

STEVE MCQUEEN

FULL-THROTTLE
COOL



WRITTEN BY
DWIGHT JON ZIMMERMAN
ART BY GREG SCOTT



TWO

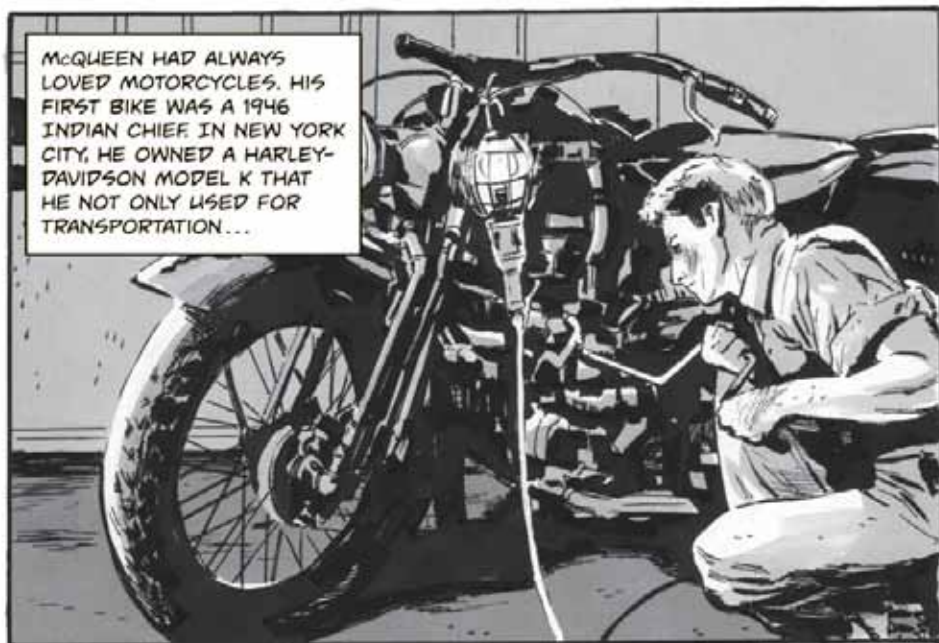
CRACKING THE THROTTLE

AFTER THE NEIGHBORHOOD PLAYHOUSE, McQUEEN WAS ACCEPTED IN THE HERBERT BERGHOF STUDIO. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY SUMMER STOCK PERFORMANCES IN 1953 AND 1954. THEN, IN 1955, HE AUDITIONED BEFORE THE LEGENDARY LEE STRASBERG...

WHEN I PLAY MUSIC, NOTHING IS CLOSED TO ME.



McQUEEN'S PERFORMANCE OF A MONOLOGUE FROM GOLDEN BOY--A PLAY ABOUT A VIOLINIST WHO CHOOSES TO BECOME A BOXER--CONVINCED STRASBERG TO ACCEPT HIM.



McQUEEN HAD ALWAYS LOVED MOTORCYCLES. HIS FIRST BIKE WAS A 1946 INDIAN CHIEF IN NEW YORK CITY. HE OWNED A HARLEY-DAVIDSON MODEL K THAT HE NOT ONLY USED FOR TRANSPORTATION....



...HE ALSO USED IT FOR RACING AT NEARBY LONG ISLAND CITY RACEWAY.



A CONSISTENT WINNER ON THE TRACK, AND THE PRIZE MONEY SUPPLEMENTED HIS IRREGULAR ACTING INCOME.



IT WAS DURING THIS TIME THAT McQUEEN LITERALLY CROSSED PATHS WITH A YOUNG ACTRESS AND DANCER, RUBY NEILAM SALVADOR ADAMS--BETTER KNOWN AS NEILE ADAMS.

HI. YOU'RE PRETTY.

SEE YA, NEILE!



AFTER SEVERAL PASSING ENCOUNTERS, STEVE FINALLY ASKED NEILE OUT. AT THE TIME SHE HAD THE LEAD ROLE OF BABE IN THE PAJAMA GAME. WHEN THE NIGHT'S PERFORMANCE AT BROADWAY'S SHUBERT THEATER WAS OVER, STEVE WAS WAITING ... ON HIS HARLEY.

HI, STEVE!

HI, NEILE. HOP ON--LET'S GO!

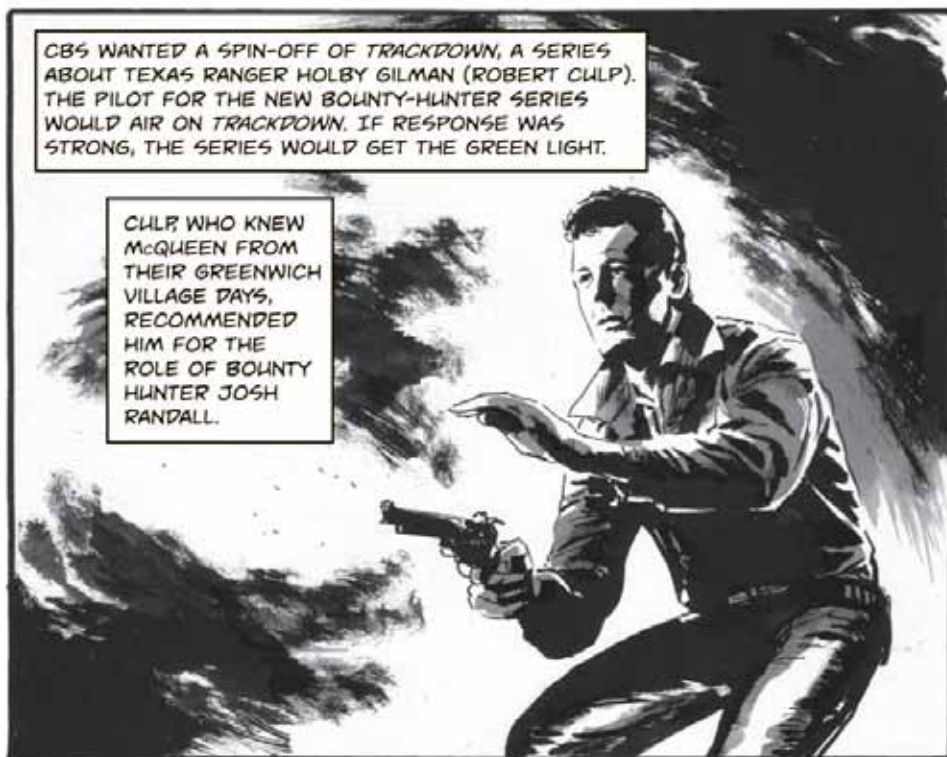


OF THE TWO, IT WAS NEILE WHO HAD THE GREATER ACTING CAREER DURING THIS TIME-- SHE WAS MAKING \$50,000 A YEAR COMPARED TO STEVE'S \$3,000. THEN, IN LATE 1957, THINGS CHANGED FOR McQUEEN.

THE POPULARITY OF TELEVISION HAD MUSHROOMED DURING THE 1950s. THE THREE NETWORKS OF NBC, CBS, AND ABC DOMINATED THE MARKET.

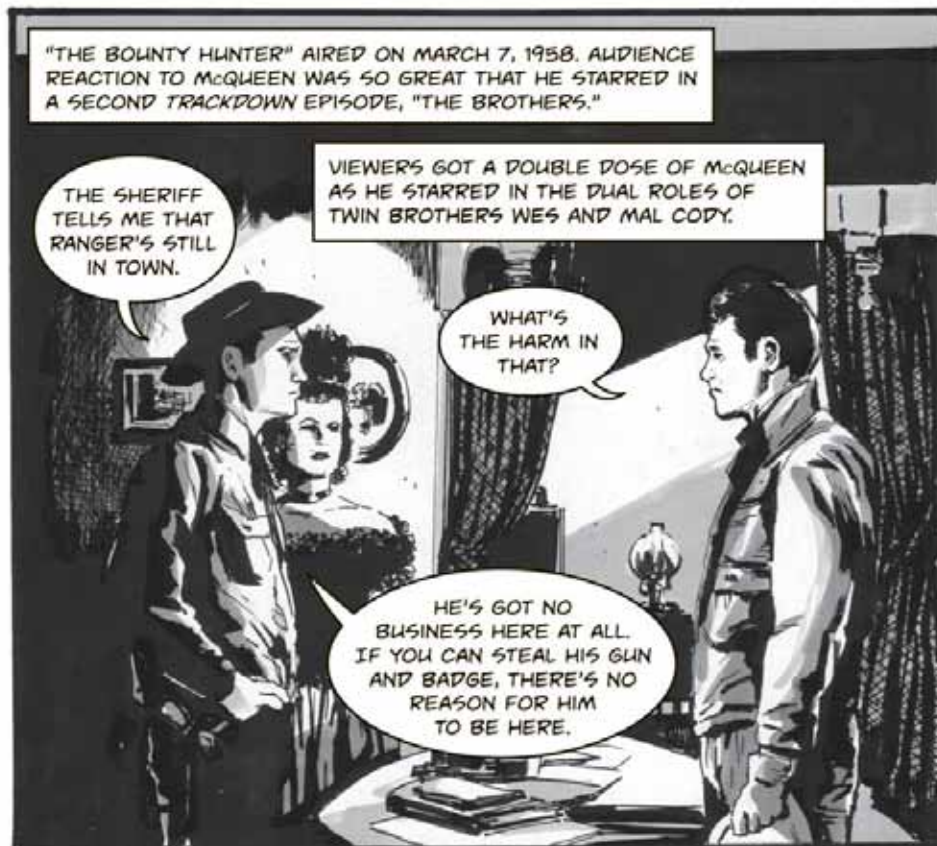


ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR TELEVISION GENRES WAS THE WESTERN.



CBS WANTED A SPIN-OFF OF TRACKDOWN, A SERIES ABOUT TEXAS RANGER HOLBY GILMAN (ROBERT CULP). THE PILOT FOR THE NEW BOUNTY-HUNTER SERIES WOULD AIR ON TRACKDOWN. IF RESPONSE WAS STRONG, THE SERIES WOULD GET THE GREEN LIGHT.

CULP WHO KNEW McQUEEN FROM THEIR GREENWICH VILLAGE DAYS, RECOMMENDED HIM FOR THE ROLE OF BOUNTY HUNTER JOSH RANDALL.



"THE BOUNTY HUNTER" AIRED ON MARCH 7, 1958. AUDIENCE REACTION TO McQUEEN WAS SO GREAT THAT HE STARRED IN A SECOND TRACKDOWN EPISODE, "THE BROTHERS."

THE SHERIFF TELLS ME THAT RANGER'S STILL IN TOWN.

VIEWERS GOT A DOUBLE DOSE OF McQUEEN AS HE STARRED IN THE DUAL ROLES OF TWIN BROTHERS WES AND MAL CODY.

WHAT'S THE HARM IN THAT?

HE'S GOT NO BUSINESS HERE AT ALL. IF YOU CAN STEAL HIS GUN AND BADGE, THERE'S NO REASON FOR HIM TO BE HERE.

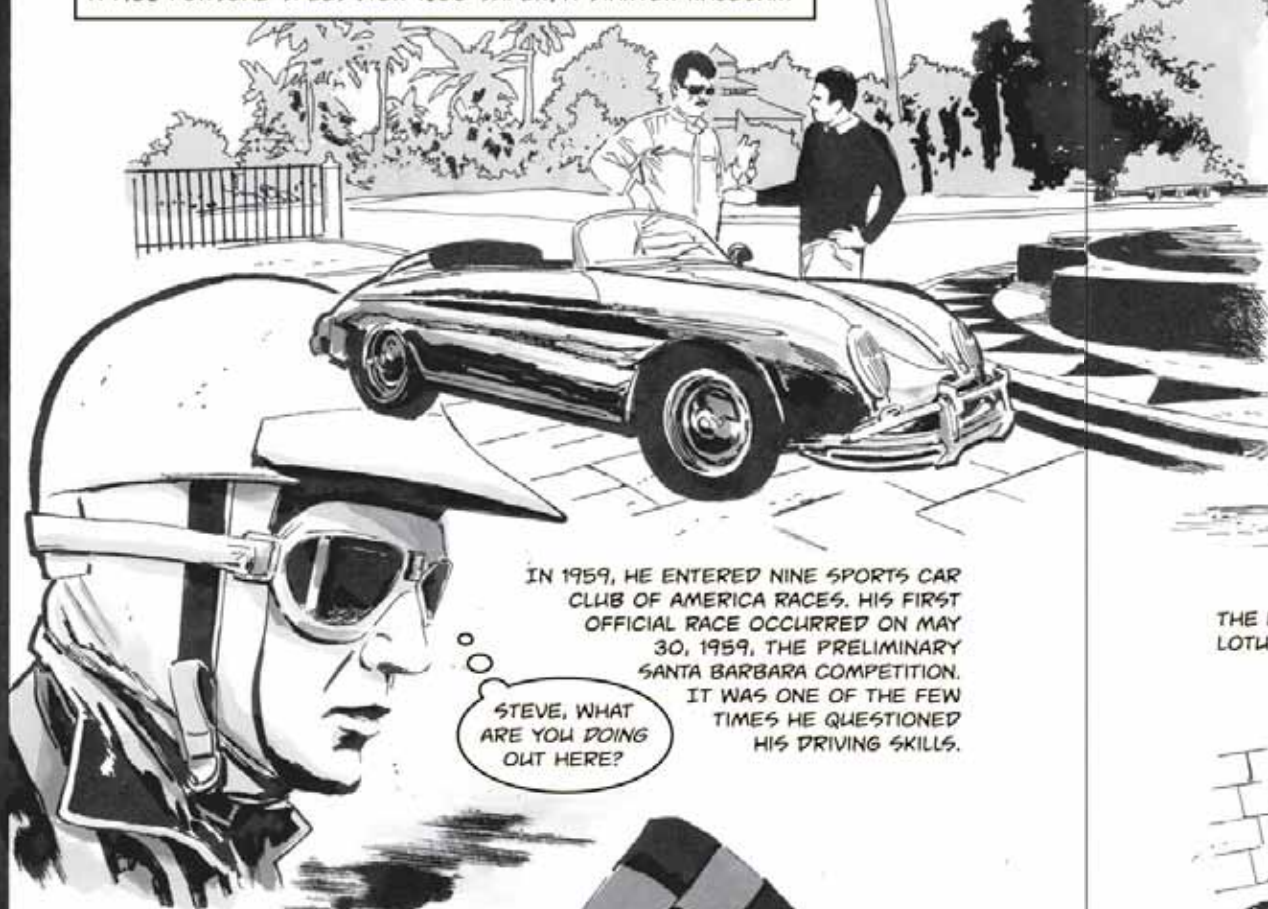
TO HELP HIS SHOW STAND OUT FROM THE OTHER WESTERNS, STEVE McQUEEN CARRIED A SAWED-OFF WINCHESTER. THE "MARE'S LEG," AS IT WAS CALLED, WAS JUST 19 INCHES LONG. AND BECAUSE IT WAS A REAL RIFLE, IT COST THE STUDIO \$1,100 IN FIREARMS LICENSES.

WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE DEBUTED IN THE PRIME-TIME SLOT OF 8:30 ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 1958. DURING ITS THREE-YEAR RUN, IT WAS A TOP 10 HIT. McQUEEN'S NEW FINANCIAL SECURITY GAVE HIM THE FREEDOM TO PURSUE HIS OTHER GREAT PASSION...



...RACING.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA WAS A MECCA FOR RACING AND STEVE, WANTING TO TAKE HIS DRIVING SKILLS TO THE NEXT LEVEL, BOUGHT A 1958 PORSCHE SPEEDSTER 1600 SUPER, A STARTER RACECAR.



IN 1959, HE ENTERED NINE SPORTS CAR CLUB OF AMERICA RACES. HIS FIRST OFFICIAL RACE OCCURRED ON MAY 30, 1959, THE PRELIMINARY SANTA BARBARA COMPETITION. IT WAS ONE OF THE FEW TIMES HE QUESTIONED HIS DRIVING SKILLS.

STEVE, WHAT ARE YOU DOING OUT HERE?

BUT, WHEN IT WAS OVER, THE ROOKIE HAD FINISHED 11TH IN HIS CLASS--AND HE WAS HOOKED.

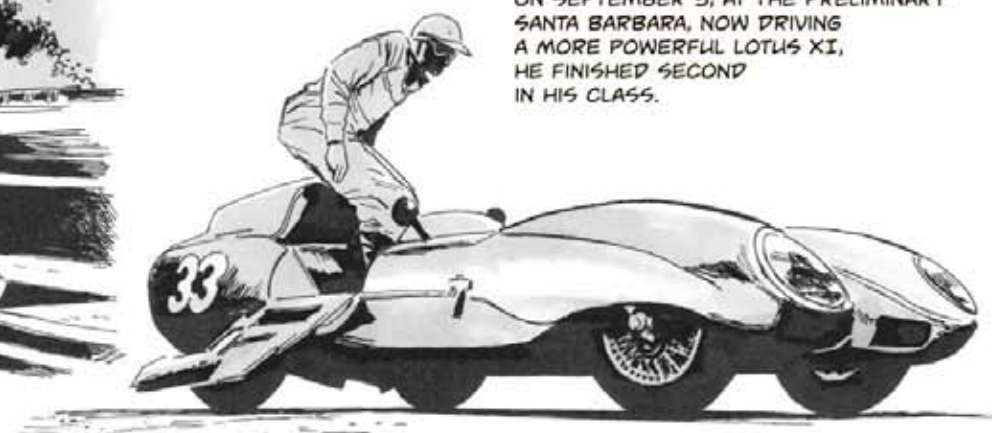
IN HIS SECOND RACE, THE NOVICE SANTA BARBARA HELD LATER THE SAME DAY, McQUEEN FINISHED FIRST IN HIS CLASS.



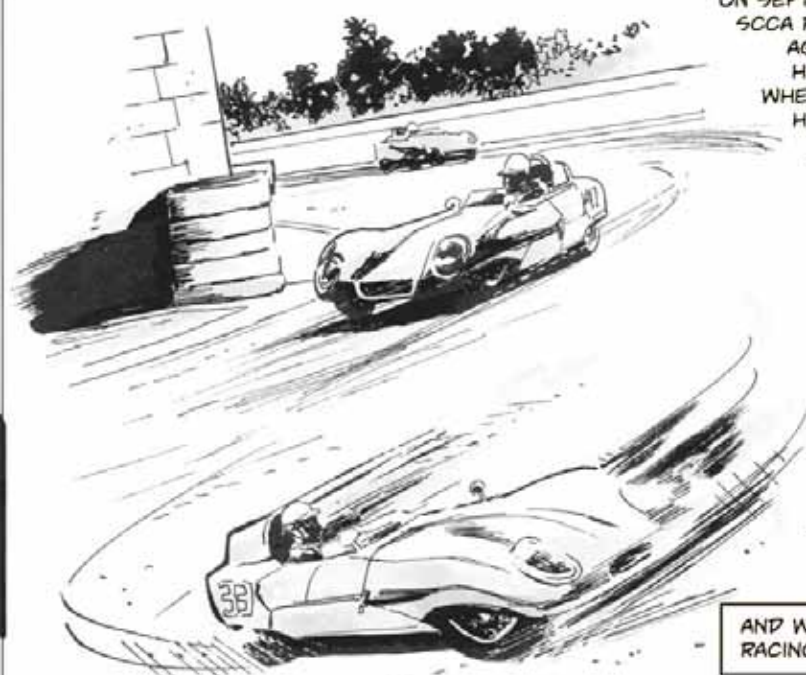
IN HIS NEXT THREE RACES, THE SANTA BARBARA, THE PRELIMINARY HOURGLASS FIELD, AND THE HOURGLASS FIELD, HE WAS DNS--DID NOT START.

ON JUNE 21, AT THE CONSOLATION HOURGLASS FIELD DRIVING A PORSCHE 356 CARRERA, McQUEEN AND CO-DRIVER EARL CALLICUTT FINISHED THIRD IN THEIR CLASS.

ON SEPTEMBER 5, AT THE PRELIMINARY SANTA BARBARA, NOW DRIVING A MORE POWERFUL LOTUS XI, HE FINISHED SECOND IN HIS CLASS.



THE NEXT DAY AT THE SANTA BARBARA, AND AGAIN DRIVING THE LOTUS XI, HE WAS IN THE LEAD WHEN HE SPUN OUT, FINISHING 4TH.



ON SEPTEMBER 20, AT THE SCCA REGIONAL DEL MAR, AGAIN IN A LOTUS XI, HE WAS IN THE LEAD WHEN HE ACCIDENTALLY HIT THE EMERGENCY FUEL SWITCH ON THE DASH, CUTTING HIS POWER. HE FINISHED 6TH IN HIS CLASS.

AND WHEN HE WASN'T CAR RACING ON THE TRACK...