

THE SPEED KING

by

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8/22/08

Property of:

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FADE IN:

EXT. SALT FLATS BONNEVILLE - DAY

The sun blazes down on the vast white expanse of the Utah salt flats. As far as the eye can see, a perfect smooth flat surface....except for a small boy MICKEY THOMPSON, 8, and his father MARION, 30s, shirt sleeves rolled up, both wear caps.

SUPER: August 27, 1938 BONNEVILLE SALT FLATS

Marion has a pair of BINOCULARS in one hand, Mickey holds a toy car. Marion peers through the binoculars...searching.

COLLENE (O.S.)
Daddy, how much longer do we have
to wait? I wanna get to
Yellowstone!

Marion looks over his shoulder. It's COLLENE, 5, Mickey's little sister, leaning out of their '37 Dodge wagon.

MARION
Collene Thompson, you get back in
that car and wait...patiently.

COLLENE
But I gotta pee!

One glare from Marion and Collene ducks back into the car.

MICKEY
(pointing in the distance)
Dad, look! There it is... the
THUNDERBOLT!

Marion looks through binoculars, smiles, hands to Mickey.

MARION
Mickey, I bet Captain Eyston just
snatched the record for England.

MICKEY'S POV THROUGH BINOCULARS

The train-sized "THUNDERBOLT" plows the salt at over 350 mph!

Mickey jumps in the air and pumps his free hand.

MICKEY
Wahooo! Look at it go.

COLLENE (O.S.)
Can WE go now?!

Mickey ignores her, turns to Marion, totally serious.

MICKEY
Dad, someday, I swear I'm going to
go even faster.

Marion gets down on one knee, looks Mickey in the eye.

MARION
Be careful when you swear, Mickey.
Racers like Eyston, Cobb, and
Campbell all had hundreds of
thousands to make their cars-

MICKEY
So? I've got two bits! And I won't
quit till I do it. You always said
Thompson's aren't quitters.

MARION
No, they aren't.

HONK!! Collene leans on the horn. HONK!!

MARION (CONT'D)
(to Mickey)
Let's go..or she'll pee her pants.

MICKEY
Awww, let her.

Marion laughs and heads for the car, Mickey runs to grab his toy car. Just as he picks it up the SUN reflects off the car's metal framework blinding Mickey and we MATCH CUT TO:

THE BLINDING WHITE ARC from a TIG welding tungsten electrode as it moves along a sheet of stainless steel spitting sparks and fumes. Pull back to reveal-

INT. RACE SHOP - HUNTINGTON BEACH, CA - DAWN (50 YEARS LATER)

A modest sized shop floor, immaculately clean. A SIGN on one wall reads DANNY THOMPSON MOTORSPORTS. The walls are covered with photos and posters from a life of professional racing.

SUPER: March 16, 1988

Angle on the WELDER, face covered by his mask, precisely welding a panel on a vehicle that hasn't been fully revealed.

A wall phone RINGS catching the welder's attention. He shuts off the torch, pulls off his gloves, and lifts back the mask revealing DANNY THOMPSON, late 30s, stocky and sharp featured. He glances at a wall CLOCK. It's 6:30 am. Danny smiles, walks over, picks up the phone.

DANNY
Dad? It's a little early to-

MAN'S VOICE
(desperate)
Danny, it's Jerri. Something's
happened at your dad's place.

DANNY
What?