



"THE CRASH" (a true story)

Written by Evan R. Gillins, "The Crashee" (that's me on the left- small dune jump)
I am Owner and Chief Appraiser of Gillins Appraisal, Inc. (my cool logo on the right)



Introduction- "My Message"

Before I say (or write) anything, I need to assure everyone that I am doing fine, and that Gillins Appraisal, Inc. is still strong and fully functional, ready and able to perform all appraisal needs. With my extensively experienced staff, and myself (Evan) still at the helm, we have not missed a beat, nor will we falter in the future. We have had blips for a few days here and there (when I have been hospitalized for four separate surgeries), but my appraisal business is still going strong, and we are now in "full steam ahead" mode.

Although I jokingly refer to myself often as "The Appraiser Dude", after this incident, most of my family, and many of my friends, have begun to call me "**CRASH**". Here's the story: Many have heard that I have recently been seriously injured in an accident, which is very true. On July 17, 2009, I sustained a major leg fracture, which I will go into detail about later, for those who are interested. As word has spread that I have been injured, I've been hearing that some innocent rumors (or minor detail errors) have also begun going around. Since little unchecked rumors can sometimes grow into huge monsters that cause serious personal, business, and financial damage, I have written this letter in order to minimize as many misconceptions as possible. And in response to numerous inquiries as to what really happened, I will describe the whole event. Although there are some uncomfortable parts, there are also some humorous (worth reading for the laughs) parts.

I do take life very seriously. For those who have had the opportunity to participate in "The Zebras" section of one of my recent seminars, you understand my firm convictions about having a positive outlook in every situation. You also know that I believe in the "Power of Attraction," which in simple terms, states "You will draw to you the things you think about most, be it good or bad, it WILL come to you." Although I realize that the details of my off-road vehicle accident may be of little interest to some, the primary reason that I have chosen to write about it in such detail is to help "me" focus on the good in life, and to help "me" focus on what I must now do to heal, and become a better human being in the process. If even one other person receives a little hope or inspiration from this, it is a bonus. (Wow, I got really deep and emotional there for a second).

I am a strong believer in working hard, but I also believe in enjoying life to the fullest, with lots of fun, activities, good humor, and an abundance of laughter, for it's a known fact that "laughter heals many emotional and physical wounds." So if you have no need for some good laughs, mixed with some serious stuff, read no further, for I have already delivered the message, from deep within my heart, which I wanted to share.

"THE CRASH"

Chapter One- "The Actual Crash"

Whenever I ride, I wear full protective gear which includes riding pants full of protective pads, a vented jersey, chest, back, & shoulder protectors, knee and elbow pads, high quality riding boots, padded gloves, and a special order XXXL helmet. All this is 100% color coordinated in royal blue with white highlights. The saying- "The better you look, the better you ride" is true, just like chrome on a Harley (I'll bet you can guess how much chrome is on my Harley). I always wear all of this gear because I often ride to the limit of my abilities. To help in understanding what "riding to the limit of my abilities" means, the "limit" is the point when I sometimes crash. The full protective riding gear helps the crashes not hurt----well, not hurt so much.

We were at The Oceano Sand Dunes in Pismo Beach. I was teaching my family doctor, his girlfriend, and their four teenagers, how to ride four wheelers, aka “quads.” (Are you sensing the irony yet?- “riding with my doctor”) We were about 15 minutes into the dunes, and passing through an area I was familiar with. I had just been riding in that exact spot only four weeks earlier – around mile marker #18 - with some of my kids, so I knew the terrain very well, or at least I thought I knew the terrain well. I was rushing ahead (about 45 MPH according to the surgeon who assessed the bone damage), so that I could make sure that none of these “newbies” would get injured by falling off one of those cliff dunes that are invisible until you are about 10 feet away (the steep ones that can form within a single windy week). I found one of these cliffs really fast, but I didn’t fall in, I FLEW IN. I had heard numerous stories about severe chest, back, and neck injuries caused by riders braking hard (which causes a nose dive), or from jumping off their bikes, so I punched the gas hard (to lift the nose) and did everything I could to land the bike on all 4 wheels, which I somehow did (to my own amazement). I wish I had it all on video, it would have been a YouTube sensation.

As I lay there on the sand, trying to sort out what had just happened, it looked to me like about a 20 foot vertical drop, and I thought maybe I had travelled about 60 feet horizontally before I landed! That means that I was in the air for about 65 feet! (I didn’t actually take the time to measure, and even though I had just been seriously injured, in my own little dazed mind I was pretty sure my estimates were close- After all, I measure stuff for a living.) BUT HOW COOL WAS THAT? Several days after I got home from the hospital, I remembered that I had my GPS in my pack when I was riding that fateful morning. I often carry my GPS so that I can know exactly where all the good places I had previously found in the dunes are located. (Right. Nerdy.) So I downloaded the specific data at “the crash” site, and realized that the exact figures were somewhat different (way different) from my estimates. According to the GPS data (which is accurate to within 2 feet), I was moving at 48 MPH at launch, the elevation change from the take off point to landing was 30 feet, the horizontal travel distance before ground contact was 115 feet, and at touchdown I bounced off my quad and stopped after flying—rolling—bouncing (I don’t really remember anything after the bounce) another 30 feet. Based on the trajectory calculations, the true travel distance measured 130 feet, and I was flying through the air like a birdie (more like falling to the ground like a rock) for a full 2.53 seconds (it seemed like an eternity at the time). NOT SO COOL ANYMORE. After realizing what had really happened, I am thankful to have only a broken leg, and am humbly grateful to be alive. (Wow, I started getting really serious there again. Okay, moving on).

Unfortunately, as squarely as I landed, and even with my super cool, color coordinated gear, I hit really hard, so hard that my left leg couldn’t withstand the impact. I have what they call an impact fracture, which is an actual cone type splintering of the tibia (the big lower leg bone) from the ankle upward (about 7 inches) as a result of the blunt force impact. That other little lower leg bone snapped like a trig. But don’t you worry, my bike (**Yamaha 350cc “Banshee”, the only two stroke, dual piston, dual carbureted, quad ever manufactured. This one has been modified to be a high performance “Super Quad”, is trimmed in Special Edition Black, and is The Most Radical Quad on the Planet**) If you can’t tell, I really like my bike. (Since I got a little carried away, I’ll start that sentence again) But don’t you worry, my bike (which is a good bike) survived with only bent handlebars. I am even so macho (or so knuckleheaded- you decide. But you should probably lean towards “knucklehead”), that I actually rode the bike back to camp, I really did! (probably because I was already beginning to go into shock). I am pretty sure that riding the quad back is the reason why my buddy might not have thought it was very serious (yet), until I got off my bike, took my first step (or tried to), and fell flat on my face in the sand. My eyes then tried to roll back in my head, and began watering really bad. Since it’s really not so cool for a macho man like me to cry because of pain, my eyes must have been watering from getting sand in them, or something. Maybe my water bottle spilled on my face? (To tell you the truth, I believe a “real man” is not afraid to express his emotions, or pain, with tears).

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Chapter Two- “The Emergency Room”

The drive to the emergency room was rather interesting. Being an Eagle Scout and a BSA Scout leader who is well trained in First Aid, I understood all of the signs of a person going into shock. I thought it would be helpful if I told my buddy when each of the signs of shock kicked in. He, being a doctor and all, agreed and then told me that talking too much was also one of the signs of shock. I wonder why he said that....? I was pushed into the emergency room in a wheelchair. It was amazing to me what happened next. As soon as my friend told the intake

lady that he was my primary care physician, I saw things that I didn't think happened in emergency rooms- I was admitted immediately (even before filling out any paperwork), and the red carpet treatment began. The music started, and two lovely ladies started talking to me softly as they gently took off my clothes, and they were touching me almost everywhere.....FOR REAL. *At least that is the way I saw it,.....at first.* Actually, what I was told really happened is that while my vitals were being checked, my heart rate shot up to about 200 beats per minute, my blood pressure shot through the roof, I got super dizzy- almost falling out of my chair, and my ears started ringing ("the music"), all sure signs of severe shock, which I am sure I had been slipping into since the wipe out.

Actually, there were two RNs working on me, pushing and prodding me all over (where did those lovely, gentle ladies go?), checking for injuries that may not have been obvious at first,.....and they were talking really loud (I guess in case I was deaf or something, telling me how to move, and they kept saying "Does that hurt? Does that hurt?" and they weren't being very gentle,..... and I couldn't really see their faces, but I could see their hands, and they both had wedding rings on. At the time I couldn't keep from wondering if they were both really mad at their husbands that day, and were, in some sort of demented way, using me as proxy for the hurt they wished they could inflict on their husbands. From my fuzzy perspective, I think they enjoyed watching me wince or cry every time they found a sore spot (Macho man me got watery eyeduh.... only a few times, or maybe more). The RNs were moving fast for obvious reasons, and talking loudly and directly because they say I began to be a bit unresponsive. I still think they were mad at their husbands and were enjoying the whole thing. The attending physician at the emergency room, who sees countless dunes accident survivors (and in his words some 'non-survivors') was surprised at the relatively few injuries I had. When the emergency room experience was over, and all was said and done, I was actually in and out of the hospital, with printed x-rays and pain meds in hand, and a appointment for reconstructive surgery in Lancaster (scheduled for first thing Monday morning), in less than about an hour and a half.

There are numerous factors for which I am thankful. If not for my 100% color coordinated protective riding gear, particularly the riding boots that limited the leg injury from being far more severe, and if not for my amazing riding abilities (Again – you decide. True? Or not? But you should probably lean towards the "not"), then.....

"THE CRASH"

Chapter Three- "From My Heart"

At this point I am going to put all joking aside, and speak from my heart. I do recognize the watchful protection of my Creator. Because of this, I am able to write about this "miracle" of having only a fractured leg. I firmly believe, after reviewing all of the facts and figures, that only divine intervention could have kept this situation from ending with ----(I'll just leave this part for you to fill in). I am sure there is a reason I was protected. My simply hope and prayer is that I will be able to accomplish whatever mission it is I was protected for, however great or small, so that I may express my sincere gratitude by doing so.

This incident has caused me to be more thankful for each day I have. My gratitude for being alive and kicking (well maybe not kicking, because kicking really hurts my leg right now) has been renewed. As a reminder to be grateful, for the past couple of years I have carried a small rock in my pocket, in the same pocket as my keys. I call it "My Gratitude Rock". Every time I see it or feel it in my pocket, I am reminded to think of the things for which I am most grateful. (You want more insight on "The Gratitude Rock", or even to get one of your own? Ask me any time.) For me, just being alive and alert is at the top of my "grateful" list.

Respectfully and Thankfully,

Evan R. Gillins

"The Appraiser Dude" or "Crash" (Whichever. You decide)