

DEUCE OF SPADES



A star is born...

From Greg Stokes

Courtesy Faith – Independent film maker

The sun was setting on El Mirage dry lake and the endless sky was slowly turning to gold. It was a sight that could take your breath away... As I watched I wondered what could possibly top that. And then it happened. I heard the roar of the engine and when I looked up I saw the black roadster in the distance. The amber trail of dust it left behind made it hard to see clearly but I swear I saw the white numbers "32c" painted on its flanks. And the "J.C" initials. And that's when I realized I actually was in the presence of the Deuce of Spades. It sped across the lake and disappeared on the horizon, like a ghost from the past... And then it was gone.

Minutes later owner Faith Granger, still at the wheel of the 1932 Hiboy, pulled up next to me and turned the ignition off.

"So you wanted to take a closer look at the Deuce of Spades?" she said.

"Well, here it is."

The youthful looking woman (in her late thirties, I assumed) had a huge smile on her face. And if I owned the Deuce of Spades, I would, too.

"J.C stands for Johnny Callaway."



She explained. "Johnny is the main character in this hot rod movie I am making and this was his roadster back in 1953. It was the fastest roadster in the LA area and was called the Deuce of Spades because of the spade painted inside its horn button." Faith pointed to the custom horn button she designed and made especially for the movie. "We just shot a flashback scene yesterday right here on the lake, it was something! Old roadsters and coupes lined up at the start line to do their run, 50s hot rodders doing their thing, waiting for their turn to race, working on their cars... It was quite a

sight! Spectators gathered to watch or take photos...Right now the deuce has its windshield pulled off and is set up for dry lake racing."

"Tell me about your roadster" I asked

"Well, the car originated from Minnesota and was first hot rodded in the seventies. It had humble beginnings, but eventually made it to Wisconsin and then California where I discovered it, about a year ago, a little diamond still in the rough. It was still primer black and had never yet been repainted. It ran strong though and I fell in love with all its old school

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features, such as the guide headlights, authentic Buick finned drums, original 4-inch drop-down axle, nostalgic interior and especially its '54 Chevy steering wheel. The roadster was understated, classy and old school, not a single billet item on it, exactly what I wanted."

Faith's polka dot black dress, reminiscent of the late 40s early 50s, kept flying in the wind and I could not help but notice that she had long legs. The kind of legs that look good next to a 32 roadster. I also noticed she was wearing original 1940s black suede baby doll shoes. She even caught me staring at them.

"Yes, they are real. I have a collection of vintage clothes from the thirties, forties and fifties. I am a Lindy Hopper you see, so I go swing dancing and I like to wear vintage. I have been in love with old cars all my life but finally I decided it was time to buy one. So I started saving money.

I'm not a rich girl so it took a lot of saving before I was able to get my dream car. And now I finally have it. I actively looked for a long time but I



never gave up on finding it. I love this deuce more than anything. Each time I work on it or fix something on it or improve it, I bond with it a little more. I really enjoy rolling up my sleeves, pulling out the tool box and getting dirty. I'd be lying if I said I was an expert, I'm not. I'm just learning like

the rest of us but I am so into my hot rod I am learning fast! When time came to paint it I insisted on doing the bodywork myself. That was a lot of sanding! I think I sanded for three weeks straight, so much so I sanded my thumbnail right into the flesh and by the time I realised it, it was too late. I even mixed the primer and the paint and clear coat myself... Did run into a lot of challenging problems though. I now have a new-found respect for people who paint cars for a living!"

The roadster has been painted jet black with some shine to it but not fully glossy. "Black with a red grille, that's my favourite hiboy colour" Faith said.

"Why a 1932 Ford roadster?" I asked "You're kidding right? Look at it! The car is an American hot rod icon. I could not think of any other hot rod I would want more. You have never seen a sunset until you have seen one while driving a deuce roadster across a dry lake, with no windshield.

I am a Lindy Hopper you see, so I go swing dancing and I like to wear vintage.



It is quite an experience.”

“Tell me about your movie... How did you become a film maker?”

“By accident and by necessity. I first started by making a one-hour short film entitled “Last of the Hiboy Girls” in which I shared my experience as a woman ‘32 Ford roadster owner and also honoured some of the Hiboy girls of the past such as Veda Orr... I had so much fun doing it that I suddenly had this crazy idea: “Wouldn’t it be cool to make a “do-it-yourself” full feature film one day?”. I already knew what the film would be about: Well, hot rods of course! Old school hot rods. No one had made a real hot rod movie for ages and it seemed no one was stepping up to the plate either. So I did. I started thinking about a great hot rod story and next thing I know I am writing the script, casting, scouting for locations, lining up cars, extras, wardrobe, music, artwork... I knew I wanted to make the film myself with as little help as possible, basically it is a challenge I have set for myself: “How much can one hot rod girl accomplish?”. I took a small loan and purchased better filming gear and started filming a few months ago. I have been receiving an overwhelming amount of support from all the hot rodders in Southern California, contributing with their gorgeous cars,



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vintage motorcycles, etc, etc... Jim Miller, curator for the Hot Rod foundation has been helping with the historical aspect of the movie, to ensure its accuracy. He has been a great support all along, stepping behind the camera to help with filming whenever necessary. Legendary hot rodders from the era have accepted cameo parts in the film. I also have the support of my swing dancing community, and am honoured to have some of the world top Lindy Hopper and swing dancers in my film.



The soundtrack is also going to be strong and I have the contribution of many great swing, rock and rockabilly bands in the U.S.. All of this on a ZERO budget.

“How were you able to pull it off?”

“Because I have been so actively involved in the hotrod scene here in L.A for the past 12 months, driving my car everywhere, all the time, rain or shine, everybody knows me and I have made so many friends... When they heard about my project they were all excited about it and wanted to become involved. And I could never pull it off without everybody’s help, so I am very grateful. I think what also helps is that I am producing, directing, filming, acting, editing and scoring the film myself. So the film will retain its artistic integrity and truly be my vision. The movie takes place in 2007 but includes many flashbacks to 1955. It is a drama with a great story, very touching and inspiring, that promises to tug on your heart strings pretty hard. I am really very excited about this project”

“When will we be able to see the film?”

“I just started filming and it takes about a good year or two to complete a film, so we are probably looking at 2009? But who knows? I’ve been known to work fast! Which reminds me, I have to prepare for a shoot, so I must run...”

We said our goodbyes and she hopped back in her roadster. Instants later she was nothing more but a trail of gold dust on the horizon... And for a moment I wondered whether I had dreamt it all... The girl, the long legs, the old school roadster, the upcoming hot rod movie... But then I looked at my hand and saw the business card she had left in it, and right there and then I knew it was all real. And so I drove away with a big smile on my face.

For more information on the movie ‘Deuce of Spades’, please visit the website at www.deuceofspadesmovie.com