

# DANGER IS HIS BUSINESS

BY JO ANN LLOYD

DANGLING PRECARIOUSLY 2,000 FEET above ground with camera in hand, **Trevor Povah (REC '04)** captures the dizzying descent of three base jumpers as they step off a rocky cliff.

Without all his usual safety and climbing equipment, Povah admitted to feeling a little anxious that day in central China. But that's all part of the thrill for the action sports enthusiast and videographer who makes his living photographing daredevils on land, in water, and hurtling through thin air.

continued on next page...



(L) Trevor Povah

From surfers in Indonesia to extreme skiers at Lake Tahoe, Povah captures the ultimate athletes' intense, dramatic acrobatics. Video or still, color or black-and-white, aerial or underwater, Povah's photographs give the more-timid viewer a glimpse of life in the fast lane.

When filming white-water kayakers, he uses a waterproof case for his equipment, sets it in his lap, and takes off ahead of the kayakers he wants to photograph. Shooting the rapids and the paddlers that trail him. Simple, right?

How about rock climbing? No problem. He deftly ascends steep rock faces, going either ahead of his subjects or next to

When he started at Cal Poly, Povah didn't have a clear vision about his future and wasn't eager to begin his studies. "I was anti-school until I was a sophomore," he said. Then he began to notice what independent filmmakers were doing, and he realized there were opportunities for a career he could get excited about.

When he approached the Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Administration Department about creating a business plan for his own videography company as his senior project, he got the green light. "It was sort of an unusual set-up, but they approved it," Povah said.

That was the first step in the creation of Red Potion Productions, Povah's action sports photography company that allows him to work and play at the same time.

His latest venture, "Lost in the Middle," is a 30-minute film capturing top local surfers riding waves from Point Conception to Big Sur. Povah's love of surfing is evident in the film, which shows the sport and the athletes to great advantage.

Povah is pleased with the way things have come together, and he encourages students to follow his lead. "I tell students to be creative. Do something different. Approach your department with a

'I TELL STUDENTS TO BE CREATIVE...DO SOMETHING DIFFERENT....  
THAT'S WHAT CAL POLY WANTS, FOR YOU TO GO FOR IT'

them, with a camera strapped to his back.

It's not your typical nine-to-five job, and Povah isn't your typical photographer. If his short-cropped red hair isn't an instant tip-off, one look at his breathtaking, adrenaline-producing photography does the trick.

But Povah is not just a man looking for action. He is a thoughtful photographer as well, capturing the natural rugged beauty in landscape photographs of the Central Coast, Yellowstone National Park and the Grand Tetons.

An avid surfer, snowboarder, white-water kayaker and rock and ice climber himself, Povah was introduced to sports and travel at an early age. He was skiing at four and snow boarding at 13. In high school, his outdoor education teacher introduced him to rock climbing and kayaking.

As a kid, traveling with his father to Africa and Alaska, he was tagged the designated photographer.

new plan. That's what Cal Poly wants – for you to go for it."

Povah remains true to his philosophy. He is creative. He trusts his instincts. He follows a different path. Is there anything this thrill-seeker wouldn't photograph?

"Weddings," he said. "I don't do weddings. They're way too stressful." □

**Editor's note:** Check out Povah's Web site at: [www.redpotion.com](http://www.redpotion.com). To watch a clip from his film "Lost in the Middle," go to [www.redpotion.com/lostinthemiddle.html](http://www.redpotion.com/lostinthemiddle.html).