



**THE HENRY FORD**

**COLLECTING INNOVATION TODAY**

**TRANSCRIPT OF A VIDEO ORAL HISTORY**

**INTERVIEW WITH**

**DAN GURNEY**

**AUGUST 20, 2008**

**AMERICAN RACERS**

**SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA**

**©THE HENRY FORD 2008**

**INTERVIEWER: BARRY HURD**

**PRODUCER: JUDITH E. ENDELMAN**

**01 GURNEY WHO INSPIRED YOU?**

## QUESTION:

10:02:24;16

Okay. I'll tell you what, one of the things we've been asking people is, everybody starts, they sometimes have heroes, people they look up to, people who inspire them. When you were starting out, or even today, are there people that you look to as your inspirations or your motivations that got you involved in your business?

## DAN GURNEY:

10:02:41;14

I was born in '31. So a big influence on my life was probably radio. Where they had all sorts of *I Love a Mystery*, or *Amos 'n' Andy*. Or all sorts of things where you could listen and almost see what you were listening to. So those formed a lot of my fundamental feelings about the world and life.

## QUESTION:

10:03:11;26

But anything about, that led you into racing? Or how was that?

## DAN GURNEY:

10:03:14;08

In racing there was one in particular. A fellow named Phil Walters. From back on Long Island. And in fact, from our town of Manhasset. And he was my role model. And I

looked up to him. He was very, very talented, hardly ever touched another car and yet, found his way through traffic in a miraculous way. And just a great, great driver.

QUESTION:

10:03:43;18

You say, "found his way miraculously through the traffic." What did he actually have some techniques that you...

DAN GURNEY:

10:03:49;17

If you're an avid fan and you're in the grandstand, and you're close to like a one-fifth mile or quarter-mile racetrack, you can imagine what he is seeing or she, whoever the driver, what the driver's seeing. And then opportunities arise. You can see them and either someone else may take advantage or not. And he always seemed to be able to move as quickly as I could see an option there, he'd take it. And yet, do it really cleanly, and that was a great, it was a lot of fun to watch.

QUESTION:

10:04:24;01

Yeah, did you kind of adopt that style when you drove later? Or?

DAN GURNEY:

10:04:28;02

Well, yes. I tried to do that. I mean, you don't win races by crashing. Or knocking people off. Sooner or later, that

catches up with you. And so, being careful in that regard, and still being able to pass people all the time that's a pretty good place to begin.

## 02 GURNEY ENZO FERRARI

### QUESTION:

10:04:47;09

Let's talk about some of the people in racing that you knew; some impressions you had. Like of, obviously, Ferrari was a big influence or somebody you worked with early. And tell us a little bit about your relationship with him.

### DAN GURNEY:

10:04:58;04

Enzo Ferrari was a little bit difficult for me because he had a great reputation; he had an aura about him that was difficult to penetrate. And I didn't speak Italian. So that was a real handicap. He seemed to be very, to treat me very well. He saw early on that I was really trying hard, and I think that appealed to him a lot.

10:05:33;07

So I mean, in terms of the 20th century and racing, why, he's probably on the top of the pyramid as to who had the most influence in racing, and so forth. So, it was great that I got a chance to see him. He was there on my

audition, or try out; first time I went to Italy and drove a little two-litre sports car, a three-litre like a Le Mans car. And then a Formula One car, all in the same grey morning there, at the Modena Autodrome. And shook hands with Enzo, and that was something I'll always remember.

### 03 GURNEY COLIN CHAPMAN AND JIMMY CLARK

#### QUESTION:

10:06:18;13

How about another big name in racing, Colin Chapman. Tell us a little bit about your relationship and impressions of him.

#### DAN GURNEY:

10:06:28;09

I could see Colin Chapman burst onto the scene. He was considered the most creative, the most able to bring forth new concepts. And at that time, probably late '50s, early '60s. And when I was thinking about going to Indy as an American driver, I always felt that Indy was something I wanted to do and when [I was] about 19, I went there in '62.

10:07:05;15

I had already..... for the first time. But I had already been aware that in Grand Prix racing, the old front-engine cars gave way to a more modern rear-engine car. And at that

time, Colin Chapman was the foremost creative designer of new rear-engine cars. Although he had done front-engines first. And when I thought about going to Indy and this evolution, revolution had occurred in Europe, I thought, "Well, you know, if I could get Colin Chapman to come to Indy and do a car that I ended up driving also, well, I think it would be a good thing to try and do."

10:07:50;27

And that's what happened. I offered to buy him a round-trip ticket to Indy in '62. Which was my first time there. And so we struck up a very interesting friendship. And I liked him a lot. I mean, he was one of those fellows that you'd like to have in your corner if you're in a fight which we'll call Grand Prix racing a fight or motor racing.

10:08:18;23

Also, it was through Colin that I met Jimmy Clark, one of my all-time heroes and competitors. So I remember Colin, like all designers, they don't want to tell you exactly what they're thinking all the time. But often, we traveled on airplanes. And he would write on a small piece of paper, incredibly small memos to himself. And for ideas, but it was always so small it was hard to see. You know, you'd

stretch your neck. You'd try and see over [the seat]. So that was just the, but he was a great guy.

#### 04 GURNEY MICKEY THOMPSON

##### QUESTION:

10:09:00;29 What about Mickey Thompson?

##### DAN GURNEY:

10:09:03;24 Well, in '62, when I went there, before I met Chapman at Indy, I ended up driving Mickey's car. Which also happened to be a rear engine with a modified Buick little aluminum V-8 in it. And a car designer or chief designer was John Crostwaite. And being with Mickey was terrific.

10:09:28;24 I mean, we really, I had admired him already, being an early California hot rodder. And, which is where Mickey came from. But Mickey also was thinking about big things. And he made friends very easily. And got involved with General Motors. And Bunkie Knudsen was a big pusher of his. And Mickey was just, you know, thrashing all the time.

10:09:59;06 And his people worshipped the ground that he walked on, in much the same way that Chapman was. But Mickey

was more a cut-and-thrust and try things. And if that didn't work, why, we'll try something else. And so, he was a great guy.

## 05 GURNEY BEGINNINGS IN HOT RODDING

### QUESTION:

10:10:17;15

Okay. When you sorta started out, that I think as a teenager, hot rodding yourself, and then kinda made a quick progression up to other kinds of cars tell us that evolution that got you from the original hot rodding and moved you forward.

### DAN GURNEY:

10:10:33;18

My folks moved to California in 1948. And I felt like that proverbial Br'er Rabbit gettin' thrown into the briar patch, exactly where I wanted to go. And oh, I was just a student of a wonderful time in automobile history. Where hot rodders had access to huge numbers of junk yards.

10:11:00;23

When many of the components in the junk yard were still in very good condition they may have been abandoned because something else in the car broke. But a lot of it was very good stuff. And the true hot rodders, in those days, could build complete cars for very little cost. And

learn engineering at the same time.

10:11:24;27

And also in competing with each other, they found out which things worked better than the others. And I mean, it was like competition. And it really and, much the same, warfare moves up evolution of things, you know, very rapidly. And it was that way in Southern California in those days. And you know, a great place to be.

QUESTION:

10:11:50;00

Well, what moved you from wanting to do the hot rods up to like the sports cars? Was there a thing that happened? Or...

DAN GURNEY:

10:11:54;26

I was a fan of racing, mostly oval racing in the beginning. But at the same time, I had done a lot of reading of the history of road racing. In Europe primarily. And early days, in the States. And so I was always looking for a breakthrough that would enable me to get into road racing.

10:12:20;29

And there wasn't any professional road racing at that time. And yet, I felt as though it was very apt to happen in the

future. And there were lots of very good Sports Car Club of America and the California Sports Car Club, here, in Southern California. And gradually a lot of racing, including some put on under the auspices of General Curtis LeMay. He [would] shut down a strategic air command base and run a sports car on a weekend not many people could do that.

10:12:57;18

I was in Korea at that time, when all that was going on. But the word got around that that was going on. But soon it became possible to make a professional business out of it.

#### 06 GURNEY FROM HOT RODS TO FORMULA ONE

##### QUESTION:

10:13:13;08

And you, but you moved, I mean, compared to now, for a racer's to now, you moved pretty quickly from all the way up to the top, if you call F1 the top racing. Just in a few short years, didn't you ascend really quickly? And could, is that something that could still be done today by somebody? A talented racer? Or is the business less open now?

DAN GURNEY:

10:13:31;26

Generally you know, if you say, "No, it couldn't be done today," of course, someone would do it. So it's hard to predict. But there was not much, there wasn't any stepping stone or ladder that you could that was clearly defined and go could get there.

10:13:55;17

So you had to have an imagination and do the best you could. I was lucky by the time I sat on the grid, the starring grid of my first Formula One Grand Prix race, I think I had only run in 22 races. Or something ridiculous like that. And so...

DAN GURNEY:

10:14:19;02

But, I mean, it was, that's what I wanted to do. And I was a genuine student the whole time, trying to learn as much as I could.

QUESTION:

10:14:28;04

You have a son who's racing now. Do you think he's got the same shot? That he's got the Gurney genes that he could move up that quickly?

DAN GURNEY:

10:14:35;23

Genes? I think he's got me covered on genes, 'cause he

has his mother's genes in him also. And she was very quick and bright, and also a lot about motor sports. I think he's probably a different combination. I think he's physically, he's extraordinarily quick. And he's got a good education behind him. And he's, but, I mean it takes everything to get there.

10:15:06;17

And I think he has great potential, even today, at, I think, 34 years old, somewhere close to there. Which would seem ancient unless you know what you're talking about. And then, it's not at all. You know, and we keep saying that Juan Fangio, who ended up winning the Grand Prix world championship five times, was 39 when he first went to Europe. So what's changed?

QUESTION:

10:15:38;05

Well, you know, that's...

DAN GURNEY:

10:15:38;19

A lot of perceptions.

#### 07 GURNEY MOVING UP THE RACING LADDER

QUESTION:

10:16:29;19

All right, tell me a little bit about when you started out. I mean, now that I know that I already know the answer

you, at 20, 23 races, you were sittin' on the grid of F1, right? That's awful.

DAN GURNEY:

10:16:37;17                   Approximately.

QUESTION:

10:16:38;18                   Approximate?

DAN GURNEY:

10:16:39;06                   Yeah.

QUESTION:

10:16:39;16                   That's an awful fast ascension. Compare that to the way it would be nowadays. Was it more open back then?

DAN GURNEY:

10:16:46;28                   Back then there was no prescribed stepping stone or ladder that you would reach for in order to get going and progress as far as you could. So I think today, there is or there are stepping stones. And that there are many more people wanting to do it. There were a few of us then, without any stepping stones.

10:17:16;10                   So it was still difficult. But probably, I don't know which is most difficult. If you can't find any stepping stone to step on, why that's not so good. But if you've got 1,000 people

on the same stone as you're trying to get up there, that's a little rough too. So it's a different era.

QUESTION:

08 GURNEY WHAT IS UNIQUE ABOUT AMERICAN RACING?

10:17:35;00                      Yeah. Compare the, like racing in America versus, I guess, European racing today. Is it, what are the big differences? Is there something sort of American about racing today that makes it unique?

DAN GURNEY:

10:17:51;04                      America has a much broader spectrum of racing. Dirt tracks really don't exist much over there. They do have some stock car racing, it virtually doesn't exist over there although, there is some. But compared to what NASCAR has done here, why, it might as well not be there.

10:18:18;01                      Grand Prix racing is pretty rarified. Indy car racing here or sports cars, like my son, Alexander, is running in, the Grand Am Daytona prototype series, there's an awful lot going on over here now. The Europeans have often managed to look down their nose at the Yanks.

10:18:50;00                      But I think those that do go beyond just talking about it

find out that it's big league and it's very difficult to excel here, as it is at the top echelons over there.

QUESTION:

10:19:07;26

Well, is there anything particularly about the American spirit or character, or something about America that gives racing a certain brand here? I mean, it's popular, obviously. But why so popular, do you think?

DAN GURNEY:

10:19:21;23

Hmm. I don't know.

**09 GURNEY CARROLL SHELBY**

QUESTION:

10:19:24;27

Fair answer. Let me ask you about a couple other people.

DAN GURNEY:

10:19:31;02

That sounded like a Shelby answer.

QUESTION:

10:19:33;01

Well, you know, it's funny that you should bring that up, 'cause I'm gonna ask you some things about Shelby.

DAN GURNEY:

10:19:36;08

Okay.

QUESTION:

10:19:36;22

He, we were talking to him yesterday. He said a few things about you, which I'm gonna tell you later. But give

me your initial impressions of Carroll, back when you met him; when you worked with him; and what you think of him overall. Just some, you know, a few things about your relationship with Carroll Shelby.

DAN GURNEY:

10:19:53;25

When I first met Carroll Shelby or became aware of Carroll Shelby, he was already driving for one of the few private owners of European Ferraris, in this case and Maseratis. And was in, very much involved in SCCA, or the California Sports Car Club races. And these were big time races, as far as we were concerned.

10:20:22;25

And Carroll was at, essentially, the top of that heap at that moment in time. So, and I couldn't tell, since all really good drivers were my enemies at that time, you know, in my own mind so I'd looked for a weakness or a chink in their armor. Or try to analyze what it would be like if I were going up against them.

10:20:49;25

So, and Carroll was, I think, later on, not at that time, but later on, I realized that Carroll was a salesperson, a leader that knew the ropes; that could play fair or not with

winning being the objective. And he could kick the young fellas off the ladder if he felt that was the right thing to do.

10:21:29;14

Or he could help 'em. As he did in my case, on several occasions. So he was formidable and I gradually learned more and more about him. And we even you can cut this out if you want to. But we, I named him, he had a nickname, "Billy." So Billy earned his name because it was the name of a fellow named Billy Sol Estes.

10:22:04;15

And Billy Sol Estes was another Texan. And he managed to be able to sell non-existent tanks full of fertilizer to the U.S. government. And that takes a really good salesperson to pull that one off. And of course, I felt that he might have Shelby might have come from, they might have been neighbors, you know.

10:22:31;22

So that was, and there's a lot of respect at the same time you're, it's not all positive. So, but Shelby when we were on his team, we say, "Boy, I think our guy can out maneuver the enemy's person." So we felt very good about that.

**10 GURNEY PARNELLI JONES**

QUESTION:

10:22:54;24

Okay. How about Parnelli Jones? We're gonna talk to him tomorrow. You got any things you want to tell us about Parnelli?

DAN GURNEY:

10:23:00;25

What about Parnelli, do you say?

QUESTION:

10:23:02;11

Just your impressions, and when you competed together. Similar to what you did with your little stories about Carroll.

DAN GURNEY:

10:23:07;22

I think Parnelli's image was one of, he was intense. He was at least a tough guy. Would sort of go for a fist fight reasonably easily. Had a lot of very, very intense fans that felt that they were part of his army, so to speak. And that he was part of theirs.

10:23:48;20

And he was also, early on, a Firestone driver, so to speak, while I was at Goodyear and I watched him drive at places like Ascot and oval racing. And, of course, watched him in road racing. I think and at Indy he was very, very good.

He was, I think Parnelli had good vision for all the elements that you want to put into your team if you're going to be a successful race driver.

10:24:29;03

And he was exceptionally good in getting the right people on his team. He didn't just, he earned their teammateship, or whatever you call it. And so he was a very, very formidable and one of the three or four top drivers I ever ran across.

QUESTION:

10:24:52;19

And you actually raced against him several times, didn't you?

DAN GURNEY:

10:24:55;09

I raced against him many times, yes.

QUESTION:

10:24:56;20

Could you tell me a couple of those experiences? What it was like, you know, chasin' each other? Or?

DAN GURNEY:

10:25:02;09

With Parnelli he sort of decided to semi-retire reasonably early in his career. Young man, still at his peak, so to speak. And so I don't know, I didn't, I never really, I don't recall getting down to a mano-a-mano situation with

Parnelli.

10:25:35;11

I'm sure he would have been as tough as any of 'em. I did that a bit with A. J. Foyt. I did that a bit with Mario Andretti. I did that a bit with Jimmy Clark and all, a lot of the Europeans. So, but Parnelli would undoubtedly be right there. And his, the people that loved him and then worshipped him, would have agreed with that, I'm sure.

#### 11 GURNEY LYN ST. JAMES

QUESTION:

10:26:00;29

What about we interviewed earlier, Lyn St. James. Tell us a little bit about your impressions of her, and involvement you may have had with her, racing.

DAN GURNEY:

10:26:11;27

With Lyn St. James, she was a pioneer as a female. Undoubtedly had a lot of driving talent. And was good at promotional aspects of trying to move her career along. I think that, without even knowing what it looked like from her perspective, I felt as though she might have, at times felt as though this, the deck was stacked against her a little bit. And it very certainly could have been.

10:26:54;06

But I, she asked me for advice on at least one occasion. And my answer was to not pay much attention to extraneous things, but look at lap times; find out who's fast and how fast that is. And that's your target, the lap times. I mean, you can't lie to a watch, and you can't avoid it either.

10:27:23;16

And that should be, and you'll know, I mean, it, not that that makes it simple; it doesn't. But that's one of the things that is going to help you a lot. If you can get the right lap times it doesn't matter. The rest of the stuff is less important.

**12 GURNEY DRIVER, TEAM OWNER, MANUFACTURER**

QUESTION:

10:27:42;06

Okay. Talk to us a little bit about, I mean, your transition. You're a driver, team owner, manufacturer. How do you sorta handle those transitions with different phases of the sport?

DAN GURNEY:

10:27:54;26

Transitioning from a driver to a team owner or manufacturer it never seemed so much as a transition. As a driver, I was intensely interested in what makes one car

better or different than another. And sometimes where they even appear to look the same. And in those days, we didn't have data-gathering equipment and computers to sort of reconstruct a lap from all different angles and all of that.

10:28:35;14

So it was, you were peering into a fog in many respects. But still, it was the only thing you had. So you're, and I developed ways of learning and deducing. And so, some of the things that I paid a lot of attention to as a driver were still very important when it came to designing and building and running a race team, and being a manufacturer. So that was more of the stuff that I was really interested in.

QUESTION:

11:00:55;07

Tell us about the transition and how you handled that transition from driver to a team owner to a manufacturer.

DAN GURNEY:

11:01:06;06

The transition from driving to team owner to manufacturer with design elements interwoven into all of that in the beginning, the motive for trying to learn why some cars are better than others or worse than others or between

and what you do about it all of that was pushed by wanting to win races. Not to mention a natural curiosity that I think is important to have also. So when I finally hung up my helmet, so to speak after 15 years of driving I still had a lot of interest in cars and what made them tick.

11:02:01;19

And I was surrounded with people that also were very good in those areas when you compare our group with others in existence at that time. So, I continued and I could almost, I was also a big fan of racing. And I was probably a pretty good spectator, seeing maybe more than most spectators would. And became involved with the what, the strategies involved in racing and the pit stops and fuel usage and tires and all the myriad of things that are involved.

11:02:45;02

So it seemed like a natural progression to have a team. I could speak with the drivers as a former driver myself. And often I could get to where I could peer into their souls, so to speak in a way that I had done myself and I think that was a big advantage. You don't necessarily get off on a dead end quite as often as you might. Although, we all

did it at times.

11:03:27;02

And manufacturing also was part of the process of trying to understand what it was we were trying to grapple with. And luckily, I had many really outstanding artisans and craftsmen and design people that kept it awfully interesting. And whenever I could contribute, which wasn't necessarily terribly often, but I continued to try to and did. So.

### 13 GURNEY PASSION AND CURIOSITY

QUESTION:

11:03:59;16

Did, do you also have, like, a great passion and curiosity? Something must have been driving you to do it. You could've probably just stopped at some point. There must have been something you wanted to innovate. You wanted to invent? You wanted to discover? Tell me a little bit about that during that process.

DAN GURNEY:

11:04:14;17

I guess I'm sort of romantic about the whole picture. And I enjoy the..., if you're able to be in a position where you're pushing the envelope of known performance and you're able to get outside the box and be successful that's a very

gratifying thing when you can do it. And I kept trying to do that. And we succeeded reasonably often. So, that was a great part of the business.

QUESTION:

11:04:54;27

And it just kept you going through the different phases?

DAN GURNEY:

11:05:02;22

I, the passion, it made me wanna be a driver, the one that made me wanna have a team, the one that made me wanna manufacture cars, all of those things, I don't know where it came from. But it was pretty hard to stamp out. It kept growing up again through the asphalt, so to speak. And it's still very important to me.

QUESTION:

11:05:27;04

Let's talk a little bit about, lot of people look at this racecar business and they say how do these guys climb into these machines and go so fast. There's all this danger, that people are injured and killed. It happens. And what gets somebody to climb into one of those things and do what you did for so many years?

DAN GURNEY:

11:05:52;01

Your name is Sigmund Freud? I don't know what we're, I don't know. What makes someone want to do something

that's obviously is pretty doggone dangerous, I used to say well, it's not as dangerous as being President of the United States, for instance, statistically. Anyway, but I think you have to have some, people would call it a screw loose and maybe that's true, but the rewards seem to be there. And met all kinds of really outstanding people that have the same virus, whatever it's called. But I think it's, we need a couch and analysis.

#### 14 GURNEY PHIL WALTERS' DECISION TO QUIT RACING

QUESTION:

11:06:49;18

Well, let me ask you on a more serious note, you mentioned Phil Walters before, a role model, I think you said. There's a story, and I'm sure you know it, the horrible accident where all the fans were killed, 1955. And after that, he just quit driving.

DAN GURNEY:

11:07:01;17

Yes.

QUESTION:

11:07:03;00

Now, compare that into what you just told me about, "we just did it". We didn't worry that much about it. Why do some guys have to get out and other guys can keep going?

DAN GURNEY:

11:07:16;06

I think when Phil Walters stopped at the end of his driving career he had been doing it for quite some time. He did it before World War II and then he did after World War II, up to '55. I think he, eventually, in my case, I found that I was lonely on a racetrack because a lot of the people that I had admired really felt it was tremendously rewarding to race against them and so forth, they were not there anymore.

11:07:54;26

That has an effect on you. And I wouldn't be surprised if that happened with Phil Walters. So, I think it happens with almost any athletic endeavor. You get older and whether you wanna admit it or not, you lose your tiny bit of edge. And also you start looking at life and saying, well, what's this all about. And maybe there are some things that I oughta be sampling or try to...

QUESTION:

11:08:31;19

Did you ever talk to him about it or any memory of talking about that accident?

DAN GURNEY:

11:08:36;16

I talked to him a little bit. I talked to John Fitch once and

he was a teammate of Phil Walters. And I asked him about Phil Walters and he couldn't have been more complimentary. In fact, he said that not many people know this, but prior to the Le Mans tragedy Phil Walters had been asked to come to Ferrari by Enzo Ferrari himself to try out as a Formula One driver.

11:09:11;23

He went there and it rained for about three days. So bad that they had to wash out the whole test. And Enzo asked Phil to come in. And through an interpreter, so forth, he said, "Look Phil, you don't need to do a test. We want you to drive in our Formula One team. We know how good you are. We, every time we send a new car to America, you beat it with what you're driving." And he said, "You don't need a test. We want you." So, he didn't accept then, but he was certainly thinking about it. And then the 1955 accident at Le Mans occurred and that was the end of that.

## 15 GURNEY DANGERS OF RACING

### QUESTION:

11:09:52;14

Have you ever had any major crashes in your career that scared you or...

DAN GURNEY:

11:09:56;06

I had one that was pretty nasty in Zandvoort, Holland. I lost the brakes because of a brake line blowing out of a overheated brake caliper. And it going straight at 180 hairpin. And ended up [a] young man, who was a spectator over a hill that you couldn't even see, he was killed in that accident. And it was a pretty nasty one.

11:10:31;15

And what that did, I was driving a BRM at the time, a Formula One car. And it was another wakeup call to engineering in a way. Because later on I talked to Tony Rudd, who was the team engineer, team manager for BRM at the time. And he said, "Ya know, I should've realized that. That we had a single brake disc on the rear at the end of the gear box." And it had to increase the hydraulic pressure because it was trying to slow two wheels through the rear end.

11:11:11;14

And it was very hot back there. And I should've realized. That was a rubberized front wheel brake, that was, hose on there and it was running too hot. And it just blew out. He said, "I should've realized that, ya know." And I

thought to myself, I wonder who was sitting in that car when that happened. And of course, a spur like that makes you even more interested in how things are going with the car and everything.

#### 16 GURNEY THE 1967 LEMANS RACE—A.J. FOYT

QUESTION:

11:11:38;26                    Let's jump ahead. We, back at the museum we have the '67 car that won a Le Mans race.

QUESTION:

11:11:45;23                    I said we have the '67 car that won the Lemans race.

DAN GURNEY:

11:11:49;07                    Oh, yes.

QUESTION:

11:11:48;28                    Yeah. And tell us a little bit about that car and that race. It was, it's a famous race. Tell us a little bit about your experience with that.

DAN GURNEY:

11:11:57;26                    The '67 Le Mans 24-hour race victory with my old pal AJ Foyt as my co-driver in the Ford 27 powered four speed, Mark IV, I think they call it. It was a really great part of my whole driving career. And as an American on an American team with an American, even though he's from

Texas, it was a terrific victory.

11:12:37;15

And it was, we, AJ hadn't yet, which he did later, became a really outstanding road racer. But he was just more or less at his peak of his terrific Indy car career. And just a wonderful, he had more fans than [he] knew what to do about. And I think that they put AJ and Dan together thinking that they were the least likely to succeed and they're probably gonna wreck their car anyway or compete with each other to the detriment of the car.

11:13:13;27

So, that's my guess as to how we ended up being that way. Now, Carroll might say it a little bit different. But in any case AJ was probably, we used to call him Cassius, after Cassius Clay who became Muhammad Ali and a great boxer. Well, AJ wasn't a great boxer, although I guess he's managed to get a few blows in.

11:13:42;26

But he was, he could have the barons of, the big guys in Detroit eating out of his hand. He was just, he was a great politician in many ways like Carroll Shelby. Maybe that's a Texas thing, I don't know. But, and he could back it up

cause he was a great driver just as Cassius Clay was a great boxer. So, we drove together. And I quick, early on I realized that if there was an Achilles heel for the Mark IV Ford it would be in the brakes. The car was plenty fast. It run over 212 or so.

#### 17 GURNEY THE 1967 LEMANS RACE--THE MARK IV BRAKES

DAN GURNEY:

11:14:37;12

The Mark IV was a great car. And if it had an Achilles heel, it would be in the brakes. The car was pretty heavy. Probably five hundred pounds heavier than most other cars in that same race. And it would go fast, 212 or so or a little bit more. And probably weighed pretty close to three thousand pounds. And so, the brakes had a lot of work to do after a three mile straightaway where you're really cooking.

11:15:09;29

And I realized early on that it was an interesting thing. I almost thinking of Phil Walters again. But I was thinking of Briggs Cunningham. And I had raced at Le Mans maybe six times when Briggs was still racing himself. And at the end of the 24 hours, almost every time Briggs was ahead of Dan.

11:15:35;02

And ya know, I didn't like that, but it was a fact. And it sort of dawned on me that this wasn't necessarily a race. It was an endurance contest. And you could look at it from a different standpoint. So, that's what I did.

11:15:54;20

And thinking of the brakes, I just decided could I come up with a way that would not take so much out of the brakes. So, what it did at the end, you're going 212 towards the Mulsanne or the turn at the end of the Mulsanne straightaway is a 90 degree turn. So, you gotta slow down to at least 30 miles an hour to get around it.

11:16:15;24

And you're going 212. So, I was, I decided early on to back off maybe three hundred yards before I needed to. But I wouldn't put on the brakes. I let the engine just coast down and the engine slowed down until the speed probably came down to 140 or so or I'm guessing. But that meant that I wasn't really beating up on the brakes. And I think that was one of the things that helped us finish that race.

18 GURNEY THE 1967 LEMANS RACE--STRATEGY

QUESTION:

11:16:46;06

Carroll told us this story. You're driving and you just pull over to the side and stop. There was a guy, what is it, Michael Parkes is the name?

DAN GURNEY:

11:16:53;02

Yes.

QUESTION:

11:16:53;12

What he said then he stopped and he said, "Let Dan tell the story." So.

DAN GURNEY:

11:16:58;23

Well, let's say it's about, we're at Le Mans in '67 and it's 2:30 in the morning. It's dark and we're the only Ford left in the race. And we're leading. Michael Parkes was the team leading engineer for their sports car program and a very competent racer and engineer. And he, I think, sensed that we were the last of the Mohicans. There was a fourth, Fordhicans. And we're, he would come behind me. And even though I had probably, if he was in my draft. I could still probably pull away from him at about three miles per hour more than he had.

11:17:50;25

So, I could get going on the straight. But adhering to the

idea of trying to save these brakes, I would back off. And sure enough, here comes Mike Parkes over me and he's on that light switch, ya know. Flicking, flicking, flicking like that. And you're kind of and you got a faster car. And I wanted to say hey listen, let's get down to it.

11:18:15;05

And, but I refused to do it. And this went on for about four or five laps, every time. And he's all over me and I, it was getting pretty, I was getting pretty tired of it. And yet, I didn't wanna do something that was bad. So, coming out of Arnage, the name of the turn, another 90 degree, I just pulled off to the right after leaving Arnage and there was a grass verge there. I pulled up and stopped on the grass.

11:18:46;08

So, the track was on our left. And Mike pulled up and stopped right behind us. So, here we are running one, two in the race. I have a lap on him, though. And then we sat there. And I don't know. He sat there for about ten seconds, maybe 12 seconds. Seemed like a long time and then finally he put in gear and drove off. And then I did the same and I stayed the same way. And about four or

five laps later, I caught him and passed him without changing. And I don't know what happened to him. But I think they ended up finishing second. But...

DAN GURNEY:

11:19:27;16 That didn't work.

QUESTION:

11:19:27;12 A little minds games you were playing.

DAN GURNEY:

11:19:29;21 It was, yes.

#### 19 GURNEY JIM CLARK, COLIN CHAPMAN AND THE LOTUS

QUESTION:

11:19:33;12 Before you mentioned that Jim Clark, one of your I think inspirations, we also have the car that won Indy in '65 in our collection, the Lotus. Tell us a little bit about how you were involved in with that car and Jim Clark.

DAN GURNEY:

11:19:49;06 Well, Jim Clark and the Lotus Ford team at Indy, as I think I mentioned before, I knew Colin Chapman. I had the feeling as though the revolution that had occurred in Europe was gonna take place in Indy car racing. In other words, no more front engine cars, just rear engine cars. And so, that was how, when I invited Colin Chapman

there. And Jimmy and I were, Jimmy was winning all the races at the time, but I often finished second and in Formula One.

11:20:26;23

And it was a natural because I had introduced Colin Chapman to the Ford people up in Dearborn. I got an opportunity to drive on the team with Jimmy for Colin Chapman and Lotus, so and Ford. So, that was the way we got together. I thought the world of Jimmy. He was a fair, a very competent, he enjoyed racing. He didn't have to have the best car all the time.

11:21:10;12

He enjoyed, he knew he was very good and would jump into a stockcar or a sports car or some other car in addition to a Formula One or an Indy car. So, he was able to do that with confidence and with very good results. So, and because we were running into the same obstacles in an effort to win Indy we got to share both the good and the bad. And it's not always good. And that brought us closer. And yet, we still had to race each other in Formula One. I was driving for Brabham at the time and Jimmy for Lotus.

**20 GURNEY "PARNOILY JONES"**

QUESTION:

11:21:59;29                    That was the first rear engine car to win, or to win Indy, wasn't it, that Lotus?

DAN GURNEY:

11:22:05;18                    I think it was.

QUESTION:

11:22:07;14                    Tell us a little bit about the car. Do you remember much about the car itself?

DAN GURNEY:

11:22:12;23                    The first rear engine car at Indy, being the Lotus, although it was '93, I mean...

DAN GURNEY:

11:22:25;16                    ...'63, four, five, before he finally got a win. And the other person we were talking about earlier was Parnelli Jones. And of course, all the Lotus team called him Parnaily Jones because of all the oil leaks he had when Jimmy finished second and Parnelli won it. That was fun. Fun because the officials at that race, the USAC, United States Auto Club, could have pulled the plug and said black flag, the car is leaking oil.

11:23:08;01

But their idea was, well, we're not gonna let those limeys come over here and beat the Indy without a fight. So, and they say it looks like it's starting to dry up. He's running out of oil anyway. We'll just let it go like that. Of course, he didn't run out of oil. Although, I'm sure it got kind of low and he won the race, Parnelli. Parnelli did. And I think, what were we gonna talk about?

QUESTION:

11:23:38;10

The mechanics maybe of the car, the rear engine. I mean, it was, that was the Parnelli thing was, what, '63 maybe? The Parnelli, he won in '63 with that leak.

DAN GURNEY:

11:23:46;13

Yeah, I think it was.

QUESTION:

11:23:47;15

And it was two years later.

DAN GURNEY:

11:23:47;27

Yeah, '63.

QUESTION:

11:23:48;24

...that Clark...

DAN GURNEY:

11:23:49;28

Next year we were in pretty good shape in '64, but we had the wrong tires on it. And the tires kept coming apart.

And I won't mention. They weren't Goodyear's and they weren't Firestone. So that was, that's another year. I used to think when you had trouble at Indy, there's a year between each race. So, ya know, you're all dressed up and no place to go. And it, if you're okay, ya know, it seemed like an awful long time till you got to do something about it.

## 21 GURNEY RACE FANS

### QUESTION:

11:24:31;03

Ya know, and another great part about racing are the fans, obviously, that turn out for all these the races. They followed driver's careers and sports. And sometimes they get to know the drivers or the team owners. Can you think of any fans that followed you around that you remember that you had relationships with?

### QUESTION:

11:24:57;14

Back to the fan[s] were there one or two experience with a fan that you might share with us? Part of this exhibit, we're gonna show what, how some of the fans and how they felt about racing.

### DAN GURNEY:

11:25:16;05

Fans are certainly a very important part of a driver's

appreciation for the whole racing business. And if you have really outstanding fans, why it's pretty hard to beat the emotional, the feelings of it. And as you ask a question about fans, I'm thinking and I'm flashing back. There were several times at various tracks in Europe where somebody would sneak out onto the track and write my name in big letters across the track, so everybody had to drive over them. And I never found out who those people were. It happened.

QUESTION:

11:26:00;27

How much did you pay them to do it?

DAN GURNEY:

11:26:01;03

It had, what?

QUESTION:

11:26:03;05

How much did you?

DAN GURNEY:

11:26:02;20

How much did I pay them, yeah. That was priceless. But, I mean, those, and they were ya know, when the, on the last race I drove was in 1980, ten years after I had retired. I did it out of curiosity. And the process of doing that right after the race, I think, well, I, maybe it was the last race in 1970. I think it was.

11:26:34;19

Someone swiped my helmet, a fan. And ya know, we felt pretty bad about that. And then I think he did, too, he or she. Anyway one day the helmet came back and it said, a note with it said, "It took so much courage for me to actually steal your helmet that I don't have enough left so I can tell you what my name is." So we got it back. But it was, that's another fan situation.

## 22 GURNEY DRIVING HENRY FORD'S 999

QUESTION:

11:27:08;23

Now, do you remember when you drove 999, Ford's 999?

DAN GURNEY:

11:27:12;08

Yes.

QUESTION:

11:27:11;09

I think you were the last person ever to drive it. Tell me a little bit about that experience.

DAN GURNEY:

11:27:17;29

Ford's 999, which I already was up on the fact that it had run on Lake Champlain or Lake, I think it was, a frozen lake probably in 1902, roughly in 1902. It, I think it was a, was just two wooden frame rails and a gigantic, I think a 14 liter engine in it. And bottom of the engine didn't

have an oil pan. Just had the crank shaft coming round every cycle. And top RPM was I think, 680 and or something.

11:28:00;13

So, it was, and it ran, I think, 90, either 92 or 94 miles per hour on that frozen lake. And I was in looking at this in the Dearborn Museum. And the caretaker of the museum said, "Would you like to drive this car?" And I thought, well, he's kidding, but yes, absolutely. I'd love to drive it. So, either later on that day or the next day, I'm not sure if I remember that, but they rolled the car out of the museum and took it over to the Dearborn test track.

11:28:40;10

And it was, there were still patches of snow on the ground, but the track itself was free of snow. And I got to drive it. And it was a tremendous sort of, I was in a time capsule, so to speak. The car was essentially as it was in 1902. And it had a gigantic flywheel in it 'bout this big around with a ledge on it. And within the ledge was a centrifugal, with wooden shoes, a clutch. And it would, you had a hand throttle and all kinds of other controls for the spark and so forth.

11:29:34;10

And the clutch would slip until about 60 miles per hour. And then finally it would stop slipping and you could give her more gas. And that's what I did. I probably had it going 75 or so, anyway, and at that moment, boom and poof. I saw a piece of, and it was, it had four separate cylinder heads on it.

11:30:00;06

And I blew one of the cylinder heads off. And I thought, oh, I've damaged the heirloom mirror. And the, but the fellow running the museum said, "Don't worry about it. It's happened before and the threads are all stripped on the soldered head nuts." So, that was it. But to actually do something that Henry Ford had driven that car. And I'm not sure whether it was Barney Oldfield or not. But one of the big names of that day was there when they broke the record. So, that was a very special occasion.

## 23 GURNEY A SPRAY OF CHAMPAGNE

### QUESTION:

12:00:44;10

The end of the '67 race, you went up there and had a bottle of champagne and created history. Now, tell us a little bit about how that all came about.

DAN GURNEY:

12:00:55;06

At the end of the '67, Le Mans 24-hour race, we all gathered on a platform that was probably five, six, five feet off the ground, a wooden platform that, and all the top three finishers, I believe, and all the, well Henry Ford II was there, Hank the Deuce they call him, I guess. And with his recently married young Italian wife. And of course, AJ and Ann and Mike Parkes and the Ferrari team. I don't know who was third. But it was a very, very special occasion. I think we broke the speed record by close to ten miles per hour in one year, which was pretty astonishing.

12:02:01;06

And so, we're up there and looking. And there are just a sea of photographers down below. And they're all looking back at us. And there was a moment where nobody was telling us what to do. But I could tell that they were, there was almost a, everybody holding their breath as though it was, they were expecting something.

12:02:27;11

So, about that time, somebody handed me this magnum of champagne. And it for no reason at all, I thought, "Boy,

this is, I might be able to do something for the photographers which maybe they won't like it." But anyway, this, I got the magnum. And with the top off just shook that thing. It was like a fire hose. And you could, I was getting people maybe 15 feet away down below and just ruining all the cameras. And they were loving it. And I had no idea it would create, that it was the first and it would create a tradition that is still there today. That was 1967. So it was a very special moment. And it's just unplanned and just something that came outta nowhere.

#### 24 GURNEY THE FAMOUS CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE

QUESTION:

12:03:31;26

And is it true that somebody gave you the, or you still have the bottle? I mean, it's...

DAN GURNEY:

12:03:35;17

I still have the bottle. I still have the bottle. I handed it to my friend now. Isn't that nice? I can't think of his name. He was also a close friend of, he was a photographer that had spent a lotta time with Martin Luther King, and also with Mohammed Ali or Cassius Clay. No, I'm angry with myself. I can't think of his name. He worked for Black Stone, I think.

DAN GURNEY:

12:04:19;13

Black Star Photography, yes.

DAN GURNEY:

12:04:31;13

I handed it to him. And that was the...

QUESTION:

12:04:43;28

Alright. So, you still have the bottle, I'm told.

DAN GURNEY:

12:04:48;23

Well, yes. I still have the bottle. I recently reacquired it from the fellow that I handed it to. His name is Flip Shulke. And he kept the bottle all the years. I probably got it back maybe five or six years ago. And he had made a lamp out of it. But it's a nice bottle, like this. It may be, no, it's not here right at the moment. But it's at one of the automobile-related shows goin' on.

QUESTION:

12:05:24;21

Most famous bottle in racing.

DAN GURNEY:

12:05:26;04

But it's a famous bottle, you bet. So, that was another one of those moments.

**25 GURNEY BUREAUCRATS AND FREEDOM DON'T SEEM TO MIX**

QUESTION:

12:05:36;04

Alright. Let me ask you, when you're driving, when you're

[a] manufacturer [or] a team, you're always looking for a little bit of an edge, a way to make the car go faster to win the race obviously, to compete better. And there, but there's all these rules of what you can and can't do. How do you become innovative and keep pushing that envelope that you talked about before within this, the body of rules that exists?

DAN GURNEY:

12:06:00;14

Rules are changing all the time. And as you increase the number of bureaucrats, why, get more rules and less freedom. In racing, I think it's gone way too far, my own personal opinion. I think the fans realize is that it's almost impossible to, well, right now, even though we've built 157 different racing cars during our time, we're not allowed to build one for the Indy 500. We're not allowed to build one for the sports car series that our son Alexander is involved in. So, it's a strange situation.

12:06:50;18

But bureaucrats and freedom don't seem to mix. And I think a lot of it is done with the right motive. The bureaucrats say we're in show business. And that's what we do best. And people go there to see racing may be

disappointed. I don't know. But it is disappointing when it meant so much to have the freedom to innovate or to create or to come up with better ways of doing things, more efficient this, more efficient that.

12:07:28;29

And you know, I, in a way, I guess the lot of the, well, history doesn't mean much, often. When, in fact, as you get older, it means an awful lot. And, but I know in racing, a lotta times they, in road racing in particular, they've rendered a lot of racetracks obsolete. They say they're too dangerous or you can't do that anymore. And you have to run at this new place we're creating over here that looks like a television set or something. And, but don't get me too far started on this.

## 26 GURNEY INNOVATING WITHIN THE SYSTEM

### QUESTION:

12:08:09;03

But obviously, back when you were building cars and doing this, you had to somehow get around some of the, you had to look for loopholes. Would that be the term? I mean, you still have to innovate within that system, even though it's harder than now. But how did you do it? How did you keep motivated with all these rules on you to keep pushing

that envelope and going faster and trying to win more?

DAN GURNEY:

12:08:31;22

I think, how do you get around restrictive rules? I think you get down to integrity, and whether you wanna put your own integrity at risk or not. And that's a difficult situation. You and a lot, often, it's on one occasion, I recall people, early on when they were turbo-charging cars at Indy, it was difficult for the rules' enforcers to maintain the rules about turbo-charging.

12:09:20;20

And various people were taking advantage of the difficulty of enforcing the rules. And we started to realize, "Hey. We're paying attention to the rules. And these other people are stretching them beyond, you know, to a ridiculous point." It's like having a police force that can't enforce the rules of the police, of the community.

12:09:49;26

And if you're sure that the police force can't cut it, what do you do then? That's an even more difficult situation. In that case, we got innovative enough to be able to get through the rules and do well. And that was the year that Mike Mosley finished third in our car at Indy, just missed

beating Foyt by about three feet near the end. But anyway...

QUESTION:

12:10:22;16

And so what was the innovation that you say, "We were innovative. We got around the rules." And tell me what, how those people or your people did that. What did you actually do?

DAN GURNEY:

12:10:32;07

Once we realized what was happening on most of the cars, there's a turbo charger which has an exhaust and a wastegate, which also has a separate exhaust to bleed off pressure if you're getting near the limit. So they were putting a-washer with a smaller hole, welding it inside the wastegate pipe, which meant that it had a leak there.

12:11:03;28

But it wasn't, it was the hole was small enough so that they could still get much more boost than they were allowed to have. Well and their pop-off valve, they call it, could get through the rule, the test that they gave to the pop-off valve to show that it would pop off when it was supposed to.

12:11:32;13

We decided we had to do something. So, we got a situation where we put a wastegate, or a pop-off valve in there, with a nice, soft spring on the initial opening of the valve, which was all that the tests could create. But soon afterwards, was a much stronger spring. And it would limit the amount the pop-off valve would open. So, it could leak. But you still make plenty of boost. And we came up with that. I kinda helped do that one.

## 27 GURNEY HOW DO YOU MOTIVATE YOUR TEAM?

QUESTION:

12:12:07;00

Well, you know, you had this group of people you're working with inventing things as you're going along. How did you keep them all motivated to be innovative? And just in general how do you try to keep people, you know, engaged in that passion, to wanna, to be better and be innovative?

DAN GURNEY:

12:12:23;11

Wha[t] was that question?

QUESTION:

12:12:24;09

How do you, the team you're working with, keep them innovative? How do you motivate them to reach for...

DAN GURNEY:

12:12:29;09

In the racing business, if you continue to win, I mean, that's the tonic for all kinds of things. Now, and you do that, I mean if you, I guess, you know, you're, they, you can, the lessons that are learned in racing apply to just living and to politics and to business and to integrity.

12:13:01;20

And I mean, there, if you're in a business, why you're not really intent upon helping out your competitors. And yet, you have to abide by certain rules. Now, does everyone abide by them to the same degree or to the Nth degree? And, you know, that's, the, you talk, people talk about gray areas and black and white. Well we've often wondered, well, what would racing be like if there were no rules, just a distance, or, and you only get so much fuel to do the race? That'd be interesting, and put really high money on it but keep the rules so simple that they'd be very easy to verify that you're complying and so forth.

28 GURNEY GOODYEAR VS. FIRESTONE

QUESTION:

12:13:50;21

Tell me a little bit about when you started All American Racing and started building the Eagles. Tell me about how

that all got going.

DAN GURNEY:

12:14:02;01

Back in '60, what, end of '64, in '64 I think it was, at Indy 500, it was the first year that Goodyear intended to invade what had been Firestone territory. And to make a long story short, as the day of the race approached Firestone had their depot on the left side as you're going out to the racetrack out of Gasoline Alley.

12:14:31;17

And Goodyear was on the right. And they had their blue and gold or yellow suits, and the red and white were Firestone. Well, as race day dawned, every single car was on Firestones, even those that had been practicing on Goodyear's. And someone at Firestone had gone around and made it attractive enough for everyone to be on Firestones.

12:14:58;08

And this was a huge insult to Goodyear in front of the world. And they decided that they were gonna not let that happen anymore. It was almost like insulting Mother Nature, you know. It's something they really shouldn't, you shouldn't do. And that ended up being the knocking

on opportunity door.

12:15:25;03

And they asked Carroll Shelby who was my partner at the time, "Do you know anyone or could you build Indy cars for us, because we want to have Indy cars where we know that they're gonna be on Goodyear tires." And Carroll said, "Look. I'm awfully busy right now. And I couldn't possibly do it with all the commitments I have. But maybe, I think maybe Dan could do it. And I'll get with him."

12:15:57;15

So, he asked me would I do it, and I said yes, under one circumstance. I think I know a way of getting in touch with all the important key people from the whole spectrum of what you need to do that. And, but I said in addition to that, on one condition would be that we can also build a Formula One Grand Prix car at the same time. And because the rules at the time were close enough to each other so you could do it without very many changes. And Goodyear said yes. So, that started the whole catastrophe.

29 GURNEY EAGLE RACECARS

QUESTION:

12:16:41;15

And in the early years, those Eagles were, they were holdin' their own, weren't they?

DAN GURNEY:

12:16:44;25

Oh, yes.

QUESTION:

12:16:45;13

Tell me a little bit about that.

DAN GURNEY:

12:16:48;08

Well, in the beginning, we were competitive, the first year we were out in '66. Lloyd Ruby was leading that race with a Ford-powered Eagle, and, but developed an oil leak. And that was the end of that. But it was a terrific time. And a lotta pressure to continue to come up with new cars and to evolve the cars that you had, I mean, in those days, we could change between races.

12:17:29;05

We could make changes. And no one knew much at all about aerodynamics at the time. But gradually that intruded into the racing business big time. And the biggest challenge we, I mean, all the challenges were big if you're behind. But when the McLaren team came over with their winged car, they managed to get permission to not just

put vestigial wings, but real wings, on the car. And all of a sudden, they bumped the, traditionally at that time, the lap speeds had gone up one and a half miles per hour per year at Indy, back to 1911 or whenever it was.

12:18:19;13

It was similar, that kind of increase. And the McLaren, I think, put 12 or 13 miles an hour all in the first year they came out. So, that's a real challenge. And when that happened you know, we had to start scratchin' our heads pretty big time. And we did. And the next year, we came up with one that put another 13 or so on top of that McLaren number. So, in two years, it had gone up over 25 miles an hour.

### 30 GURNEY COMPETITION IN RACECAR DESIGN

QUESTION:

12:18:53;10

Was that another example where you had to kind of work around the rules to get those kind of lap speed.

DAN GURNEY:

12:18:57;00

No. In that case, well, already that wasn't the case of working around the rules, although anytime you can find a loophole or a legitimate way of defeating the rules, why, it's up to you to do so. I mean, as long as it's legit. So

but that was wings and turbo-charging and good design. So, you know, that blew the doors off of all the tradition. And everyone liked it for awhile.

QUESTION:

12:19:41;10

But then the competition sorta caught up with you and knocked you off the top of the hill? Is that an accurate way?

DAN GURNEY:

12:19:45;28

No, I wouldn't say that. I mean, we were in '73, we entered, I think 21 of the 33 fastest starters were Eagles. So, it was a, that was a high watermark. But we were pretty good for quite a bit of time.

QUESTION:

12:20:05;28

And was Parnelli comin' in though, at around that time? Have I got this straight? And he was sorta challenging with his cars too, or...

DAN GURNEY:

12:20:13;14

Parnelli came with a very, very good designer and came up with a car. But for one reason or another, it fell short. And it was a beautiful car, beautifully made. But in the end, they ended up running Eagles which, I'm sure that left a bad taste in his mouth. But that's one of the things

you could do. But later on, it's funny.

12:20:48;28

Now, somewhere in there have you ever, I shouldn't say that. But we used to say, do you remember the days when it used to say the sun never sets on the British Empire? Well, you know why that is? Well, that's because God doesn't trust those limeys at night, see. And it's that, that isn't a very thing for your movie. But don't send it to England, please. 'Cause I have a lotta very good friends over there. What I was thinking though is, that the British and their, you have to hand it to 'em. They ended up controlling the rule-making, just by inserting good people into that process. And that was often true of the way they operated.

12:21:52;28

And when you thought, when the British Empire was at its peak, if you realize how few people from Britain were actually orchestrating it, it's, you know, they were top notch. But it was then that on one occasion, we had several cars that were not allowed to run anymore. Because they were threatening the British. And that wasn't what we call the most fun. It's just part of life.

So...

DAN GURNEY:

12:22:26;10

...politics are important. What?

31 GURNEY WHAT IS BLAT?

QUESTION:

12:22:28;01

It's like the big guy versus the little guy. It's a big...

DAN GURNEY:

12:22:29;19

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, or clever and, but it does happen.

QUESTION:

12:22:35;03

Let me ask you, do you remember a technology, I think you invented, called BLAT?

DAN GURNEY:

12:22:39;24

Yes.

QUESTION:

12:22:40;17

Tell me a little bit about BLAT, what it stands for.

DAN GURNEY:

12:22:44;04

Well, when the wings and the aerodynamics really took control big time it was, they decided that they were using what they call ground effects, which is an aero, airplane, aircraft term, mostly. It's like, that an airplane comes in to land, as it gets near the ground it's starting to land on a bit of a pillow of air so it doesn't come down as rapidly.

12:23:14;24

It sorta floats a little bit longer. Well, that's just the opposite of what ground effects, I mean, that's what ground effects started out as. But on, in the case of racecars, its ground effects are used to keep the car sucked down onto the track. And they had traction for goin' around the corners faster. And, but we were thinking, "Well, our ground effects was done in a different way."

12:23:42;08

And we said, you know, "It's not, we use BLAT." And remember, BLAT was a beer at one time. But this was BLAT, we called it Boundary Layer Adhesion Technology. And so, we just used BLAT. And everybody got a smile out of it. And it was a lotta fun. We had a very good car. That was good enough. So, they changed the rules. Yes.

QUESTION:

12:24:06;18

So, every time you had an innovation, somebody...

DAN GURNEY:

12:24:08;13

Not every time.

QUESTION:

12:24:09;21

Couple times.

DAN GURNEY:

12:24:11;19

Oh, we've had our day in the sun. And it was, those were the fun times.

### 32 GURNEY INDY CAR RULES

QUESTION:

13:00:48;22

Just a couple of follow-ups. You said today, you're not allowed to build Indy cars, you said, for your son? It's why can't you build Indy cars anymore?

DAN GURNEY:

13:00:58;12

The rules say that Tony George , who inherited the ownership from his grandfather, Tony Hallman, they decide who they're going to purchase cars from, or who will be allowed to build cars. And that's it. It's not open as it used to be.

QUESTION:

13:01:34;12

So, it's sanctioned body of vendors , is that what you're saying?

DAN GURNEY:

13:01:37;08

Yes, the, I think, almost all the cars are now built in Italy. I'm not sure of that, but I think so. Does anybody here know? Oh, okay.

DAN GURNEY:

13:01:53;08

I think it's called a Dallara , right?

QUESTION:

13:01:58;23

And when did that rule come in, do you know? I mean, and what do you think of that whole thing?

DAN GURNEY:

13:02:04;27

I, what do I think of the way the rules are right now? It, there's been a civil war in open wheel Indy car racing for a long time. And it has damaged both sides that are competing. And now I think it was down, a civil war going on for 15, 20 years. Well now, they say, "Okay, the war is over. Let's all...". Well, of course most of the people, or a lot of the people have never heard of it. And they like other things. And so, the enormous crowds that were once showing up almost automatically, are not there anymore. So, it hopefully, the new leadership, if there will be new leadership, will be able to rekindle that. But it's, I don't know what the odds on are on that happening are.

### 33 GURNEY WHY WE STOPPED BUILDING EAGLES

QUESTION:

13:03:08;20

Okay, I also wanted to ask you, you've stopped building the Eagles?

DAN GURNEY:

13:03:13;10

Uh-huh.

QUESTION:

13:03:14;13

Tell me why you stopped? What happened that, just, you decided to quit doing that?

DAN GURNEY:

13:03:18;28

Why did we stop building Eagles? Partly because we weren't allowed to sell them anywhere, or couldn't go to Indy, or couldn't go to the, well, they closed down IMSA. And the thing that has replaced that is now, there are six different companies that can build cars for the series, the Grand Am, Daytona Prototype Series. And we're not among them. So, we've been sort of told that we can't build 'em. Or, if we do, we have to buy one of the six outfits.

13:04:09;15

And now, with the number of bureaucrats there, it's one of those, are we having fun yet kind of situations. And we're not. So, we just said, hey, and we, it didn't, it wasn't something that we could stop easily, you know. Our last, the last cars that we built were with Toyota, behind, as the primary sponsors, along with Castrol and Goodyear.

13:04:41;06

But when that stopped, we had been just over 200 people here. And within about a year, we're down to about 12, from 200. And we're now back up over 75. And, but we're working on un-racing things.

### 34 GURNEY RULES CAN STIFLE INNOVATION

QUESTION:

13:05:03;04

So, you set, had to sort of reinvent, and re-innovate what you were doing? I mean, so, you responded to this shutdown, this forced shutdown, by being innovative, did you not?

DAN GURNEY:

13:05:11;11

Yes.

QUESTION:

13:05:12;18

Tell me how that worked. How, why didn't you just pack it in? Why, how, why did you decide to go after it?

DAN GURNEY:

13:05:18;00

Well, I think that the, if I understand the question correctly. I think, we stopped because it, there was no interest in innovation or design. It was just, you had to fit some attorney's idea of what had to be done, and it didn't appeal to us. And most of the cars, the, I mean, they're

the wonderful people that are enforcing the rules, are also making the designs. So, a designer is in handcuffs going in. Well, you know, that isn't the way you really want to do it. And spend your time I used to say, I accused on one occasion I said, "Well, at least we won't have to use up 20 gallons of lipstick every few weeks in order to sell." But that didn't go over so big either. So.

### 35 GURNEY DOES AMERICA ENCOURAGE INNOVATION?

QUESTION:

13:06:19;21

But it's funny. Well, with that thing, do you think America, even with things like the story you just told us, is still a great place for innovators, and people who want to invent the future?

DAN GURNEY:

13:06:30;08

Oh, America?

QUESTION:

13:06:31;00

Yeah.

DAN GURNEY:

13:06:31;19

Absolutely.

QUESTION:

13:06:32;17

Tell me a little bit about how you feel about that.

DAN GURNEY:

13:06:37;20

Is America still a great place for new things, and pressing the frontiers, and all of that? Yes, absolutely, it still is. But, it, a lot of it has been driven out of California. Which, really bothers me. Much of the racing is back in the Carolinas, and in what used to be the Deep South.

13:07:06;03

And that's because they've opened up their arms and said, "Welcome," and "Please, come here, and get jobs," and you know, it's good stuff. And it, that's happening in other states as well. Now, California has, they still have, it's pretty attractive from the standpoint of weather, and surroundings, and history.

13:07:28;24

But it's not easy to run, not new companies are coming in very often. It's still, I mean, you look at, it's now, no longer the steam age. I mean, you have the digital age, and computers, and all of that is still a big part in it. And of course, Silicon Valley is in California. So.

QUESTION:

13:07:54;27

There's something unique though, about the American character, you think, that just makes people want to

invent, and be innovative?

DAN GURNEY:

13:08:03;14

Is there something unique about the American character that, I, to me, it's probably, and I've been talking about the diminished amount of freedom. But freedom is still what I think is the most important ingredient. And it doesn't matter what brand of human being you are if, and you can get out and compete, and have your passion, and be able to get with the program, and do things together. I, that's still very much American. I hope it continues to be that way. I'm gonna intend to vote for the right people to make sure that that continues to happen that way. But I you know...

**36 GURNEY HOW DO YOU ENCOURAGE INNOVATION?**

QUESTION:

13:08:45;12

Well, I'm...

QUESTION:

13:08:54;16

Tell me again, about this freedom, this innovation of freedom. I mean, you've transformed your business. You're still innovative here.

DAN GURNEY:

13:09:00;12

Uh-huh

## QUESTION:

13:09:01;13

Come up with new products, you've got people here. How do you keep them innovative and give them the freedom to work? Tell me how that works.

## DAN GURNEY:

13:09:09;22

That's a good question. I don't know how, I mean, I think that the, you know, we have quite a few Mexican people here. Terrific guys, and girls, and workers, and we have a whole spectrum of people. And they seem to get along really well together. Now, I think they have some excellent leadership. We have one, we do a lot of composite work. And a fellow named Brett George is able to do almost every job as well as the best in our company.

13:09:55;21

And he gets a lot of respect. There's a lot of humor involved in what we do, even though we're deadly serious about it. We all have a sense of humor. That's very important. Justin, our son Justin, is doing a great job of being able to handle some big demands on our ability. And the people that we have here are able to strike back and perform.

13:10:26;10

You know, we used to say, we can't do more than four or five miracles a week. And, but we seem to be able to do that. And that's a spirit of that where they feel good about each other.

QUESTION:

13:10:39;06

Is there a way, that that freedom, that you think...

DAN GURNEY:

13:10:42;06

We've got people from Vietnam, we've got people from India. We have, you know, just, it's a fascinating situation. Which is a melting pot. And the, that's America, for sure.

QUESTION:

13:10:56;10

Do you sort of turn the people loose, and let them be real creative, or?

DAN GURNEY:

13:11:00;09

A little bit. No. I, you know, you'd have to ask Justin. And I mean, these people are doing it on merit. They're not just chin music that enables them to hold a job, as long as they can pull the wool over your eyes. Not with that, that doesn't last long here. Go ahead.

**37 GURNEY HOW DO YOU WANT TO BE REMEMBERED?**

## QUESTION:

13:12:33;05

Let me ask you this, I mean, you've obviously accomplished a lot throughout your years. What do you think people, what would you like people to remember you for? Like even 100 years now, when they look back at Dan Gurney, the race car driver said something else, and what's your take on that?

## DAN GURNEY:

13:12:52;19

Hmm. Somebody who gives good interviews? No, that won't work. No. Ahm. I guess, I try to think of, just like driving in 999 was a window to a time that is gone now. And just that it's, that's part of history. I'd like to see them, maybe read the book that my wife and I are doing. My wife, primarily.

13:13:47;05

And be able to see what it was like in this particular era. And see the parallels, I guess, as we do with the ones that we look back at. Now, they could look back, too. And those things, if we can be a rich, mother lode of that stuff, why that'd be great.

**38 GURNEY ADVICE FOR KIDS**

QUESTION:

13:14:18;07

And suppose you had a bunch of kids here today, young kids. What would you, what would be your advice to them on how they should prepare for their future?

DAN GURNEY:

13:14:25;10

How they can prepare?

QUESTION:

13:14:26;15

Prepare for their future. You know, take some inspiration from what you've done, perhaps?

DAN GURNEY:

13:14:33;10

Well education is probably, regardless of whether you get it, or exactly how you get it, it [is] terribly important. So I don't know. It's hard for me to think like a kid coming along now. There were times where I thought, there were more, there was more opportunity back then, or there's less than there is now. Or, you know, it's opportunity though, is, if America is, sort of continues its traditions, why, it's gonna be a great place to live.

13:15:30;22

And I'm not so sure that money is as important as, if you're lucky enough to figure out what you'd really love to do. That's probably way more important than how much

you can, how much money you can make. That doesn't mean you can be terribly happy working for nothing. But if you can follow your passion, why that's a, you're pretty lucky.

### 39 GURNEY MESSAGE TO THE FUTURE

#### QUESTION:

13:16:04;27

One final thought here. We were asking people, 'cause this interview is going to survive for thousands of years we hope. Is there some kind of message you'd like to leave to the people of the future? We asked Carroll, and he just said, "Never give up." That was his answer, short and sweet, like that. Is there something Dan Gurney would like to leave? A little time capsule here for the folks down the road, maybe?

#### DAN GURNEY:

13:16:27;29

Well, you always remember things like, my father-in-law said, "It's better to be rich and healthy, than sick and poor." Which is, of course, that's not a very good answer to that question. But I don't know what never give up means.

#### QUESTION:

13:16:49;17

Now, that's what Carroll said.

DAN GURNEY:

13:16:51;01

I know. I know. And it sounds good, doesn't it? It depends on what you're never giving up on, doesn't it? I mean, if you're, what did I say? If at first you don't succeed...

DAN GURNEY:

13:17:07;09

Yep. If you're robbin' a bank, that's probably not a very good, so I, one, I think, life is not necessarily fair. Don't expect it to be. But it doesn't mean that it isn't terrific. And that you've got an opportunity to, you know, keep your eyes open. Look for what really appeals to you. I mean, you're so lucky if you can even identify what it is you'd love to be doing. And then, you know, set your course, if you can. But I don't know. I don't think you should be so grim about it that, if it doesn't work to your satisfaction, that you have to keep on doing it anyway. I mean, I think you need to be able to take a well-rounded look at things, and decide, I mean hopefully, you're gonna be lucky. I guess, that still counts. Yeah.

QUESTION:

13:18:08;26

Let me ask you this. I mean, a lot has been written and said about you, and people you know. Is there anything

you want to correct? Have there been some mistakes made along, long held, a lot of people say, "I want to correct this." A couple of people have told us things. "This was never true. Here's what really happened," or something like that you'd to make sure the world knows?

DAN GURNEY:

13:18:50;06

No, I don't, hmm. You know, I've thought of quite a few things in my, in searching for something. And you know, all those Confucius say[ings], kind of things that "men who kisses girl on side of hill, not on level", that kind of thing. But I think friendship, and I could see when I was racing in Formula One Grand Prix racing, I traveled a lot of the world, and got to see all kinds of different places.

13:19:50;23

And I can see why people love their country. I happen to like mine a lot. I love my country. But I understand why people love theirs, too. And that's a, that was an interesting revelation, in a way. So, it's. I don't think being patriotic is a bad thing. It's been, they've tried to portray it often as that way. But I never felt that way. So but it's been a wonderful thing. And I'm still trying to build a good motorcycle.

**40 GURNEY THE ALLIGATOR MOTORCYCLE**

QUESTION:

13:20:53;26 It's called the Alligator, right?

DAN GURNEY:

13:20:55;04 That's right. Well...

QUESTION:

13:21:01;27 Okay, tell us about the, why you want to build a better motorcycle? About the ones you've built. There's an Alligator. Give us your chops on that.

DAN GURNEY:

13:21:10;22 I've been a motorcycle fan since I was probably knee-high. And I just enjoy the spirit of many of the people that have pioneered that business. It's a global, two-wheel business is global. And since I'm my age, and height, and weight, and so forth, I don't really fit on what is the sort of, the way motorcycles have evolved from the sport bike standpoint. You're kind of hunched over, and the proverbial, monkey on a football kind of thing. And I, and it's not, so, I've come up with the Alligator concept. And the name Alligator, came from our machinist here at AAR that is no longer with us. But you know, we were saying, "Well, what are we gonna name this thing?"

13:22:20;25

And "Well, tell me about it." And he said, "Well, it's gonna, I want it to be low. And it's gonna be pretty ferocious, and one or two other things". And it's old-fashioned to some degree, and yet, not. And right away he said, "Well, you're talkin' about an alligator, right?" And I said, "That's it. That's the name."

13:22:45;04

And it so, it's a, you sit down in it. About the height of this chair. And so, you're not up on top, fighting the wind so much. You're down in it, and the wind is kind of over and around you. And it's pretty comfortable. There's a low center of gravity. It feels good. It's making an essentially, a smaller hole through the air. So, it's pretty efficient. And it doesn't quickly do a wheelie. So, that gives you more freedom to just gas it from a standing start. It's pretty good.

13:23:23;09

We tried to make it light, which would be racing sort of technology, and make it aerodynamic, and efficient. And I mean, I'm looking forward, we're liable to make one that can make some really good mileage these days, and still

keep the bugs on your teeth. So, it's just a great deal of fun.

13:23:49;01

We have learned to give much greater respect to the motorcycle builders and designers that have come before. Because ours have been so far unable to surpass what they've done. But we're still learning. So that was a real wake-up call, to say, well, we can fix this, and have something really good in no time at all. Well, it, we ended up with something that you were afraid to go further than from here to the market and back. 'Cause it's liable to breakdown.

13:24:28;06

So, but we're trying to get over that. And we're gonna have something that I think people are gonna really like. And I look forward to the day when other people will be riding them.

#### 41 GURNEY FREEDOM AND INNOVATION

##### QUESTION:

13:24:42;24

Okay, let me just do a follow-up to, about this thing about the, how freedom sets people into their inventive modes, or...

DAN GURNEY:

13:24:49;07

Yes.

QUESTION:

13:24:50;19

Tell me about that sense of how freedom, you think, helps people become innovative.

DAN GURNEY:

13:24:58;28

Well I think, freedom means, that there are opportunities. If you're a very regimented, or a, or you're hemmed in by rules that say, you can't do this, this, this, and this. And there's only this much education. And you can't go there unless you do these other things.

13:25:24;14

That's a stultifying situation. And the freedom to be able to make your own mistakes, and learn from them. Or, make your own successes, or those are all very educational. And I think as I got older, I appreciate the wonderful thing that you know, our forefathers and mothers tried to provide for us.

QUESTION:

13:26:03;22

Okay, thanks so much. That was great.

DAN GURNEY:

13:26:06;24

Thank you.