

# 'ATTORNEY THAT RIDES' GOES FOR THE RECORD

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**GABRIEL CARRERA** is applying to be in the “Guinness Book of World Records” for his long journey on a Harley-Davidson.

## 'Attorney that rides' goes for the record

***FT. LAUDERDALE ATTORNEY RIDES FROM THE SOUTHERNMOST TIP OF ARGENTINA TO THE NORTHERNMOST TIP OF ALASKA***

*Associate Editor*

Near the top of the Calbuco volcanic mountain between Chile and Argentina, Gabriel Carrera coasted on his Harley-Davidson when suddenly it started to get gray. A dark plume of ash in the air surrounded him. It started to look like the moon.

“The volcano is spewing!” A guard on the roadway yelled. “Right now as we speak. You have one hour!”

Everyone descended in a hurry, and although Carrera wore a bandana to cover his face, he spent the next few days with a sore throat that needed antibiotics to clear it up.

This wasn't the only ordeal that came up during the Ft. Lauderdale attorney's successful quest to ride from the southernmost tip of Argentina to the northernmost tip of Alaska.

Known in his hometown as the "attorney that rides," Carrera completed the distance on a 2013 Police Road King that he purchased used from the Daytona Beach Police Department, and is currently applying to be in the *Guinness Book of World Records* for going the furthest south to north on an American-made motorcycle.

The experienced biker turned mechanic turned lawyer found himself in trouble with the law in his youth before turning his life around.

Like a true mechanic with grease-stained fingers, Carrera talks about the law as though a pair of wheels were attached: "I fell in love with the law because it became a puzzle. Because you would read the fact pattern and think 'how are we going to fix this?' and then you see the *road* that the justices took, and now, when clients come to me, it's like a puzzle. How can I *fix* it? I've got the law. I've got case precedent. And I've got experience. Now put that all together, and I see how I'm going to *repair* this."

Aside from defending clients as a private practitioner, Carrera's passion for the road lets him burn steam from work because according to him lawyers are "like pressure cookers."

"You have to let some of the steam out, or you're going to explode," he said. "All your clients problems get on your shoulders. How are you going to get it off? You can't bring it home and dump it on your wife and your kids. You've got other people's problems. You've got your own personal problems. You need an outlet."

An outlet of choice for this biker involves burning rubber long distances on the highway. Last year, he rode from Key West to Alaska in a competition that took nine days. A movie stuntman he met on the way to the Arctic Ocean provided the answer to Carrera's question: "Wow! I did the trip of a lifetime! What am I going to do now?"

"Tierra del Fuego," the man replied.

"What? Where's that?" Carrera asked.

"The bottom of the world until the top," he said.

Tierra del Fuego is referred to as “the land of fire” and “the end of the world” — an Argentinian province whose capitol, Ushuaia, is the southernmost city on Earth.

Carrera took on the challenge. He traveled from there to Deadhorse, Alaska, but first used the opportunity to support a biker-run charity close to his heart — the Toys in the Sun Run— which raises funds for the Joe DiMaggio Children’s Hospital in Hollywood, Florida, and the Chris Evert Children’s Hospital in Ft. Lauderdale.

“I went to different businesses and asked people to donate per mile,” he said. “I told them it’s going to be an average of 16,000 miles, but it turned out to be between 18,000 and 19,000. I left with the pledges.”

Carrera then shipped his crated-up Harley to Santiago, Chile, where he journeyed south to Ushuaia. There, it was nearly winter in early May.

“I had a bunch of problems. Well, I had a few. No. I had a lot of problems,” he laughed, speaking of his travel experiences.

During South America’s first snowfall, the adventurer was crossing a mountain range in the darkness with a buddy when they became exhausted on an icy road that seemed to have no end. Someone followed them with blinkers and warned they’d die if they continued, so they turned back 90 kilometers to the nearest town.

“It was cold. It must have been 20 degrees up there,” he said. “It got so bad. I had to stop because I was tired of fighting the road and the elements. I was getting tired. It was late and I just wanted to go to bed and find a hot room.”

The bikers pushed on the following day, but beyond that snowy mountain, Carrera rode alone — relying on his ability to speak Spanish fluently.

Born of Cuban descent, the gregarious lawyer joked with locals, and managed to dispel anyone’s interest in his expensive bike.

“I didn’t want them to think I was some rich gringo. I’d get jacked,” he said, telling strangers he came from Cuba.

Although he made it through the continent safely, mechanical trouble haunted him from Mexico to Alaska.

“I broke down in Chiapas, Mexico. That evening, Hurricane Carlos came in. It was a category 1, and I was 20 minutes from the coastline. It turned into a tropical storm within an hour.

“I had to get Harley-Davidson of Mexico to come and get me. They were 12 hours away, and for some reason, they did a terrible job on my motorcycle. They burned wires in my wiring harness,” which led to electrical issues from then on.

Carrera said when he reached Alaska, the bike was going 10 miles per hour uphill because it couldn’t handle the load — all because of damage to the sensors.

As a teenager, Carrera began riding motorcycles, and the love affair with these machines blossomed into joining bike clubs, becoming a mechanic, and finding himself in some trouble along the way.

“I was bad,” he said of his early years before law school. “I moved out of my house when I was 16 years old. Sometimes it curls people’s toes, but it’s a success story: I dropped out of high school and got into a motorcycle club. Started doing drugs, and I had a criminal past. I’ve been drug-free since 1984, but I was bad,” having been court ordered to one year in-house probation. “My drug habit got so bad, I actually got kicked out of the club.”

It was the Latin Riders MC Club in Hartford, Connecticut, that booted him out. He went through rehab and relocated to Daytona Beach to start a new life.

“I was ‘wrenching’ in Daytona for a few years, but it didn’t pay much,” he said, working full-time as a motorcycle mechanic, and on weekends, at a country-western bar that featured a mechanical bull. One night, Carrera threw a man out of the place. In the process, he fell down the stairs and was hospitalized for three weeks with broken cartilage and ligaments.

The incident put him on disability and food stamps, which qualified him for financial aid at Daytona Community College — later earning a bachelor’s degree, a master’s in communication, and a J.D. from Nova Southeastern University Law School with a certificate in international law.

Carrera said lawyers without an interest beyond career need to “get out from behind a desk and go look for it.”

His plan is to repeat the record-breaking trip in 2017 on an Indian motorcycle, with charitable contributions going toward the Toy Run, as the Harley-enthusiast can ride 1,000 miles in 17 hours.

“We’re long-distance riders. We’ve got tricks to stay awake that are drug-free. One of the tricks that a lot of people don’t understand: Get yourself some cinnamon hard candy, and when you start sucking on it, the sensors start to wake you up,” he explained.

“At least I’m heading in a direction and I have a purpose. If I don’t have a hobby or project to work toward, then I get burned out from work. That’s the way I deal with the stress of work.”

Carrera reached Prudhoe Bay, Alaska, toward the end of July, meeting other adventurers on the way: a Japanese man walking the world for three years with a cart; two Asian men on bicycles traveling southward to Ushuaia; a Panamanian driving a 2015 battery-operated Tesla across the U.S. to Panama.

Although Harley-Davidsons are famous for breaking down, he said he chose one to break a world record because “everybody does this ride on dirt bikes. Japanese. BMW. KTMs. What’s the fun of doing it on a BMW if you know you can do it? If there’s no challenge, everybody does it. I want to be like nobody else.”

Married with two children, Carrera practices immigration law, family law, and personal injury law — particularly involving motorcycle accidents.