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Knievel takes up 'strongest game'

Wednesday, July 19, 1978

BY ROSEMARY BEALES
American-Statesman Staff

Evel Knievel, in Austin to do court battle over a motorcycle jump he never made, said Tuesday he has taken up another sport that is "the only thing that compares with what I do in-risking my life" by jumping two-wheelers.

The 38-year-old stuntman said he plays 36 holes of golf a day "anywhere I can get a game."

Knievel is expected to testify this morning in the 53rd District Court trial of a lawsuit charging that he breached a contract when he failed to jump in Austin two years ago.

Although the suit was an off-limits subject in a Driskill Hotel interview, Knievel had plenty to say about other aspects of his life, including his recent jail stint for assaulting a television executive with a baseball bat.

He served six months in jail on that charge, but has been out for the past three months, as evidenced by the tanned face under his silver, wavy hair.

Knievel was dressed casually in white knit pants and a lavender peasant shirt, contrasted by flashy gold jewelry including a ring containing at least five large diamonds.

He says his assault conviction has not turned former fans against him.

Preachers come up and shake my hand. Pilots come out of the cockpits and



Knievel: Found a new sport

shake my hand. Stewardesses kiss me and children come up to me, saying they're glad I did what I did and I was right," Knievel said.

"I have had some adverse comments from people in the illegitimate press, not like your paper," he said.

His legal trouble has not affected the sale of toys in his likeness, said Knievel, noting he received a royalty check last month from Europe for "several hundred thousand" dollars.

"Most toys, if they do very well, sell two or three million and last maybe two years. My toy did 200 million and it went for five years. I consider that a blessing."

Knievel's daredevil doll was the "biggest selling toy in the history of the

world," he said. "But it wasn't a make-believe toy. It was reality."

While children around the world may still be putting their Knievel toys through jumps and other tricks, the original is not in operation.

"I've saved a little money and I don't have to work or perform," Knievel said. "I haven't jumped in a couple of years and I may not jump again."

Instead, he is playing golf. "I think that golf is the strongest game, physically and emotionally, that a human being can play on the face of this earth," he said. "Playing for money, he said, is "the only thing that compares with what I do in-risking my life."

"If I don't concentrate solidly on what I'm doing when I'm risking my life, I miss the jump," and golf takes that same singlemindedness, Knievel said.

If the celebrated daredevil from Butte, Mont., jumps again, Austin may be one of his performance sites. "I love Austin and I'd like to perform here someday," he said.

His scheduled performance here on Sept. 4, 1976, fell through, sparking the legal battle over whether he breached his contract with the promoter, Music Capital Inc.

The company is seeking \$530,000 for its alleged damages in expenses of preparing for the aborted show and expected profits.

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B6 Austin American-Statesman

Thursday, July 20, 1978

Knieval says promoters didn't have his fees

By ROSEMARY BEALES
American-Statesman Staff

There was a standing-room-only crowd to watch Evel Knieval in Austin Thursday, but the motorcycle daredevil was not performing one of his life-risking stunts.

Knieval was on the stand in 53rd District Court to testify in the trial of a suit against him by promoters of a scheduled Austin show that was never held.

He told jurors Thursday that he had "intended 100 per cent" to jump his cycle over seven trucks here Sept. 4, 1976. But, when he arrived in Austin, local promoters did not have the \$100,000 fee ready and "there was no fairground," he said.

"They must be con men. They defrauded me," said the stuntman from Butte, Mont.

The promotion firm, Music Capital Inc., sued Knieval shortly after the scheduled jump, saying he breached his contract by failing to perform and by not adhering to the portion of the contract in which he

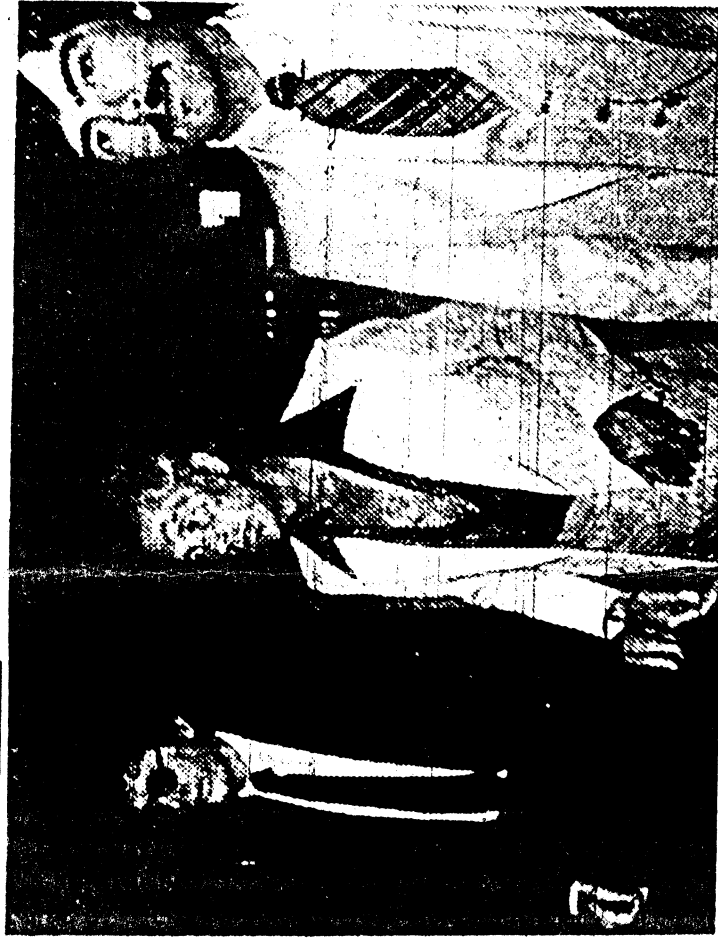
guaranteed that several national companies would advertise the event.

If Knieval had followed through on the advertising agreement and oral promises for other help, the promoters say, they could have sold more advance tickets and collected his fee. But they sold only about \$24,000 worth of tickets at an average price of \$7.67 apiece, according to testimony.

"This happens to be the first time in 14 years (of performing) that I have ever been in court with a promoter," Knieval said during a proceeding that featured both eruptions of anger and bursts of laughter.

"When you're risking your life for a promoter, a whole new set of moral obligations arises. Everybody has to keep their word and I try my best to do that," said Knieval.

He said he felt he had lived up to his part of the advertising guarantee by contacting officials at Ideal Toy Co., AMF Bicycles and Warner Bros. studios.



Staff Photo by Kai Brooking

Knieval enters courthouse flanked by his lawyers

President Tom Erwin and other Music Capital Inc. officials testified that none of the companies, which are involved with Knieval's toy and movie ventures, advertised the Sept. 4 event.

les, cars and other equipment to Austin two weeks before the show, to be displayed at Highland Mall as a ticket sales promotion.

"There was never a word said about sending equipment down two weeks prior. We couldn't. It was committed" for a Special Olympics benefit, Knieval said.

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Brackenridge Hospital grapples with the problem of who will
provide obstetrical care to indigent mothers when the
present contractor pulls out. Page B5.

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Jury finds in Knievel's favor

Verdict rules daredevil didn't violate contract for 1976 Austin performance

An Austin jury took about six hours Friday to determine that stuntman-daredevil Evel Knievel did not breach his contract when he caused a scheduled motorcycle jump here to fall through two years ago.

Attorneys for Music Capital Inc. attempted to show that Knievel's cancellation for the Sept. 4, 1976, event caused the show's failure and violated certain provisions of a written agreement, ranging from ticket sales to television advertising.

The jury, however, determined that Knievel was not liable for such provisions and therefore not responsible for compensating the company's losses. The company was seeking \$550,000 in damages for expenses incurred in preparing for the aborted show as well as anticipated profits.

Knievel testified earlier this week that he tries to keep his word with promoters and expects them to do the same. He said he agreed to do the Austin jump largely as a personal favor to company

president Tom Erwin. Part of the agreement was a \$100,000 performance fee to be paid to Knievel when he arrived in Austin Sept. 1, 1976.

Promoters acknowledged in the testimony this week that they did not have all of the fee but expected they would have been able to raise the money through advance ticket sales, if Knievel had followed through on what they said were oral promises to help promote the event.



Evel Knievel



Referendum on sales tax viewed as legal

By LARRY BESAW
American Statesman Staff

A House committee's decision to ask voters if the state sales tax should be raised to lower school taxes does not conflict with state law prohibiting referenda on general election ballots, Legislative Council executive director Bob Johnson said Friday.