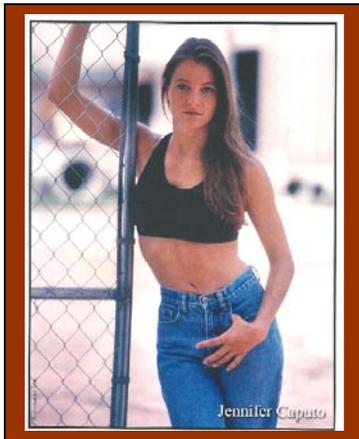


## INTERVIEW WITH JENNIFER CAPUTO: STUNT WOMAN AND MOTORCROSS RACER



**W**hen Jennifer Caputo's not jumping a motorcycle through a wall of fire or racing through traffic with guns in tow, then she's flinging dirt on a motocross bike – and that's just for fun. For over a decade as a Hollywood stuntwoman, Jennifer Caputo has made a career out of making celebrities like Cameron Diaz, Halle Barry and Sheryl Crow look like they can accomplish impossible feats onscreen. But it's all in a day's work for Jennifer. With movies like *The Aviator*, *Catwoman*, *The Fast and the Furious*, and *Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle* (just to name a few), it's no surprise that she is one of the most sought-after women in this competitive profession. Jennifer shares insight about her stunt work and passion for motocross, and also gives us a peak into her personal world outside the glitz and glam.

**HH:** Your work allows you to meet a lot of inspiring people, how do you stay grounded around all the glitz and glam?

**JC:** I go home to Florida. Being around my family and friends continually reminds me what life is ultimately about.

**HH:** Did you ride motorcycles before you started stunt work?

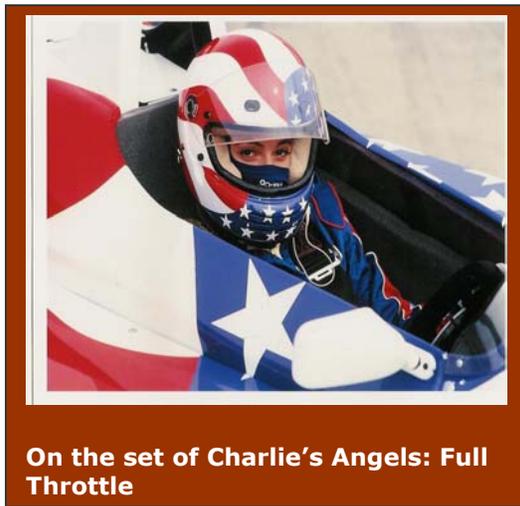
**JC:** I've had a passion for motorcycles for as long as I can remember. I had a Honda 50 when I was about seven. I rode that for a few years, and then it wasn't until I graduated from college that I got my first street bike ... a 1987 Honda Hurricane 1000. My first dirt bike experience was in 1996. I went with some friends to Bakersfield, CA with the purpose of buying a used 125. We were leaving a Honda shop when a man walked right past us pushing a 1994 CR125. Turns out he was taking

**Jennifer and other extreme women featured in Ad for C.T.I. Kneebraces**

the bike to the shop to sell. I bought it right there and we were off to ride. Later that day, the engine seized, and it was at that point my schooling on 2-stroke engines began.

**HH:** Do you have a favorite moto stunt, and have you had any stunts go awry?

**JC:** I got to do a great day's work for a TV show called *Fastlane*. I worked for a guy named David Barrett who is a friend and is a fantastic motorcycle rider himself. I got to jump over alleyways, lay the bike down, run across the hood of a car and jump on the back of another bike, hook my legs under the handlebars, lay back on the seat, and fire two guns to stop the cops from following us! It was a great day all around and working for David, who knew what we were up against, made it that much more fun and rewarding.



**HH:** What advice would you give to women riders who want to enter the field of professional stunt work?

**JC:** Practice, practice, practice!!!!!! Be prepared for anything, and gain skills in other areas because motorcycle jobs are few and far between.

**HH:** You race motocross "in your spare time." What is it about the dirt that you prefer to the track?

**JC:** I love to jump, so I guess that would be the thing I like the most about the dirt. Of course, there is the added feature of a bunch of amazingly cute, in-shape young

men changing into their gear in the back of their pick-ups. This, my friends, can be worth the price of track admission.

**HH:** Do you find the same amount of competitiveness in motocross as in stunt work?

**JC:** No. With motocross, there's always a clear winner. The checkered flag determines the true winner of each competition. In stunts, the judging is subjective and based on personal taste. It's not uncommon to repeat a stunt once the director has actually seen the stunt performed. "That was great! Can you try to ... ?" There have been times in my career where I've thought I could not perform a stunt more technically perfect but have been asked to do it again. There have also been those times when I have felt unhappy with my performance and the director has loved it! It's all a matter of what they're looking for and what the particular person is visualizing. For me, I'm in competition with my self to do a good job. When a stunt requires more than one performer, teamwork is the most essential



ingredient in completely the job successfully. The only competition I see in the stunt world seems to take place when you're actually trying to land the job.

**HH:** What ambitions do you hold for competing in motocross?

**JC:** I love motocross and would like nothing better than to make it my only profession. I do, however, believe my time has passed. It was extremely hard to have a stunt career, race full time, and be financially responsible for everything. Women's motocross has come a long way in the last 10 years thanks to women like Miki Keller, Mercedes Gonzalez, Sue Fish, and Bonnie Warch, to name a few. These women have helped gain respect for women's motocross and have paved a little easier road for the girls coming up. I would love to some day be in the position to help an up-and-coming youngster fulfill her dream of becoming a women's pro rider.

**HH:** The other side: What career path do you think you would have followed if your journey didn't lead to stunt work?

**JC:** I have a degree in Hotel and Restaurant Management from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. I would probably be in some remote tropical location running my own bar.

**HH:** With such a successful career, do you have any time to take a peaceful motorcycle ride outside of work? And if so, what are some other things you do to de-stress and relax - what soothes your soul?

**JC:** There's not a lot of time for peaceful motorcycle riding, but I have two dogs (Pumpkin and Mia) who I like to go hiking with. Nature has a real way of calming my soul. Motocross is a definite release for me. I used to be able to ride all the time and now it's a luxury I rarely get to participate in. I also love music, so whether I'm listening to it or playing my guitar or drums, it also has a calming quality.

**HH:** What would be your suggestion for HH's Road Goddess Guide - something you never ride without? (think mind, body, or soul)

**JC:** Helmet! Clean mind, awareness, proper gear, and an appreciation of how lucky we are to be able to ride.



On the set of Till Dusk Till Dawn

**HH:** On a personal note: who is Jennifer Caputo without motorcycles and stunt work? What types of music and books are you into?

**JC:** I'm a daughter, a sister, an aunt, a granddaughter, a Godparent, an animal lover, a loyal friend. My taste in music ranges from Sinatra to Big Band to Bob Schneider to Jack Johnson to the Beatles ... I can pretty much listen to anything, but as yet I haven't developed an ear for Country Music.

**HH:** We love the fact that you starred in the commercial for Silk soymilk. Does promoting healthy food choices show a side of your character and well-being? Is this important to you?

**JC:** I try my best to take good care of myself and put good things in my body. I must admit that I eat and drink what I want. I just work out a little harder when I go crazy with the fries!

**HH:** Would you like to give a shout-out to any of your friends, sponsors, or people who have helped make this dream possible?

**JC:** Thanks to my mom for the unconditional support she's given me my entire life. Thanks to Johnny Airtime (Roger Wells) for helping me to cultivate my passion for riding, teaching me about motocross, my bikes (mechanically), and basically how to be a self-sufficient motorcycle rider. I would also like to thank the folks that have helped in the past and continue to help with product support. Michael McGunagle, Scott Griffin, David Preston, and Mike Farmer with Maxxis tires are fantastic! They not only put out the best tires around, but they are a class act and make me proud to be a part of their team. Alan Picard at Fly helped me to look sharp in my red, white, and blue gear. Thanks also to Tom Carson at CTI Knee Braces, Steve Piattoni at Shock Therapy, Dawn Rogers at White Brothers, and Miki Keller at the WMA. I can't leave out my good friends Gloria Fontenot, Robin (Ears) Bonacourssi, Eileen Weisinger, and my riding buddies Rex Reddick, Clay Fontenot, Rob Petrin, and Chris Palermo – thanks for your friendship and support.