

Calendar

Broke His Face in Nine Places

Motorcycle Acrobatics Fest

'Before I try anything new, I visualize it," says Jason Britton, motorcycle acrobat and stunt double, notably for Ice Cube in *Torque* and for Derek Luke in *Biker BoyZ*. "If I can't see in my imagination how it could happen, then I don't feel comfortable attempting it."

Once he sees it, he can get started. "I can make corrections from there. I have to have escape routes in case something goes wrong; I have to see a way out. I have to know where I'm going to land, how I'm going to get away from the bike. I'll study it, take my time, learn it without hurting myself. That's why I've been able to do this for so long."

Speaking by phone from his home just south of Los Angeles, in Garden

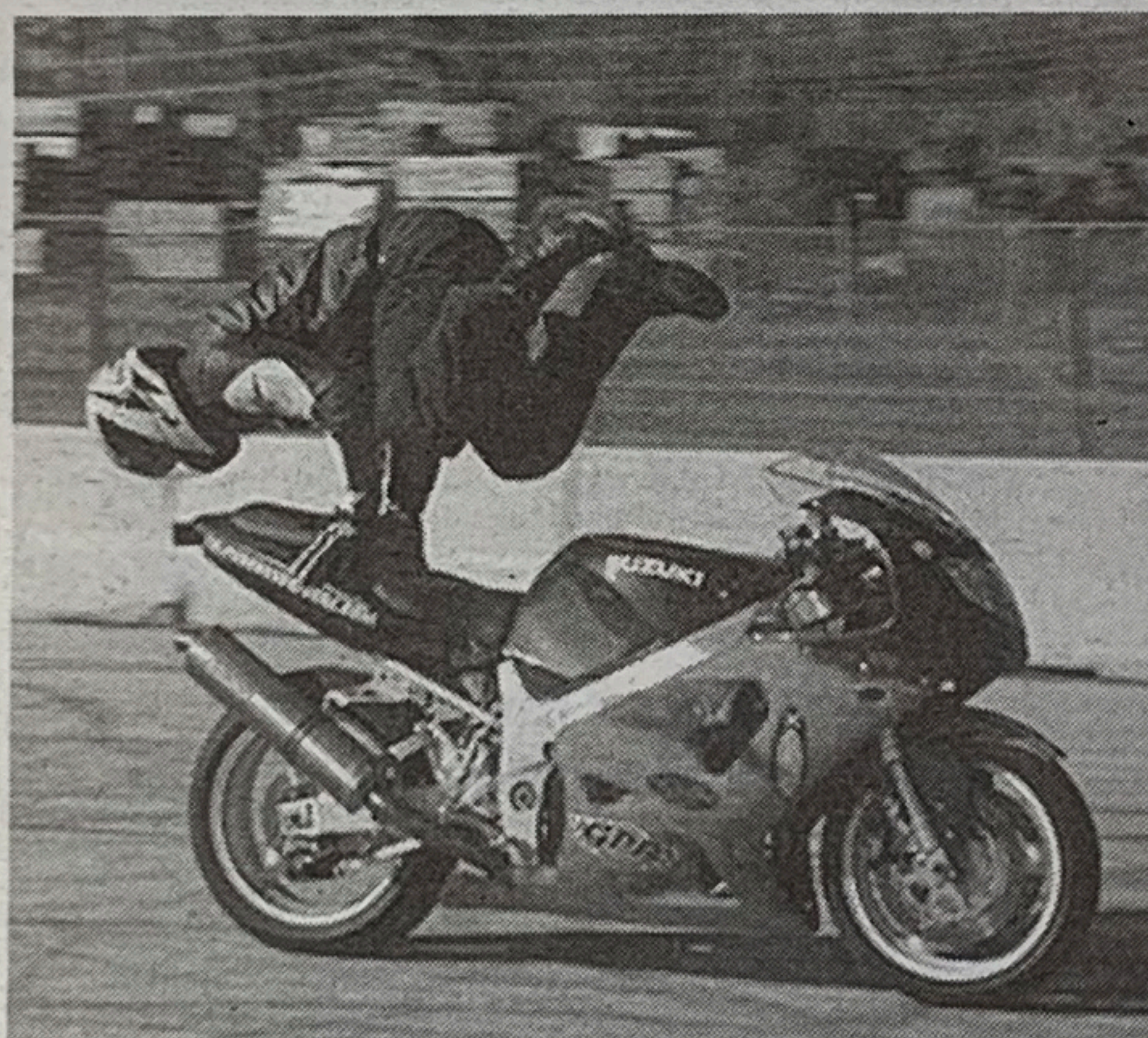
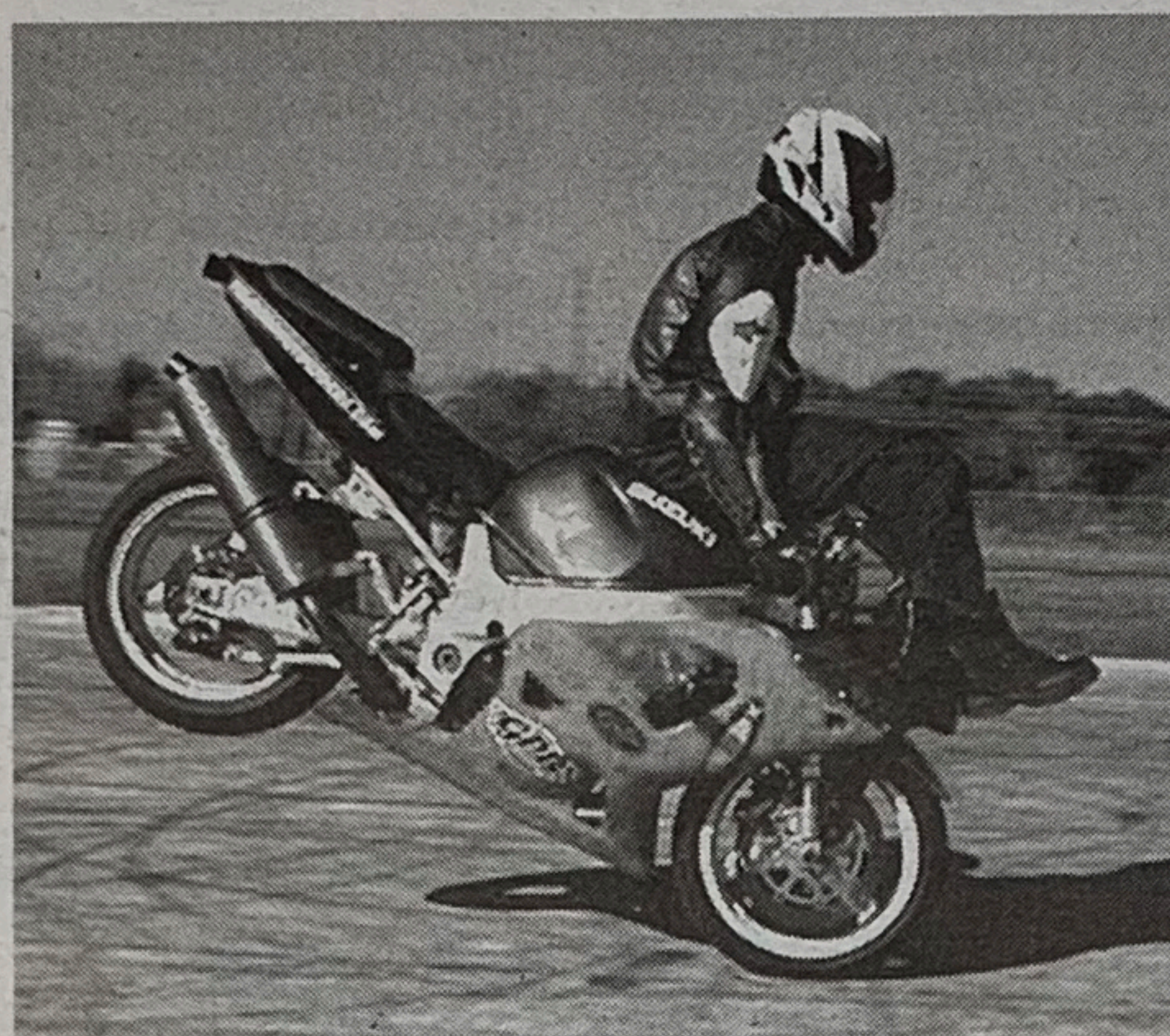
Grove, Britton, who is 35, acknowledges that his personal style doesn't

resemble that of the monosyllabic cool dudes from the Hollywood movies he's made. "I've been able to carry myself in such a way that I can actually deal with corporate sponsors. They say, 'Oh, wow, you ride too?' They think I'm the representative or something" — that is, for his Team No Limit or his business concern, No Limit Extreme Entertainment. Team No Limit will perform in Tijuana this weekend.

Britton is the popularizer of the stunt called the elevator. This is how he describes it: "You're riding down the road about 50 mph standing on the [foot]pegs with your hands out. And then you take one jump from the pegs up to the gas tank. And you remain in a standing position with your hands out without touching any other part of the motorcycle."

He didn't invent it. He's seen plenty of pictures of it, in 1950s magazines. He doesn't know of any really "new" tricks. "I don't know what they called it 50 years ago, but standing on the seat or standing on the gas tank while riding down the road with your arms out is called a 'Christ air' today."

For an exhibition like the one on Sunday, Britton says he'll make \$2000 or \$3000. Making movies is much more lucrative; it's also much more pressure. "When you're working on a \$100 million film, if you don't get the stunt right, and you're doing it over and over for two hours, you set everybody back. They've got camera time, grips out there working dollies, camera cars, and actors waiting to do their shot, waiting for you to finish. So it's crucial that you can do



Jason Britton

your trick upon command."

Britton's choice of bike is a 2003 Suzuki GSXR1000. His car is a 2003 Cadillac Escalade. After this conversation is over, he says, he'll drive the car to Las Vegas, to do some filming for Team No Limit's latest video, *Revolution 2003*. He almost never rides bikes on the street anymore.

How did he choose his team members, Darius Khashabi, Alex Flores, and Joey Barta? "To have longevity as a team in this business, you don't go out and choose the absolute best riders whose attitudes or personalities you don't know. What I did was go with guys I had already ridden with, was friends with, and had already clicked with."

Their riding styles all differ. "Alex is very controlled. He does very good slow wheelies and rolling endos" — i.e., the rider hits the front brake hard enough to lift the rear wheel off the

ground while continuing to roll the bike down the road, on the front wheel only. "Darius, on the other hand, while he's always in control, looks more like he's on the edge. He does amazing burnouts. He's all over the bike while the back wheel is spinning. His slow wheelies are like no one else's. He does circle wheelies faster and can wheelie out of a circle wheelie better than anyone I've seen. Joey is very controlled, too. He learns very quickly. You put a trick in front of him, he'll picture it, and then he'll go out and nail it."

In February 2001, Britton was seriously injured. He broke his face in nine places and ruptured his brain sac. Was he wearing a helmet? "I was. And I had every opportunity in the world to pursue a lawsuit with HJC [the helmet maker]. But I never did. The worst thing that ended up happening to me was that I lost my sense of taste and smell. I

consider myself lucky to be alive."

He has plenty of colleagues on crutches and in wheelchairs. "There's a gentleman named Lee Beaver. He has no feeling from the waist down. But he actually competes in some of our events. He's made this contraption. When his bike gets below 5 mph, these hydraulic wheels come out on the side to keep the bike balanced. It's really an elaborate setup. And he did it all himself from his wheelchair."

— Jeanne Schinto

**Third Annual
Tijuana International Festival
of Motorcycle Acrobatics 2003
Sunday, November 23,
1:00-4:00 p.m.
Centro de Espectaculos Alamar
(Behind the Central Camionera)
Tijuana**

**Cost: \$5; children under 5, free.
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