

Q&A WITH THE
ROCKERS OF RED

THE RYAN HALL
WORKOUT

SICK TRICK OR
STUPID STUNT?

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STEPHEN DREW

BREAKAWAY

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STUNTMAN
ALLEN
ROBINSON IS

ROCK SOLID

JULY 2008



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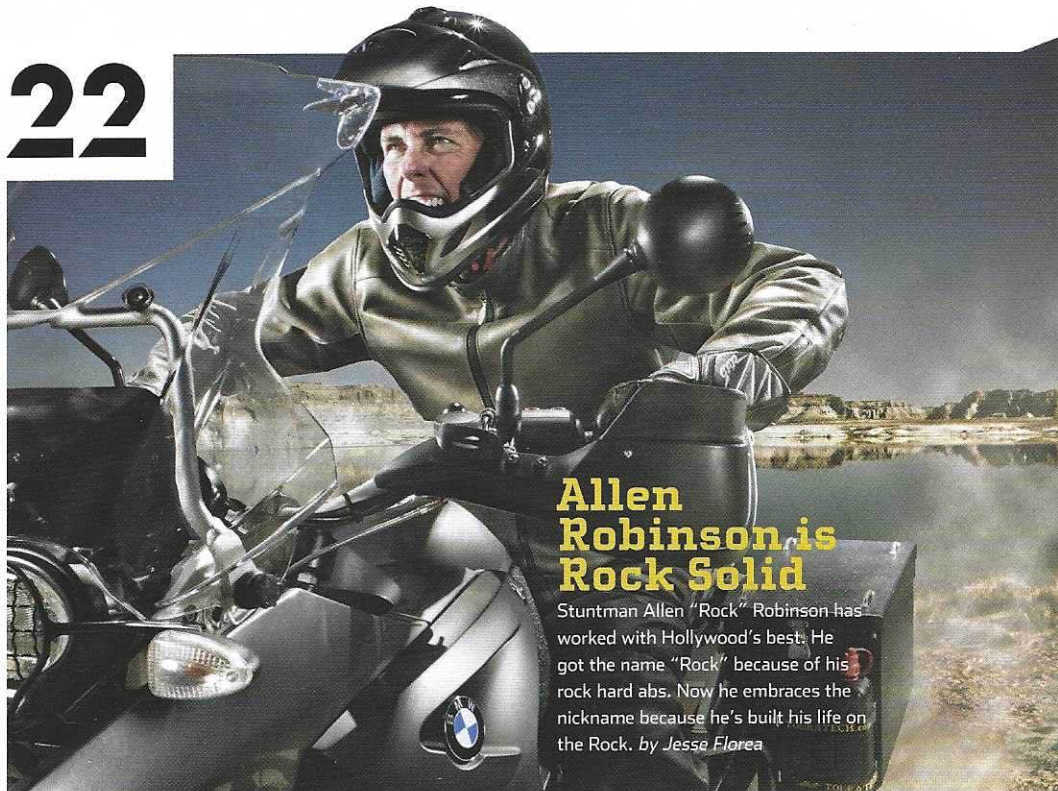
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Allen Robinson is Rock Solid

Stuntman Allen "Rock" Robinson has worked with Hollywood's best. He got the name "Rock" because of his rock hard abs. Now he embraces the nickname because he's built his life on the Rock. *by Jesse Florea*

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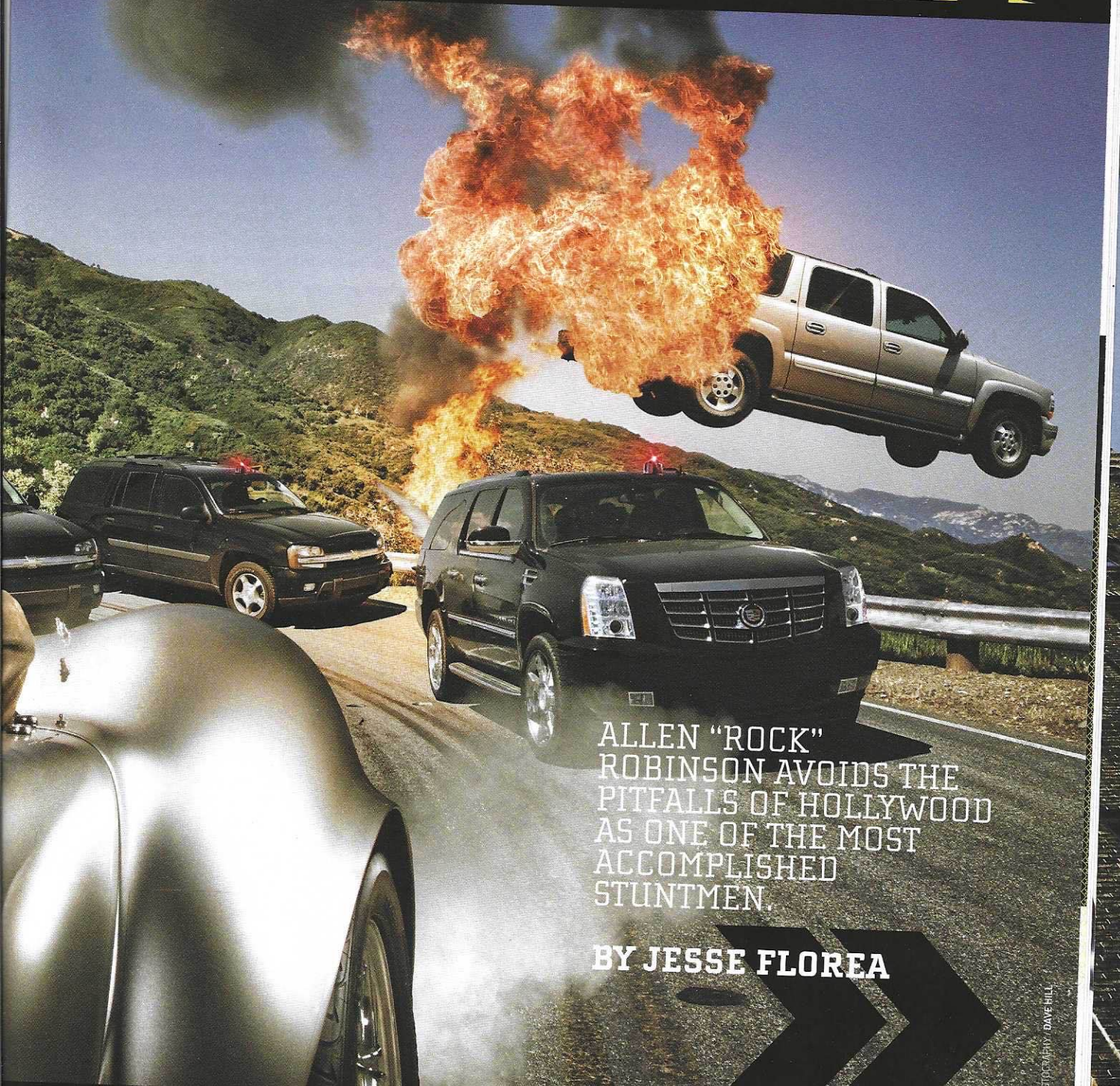
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ALLEN "ROCK"
ROBINSON AVOIDS THE
PITFALLS OF HOLLYWOOD
AS ONE OF THE MOST
ACCOMPLISHED
STUNTMEN.

BY JESSE FLOREA

PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVE HILL

STUNT

Waves of heat

radiate from the Arizona desert. Allen Robinson sits in a black Suburban watching a flurry of activity on the set of the \$100 million-plus movie he's filming.

A crane hoists another Suburban high into the air. A gas bomb is rolled into position. Other drivers pull in front of Allen's car and get ready for the scene to start.

"We had about a hundred background cars and two-dozen stunt cars," Allen explains. "This scene is where several SUVs blow up and roll. Mine is the only one with a human in it, because it was too dangerous to have real people in the other Suburbans."

Action!

Allen accelerates his specially equipped SUV to 50 mph and swerves through traffic. But instead of 20-inch chrome wheels and DVD player, the "extras" on Allen's Suburban include a cannon under the chassis, heavy-duty restraints and no front brakes.

"Unhooking the front brakes is a little trick to help slide the car," Allen says. "And just before I roll the car, I have to turn on three cameras."

As Allen nears the spot where he's supposed to flip his SUV, he starts to sweat. Maybe it's nerves. Maybe it's the fact he's wearing a fire suit and it's 115 degrees outside. Or maybe it's because he has a live cannon under his car.

♣ Cut! Cut! Cut!

Just before pandemonium breaks out on the set, the director shouts to stop the scene. Allen's so strapped down that he can't reach the radio to tell other cars to get out of his way, and stopping his SUV without locking up the back brakes isn't easy. Any wrong move and Allen's car could detonate and crush another car—or, worse, a film worker. Finally, Allen is able to creep to the side of the road and drive back into position.

Next time the scene goes perfectly. The crane drops the other SUV into the shot as gasoline explodes. Allen clicks on the cameras, locks up the

brakes turns the SUV sideways and fires the cannon. Mangled metal and fire fill the air as Allen flips down the highway.

HIGH-RISK ILLUSIONIST

After nearly 20 years in Hollywood, there's very little Allen hasn't seen or accomplished. But he's still relieved when a big stunt is finished and the director has what he wants.

"I consider stunt work as being a high-risk illusionist," Allen says. "That's what I enjoy about the job: Doing something very dangerous as safely as possible."

Over the years Allen has done big explosions, fallen from buildings, trains or out of airplanes, careened down stairs, performed motorcycle stunts

and hung from a hot air balloon. As scary as those things may sound, the stunts that worry him the most are the ones involving animals and other actors.

"It's scariest when there's an element of the uncontrolled," Allen says. "A fight scene with an actor could lead to an unintentional injury. With the bigger stunts, you do so much preparation that it's down to a science. But you don't know if that pit bull on your chest is going to bite you or jump over you."

Even with careful preparation, accidents happen. Allen has suffered his share of cuts and broken bones. He views stunt work as he would playing football—if you do it long enough, you're going to get injured.

"But hopefully you won't be injured too bad," Allen says. "My worst injury is hearing loss from being too close to gunshots and explosions. When I was young in the business, I was dumb and didn't use the hearing protection recommended to me. Now I'm paying the price. Broken bones and cuts heal, but hearing won't come back."

Now with all of his stunt experience, Allen's role has started to change in some films. Instead of being told, "You fall here," Allen sets up stunts and hires the right people to give the movie's director the look he wants.

"It's a natural progression to

WANTED: STUNTMAN

A lot of guys ask Allen Robinson how to break into stunt work. Allen's path was simple: He answered an advertisement in the newspaper.

"The ad said, 'Stuntmen wanted: Will train,' " he remembers. "It was a summer job doing a live show at Stone Mountain Park outside of Atlanta."

Allen played a gunfighter robbing a train. He learned how to fall off the train and do other stunts. When the summer was over, he was hooked.

"I said, 'This is what I want to do,'" Allen says. "I was using my athletic ability and performing in front of people."

Until that point, Allen had worked as a ski instructor, painted houses and done other odd jobs. The problem was there wasn't any stunt work in Atlanta. A couple of months passed before a friend in Orlando called and said he could get Allen a job at Disney World.

Allen sold all of the furniture in his apartment, bought a Winnebago and drove south.

"The only way I could afford to do it was to live in the Winnebago in a campground," Allen says.

"Through doing the live shows at Disney, I started to get TV and film credits."

go from stuntman to stunt coordinator and then to second unit director," Allen says. "It's a lot more mental and not as much physical. You have only so many years of hitting the ground before your body says, 'That's enough.'"

ON THE ROCK

Early in his career, Allen loved hitting the ground. He was athletic and enjoyed the adrenaline rush of stunt work. One of his first jobs was at Disney World, where he earned the nickname "Rock."

One day he was working out between shows and stopped to flex in the mirror. Another actor looked up from his newspaper and said, "You look hard as a rock. That's it! You're Rock Robinson."

The name stuck. People still call him Rock.

"I think it's cool, because it has various meanings," Allen says. "Sometimes I fall like a rock. And I would hope my faith and career are as solid as a rock."

But when Allen first moved to Hollywood, he had built his life on the sand. Although he had grown up in a Christian home, Allen never gave his life to Christ.

"My sisters were born-again believers," Allen says. "They'd continually tell me I had to accept Christ into my life."

Allen had other plans. He didn't want to change. Through high school and college, he lived the partier lifestyle. His plan was to accept Jesus right before he died.

God had other plans. Alone in Hollywood, Allen couldn't escape the emptiness of his life. He lived for the thrill, but once the thrill was over he felt hollow. Shortly after moving to California, Allen knew something had to change—and it was he. He walked into a church and teared up right away.

"I felt the love in there," Allen says. "Within a few weeks, I surrendered my life to God. I dropped to my knees and said, 'I can't do this

ALLEN'S FILM CREDITS INCLUDE...



MASTER AND COMMANDER



STAR TREK: NEMESIS



WORLD TRADE CENTER



JUST ANOTHER DAY AT THE OFFICE



SPIDER-MAN 2

PHOTOGRAPHY / COLUMBIA / PARAMOUNT / UNIVERSAL / 20TH CENTURY FOX

Now with all of his stunt experience, Allen's role has started to change in some films. Instead of being told, "You fall here," Allen sets up stunts and hires the right people to give the movie's director the look he wants.

alone, Lord. I accept You.' God is just amazing."

In Hollywood it's not always cool to be a Christian, but Allen does little things to let his faith shine. When he's working on a movie, he's with the same group of 150 people every day for several months.

"People see how you operate," Allen says. "They notice if you say a prayer before eating or if you pray before a stunt. They also see I'm not cussing and walking away or making a comment if somebody tells an inappropriate joke."

Allen strives to stand firm in his faith. He likes the challenge of being a Christian in Hollywood. He wants his life to stand out and be different . . . now that he's built his foundation on the Rock. ☺

Jesse Florea is the editor of *Clubhouse* magazine.



WORTH THE WAIT

Allen Robinson likes a challenge. Whether it's lighting himself on fire and jumping off a building or finding a woman to marry, he's willing to take the right steps to make it successful.

"My faith taught me not to be unequally yoked," Allen says, referencing 2 Corinthians 6:14. "I wouldn't compromise in dating or marrying a non-Christian woman. In Hollywood, that really limited the number of available women."

But during a Christian banquet for Media Fellowship International (MFI) at the 2001 Emmy Awards, Allen saw the woman of his dreams.

"Pastor Bob Rieth, the president of MFI, was talking to the most beautiful woman I'd ever seen," Allen remembers. "So I asked him to introduce me to her."

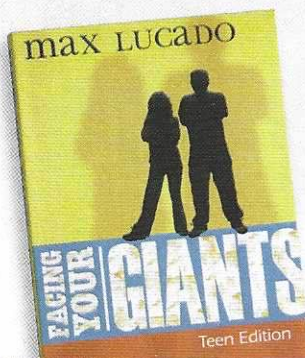
Her name was Sandra, and the two kept seeing each other at Christian functions in Hollywood. But every time Allen asked Sandra out for coffee, she was too busy. Finally, the pair ended up in a small-group Bible study, where they got to know each other as friends. Allen continued to pursue Sandra until she agreed to attend a movie screening with him.

"It took three years of asking her out before we started dating, which was great, because we knew each other on so many different levels," Allen says. "God's timing is perfect."

The couple has been married for three years. Because both work in television and film, they have a rule of not being apart for too long. If one's on location, the other visits the set to stay connected.

"As long as we're both focusing on God, then Hollywood doesn't have a chance to interrupt our marriage," Allen says.

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AREN'T SO BIG AFTER ALL...



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