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Ferrari: Race to Immortality

By Unknown

You'll find that drivers
are a very happy lot of people
because they appreciate life
far more than the average man does.
A driver usually
gets killed on a Sunday
and if he's a close friend of yours,
well,
you think what a stupid sport this is
and you think seriously of giving it up.
Then on Monday you think,
well, maybe he was just unlucky.
Maybe I shouldn't give it up yet.
I'll give it up next year.
Then on a Tuesday you start thinking
about, now, there's a race next Sunday,
maybe I'll go.
Then on Wednesday you go to the race.
Enzo Ferrari once said,
"Win or die, you'll be immortal,"
talking to his drivers,
and of course he's right
because every time I go to a Grand Prix
those essences are part
of what makes the sport what it is.
Without drivers like Mike Hawthorn
and Peter Collins,
it would be all the poorer.
The Ferrari name is
very important to Formula One today
because it's a symbol
of the history of the sport
that was once
the most dangerous sport on earth
and still trades on those associations
of risk and glamour.
We think these guys must be daredevils
because Collins and Hawthorn
were daredevils.
I look back on it now and I just
perceive them, the drivers of the time,
as an entirely different breed.
Controlling this powerful beast
under your rear,

balancing this car on this tightrope,
and taking the best line
through the corner,
this gave you a sense of ecstasy.
It was an era
of great glamour and great risk.
These men went out
to drive these red cars
not knowing
whether they would come back alive.
Mike Hawthorn described
how we, as young men,
were all willing
to jump into the cooking pot
under which Mr. Ferrari
kept the fire stoked.
When it came to running drivers,
Ferrari's approach was
the more pressure you put on them,
and the more unsettled they feel,
the faster they will go.
These guys were experiencing
the buzz of competition in cars,
but they were subjecting themselves
willingly to all the attached dangers.
There is something
about the motor racing world
that, as far as we were concerned,
when catastrophes would happen
we would kind of just carry on
and not let it get us down.
And I think that was the attitude
of a lot of people then.
Fear is really a lack of
understanding of what is happening,
like a child frightened of the dark
'cause you don't understand
what's there.
I am not normally afraid
of killing myself.
I am frightened of being killed by
something over which I have no control.
The great thing about
Mike Hawthorn and Peter Collins

is that they would do what land speed record-breaker John Cobb described. He said, "It's pretty much akin to seeing how far you can lean out of the window before you finally fall out." And that's what those boys with Ferrari did in the 1950s. They willingly leant out of the window as far as they possibly could and a few of them, and in retrospect far too many, fell out. At age ten you watched your first race. How did you experience that moment? I was shaking like a boy who is dreaming of having the chance, one day, to take part in that competition. Ferrari had a difficult early life. His father died when he was quite young and then his only brother also died, leaving him more or less alone when he was still in his teens. But he was very keen on cars. So when he had to make his own way in the world, cars and motor racing were the things that attracted him most. What mattered the most in your life, your passion or the drive to succeed? Mostly, it was passion. What do you feel before the "Go"? Anxiety? Fear? Before the "Go", I feel... a mix of feelings, all of which disappear as soon as the race starts. The hero of the event was the brilliant young British driver, Mike Hawthorn, number four. Peter Collins in the Ferrari took and held the lead from the beginning. Enzo Ferrari was a great talent scout and after the war, although there were

many good young Italian drivers,
he'd spotted that there was
a bunch of English drivers
who were starting
to do very well indeed.
Hawthorn and Collins
had some years between them.
Mike was the older
by two or three years.
He really made his name in the little
Riley that was prepared by his father.
Every time they went to a race meeting,
here was a young man who expected
to come away with a trophy.
Peter, when he started racing
with a 500cc Cooper
that his father, Pat, bought for him,
he was immediately quick
and he was only 17 years old.
Hawthorn and Collins
met as rivals on the race track,
but eventually when they both
found themselves in Modena
driving for Ferrari,
they became enormous friends.
Mike was a sports-jacketed
beer-drinking one of the lads.
He and Peter Collins were like a pair
of rather irresponsible schoolboys.
Tremendously fun-loving.
Peter was a life enhancer.
When he came into the room,
things got jollier, noisier
and altogether more entertaining.
When I first met Mike
he was tall, good-looking.
I thought, "That's a lovely-looking
man." So I set my heart on him.
He was a great character, a very flash
sort of a guy, who was a lot of fun.
I think he used motor racing as
a stepping stone to enjoyment of life,
whereas to me it was the life.
You were either a Hawthorn fan or

a Moss fan. You couldn't really be both. Peter, in particular, I think, was very much a Boy's Own character at what an exciting racing driver should be.

The girls loved him and I didn't see too great an effort on his part to fight them off.

Mr. Ferrari had always had a soft spot for the Brits.

Mike went there and the old man was pretty impressed because here was somebody who was prepared to put it on the line and that was the sort of thrusting, aggressive young driver that Mr. Ferrari really rated.

When I was with Mike he just stood out amongst the others as being very beautiful.

We were intoxicated by the atmosphere of these wonderful, wild men.

It was fun. It was like a big family. Everybody knew everybody.

But it was dangerous and wherever you get danger, you get this thrill.

Hawthorn did very well in his first spell with Ferrari.

He won a couple of races, but then when his father was killed and he wanted to drive sports cars for Jaguar, he went back to England, and I think Ferrari was very disappointed by that.

I'm sure he wanted to hang on to him. I think for most of the Grand Prix drivers, Le Mans was a bit of a bore because it was a test of the car, but not the driver.

And I think that Mike and Fangio got involved in what had become a Grand Prix more or less, at the beginning of the race, so taking the boredom out of it.

Drivers are requested
to get to the places assigned to them.
Stand by.
Five, four, three, two, one, zero!
Lap after lap, Hawthorn
and Fangio, no more than yards apart,
hold the crowd enthralled
with an exhibition of driving skill
no words can adequately describe.
This battle royal that's
been raging in those opening laps
really reached a climax
that was just more cataclysmic
than anybody could possibly imagine.
Everything went normally in practice
and I was given the job
of starting doing the first spell
and I was actually out on the circuit
when this dreadful accident happened.
Coming out of the White House bends
and up towards the pits,
Mike saw the opportunity
to lap one more car
before he pulled across to the right
and braked for his scheduled pit stop.
That one last car was the Works'
Austin-Healey driven by Lance Macklin.
Trouble was that race was the first time
the new rule had come in
where you had to change the driver
every two hours.
So Mike knew that another lap
would have taken him over the two hours.
In braking hard, Lance Macklin
pulled out very sharply to the left
to avoid the back of Mike's Jaguar.
There's an almighty bang and Levegh's
car came sort of right over the top.
His wheel came right past my left ear
and I could feel the heat of his exhaust
as he went by he was so close.
Levegh ran up the sloping tail
of the Austin-Healey,
flew best part of 100 yards

completely airborne
and then crashed belly-first
on to the top edge of the safety bank
in front of him.
Approaching the pits
I saw a blue flag out, so I eased off
and of course
I came across this absolute chaos.
When Levegh's Mercedes
hit the top edge of the bank
the chassis sheared
and the entire front end assembly
was hurled through the crowd
and it went through the crowd
like a torpedo.
And it killed over 80 of them
and it injured over 100 more.
There were even children
in the front row
who'd been put there for the best view
and they were right in the firing line
of the wreckage that tore through them.
What most people didn't realize
was that it was on such a grand scale
and why the organizers
had decided to continue the race
was to enable them to get the emergency
vehicles away from the circuit.
I hadn't seen anything
of the accident as such
because where I ended up
was about 200 or 300 yards
from where the accident was.
I could see the car burning
on the side of the track,
but at least I thought
it didn't go in the crowd.
I went into the Austin-Healey pit
and Donald Healey told me
that Mike had come in
and said to Lance,
"Can you ever forgive me?"
He literally sort of staggered
across to where we were,

tears pouring down his face, came up to me, put his arm over my shoulder, and said, "I've killed all these people. I'll never race again," and so on. A few hours later he was back in the car driving again. Hawthorn and Bueb drove a brilliant remaining part of the race to win. And contemporary movie shows Mike very conflicted in his facial expressions about whether to enjoy this victory or not. But when he did break into a grin, stills photographers got that photograph and photographs of a beaming Mike Hawthorn, having just won at Le Mans, after the colossal tragedy that had marred the race, were used by the press to vilify Mike around the world. It did affect him terribly. He was desperately upset, but it wasn't actually his fault. I mean, he was exonerated and he shouldn't have to feel like that. He had this sort of air of devil-may-care, you know, attitude, but actually he did care, he cared an awful lot. Behind success there is a terrible truth. Italians are prepared to forgive anything and anyone. Thieves, murderers. All sorts of criminals. Except for success. They won't forgive anyone for being successful. Ferrari in Italy was a towering figure, even at the time. He was the single most significant automotive industry figure of the 20th century. He was a survivor. He was a chameleon.

Such a manipulator of men.
He regarded it as a sport
in its own right, I think.
The Scuderia was a stable effectively
in which Ferrari would pick
the best talent that he could find.
The drivers were
the public face of the Scuderia
and he would take the cream
of the talent that was available to him.
Eugenio Castellotti
came from a little town called Lodi.
He got into racing
because it was a big macho deal.
It was what the king of the kids
would do. "Hey, look at me."
And he did have a talent.
He had a shining talent, in fact.
Musso was from Rome.
He was an Elio di Angelis of the time,
whereas Castellotti was
a street fighter from northern Italy.
Luigi Musso was a charismatic Italian
racing driver of the first order.
Let's not mince words here.
The guy was very good.
I think while Castellotti
and Musso were at Ferrari together
there was a certain amount
of shared responsibility, if you like.
You've got two drivers there
who brought Italy into Grand Prix racing
in a way that is unimaginable now
because the whole country was behind
them and both of them gave it 100%.
Fon de Portago was a nobleman
and a sportsman
of every possible variety
and he was
a very attractive personality.
He was a real playboy,
but he was a playboy, you know,
who didn't mind getting his hands dirty.
He is a man devoted to sport,

whether it be skiing,
bobsleighing, waterskiing,
swimming, fishing, hunting,
whatever it might be.
He was in some ways
the sort of most natural Ferrari driver
of the whole of the 1950s.
If you had to design a Ferrari driver,
it would have been Fon de Portago.
And he had the girlfriends
to go with it too.
The Scuderia was led
by Juan Manuel Fangio
and Castellotti apparently
would hang on Fangio's every word.
Fangio to me is the best driver
in the world bar none.
He was a great man. He was a man
that whatever he could do once,
he could continue to do.
And it was a beautiful balance
and a rhythm of a man and a vehicle.
Enzo Ferrari was once asked
when a car crosses the line
to take the checkered flag,
how much of it is car,
how much of it is driver?
And he said, "60% car, 40% driver."
The sad thing was that Ferrari
didn't spend enough time
learning how to deal with the drivers
individual to individual.
Now every driver
has a different style of his own.
Hawthorn has an expression of a man
who is fighting on his face.
Peter Collins
is always making faces at the crowd,
not deliberately,
but I have yet to see a picture of Peter
in which he isn't making
some kind of a face.
Peter Collins
had been driving for BRM

and then he was offered
a drive with Ferrari,
which would have been fantastic.
What an amazing opportunity.
Ferrari set himself up
as the spider
in the middle of this extraordinary web
and he ensured
that everybody had to come to him.
He never went to them.
There is a story that Peter
Collins, when he went there to sign up,
he thought, "Oh, you know,
this is gonna be a big deal, you know."
And, in fact, Peter
was kept waiting and waiting
and waiting, and he was on the point
of giving it all up as a bad job
when ultimately Mr Ferrari
came sailing in
and everything was sweetness and light.
It was a sparkling honeymoon
for Peter Collins at Ferrari.
He won in Formula One.
He won in other categories.
Ferrari immediately
recognized his versatility
and overnight, almost,
Peter Collins became a star,
not only in Italy at Ferrari,
but also on the world racing stage.
Victory goes
to Peter Collins and Mike Hawthorn,
with Moss second and Fangio third.
So Peter Collins
wins his first Grand Prix for Ferrari.
Peter Collins joins
that exclusive band of British drivers
to have won a Grande Epreuve.
There's no doubt that Peter Collins
was one of the drivers
that Enzo Ferrari loved.
He felt a real warmth to him,
which he didn't feel

towards all his drivers by any means.
Peter Collins became very friendly
and very close with Dino,
Mr Ferrari's sadly terminally ill son.
My husband did a wonderful job,
in a way,
of helping to communicate
between the dying son and Enzo.
Ferrari was very moved by that,
that Collins should show
such concern for his son.
And Dino's death, of course, was a...
It was a shattering blow
to him and to his wife
and I think
that brought him closer to Collins.
By the end of the '56 season,
Collins has won the Belgian Grand Prix,
he's won the French Grand Prix.
He's in with a shout
of becoming the first British driver
ever to win
the FIA Drivers' World Championship.
There were five Lancia Ferraris
in the race.
There was Fangio, Portago and Collins,
but also Castellotti and Musso
had a fierce, fierce rivalry.
Actually, my guess, as soon
as the Italian Grand Prix started,
Castellotti and also Luigi Musso,
who went for it, you know,
as if the race was starting
on the last lap.
Fangio's car broke down
and in those days you could share a car
with another driver
and get half the points.
Musso came in and it was
suggested to him he should get out
and give the car to Fangio, and Musso
had no interest in that at all.
That was when Collins, of course,
did his famous selfless act.

Collins is poised
to win the World Championship.
He comes into the pits
for his last pit stop,
beckoned to Fangio and said,
"You take my car
and I'll give up my chance
for you to win
yet another World Championship."
I can't actually think
of another driver,
apart from Peter, to do that,
because all Peter had to do
was keep going
and he was the man who would take it.
He respected the superiority
of Fangio as a driver
and I think he felt it would be
unfair of him not to provide the car.
It was a very chivalrous
and respectful gesture,
which Enzo Ferrari appreciated a lot.
Talking to the press afterwards,
Peter apparently said,
"I'm young. I'll get another chance."
I was in a play
at Coconut Grove Playhouse in Florida
and Peter was on his way from Argentina
back to England.
The West Indies, Cuba,
all of Latin America,
are just beyond the horizon
when you make Miami your headquarters.
Stirling Moss actually
told Peter that I was in Florida
and so if he was going through there,
why not say hello?
So, he gave me a ring
and Monday night after the play
we got together, and that was it.
Wednesday he asked me to marry him.
Friday my father came down from New York
to stop this whole nonsense.
He was with the United Nations,

a very dignified human being.
He was a little unhappy,
thinking that his daughter
was going to marry a racing driver
that she didn't even know.
It worked out very beautifully.
When does a star begin to decline?
The day they put personal interests
before the sport itself.
Enzo Ferrari didn't like his drivers
getting tied down
because he didn't like the idea
that they had something else to live for
besides driving his racing cars,
that that would
take the edge off their speed.
I think he loved the cars
more than the drivers
because the cars were loyal to him
and the drivers very often weren't.
Mr Ferrari always maintained
that his team number one
would be the driver
who performed best last Sunday,
which tended to keep them on their toes.
By setting them to some extent
in competition with each other,
by very often having five drivers
for four cars,
it would ensure that they were
performing at their maximum
the whole time for him.
There would have been
quite a lot of culture shock
for Mike Hawthorn and Peter Collins
going into the Scuderia Ferrari
where they would have been surrounded
by very competitive playboy drivers.
I had dinner with Ferrari
and we were talking about racing,
as we usually do,
and all of a sudden he said,
"But you know the drivers
will always go to the factory

which produces the fastest car."
And I was just about to protest
my loyalty to Ferrari when I realized
that I would go somewhere else
if they produced a faster car.
There is no loyalty to a factory.
There was a colored,
embittered relationship
between Fangio and Mr Ferrari,
and so when Fangio left Ferrari
at the end of that
World Championship-winning season,
to go to the rival Maserati team,
the only person surprised
was Mr Ferrari.
When Mike Hawthorn rejoined
the Ferrari team at the start of 1957,
they had Collins, Musso,
the Spanish Marquis Fon de Portago
and they had Castellotti.
It was an incredibly strong team.
One thing I've always loved
about Castellotti
was how neat and precise he was
in his everyday life,
and that's always a good sign, I think,
to how you are in a racing car.
And you look at the way
he used to pack his racing suitcase
with all his race kit, everything was
immaculate and perfectly organized,
and I think that showed
another side to Castellotti.
He wasn't just a crazy Italian.
This guy was good.
Castellotti started racing,
effectively, with a Ferrari sports car
that his mother bought him.
He grew up
as a gilded child, really.
He's another immature fellow
that has a lot of money,
and decided he was going to do what most
wealthy Italians wish they could do

and that's be a real racing driver,
and he's pretty good,
but he's not all that good.
You said drivers
can be divided into two categories:
the pros and the ambitious,
i.e. the amateurs.
No doubt.
You said it's not true
that Italians race slower
than foreigners.
But the winners
are almost always foreigners.
Obviously Italians lack
the technical resources
available to foreigners.
Everybody in Italy was mad about racing.
Even if there was no television,
but there was a radio,
they were following what was happening.
I think being an Italian
driving in Italy
and obviously having to prove yourself
constantly against drivers
like Collins, Hawthorn and Moss
was very, very difficult.
In March 1957, Castellotti was
called to do some testing for Ferrari
at the Modena test track.
I mean, it sounds ludicrous, in a way,
that Modena was the test track
that both Ferrari and Maserati used
and why it should have been
so desperately important
who actually held the, you know, the
unofficial lap record at any given time
is quite difficult to fathom now.
But, for whatever reason,
it was very important
and particularly to Enzo Ferrari.
Maserati had just broken
the lap record there.
Mr Ferrari wasn't happy with that.
He wanted Ferrari

to hold the lap record there.
And either spoken or tacitly,
Castellotti was expected
to go out and break the lap record
in the developing new car.
Castellotti was summoned
back from Florence
and it wasn't a request,
it was a demand.
And much against his will,
he came back to Milan
and went out to Modena,
got in the car late afternoon
and was killed.
He either suffered a brake failure
or the throttle stuck open
and the Ferrari rode over the curbs,
flew into the air and began to roll
and it went into
a little concrete-built grandstand
and it ended up in the top row
at the back of the grandstand.
And Castellotti, very sadly,
had been thrown out of the car
and he was rushed to hospital
and it was too late.
There was no saving him.
The thing that troubles us
is when somebody gets killed
because the steering arm broke
or because the wheel came off
and that worries us a lot because then
you think if it happened on that car
and I have to drive the same type
of car, it could very well happen to me.
I don't think Ferrari really
was capable of having relationships.
I think he was a guy
that was just driven
to do what he had
to do in motor racing,
and that was build cars
that were capable of winning
and to find drivers

that were capable of driving them
and what happened happened.
Collins was in the office
with Enzo Ferrari when the phone rang.
It was with the news
that Castellotti had been killed.
The old man said,
"Oh, non, non, Castellotti morto."
And then, "E la macchina?"
"And how's the car?"
Not everyone finds you agreeable.
You're often accused of being
a dictator. What do you think?
If by dictator,
you mean demanding from others,
the utmost commitment to their job,
they definitely have a point.
Ferrari was a man I admired in some ways
and thought he was appalling in others.
I think success
was important to Ferrari.
But success because it showed that
he was one better than the other guy.
Ultimately, it was about Ferrari
and Ferrari had been around now,
in some form or another,
since the turn of the century almost.
And the reason Ferrari is
the biggest brand in the world today,
bigger than Formula One,
in motor racing terms,
and the reason people think
about Ferrari the way they do
is because it ultimately is
about the car and not the driver.
Mr Ferrari became
absolutely well aware very early on
that his favored sport was a killer.
If you visit
the cemetery as often as I do,
you'll find yourself staring
into the majestic face of death.
What can you think in that moment?
"All those worries,

all those issues, all those fights
to just end up here."
Well, what kind of guy is Ferrari?
Well, Ferrari is a dictator.
If he doesn't like you,
he won't sell you a car.
But as far as I'm concerned,
he's a wonderful guy.
Why do you race?
Because I want
to be champion of the world.
Life to me is a wonderful thing
and even if I live to be 100,
I still won't be able to do
a 20th of all the things I want to do
and read all the books I want to read.
And I plan to get the most out of it,
but I have no time to lose.
Fon Portago I knew quite well.
Because I saw him...
I was living in France at the time
and he was one of the people
one saw regularly in Paris.
He could do anything, Portago.
He liked doing dangerous things.
Everybody,
no matter how wealthy they are,
who drives
aims to become a professional driver.
All you must have
is respect for the car.
I have enormous respect
for the Grand Prix Ferrari.
And I realize that if I treat it badly,
it can very easily kill me.
Well, every driver believes
it can never happen to him.
I know it won't happen to me.
Inside me, I know it won't happen to me.
The Mille Miglia was a 1,000-mile race
around Italy on normal roads
with millions of spectators
lining the roads
and it was incredibly dangerous.

Fon de Portage was driving a Ferrari that was one of the most powerful cars in the race, so he would have been expected to do well. It was actually a race he detested and he didn't want to do that year, but Ferrari insisted. He was embroiled at that time in a sort of mad, passionate affair with this American actress, Linda Christian, and at one of the control points on the race, Portago came in, took on fuel and he had his card stamped. One of the mechanics noticed the rear bodywork was damaged and was actually folded over and it was very, very close to the tire. They wanted to change the tire and Portago, you know, by all accounts, just waved them away. "No, no, no. We haven't got time for all that." Then saw Linda Christian. She came over and there was this passionate kiss, having said there's no time to try and get the bodywork away from the tire. Then he got on his way again. In the closing stages of the race, when at a place called Guidizzolo, almost within sight and earshot of the finish, a tire burst on the car. The car left the road, somersaulted, hit the bank and disintegrated. De Portage was killed. Edmund Nelson, his navigator, was also killed. Nine spectators were killed. Five of them were children, which made it particularly shocking. He died in the pursuit of a career to which he had given

all his time and energy
and that great competitive spirit,
which made him what he was.
That he should be killed
on the threshold
of a magnificent racing career
is a great loss to racing
and to the world of people who still
retain an ounce of romance in them.
By the very nature of their lives,
people like Portage do not die in bed.
Their flags remain flying
on the many competitive fields
where they enjoyed their
greatest triumphs to the very end.
It was not uncommon in
the 1950s for spectators to be killed,
but this one, it was the five children
that made the difference.
For Enzo Ferrari, this was a moment
when he had to dig very, very deep.
The Mille Miglia was never run again.
That was one thing.
But beyond that
there was a manslaughter charge.
There was an air of revulsion
and the Vatican was horrified.
Do you feel
any responsibility or a moral burden
when these tragedies happen?
I question myself profoundly.
How do you feel
when one of yours dies?
Do you feel like quitting?
I feel many things.
Too many things.
For instance,
the frightening fragility
of the human existence.
Mike Hawthorn
had a congenital kidney problem.
He would have days where he would
be very pale and sweaty and weak
and it showed.

If he had gone public,
he risked not getting a competition
license on medical grounds.
That was brushed under the carpet
somewhat carefully
by saying, "I have a chronic condition
which flares up every now and then."
From what I've been told
he used to get angry with himself
if he was having a weak day
or just feeling lousy.
But I think in terms of people
who knew about it,
there were very, very few people.
He refused to let the government know
because there were questions
in the Houses of Parliament
why Mike Hawthorn wasn't going into
the army, doing his national service.
And he wouldn't let his doctors
tell them why.
He never mentioned his disability,
but he certainly suffered from that
and I think that some days that,
you know, he felt it more than others.
It was very exciting
to be around Monaco.
We bought that boat
and decided to make that our home.
Peter had a nice accident
when his car went into the harbor.
Yeah, that was funny.
I think he did it twice.
Someone said, "You know, your husband
just went into the harbor."
I said, "It's alright.
He did that yesterday. He knows how."
Peter and Mike
had a lot of laughs together,
so when I came in on the scene,
the three of us clicked right away.
We just had such a good, funny time.
Peter was, I think, generally regarded
as a nicer person than Mike.

Mike could be terribly rude,
terribly abrupt.
But with people he liked
and got on with...
he was a great, great friend.
"Mon ami mate" was like a comic strip.
These two characters
go on a trip to Mars.
They look at this Martian,
and to be friendly and saying hello,
they said, "Hello, mon ami mate."
It amused Peter and Mike so much
that they just kept
calling each other "mon ami mate."
It was all very nice and "mon ami mate"
and all that sort of thing,
but I don't think it was
in the best interests of Ferrari.
Formula One team owners
are pretty incapable of managing teams
when you've got two very fast
racing drivers alongside one another,
and we've seen it
through the history of the sport.
Peter Collins and Mike Hawthorn
were basically coming as a package,
and, for the first time, Enzo Ferrari
was faced with this weird situation
where if he said something to Peter,
it actually affected Mike Hawthorn
and vice versa.
It sometimes detracted
from their racing, you know,
and they used to be mucking about,
you know, changing places,
instead of concentrating 100%,
you know.
And I think the sense of competition
was sort of slightly dulled
between Mike and Peter
to their, to their detriment.
I mean, Roy Salvadori said to me once,
"God, if I'd been Enzo Ferrari,
I'd have fired those two."

They were such close friends.
They were almost happier
when the other won.
Enzo always loved it
when his drivers spurred each other on.
You know, and if there were casualties,
well, you know, it happens.
It's been suggested that Hawthorn
and Collins ganged up on Luigi Musso,
who was really the last
of the great Italian drivers left.
He would write to me about
the badgering he had to put up with
from these two people.
Because strength comes in numbers
and they were united against Luigi.
I think you must always wonder,
sort of, "What are they saying?"
"I don't understand what they're
saying." That can't have been easy.
He forged this relationship
with Fiamma,
who was a beautiful girl,
she really was.
Never again
in my life was I so happy
and in love as I was with him.
It was an incredible and amazing thing.
He was really carrying
the weight of Italy on his shoulders
and driving way beyond his means.
Apart from being
the only Italian driver of consequence
in Formula One
and the only Italian at Ferrari,
he also, by all accounts,
was not a very good businessman.
He'd entered into a business deal
to import American cars into Italy.
His backers got more and more concerned
about their investment.
There were also suggestions
that he'd run up some gambling debts.
He certainly was under

some financial stress at the time.
The pressure had been building.
The debts that Musso
was finding himself in.
The enormous rewards
that you could receive
if you won
the French Grand Prix at Reims.
That was a race for Musso to win,
no question about it.
On three or four occasions
in the opening laps,
trying to match Hawthorn's pace
through the very fast right-hand curve
immediately after the pits,
he put two wheels on the verge and
there'd be a puff of dust and stones
and some of the photographers
were saying, you know,
"Hey, he's on the ragged edge."
Because he got it slightly
wrong, he was slightly off line,
the left rear would have caught
the marbles and then he went off
and the car somersaulted
and threw him out.
On the seventh lap
Luigi didn't come around.
I thought his car might have
broken down or he might have stopped.
Nobody made a signal.
And when there is no signal, it's bad.
He was thrown out and suffered
a head injury which took his life.
I was young
and my entire world collapsed.
I ran to the window
to throw myself out.
When a fatal event occurs,
it is never down to a single cause.
It's different things
happening simultaneously,
leading to the sacrifice of a life.
When Luigi Musso died,

Ferrari was upset,
but one way he showed his regret
was to console Musso's girlfriend.
He set her up
in a flower shop in Florence
and spent quite a lot of time with her
and they had quite a long relationship.
Well, the thing is a driver should
have confidence in his own ability,
but not to be so naive as to think,
"It can't happen to me."
If you come round a corner
and you find oil on the circuit,
you can still spin and go off,
so you recognize
that that was beyond your capabilities
and you either accepted that
or you didn't go motor racing.
Nobody's making you motor race.
It was terrible
when you heard somebody was killed,
but, after all,
it was his decision to race.
They were all aware in those days
that it was very dangerous
and they still were doing it.
If you ran off the road and there
was a chance of the car overturning,
it was better to be thrown out
than to be trapped
in the cockpit by seatbelts
and crushed underneath it when it landed
or, worse, burned to death by the fire
that would almost inevitably follow
a fuel-tank burst.
One time Peter almost said something,
and I said, "Don't."
We never discussed
the dangers of motor racing
and I think if we had,
it would have compounded the fear.
And the fear you stuff away.
You don't want to bring that up.
You know, if you get involved

with a racing driver,
you take the risk that something's
probably going to happen,
certainly then
because it was so dangerous.
There was a black humor
in motor racing at that time
to get through.
It was a defense mechanism.
I know that one circuit
we were at there was an accident
and the driver got out and walked away
and the crowds went, "Oh."
It's an awful thing to say,
but it's true.
People go for the excitement.
I was doing time charts
all the time.
That may have helped
keep that fear away.
But I had full confidence
that Peter would never die.
It was very easy to ignore
any possibility of things going wrong.
Summer came
to Silverstone on Saturday July 19th
for the 1958 British Grand Prix,
sixth race of the ten events
counting for the World Championship.
The crowds came too,
in their tens of thousands,
lining the three-mile circuit
to watch the major event
in the British calendar,
a race made more dramatic
by the fight for Championship honors.
Peter had decided
that because of our marriage
that he would drive the few races that
were left that year and then retire.
Congratulations, Mike, on Reims.
You don't happen to have a spare bottle
of champagne on you, do you?
No. I haven't got it yet.

What about the British Grand Prix?
Because we won the last race,
people are saying
Ferrari will win this one,
but it's a completely
different type of circuit.
It's Collins number one
and Silverstone sees
a high-speed tactical exercise
carried out by three of the greatest
masters of the art of motor racing.
Collins was just
absolutely on it that day
and he just controlled the race
from start to finish.
And Collins
leads Hawthorn by 2'! Seconds
at a race average
of 102.5 miles an hour.
He was supremely quick,
Peter Collins, by then,
and you can't describe his pace
any other way
because of what he did at Silverstone.
Peter Collins wins
after a magnificent drive
and Mike Hawthorn is second.
Nobody expected him
to win at Silverstone.
He was on the second row and
he just took the lead from the start
and won with abandon.
He drove beautifully that day.
You know, it was a British crowd,
home victory.
One golden boy
in Peter Collins had won it
and the other golden boy, Mike Hawthorn,
had come in in second place.
I mean, what could be better?
In the two weeks between
the British Grand Prix and Niirburgring,
we had just put money down on a house,
so we were looking forward

to getting back.
The trouble
with poor Mr Ferrari, in a way,
was he'd suffered the very real personal
tragedy of losing his son, Dino.
He'd transferred some of his almost
paternal affection and ambition
to Peter Collins.
The old man just feared
that Collins's focus in life
was not gonna be any more on his racing.
I mean, it was a wonderful time for us
because we were making
all these future plans.
And Peter asked me
not to come to Niirburgring.
He said, "We have so much work to do
with this house."
"Why don't you just stay
and manage that?"
And I said, "Oh, no.
I'm not gonna let you go without me."
When you think of circuits of that time,
there was Spa and it was very fast,
but the Niirburgring
was miles of torture.
It was 180 corners per lap and you
had any comer you'd like to name.
The weather could change dramatically,
as it could in the mountains
at any mountain circuit.
It was, I think,
the most challenging circuit we had.
Undulating, narrow,
demanding and unforgiving.
The car was airborne a lot
and the drivers, of course,
when they're in a groove,
they're doing it from memory,
they're doing it from muscle memory.
At the end of the day there's always
the unexpected around the next comer
and that was probably
the biggest problem of the Niirburgring.

I thought it was just another race
at Niirburgring.
I, um...
I didn't really have a lot of fear.
I just had complete confidence in Peter.
Phil Hill was leading
the Formula Two class
until his dampers began
to give up and his drum brakes.
And in their Formula One cars,
Hawthorn and Collins
would have been experiencing
exactly the same difficulties,
but they're running up
at the sharp end of the race,
going for the lead,
and battling with Tony Brooks.
And Tony was the smoothest of drivers.
I caught them,
past Mike, I think, initially, one lap,
and then he re-passed me.
We swapped places on a couple of laps.
And then I got back into the lead.
So as these two ailing Ferraris
became capable of only returning
slower and slower lap times,
their drivers had to drive more
and more desperately to compensate.
I pulled into the straight
and, of course, the first thing to do
was to look behind
and see where Mike or Peter were
and I looked behind
and there was no sign of either of them.
I was in the pits
with my time-keeping stuff.
Peter didn't come around again
and I thought, "What's happening?"
But I focused on that lap chart.
Mike's account, following Collins,
was that he saw the car drift off
onto the grass and thought,
"Well, you silly arse.
You've overcooked that one."

And he expected him
to ride up the bank a bit
and then come back off the grass
on to the road
and he was a bit concerned
that he might spin across the road
and might, himself, might hit him.
But then, to his horror,
the car reared up on that bank
and he just got a glimpse
of his great friend Peter Collins
being thrown out
and flying through the air.
Mr Hawthorn, you were driving
just behind Peter Collins, I think,
when this accident occurred.
Just how did it happen?
Well, um... there was a little dip
and we went into that.
And there's
a sharp right-hander after that
and he took it just a little too wide.
He didn't turn into it soon enough...
and, um... the car hit the bank
and turned over.
- How fast was he traveling?
- I don't know.
- How fast were you...?
- I don't know.
So it wasn't until after the race
that I was told Peter had an accident
and he's being flown to Bonn
to the hospital.
And I said, "Can I go too?"
And they said no.
My father at the United Nations,
he had always been having someone
keeping track of Peter's racing,
so this UN man called my father
and said, "Peter's been in an accident,"
and then my father pulled a few strings
and then he called the hospital.
And when I got into the hospital,
the first thing that happened

was I was told,
"Oh, you have a phone call
at the reception desk."
And I went there and my father
was on the phone from New York
and he told me that Peter had died.
That just, I thought, was so beautiful,
that he would say, "I will tell her."
I said, "Well, I want to see him."
And I... They took me down.
He was in the basement,
which was cooler, you know.
I went down there and I looked
and I saw one foot.
The covering that was over him,
that, that one foot was out.
And in an instant I knew he was dead,
and so that was that.
And we only had a year and a half,
but it was a great year and a half.
Michael was desperately upset and it was
the first time I ever saw Mike cry.
He was beside himself, really,
because he'd lost his great mate.
Could you say
a few words, as a friend of his,
about Peter Collins
as a man and as a driver?
Well, as a driver, I mean,
he was definitely one of the best.
As a friend, well, he was my friend.
Do you know what fear is?
I would say I've always lived in fear.
What are your most frequent fears?
All of them.
It's very difficult even now trying to
comprehend what it would have been like.
How Ferrari got through that period
and emerged
is a tribute to Enzo's passion
for motor racing
and his ability to turn the page
and move onwards.
Once you've been through

as much as he had been through,
he was already like a person in war
and it means losing drivers
and everything
and he did his best, I suppose,
to act appropriately.
To what degree he really felt
these things is hard to say.
When you think of Peter Collins
and his grace, his sportsmanship
and what he did at Monza in '56,
constantly Peter Collins doing
these wonderfully humble gestures.
If you look at Luigi Musso
and Eugenio Castellotti,
they were divided in their support,
but they brought to Formula One
the Italian element of glory.
And that's something that
was very difficult for both drivers.
Both drivers crashed
and died under that pressure.
And then there was Alfonso de Portago,
who was basically James Dean on wheels,
was great.
The appeal of the drivers in the 1950s
was that they were all so different
and yet united in this willingness
to take enormous risks.
With each death of a driver,
the pressure mounted
on Enzo Ferrari and the team.
Team manager, Romolo Tavoni,
tells us that Mr Ferrari was devastated.
His initial reaction was to say,
"We must give up Grand Prix racing."
"This is too much."
But Hawthorn went to see him and said,
"I want to finish the season."
"I'll drive another car if I've got to,
but I want to drive a Ferrari."
I think he'd lost the love of racing,
but he was determined
to do it for Peter's sake, really.

Thereafter
for the rest of the season,
each time they finished a race,
Mike would say, "Well, that's another
bloody race I don't have to do again."
But whichever way you slice it,
he was in there with a chance
of the Drivers' World Championship.
In actual fact, he reckoned Peter
would have won the World Championship
and I think that made him upset.
Between the Italian Grand Prix
and the Moroccan Grand Prix,
it was six very tense weeks.
Everybody used
to bug Mike, you know.
Every time he went into a pub they'd
say to him, "Mike, it's not long now."
So we stayed at home.
The British press
were also fired up by the fact
that there was now going to be a British
Formula One World Champion driver
for the very first time.
The Daily Mirror characterized it
as the "showdown in the sun."
Michael was very nervous.
He wasn't at all himself.
You know, the sort of carefree person
that he normally was.
Sometimes he really had to slow down
and rest and take it easy.
So I was always aware
when he felt like that
that he had to take care of himself.
You know, before a race I was amazed
that Mike actually came into my room
and stayed with me for the whole night,
which was most unlike Mike.
He just wanted
to be with somebody, I think.
I think he was very nervous.
All that Moss had to do
to win the World Championship

was to beat Hawthorn
and hopefully set fastest lap,
which scored an extra point,
with Mike finishing lower than third.
At the end of the race in Morocco,
Phil Hill had done the decent thing
and handed second place to Hawthorn.
Moss had done everything he could do.
He'd won.
He'd set fastest lap.
But still, when it was all over,
Mike Hawthorn was the World Champion.
Mr Ferrari's reaction
to winning the World Championship,
after what in so many ways
had been that catastrophic year,
was one of immense overwhelming relief.
Moss ended up one point, just
that solitary point, behind Hawthorn.
So Mr Ferrari knew that they'd
shaded it, but, hey, a win's a win.
With a few laps to go,
Stuart Lewis-Evans was running fourth
but suddenly his engine seized,
the car caught fire,
and by the time the brilliant
young Englishman was out,
he was already severely burnt.
That affected Mike
because he hated drivers being hurt
and he knew that Stuart was very ill.
He told Enzo after the race
that he wasn't going to race anymore
and Enzo was furious.
Can you give us any news
of Stuart Lewis-Evans?
He's quite badly burnt.
He came back in the aeroplane
on a stretcher with us just now.
He was talking and drinking tea,
but, um...
he's obviously in quite a lot of pain.
The flight home was bittersweet
in the truest sense of the word.

On one hand, Mike Hawthorn
had won his World Championship.
On the other,
there was Stuart Lewis-Evans'
terrible agony from these burns.
He died a few days later in London.
You look at footage of Mike
having won the World Championship,
he doesn't look to be happy.
But then why would he?
It was a year that in many ways Mike
would have wanted to have forgotten
and yet he was World Champion.
He was a very good World Champion
because he looked good
and he spoke well,
so he wore the mantle extremely well.
I've had eight years of racing.
In eight years I got to the top.
So I decided now's the time.
Thank you all very, very much indeed
for coming along
and being so patient to listen to me.
And I hope one day some of you
will come along and join me
and we'll empty that lot.
Thank you very much.
On the 22nd of January, 1959,
Mike had a lunch appointment
up in London.
He didn't want to go to London that day.
He wasn't feeling very well.
I knew that he was in a lot of pain
and I'd seen him on the floor
writhing around in agony.
When I came back to England,
my most urgent thing was to see Mike.
We said, "OK, we'll see each other
after that luncheon,"
and he would come to my hotel.
As he went along
the Hog's Back road,
he came up behind
a Mercedes-Benz 300SL Gullwing

and he recognized
the driver immediately as Rob Walker.
I saw a Jaguar come up behind me
and I saw it was Mike Hawthorn
and we both accelerated as hard
as we could alongside each other.
Rob was thinking, "Oh, this is all
getting a bit much for me"
and I'm not really a racing driver,
though I'm keen."
I was so looking forward to seeing him.
I wanted very much to have Mike
tell me what it's like
to be in a serious accident.
Does your whole life run in front of you
or what happens?
When I walked into the hotel,
the receptionist knew me.
Peter had always stayed in that hotel.
He was very aware of things.
The receptionist didn't look at me.
And I got into the elevator,
up to whatever floor I was on,
went into my room and knock on the door,
and it was the manager of the hotel
and he told me that Mike had died.
And I just... I mean, I...
It was shattering. It was shattering.
It was just awful.
Rob managed to get the back door open
and bent down
and he told me
that as he looked at Mike,
Mike's eyes glazed
and there was a gentle gasp
and that was it.
I was up in Yorkshire
when I heard the news
and I just didn't believe it.
But, um...
When I did believe it, a lot of...
I had a lot of friends
in that part of the world and they...
I think... I seem to remember

going for a long walk on the moors.
I think I heard it
on the television at home
and it was, you know,
it was very, very, very sad
and, you know,
so... so unnecessary, really,
but it's easy to say that
with the benefit of hindsight.
I think it's that he had a blackout
because he knew that road backwards.
He knew the car.
He used to race that car.
That road, it might have been slippery,
but Mike's been in...
in masses of skids,
so I think he had a blackout
and he didn't really know anything
about the accident at all.
That's what I think
and that's what I hope.
Whichever way you look at it,
Mike's life was tragic.
He only got to savor
his World Championship for three months
and then it all just went away.
People who knew him well said to me
he would not have made 35.
Whether that's true or not,
I don't know.
Um... But...
But the prognosis wasn't very good.
His last Christmas
was spent in bed. He wasn't at all well.
I didn't know how ill he was.
His doctor told me later
that he only had a few years to live.
So the way he went, I suppose,
it was the best way for Mike.
You've been quite straightforward
about some of those who quit.
You said, "Time will prove
the worth of all these people."
It is not up to humans to judge

what we are supposed to believe.
Only time can do that.
And time is relentless.
If you put a racing driver
in a racing car,
he's always going to take it
to the limit and beyond if necessary.
Um... Ferrari certainly
didn't discourage that.
He wanted drivers who thought like that.
I would say, first and foremost...
that I did nothing
other than what gave me pleasure.
I just did something that mattered
to me, in a purely selfish way.
I only find comfort in the thought
that what I did
wasn't detrimental to anybody.
It was phenomenal
with Castellotti and Musso and Portago
and Collins and Hawthorn.
That was an amazing bunch.
An amazing bunch of characters
as well as a bunch of talents.
And to lose those drivers
one after another,
it was a terrible thing,
it couldn't happen now,
and it was probably unique
in sporting history.
Well, they were rather like
fighter pilots or gladiators, I suppose.
They were...
They were stars.
They would have been the first
out of the trench or over the top,
the first off the landing craft.
These guys were...
They were warriors.