



IN HIS OWN WORDS
**BRIAN
SHORT**

**DOUBLE
LIFE**

FOREWORD BY DAVID EAGLE

Brian Short got our attention when we noticed that his lap times weren't too far off from some of the AMA Pros who frequent Chuckwalla. It's not every day that you find a guy who can win in the courtroom and on the racetrack. As a character-based magazine, we're always looking for interesting stories and, if you race at Chuckwalla, you might end up in your own NMC article. One day, you'll be reading about Brian Short, the next day you might be racing against him. For a peek behind the curtain of his double life, we bring you Brian Short.

The February round of racing at Chuckwalla Valley Raceway was this past weekend, and I was barely leading the points in the Middleweight classes. Unfortunately, I was scheduled to attend a court hearing more than 500 miles away on the Friday prior to the races, and there were no flights that would allow me to get back to the track in time to make the starting grids. The hearing was to allow a judge to determine whether he was going to grant approval of a large settlement that I had been working on for more than a year. Luckily, Aimee and Mickey Grana, the track owners, were gracious enough to let me to use their office and appear telephonically from the track--albeit, it was a risky proposition because judges are notorious for demanding zero background noise if attorneys appear by phone.



So, there I was at 9:00 AM on a Friday, sitting with my legal documents in front of me in the track's front office. The track was going hot in 30 minutes, and I was stuck on the telephone speaking with the judge and some hotshot defense attorney who was billing by the hour and making me late for practice. I finally managed to wrap things up and get the court's approval to the settlement just in time to get my bike through tech inspection and make the third practice session. Then, I had just a short amount of time to start experimenting with front spring rates on a bike that I had never ridden at Chuckwalla. It was just one of the many little hurdles I've encountered while trying to juggle a career as an attorney and my hobby as a racer.

I started riding motorcycles relatively late compared with most of the kids shooting around the racetrack on 600s. I bought my first road bike when I was 24 and in my last year of law school. Within two weeks of buying the bike, I had the unfortunate experience of letting my ego toss the bike down the road and directly into a guardrail. I was riding with a group of friends, and I decided to prove to myself that I could drag my knee just as well as the girl who I had met the week before and who I had watched flying down the Southern California twisties on her FZR600.

The girl just happened to be future AMA Pro Melissa Paris who, after she finished laughing at me, would help convince me to get off the street and onto the racetrack.

As a first-year lawyer at a big firm, I was stuck in my office doing grunt work for long hours, and I didn't have much time to race, but I did go to the occasional track day and intermittent races whenever I could convince the partners to unleash me. Without any consistency in a race program or much track time, I ended up progressing very slowly and, eventually, a bad race accident put me out of commission for a few years.

By the time I started racing again a couple of years ago, I was one of the more senior attorneys at my firm, and I had more flexibility to set my own schedule. However, even to this day,

trying to make it to each event and contend for the points championship is difficult, and it means bringing my race schedule into court along with my trial calendar to try to convince the judge to schedule hearings around race dates (shhhh!). One of the drawbacks of being the senior attorney on my cases also means that I absolutely must be able to get to the courtroom on Mondays after the race weekend...putting a damper on my ability to go out and bang handlebars with the rest of the young, brave, and ambitious kids racing middleweight bikes. My answer has been to do my best to race smarter rather than harder.

In the past few months, I've put more thought into how I prepare for races and, in doing so, I've alleviated myself of the need to rely so much on bravado to get me running up in front of the pack. I've been fortunate enough to work with Jason Pridmore and Dale Kieffer as riding coaches, and they have brought me back to square one with learning proper riding technique and, most importantly, patience. I've also started working with Randy Acevedo at InHouse Suspension, who is somehow able to decipher my nonsensical comments about what the bike is doing in a corner and work his black magic on the knobs.

As a result, this season, I've not only dropped 5-6 seconds per lap and won my first expert middleweight race (followed by seven more wins and seven podiums), I've also felt a lot more comfortable and confident as a rider. I'm learning a lot by racing up front with AMA regulars such as Benny Solis, Jake Zemke, J.D. Beach, and Jake Gagne. At 33 years old, and with a successful law practice, I don't have any ambition to race for anything more than the thrill of being a weekend warrior. Nevertheless, most weekdays, I still have to fight to keep myself from daydreaming about my next race weekend in-between writing legal briefs or while waiting for the judge to call my case in the courtroom.

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