

# Recounting the Worst Motorcycle Wreck in AZ History



three of the endangerment counts and a retrial on the remaining 13 charges began on June 4th, 2012. After a three-week trial and three days of deliberations, a jury convicted Jakscht on all counts.”

I was at ABATE’s Too Broke For Sturgis in July 2011. Friends & I were sitting at a campfire when a girl sitting across from me said, “You look so much better now than the last time I saw you.” She was the airway nurse at St. Joes Hospital who hooked me up to the breathing machine. Her name is Brenda Scabo. She & her husband both ride.

6th & final in a series of installments

by survivor Ernie Lizarraga

Ernie has been released from the hospital & is home recovering. During the next 16 months he will undergo intensive rehabilitation and retraining. He goes back to work at the Fire Department on limited duty, and regains his driver’s license.

In June 2011 the trial starts for Michael Jakscht. The prosecutor’s side of the courtroom is filled with bikers and many are standing outside in the hallway. There was even a person who assisted in parking bikes and stayed outside with all the parked bikes. On August 18, 2011 the trial for Michael Jakscht ends in a hung jury. We are devastated again.

The judge orders a new trial. The prosecuting attorney also asks for all the bikers showing up to not wear their leathers because it intimidates the jurors. For the second trial they had me limp up to the witness box. Since I wasn’t really a good witness because I didn’t see anything; I was just asked by the prosecuting attorney what my injuries were, which took a few minutes to name off. When it was the defense’s turn they declined to ask any questions.

**FINAL SENTENCING:**

Michael Jakscht’s sentencing, as quoted from a statement from the Maricopa County Attorney’s Office, “PHOENIX (November 16, 2012) – Michael John Jakscht (D.O.B. 7/4/63) has been ordered to spend 26 years in the Arizona Department of Corrections for killing four people and injuring five others in a March 2010 collision with ten motorcyclists and three other vehicles. Under terms of the sentence imposed by the Honorable Joseph C. Welty, Jakscht will receive credit for approximately two-and-a-half years of incarceration time already served. <snip>

“On April 8, 2010, a Maricopa County Grand Jury indicted Jakscht on four counts of manslaughter, five counts of aggravated assault and seven counts of endangerment. After a 29-day trial, the jury was unable to reach a unanimous verdict and a mistrial was declared on August 18, 2011. Judge Welty ordered a directed verdict of not guilty on

After a few months of driving it was time to get something back that was also taken away from me in the accident; my motorcycle endorsement. I was very lucky because James Barnett of T.E.A.M. Arizona Motorcycle Training in Mesa offered to help me out. Over a few weeks and a lot of his patience with me; on Nov. 18, 2011 I obtained my motorcycle endorsement. When I got home, the first thing I did was find someone who could make my Indian Chief into a trike. It was a lot easier to ride than my chopper with a 70 degree rake. The motor in the Indian was only 88cc but it could keep up with traffic on full throttle. So every weekend I was out riding again; wearing a helmet now of course, but it was great.

In December 2012 Dayle’s mother Barbara calls me up and asks me if I would like to meet the girl that received Dayle’s heart. I’m stunned and shocked. I say WHAT? She tells me, “A girl that lives in Anthem named Yadira received Dayle’s heart. We’re going to the crash site today. Would you like to go?” I go up to the crash site and meet Yadira. Hugging her was like hugging Dayle.

In 2014 I find a company that can make a trike kit and mount it on my custom chopper. So I loaded it up, took it over, and a few weeks later I had a custom-made chopper trike which I ride all the time now. It has a 113cc S&S motor so it can keep up with traffic no problem.

I’m working at the Phoenix Fire Dept. Training Academy one day talking to a member of the Police Bomb Squad when he asks me if I see my bike much? I reply with, “No, not at all. The police have it somewhere.” He points across the parking lot about 400 feet away to what I thought was a wrecking yard inside a chain link fence and says, “It’s right there.” I look closer and see a dump truck with wrecked cars and motorcycles. So we walk right up to it and sure enough there was my bike.

I find out the number to the Property Management, talk to them, and they send me a letter dated 6/5/15 to show the groundskeeper and he will release the bike to me. I have a trailer hooked up to my truck and went to get my bike, with friends Efrain Guzman and Jeff Calvagno.

When I walked into the area it felt real eerie. All the other bikes were next to mine, including Dayle’s. My bike was sitting on a pallet which was lifted by a

fork lift and put into my trailer. We drove it home. When we get home, while it was still laying on the pallet we got some jumper cables. We hooked up the cables to the car parked next to it and to the battery of the bike. I got some ‘Sure Start’ out of my garage, took off the air cleaner to the bike, gave a squirt into the carburetor, turned the key to the bike on, hit the starter button, and it fired up. WOW! We couldn’t believe it, after sitting out in a field for more than 5 years!

People have said I should get it back on the road again. But it would take way too much work. The rear rim is destroyed, the drive shaft is bent, the rear peg is broke off, the handle bar is bent with all the hand controls either broke off or bent. They all tell a story. So it’s just gonna sit in my back yard. Maybe someday... Who knows?”

*As shared by Ernie Lizarraga, in memory of dear friends gone but never forgotten.*



*As we’ve reached the 10th anniversary of this horrific wreck, Bruce & I want to say that we admire Ernie for his tenacity & courage.*

*Perhaps some of it comes from that inherent insanity that, thankfully, makes certain people take on a profession that sends them running INTO a burning building when everyone else is running the other way.... ☺*

*We appreciate the opportunity Ernie has given us to share his story & help to keep the memory of his friends alive.*

*Betsy & Bruce*



Join Ernie to **Finish The Ride** -- Saturday March 21

This year marks 10 years since this life-changing wreck that affected so many people. Ernie will be at the memorial site on March 25th but also realizes that people who would like to pay respects are more likely to be able to do so on a weekend. So, Ernie is going to ‘Finish the Ride’ for his friends, Dayle, Steve, Clyde, & Dan, on Saturday March 21.

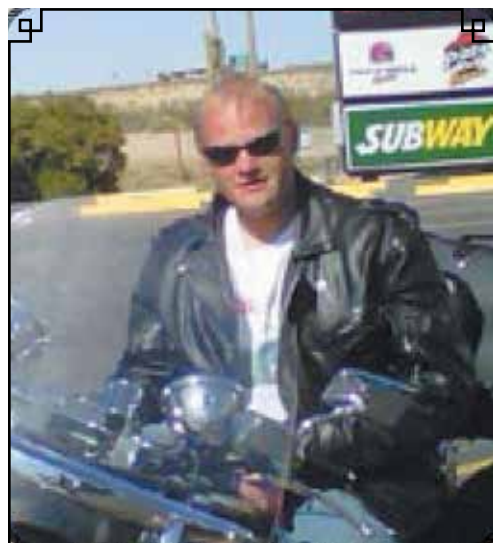
There’s been a slight change of plan regarding the start location. Anyone who wants to roll with Ernie to Finish the Ride should meet at the Albertson’s parking lot at 18411 N. Cave Creek Rd., on the **SOUTHEAST** corner of Union Hills & Cave Creek Roads.

Kickstands up same time as 10 years ago, at 10:40a. Ernie detailed the route. “The Ride will go north on Cave Creek Road to Carefree Hwy, west on Carefree Hwy to 7th Street, then north to New River Road and the Roadrunner Restaurant for lunch ‘til 12:30. After lunch the ride will go west down New River Road to Carefree Hwy then east on Carefree Hwy to 27th Drive for a stop at the Memorial site. The first 911 call came in at 13:00. Stop & give respects; then finish the ride for our brothers and sister to Bartlett Lake by riding east on Carefree to Tom Darlington Road, north to Cave Creek Hwy, east to Bartlett Lake Road.”

If you are planning to attend, it is requested / suggested that you contact Becky Mullins of the Roadrunner at 520-730-9746. She is coordinating the gathering at the restaurant. Having a headcount will be helpful. They have planned a pork sandwich lunch special. Please specify that you are a part of Ernie’s Finish the Ride.



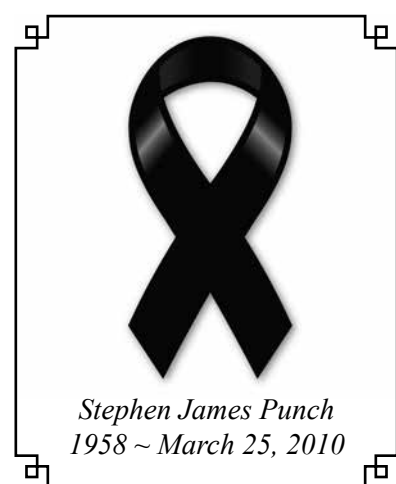
Clyde R. Nachand  
August 31, 1942  
~ March 25, 2010



Daniel Butler  
April 30, 1974 ~ March 25, 2010



Dayle Veronica Downs-Totonchi  
August 17, 1962 ~ March 25, 2010



Stephen James Punch  
1958 ~ March 25, 2010