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Winning Is Not Enough

The Autobiography

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Extract

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CHAPTER 6

Ideal Education

Jim clark was the finest racing driver of my era. He was also one of my closest friends and even now, almost forty years after his death, just the mention of his name triggers so many memories and emotions. We were so similar in so many ways – the same height, the same build, the same measured approach to our racing and the same pride in being Scottish. Yet in other ways, we were so different – Jimmy was quiet, I was rarely at a loss for words; he was an introvert, people used to say I was an extrovert. Nonetheless, we always seemed to get along and, during my club racing career and through my first three seasons in Formula 1, this humble, unaffected genius became my benchmark and role model. Just his presence at an event somehow seemed to make me more relaxed and, as a result, more successful. I did not fully appreciate it at the time, but I now look back and see that Jim Clark, together with my BRM team-mate Graham Hill, offered me an ideal education in racing at the highest level.

It was July 1958 when we first met, on the evening after the hill climb at Rest-and-Be-Thankful. The much-heralded young Scottish driver had competed in the event and stopped for petrol at Dumbuck on his way home. Jim Clark stepped out of

his car on to our forecourt wearing, I recall, a blue round-neck sweater and grey flannels. The pundits were talking about him as a star of the future, and I had read all about him in the various motor sport magazines on sale at the time – the comics, as I called them. I knew his family were farmers in the hills around Duns and Chirnside in the Border region of Scotland, I knew he had started his racing career in cars provided by Ian Scott Watson and I knew he was a member of the Border Reivers racing team run by a great enthusiast called Jock McBain. And here he was, visiting our garage. I continued to follow his career with great interest, once standing in the crowd at Oulton Park and watching him dominate a Formula Junior race, right through to 1961, when he signed with Colin Chapman and Lotus and became a Formula 1 driver.

Jimmy and I were formally introduced by Graham Gauld, the editor of *Motor World* magazine, at Charterhall in 1962; by then, he was recognised as one of the top racing drivers in the world, and I was competing as A. N. Other, and yet he greeted me and seemed so mild and modest. Jim was a brilliant driver, however his great popularity throughout the sport owed as much to his endearing shyness and total humility.

There was more contact the following year when I started to race for Ecurie Ecosse and, as we became friends, I believe Jimmy Clark was somehow looking out for me: 'Don't force it,' he told me once, 'don't try and drive too quickly. Just keep it smooth.' That was *his* style, of course. You never saw arms and elbows when he was driving. There was minimal hand movement because he was so precise and accurate. I used to watch him intently, studying his preparation and his mannerisms, and it seemed to me entirely logical that this was the correct way to drive.

As the pace of my life increased during 1964, Jimmy became a kind of anchor for me, always encouraging me, always

supporting me and, when I started getting drives for prestigious teams like Chequered Flag and Team Lotus, I suspected it was because he had put in a good word for me.

I used to visit him at his farm, getting to know his parents and four elder sisters, and I enjoyed listening to him talk about racing and his experiences. We became close and, in the frenetic world of motor racing, perhaps we helped each other: for me, it was a friendship forged by my utter respect for him as a driver and as a person; for him, maybe I was a fellow Scotsman in the same business whom he felt he could talk to and, now and then, confide in.

However, Jim was not always too forthcoming. One afternoon at Silverstone, when we were preparing to race in a couple of Lotus Élans, I wandered over to where he was sitting and asked where he braked for Stowe corner. He mumbled and looked away. Bloody hell, I thought, nobody knows this circuit better than him, and he doesn't want to tell me. Maybe he thought there were some things I should be left to work out for myself; perhaps I was becoming fast enough for him to feel he shouldn't be giving me tips.

'Morning, Jackie, will you drive Jimmy's car in South Africa?'

It was November 1964 and, out of the blue, Colin Chapman was asking me to drive for his works Lotus team in the Rand Grand Prix, a non-championship Formula 1 race, in Johannesburg. He explained how Jim had suffered a freak injury – he had travelled to Cortina in the Italian Alps to attend the launch of the new Ford Cortina and slipped a disc in his back while throwing snowballs – and this meant Lotus urgently needed a driver for both the F1 race and a touring car race at Kyalami. Colin wanted to know if I was available.

'That would be very nice,' I replied, 'but you know I've signed to drive for BRM next season.'

'Yes,' he said, 'but what if I cleared it with them?'

'Well, if you do that, fine.'

I had enormous respect for Chapman as a great innovator in the history of our sport. He had an amazing ability to produce cars that were frighteningly quick and, as the years passed, strangely, he seemed to play a pivotal role at key stages of my racing career. This was one such moment and, with his amazing charm, he persuaded BRM to let me drive, and I was boarding the flight to Johannesburg.

It was my first ever Formula 1 race, and I put the car on pole position. I don't know how. Coming out of club racing and the formative classes, I was shocked to find myself on the front row of a F1 grid. Only Jacques Villeneuve has achieved the same feat in recent times, and that was after he switched from IndyCar racing, where he had already been the CART World Series champion. Maybe it was the combination of a fantastically quick car and a bright-eyed, bushy-tailed young driver who was thrown in at the deep end, against big names like Graham Hill, Mike Spence and Frank Gardner, feeling as if he had nothing to lose and an awful lot to gain.

The brand new Lotus had been designed specifically for Jim Clark and its adhesion and grip was incredible, but this was the first time the car had ever been raced competitively and, on the start line, just as I released the clutch, a tubular metal drive shaft snapped, and a rubber doughnut that was part of it flew 100 feet in the air. I was stranded and the rest of the field roared past in a blur of noise, power and dust. This particular event was run in two heats, and I managed to redeem the situation in the second part of the race when, with my drive shaft repaired, I made my way from the back of the grid, recorded the fastest lap of the day and won. Graham Hill was the overall winner and he took home a spectacular diamond and gold trophy, but my first taste of Formula 1

racing could hardly have been more exciting.

The 1965 season was scheduled to start at the South African Grand Prix on New Year's Day, in the coastal city of East London. I was nervous ahead of my first F1 championship race having qualified the previous day in eleventh place and, just as the New Year's Eve party was getting underway at our hotel, the King's Arms, I decided to escape the bedlam by going to watch a movie at a local drive-in, together with an emerging Austrian driver called Jochen Rindt.

There was a great spirit among the drivers in those days and, on the morning of the race, I recall spending some time sitting and chatting with Graham Hill and Jo Bonnier in their hotel rooms.

That afternoon, I focused my mind on getting the basics right and performed reasonably well, picking up my first championship point in a race won by Jimmy Clark at his most immaculate, driving the same Lotus that I had driven in the Rand Grand Prix.

'Finished sixth Jackie,' read the telegram I sent home to Helen.

Everything was going well . . . although maybe not quite as well as Ken Tyrrell had anticipated: he had laid a bet with John Cooper that I would out-qualify Bruce McLaren in South Africa and he lost. The setback must have upset him, because years later he was still telling me how I let him down.

The fast start to my Formula 1 career continued: second place in the non-championship Race of Champions at Brands Hatch, pole position for the non-championship Sunday Mirror Trophy race at Goodwood and, on Saturday 15 May, I was leading the field in the non-championship Daily Express International Trophy at Silverstone. There were no world championship points at stake, but this was a major motor sporting occasion. More than 80,000 people packed into Silverstone,

and the British crowd were becoming increasingly noisy and excited as the new, young British driver moved into the lead.

Keep it smooth, I tell myself, repeating Jimmy's words in my head . . . only a few laps to go . . . keep concentrating . . . in my rear view mirror, I see the reigning world champion, John Surtees, in his Ferrari . . . ahead of me, I see his team-mate Lorenzo Bandini in the other Ferrari . . . I am concerned . . . I have to lap Bandini, but maybe he will give me a hard time, and let Surtees get closer . . . don't get outfumbled by the Ferraris . . . stay calm . . . I head for Becketts corner . . . ease on the brakes . . . OK, there's a gap . . . go for it, nice and smooth . . . that's it . . . I slip past Bandini . . . open road ahead . . . Surtees won't catch me now.

Victory in what was just my fifth Formula 1 race seemed to confirm my potential, and, ahead of the next date on the calendar, the Monaco Grand Prix on 30 May, the *Daily Sketch* newspaper invited me to start writing a weekly column. Everything was happening so fast, and my excitement coursed through the words I babbled to my contact person at the *Sketch*, motor sport writer Michael Kemp.

'This place is special,' I dictated. 'One moment, I am driving at 130 mph in bright sunlight along the streets of Monte Carlo. In a flash, I drive into a wall of darkness. It is a pitch-dark tunnel. Instead of slowing down, I have to pile on speed until I return to the dazzling daylight at 140 mph. This is the most hair-raising part of the circuit, before I swoop down to the harbour. This burst from light to dark to light will happen 100 times; it's cruel on the eyes and hard on the nerves. Driving must be more precise here than anywhere else because there is no room for error. There are sharp stone kerbs on each side of the road and, if you hit them, there could be a burst tyre, a broken wheel, or a bent or broken piece of suspension, and that could spell disaster.'

The BRM P261 was flying. Graham Hill, and then I, broke the lap record during practice on the Saturday, but my inexperience showed in the race when, leading through lap twenty-nine, I failed to notice an oil spill on the tarmac and spun the car. It was a mistake any over-eager youngster might have made, but I was very annoyed, even though I did go on to finish in third place. On reflection, that is not bad for my first Monaco Grand Prix, but I knew I could, and should, have done better.

In years to come, my capacity to consume information and take appropriate action, usually within the space of a few milliseconds, would improve to such a degree that I would avoid such errors. With experience, I would be able to spot a black streak on the track and instantly register an engine had blown or a car had dropped oil and I would be able to straddle the spill or avoid it without losing speed.

However, if carelessness was one product of my youth, another was naivety. A fortnight after Monaco, I noticed some of the experienced drivers seemed apprehensive about starting the Belgian Grand Prix at Spa-Francorchamps in driving rain. What's the problem, I thought. I was so keen and eager that I didn't know any better than to throw myself into one of the most notoriously dangerous circuits in extremely difficult conditions. Courage is one thing but, in years to come, I would learn to respect the thin line between what people call 'bravery' and what is actually downright stupidity.

It was an extraordinary race. Only two drivers completed all thirty-two laps, the two Scots. Jimmy Clark won, and I came second. At stages, I had started to sense my compatriot was almost pacing me around Spa, past the barbed-wire fences and the telegraph poles, past full-grown trees at the edge of the track and farm buildings constructed a few feet from the edge of the tarmac. Jimmy seemed to be backing off when possible,

ensuring we took no stupid risks, making certain we both stayed safe.

Actually, standing on the podium afterwards, he turned to me and asked: 'Are you OK? I was getting worried about you out there.'

'No problem, Jimmy,' I replied. 'I'm fine.'

Back home in Glasgow, the *Herald* was preparing a headline acclaiming the one-two finish of the 'Scottish speed twins', but I was already focused on my next challenge. At the end of every race, win or lose, my first instinct has always been to get away as soon as possible and move on.

The next adventure was Le Mans, where Graham Hill and I had been invited to co-drive something called the Rover BRM Gas Turbine. This was a good-looking car, with an engine revving at 64,000 revs per minute, compared to the 11,000 rpm of the BRM Formula 1 car. It generated speeds of 150 mph on the Mulsanne Straight, but there was no engine braking, so the only way to decelerate was to use the brakes.

'It feels more like flying,' I remember telling Graham.

We finished tenth in the 1965 race, and I returned the following year and qualified a Ford GT 40 Mk II for Alan Mann Racing, but injury prevented me from taking part in the actual race.

Historically, the 24 Hour of Le Mans is one of the three great events in motor sport, ranking alongside the Indianapolis 500 and the Monaco Grand Prix, but I have to say the race never particularly appealed to me. It was certainly a test of machines, pushing cars through the equivalent of a year's motoring in one single day, yet for a driver it seemed less challenging, driving to finish more than anything else. Aficionados of the race will disagree, but it seemed to me that, to win a Formula 1 Grand Prix, the driver has to drive pretty much on the limit, at 9/10. To win Le Mans, it was necessary

to drive at 6/10 or 7/10 for twenty-four hours. That was the difference. One was a blue riband 100–metre sprint; the other was a slog.

The 1965 Formula 1 season continued through June and July, with Jim Clark sweeping all before him and me following not far behind. After my second place in Belgium, I again took second place behind him in the French Grand Prix at Clermont-Ferrand, and yet again at the Dutch Grand Prix in Zandvoort on 18 July. Such results were far beyond my expectations, and I felt tremendously proud each time I stood on the podium alongside my fellow Scot.

It was an ideal education, seeing Jim perfect the art of doing just enough, going just fast enough, pushing the car just hard enough to win. There was no wasted effort.

Sandwiched between the French and the Dutch races was my first British Grand Prix, which turned out to be a disappointing event for me. I qualified well enough, on the front row, although in reality I was in fourth position. Unusally, the grid was set up in a 4–3–4 formation. Throughout the whole race I was uninspiring. That is the best word for my performance that day. I hadn't set the car up as I should have, I didn't drive as well as I should have and I certainly didn't deliver as I should have, finishing fifth.

In practice for the Grand Prix of Germany at the Nurburgring, which followed the race in Holland, I came within a few hundredths of a second of being the first man ever to complete the 14.7 mile circuit at an average speed in excess of 100 mph. Almost as if to put me back in my place, Jim jumped into his Lotus and claimed the milestone for himself, which meant hardly anybody seemed to notice when I posted a lap at 100.07 mph a few minutes later.

Jimmy always seemed to be one step ahead of me, and I remember how we laughed about the rivalry the next week,

over dinner at an Italian restaurant called Trattoria, around the corner from the flat where we used to stay whenever we were in London. The Balfour Place apartment belonged to Sir John Whitmore, who became a great friend to both Jimmy and me, and he put it at our disposal.

John was a very talented racing driver and a great character, who once famously forgot to lower the wheels when landing his private plane in Geneva and caused the airport to be closed for the rest of the day. He has since built a highly successful business, becoming one of Britain's experts in leadership and organisational change. His flat became known as the 'Scottish Embassy', and we enjoyed many happy times there, with Jim and his girlfriend Sally Stokes taking the main bedroom, and Helen and I using the smaller one.

It's odd how life turns in circles because Trattoria has since closed and the building is now home to a private dining club called George's, where I am a member and frequent visitor.

The 1965 Italian Grand Prix was held on 12 September at Monza, but this was not the Monza of today, punctuated by a series of chicanes to reduce speed. This was the high-speed circuit through the wooded royal park where the lead could change four or five times during a lap, where you could pass or be passed before or after Curva Grande or before Curva di Lesmos, or at Ascari, or at the Parabolica and perhaps eight cars would be slipstreaming, taking advantage of the drag produced by the air pockets, racing nose to tail and wheel to wheel.

It was uniquely exciting to watch and exhilarating to drive in and, year after year, hordes of knowledgeable, fanatical, feverish Italians would get to their feet and roar with delight as the drama unfolded before their eyes.

BRM senior management and drivers typically stayed at the Villa d'Este during the week of the Italian Grand Prix. It was

one of the finest hotels in the world, on the banks of Lake Como, and I checked in with the team: Louis Stanley and his wife, Jean, whom everyone called Mrs Stanley and who was, in fact, the sister of Sir Alfred Owen, the owner of BRM, Tony Rudd and Graham and Bette Hill. Helen stayed at home as she was just about to have a baby and was not able to travel.

The race was remarkable for the fact that the lead at the start/finish line changed no fewer than forty-three times during the seventy-six laps. Jim Clark, Graham Hill and I were driving in a cluster of cars, each of us taking the lead at various stages, then losing it, and surging again. Jim was for once forced to retire with a mechanical problem so, with thirteen laps left, Graham and I found ourselves out in the lead, ahead of the rest of the field. Tony Rudd immediately started to signal from the pit wall that we should ease off and consolidate our control of the race, and, as drivers, neither of us had any reason to do otherwise. However, to Tony's frustration, the more we 'eased off', the faster our laps became.

I was intrigued by the experience and, thinking about it, realised that when someone tells you to slow down, you change up a gear a little earlier, you use fewer revs and you don't brake as aggressively into a corner . . . and, as a result, you actually go faster because you are not unduly upsetting the car. Riders will understand the concept because it also explains why similarly, if you loosen the reins, a horse tends to run more freely and quickly. It was a useful lesson, and the theory applies in other walks of life: sometimes the best way to raise your level of performance is to back off rather than to push even harder.

The two BRMs continued to hurtle around Monza. Graham led with two laps remaining, when he went wide at the Parabolica, got into the loose stuff, losing speed and leaving a gap. I slipped inside, drove through and easily seized the lead.

Thrilled beyond words, I was able to complete the race and secure my maiden Formula 1 victory.

Tens of thousands of Italian fans, *tifosi*, flooded the track at the end. The typically Italian tidal wave of adulation, passion and enthusiasm for motor sport was overwhelming.

'*Il Grande Jackie, il Grande Jackie*,' they chanted.

Monza was special for me in 1965 and it has been special for me ever since.

Only when I escaped from the mayhem and returned to the hotel did I have an opportunity to phone Helen and tell her what had happened, and then to call my father at Rockview. I remember hearing the pleasure in his voice, the simple pride that his 'stupid' younger son had won a world championship F1 Grand Prix.

After such a 'bang', my debut season ended with a whimper. Mechanical failures meant I failed to finish the USA or the Mexico Grands Prix, which cost me a chance of finishing second in the world championship. My total of 34 points left me third behind Jimmy, the world champion on 54, and Graham on 47. Even so, I was happy. The BRM had proved every bit as robust and reliable as I could have hoped, and one victory and five podium finishes in ten races represented a very satisfying promising debut season.

Early in 1966, I flew around the world with Jim, Graham and Dick Attwood to compete in the Tasman Cup, a series of eight races, four in New Zealand and four in Australia. Jimmy later reflected on these two months as among the happiest trips of his career, and everyone enjoyed the mix of tough, competitive motor racing with flying, surfing, trap shooting, water-skiing and plenty of laughter along the way.

Chris Amon was not competing that year, but he was one of New Zealand's finest drivers and an extremely likeable man and he invited us all to visit his family's beach house after the

New Zealand Grand Prix at Pukekohe, and before the second race at Levin. It was arranged that Jimmy, Dick and I would drive down in the red 3.8 litre Jaguar with cream upholstery provided for us to use during our stay. However, for whatever reason, Jimmy was not ready to leave on time. 'Don't wait for me,' he told us. 'They have given me an E-type Jaguar, so you go ahead and I'll catch you up.'

To a fellow racing driver, this casual remark amounted to a clear challenge. So Dick and I set off, determined Jim would not catch us and we were soon speeding through the countryside, regularly glancing back to check for any sign of Jim. Approaching a town called Bulls, I moved wide to overtake a school bus labouring up a steep hill and, a few minutes later, stopped at a set of traffic lights in the main street. Suddenly, a police patrol car appeared from nowhere and screeched to a halt across the front of our car, blocking our way.

The policeman was agitated. 'Do you have any idea what speed you have been doing?' he asked.

'No,' I replied.

'Well, I've been trying to catch you for the past twenty miles, and I must have been going at over a hundred miles per hour.'

'I see.'

'Do you know the speed limit in New Zealand is fifty miles per hour?'

'No, I'm sorry. I didn't.'

'Well, it is, and I'm charging you with dangerous and reckless driving.'

As he spoke, the school bus stopped nearby, and some of the children came over to look at the Jaguar. The policeman's mood was not improved when the boys recognised us as racing drivers and asked to borrow his pen because they wanted to get our autographs. The officer eventually told me to follow him to the Bulls police station and, once my attempts to charm my

way out of the problem failed, the reality started to dawn on me that reckless and dangerous driving was a serious charge, and I could lose my road licence; and if I lost that, I would lose my competition licence as well.

When I had been warned to expect a summons and allowed to leave, we joined our group at the barbeque with the Amons, where I told everyone what had happened, but not before I made it clear that Jimmy hadn't passed us on the road!

'You need to get yourself a decent lawyer,' I was advised, firmly.

'Who?'

'Well, the man you want is Trevor de Cleene. He got P. J. Proby off a charge of indecent exposure.'

P. J. Proby was an American pop star known for wearing skin-tight trousers that used to split during his live performances. When this happened during a concert in New Zealand, he was charged with indecent exposure and, apparently, only Mr De Cleene's expertise resolved the situation.

I called him on a Sunday evening and, having been told he was out fishing, spent two hours waiting beside his white Mercedes for his boat to return to shore. I eventually met him, explained what had happened and asked if he would take the case. He said he would, so long as I paid his fee of £1,100 up front and in cash. It was a lot of money, but my career was under threat, so I didn't have much choice.

The following Saturday, I was served with a summons by an embarrassed Scotsman who had emigrated to New Zealand; he handed me the papers when I was still sitting in my car after finishing second to Jimmy in the Gold Leaf International race in Levin, which ensured that the case was splashed over the newspapers, but Trevor did his homework and got the charges dismissed on a technicality.

The story didn't end there. Many years later, back in New

Zealand to present a Sportsman of the Year award, I was surprised to read in a newspaper that the government minister with responsibility for taxation was none other than Trevor de Cleene. Interviewed live on television, I was asked to relate an anecdote about my experiences in New Zealand, and I couldn't resist telling the tale of my adventure in 1966.

'So Mr de Cleene took my money and insisted I paid in cash,' I concluded, with the studio audience in stitches, 'but don't worry, I'm sure the minister would have declared the income in full.'

Early the next morning, the telephone rang in my hotel room. It was the man himself on the line. 'Jackie,' Trevor declared, laughing. 'You've made me a hero!'

He was a talented man and a terrific character and, when he succumbed to cancer in April 2001, I called his wife, Raewyn, the following day to express my sincere condolences.

I actually managed to win the 1966 Tasman Series, but my abiding memories are of the parties where the touring group drank the bottles of local sparkling wine we were given on the podiums because we couldn't take them home, and where we held Maori war canoe races, where we sat on the floor, barefooted, in lines and rowed in time together, pushing ourselves backwards by digging our heels into the carpet. Jimmy and I laughed and laughed. If people weren't referring to me as Jimmy Stewart and to him as Jackie Clark, they were calling us the Speed Twins, or the Poison Dwarfs, or Batman and Robin.

For someone so commanding and clear-minded when driving, Jim was frustratingly uncertain in other areas of his life. He was one of the world's great procrastinators, and I lost count of the times we missed dinner or a film because everywhere had closed by the time he made up his mind where he wanted to go.

I tell the story of the time we were driving to a race in

Sebring, Florida, when we arrived at a single-track level crossing. The railway stretched away straight as a die for miles to the left and right, and there was no other traffic. Jim was driving, so he stopped and looked left and right. There was nothing. He glanced at me warily and said, 'Well, what do you think?'

I thought I must have missed something. So I looked left and right and saw again that there was nothing within miles of us. He was still sitting there, in a quandary.

'I think it's safe to go, Jim.'

'OK,' he said, and we continued on our way.

The general expectation ahead of the 1966 Formula 1 season was that the BRM would be competitive, with Lotus, Ferrari and the new Brabham Repco team also strongly in contention, and our optimism seemed to be borne out when I managed to win the opening race of the year in Monaco, which was, and still is, regarded as the most prestigious race of the season.

Next day, Jimmy, Graham and I caught a flight to America to drive in the Indianapolis 500. We had all been there the week before Monaco to qualify our cars and now we were returning for the race itself.

The contrast between the prestige and luxury of Monte Carlo and the flat, open plains of Indiana could hardly have been greater. Leaving La Grande Corniche, we arrived at the Indianapolis International Airport, which in fact only handled domestic flights. Having checked out of the Hotel de Paris, we experienced the raw charm of the Speedway motel. Having negotiated the Monaco circuit, where there are sixteen corners and you have to make at least 2,800 gear shifts during the race, we were confronted by the Indy race track, where you turn left, left, left and left again and you don't have to change gear at all after leaving the pits. All the two events shared in common was their eminent status in motor sport.