



BEHIND THE SCENES

with P.J. Gomez

When Paul Jonathan Gomez received a “Crusty Demons of Dirt” video for his 11th birthday, he decided then that all he wanted to do in life was travel and get paid for riding his dirt bike.

For the next several years, P.J., as he is known, did spend a significant amount of time riding his dirt bike. “My dad [Vice Chairman Richard Gomez] always filmed me practicing and seeing him there holding the camera pushed me even harder to go big,” said P.J. However, when P.J. started to get into freestyle motor crossing, hitting ramps and flying 75 feet across the air, his father stopped filming him.

“He didn’t want to witness me when I was flying across the sky and didn’t always land on two wheels,” said P.J. But by then, P.J. had taken a video production class in high school and he and his friends would film their own footage of themselves riding – footage in the style of the Crusty videos. His interest and skill in videos led to a number of freelance projects working on dirt bike videos, including his first project assisting the camera operators and editing the trailer for “Red Bull Ride to the Hills with Jay Schweitzer” back in 2004.

DETOUR AHEAD

Although dirt biking was his passion and his intention was to become a professional dirt biker, he was sidetracked by a number of accidents he suffered in the sport. “After my tenth concussion and eighth broken bone, my parents clipped me from supporting my riding career,” said P.J.

During recovery from his latest accident, P.J. bumped into the film crew of the “Crusty Demons” videos at a friend’s ranch in the Santa Ynez Valley. “They were pumped at the fact I was out on my crutches in the hills getting rides from friends to take me to a spot to film them,” said P.J. “Right after that, I was asked to help edit the ‘Crusty 13’ video. It was a dream come true to

work with the company I had idolized every day while growing up.”

With so many injuries and broken bones from his dirt biking accidents, P.J.’s parents told him that he should have a back-up plan. “I thought it would be interesting to move from in front of the camera to behind the camera,” he said. And with his work on all his freelance video projects, the transition was a smooth one.

While in college, P.J. found himself balancing his freelance video production projects with being a full-time student. One summer he worked on three motor cross films, product support projects and fashion line projects for FOX Racing in addition to helping out with another award-winning Crusty film. “I made a lot of money that summer and was able to buy myself a new bike and put myself up in an apartment four blocks from the beach in Santa Monica,” said P.J. And he did all this on his own while being a full-time student.

INTO THE WORK WORLD

In June, P.J. graduated with a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Television and Cinema from Columbia College Hollywood, an accredited educational institution that has offered degrees in film and television production for more than 54 years.

During finals for his last semester at Columbia, he received a phone call from Alpinestars looking for a full time editor. “I went to the interview and got the job on the spot and am now their camera operator and editor,” said P.J.

Alpinestars is an Italian-based technical safety gear manufacturer for motorcycle and auto racing, including MotoGP, Motocross, Formula 1 and NASCAR. With offices in Los Angeles and Tokyo, Alpinestars’ headquarters and research and development labs are in Northern Italy.

“I get to film MotoGP, Formula 1, NASCAR and Trophy Truck Baja Racing,” said P.J. “I also get to film

skateboarding, wakeboarding, BMX, surfing, street bike stunt and freestyle motor cross since the company tends to sponsor everything.”

P.J. has already been to Italy once for his job and said he has a good feeling that it won’t be his last time since Alpinestars is headquartered there.



P.J. Gomez

LIVING THE DREAM

“I never thought things were going to go this way since all I wanted to do is ride my dirt bike,” said P.J. “I’m thankful for my parents encouraging me to further my education after my accident because I truly didn’t know what to do with myself. As my dad always said, education can never be taken away from you no matter what.”

P.J. said that he’s also thankful for the tribe’s Education Committee for helping tribal descendants pursue their goals. “Not too many people realize what an opportunity we have and how great it is to have education funds available to us.”

For now, P.J. wants to stick with the action sport world since he has already made a name for himself in that arena. Eventually, however, he would like to start working on motion picture films, specifically native films.

As for dirt bikes, he is still working on the back flip with his best friend, practicing into the foam pit. He plans on landing it in the dirt before the end of the year.

“You only live life once so I’m trying to cover as much as I can before that time comes,” he said.