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This 55-Year-Old Is An Amazing Breakdancer Who Learned How To Do It At Goldman In The 80s

Julia La Roche Jan 16, 2014, 9:37 AM EST



Steve Graham—a 55-year-old private equity exec who runs Philadelphia-area [Graham Partners](#)—has some serious breakdancing moves that would make most twenty-somethings envious.



Business Insider/ YouTube

In the breaking world, he's known as "B-boy Silverback." In the 80s, people called him "Vanilla Shake" (that was before "Vanilla Ice" came along).

Graham got his start in the breaking scene while working as an analyst at Goldman Sachs during the early 1980s.

Back then, he used to go to legendary Chelsea club, The Roxy.

"I asked a guy to show me a move. And then I was like, 'I can do this,'" said Graham, who was a three-sport athlete (track, tennis and skiing) at Williams College.

After that, he started going out to a community center in the South Bronx late at night for breaking.

"When you work at Goldman so late you can take a cab anywhere, so I literally took it to the South Bronx and trained at this place with guys who were sort of famous breakers back in the day. I learned some moves from them."

He also started breaking during lunch at Goldman. His colleagues loved it.



YouTube/ Business Insider

Once Graham had learned enough moves, he started challenging the Manhattan "street hitters"—people who break for money on the sidewalk—to breaking battles.

"You know, 'Hey, I want to battle you.' They thought it was hilarious because I was this white preppy dude breaking. I had enough moves and I was athletic enough that they loved it. They started putting me in their act," Graham said.

Graham said he would show up wearing glasses, a tie and carrying an HP-12C calculator in his pocket. He explained that the hitters would grab him by the tie from out of the crowd.

"When they'd pull me out of the crowd it would literally flip everyone from Oklahoma out," he said.



Via Graham Partners

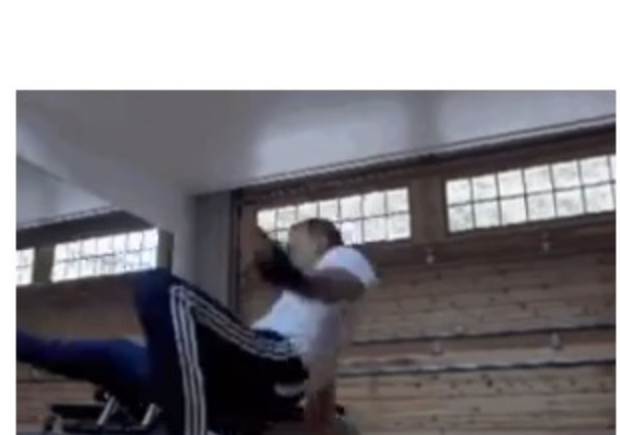
Graham would then fold his glasses, take off his jacket, put down his calculator and walk straight up to the hitters and bust an air swipe for his entry move. (You can check one out in the video below.)

People didn't know what was going on, he said, but they loved it.

Following his stint at Goldman, he went to business school at Dartmouth. There, he taught a bunch of his classmates how to break. For years after that, he would occasionally break out his moves at parties, but he stopped training.

Just a couple of years ago, though, he enrolled his two youngest sons—now ages five and eight—into breaking with some coaches in Philadelphia. That's when he picked it up again.

Now he even teaches a bunch of his summer interns how to break in addition to learning more common Wall Street skills, like financial modeling.



YouTube/ Business Insider

He explained that about half of his interns are college athletes. During the summer, they live on his farm and they learn to break. They also enter into breaking events.

Graham is also very connected to breaking scenes in Philadelphia, New York, Chicago and the West Coast — he even knows breakers overseas in Europe.

He sponsors highlight videos, events and competitions for breakers, and spends time helping out fellow breakers with anything from education to legal issues.

Graham recently created a [non-profit UDEF \(Urban Dance & Educational Foundation\)](#). So far, the [Facebook page](#) has more than 50,000 "likes". UDEF's first initiative is The Pro Breaking Tour with a board comprised of breakers and promoters. In some respects, the tour is modeled after the ATP tennis tour, PGA golf tour, NASCAR and other pro sports.

Part of the charitable mandate will be the educational initiative, he explained. The proceeds will go to UDEF to support young breakers teaching and helping people.

Now check out Graham breaking:



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