



The credit crunch
had hit the *Alien*
prequel hard

Shaun White

The world-famous snowboarder on giant squirrels, groupies and Elton John's Oscar party

So... 'riding pipe' is an interesting snowboarding term...

Ha! We have some strange names for tricks in my sport. There's also one where you straighten your legs and grab your board while in the air that's called the 'stiffy'.

Are there any more tricks left to learn without you actually killing yourself?

There's a trick called a 'double-corked spin', which works out as three-and-a-half 360° turns with two additional mid-air twists. I can see it in my head now and if I pull it off I reckon it'll be a cool addition to the sport. But with tricks my rule is that you need to keep moving forward: who wants to eat the same cereal every day?

Have you ever been attacked by a wild animal while going off-piste?

Sort of. No one who wasn't there believes me, but I was snowboarding in Japan and suddenly out of the trees, I saw this massive squirrel thing come after me. Except it was more like a big, furry dog with a deer head on it. It was crazy. My friends who were with me won't confess that they also saw it though as they don't want to come across as insane.

What's the coolest prize you've been given for winning a competition?

When I was a kid, I used to win cars. I was 12

contact me later and, we, you know... And that's the PG version of that story...

Snowboarding groupies sound awesome...

Unfortunately they're not all like that. And they're nowhere near as good as the girls surfers get. For a start, those girls are at the beach – so they're beach babes. The women who end up in the mountains, however, are pretty rugged. They're burly girls unless they're up there snowboarding for fun. Though, if they're there trying to do 360s and other mid-air tricks, they're there to take my job. They mean business.

What's the worst part of being a snowboarder?

The travelling is intense. Unlike skateboarders, I have to get to a mountain first. So you have to fly constantly, and take all your equipment with you. I genuinely think I've racked up over a million air miles. Which, in a weird way, has paid off. Whenever I fly economy, I've got so many air miles, I often get upgraded to Business or First Class. But once you get into the swing of things, it's not too bad. I've stopped getting to the airport two hours before or packing my liquids in clear plastic bags, which makes things a little easier.

drink and I brushed past Prince. And then Jamie Foxx started yelling at me over a microphone, saying, "Shaun, come over here now and get on the dance floor!" You always get gifts as you leave these kinds of parties, too. One time, though, I walked out with a printer. And I was like, "A printer? Okay, man. Whatever."

Your second snowboarding game on the Wii is out this month. Ever play as yourself?

I do. Except I like to trash talk at the other snowboarders I know because in real-life, when I'm up on the mountain, they can't usually hear what I'm saying. Although it is still weird having these videogames where I'm on the cover. The first time I was in a game that didn't bear my name, I was 13 and it was a terrible experience because I didn't have any input. They just slapped me in there. So I ended up having this gigantic awkward red Afro going on. It was terrible.

You've teamed up with a lot of corporate sponsors, from Hewlett-Packard to Motorola. Do you ever worry you might be selling out?

I see selling out as saying to the companies, "Thanks for the cheque, here's my name, do whatever you want with it." But in every case I'm heavily involved with the final output and have the final say. In most cases, you've got these big companies coming to me asking, "How can we look cool?" But with HP, I was keeping good company. Pharrell and Jay-Z were also in those ads. Although I'll admit, I've been sent around 20 movie scripts. And in every case, the first line they want me to say is, "What's up, bro?" Forget it.

The ski season's just getting under way. Got any snowboarding advice for anyone who's never been on the slopes before?

On your first day, get a private instructor for a one-on-one lesson then give it three days until you start to pick it up. And don't be put off just because after the first day, your wrists and butt hurt and you're cold because you kept slamming onto the ground. I've broken both arms, fractured my skull and broken my leg. Nothing too big. Sure, you might find snowboarding's not your thing. But if it is, you'll be hooked. And ride with people who are better than you, so you have to catch up.

Do you reckon you'll still be a pro snowboarder in ten years?

Hmm, I'm not sure. I'm currently looking at the field of specialised microbiology with an emphasis in single-cell organisms. Or I'm going to become a taxi driver. I'm not sure yet, but I reckon it'll be one of the two...

Shaun White is sponsored by Red Bull

A If you could have just one super-power, what would it be? I'd like to be able to project the latest movies onto opposing walls from out of my neck

or 13 and I won a bunch of Chevy trucks. But I was too young to drive them. Eventually when I turned 16 I got my driving licence in the US, but I still kept winning trucks. So it became this battle amongst my family and friends over who was going to get them. Now I just donate them to charities.

By the way, great effort winning the 2006 Olympic gold medal, aged just 19. We noticed you got a little tearful there...

Ha ha! I wasn't crying, dude. I just had some tears come out.

What's the craziest thing a female fan's done?

I was at the X-Games and this girl ran up to me and slapped her phone in my hand, screaming, "Take this! I'll call you later so we can 'hang out'." But I was so focused on the competition that it was only when I got to the top of the half-pipe that I realised I still had her phone in my pocket. And I was like, "What am I doing with this?" And it wasn't one of those cool phones, it was a brick. I couldn't even ride properly with it on me. But I've always thought that was great – that she gave me her mobile so she could definitely

You dress like a member of Guns N' Roses when you're not on the slopes. Don't all snowboarders wear baggy gear?

In my view, that whole XXXL white T-shirt look is the stupidest fad in the world. I even know guys who wear an extra-long T-shirt and then an even longer one over that. It's ridiculous. I used to wear baggy jeans, but then I tried a skinny pair and I haven't gone back. And I'm really into vintage rock T-shirts, you know, Led Zeppelin, Guns N' Roses. And although I'm not a mega-spender, my most extravagant purchase in a long time ended up being a \$3,000 vintage Louis Vuitton suitcase, because it was so bashed up and looked like 20 people had owned it before me. When I saw it, I had to have it.

What's your best celebrity incident?

I recently ended up at this party Elton John was hosting, which he holds every year after the Oscars. And, as I walked in, he was sat in the middle of this big party at a piano playing *Benny And The Jets*. When I met him, he mentioned he'd seen me on TV. But that was one hell of a party. At one point I was cruising to the bar to get a



The facts
Age: 23
Snowboarding since: 1999
Achievements: X Games gold medallist 2003-2006, 2008-2009; Olympic gold medal men's halfpipe, 2006