



KEEPIN' IT STRAIGHT

BAKER PRO THEOTIS BEASLEY IS ONE UP-AND-COMER WHO REFUSES TO VEER OFF TRACK.
TEXT OLIVER PELLING & PHOTOGRAPHY DAVE CHAMI

Some people refuse to settle for the hand life deals them. And Baker pro Theotis Beasley, who was raised in Inglewood, California, is no exception. "Inglewood was crazy," says the twenty-year-old. "I had homies that gangbanged, but I was smarter than that. You'd hear gunshots every night, you couldn't wear certain colours to certain places. If you ended up going somewhere with the wrong colour on, you could end your life."

Being smart paid off this May, when Theo's pro status was announced at the Transworld Awards. "I was walking around with tears in my eyes the whole night," says Theo, who puts his success down to "being in the right place at the right time". All it took was a chance meeting with Baker founder Andrew Reynolds at his local skatepark – and the chance to show off his next-level skills. "He wanted to hook me up with some boards. It was a dream come true," smiles Theo. "More and more boxes came each week. It was like Christmas. I made sure I hooked up my homies on the block, too."

Soon Theo had a shared part with Rammy Issa in 2006's *Baker 3*, and was joining the team as an official am. But the violence in his community still posed a threat. "Even if you're just a skateboarder, not a gangbanger or nothing, they'll still mess with you," says Theo, who recently moved to the nearby suburb of Gardena. "They don't care. If you've got those colours on, they'll shoot you. It's crazy man; it's wild. Thank god I got out."

Today, Theo has a list of sponsors that would make a professional footballer jealous. But unlike most of his peers, who hire managers and PAs, he handles all of his sponsorship deals himself. "I think being on Baker has helped me a lot," explains Theo. "Drew's always had my back and helped me out. That's why Baker's home, I'd definitely never leave."

The Baker team are renowned for their balls-to-the-wall partying antics, but Theo takes a more mellow approach. "Drinking and smoking ain't too bad," he says. "It's just something I choose not to do. People that drink and smoke a lot can't maintain and still kill it. I respect all the dudes on Baker because they're my boys. I love them, they love me, and at the same time they respect that I don't do any of that stuff."

So, where does this staunch commitment to clean living stem from? "When I was about nine or ten I tried [marijuana] and got caught by my cousin," he says. "He told my mom and I got a whoopin'. I haven't touched it since."

On top of turning pro this year, Theo's racked-up a killer section in *Not Another Transworld Video*, is currently filming for the Shake Junt video *Chickenbone* (due out in October), and has also been working on a signature line for Altamont Apparel, which will drop late next year. But it's the lessons he's learned that resonate the most. "You could be around some crazy stuff, but know your limits," says Theo. "Stay positive, stay humble and if you know what you want just keep going for it. That's it."