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TRANSCRIPT OF A VIDEO ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEW WITH

LYN ST. JAMES

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QUESTION:

01:03:14;18

Let's start with something easy. Behind you we see this fantastic looking race car. Just tell me a little bit about that car. What amused you, and what you did with it that the world remembers so well?

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:03:22;03

Well, let's see. First of all, I've been racing for over 30 years. And this is the only race car that I own. So the 1988 Thunderbird that I set records with at Talladega is my, personally that's the only race car that I have. So it's very dear to me.

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I wished I had a few others that I've raced in the past. But at that particular time in my career I was really trying to maintain a very positive and beneficial relationship with Ford Motor Company, so that, you know, that there was value there.

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I had a long standing relationship, I've been with them

since 1981. We're now in 1988. And so I really wanted some, to continue to do things of value to them, for them. And I also, though, wanted to continue to demonstrate my skills.

01:04:05;08

And to test my skills, and challenge my skills. And sometimes you have to go outside your comfort zone to do that. I mean, if you just keep doing the same thing that I was doing, which at that time was GT racing, Trans Am and the IMSA Camel GT series. I was really trying to A) show that I could drive a stock car and try to get into NASCAR.

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And, B) show that I, again, had these diverse skills. So it was a statement for me and my skills. It was also, I thought something of great value of Ford Motor Company, because they were just getting into NASCAR at that time.

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The Thunderbird was not winning a lot of races at that time. And so if you can go out and do something splashy

that's a success, it's something that was good for the company, and for Ford Motor Company. And then in addition to that, I had just come off the previous year winning the 24 Hours of Daytona with Bill Elliott.

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And I'd also then ran with Bill Elliott at Watkins Glen, you know, around that same time. And so, I mean, Bill and his whole family, he owned the team that he was driving and racing at the time, was just, we really developed a great friendship and a neat relationship.

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And I thought, it'd be so cool to do something with Bill Elliott. And so the fact that the Elliott's built that car, you know, did all the testing and setting it, everything up. So it was just a fabulous opportunity. And it really, I think, you know, did a lot for my career.

QUESTION:

01:05:19;00

Take me back to that day when you went out and set the record that sort of visceral feeling you had, what it felt like? And when you did it all tell me a little bit about that.

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:05:26;21 Well, the first very strange thing about setting records with a race car is there's no one else there. I'm always used to being at the race track, where there's a lot of other cars, there's a lot of activity. Quite frankly, there's a lot of things to distract people.

01:05:36;25 So there was this sort of feeling of isolation and like, God, all those people. There were media people there. And Ford Motor Company executives there. And I'm like, you know, all the eyes were on me.

01:05:45;28 So it was kind of extra pressure that I am not used to feeling. The other thing, we weren't just there a day. We were there for days. And yet the media was invited on a day to watch Lyn set the record. Well, we don't know what the weather's gonna be like that day.

01:06:01;16 We don't know how the car's running that day. I mean, it wasn't like, "Oh, it was..." like, there's a session at 3:00,

it's called qualifying, so everybody needs to be there then. I mean, it, you just don't control your destiny that much. So it was just a lot of pressure. It was a lot of hurry up and wait, which is racing, is that a lot. You go out and you do some runs. And, you know, you check everything.

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And so it was kind of like watching grass grow for a lot of people, I think. But then, you know, we went out and we had to do a couple of sessions. And the car got better. I got better driving the car.

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But we didn't really set the ultimate record until the next morning after all the media had left. So it was kind of an interesting thing that, you know, when we went fast enough to set the record. But I went faster the next morning, after all the media left.

QUESTION:

01:06:47;05

So did you feel you had accomplished that goal to show them your skills? You know, you might be able to get to NASCAR, more important, tell me a little bit...

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:06:52;11 Well...

QUESTION:

01:06:52;26 I felt accomplishment.

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:06:53;24 Yeah. There, it was definitely a very respectable speed. We went 212.5 miles an hour. Just a hair. I think it was two or 3/10 of a mile an hour slower than Bill Elliott's. I mean, it was, you know, right there close.

01:07:07;27 The engine then went kaput. I mean, it didn't actually blow. But it went soft. And so we were done. So everybody was, it was a success on everybody's record, Ford, the media, Goodyear, you know, the Elliott's, everybody was happy.

01:07:19;06 I was proud. But I have to tell you that I was really surprised, because in driving in the car that two and a half, it was around two and a half days, I didn't feel that comfortable in the car. I had, the car was very heavy.

The steering was not real positive. The tires were, really felt like I had none at all. I couldn't feel the car.

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I remember one time literally saying to Bill Elliott 'cause he'd stuck his head in when I came in for one of my stops "So how's it goin'?" And I looked up at him and I said, "I don't know who's driving this thing. 'Cause I can't feel it."

01:07:49;06

He said, "Just give it some time. It'll come to you."

Which, it did. But I didn't really feel like at one with the car. But, you know, I still did well. Three weeks later, I got to drive an Indy car for the first time. I'd been working and trying to make that happen, as well.

01:08:04;28

You got to keep a lot of balls in the air when you're running out of time, and you want to make a lot of things happen. And I had been trying to get a chance to drive an Indy car. And Dick Simon who was a successful team owner in Indy car racing, he called me and gave me

01:08:17;11

qn opportunity to drive an Indy car. It was a track in Memphis, Tennessee. And I didn't even know there was a racetrack in Memphis, Tennessee. But there was. It was a small test track, and a track that they run the drag racers on.

01:08:30;08

And three weeks later after the success at Talladega, I was in an Indy car for the first time. And I felt completely at home. I mean, I was so right with that car. And so one with that car. And it clearly made, I made a decision that day.

01:08:45;00

Because I thought, "If I got to climb this mountain, of trying to go to the next level in my career, I'm gonna chase the one that I feel the most comfortable with." And I kind of quite frankly, I walked away from trying to get into NASCAR.

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'cause I knew that Ford still wasn't interested. I mean, quite frankly, the executive at Ford that was in charge of

the racing program said, "Lyn, we need veterans. We do not need rookies. 'Cause we need to put Ford Motor Company in the winner's circle in NASCAR."

01:09:12;02

So, I respected that. They weren't against me. It's just, you know, I was a rookie. And when I drove that Indy car, I just thought, "You know, this is what I'm gonna make happen." And so it was a decisive moment for...

QUESTION:

01:09:24;22

Would you say you were running out of time, you know, with your Ford contract, or age wise, or what does that really mean?

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:09:29;07

Well, it was mostly age. I mean, my Ford contracts were all one year contracts. And so, you know, I never knew really for sure of year to year. I mean, it was always a great relationship.

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But there was times when I never knew. And there were times when I had to really fight hard to get renewals. So

it was really more of my age. And also, well, it was, yeah, it was my age. 'Cause at that time, I'm trying to think, I was almost 40 year old.

01:09:56;23

And you know, a lot of drivers retire around that time, or they know they're in their latter part of their years. Plus, you know, the media, sponsors, fans, you know, they like news. And you get to be old news pretty quickly if you aren't out there breaking new ground, accomplishing better things.

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And so I was ready. I was anxious, you know. And I was to conquer to new things. And so, that's how I guess when I say I was running out of time. It wasn't like I was 20, you know, 21 or 22 year old. And I could go, "Oh, well." You know? This is a good year, fine. If not, you know, next will get better. I couldn't take that kind of an attitude.

QUESTION:

01:10:36;23

Now let's do a flashback now. You're just on the verge on

this story of getting into Indy. But let's go back to the very beginning when you were a young girl, I assume. And if you go back...

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:10:46;03

Some day or other I was a young...

QUESTION:

01:10:47;11

You used to be a young girl, huh? Oh, and there's all these stories about what got you interested in racing. I mean, I've seen, just for the record, tell us about how you really came to be so interested and decided to do it at a time when, you know, for especially, for women, you didn't do it. So tell, take me, and paint that picture for me.

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:11:04;10

Well, I grew up in Ohio. Outside of Cleveland. Very traditional background. I had no sisters and brothers. I lived across the street from a factory. That's where I meet, I had this, my dad was in a family sheet metal business.

01:11:17;11

I started taking piano lessons at the age of six. I was not

an active child. And then I went to girls' school, though, in seventh grade. I was fortunate enough to be able to go to this school that was in the next town, right next to us.

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And because of that I got sports. Because they give you, have to have sports when you're in a girls' school. If I'd gone to public school, I wouldn't have had it. So I became physically active. And I became not an athlete in the true sense of the word. 'Cause I was never athletically gifted. But at the same time I started to learn how to compete. I learned how to win, how to lose, how to be part of a team. The great life lesson that you learn through sports.

01:11:56;08

So I felt blessed that I was able to have done that at a young age. Racing didn't really come into my life until I was around 16 or 17, when I started driving. And I had a lot of guys that were my buddies. And they took me to the races.

01:12:08;03

And it was mostly the drag races. And I actually mouthed off at one of my buddies when they lost at this little local track that we were at. And he said, "If you're so good, why don't you drive the car?" And I said, "Really? Will you let me drive your car?"

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He had a GTO. And so I lined her up. And I watched how the Christmas trees went and all that stuff. And I remember sitting on the line, and getting it up to about 3,000 RPM. And watching the lights. And I mean, I just came alive inside. I mean, maybe it was adrenaline. I don't know.

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But I just felt so powerful at that moment. And I had done nothing in my life ever before that I felt that power. And I won. And I ended up, every time you win, I got my little tickets still that I saved, but every time you win, you come back around, and it's elimination deal.

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And I ended up winning that class that day, that Sunday,

at that racetrack. And so I came home and showed my mom this trophy. And said, "Wow, this was just so cool, Mom." You know?

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And she said, "Look it, I didn't send you to girls' school and give you piano lessons that teach some, you know, I taught you to be a young lady, a self-sufficient, independent young, and you're not gonna be doing that kind of stuff." So that came to a screeching halt. I was, still was a spectator, though. I went to a lot of races. So there was something about the sport, the sounds, the smells, all the sensations.

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I mean, if you're not alive when you're, you know, if you're not feeling more alive when you're at a racetrack, to me, then, you know, there's something wrong with you. You may not like it. But you're definitely gonna get elevated sensations of sound, and smells, and visually it's stimulating.

01:13:29;29 I mean, it was really so exciting. It wasn't until I moved to Florida. And I went to the 24 hours of Daytona, and the 12 hours of Sebring. I married this great guy that had a motorcycle and was really cool. And we found out about the Sports Car Club of America.

01:13:46;23 And he said, "Well, why don't we join. And let's see if we can figure out how to do this?" And so we went out and I got a Ford Pinto. I bought it at my local Ford dealer.

01:13:56;24 I put a roll bar in it, and a five point seatbelt, and a five pound fire extinguisher. Which was required for all race cars, and not just Pintos. And he went out and bought this clapped, old Corvette that fell apart because he wanted to turn it into a race car.

01:14:09;21 And so we were husband and wife, business partners and racing team. And so I raced the Pinto. I passed my first driver school. And my second driver school. And I just thought once I got behind the wheel of that Pinto, I

thought, "This was it. This was just, this was what I always felt like I was meant to do in this world."

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And so sure, I was in my 20s. I had no role models. But I didn't really think about that. All I wanted to do was not be an embarrassment to myself, and have fun. And that meant win races, and learn how to drive well.

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And it's documented so I can't deny it, that my first race, after driver's school, I ended up losing control of the car, and I spun off into this body of water. We were down in south Florida, at West Palm Beach. And I drove into a lake. And the car totally submerged.

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And it was a frightening moment for me and embarrassing, because this was my street car. We had to flat tow it home, clean that thing out, and drive it. I had to drive it to work the next day. I mean, and it stunk, 'cause that was stagnant water.

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So you know, I didn't, I'm not naturally gifted necessarily, but I was somebody that was, I loved it. I was determined to learn how to be good at it. And to learn how to win. And I've dedicated my life to it ever since. And absolutely...

QUESTION:

01:15:26;28

Now there's another story I think, when you were a teenager. That you and your mother went to Indy or something. Did that really happen?

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:15:32;19

Oh, yes. Yes.

QUESTION:

01:15:33;14

So that your mother, even though she said, "We're stopping. The breaks are going on. Somehow she took the breaks off?"

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:15:38;24

Well, no. No. She, it wasn't a shock the break offs. It was just that she knew how badly I wanted to go. And so she just went literally as the escort to make sure that there was no hanky-panky going on.

- 01:15:48;00 I mean, you know, I was still a teenager. And it was the guys at a gas station. And they invited me to go, and they liked my mom, too. 'Cause my mom was really cool.
- 01:15:56;26 So she didn't really put the breaks on for me to watch racing. She just didn't want me doing it. And so to go to the Indy 500 was a really big deal. And so she went with us. And so we ended up staying. 'Cause we, they didn't have hotel rooms or anything.
- 01:16:13;08 I mean, it was a bunch of guys gonna go. You know? And so we ended up going, she didn't go to the race. She stayed in this little house. You know? 'Cause people in Speedway, Indiana, which now I've gotten to know quite well, they actually rent out their garages and spare bedrooms.
- 01:16:25;15 And put cots in it and stuff like that. So that people can stay there. And so she pretty much stayed there and then

just made sure that I was safe, and came back when I was supposed to be back, and that kind of stuff.

QUESTION:

01:16:36;00

Now how did you convince her that, to give up being a piano teacher? And go do 100 miles an hour round a track?

LYN ST. JAMES:

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Well, there was gaps of time in that, I mean, when I graduated from high school, I got a job as a secretary at U.S. Steel Cleveland District Sales Office. And then my first job, though, was actually a piano teacher, an organ teacher. When you went down to this little local music store, if you bought a piano and organ, you got six free lessons.

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I was the teacher. And I did that for about three months. And then they fired me. Because they said I was too hard on everybody. 'Cause I was really, I'm very serious as a person. And I was like, "If these people were gonna take their lessons, then I was gonna teach them the way my

teacher taught me."

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Which was really a much more serious type of teaching, as opposed to just she, they said, "Lyn, all they want to do is just learn how to play their instrument." You know? They, and so, I finally stopped doing that. I think it's good to find out what you're not meant to do.

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And that was one of the things that I found out I was not meant to do. But I did that, I think out of respect for the fact that my parents had paid for lessons for 13 years. So I thought that I needed to do something with it. You know? So I did.

QUESTION:

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But how would you rate your mother as an influence sort of, in this whole way you've approached your life and your career?

LYN ST. JAMES:

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Oh, my mother's been a huge influence. I mean, first she taught me how to drive. And I reminded her of that often,

when she complained about it years later. I said, "Mom, you're the one that taught me how to drive."

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And I remember one of our early driving lessons, I guess you'd say. We used to, you know, when you grew up in the Midwest, you went for Sunday drives. I mean, that was just kind of what we did.

01:18:05;04

And so we were driving, and it was on Route 306 in Cleveland. And it's a two lane road. We were going down this hill. And a car was passing, you know, it was not a passing lane, it was a double yellow line, coming the other way. And of course I panicked. And I started to slam on the brakes.

01:18:22;17

Which meant I would've stopped in that lane, and been probably a great target for that car. And she yelled at me, "Get your foot off the brake. And pull over." You know? So I got off on the berm. So I, you know, nothing happened. We drove up the hill, and there was a parking

lot up ahead. And I pulled over in the parking lot and I was shaken.

01:18:37;07

And I remember her telling me this. She said, "The gas'll get you out, you know, of more trouble than the brake. Don't ever..." (LAUGHTER) it's like, people "...go to the brake too much. They panic and they go to the brake."

QUESTION:

01:18:47;27

She was the original drag influence?

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:18:49;00

I know. I'm like, "Mom", you know, "that's right". I learned...

QUESTION:

01:18:51;10

So she [taught you safety for] your race car career?

LYN ST. JAMES:

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Well, no. But my mother had polio. And so for her, a car was her, I mean, it was all of her transportation. She wasn't walking anywhere. And she wasn't riding a bike anywhere. Where I think we kind of tend to, even though we all love our cars, she was much more dependent on her

car than most people.

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And she taught me that a car will get you out of, I mean, "The car doesn't break," she said. She said, "A car gives you warnings and signals. And gives you, there's sounds and smells." I mean, I learned the difference between the smell of oil and antifreeze. I mean, she taught me that stuff.

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And she had a real feel for the car. And in fact now, I don't know. This is going way back now. So this may not be true. But she told me that when I was a little girl, I mean a real little girl, and I couldn't sleep.

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Or you know, that she would go just take me for a ride, and then I'd fall asleep. And so she'd take me home and put me to bed. And so I don't know whether she said when I was a baby that I would sit in my highchair in the kitchen.

01:19:50;14 And she'd turn around and the highchair would've moved across the room. Because I was rocking it. So I mean, you know, you can kind of go crazy trying to figure out...

QUESTION:

01:20:01;03 It's in your DNA...

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:20:01;23 The early signals or something is in your DNA. But I've always liked movement. Not just speed, but I always liked movement. And I do rock a lot. And I do remember driving, you know, going for rides a lot.

01:20:14;09 And when I got my driver's license, people, we would take off and do weekend trips. And I was always the designated driver. I mean, it's like, okay, where do we want to go? And I loved to drive. So.

QUESTION:

01:20:24;22 Now let me, this may [be] sort of a pivotal question, we may come back to it a few times. But you're doing all of this at a time when girls and young women aren't supposed to do this. Did you start to feel resistance from

the guys? Or what was it like trying to move into that world? Didn't they tell you to go home and play the piano?

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:20:37;29

Well, the drag racing scene that day was interesting. Even though I won. You know? Standing in line 'cause you know, you go, you win, you come back around. And it's like a lot of the comments the guys were making, not my friends. But the guys that I was, you know, that were in line so to speak, with me.

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That got to be kind of ugly. And you know, quite frankly I didn't feel comfortable in that environment. And so there were times when, but most of the buddies, most of the people that I hung out with were my friends.

01:21:05;01

And they thought it was pretty cool that I was interested. I mean, I didn't, I did this 'cause I was really interested. I mean, I didn't do it because I wanted to just hang out with the guys.

01:21:14;17 I did it because I was really fascinated with it. I loved going to the races. I love driving. I loved going fast. And, you know, and so all of that I was doing because I really wanted to. And I think most of the people in my life, meaning my teammates, and even some of my competitors, I think once they saw that, they knew that

01:21:34;26 I wasn't trying to get publicity. I wasn't trying to be in your face and say, "I'm a woman. And I can do that." Or, you know, I just loved it like they did. And I think once people saw that, that I got their respect. And you know, I mean, there was always...

01:21:48;26 You weren't trying to prove anything...

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:21:49;10 No, I didn't try to prove anything.

QUESTION:

01:21:50;22 There wasn't a gender thing going on...

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:21:51;11 No, I just wanted to do it. And I wanted to do it well. Because that's anything I do, I want to do well. So I was

just being me.

QUESTION:

01:21:58;16

Was there, who else was there? Your mother, obviously a big influence. Who were some of the other people that you looked up to then or even in the beginning of your career?

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:22:06;18

Well, my first husband was huge. Because I mean, without him, I wouldn't have been able to do it. I mean, if I had been just all by myself trying to figure this out, I don't know. I should say I don't know for sure [if] I wouldn't have been able to do it.

01:22:18;04

But it would've been a heck of a lot harder. So having a partner that was in the same mode that I was in and we'd learn together and, you know, he's a smart guy. And so that helped hugely. I mean, he, and not only that, but throughout my racing, the first seven years that I raced when we were together, I mean, he was a great sounding board.

01:22:36;08

You know? He taught me things. He put up with me.
(LAUGHTER) You know? And when I'd get mad and like,
you know, get pissed at every, I mean, oops, sorry about
that. I'd get angry at everybody.

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:22:51;22

So he would bring me back to center. And you know, he
was a great stabilizing force, as well as a lot of help. So, I
really credit him a lot. And then we had a couple of crew
guys that came along that we worked with. One is still, his
name is Emory Donaldson.

01:23:06;22

And he lives in Daytona Beach. And he worked on my
husband's Corvette. And he put up with me. Because I
used to pump, you know, his brain wanting to learn as
much as I could about the mechanics. He was my crew
chief in Indy in 1994.

01:23:19;24

I asked if there was any way he could come on the crew,
so that you know, 'cause just even for a crew member to

be able to be on the crew of an Indy 500 team is a big deal. And so, you know, I had that opportunity many years later to kind of, not pay him back, but to still be a friend.

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So, you know, and then I learned, you learn a lot by watching people and listening to people. And because I had people like Emory and John, and Don, a few other guys that were at the races that were smart. Then I'd be out there. And they used to tell me, "Lyn, well, you just listen to too many people."

01:23:51;14

What I would do is I would listen, and watch, and learn. And then I would come back and talk to them about what I saw. And they'd help me sort out what was worth retaining, and what was thrown out. And so, you know, I felt like just a sponge.

01:24:04;19

And I would just, I'd watch people like Peter Gregg, who was a great GT racer. I noticed that the car that's usually first on the grid for practice, and it's cleaned, and that's

organized in the garage, it's amazing how those cars tend to be the cars that win.

01:24:20;01

And so I started making sure I was first on the grid for practice, instead of being always last and hustling in, you know, and never making it on time. And dramas, and all that. So I worked on that. I made sure my car was always clean. And even though I was not racin' the car that needed a lot of tools around it, or mechanics, I still tried to, I worked hard on our team to make sure that we looked, you know, that we had our act together, we were organized.

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So, you know, just little things like that that you can learn from watching people who win. I mean, I say, "Hey, when people say, 'You don't need a role model.'" What scares me about role models is that you're trying to mimic somebody maybe.

01:24:53;15

You know, you're trying to be like them. As opposed to

watching people who are successful. And learning, and picking what you see they're doing that you could incorporate it into being more successful yourself.

QUESTION:

01:25:06;12 When you were starting to, the early racing period, were you looking at any race car drivers, and sort of...

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:25:12;19 Oh, yeah.

QUESTION:

01:25:13;13 Well, who? And were they even female, was it [a] guy...?

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:25:15;08 No.

QUESTION:

01:25:15;11 ...and did it matter?

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:25:16;00 Well, there weren't no other women. And when there, sometimes they were, in fact, they weren't sometimes very good. And so then I got worried and I would always say if I'm that bad, (LAUGHTER) I don't care how badly I want to do it.

01:25:26;10 Play off. 'Cause I don't want to be, you know, I don't want to be like that. So, no. These were all guys, but they were, and mostly drivers. Some were mechanics or crew chiefs type of people. You know? Managing the team.

01:25:37;27 Even on an amateur level. So, I mean, you know, these were people, I mean, I don't go up and ask them all the time. I mean, I wasn't asking. I said, "Just observe." And see who's winning.

QUESTION:

01:25:48;23 And then, so you went to racing school. Tell me what that was like.

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:25:51;02 Well, you have to go to driver's school to get your competition license. That's required for everybody. It kind of weeds out the wannabes, you know, who are probably dangerous for themselves and others.

01:26:01;14 And I mean, now, well, here's the, okay. My first driver's

school, SCCA Drivers School, I'm down in Palm Beach, at that track. And it's volunteer instructors. And so I was assigned an instructor with like three other drivers.

01:26:18;01

You know, I'm nervous and well, this instructor, I noticed was not talking to me at all. I mean, and I am a people person. It was like I was invisible. It was like I wasn't even there. And it started to bother me.

01:26:28;16

Because I'd be like, I'd try to get his eye, you know, or ask a question. And he wouldn't even acknowledge my existence. So I figured it, you know, he had a problem with me. So I went to the chief instructor, and I said, "I'd like to be assigned another instructor."

01:26:42;13

I said, "I'm not connecting with this guy and I need to learn. I'm here to learn." And so he signed me to another instructor. This guy was fabulous. His name was Bob Constantino. He was this Italian. And he raced these Alphas. And the next thing I know, he's drawing this

corner on the sand.

01:27:02;01 And, you know, on the side, and he's riding with me in my Pinto. And then I'm riding with him. I mean, it was dynamic. You know? I learned so much.

01:27:09;22 Now, I could've concentrated on the fact that this idiot, you know, and complained, or just, "Poor me..." on all weekend. But instead, I went, did something about it, and had a great experience.

QUESTION:

01:27:21;08 But you think he was ignoring you 'cause you're a...

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:27:24;16 Probably. You know? It's easy to say that it was because I was a woman. I don't know. I didn't want to go up and discuss it with him. You know? I mean, I didn't have a lot of time.

QUESTION:

01:27:31;21 What year was this? Seven...

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:27:33;14 '74.

QUESTION:

01:27:34;04 '74?

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:27:34;17 Yeah.

QUESTION:

01:27:35;19 That could've been what he was doin'.

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:27:36;15 Yeah. But I mean...

QUESTION:

01:27:37;11 Back then?

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:27:37;25 ...there were definitely those things. I mean, I had a guy protest me in a race for giving him the finger.

QUESTION:

01:27:45;01 Well, tell me, I gotta hear that story.

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:27:46;07 And bottom, I mean, bottom line is that we were learn...
what we learned in driver school is you point to where you

want somebody to pass you. If somebody is like on your tale, whether they're comin' up fast, or whether it's somebody even you're racing against, to acknowledge that you know they're there, you're supposed to point to them where to pass.

01:28:04;06

Either on the outside or on the inside. Well, if you're smart, you want to always make 'em on the outside, 'cause that's the hard way around. You know? The long way around. So this was a guy, I think he was out of Arkansas or Alabama, or whatever he was, it was somewhat.

01:28:16;27

He wasn't one of our local, local guys. And I signaled him to pass. And the next thing I know, at the end of it, I'm told that there's been a protest filed against me. And I got very upset. Because if you get a protest filed, and they vote in favor of the person protesting, it goes on your records. And I even had this thing about, you know, I was gonna be in Denver, at the home office.

01:28:40;10 And it'd be in permanent records. You know? And so I had to go out and get witnesses from the corner. I mean, this was like ridiculous. But it's what I had to do.

QUESTION:

01:28:50;04 You say the coroner or the corner?

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:28:51;20 The corner.

01:28:52;19 (OVERTALK)

LYN ST. JAMES:

01:28:52;27 Yeah. No, the corner workers. The corner workers that were in that corner, I had to go out and ask them if they observed me signaling him to go by, and what finger did I use to signal him to go by. And I mean, this whole thing was an absolute just, you know, ridiculous.

01:29:06;00 And I was very upset, in fact, that's bottom line, is my husband said, "Lyn, first of all, it's because you're a woman. And he can't stand bein' beat by a woman. And secondly, he is using that as a distraction.

01:29:20;06 "And so, you're getting so caught up into all of this. Forget it. You know? You didn't do it. You go in, you get a couple of people that are gonna stand up for you. And get ready for the next race." 'Cause there's like three races in a weekend.

01:29:31;15 And this was the first race. So, you know, yeah, that was probably because I was a woman. But I said, "You know? That's his problem. Not mine." And so, my husband helped get me into the right frame of mind about how to deal with something like that.

LYN ST. JAMES:

QUESTION:

02:01:14;20 Let me go back and ask you, you said you went to [an] all-girls school. Tell me how that came about and some of your impressions about the ups and downs of that.

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:01:23;18 Well, okay. Let's [see], we're back in the '50s now. The 1950s. And I lived in Willoughby, Ohio. I was very quiet,

young lady. Very shy. And in sixth grade, the end of sixth grade I was absolutely frightened of the idea of going on to junior high school.

02:01:39;15

It's just the idea of being in this big school. And these guys, and I just wasn't prepared for that. And so, unbeknownst to my parents, I went to the local book store lady that worked in the little town that I lived in. That she had an office supply and bookstore.

02:01:56;00

And she got to help me get an application to this school that was right next door. It was right across the river. That was this beautiful campus. I was very fascinated with the fact that it was just, it looked so peaceful. And it was just gorgeous architecture.

02:02:09;16

And she told me that it was a girls' school. And I said, "I want, can I go to that?" She said, "Well, you have to fill out an application." So she helped me fill it out. And send it in. And unbeknownst to my parents, all this happened.

02:02:19;28

And then I get a letter back saying that they set up an interview. And my mom and I went in. And they accepted me. And there was no tuition, so it wasn't a financial situation. And it just was this comfort level, I guess, of being around the same sex. You know?

02:02:34;16

In other words not to having to deal with boys at that point. And at that time it looked like a small school, even though the campus was really beautiful. But it just didn't, I don't know. There was something, I wanted to go there.

02:02:44;24

And I got to go there. Because of it, I got sports. But I also got confidence. And I got a great education on top of it. I mean, I actually got a business degree when it was a vocational school from 7th to 12th grade. I got discipline. I actually lived in the dorm for a few years.

02:02:59;19

And I learned how to live with peers. And deal with things. So I mean, I learned so much in that school environment

that was perfect for me. I'm not saying it's perfect for everybody.

02:03:09;24

But I think for me, I was blessed to be able to have had a single sex education. And to be able to provide me with the sports, and the confidence, and the education that I got. It's the foundation.

QUESTION:

02:03:20;15

Well, why couldn't you have done that at a coed school?

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:03:23;03

I don't think so. Because when I know my personality, when I look back on how I remember my personality being, I think I would have caved. I would've been, when I say, caved, I wouldn't have caved in to peer pressure. But I would've become this flower that never bloomed.

02:03:39;23

You know? I mean, I think I would've been overwhelmed. And I would've just kind of been a meek, little flower that would've never bloomed. And I don't think I would've... When I think of that Pinto, when I got that Pinto, and that

first day at that racing school.

02:03:55;19

To put that race suit on, to put that helmet on, and to get behind the wheel of that car, I don't think I ever or would've had the confidence to do that had I not had that education, the training, and been in that sports arena. You know? Played field hockey when I was scared to death, and never seen field hockey before in my life.

02:04:11;12

And now I'm playing it. You know? I learned how to play tennis. I mean, a lot of it came from sports. 'Cause I would have had the schooling, maybe. But I wouldn't have had that physical risk-taking, fun, body movement, of team building, win-lose camaraderie.

02:04:29;01

I mean, I wasn't a cheerleader. And that's for sure. And that's how the only thing that would've brought that kind of, you know, an exposure. So.

QUESTION:

02:04:34;21

At that time there weren't a lot of team sports like that for

women.

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:04:36;23 There weren't any. No. There weren't any. I mean, unless you...

QUESTION:

02:04:39;21 Unusual, isn't it?

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:04:40;26 Well, it did. I mean, that's why Title IX, which is now 30 year old, or 30, a little over 30 years old. Where if you received federal funds you cannot discriminate by sex, race, edu[cation], you know, so because of that, now, at least if they offer sports, they have to offer it for the entire enrollment.

02:04:55;20 You know? For as much for the girls as the boys. That's why I'm such a proponent of that, is because I know that that set the foundation for me. That drag race that I did, I wouldn't have had the courage to do. I wouldn't have. I wouldn't have probably even wanted to drive a car fast probably.

02:05:09;01

Because I didn't know enough about myself, I wouldn't have known enough about myself. As I did then. I mean, my mom was a pretty neat lady. And was raising me the best she could. But even she was somewhat limited because of her polio.

02:05:21;01

And she, my mom didn't get past 8th grade, which was not that unusual for that generation. Anyway. but I just know how valuable it was for me. And so I feel blessed that I had that opportunity.

02:05:32;14

And I think that there are many young people that need that environment. So I think that, you know, that we should maintain, you know, that ability to have some same sex schools. I think it can be fine.

QUESTION:

02:05:44;16

Yeah. Now let's jump ahead to a new start in your racing career, professional racing career, when you...

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:05:49;05

No, no, no. We can't only do professional. We gotta go back to the amateur stuff. You have to understand this, though. Seriously.

QUESTION:

02:05:54;14

Okay. Tell me something.

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:05:54;25

I raced on my own money, on my own ability, with my husband and I. And I did that for seven or almost nine years. I did that for seven years. So many young people come up to me and they say, "Oh, you know, I need to sponsor 'em."

02:06:05;22

I mean, they're little kids or they're, you know, they think they're gonna get a sponsor right away. I say, "No, no, no, no. You gotta build your resume on your own resources. You've got to figure out how to do that." And so I think it's real important that people understand that.

02:06:16;10

That you just don't go out there and because you want to

do something, that all of a sudden you expect other people to pay for it. So you've got figure out how to do it. Which we did. And then I had the opportunity to drive my husband's Corvette, because he had to go to a meeting.

02:06:30;15

And this was in a professional race. This was in the IMSA Camel GT Series. Because I did really well in that Corvette, in 1979, Kelly Services decided to sponsor a series, a professional series in the IMSA which was an International Motor Sports Association.

02:06:48;14

They sponsored a series where they would give bonus prize money for the top woman driver. So because their heritage was about temporary help for secretaries, but they were getting into light industrial.

02:07:04;05

And so this kind of gave them a new venue to promote in racing. But to maintain some sort of loyalty to women. And everybody's attitude was, "Why would they do that? There are no women that are even, you know, gonna be in

the race." I was the only woman in that race in 1979, and Road Atlanta in April.

02:07:22;19

I qual[ified] and I'd been racing my Pinto, and then a Cosworth Vega, and then I had done the Corvette a couple of times. And I'd done fairly well. So I qualified 13th, because it was kind of a rainy day. And this was an old Plymouth Volare.

02:07:36;07

And we had old rain tires on it. So they were kind of, everything was like really not like prime for what should have happened. But because it was not a hard rain, it turned out to be the perfect tires. And I ended up finish[ing] second, 79/100 of a second behind Gene Felton, who was the hot dog in that series.

02:07:54;07

And that's one of the things that sort of blew open my opportunity to become a professional race car driver. At the same time there was an article in *Car and Driver* magazine that was about Ford Motor Company wanting to

sell the Capri, it was the Mercury Capri at the time, to women.

02:08:11;24

And that there was a little sidebar that talked about they wanted to provide equal employment opportunities for women in non-traditional roles. And it quoted three people in that article. And so since I thought I was the hot dog now.

02:08:24;07

'Cause I'd done so well, you know, in this race in Atlanta. I then wrote to those three people. And said, "You need to sponsor me. And if you do that, you know, I'll be able to demonstrate that women can be successful in male dominated fields.

02:08:38;09

"And more women will buy your car because I'm gonna race it." And they said, "Thank you very much. But no, thank you." I got a letter back from Jim Olsen, who was at that time the head of, I'm gonna put this on record, he was the head of public affairs for Lincoln Mercury.

02:08:57;02

But he said, "But keep the door, but keep us informed of your progress." So it was a no, but with a little crack in the door. And I bugged him for three years. And every time I saw any kind of an article about Ford Motor Company, there were a couple of others, Len Pounds was a guy that I'd see.

02:09:15;04

And every time I saw a name of or anything, I would send them letters. I would send them pictures. I would send them little articles that maybe were written about me. And I hounded them to death. I also contacted Chevy. I also contacted Chrysler.

02:09:27;16

Because I thought, "Well, if Ford's doing this, they probably all." I mean, I was trying to chase anything. You know? 'Cause at that point I'd built my resume. And I had had the success in this Kelly Series.

02:09:36;16

And so I was on a mission. And because I was driving a

Plymouth Volare, it was Plymouth and not Dodge. And so, took me three years of bugging, you know, the Ford Motor Company 'cause they were the only ones that kept that door open a little bit. And then I was invited to come to Dearborn, Michigan and make a presentation to a new division that had not yet been announced, called Special Vehicle Operations.

02:09:59;23

And so I came in and I wanted them to sponsor me in the Camel GT Series. And instead they did say, yes. But they sponsored me in the IMSA Kelly American Challenge Series, driving a Mercury Capri. So I think that Ford signed me because they said, "This woman is driving us crazy. And the only way we can control 'em is if we hire her." (LAUGHTER) You're absolutely convinced.

QUESTION:

02:10:26;02

Tell me what you felt like the day they finally, you finally after three years of buggin' 'em, they said, "Let's do it."

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:10:29;27

Oh, I was just over the moon. I couldn't believe it. One of

the things I did wrong was, when I got the letter, and then I had other follow up meeting[s], is that I kept selling. And you know, it was like, you know, sometimes you have to remind yourself that you've just made the sale.

02:10:44;28

And it's time to shut up. 'Cause it was like I just kept, you know, goin' and goin', and goin'. But you know, it was great. The season was not great. I had them, that year, and we kept blowin' engines, because there were no Ford blocks.

02:11:01;19

And we had to run, you know, Ford equipment and a Ford engine. And so the blocks that Ford had raised had been out of circulation for a long time. And so we were trying to find Ford blocks all over the country. And they really weren't all up to speed with the Special Vehicle Operations. It was a pretty rugged year, as far as success on the racetrack. I was getting very nervous. It was a one year contract. So through that year, I would call Ford dealers.

- 02:11:28;09 And in the towns that I was coming into. And I'd say, "Look it, I'm gonna be racing in Atlanta. Or I'm gonna be racing in Ohio. Or I'm gonna be racing in Lime Rock, Connecticut, or Watkins Glen. Oh, well, Watkins Glen wasn't on the schedule yet.
- 02:11:39;25 But, you know, various cities that we were going to. And I'll come in a day early and bring my car. And, you know, and help promote the fact that we're coming. 'Cause of what I learned was that Ford really had to sell the dealers on this support that they were getting back into racing.
- 02:11:54;26 Through that activity I got to know some of the marketing people. And some of the other people in the company outside of just the racing group. And I convinced them that I could drive, do more than just drive the race car for them.
- 02:12:07;22 And I got a separate, personal service contract from Ford, to start making personal appearances for the media, and

for dealers and things like that. And quite frankly, from a business standpoint, it gave me some job security. 'Cause I thought if I hit a homerun over here, and things aren't going so well over here, whichever over here you want to talk about, it might help keep the relationship going.

02:12:27;23

I mean, I was on a mission to sustainability for my career. And I knew that if I had to rely on just the success of what was happening while we were blowing up all these engines, that I might have a very short career. And I was hoping to have a long career.

QUESTION:

02:12:42;11

Where do you get this great sense of promotion and marketing? I mean...

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:12:46;18

I wasn't on...

QUESTION:

02:12:46;25

...power in the car, but, where did you learn all that?

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:12:48;21

Well, I was really unusual because I was a business person

first, and then a race car driver second. I owned and operated an automotive, I mean, I owned and operated with my husband, John, a consumer electronics manufacturer's rep company. And had to go to trade shows.

02:13:04;16

And we represented Sanyo Electric, and I was in the sales business. And so when I decided to race professionally, I knew that this was a business. And I had to approach it as a business.

02:13:16;01

This wasn't like, I didn't want handouts. I wasn't just looking for somebody to, you know, some sugar daddy to pay my way. I was married. I was a business person. And I was a race car driver who wanted to become a professional race car driver.

02:13:27;28

And so that meant business. So this was business. And I love business. I'm as competitive in the business arena as I am on the racetrack.

QUESTION:

02:13:36;29

Take me through a little bit of when you were racing and representing Ford those years, some of the highlights, some of the important things. And, you know, we don't want like a 20 minute...

QUESTION:

02:13:45;04

But you know, a lot of it's a matter of record. But some of your impressions of that. What it was like.

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:13:50;06

Little over ten years that I raced for Ford Motor Company and had this personal service contract, I can honestly say were the best ten years of my life. I learned more about the car business. And learned more about business, and the media, and got to race fabulous race cars with fabulous race teams.

02:14:10;13

That were beyond what I could even imagine. I got to travel all over the world. I got to work with the media on their press days and their press launches with the cars. I got to go to factories. You know? And see how cars were

built.

02:14:24;08

I mean, I went to some plants. I got to talk to employees. I got to understand what the corporate culture was like. And in the '80s, for Ford Motor Company, we went from, and I say, we, 'cause I felt really a part of the company. From really coming off the '70s when things were not looking good for the whole industry, but particularly for Ford. And it became this heyday almost. I mean, they transformed the looks of the cars. The, you know, quality control, the continuous improvement.

02:14:52;04

I mean, I understood leadership. I got to deal with, you know, Peterson and Poling, and some of the great leaders of this company. As well as I think of the industry overall, and business.

02:15:06;05

And then I got, you know, I got to win races. And I got to deal with people like Bill Elliott, you know, as teammates. And great people like Scott Pruett and some other drivers

that, you know, were...

QUESTION:

02:15:17;14

What were some of that camaraderie of racers? I mean, what's that like?

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:15:20;04

Well, you're a team. I love being part of a team. It's like the family I probably never really had in the sense of, you know, sisters and brothers. And so I really enjoyed that team spirit, and the team effort.

02:15:32;18

But yet, we weren't really all that close. I mean, and I don't know whether that was part of the being a woman. Because I was the usually, I mean, I was the only woman on the team for 99.9 percent of time, as far as the drivers go.

02:15:45;18

And I'm not a chick. So some of the other women that were like working could play more of the chick role. I hope I'm being clear what that is. I mean, it's not, I'm not saying they did anything wrong. But it's just, you know,

I'm different.

02:15:59;09

And I'm, and I was there, and my persona is very business like. And I mean, I can have a good time and be fun. But meanwhile, it's still all about being competitive and being the best. And also learning. So I was there with a pretty hard, you know, hard nosed, and hard headed attitude about things.

QUESTION:

02:16:18;26

Did you have to be the, I mean...

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:16:20;18

It didn't have to be that way.

QUESTION:

02:16:22;09

Did you feel any discrimination, gender, or there must've been a little bit, 'cause of all these...

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:16:25;22

Well, there was. But you know, whenever I didn't feel comfortable because of what was going on, you know, be thinking that may, I could just remove myself then. Because if it's not some place I had to be, I mean, in fact I

just gave some advice recently to somebody at a speech.

02:16:41;22

That his daughter is a pilot. And is running into some discrimination issues, and issues that are, you know, she's feeling that she's being held back in obstacles. And I said, "Look it. I always look at it if I knew where I was in my career, and I knew where I wanted to go, if there was an obstacle or a discrimination or something that was getting between where I was and where I wanted to go, I dealt with it head on.

02:17:04;04

I'd just go hell bent to make it, to fix it. But if it wasn't gettin' in the way, but it was still annoying or discomfort, I'd just say, I'd just remove myself from it." I mean, there's many times that comments would be made.

02:17:16;09

Or something that would make me feel uncomfortable, I'd just go back to my room. If I was at a hotel or something. You know? It's like, as long as it didn't inhibit my ability to do my job, or to get ahead. But if, and a lot of times it's

just petty stuff. You know? It's just guys being guys. Or people being stupid. Or just, I don't know. It just isn't that big of a deal. So.

QUESTION:

02:17:38;03

You have that same ability though, when you're racing, win or lose? Is it, immediately forget a bad performance and reward a good one? You know what I'm saying?

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:17:44;07

Well, most of the time in racing, I mean, you're as good as your last race. And I certainly had my share of incidents, of mistakes that either I made, which of course, at that time I would never admit. But anyway, you know, it was mistakes that I made, or incidents that other people caused on the track, that I, would ever, they are very, you know, your adrenaline's goin'.

02:18:00;20

And your energy's really high. And then, bingo, you know, it's just bad stuff happens. But most of the time, except one time I remember, at Road Atlanta, in a race, where I crashed. And I was so devastated.

02:18:12;17 Because I couldn't figure out why. But most of the time you know that you've had a mechanical failure. You know that you've messed up. Or you know that somebody else messed up. And you can't go back and undo it.

02:18:22;17 And so, I don't want to say you just schloff it off. But at the same time, you get over it pretty quickly, 'cause you have to. There's only one time that I remember, at 9:00 at night, I'm sitting at the hill, trying to figure out what happened. Because I felt I couldn't leave the racetrack until I was able to put the pieces together. You know? I'm sure there's a lot of incidents that I...

QUESTION:

02:18:41;27 What was that that was happening? You were sittin' there?

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:18:45;25 Oh, it was when I crashed at Road Atlanta. It wasn't even, it actually [was] in an Aston Martin prototype car. And I just crashed in the 66th lap. I was supposed to pit the

next lap.

02:18:55;13

And I just lost it. And I was in a groove. And I was running really well. And I just couldn't figure out what went wrong. And I did eventually. But I felt I couldn't leave the track until I could figure it out what it was that went wrong.

02:19:10;21

So, I didn't figure it out that day. I didn't figure it out till later. So sometimes the mysteries hang with you for a while. You know?

QUESTION:

02:19:18;26

What would you call two or three of the biggest highlights of when you were racing with Ford?

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:19:24;03

Well, I think my first win was not really the highlight. 'Cause my first win driving for Ford was at Road America at Elkhart Lake. And I was co-driving with Johnny Jones.

02:19:36;00

And it was not my regular teammate. And so that was

kind of, but that was still my first win. But the following race, the next race was at Watkins Glen. And that one will go down in the record books, first of all, because it's the first and only time that a woman driver has won a race driving solo in IMSA.

02:19:53;16

It was a Serengeti 500. So it was a 500 kilometer race. That I had a co-driver that was also a temporary or one time co-driver, Whitney Ganz, a good driver. Really good driver. Good kid. But he was not used to the car. And he was just sort of a substitute for my regular co-driver. And I was running the race. I was winning. I was in a groove. I was running really strong. We made the pit stop to change tires, fuel, and driver change.

02:20:24;27

And I decided not to get out of the car. Against the team's strategy. And I went on to win the race. And that was big. It was, I said, it was, it's still in the record books of significance.

02:20:42;18

The down side of that was that by the time I got to victory circle, the crew had already left. Nobody showed up to celebrate with me. So that was a bittersweet victory. Obviously the record runs at Talladega. You know, first in the Probe. And then in the Thunderbird. Those were big deals with Ford. I don't know. I mean, I just, on the racetrack, those were probably the biggest with Ford Motor Company, that I...

QUESTION:

02:21:12;26

Tell me a little bit of how, though, you were sort of an ambassador or role model for the women customers. You went around and maybe tried to get them interested in cars. I mean, other than that it was a job, did you feel any sort of sense to the female audience to try to make them understand this better? Tell me a little bit about that.

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:21:29;05

Well, the umbrella which my budget with Ford Motor Company, you know, was identified under the women's market. And so a lot of that had to do with working with

the designers and engineers, and test driving cars, to help make them more female friendly, or, to more...

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:21:44;22

...consumer, yeah.

QUESTION:

02:21:56;07

All right. So your role was, tell me...

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:21:57;22

Yeah. So I know that you know, the budget line item that my non-racing activities came from was under the women's market. But a lot of that had to do internally, where I worked, and I did a lot of tapes and training programs, you know, for dealers.

02:22:13;24

I did a lot of test driving of cars to try to make sure that they would accommodate or please, you know, female consumers. And I as a professional driver, I could give them both. You know? I mean, I used to test drive cars in high heels.

02:22:25;12

And I'd wear nail polish, and have long fingernails. You

know, I mean, it's just what I am. So it was a good, they got two for one out of that one. They had Jackie Stewart, as well. You know? Test driving the cars, but then I also put on these car clinics. Then I wrote a book called, *The Lyn St. James Car Owner's Manual*.

02:22:43;29

Which was a lot of the same information we provided in the car clinics, that were for women consumers. So a lot of it's about education. And it's about respect. It's treating people with respect. And it's helping educate the consumer.

02:22:54;19

So that they can make knowledgeable choices and decisions. And it was fun. I mean, I made anywhere from 50 to 100 appearances a year, working on behalf of Ford Motor Company. I also learned how to be a speaker. Because like the Small Business Association, the National Association of Women Business Owners, the National Association of Female Executives.

02:23:17;02

You know, these organizations that were women's groups, would contract with Ford Motor Company, to have a display and an exhibit and be a sponsor. And then as a bonus, they got me as a speaker. And I learned how to be a speaker. Which now is how I make a living, as a motivational and key note speaker. And I really learned that from my experience with Ford Motor Company.

QUESTION:

02:23:37;17

Let me just jump back. A question I wanted to pick up, back in the, I guess, in the late '50s or early '60s, there were some female NASCAR drivers and different race car drivers. Were you aware of any of them at any of this time? Were you paying any attention to...

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:23:50;08

Well, I think in the '60s, really there were two women race car drivers that emerged successfully. One was Shirley Muldowney in drag racing. She was a three-time world champion. At which most of those championships, I came to two of them, at least I know, came in the '60s.

02:24:07;01

Janet Guthrie was also successful at Indy in the '70s. And did some NASCAR racing. I certainly was aware of that. Because I wasn't drag racing anymore, that kind of was elusive, even though I did know about Shirley.

02:24:23;16

In fact, I went to a couple of drag races trying to get her autograph and meet her. But never could get close enough. Janet, because I was already racing in SCCA again, in my Pinto. And at that level, I watched Janet in the '70s race at Indy.

02:24:39;23

And I do vividly remember watching that on television. And it did not send a positive message to me. Because the things I remember were A) she doesn't look like she's having any fun. 'Cause she didn't smile a lot. And I was having a blast doing what I was doing. So I didn't go, "Oh, well, she's doing it. I want to do it, too." I was like, "Whoa. You know?" And the other was that they didn't seem at all happy that she was there.

02:24:59;08

And I had already gotten over most of that kind of little petty stuff in the early '70s, that I went through. So, you know, I really was part of my racing scene with the community that I raced with. And so it was no big deal.

02:25:10;24

So that I remember Janet. And I actually worked with Janet. First of all, we drove together, in 1978. '78 or '79, at Sebring, in the 12 Hours. And so I met her then. She was a big dog. And I was, you know, a nobody at that point.

02:25:31;14

I didn't have Ford as a sponsor. I was just this local girl that, you know, was on the team. And then I met her again working with Ford Motor Company in 1981. One of the first things I did for Ford was drive across country on ethanol fuel, in honor of American Energy Week. We drove from Los Angeles to New York City.

02:25:48;06

And there was a four-car fleet that was part of this team. And Janet was one of the drivers. And so I met her for

another time then. Plus, I've seen her many years after that with the Women's Sport Foundation.

02:26:01;04

So I knew they were there. They were on different paths, so I didn't really look at them as role models. I observed what they were doing. And was doing what I was doing.

QUESTION:

02:26:14;07

It sounds to me like the whole gender issue that people always ask you about, is just not really...

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:26:18;14

It's kind of not there.

QUESTION:

02:26:19;17

Well, maybe it's not really an issue. Why let's talk about that. 'Cause that's important. 'Cause I think there's a natural chemistry when you're the first, you know, whatever category they put you in, people want to keep asking you. Just give me a couple of minutes about that. Why that's really not an issue with you. Is it?

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:26:32;20

One of the things that I loved about the sport is A) it's not

gender driven or gender specific. First of all, by the time you put the suit and helmet on, nobody knows what you are. And the car doesn't know the difference. And the other thing is women are judged in this society so much by how they look.

02:26:51;00

And even when you're an athlete and you're performing as an athlete, and competing as an athlete, you're still judged so much by how you look. Men are not generally. I mean, unless you're talking actors, and you know, that kind of a thing.

02:27:05;21

In racing, the human aspect is almost not even visible. So it's not part of the judgment factor. Maybe after you get out of the car or something. But you know, it's like, "God, there goes that Pinto." You know, it's not, "There goes Lyn St. James."

02:27:18;08

So I was attracted to that. 'Cause I'm still basically inside a very shy person. And not as secure about my

appearance and all that kind of, and I don't like fussin' about it. You know? So I found a home in that sport that to me was gender neutral.

02:27:33;16

If you were smart enough, and you were good enough, and you were fast enough, and you worked hard enough, you won races. And that was what it was all about. And I like people. So I mean, and it became, when I raced even as a professional, it's like being a traveling circus. It's the same folks pretty much. You know? And so most of my best friends then, became people that I looked forward to seeing at the races.

02:27:57;14

And I was accepted. So and again, if I wasn't, then I'd, you know, I'd get out. I didn't need to deal with that person. You know? So for me, it was never a gender thing. I mean, I knew that I was a female.

02:28:10;25

And I was proud of that. And I knew that that could possibly help me in the case of getting Ford as a sponsor,

that seemed to work. So if it fits somebody else's criteria, and benefit...

QUESTION:

02:28:22;20 It's like the crux right there.

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:28:23;12 Yeah.

QUESTION:

02:28:23;15 You've actually used it...

LYN ST. JAMES:

02:28:24;07 I used it if that's what was gonna help me get what I wanted to do. And I could help them. There, that's the other thing, with this is what I do when I teach my sponsorship stuff. It isn't about you.

02:28:35;26 It's about them. And if you can figure out how to help them to accomplish what you want to, then it's a win-win. If you're just out to get them to help you, it's a one way street. And it's either not gonna happen. Or it's gonna be a short-term deal.

02:28:49;07

'Cause they're gonna get disappointed. And they're gonna be gone. And you got to start all over again. So, does that make sense? I mean, to me it's about strategy. It's getting somewhere. And it's taking, you know, it's getting something done for them that's also accomplishing what you want to accomplish. And I think that's what life should be about. So.

QUESTION:

03:00:46;21

Let's go back. Earlier you had just, well, tell me about how the deal with Ford kind of wound down. And you had to move, that's when you moved...

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:00:54;06

Well, no, I still maintained my relationship with Ford, my contract with Ford, my racing contract with Ford, was from 1981 till like 1991. So that was ten years. But my personal service contract continued on. My goal in racing was to win a national championship.

03:01:15;13

And so when I was an amateur racer, I wanted to win a national championship. When I became a pro racer, I

wanted to win the Kelly Series. I wanted to win the Camel GT Series. Or then I wanted to win the Trans Am Series for Ford Motor Company, and for myself.

03:01:27;20

I didn't get any of those championships done. Finally, and after setting the records at Talladega, you know, and having the success we've had, Ford pretty much said, "We really do not see the benefit.. " or I don't know how they put it. But they said, "We're not sponsoring you anymore."

03:01:42;12

But they wanted, "Well, we like you. And we like all the other work we do for you." And I pretty much said that's not really a good deal for me. You know? So we kind of had an impasse there. Well, when I finally got JC Penney as a sponsor to do Indianapolis in 1992, because I still was under contract to Ford Motor Company on the personal service side, we went with the Ford engine.

03:02:07;11

With Dick Simon racing a Lola Chassis, a '91 Lola Chassis,

and a Ford Cosworth. And it was the old Ford Cosworth. 'Cause that was Ford had not been in, Ford was not in Indy racing at that time. I completed rookie orientation.

03:02:21;09

But we could only go 2:19 with this old Cosworth. And Dick said, "Lyn, the car is not gonna go any faster. I don't care who I put in it. There's nothing you, there's not you... That is all the faster that car is going to go. And it's not good enough. It's not fast enough to get in the field. Even though you've passed rookie orientation." He said, "But I have a spare car over there. But it's got a Chevy in it." And this is like the Thursday before the second weekend of qualifying. We've been working on this with my Cosworth.

03:02:50;01

You know? Trying to get it out there. And he said, "And I'm not gonna let you get in the car. 'Cause you've had too long of a positive and successful relationship with Ford Motor Company, unless you get their approval." He was really looking out for my best interest.

03:03:03;08

And I said, "Dick, this is the Indianapolis 500, for God's sake, that I have wanted to do for almost my entire life. You are here. I am not leaving. You know?" So I mean, this is a true story. I called David Scott, who was the head of public affairs.

03:03:19;04

And this was on a Thursday. And if I'm not mistaken, it was the day of the board meeting. So the guy's kind of busy. I mean, not that he's not busy other days. And I left a message. And I said, "I need approval to try to qualify for the Indianapolis 500. But I can't do it in the Ford. And the only car available to me is a Chevy-powered Lola."

03:03:39;22

And his secretary asked for a fax number, and all that, 'cause I didn't actually talk to him. I passed that on through his secretary. Later that day, I was faxed a letter from David approving me to do that in a Chevy that it would not conflict with my contract.

03:03:54;24

Basically okaying it. And he said, "If you can't do it in a Ford. And you have to do it in a Chevy, just do it." It w[as] a very short letter. And it was really cool. So that was one of the biggest challenges in my business life that I've ever had.

03:04:06;14

Because I felt indebted to Ford. I felt loyal to Ford. I wanted to do it in a Ford. But I was not leaving, (LAUGHTER) and so we qualified. And, you know, I ended up finishing 11th, and won rookie of the year. And I had a Ford oval on my suit.

03:04:24;08

Because that's where my loyalty was. You know? Chevy wasn't giving me anything. So it wasn't like I had to have anything to do with a Chevy. So, but I did not race for Ford Motor Company, after that, unfortunately. But I did continue to race with some Ford engine, you know, power, next year, Ford had an engine. And so I was able to then be back under Ford power in '93 and '94, and '95.

QUESTION:

03:04:50;01 What year is it? Six, seven years?

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:04:51;08 I was in seven Indy 500s over a nine year period. I qualified six consecutive years, '92, '93, '94, '95, '96, '97. I came back and got bumped in '98. I came back and got bumped in '99. And then I completed successfully to qualify and race in the 2000. So I was in seven races over nine years.

QUESTION:

03:05:15;24 Now did you have to continually fight for sponsorships all this time? Is that all...

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:05:19;04 I continually fought for everything during those nine years. For keeping myself in a race car of some sort, even though it was a Go cart often, to try to keep my skills up. I helped found Human Performance International to help me with my training.

03:05:35;23 So that I could have my, you know, all kinds of out of the

cockpit stuff to keep myself sharp. 'Cause I felt if I wasn't continuing to get better, I didn't deserve to be there. And then I had to keep fighting to get the funding and the sponsorship to make it happen.

03:05:46;23

JC Penney came in, in '92. They came back in '93 and '94. Then they said, "Lyn, we can't do this anymore. It just isn't working for us on a business level. No offense. But, you know, we're gonna start sponsoring this Avon" or not Avon,

03:06:01;12

but this women's running series, or something they did, went into another direction. And then I got picked up actually at the last minute there with Locke Auto Supply one year. And then I got Lifetime Television for Women. You know?

03:06:13;09

It was always hustle all year to put a sponsorship package together to run Indy the next year. And trying to get not only just Indy, but quite frankly, you know, more races.

'Cause it's hard to run one race a year, and compete against the best in the world. And expect you're gonna beat 'em, and do better.

03:06:29;22

Which we did actually pretty reasonably well. Dick said, "You know?" He said, "Just think what it would be like if we actually had enough funding that you could run a whole season and be on equal ground with these guys. 'Cause you do so well.

03:06:42;06

"And even though that's, you know, you're behind the Eight ball, by the time you get to May." But, you know, that is what it is. I mean, you know, you can't go around going, "Yeah, whata, shoulda, coulda." Instead I just worked hard, and got...

QUESTION:

03:06:55;18

I mean, roughly for historical purposes, what would it have cost to have a good year round program?

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:06:59;08

About \$8 million. And the most I ever had in one year

was \$2.3, which got me six races. And then I had a \$1 million budget one year. The rest of them were less than that. So they were, you know, one race deals.

QUESTION:

03:07:14;26

That really is a business. You got to have the money to really compete.

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:07:17;07

Oh, yeah. Yeah.

QUESTION:

03:07:17;28

Tell me a little bit about that. How the money works in the race business that you experienced.

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:07:21;27

Well, it's all over the map because either a driver gets the sponsor, or the driver with the sponsor's money shop for a team. Or the team gets sponsorship, and then they shop for a driver. Very rarely does that happen.

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But that is the ideal situation. And then it sometimes, in most cases, it's a combination of the two. You know? The driver has some sponsorship money. And the team has

some sponsorship money. And then together they can make a program work. QUESTION:

03:07:50;00

Okay. So after your Indy career, if we can call it that. Or that phase, you didn't just go retire. I mean...

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:07:57;08

Well, there's one other very, I think important information about my Indy career.

QUESTION:

03:08:01;03

All right. Then...

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:08:02;12

And that it's very short. That is, the Indianapolis 500 was my first oval track race. And only my second open wheel race. All my racing had been done in sedans, and had been done primarily on road courses. And I never would recommend that to anybody.

03:08:18;18

But it was the best I could do. Because when I finally got the sponsorship, that was, you know, I couldn't say, "Well, I need more money because I gotta go do some other

races in an open wheel." And I mean, you just have to go with what you got.

03:08:31;03

But because of the Talladega experience I had, because of all the other racing, quality racing I'd had, and because Dick Simon took me down to Texas, and taught me how to drive an oval. Which means you've got to go flat. You got to put your foot on the gas, all the way around that racetrack.

03:08:46;01

And you've got to be able to turn the steering wheel and not lift. And I'm telling you there's a bone in your right foot, that when you turn the steering wheel, it's like there's a string connected and the foot wants to come up. There's just, it's a psychological thing. And it takes some doin'. But we got there. And so with the help and the support of all the people I'd had around me, I was successful at doing it. But I'm telling ya, it was something else.

03:09:11;12 'Cause everything is happening to me for the first time. I mean, you know, it was just amazing. So anyway, I just think most people don't get that. And don't realize that.

QUESTION:

03:09:22;02 The way people, if the driver then you can.

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:09:24;00 Well, I know. But they come with a lot more and I wished I had more experience that directly related under my belt. But I didn't.

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:09:29;22 Yeah. So I'm proud of that. I mean, I think that that was huge. Besides the fact that I hold the record for being the oldest rookie in the history of the Indianapolis 500. Which in 2011, will be the 100th running of the race, of which only 176 people had ever run that race in 100 years. So.

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:09:51;00 Put that in your pipe and smoke it. (LAUGHTER)

QUESTION:

03:09:54;08 That's what we want. This is for the record. That's, is there anything else you want to say about that?

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:09:57;19 No. That's all.

QUESTION:

03:09:59;23 Well, then tell me what happened. After you finished with Indy. I'm trying to make a transition to the next...

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:10:04;22 I know.

QUESTION:

03:10:05;03 ...phase of your career. And I want you to kind of take me through that transition.

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:10:09;14 Well, it...

QUESTION:

03:10:09;25 At some point you had to say, "Well, I'm not gonna... this was a dream." You didn't quite get the dream. Or did you? What did you feel you had accomplished when it was time to stop?

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:10:18;04 Well, as I said it, every year I went back to Indy, I always felt I could do better. You know? I was either smarter. I

had better equipment. Something made me feel that, you know, I was still getting better. But I got bumped in '98 and '99.

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And I did not want to leave it on that basis. And so I was able to pull together a sponsorship to go back in 2000. And I wasn't better in 2000. And so I knew, yeah, it was probably gonna be my last one. So, but I was fortunate enough to actually find a publisher.

03:10:52;20

I read a book. Oh, shoot. I can't think of the name of the book all of a sudden. Not, *The Perfect Storm*, but it was the gal that was in that. She wrote a book. And I had just read it. It doesn't matter. Anyway, I got a publisher that said that they would publish a book about my life, and about my racing life.

03:11:14;26

And so I went back in 2001 and sort of announced my official retirement from Indy racing. Of which the book sort of starts there. And then the book is all flashbacks,

you know, of everything that happened before that. So at first, I really was in a pretty big funk.

03:11:29;20

I mean, it was like, "What am I gonna do? I mean, racing has been now almost my entire adult life." And it has certainly been the most important thing in my adult life. So I kind of struggled with that. And then in 2001, this dentist out of Los Angeles contacted me and invited me to drive his Cobra at a vintage race in England, called Goodwood. I landed in London on the morning of September 11th, 2001.

03:12:05;26

And of course, in the morning is really early here, 'cause they're six hours ahead of us. So obviously that afternoon in England, I saw the horrific thing that was happening here. But at the same time I had an opportunity to race again.

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In an event that is absolutely amazing. And so that was the beginning of my new life as a race car driver. Is that I

found out old race car drivers get to drive old race cars. And I'm havin' a blast. So personally, even though I'd love to do it more, I'm able to drive two, three or four times a year, and drive race cars that are absolutely phenomenal.

03:12:39;23

And compete, I mean, it's competitive stuff. But there's really no pressure. I mean, you know, you either suck or you do really well. But, you know, it's kind of, you have fun. And so I'm back almost doing what I did in the very beginning with the Pinto.

03:12:52;28

I take it very seriously when I'm there, and I try to train, and compete. You know? But at the same time there's no sponsor to, you know, obligations and all that kind of stuff. And along the way actually, I'm gonna go back.

03:13:05;19

'Cause in 1993, I got so much fan mail in '92 and '93 in Indy that I wanted to find a way, other than just sign an autograph and send it out, to help these people. They were asking for advice in this fan mail. And so I actually

started my own foundation, the 501 C3 Educational Foundation.

03:13:26;18

Because I wanted to find out a way that I could help the next generation of young, up and coming drivers to succeed, and particularly women. And so I started a driver development program, which I'd been doing since 1994. And I'm now focused. So life after Indy, or after me racing professionally has been race for fun.

03:13:46;22

And give back to the sport, and help the sport grow, and provide the skills and the tools that people gave me along the way. But took me years to accumulate, and try to, you know, give these gals a heads up and an education. So that they know what they need to know before they need to know it. Rather than after you need to know it.

QUESTION:

03:14:03;26

And that organization is the Women of the Winner's Circle?

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:14:06;04

It's the Women in the Winner's Circle Foundation.

QUESTION:

03:14:08;04

Is that what they called that when it first started?

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:14:09;01

It was called the Lyn St. James Foundation when it first started. I didn't know. That's what I called it. And JC Penney gave me \$50,000 as a parting gesture in '95. So that kind of helped really get the foundation, you know, financially on solid ground.

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It's not really on solid ground. But to get it launched well. And, you know, more young girls are now pursuing this sport. Moms and dads are now saying it's okay for our daughters to do what's always been okay for our sons to do. Which I believe is partly influenced, if not greatly influenced by Title IX.

03:14:43;20

'Cause we now have a generation of parents who grew up with the Title IX. And so they either personally have experienced it, or certainly have been enough around it, that they know, "Hey, there should be no barriers here for

our daughters. She wants to go drive a go-cart or go drive a quarter midget, or," I don't know, go jump, you know, motorcycles. Or do whatever, they should do it. And they're doing it. And they're doing it well.

QUESTION:

03:15:04;26

It's a racing school or...

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:15:06;15

No. It's actually a program. There are driving schools around the country that are very good. And these kids, if they're racing quarter midgets or go-carts, there's ways that they learn to do that. I'm not teaching that.

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What I'm teaching is if you are already successful as an amateur, and you aspire to be a professional, then you've got to learn how to give an interview. You've got to learn how to be physically and mentally ahead of what you need to do.

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In other words, you might be racing at this level, but you have to prepare yourself to race at the next level, the

higher level. So that when you get there, you're prepared. You're not, you know, hustling and figure, "Oh, I wish I'd been stronger. I wished I'd, you know, gotten more rest."

03:15:47;06

So it's all about the things that you need to do. And I only do it once a year. And it's an invitational-only thing. So I gather resumes. I go to racetracks. I've been going to all kinds of racetracks watching these kids race.

03:16:00;14

I look for the best out there. I say I look for the cream. Get a lot of milk, but look for the cream. And then I try to, you know, give them this educational experience that'll help them be better prepared.

QUESTION:

03:16:12;12

Can we talk about some of the people who've gone through?

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:16:14;11

Yeah. I've had some success actually with our students.

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:16:16;24

Yeah.

QUESTION:

03:16:17;05 I've heard about your...

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:16:17;22 Well, Danica Patrick came through when she was 14. And then she came back a second time. And I worked very closely with her parents. And so that was like in '96. So that was like two years after I started the school.

03:16:30;11 Sara Fisher came through the program around, I think a year later. And Erin Crocker, Melanie Troxel, Liz Halliday. I mean, a lot of the drivers that are finding some success now, believe me, I'm not taking credit. But I know that our program has helped contribute to their success and their ability to be prepared for the success, 'cause it takes talent.

03:16:51;02 But it takes a lot more than talent. And so I work a lot with the parents, quite frankly. 'Cause they're the ones, when you're talking to kids, a lot of the information that they get is funneled through their parents anyway. And

so, you know, I spend a lot of time coaching parents.

QUESTION:

03:17:04;24

Yet still today, I mean, if you look at motor racing, you don't think there's a lot of women involved in it. Do you? I mean, what...

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:17:11;16

No, you don't. But at the same time I think you're gonna start seeing the grids changed a lot more. Because probably about a third of go-cart racers are girls now. About a third of soapbox derby competitors are girls now.

03:17:27;18

And about 20 percent of quarter midget racers are girls. And so I'm seeing a change down there. And it's going to take, you know, a few more years before we're gonna start seeing them at short tracks, or start seeing them in other tracks.

03:17:40;20

You know? As they go up the ladder. And of course, the other problem is that [there's] still a small percentage, and as happens with any activity, there's a fall off rate. So if

they fall off and decide not to continue, then, you know, it starts to narrow down.

03:17:54;21

That by the time they get to be in their teens and they're running at maybe these shorter tracks, they're maybe only ten percent. You know? You started at 20 or 30, but maybe it's only ten percent. So it's still a minority that are actually out there that are females. But they're still a lot more than what people realize.

QUESTION:

03:18:11;25

All right. But do you think it's ever going to be, I mean, there's really not an equal gender thing in sports. There's different leagues, male basketball, female, but can you see this be a women's racing league versus a man, something like that? There'd be enough...

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:18:26;00

Well, I mean, first of all, because I've never been about gender, I'm not out to try to make it 50-50, or you know, whatever, equal. I'm only about opportunity. Where my passion is, is that if somebody has the talent, the ability,

the desire, and they're willing to dedicate, you know, their effort and everything, they deserve the opportunity.

03:18:46;08

But if they don't know that they have to do all this stuff to get the opportunity, then it's shame on them. So I'm just trying to fill that gap to give them that information. So, even if it's only one or two or three, I'm not looking at the numbers.

03:18:58;29

Even though the bigger the numbers, the better chance for success. But, you know, as far as having a women's series, I don't know. I mean, there's days that I think that's a good idea. And then there's days I think it isn't.

03:19:11;29

Because of the uniqueness of the sport being gender neutral, and knowing that it physically, you don't have to be stronger, and you should be able to compete against the guys and see how, you know, just see how you rack up. But at the same time, if you have to get the experience to get as good or better than them.

03:19:32;23

And you had to do a women's series to get that experience, then it's not all bad. So it's not that I think it should be there, or should be there. It could fill a purpose or fill a need. But we don't need to have a women's tour or circuit like they do.

03:19:50;17

If you have golf and tennis, and all the other sports there are women's categories, it's because a man can still hit a golf ball harder, farther, and a tennis ball harder or farther. I mean, you can't compete against the guys. We can't. But we...

QUESTION:

03:20:04;02

But there's some people that say it takes so much stamina and...

QUESTION:

03:20:07;02

...that the guys, these are philosophical questions.

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:20:09;10

They're philosophical questions. Yes.

QUESTION:

03:20:11;11

I mean, you've heard that. I remember you told me the story one time you used to like to sit in the bathtub with oars or something to strengthen

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:20:17;01

No, I called it a tug, because it's the race...

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:20:19;18

...the race...

QUESTION:

03:20:19;16

Set the record straight. 'Cause I got the question wrong.

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:20:21;04

I know. 'Cause everybody, like the chassis of the car, the actual chassis of a race car, particularly of an Indy car, is called a tub. 'Cause when you take all of the suspension off, and you take all of the air out, you know, you take all of the external panels off, all you gut down to, it looks like this little tub.

03:20:37;29

And it's a cockpit. In an airplane. Well, we call it a tub. And so when I make reference to a tub, people envision

me maybe in a bathtub. You know? So it's not. There was a...

QUESTION:

03:20:50;13

Well, I'm glad we have that straight.

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:20:51;13

Yeah, I mean, it takes physical strength. You have to have strong hands, and strong arms, but you don't have to be Brunhilda. I mean, we're not talking the physical strength, is not an advantage. It only is a disadvantage if you're not strong enough.

03:21:04;14

You know? If you don't train. And if you're not strong enough. But more muscle isn't gonna make you hit it harder, go faster, as it is in other sports.

QUESTION:

03:21:12;24

What does it take for the guys to play if the women don't weigh as much, then they would have an unfair...

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:21:15;11

Then they should go on a diet. (LAUGHTER)

QUESTION:

03:21:19;20

I love it. Okay. Here's the next philosophical question. Message to the future. If you had a message you wanted to, I mean, this is a tough one, I mean, you probably haven't thought about it. But what would you sort of want to tell people about...

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:21:36;27

A message for the future?

QUESTION:

03:21:38;08

Yeah. Maybe to the people that are interested in...

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:21:41;16

Well...

QUESTION:

03:21:41;05

...in achievement and setting these goals and seems to be a big part of really, the under current of what you do.

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:21:47;27

Well, I mean, I think that...

QUESTION:

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:21:57;23

Well, I guess I was thinking, too. I think well, this is

tough. Because first of all, it is a business. It's a sport, but it's also a business. And there's a very simple theory. If you want a different result, then you have to go about doing your business a different way.

03:22:16;02

And for the sport to grow, and I'm talking now about fans and sponsors, and TV coverage, and all those things that help the sport grow. And you already know that you're not addressing an audience that spends a lot of money, if not the majority of the money in society, and represents 50 percent or greater of the population, that is a growth area.

03:22:42;23

So it's identified as a growth area. So if you want to attack that, or you know, make that a priority, then you have to go about changing your business model a bit, to be able to get that result. And one of the ways to do that, is to incorporate more women stars, and integrate more women into your product.

03:23:03;11

So from a pure business standpoint, then it says, "Okay, if

you want that result, then you better do something about it. And you better go about it differently." 'Cause the 50 year history, let's say, that NASCAR has had, and the 100 year history that Indy's had, there haven't been a lot of women that have come through the gates.

03:23:20;02

So, in a pure business sense, they need to do something about it. And so I see myself as being part of that solution, in trying to help that happen. On an emotional or philosophical [level], I'm about opportunity.

03:23:34;11

I'm about talent. And I'm about freedom, openness, freedom of opportunity. And if we're talking about people should be free to have the opportunity to display their talent, if they're properly prepared, but it requires the decision makers to change the model of who they think the opportunity should be given to.

03:23:55;00

Then they also need to wake up and, you know, look at life a little more differently. So both of those motivate me.

So I don't care whether you're doing it because it's the right thing to do to give somebody an opportunity.

03:24:06;07

Or if you're doing it because it's a great business opportunity. Just do it. And now I'm trying to train the talent pool so that they're prepared for whichever one of those doors might open.

QUESTION:

03:24:18;00

But do you see more doors opening as opposed to being closed?

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:24:21;13

Yeah. I think, right now, the doors are not slammed shut. That they didn't put a nail in the door after they shut it. You know? Now if you kick the door, you know, or they might even, where they peek around the door every once in a while.

03:24:33;11

They're curious. I mean, you know, I have team owners. I talk to team owners all the time. And I gage what's going on. And they're like, "So who's the best one, Lyn?"

Come on." You know? They want the easy answer. They want to know who is the one that's gonna, you know, beat Jeff Gordon or beat Jimmy Johnson. Or beat Helio Castroneves, that was, I mean, you know...

QUESTION:

03:24:50;11 That's the big theory. It's gonna take one huge win to tip it over.

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:24:54;05 The tipping point.

QUESTION:

03:24:54;14 And then just like when Tiger Woods showed up. Suddenly it opened golf for everybody.

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:24:57;20 But you know, if Tiger Woods hadn't been able to sustain that...

QUESTION:

03:25:01;26 True.

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:25:01;18 ...that would've been a short lived situation. 'Cause we are the instant society today. Sound bytes, "What have you

done for me lately?" And so I think even if a woman does win the Indy 500, or what I mean, if Danica could win it, and God bless. I hope she does.

03:25:14;15

But at the same time, I don't think that's gonna be such a tipping point. Unless the flood gates are filled with more coming up, then it becomes a tipping point. And if whoever tipped the door, you know, whoever made that, is then able to sustain that.

03:25:28;13

Because otherwise it'll be a peek. And then they'll be, you know, on the other side of that is another another nose dive, if there's nothing. And that's why I'm working on trying to feed that system that pipelines so that when that does happen, you know, "Hello.

03:25:43;27

"Here we are. Here's 20 women that are ready to, you know, vie for those seats." And that's doable. That is doable. And that's my goal.

QUESTION:

03:25:52;17

That's positive? Here's a tough question. 'Cause I don't know how anybody clears out answers. How would you want people to think of you in the future? How do you want to be remembered? I mean, have you thought about this? Or when they think back, and, you know, if I'm not saying five years down. I mean, 100 years from now. I mean, you'll obviously still be a figure in the history of...

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:26:13;19

Oh, no, no. I mean, if I think 100 years from now, I don't even think I'd be a...

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:26:17;21

a dot on the radar screen. I don't know. But...

QUESTION:

03:26:21;01

Well, in the future. Just, you know, sort of a legacy going...

LYN ST. JAMES:

03:26:21;27

I think, I don't know. I think one of the things that I've been afforded in my so-called retirement is more time to read. And I do love to read. And I've read all of Ann

Morrow Lindbergh's books.

03:26:35;18

And I didn't know she was a pilot. And that she, you know, navigated and went on all these trips with him. And, you know, besides being a mother, and a writer, and I mean, she's a fabulous woman. You know? And fascinating. And so I guess, for the people that, I don't know.

03:26:52;09

I just guess that I hope people find there was a lot to Lyn St. James. You know? Not just something you might read in a record book somewhere. And that somebody will find me interesting 100 years from now.

QUESTION:

04:00:41;14

Even though we've talked that gender's not the big issue, there's still a lot of gender issues in the world of racing. Tell me about some of those and some of your recommendations or things you'd like to see how those could be handled.

LYN ST. JAMES:

04:00:52;11

Well, I think first of all, women have to learn how to train hard enough to be strong enough to be equal or better than their competitors, whether it's a man or a woman. So the physical training is very demanding. I mean, a lot of these young gals that come through our program have no idea.

04:01:06;18

I mean, the cardiovascular, we maintain 85 percent of our max cardiovascular capability the entire time we're in the car. That could be two to four hours in a professional race. In an amateur race, it's 20 minutes.

04:01:18;25

So, you know, you've really got to have good cardiovascular fitness. You've got to have good strength, upper body. You have to have enduring strength. So you don't have to be muscular built, but you have to have strong, enduring muscles.

04:01:30;19

So the physical training is very, very important, and it's

just, it's huge. Then there's issues, cultural issues that still impact women in this sport. You know, if you get a sponsor and a team that rallies behind some young driver, and they hire them and they build this whole campaign and this image, I mean, you look at a Dale Earnhardt Jr., you know, you look at Jimmy Johnson, you look at, you know, a lot of these young drivers that come in, that there's an investment made by these sponsors and by these teams.

04:02:01;12

Well, if they're gonna pick a woman driver and do that and get behind her, there's a fear, there's a concern. What happens if she just decides she, you know, wants to get married and get pregnant and be a mom? She's gonna have to take a year off. Or, you know, at least a year off.

04:02:16;23

That's not gonna have to happen with the guys. And no one knows when that little light switch or whatever you want to call it could off with any other individual. So I think there's some reluctance there. There's also

reluctance because of the safety issue. You know, racing's a dangerous sport.

04:02:34;17

And believe this, every race car driver that straps himself into a racecar knows that. But first of all, I think men almost feel, many men, not all men, (SWALLOWS) there's an inherent cultural quality that you're supposed to protect us. That men are supposed to protect the women.

04:02:52;08

I mean, if we go back to the cave (LAUGHS) days or whatever, you know, I think that some of that, a lot of that still exists. And so, now, if a man, particularly, is signing off on a sponsorship deal to put a woman in a racecar that, in fact, could kill her, so there, it goes against the grain.

04:03:08;26

So now he's got to kinda overcome that. Plus, there's a potential backlash of, or concern of a backlash of fans and the media that if, in fact, a women were to get maimed, you know, get seriously injured or die in a racecar that then was sponsored by whomever, that there could be a

backlash to that sponsor because they actually facilitated that.

04:03:32;04

So those are things that nobody wants to talk about. Believe me, nobody ever brings them up. But I know they're hurdles, they're issues. They're there, in the way of multimillion dollar deals that it takes to be a successful racecar driver. And for women, those are things that (CLAP) they're just, they're there.