

## "Rip-off"

Realizing the profitable aspects of risking life and limb, many so-called "daredevils" are now trying to perform dangerous stunts the public will pay to see.

Chief among these is Robert Craig (Evel) Knievel, who was unsuccessful in his attempt to jump across the Snake River Canyon in his steam-powered "Sky Cycle." From a financial standpoint, however, his endeavor was a highly successful one. He will receive an estimated six million dollars for his efforts. Much of this money came from spectators across the nation who wanted to see (mostly on closed circuit T.V. with a \$10 charge) a man do what had never been done before.

It is ironic to note that the deed which was regarded as a heroic and significant act to many was, in actuality, one of the greatest rip-offs of all time. When compared to earlier historical journeys, the fiasco over Snake River Canyon is one of the safest voyages ever attempted. Had the daredevils of the past capitalized on opportunities similar to those enjoyed by men like "Evel" Knievel, the following news might have appeared in the daily tabloids:

### Discover America

PALOS, SPAIN; August 3, 1492—Thousands of spectators have flocked to this city to witness the takeoff of stuntman Chris "Seabus" Columbus in his attempt to discover America. Onlookers here have paid up to six thousand pesetas for seats. Sales of "Seabus Columbus" sombreros were skyrocketing at last report. Oddsmakers have given Columbus a 90-10 chance of discovering America and a 50-50 chance of discovering scurvy.

ROME, ITALY; 222 B.C.—Great excitement has spread through this city with the news that Hannibal has successfully crossed the Alps. Thousands of Romans have purchased special "Hannibal" tunics. In addition, a full line of authentic "Hannibal" autographed elephants are now on sale.

Although these illustrations verge on the absurd, the idea of a man earning six million dollars for a 30-second ride is equally ridiculous.

Although some of these men might have cashed in on their exploits afterwards, their initial reason for attempting these deeds was a love of country or a desire to do something for the first time. The fact that the Snake River Canyon jump did nothing for the nation and used a 400-year old propulsion principle shows it for what it is—the "great American rip-off."

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