

SUBJECT: Justin True Triathlon

In May 2022, in honor of Mental Health Awareness Month, athlete Justin True will aim to raise \$15MM by undertaking the longest triathlon in U.S. history: The True Triathlon. A ~3,686 miles physical and spiritual journey, Justin will swim 86 miles from the Bahamas to Miami, bike 3,000 miles from there to San Diego, and run 600 miles up the coast of California, finishing the triathlon by crossing the Golden Gate Bridge. His goal in completing the triathlon is simple and powerful: to break the stigma surrounding mental health and to show others the undeniable power of speaking their truth.

The True Triathlon will serve as both a platform for discussing mental health and a fundraising catalyst. As he undertakes each leg, well-known athletes, actors, musicians and thought leaders will join Justin for segments, creating space to share their own stories as part of a feature length documentary and Speak Your Truth social campaign.

The pandemic has left a mental health crisis of staggering proportions in its wake. Isolation, financial, physical and mental stress, loss, and battling long-haul COVID symptoms have led to spikes in depression across age groups, genders, and socio-economic brackets. The True Triathlon is Justin's first endeavor to bring together the power and resources of individuals and business to support the organizations who are battling this crisis head on.

Justin's life - and his calling to help others - is defined by his own journey to overcome his mental health struggles. Pushing himself to superhuman feats - tandem biking 200 miles around Cascade mountains; completing an Olympic Triathlon while carrying a 90-lb concrete Thor hammer on his back; pulling a small half ton truck the distance of a marathon - has allowed him to raise awareness and over \$20,000 for others who are suffering around the world. The True Triathlon is his most ambitious physical and philanthropic undertaking thus far.

"The triathlon is such a perfect metaphor for what I'm trying to convey," he says. "Swimming in the ocean symbolizes life's waves - sometimes you can't tell up from down, but eventually you're going to hit a clear spot and if not at some point the rough part's going to end. Then the bike's going to start - the whole thing might suck, but the run's there next. When you're struggling with depression, the next day might suck, the next week might suck, but eventually you're going to hit a spot that's so cool. The struggle will always be worth it."

Growing up in an emotionally abusive household, Justin witnessed the many ways in which toxic masculinity and depression can go hand in hand. Emotional and psychological abuse at the hands of their father led Justin's brother to become a drug addict as a teenager. He OD'd multiple times before the age of 18 as he struggled with addiction.

Then, in 2009, the unthinkable happened. Justin's mother, who had suffered years of emotional and psychological abuse at the hands of Justin's father, was stabbed nearly to death by an unhinged ex-boyfriend while working a shift at Safeway. She miraculously survived, but the compounded impact of years of trauma took Justin into the darkest season of his life.

Having nearly lost both his mother and his brother, Justin began to suffer from his own mental health struggles. At age 19, he attempted to take his life - twice - using pills. Surviving the second attempt fundamentally shifted Justin's outlook. It was, in his words, a moment in his life he's grateful for and that made him who he is today. He emerged wanting to turn his life around, and to help others who are suffering without hope.

"What I want to show people is that you can be strong and vulnerable at the same time. I'm very open about my struggles now, but I kept them bottled up inside for a really long time. I nearly lost my life because of it. It's important to show, especially to men who are struggling, that you can be vulnerable. It's ok to talk about it, it's ok to admit that you're not ok. It's an incredibly powerful thing to do."

APPROVED: CHAD COPELAND, STUDIO EXECUTIVE