

# On Any Sunday: The Next Chapter

By Wes Fleming #87301

**IN 1971, STEVE MCQUEEN WAS AT** the height of his popularity. He'd been in a string of fantastic movies, including *Bullitt*, *The Thomas Crown Affair*, *The Sand Pebbles*, and *The Great Escape* in the previous ten years. *Le Mans* came out in 1971, but for motorcyclists, the movie that cemented McQueen in their consciousness wasn't a lush Hollywood extravaganza, it was a documentary called *On Any Sunday*.

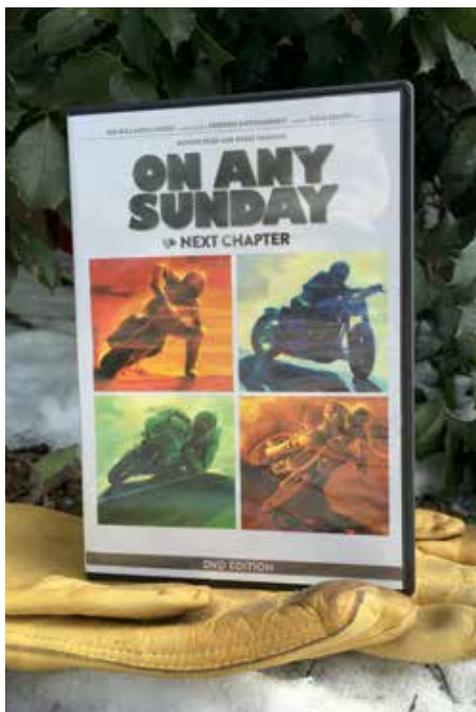
*On Any Sunday*, directed by Bruce Brown, won the Academy Award for Best Documentary in 1972 and, yes, it's that good. It starred not only Steve McQueen, but motorcycle racers Mert Lawwill and Malcolm Smith, who went on to become not only champion racers, but legends of motorcycling.

A sequel, *On Any Sunday II*, came out ten years later; it didn't have the same pop culture impact as the original. Brown retired from filmmaking, but his oldest son Dana took up the mantle, producing two back-to-back additions to the franchise in 2000 and 2001: *On Any Sunday: Revisited* and *On Any Sunday: Motocross, Malcolm and More*. As with the original sequel, neither of them had much commercial success.

That could – and perhaps should – change with Dana's 2014 documentary, *On Any Sunday: The Next Chapter*. It hews close to the original in style and tone, and even starts and ends with music that evokes the original in fantastic fashion.

*The Next Chapter* is packed with riding and racing footage, but it intersperses the riding sequences with commentary from the film's stars. If you pay even a little attention to the motorcycle world, it's likely you've heard of Travis Pastrana, Dani

Pedrosa, Marc Marquez and Roland Sands. If you're not as tuned into the racing and stunting world as some folks, you probably haven't heard of Ashley Fiolek, a deaf woman who has won the Women's Motocross Championship four times. You may not have heard of Doug Henry, a former championship motocross racer who still rides after a broken back in 2007 left him unable to use his legs.



It is impressive and inspiring to see Fiolek and Henry overcome their individual obstacles and succeed at an intense sport. The footage of Henry riding his specially-modified dirt bike on Travis Pastrana's property in Maryland is excellent, and Henry even gets in a couple of stunts, landing safely in Pastrana's famous foam pit. Dana effectively portrays the friendship between Henry and Pastrana, lending a very human element to motorcycling, where most of the time, competitors are hidden behind a helmet and pounds of

protective gear. Henry's optimism and Fiolek's infectious excitement come through in their time on screen.

One thing that Dana does that his father didn't in the original is stray from the Sunday racing motif. The original sticks to the racing that's happening on any Sunday during motorcycle racing season while still touching (and even glorifying) the individual riders and why they do what they do. *The Next Chapter* strays from this path, showing footage of chaotic two-wheeled commuting in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, discussing custom bikes with builder Roland Sands and actor Mickey Rourke, and examining a UK-based charity called Riders for Health that supplies motorcycles to Zambia and other African nations so doctors can administer healthcare to remote villages. As interesting as these segments are—and they are as beautifully shot as the rest of the film—they do distract from the central theme of racing.

Another displacement from the original—and I can understand why Dana did it—is the near-constant presence of Red Bull logos. Hats, shirts, trucks, water bottles, you name it, there's a Red Bull logo on it. Given that Red Bull is the primary sponsor of the film, I suppose it's to be expected, but it does get to be a bit much at some points.

When it comes to racing, though, *The Next Chapter* delivers. The story of Pedrosa and Marquez is the arc that ties the entire film together. It's no secret that Marquez won the MotoGP World Championship in his rookie season (2013), but Brown does an excellent job keeping up the will-he-or-won't-her tension while following Marquez path to the final race of the season, when he placed third behind his idol Jorge Martinez and teammate Pedrosa, winning the season with accumulated points.

Marquez was the first racer to notch an overall win in his rookie season since Kenny Roberts accomplished that feat in

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1978, and of course, Roberts is interviewed for this film. The MotoGP racing footage is excellent, but the extended montage of racers crashing is a bit tough to watch, and it goes on a bit long.

It's smile-inducing to see Mert Lawwill make a return in *The Next Chapter*, even more so because since his retirement from motorcycle racing, Lawwill has dedicated his time and expertise to improving prosthetic technology for amputees. That is made touchingly clear in the story of Jake McCullough, a one-armed racer who is able to compete on the flat track thanks to a prosthetic designed and built by Lawwill's firm.

*On Any Sunday: The Next Chapter* is out on DVD and Blu-ray and in various digital and HD formats. I purchased the DVD from Amazon for \$11.24, a slight discount from the MSRP of \$14.98. The Blu-ray costs a little more. There are subtitles in French, Spanish, German and Portuguese, but surprisingly, there are no closed captions or subtitles in English. This is disappointing not just because one of the stars of the film is deaf, but because many motorcycle riders suffer from hearing loss and tinnitus and might have difficulty extracting the dialog from the background music; the rock soundtrack is excellent, but buries the talking from time to time.

There are a few nice extras on the DVD: a five-minute session between the father and son filmmakers, a nine-minute featurette on Riders for Health unconnected to *The Next Chapter*, a five-minute featurette called *Drop In* that shows the entirety of Robbie Maddison's amazing luge run and ski jump without all the pesky talking (only the jump is featured in the main film), and a touching look back at Kurt Caselli's life, tragically cut short in a crash during an overland race in 2013. In this featurette, Caselli's friends team up with Roland Sands to build the KTM race bike Caselli always wanted to build.

*On Any Sunday: The Next Chapter* is a great addition to any rider's video library. Combined with *Why We Ride* and *Sit, Stay, Ride*, 2014 was a very good year for motorcycle documentaries! 🍷

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