

magazine coverage

# Transworld Skateboarding

1996

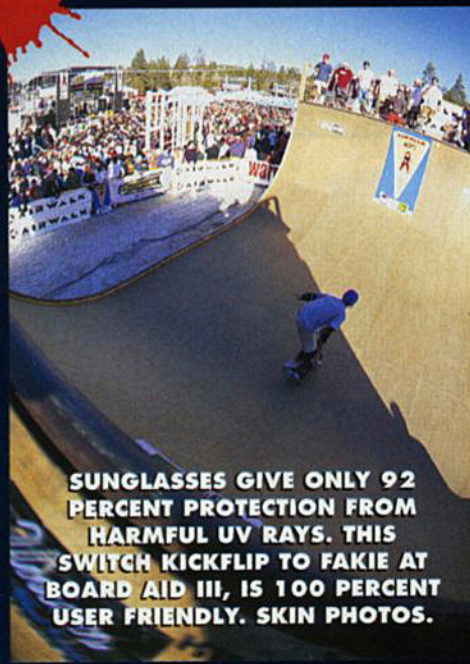
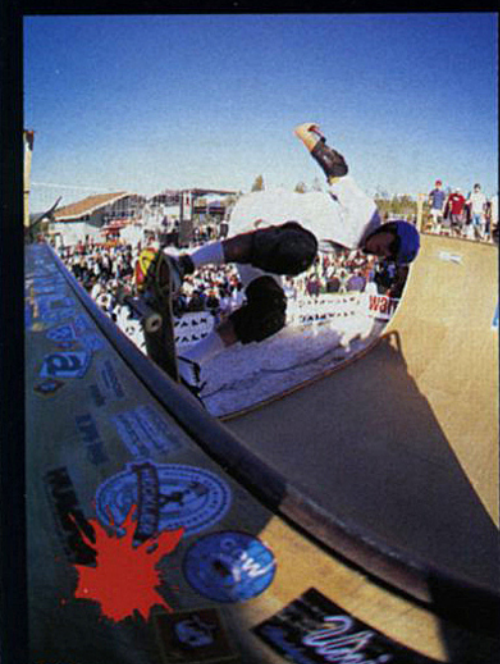
Bob Burnquist Interview.

The logo consists of the letters 'E' and 'S' written in a stylized, cursive script. The 'E' is positioned above the 'S', and they are connected at the top.



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# BOB BURNQUIST



WHAT ABOUT BOB?  
THE BOB BURNQUIST INTERVIEW  
BY ATIBA JEFFERSON

BOB BURNQUIST IS A NINETEEN-YEAR-OLD SKATEBOARDER FROM SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL. HE NOW LIVES IN SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA WITH HIS OLDER SISTER MILENA AND YOUNGER SISTER REBECCA, WHO HAS JUST ARRIVED IN THE UNITED STATES TO ATTEND SCHOOL. FOR CLOSE TO A YEAR NOW BOB HAS SPENT HIS DAYS HANGING OUT WITH HIS SISTERS AND LEADING VERTICAL SKATEBOARDING TO A NEW LEVEL.



BOB'S AT HOME EVERYWHERE,

THAT INCLUDES HUBBA HIDEOUT.

180 NOSEGRIND. TOBIN PHOTOS.

[The tape recorder kicks on with a loud electronic belch. Atiba's voice starts over the mic loud and unstable, but quickly comes under control.] **This is Bob Burnquist's interview. It's 11:15 on the nineteenth of March, in the nine-sickle [1996]. Let's do some basic shit real quick.**

All right.  
**How old are you?**  
Nineteen.

**Where were you born?**  
In Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

**Where do you live now?**  
In San Francisco.

**How long have you lived there?**

The first time I came to San Francisco was in July of 1994, but just to visit. Then in December of that year I came back. My sister was with me, and she rented this house. She stayed, and I went back and forth for about a year and a half. Now I've been here [permanently] for about seven months.

**So you're a dual citizen? How does that work?**

My mom is Brazilian and my dad is American, so I have a Brazilian and an American passport.

**Where's your dad from?**

He was born in Taft, California, but he grew up in the Bakersfield area. He lives and works in Brazil now. He likes it there. He was a tourist who became a resident.

**Did he lose his American citizenship?**

No. He got Brazilian citizenship when he married my mom.

**Do you like one over the other [between Brazil and America] to live?**

There are different aspects I like about each place. I like the States because of skateboarding—you can skate everywhere, and I've made new friends now, so I like it and enjoy it here. But Brazil is where I grew up; it's where I have my roots. I like hanging out there and talking about the past.

**Where do you see yourself living in the future?**

We were talking earlier about how Nostradamus predicted a huge earthquake in 1999 in the Bay Area or whatever. I don't think I'll be here in 1999, just because of that prediction. [Bob laughs nervously.] It might sound crazy, but I'd be going crazy.

**So where would you go?**

Somewhere away from San Francisco, or back to Brazil for a year or something.

**But most likely you'll ...**

Most likely I'll be somewhere in California.

**How long have you been skateboarding?**

Almost nine years. Eight and a half.

**How long have you been pro?**

In Brazil I've been pro since I was fourteen. It was a weird thing—at an amateur contest me and all my friends decided to turn pro for some reason. In Brazil it's a decision that you have, not your sponsor. It was like, "Yeah, I'm pro." [Atiba and Bob both laugh.] In the States I've had a board and gotten paid since the Vancouver contest [May 1995].

**Were you getting paid in Brazil?**



SWITCH FRONTSIDE OLLIE, MISSILE PARK. LUKE OGDEN PHOTO.

Yeah, about 50 bucks a month—that's if we got paid, y'know?

**Who're your current sponsors?**

They are anti-hero, éS Shoes, Independent, Spitfire. I guess that's all.

**Did you ever skate an amateur contest in the States before you turned pro?**

No.

**Is it a whole different world being pro in the U.S.?**

It's paradise, dude.

**Do you like getting paid more than 50 bucks a month?**

Hell, yeah. I love it.

**Do you get more travel opportunities here?**

A lot more. They pay for everything. In Brazil they [sponsors] would only pay half, and you'd have to make all your reservations and come up with some of the money. It's rad being with Deluxe—they have Mickey [Reyes] to

take care of all that shit so you can just think of what you have to do.

**How many people are in your family?**

I have two sisters, my mom, and my dad.

**Are you pretty close to your family?**

Yeah.

**Do you like that?**

Yeah, I love it. I'm closer to my mom and my sisters because I've lived with them. My dad moved to Rio when I was twelve or thirteen, so I didn't really live with him. I always talked to him on the phone, though, and I was always going to Rio and stuff. It was usually five days with my mom, two days with my dad.

**Does your family support you in your skateboarding?**

Yeah. They always have. My dad bought me my first board for my

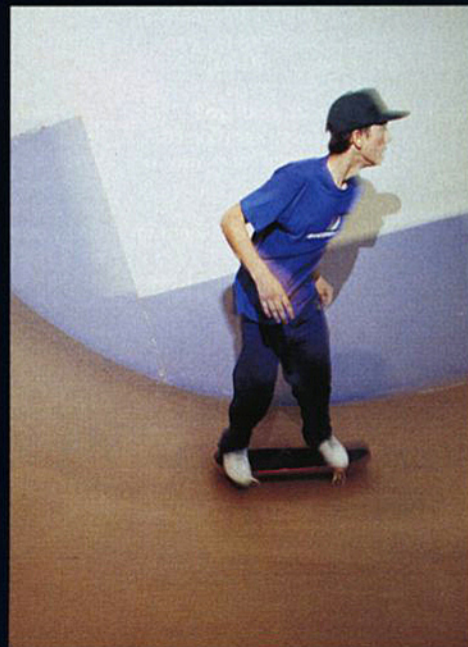
eleventh birthday. We bought it all separate—the board, the grip-tape, the wheels, the bearings, and everything—he had a workbench, and put on the rails and the noseguard and everything. He knew a lot before I even knew about skateboarding, and [even now] he probably knows more about the industry part because he reads all the *TransWorlds* and *Thrashers*.

The last time I was in Rio, he came up to me and said, "So, is so-and-so still working on this new trick?" I was like, "I don't know, Dad." [Bob laughs.] Then he's like, "He's been working on this [trick], and you gotta think about that." He's got a competitive mind, which I understand, because he's probably just proud of what I'm doing. He just wants me to do better, and that's the way he sees it.

**Does he tell you to watch out for Tony Hawk?**



**NOSEGRIND ON THE EXTENSION.**  
TOBIN PHOTOS.



**SWITCH BACKSIDE AIR.** SWIFT PHOTO.

Totally. He'll say, "Watch out for Tony Hawk," or whoever's skating really good. And I always tell him, "You know, Dad, that's not how it is. I just skate to skate and have fun, and that's it. Whatever happens is cool." I'm stoked whenever I get to talk to him about that. My dad's totally supportive. If he could, he'd be at every contest. In *Thrasher*, I remember, he was in the background of this one photo, and in the Brazil article in *Thrasher* he was in the background a lot, too. He always has to be there.

**You're dad gets more coverage than you.**

[Bob and Atiba start laughing.] Yeah.

**Did you graduate from high school?**

I took my GED here [in the U.S.]. I didn't graduate in Brazil. I went to high school until the second year—we have three years in Brazil. After those two years, I just wanted to move here. If I was in Brazil, last year would have been my last [in high school]. If I hadn't come here, I wouldn't have been able to go to Europe, and I would have missed a lot of skating. So, I decided to take my GED test and go to college here.

[Interviewer and interviewee pause for a moment.]

Oh, about my parents being supportive—my mom was always afraid of going to watch me skate. I remember when I first learned fakie ollies, I told her, "Oh Mom, I learned how to fly off the ramp and come back into it—you have to come and see it." So they all came to the skatepark, my whole

family and my grandma from the States. I padded-up and started doing fakie ollies like, "Wooooow!" I wanted to pop it so high. I just wanted to go the highest I could. So this one run I pumped the tranny, popped the hardest I could off the coping, flew, and landed flat on the flatbottom, like, "Kwah!" [He hits the table for effect.]

I just went for the fattest ollie I could have possibly made, because my grandma, my dad, my mom, and all my sisters were there. So, my mom starts screaming [Bob imitates her voice], "OH, MY BABY!" She walks out and goes home all bummed. I went home, and she says to me, "I don't want you doing that anymore." She's funny. My dad witnessed my first 540.

**Was he stoked?**

Yeah, he was stoked. I remember thinking, "I have to do it. My dad's here. I have to do it." Then I said, "Dad, Dad, check it out!" I spun it, and made it, and started screaming like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah!"

**Do you think you'll go back to school?**

Yeah I will. I don't know really what I want to do yet, but I want to start taking classes at City College. Some English classes to back-up my English and writing, because I don't think it's really the way I want it to be.

**What you do in your spare time?**

Skate. My routine changed when I moved out here, because it's just different for me. I've got to catch up. I used to mountain-bike a lot. I played baseball on a Brazilian team, too.

**Did you ever play soccer?**



**BOTTOM TO TOP—REBECCA BURNQUIST, BOB BURNQUIST, MAX SCHAAF.**  
ATIBA PHOTO.

Yeah, I played soccer in school—I played all kinds of stuff. Basketball, soccer, handball—I was always doing something.

**Is handball big there?**

The handball you guys play here is different. In Brazil there're seven dudes and a goal keeper, it's kinda like soccer, but you play it on a hard court, indoors. I [also] work out sometimes. I like to stretch ...

**[Atiba interrupts.] Getting buff?**

Not to get buff, just to make some muscles so I can take the falls.

**Have you had a lot of injuries skateboarding?**

Yeah. A lot.

**How many broken bones?**

Probably ten.

**Ten?!**

Or more. I broke my foot badly when I was nine months old. Some guy on stilts fell, and his stilt crushed my foot. Since then I've sprained both my ankles, and I broke my left one in Germany. I sprained my right ankle twice: once badly, once not so badly. I've broken my elbow five times in the same spot. I broke my left wrist and four fingers on

that hand all at the same time.

**While you were skating?**

Yeah.

**Ever break your collarbone?**

No. I got lucky—never [the] collarbone.

**You better knock on wood.**

Uhh ...

**[Atiba barks out an order.] Knock on wood!**

I don't need to knock on wood. [Laughs slyly.] If it has to happen, it will happen.

**It makes you tougher.**

Or weaker.

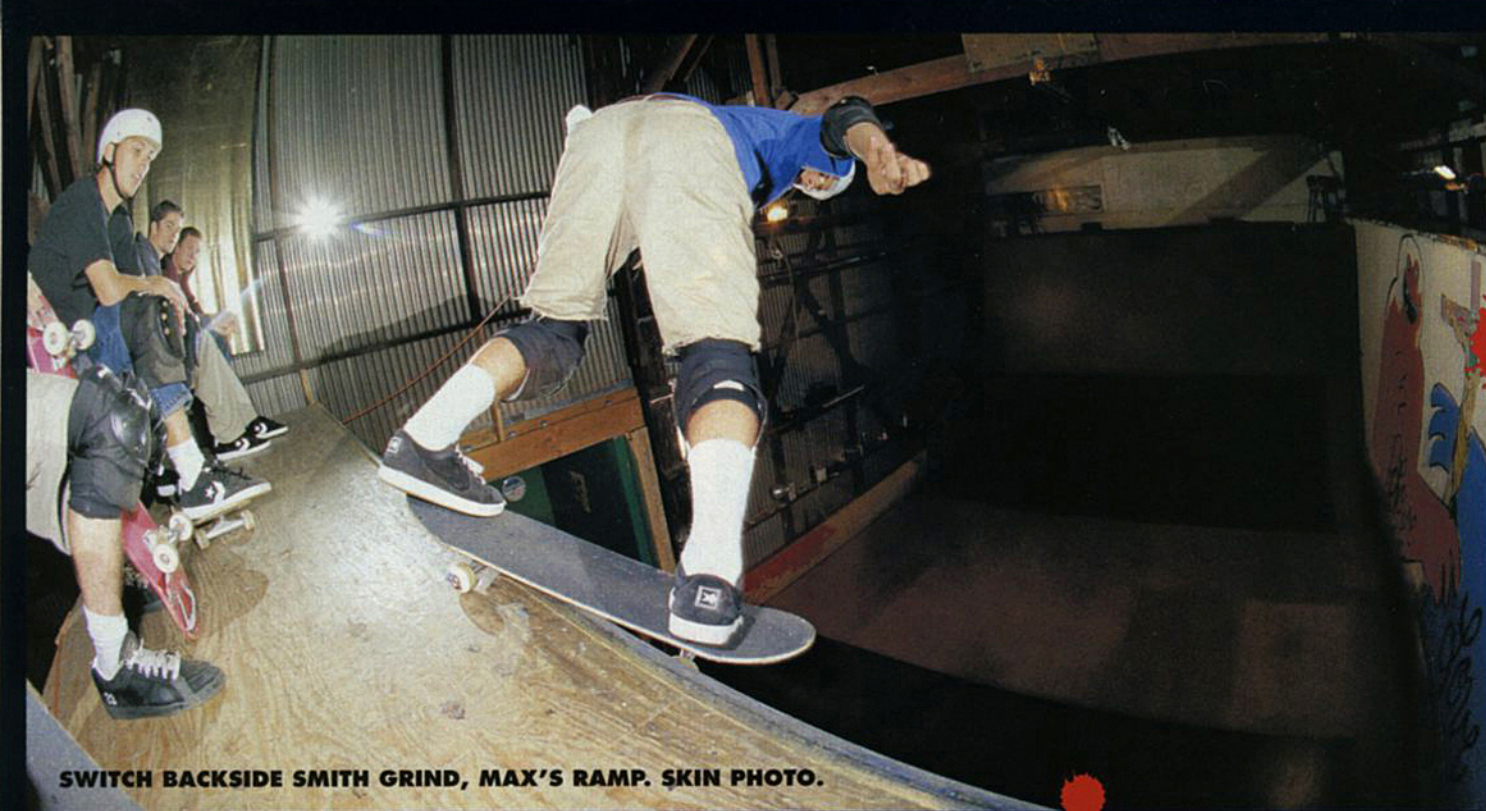
**What kind of music do you like?**

It depends on what I'm doing. If I'm about to go to sleep, I like reggae, jazz, and slow Brazilian music called MPB. I like metal and punk to skate to. I really like all types of music ... besides pop, and rave, and that crazy stuff.

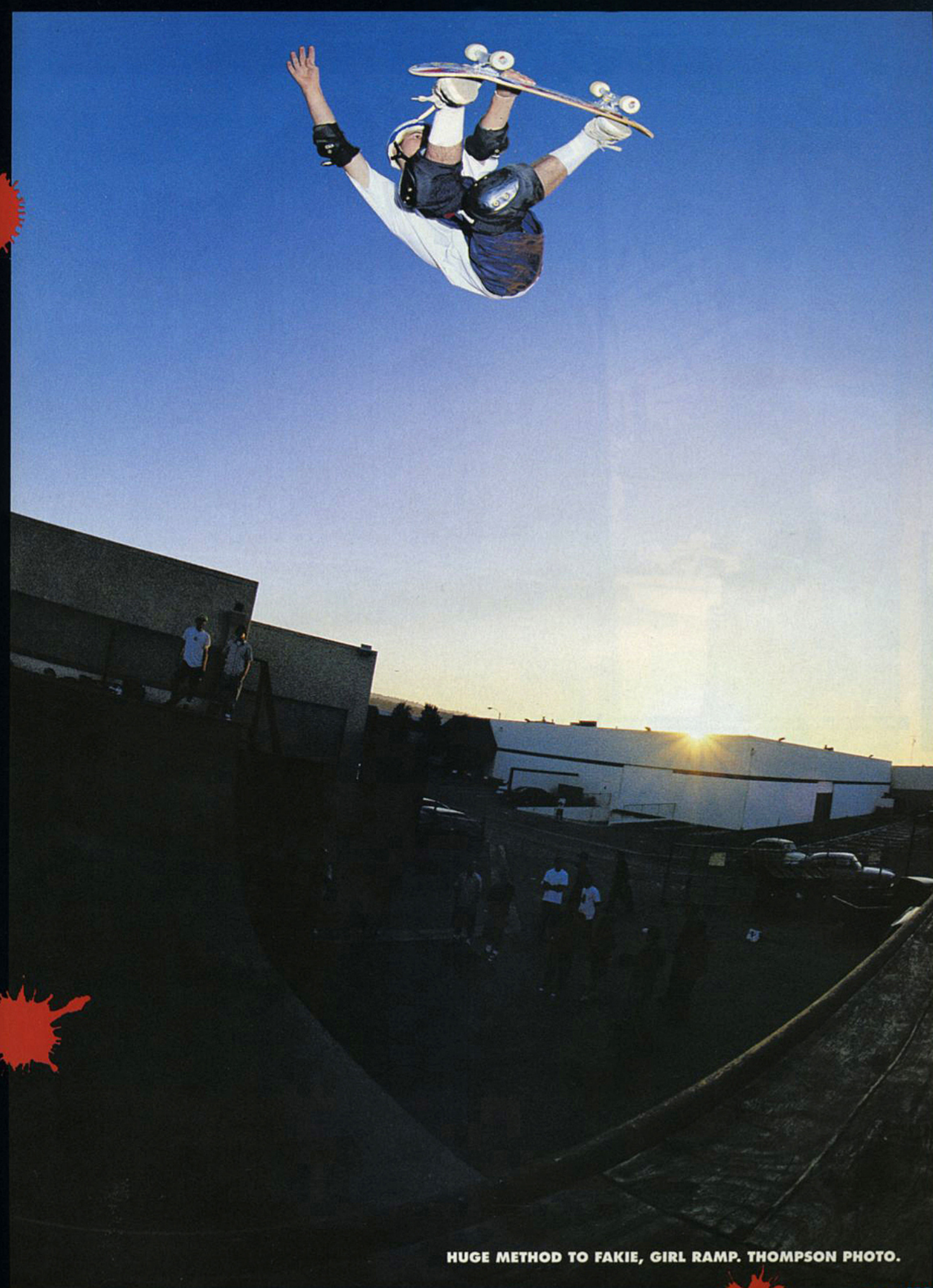
**When you go to a contest, do you have them play a certain song during your run?**

No. Actually, I probably have once or twice, but I never really think about that.

**If you did, what song would it**



SWITCH BACKSIDE SMITH GRIND, MAX'S RAMP. SKIN PHOTO.



HUGE METHOD TO FAKIE, GIRL RAMP. THOMPSON PHOTO.

be?

A Descendents' song.

**Were you stoked to see them [Bad Religion] at Board AID?**

Yeah, I was stoked! I like Bad Religion.

**What kind of food do you like?**

I like pasta, Mexican food, my mom's food—whatever she cooks. Basically, [I like] healthy, non-fat stuff.

**What's your favorite movie?**

Condorman.

**It's like an 80s movie, right?**

Yeah, I remember watching it when I was a little kid, and I rented it about a million times. I was so stoked on it.

**Who's the star?**

I don't know, dude. I think it was that guy who was *The Greatest American Hero*.

**He was Condorman?**

Yeah, yeah!

[Both start singing the theme song to *The Greatest American Hero*: "Believe it or not, I'm walkin' on air." They start laughing.]

I used to love that. I used to watch it in Portuguese [the official language of Brazil]. *Condorman* was in English because it was a pretty big movie, but whatever was on TV I saw in Portuguese. When I watch television here, sometimes I see cartoons that I remember from back when I was a little kid. They're speaking English, and I'm like, "Wow! That's not right." Because I have the voices in my head, and they're Portuguese.

**When did you learn to speak English?**

At the same time I learned to speak Portuguese. When I was learning [to speak], everything had two words: table—mesa. I had to speak English with my dad and Portuguese with my mom. So, when I was talking with my mom I learned to think in Portuguese, and with my dad I thought in



BACKSIDE OLLIE IN BOB'S HOMELAND. ATIBA PHOTO.

English.

**Where do you picture yourself in the year 2000?**

I'll have a house in the country with a ramp in the backyard.

**In the U.S.?**

Yeah, but not in a big city. Just mellow—in the woods. Escape. [Bob goes from mellow to screaming.] ESCAPE!

**Do you consider yourself a vert or street skater?**

[Brief pause.] I consider myself a skater. I'll skate whatever, but I do like skating vert more.

**Do you see a lot of kids coming up like you, Colin [McKay], and Danny [Way] as more well-rounded skaters?**

Yeah, but I think vert skating takes a lot of time. Not generalizing—because there could be a wonder kid who always skated street, then in two years would be the raddest vert skater, you never know—but I think that you really have to want to vert skate, not just do it because everyone else does it.

**It's probably harder to stay dedicated to vert skating.**

Yeah. You've gotta start when you're young, and then street skating just comes with skateboarding.

**Who were the first American pros you ever saw in Brazil?**

Sergie [Ventura] and Christian [Hosoi].

**Did you ever think you'd be skating with those guys?**

No dude. I never did. Sometimes I trip out, I look at Sergie and I remember being in the crowd, and those dudes skating, and me [screaming], "YEAH-HHHHH! Oh my god, that's incredible!" I was a little kid, and I didn't have a good view of the ramp or anything, all I could see were these dudes flying. I remember in Vancouver [Slam City Jam Contest], Sergie came up to me, and he was all, "Dude, you can take

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# BOB BURNQUIST

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 128

it." I was just in Vancouver to skate, but Sergie brought up my confidence. I was stoked. Thanks, Sergie.

### Who's your favorite skater?

I have a whole bunch. I like Colin [McKay]. I like [Mike] Frazier a lot. I like skating with Max [Schaaf] a lot—he's really smooth. I like Julien [Stranger], John Cardiel—just the way he skates, dude. An amperguy, he's always amped. I get stoked when I'm around him, because he's always enthusiastic. I like to see [Eric] Koston skate, and [Mike] Carroll—full board control. Chris Senn charging whatever he wants. Wade Speyer. Phil Shao. F\*\*\*, there're so many people. The list could go on and on.

### Who was your idol when you were young?

Danny Way was my idol; he still is. Did you have photos of him up on your wall?

Yeah, dude! [Bob sounds insulted that Atiba would even ask.] I used to try blunts just because Danny did them.

### When vert skating was on the down-low in the U.S. a couple years ago, was it the same in Brazil?

Yeah. I don't know what happened. I can't see it fading away here, because you have wooden parks, you have the money to do it—why would it go away? But in Brazil, skateboarding as a whole kind of disappeared. The skatepark that I used to skate in—the Ultra Skatepark—was gone. My friend's dad sold it, or rented it, or something. That was the only wooden skatepark—that's where I grew up and started skating wood. After that there was a cement skatepark called Prestige; it was the only thing we had to skate, and compared to the Ultra Skatepark, Prestige was shit, dude. It was tight, full of kinks, the coping was small, it didn't have enough bonk, it made me feel like, "F\*\*\*!"

I loved to skate Ultra, because I just loved doing airs, and it was a big tranny ramp that was perfect for airs. To skate Prestige you had to skate street-vert. You had to pop your tail on every air. The kinks and the cement made it so when you took a slam you were like, "Ahhh, duude!" You're out—no more skating that day. I got bummed and stopped skating vert for like three or four months. I was just street skating, because I didn't want to kill myself skating that cement thing.

Then Digo [Rodrigo Menezes] started skating—he was a downhill skater first. He started at Prestige, so he always skated cement. You know, he didn't care, he was skating by himself, every day, and was still having fun. So, I started skating again, it was just him and me every day. Then, gradually a whole bunch of people started skating again. That was it—it was like, "This is what we've got, let's deal with it and build something in the future."

### Did you ever learn pressure flips?

Yeah, I used to love them.

### On vert?

On vert? No. Maybe once, I can't remember. I remember doing nollie front-foot flips.

### Did you grab?

No.

### Did you film it?

No. I had almost no control at all; it was a lucky trick. You just hit it, and land it. [Laughter.] When you finally do it, you're like, "YEAHHH!" That's it.

### Have you ever invented a trick?

I don't know if I've ever invented anything that's never been done before, but I remember this one trick I did that I'd never

done, and I'd never seen anyone do it. This was in Brazil in about 1989, and I didn't look at mags or anything, I just skated. I was at the park, and this guy wanted to shoot a sequence of me for *Overall* skate magazine. I wanted to do something crazy because it was a sequence and shit, so I came up with an ollie body varial. So you come up regular, go for an ollie to fakie, ollie, then in the air turn your body.

### But no grab, right?

Yeah, no grab. Just get the board back on your feet again and come back in like you did a fakie ollie.

### What did the guy call it in the magazine?

The dude ended up calling it Bob Switch-stance. [Both chuckle.]

### Do you follow a certain religion?

My mom is really spiritual. [Thoughtful pause.] I believe in god, but I believe in god as a higher level of yourself. You're your own god in the highest level. Someone who guides your higher self. That's what I believe in.

### Have you given any autographs yet?

I did, dude, in Vancouver, and it was rad.

### You wouldn't tell a kid to beat it, would you?

No. Not even.

### Are you going on tour this summer to do demos and stuff?

Yeah, we probably are. In Brazil I did demos ... for free. [Laughs slyly.] It was the boys from São Paulo. YOOOWWWW! The Ultra Boys—that's what we were called.

### Who?

Me, Cristiano, Valtinho, Renatinho, Marcilio. We were the Ultra Boys [he laughs]. What was the hardest trick you've ever landed?

[Bob pauses to think.] Probably an ollie 540.

### Did it take you days, or did you get it quick?

It took a long time—not days, though. Months. But it's not like all I did was ollie 540s for months or something. Ollie 540, ollie 540. I'd try them at the end of sessions.

### Have you ever filmed for a video part other than the anti-hero video [F\*\*\*tards]?

Yeah, I had a little part in *Silly Society*, my friend's video. That was my first video part. F\*\*\*tards wasn't really a video part, it was all our video part. Now, I have a Pro File coming out in 411. We just finished filming, and now they're editing.

### Do you like riding for anti-hero?

F\*\*\* yeah! When I first came here it was the Fourth of July, and there was a party at Jake's [Phelps] ramp—the Widowmaker—and I was just skating there with a whole bunch of other people. Tommy Guerrero showed up, and I was really stoked that he was there ...

### Who flew you over here?

Myself. I just came out on vacation. Okay, let me tell you the whole story. Jake [Phelps], Joey [Tershay], Julien [Stranger], and John [Cardiel]—the four Js—went to Brazil in March of 1994. They just went down there and hooked up with Bruno and the *Tribo* guys. I met them down there and traveled around skating with them. I was stoked. I went everywhere they went. I got Joey's phone number and address [in the States], and I told my dad I wanted to go up and skate. I asked if he'd send me and pay because I didn't have any money. He let me go, so I called up Joey and he said I could stay at his house, so I came

over to stay at Joey's for a month.

I got here on the Fourth. Tommy called me up after the party and told me that if I wanted to grab some boards and stuff, to come by Deluxe [Distribution]. I was stoked. He gave me a box [of product] that I took with me back to Brazil to skate on. Then I came back in December, and that's when the anti-hero thing came up. Julien wanted to start a company, and John wanted to be a part, so he quit Black Label. The anti-hero thing was definitely happening, and they said they wanted me to ride for them. I really wanted to do it. It's anti-hero forever.

### It's nice to see someone stick with a company through thick and thin. You don't see that much these days. What's the Dreamer's Workbook?

It's something I bought 'cause I went to this psychic fair—I'm really into that shit. Really?

Yeah.

### You don't call the Psychic Friends Network do you?

No. Not even. I'm just into mind stuff and dreams. I believe in fate, that your destiny is already traced before you're born. If you take the wrong turns, you'll go into another fate. Like, there's not just one fate. There're side roads, and once you chose one, you cannot just go back to the main road. That's how people get messed up—they had a turning point and they F\*\*\*ed up.

### So you control your own fate?

Yeah. You have to listen to yourself to make the right decisions, and the way to make those decisions is to try to interpret dreams. Dreams are trying to tell you what's going on. I remember—this is a long time ago—dreaming of coming to the United States, meeting Chris Livingston, and being good friends with him. It was a really clear dream—I can remember it now. It doesn't mean it will be exactly how you dreamed it. How I see it, Max [Schaaf] replaced Chris Livingston in real life. You have to interpret dreams. I've been writing down dreams—I have a dream diary—and I read it and think about what happened and what it means.

### [Is that] so you can go back and analyze it?

Yeah. The other day I had a dream that I was on a lift going up a mountain to go snowboarding, and this chick was skiing—she was beautiful, and I didn't even want to look at her because I'd fall in love like that [snaps his fingers]. So, I didn't want to talk to her, and she was like, "Why are you like that? Why are you so shy? Blah, blah, blah." Then she grabs me, kisses me, and says, "Why don't you go to school?" Then I woke up. It was weird, dude.

Is there anything offhand that you could think of, so you could have it in your interview, anything you might be able to predict for the future? [Atiba tries to hold back laughter, while Bob answers very seriously.] Naw. No, no. [He tries to think of something for a second.] No. You'll only know something after it happens.

### Déjà vu.

What?

### Do you ever wear striped socks?

No.

### Do you like stripes?

Yeah, I like matching colors. I like matching shoes with socks when I'm skating vert.

### Do you ever match shoes with boards?

Yeah, I did for that Spitfire photo. Green board with green wheels, green T-shirt,

and I had green hair, but it didn't really show. I like doing stuff like that.

### Do you think of yourself as a pretty-boy?

No. I'm pretty clean, but I'm not paranoid with it.

### Being a pro, do you feel pressure?

No.

### Contests, people watching you, expecting things from you?

No. I don't. Should I? Good question. I'm serious and professional when I need to be.

### Do you have any good-luck charms or habits that you use during contests?

Yeah. I try to touch my necklace a lot. I like to have something to hold onto before my runs. It helps with confidence, you know.

### Do you ever get mad and focus boards?

Focus means break?

Yeah.

No. I did when I was a kid, and it was cool, once or twice. If you break boards on purpose, you're an idiot, you're wasting wood. [Atiba laughs, Bob doesn't.]

### Do you have a girlfriend?

Nope. Never have.

### [Sarcastically] You've never had a girlfriend?

I'm serious, dude. I've never had one. I really liked and stayed with for a year, at least.

### What was the longest you ever kicked it with the same girl?

A month.

### Shut the f\*\*\* up!

I swear to god!

### What about that girl in Brazil?

What, that one chick? I've known her a long time, but I haven't found a girl yet that I want to be with for a long time.

### Have you met any girls here?

Yeah. But none I fell in love with.

### So, you don't see yourself getting married and having kids?

Yeah, I do.

### Where do you see yourself in the future?

In skateboarding, of course. What kind of question is that?

### Is there anyone you'd like to acknowledge?

Yeah. My family from Brazil and the United States—Mom, Dad, Milena, and Rebecca. Everyone who's crossed, or walked with me on my path through life. Skateboarding. Ueda, Sergio Negaõ, Mauro Mureta, Marcelo e Mauricio. Jorge Kuge, Danny Way, Colin McKay, Jason Jesse, Mark Gonzales, thanks for making a difference. Daniel Pihanha e a Galtera do Rio De Janeiro. Pinguim e os mano de São Paulo. Zona Norte! *Tribo* magazine for keeping skateboarding alive in Brazil. César Gyraõ, Bolotinha e os Raça Ruim. Thronn e Logico. The four Js—Jake, John, Julien, and Joey. A lot of respect goes out to Jake Phelps for being who he is, and for what he's done for me and skateboarding. Julien Stranger, the heart of anti-hero. The Deluxe crew. To Max Schaaf, what more can I say than, "Thank you, friend." Dave Swift and Atiba Jefferson for making this interview possible. Sole Technologies. Don Brown. Steve Black. Yeah! The Ultra Boys, where it all began. I love you all! É isso aí BRASIL!

### That's it?

Yep.

### That's weak. [Both laugh. Tape recorder shuts off.]