

10 Classic Peaks Anyone Can Summit

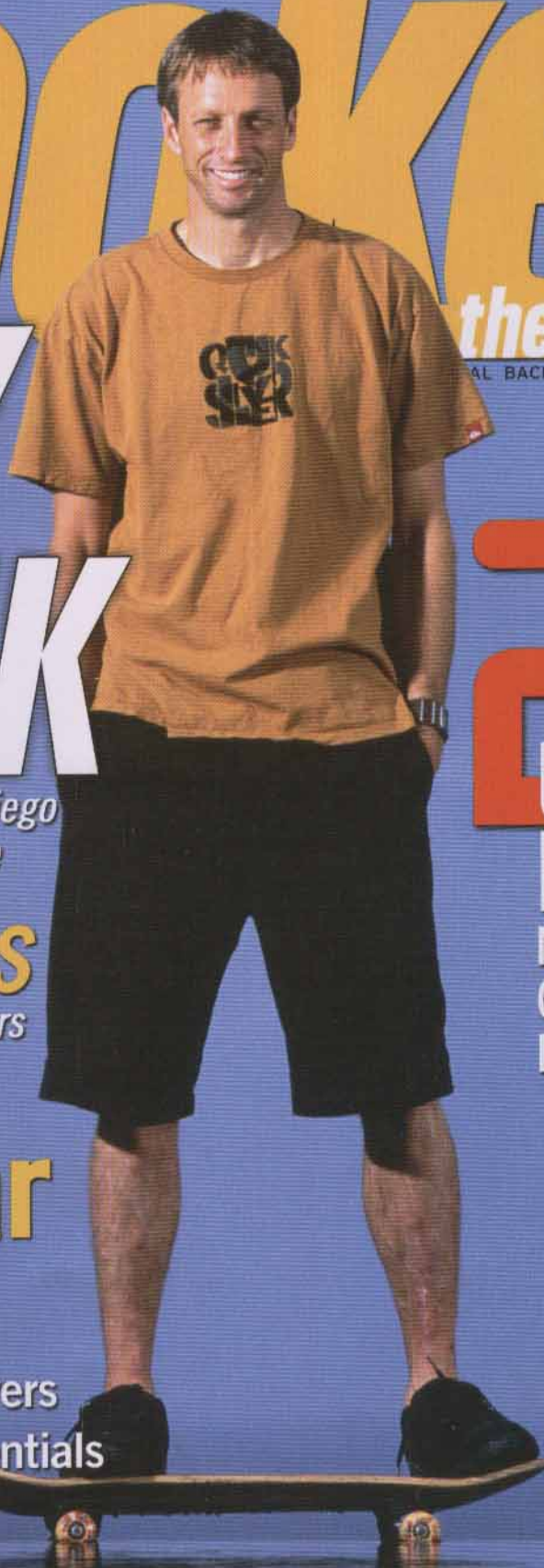
CONRAD ANKER
Mountaineer explores family
life. See page 47

SPECIAL VOTER'S GUIDE
Candidates who care about
your lifestyle. See page 24

Hooked

the Outdoors[®]
AN OUTDOOR BACKYARD TRAVEL & GEAR MAGAZINE

TONY HAWK



24

**Urban
Escapes:**
New York, Atlanta,
Cincinnati, Dallas,
Denver and more

How a skate punk from San Diego
created a **\$250 million** empire

Dream Jobs

Trade your office for the outdoors
(Meet five people who did!)

+ Fall Gear Bonus

- Go-anywhere MP3 players
- 10 life-saving gear essentials
- Trendy threads, fall jackets and more
- Win free gear! See page 32

OCTOBER 2004
www.ruhooked.com
DISPLAY UNTIL OCTOBER 24, 2004
\$4.99US \$6.99CAN 10



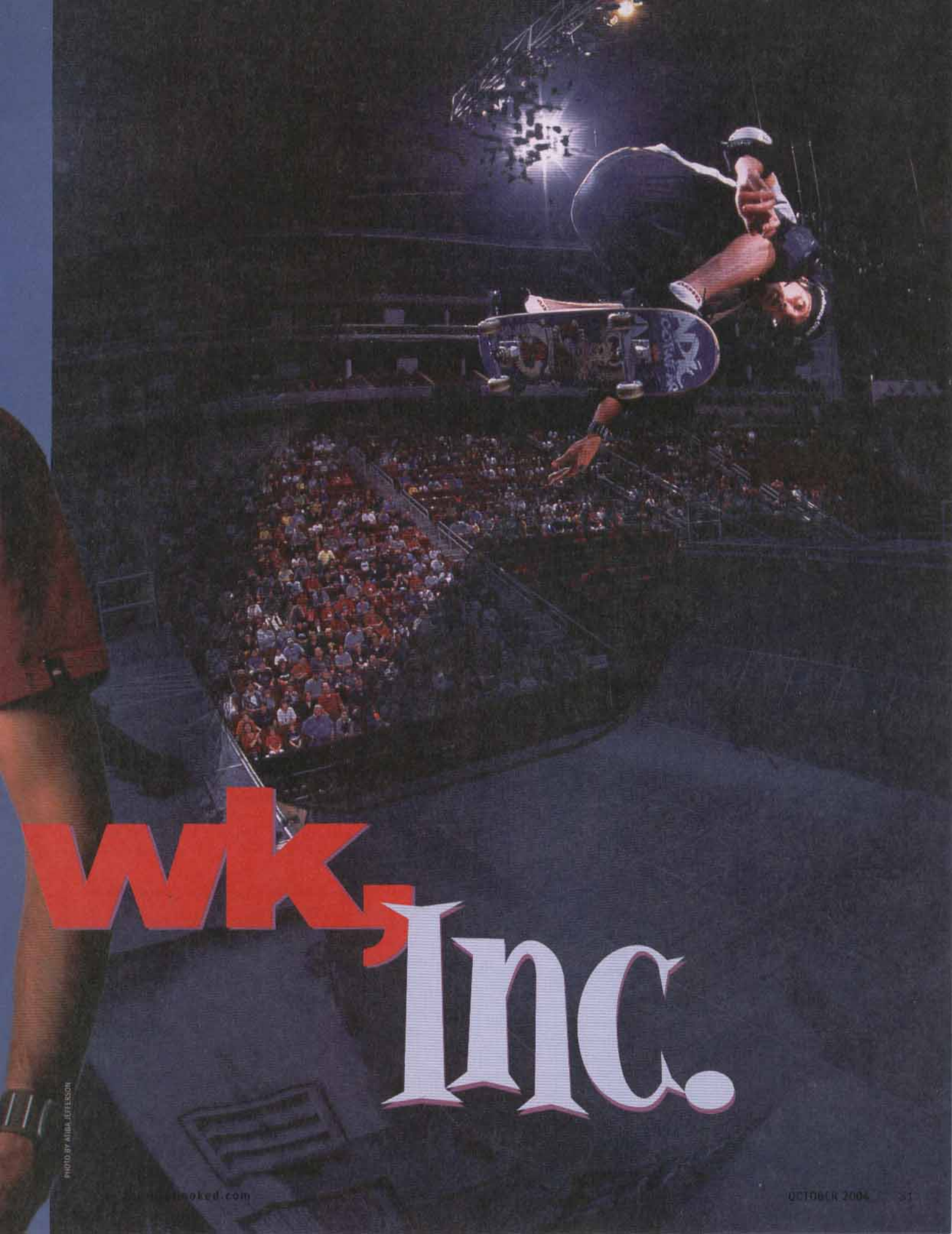
0 74470 01747 9



Tony Hawk

BEFORE TONY HAWK, IT WAS TOUGH TO MAKE A LIVING AS AN ACTION SPORTS ATHLETE. NOW EVERY SKATEBOARDER, DOWNHILL BIKER, RODEO KAYAKER AND SNOWBOARDER ASPIRES TO AN EMPIRE LIKE TONY'S. *HOOKED* TALKS WITH THE SKATEBOARDER WHO BECAME A BRAND.

BY MARK ANDERS
PHOTOS BY COREY RICH



wk, Inc.

PHOTO BY ANNA JEFFERSON

Tony Hawk, Inc.

Before he was a video game character, an action figure or a household name, Tony Hawk was simply a stick-skinny skate kid from San Diego, California.

In 1977, when he was nine, Hawk shunned team sports and found a home in the concrete undulations of the local skatepark. Within two years, the doggedly determined Hawk had landed his first sponsor. From there, he won contest after contest and, by the 1980s, he had established himself as a dominant force in the skating scene.

But Hawk's success was tempered by skateboarding's rocky waters. In 1990, the skate industry flatlined. Sensing the end of his reign as a pro skater, Hawk refinanced his home and sold his car to start a new skate company, Birdhouse. Like the rest of the industry, Birdhouse struggled. Against all odds, things turned around—big time—in 1995, with the first-ever Extreme Games (later renamed the X Games). As America watched intently from the couch, Tony won the vert contest, placed second in the street contest and promptly established himself as a skateboarding superstar in the eyes of the mainstream audience.

Now 36, Hawk is one of the most beloved athletes on the planet. He has invented more than 80 tricks and won or placed 2nd in 92 of 103 competitions. He was also the first-ever skateboarder to complete the elusive 900 (two-and-a-half spins above a halfpipe ramp). He became one of the first "extreme" athletes to garner major media attention and, in turn, major sponsorships.

...it's reported that Hawk's business empire is worth \$250 million a year

Tony Hawk proved it's possible to make a damn good living by... well, playing. And he paved the way for other extreme athletes like snowboarders, downhill mountain bikers and whitewater kayakers to do the same. He made extreme sports mainstream.

Hawk retired from traditional competition in 1999, but he's found work as a pitchman for a variety of products, including Hershey's, Doritos and McDonald's. Between his endorsements, his Birdhouse line, the best-selling Tony Hawk Pro Skater videogame series and a 30-city action sports arena tour called Boom Boom Huck Jam, it's reported that Hawk's business empire is worth \$250 million a year, and sales of his video games are estimated at more than \$500 million. What's more, Hawk has arguably done more to legitimize the action sports world than any other athlete.

But the Tony Hawk I met at his home in Northern San Diego was just a down-to-earth, warm, thirty-something guy with a wry sense of humor. He still skates like his life depends on it, and he peppers his free time with other boardsports like surfing and snowboarding. He's even planning a trekking trip in the Himalayas. These days, though, his biggest obsessions are his three young sons. In fact, we had to take an intermission from our interview so he could shuttle the kids to school.

"Guess what we can watch in the car?" he says to his boys, in an attempt to wrangle them out the front door on time.

"S-p-o-n-g-e B-o-b!" the young Hawks cheer in unison.

HOOKED: Do you ever find it tough fitting in to the professional skate world now with 12-year-old pros—especially since you have an 11-year-old son?

TONY HAWK: My style of skating is a niche. I mostly skate vert [as in "vertical" skateboarding, in which athletes skate on a halfpipe and concentrate on aerial maneuvers]. And vert is not the big popular form of skateboarding. Street is. And skateparks. So it's a real specialty type-of-thing and there's only a handful of guys that can do it. I never claim that I'm anything else but a vert skater.

Are your sons into skateboarding?

My oldest son is full on into skating. The other two are a little bit young—but they're interested. The youngest is the biggest daredevil of all of them. I don't know if skating is dangerous enough for him, actually. He'll probably do nitrous bungee jumping or something.

Do your sons understand your legacy as a skater?

Well, my oldest son is 11 and he skates. He's been skating since he was three. And he does, in a sense that there's—I don't want to say pressure—but there's this weird sort of expectation on him. And he's pretty good about not letting it get to him and not really caring about it. But he senses it. To them, there's this separation from me and Tony Hawk the pro skater, or video game character, or action figure. Like, they know it's me, but it's sort of like there's this other entity that exists besides dad.

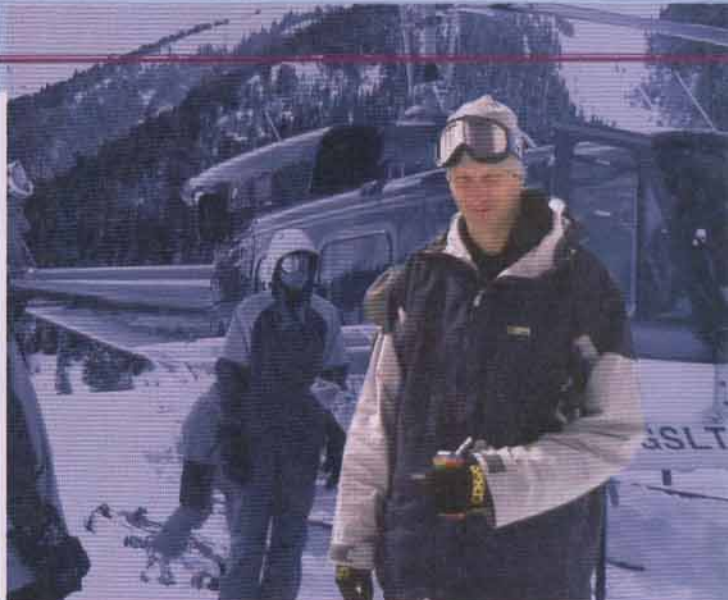
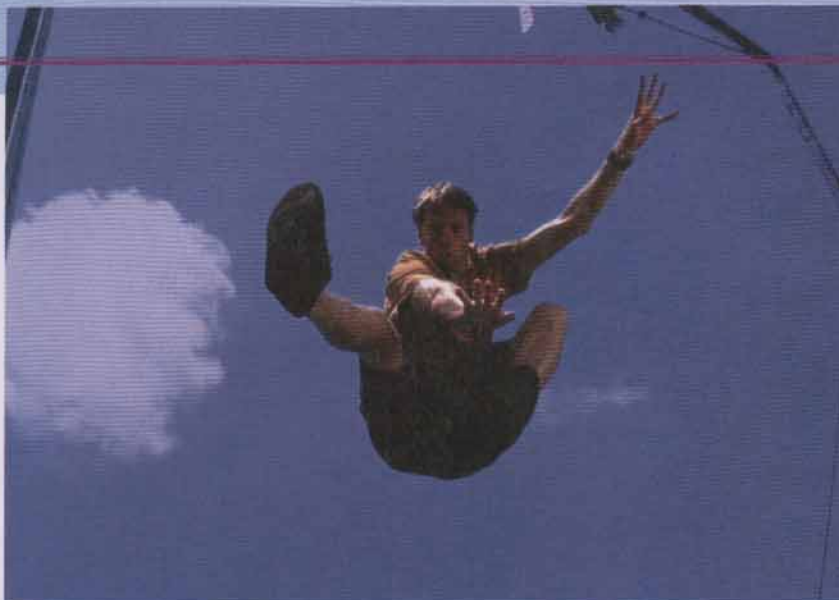
How did it feel to become a video game character?

It was weird. I've been into video games for a long time. I used to seek out any game that had skating in it. I bought a Commodore 64 because there was a skate game for it. So I've always been really into it and always hoped that I could help guide one along so it helped represent skating properly, more for the sake of being enjoyed by skaters than gamers. So I was excited to get to work on it. But I just thought it was something I'd get to do once and some skaters would buy it and that'd be it. I had no idea it would be going on and on—now we're on our sixth game.

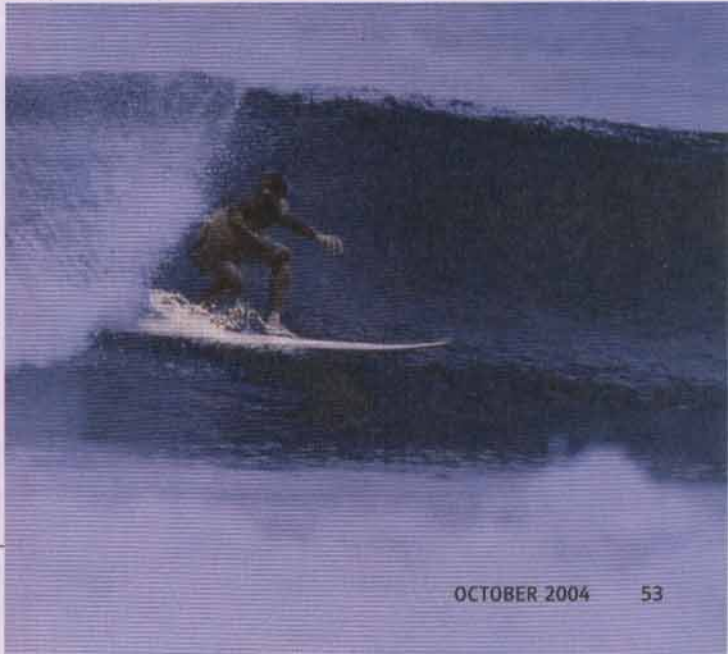
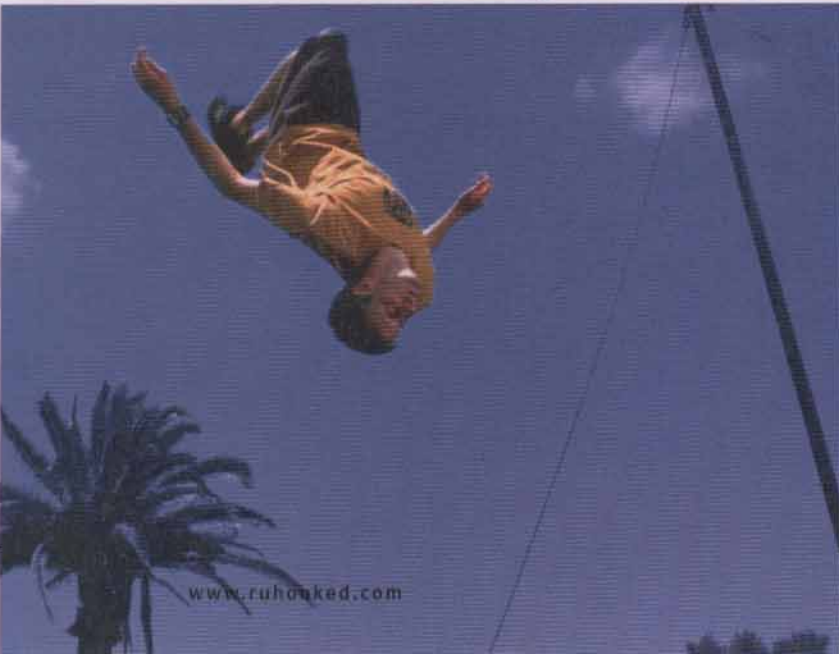
Did you ever think skateboarding and your fame as a skater were going to get this big?

When we were doing stuff with the Bones Brigade [an elite, pro-skating demo team in the '80s], we just thought we were invincible. So, sure, we just thought it was going to last forever. But I certainly didn't think that after that rise and fall of popularity I'd get another chance at being a pro skater. I just thought my run had come to pass. I wanted to stay in the skate industry, so I started Birdhouse and that was kind of what I thought was my transition from being a pro skater to being a force in the industry.

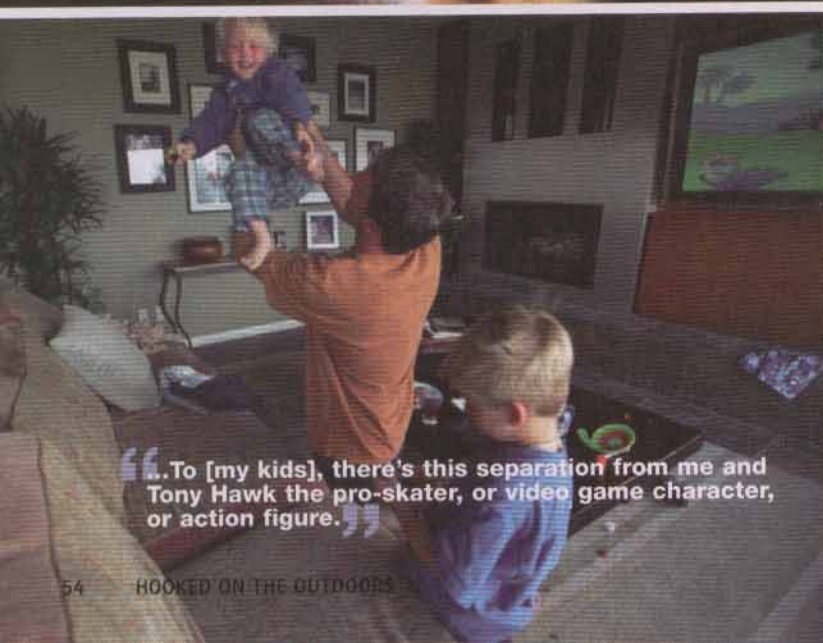
But I never quit skating, so when things came up around '95 and '96—opportunities to skate and to compete—I did it mostly because I never left it. And I felt like I was still improving my skills and I could still justify being a competitor. I never



“...It’s mostly about the stance. I just know how to turn when I’m standing sideways on pretty much any board.”



Tony Hawk, Inc.



“...To [my kids], there's this separation from me and Tony Hawk the pro-skater, or video game character, or action figure.”

imagined having a second wind and having that go bigger than anything ever went before. It's all just a shock.

Do you ever wish things had stayed small?

The strangest aspect is the overwhelming celebrity. I get recognized everywhere I go. I never imagined that would ever happen. People are usually really respectful and nice about it, but it is weird when I'm out with my kids and we're trying to get something done that's just a normal everyday thing and people are like, 'Oh, can I stop you for an autograph?' And I've got a two-year-old in this hand and a backpack in this.... In situations like that it's a little strange to be in the spotlight, because you're just trying to do normal things. You know, I don't have assistants running around for me all day. Then again, there are perks.

Like what?

A couple weeks ago I got to fly in an F-16 in Vegas—you know, The Thunderbirds. I got to go up in the plane and fly it a bit. We pulled 9.4 Gs. It was just ridiculous.

Did you puke?

Umm, no. When we pulled 9.4 though, I felt like everything was closing in. I could feel everything fading. When the pilot pulled out, he's like, "Are you okay?" And I couldn't really speak properly and my arms were shaking and I said, "My...arms...are...shaking. Is that normal?" And he was like, "I don't know. I'd have to see it."

You surf, right? And I heard you're pretty good.

Well, I'd say I'm average. Let's put it this way: I've pulled two ollies in my life—like small airs—and that's it. I want to do aerials. That would be where I feel comfortable.

I went tow-in surfing, actually, in Maui with Rush Randle and Laird Hamilton. They invited my brother and I to go. And for them, it's a small day and for us it's the biggest waves. If I had to estimate, the face I rode was 18 feet. I was going backside [riding with your back facing the wave], and I remember the first wave I got: I was kind of cruising the face and then I did a small cutback and I turned and saw the barrel and pit [the deepest and most dangerous part of the wave], and I was like—[gasps]—and I immediately turned right back out into the face. I didn't want any part of that.

Is there an equivalent to big wave surfing in skating?

In this summer's X Games [August 5-8] they are going to have a big air event with a 40-foot gap and a 30-foot quarter pipe. So that's the equivalent to big wave surfing. And there's maybe like only seven guys on this whole planet that can even handle it.

What other sports do you like?

Snowboarding—that's about it. It's mostly about the stance. I just know how to turn when I'm standing sideways on pretty much any board.

In snowboarding there's the search for untouched powder and in surfing it's uncrowded waves—what do you seek as a skater?

The motivation in skating is the new trick. That's what everyone is looking for.

Are you still coming up with new tricks?

Once in awhile, yeah. The last trick I learned was a shove-it to a frontside hurricane to fakie.

THE TRICK

You're 36, are you starting to feel your age?

Only when I get hurt. It takes longer to bounce back for sure. I had my worst injury ever last year. That was definitely the hardest comeback I've ever had to make.

How did you get hurt?

I was doing a full loop and I just didn't have enough speed. I was messing around and I shouldn't have been where I was. Usually, when I do it in our show [Boom Boom Huck Jam], it's serious and we practice for it. I was doing it for a TV show and I was like, "Ahh, don't worry about it. Let's just do it now." And then I woke up in the ambulance. I fell and fractured my pelvis and broke my thumb and fractured my skull—all at once.

I did the loop for five weeks on tour—every night—but then again I was just getting too cocky with it. It was something that I've always been afraid of. Every time I do it, it takes a lot of mental preparation. And then the accident just taught me that I can't ever take it for granted.

You have a ton of endorsement deals. Do you ever get called out for being too corporate?

Well, I'm always that guy that people point to. The bottom line is: I never had these opportunities given to me before. When I was 16, if McDonald's came up and offered me a sponsorship, you bet I would've taken it, but they weren't knocking on my door then. Or if somebody would've wanted to do a video game—I'd be like, "You bet, let's do it." Skating just wasn't there yet. It hadn't come of age. You know people are accusing me of being a sell-out. But it's like, "No, my stuff finally does sell." I've had signature products since I was 14. I had a pro model. Nobody really cared about it, but it was out there if you wanted it. I'm not changing the style of my skating or dressing up differently because someone is paying me more. I'm still doing what I do. Take it or leave it.

What's next for Tony Hawk?

What I want to do is make our Boom Boom Huck Jam tour a genre of tour, one that I don't always have to do for it to be successful, but the idea will live on its own. Maybe there's an installation in Vegas and there's a global tour. I feel like that's a strong enough concept that I won't always have to be the headliner. And that'd be fun to guide that along.

Will there be a time in your life when you won't do vert anymore?

I don't think there will ever be a time when I quit skating per se, but if I felt like there was a point where my skills were really fading, then I wouldn't be doing it on a public level. I'd just be out there doing it with my sons. I wouldn't be out skating big demos, because I just wouldn't feel right about it. I wouldn't want to be just going through the motions.

Do you think you have the dream job?

Umm, yeah, I can't complain. It's busy. It's hectic. There are certain things that are hard to deal with, but at the same time you're just riding your skateboard and you're getting paid to do it—can you believe that? [chuckles] PHOTOGRAPH BY [unreadable]

In case you're not up to speed on your skateboard trick terms, we asked Tony's assistant, Jared Pindle, to define Tony's latest invention: a shove-it to a frontside hurricane to fakie.

"Yeah, I guess it's not in the Merriam Webster yet. This is going to be *very* difficult. Let me try to break this trick up into the parts.

Shove-it To use your feet to 'shove' the board 180 degrees, so that the tail is now in front and the nose is in the back.

Hurricane (grind) This is a 'grind' (a trick done on the coping [where the top edge of the ramp intersects with the platform]) as apposed to an 'air' (a trick done above the coping).

To do a **Frontside Hurricane** while going forward up the ramp, carve frontside. When you get near the coping quickly turn backside and try to lock your back truck [like an axel, the truck holds the wheels on the board] on the coping and your front truck on the deck while you're grinding backwards. Easy, huh? Now lean back into the ramp clearing your front truck and come in Fakie [or backwards]. Ta da!

Now do a shove-it to a frontside hurricane to fakie. Same as a Frontside Hurricane but add a Shove-it at the same time as you "quickly turn backside" in the above description.

I knew this would sound ridiculous before I started but this is the best I can do."

The Tony Hawk Foundation

Don't think Tony Hawk is all sponsorships and video games. His charity, the Tony Hawk Foundation, builds skateparks and contributes to other causes to support young skaters across the US, from Sitka, Alaska, to the Virgin Islands. For more information, go to www.tonyhawkfoundation.org.

BOOM BOOM HUCK JAM

Want to see the man in action? Tony Hawk's Boom Boom Huck Jam Tour will set out for its third 29-city tour in early November. For more information check out: www.boomboomhuckjam.com.