

Knievel's Sky-Cycle ride nears

Two test runs have hit the drink

Attorneys ask judge to deny plea-bargain

TWIN FALLS, Idaho (AP)—The scientific brain behind Evel Knievel's attempt to hurdle the Snake River Canyon figures his chances of success are about the same as a test pilot trying a new aircraft for the first time.

Robert Truax, a veteran engineer of U.S. guided missile programs, says his estimate Wednesday, just moments after a crane delicately positioned Knievel's X2 Sky-Cycle on the 108-foot ramp from which the stuntman will be catapulted Sunday.

"I'd say the chances are less than a space agency gave the astronauts," Truax, 56, said at the launch site at the edge of the 4,000-foot-deep canyon. "Our statistics are two tests in the drink, so if you take a pessimistic view, our chances are zero."

"But we feel they're considerably better than zero," Truax added.

At the foot of the dirt hill forming the base of the launch ramp was the mangled wreckage of the X1 Sky-Cycle which plunged to the bottom of the canyon last November. At the top of the hill was the comparatively unbroken shell of the second Sky-Cycle that failed to make it across the 1,600-foot gap a week and a half ago.

Truax, a developer of the Air Force secret satellite and Navy Polaris missile programs, appeared concerned by the aluminum skeletons as he explained what would happen after the 34-year-old

Knievel straps himself into the toylike Sky-Cycle at about 4:30 p.m. EDT Sunday. Fifty thousand people are expected to watch the stunt here, with millions more in theaters for the closed circuit telecast.

Knievel, who made his name by jumping motorcycles over trucks and the like, is carrying a \$100,000 check made out to Truax. It's dated Sept. 9—the day after the jump—and Truax said, "We get him across or get nothing."

Truax said the clock will begin ticking for Knievel when he lowers himself into the cramped, open cockpit of the rocketlike vehicle.

Once inside, Knievel will turn on a master switch controlling the electrical system, press a button to start cameras inside the cockpit, pull back a lever that will control the crucial parachutes and, finally, start the engine.

"He doesn't have to do anything really complex," said Truax with a smile.

As designed by Truax, the Sky-Cycle is quite unlike the motorcycles Knievel is used to. At 13 feet long, about 1,300 pounds fully loaded, the vehicle is really a steam-driven bullet with Knievel along as the passenger. As the engine is activated, water heated to 720 degrees will be fed into the vehicle and cooled to 700 degrees, creating the steam that will power it over the jagged rocks of the canyon.

By the time they reach the end of the ramp, pointing 56 degrees in the air, Knievel and his Sky-Cycle should be traveling about 200 miles per hour. Peak speed will be about 400 m.p.h., Truax said.

With 5,000 to 6,000 pounds of thrust behind him, Knievel can wait

no longer than 21 seconds to push forward the lever to activate the two-parachute system on which his life will depend. If he does push the lever and if the chutes deploy, the remaining few minutes of the attempt will be taken up by the "cycle" floating to earth from its anticipated height of about 2,000 feet.

Truax expects Knievel to undergo a "red-out" as the force of gravity increases with his velocity. The stuntman will experience a partial loss of vision and possibly a nosebleed, but should not lose consciousness, the engineer said. If he does become unconscious, or if the vehicle begins to spin, Knievel should simply let go of the spring-loaded parachute lever which will send the initial drone chute and, moments later, main chute, spiraling out behind.

There is a backup system to allow

the ground crew to deploy the chutes if Knievel releases the lever. "If he freezes on that stick, there's nothing in God's world we can do," Truax said.

The missile engineer added that Knievel has the option of bailing out. "It's hard to get him interested in practicing, but I think if someone tells him to bail himself out once he gets up there, he'll give himself a shove and jump."

Assuming the Sky-Cycle makes it across the canyon with Knievel still in it, the chutes should carry it to the dry rocky ground nose first. Built into the vehicle is an eight-foot shock absorber, something like a large pogo stick, that will cushion the impact.

What about recovery plans? "My job is to get him up and down safely and after that, it's up to someone else," Truax said.

DALLAS (AP)—State attorneys and attorneys representing a San Angelo savings and loan firm will ask a federal judge not to approve a plea-bargain deal made by Watergate special prosecutors with Jake Jacobsen, it was learned here Wednesday.

Jacobsen agreed to testify against former Gov. John Connally in a bribery case in return for the dropping of Texas charges against him involving the misapplication of funds of the savings and loans company.

The Dallas Morning News quoted sources in Dallas as saying that representatives of the Texas Attorney General's Office, and the First Savings and Loan Association of San Angelo would file a brief with Judge Hill opposing dismissal of the charges.

Last week U.S. District Judge Robert Hill delayed an approval of the plea-bargain after U.S. attorneys asked that the Texas charges against Jacobsen be dismissed.

Hill said he questioned whether the special prosecutor's staff in Washington can make a deal in one case that would be binding on a judge in a completely unrelated case in another court.

The Texas charges referred to the misapplication of \$825,000 in loans from the San Angelo company in 1971. Another man charged in the same case pleaded guilty last week.

FOR
BEST
RESULTS
TRY
BATTALION CLASSIFIED

Club offers community dance class

Square dance lessons sponsored by the Circle-Squares Dance Club begin Tuesday.

Twenty lessons will be offered through the A&M Consolidated Schools' Community Education program.

Dick Stickley, club caller, will be instructor for the lessons at the A&M Consolidated Schools' Kindergarten Cafeteria from 8 to 10 p.m.

Cost will be \$25 per couple, \$12.50 for singles, with special rates for children 9-14 whose parents are enrolled.

The first three lessons will be free. Deadline for enrolling is Sept. 10.

For further information call Bill Mary Jo Lay at 846-2493.

Health center

Students with special medical problems such as diabetes or epilepsy should inform the Student Health Center as soon as possible.

If those students need emergency care, previously filed information would aid the center in providing it quickly.



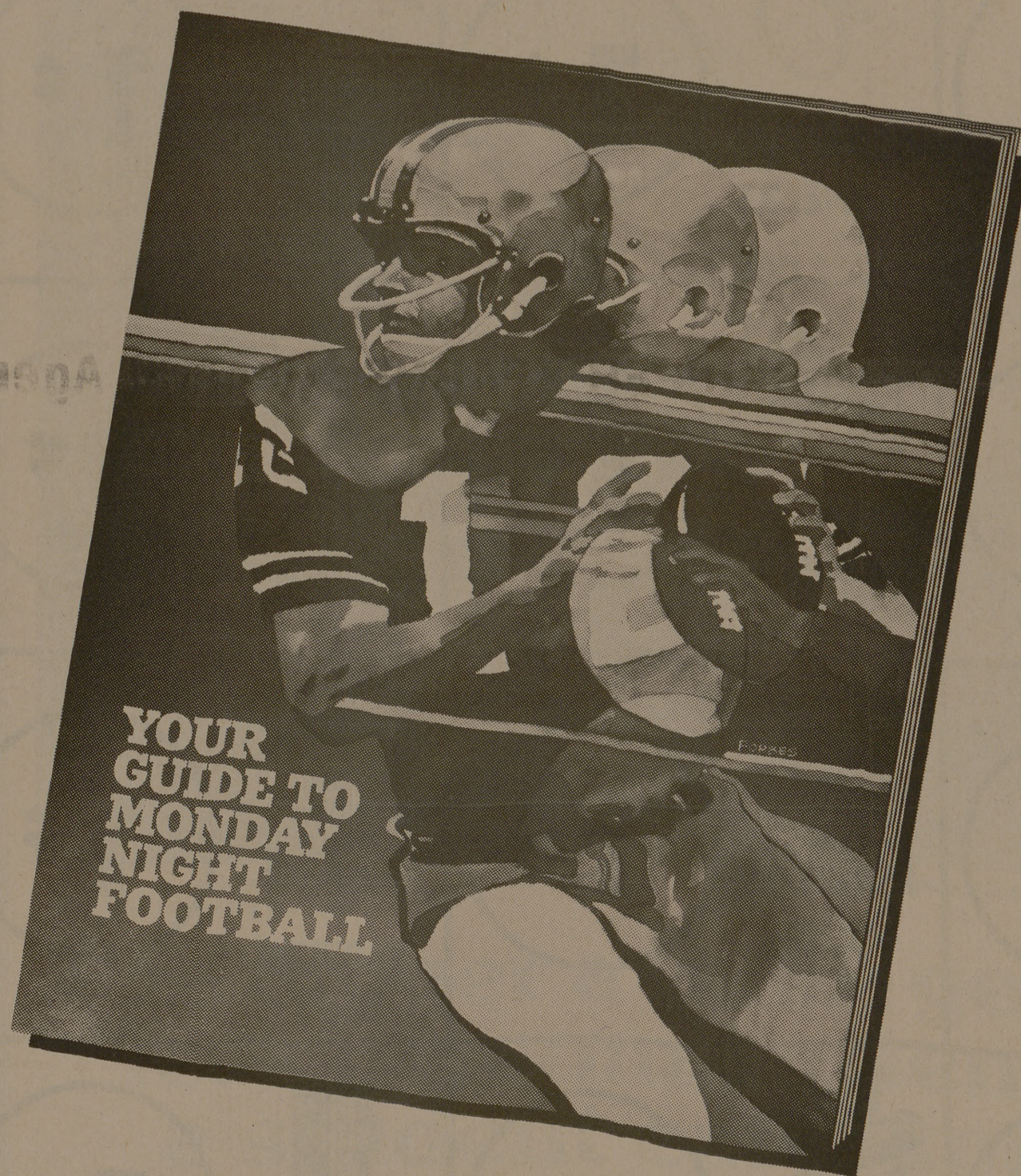
Starfire
REGISTERED DIAMOND RINGS
Trade-Mark Reg.



We offer registered Starfire rings with larger diamonds at lower prices. Trade-in value and protection against loss are assured.

EMBREY'S JEWELRY
Northgate
846-5816
open 9-5:30 Monday-Saturday

PICK UP YOUR FREE COPY TODAY!



We're cosponsoring ABC Monday Night Football games on television again this year. To make your viewing of each game more enjoyable, we've prepared a special booklet analyzing strengths and weaknesses of each team.

We know you'll be watching and we know this free booklet will add to your enjoyment of the games.

Come in and get your free copy today.

Bryan Building & Loan Association

Main Office: 2800 Texas Avenue • Bryan, Tx. 77801 • 713-823-7541

