

## [Transcript] Sky Sports F1 Podcast / The greatest driver to have never won a World Championship? Villeneuve Pironi: Racing's Untold Tragedy

Hello everyone, today we've got something a little different for you, available from this Saturday directly after qualifying on Sky Sports F1. We're going to be showing you a brand new documentary, Villeneuve Pironi Racing's Untold Tragedy. Now you may well know their names, Gilles Villeneuve and Didier Pironi, but you might not know this astonishing true story of two exceptionally gifted drivers who were torn apart by a historic and controversial moment in Formula One. And to tell you a little bit more about the film, here is David Croft, Karine Chandoch and Damon Hill. Enjoy.

Well here we are in the paddock in Saudi Arabia, few days since we saw the film, Damon and Karine, and other than Cham getting the sweets and the popcorn in, what was the highlight for you? Because I love the film and I could go on about this all night.

Yeah, it feels strange talking about the highlights because it is actually a tragedy, it's actually built as a tragic story and sadly both those drivers are no longer with us and of course Gilles' accident was, he is a driver, was a legendary driver, that's the start point is, you know, his pizzazz and the way he drove and his lack of fear and he was mad fast and all that stuff. And then he came into relationship in the team with Ferrari, with Didier Pironi and it's the story of how that friendship that Bonny had got badly broken and ultimately may have been a part of the energy that went into Gilles' accident. So yeah, I thought it was, it told the story very well and very sensitively with both the widows of both drivers and the kids who went on, in Jack's case, obviously went on to become world champion. I don't feel bad saying highlights, Carune, because although Damon's right, it is a tragic story. The joy, the unbridled joy that both Gilles and Didier got from racing in Formula 1, shone through the whole film for me, right up to the moment of San Marino 1982, where I think the quote was, the innocence kind of went from Gilles Villeneuve that afternoon.

It was a very powerful emotional rollercoaster in many ways, isn't it? Because you know, it's always a bit strange watching those films when we know how it ends, I think. But that journey you go through, particularly, for me at least, it was the first time I heard all of the family actually speaking about the events of 1982 in particular in such detail and Jack himself has always been very closed up about talking about his father and he spoke very eloquently on the subject. I mean, you were teammates and he never spoke to you about it at the time, even, did he? No, it was fascinating listening to what

Jack had to say about his father and admitting that in some senses, occasions, he was frightened of his dad. You know, his dad was a very direct person, a very honest person and all that was well commented on and that came out in the story and also what I thought was interesting was the forgotten man, if you like, Didier Pironi in the story who was a proper title contender and an insight into the politics of Ferrari and all those ingredients that makes Formula One what it is, was actually the value of the story. I think it showed how people have come to terms with what happened and how they've tried to come to terms with the nature of the sport they're in. It's very difficult to talk about a film without giving too many spoilers away and I don't want to do that because I really want every Formula One fan to witness this because it is such a beautifully researched piece of movie making and documentary making but the cast, the characters that they brought into this film from the days at Ferrari that you mentioned, from people who were in and around the paddock at that time really adds such a weight to this. Well, I mean, you know, in 1982, for those who don't

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know the story, that's where these two drivers, their friendship was broken apart, it was completely disintegrated. And actually the reality is they were truly friends despite the fact, you know, Gilles had come from, you know, not a lot of money, you know, sort of middle-class family in Canada, made his way to Europe, racing for Ferrari now, whereas Didier had come from French aristocracy, you know, he'd come from a very wealthy French family. But they found this friendship through motor racing, through their common love of driving and motor racing that you mentioned before and it all unraveled that day in a matter of a few laps in Imola. And what is brilliant about the film is that after that race, you know, there was a meeting between just five people in the room, the two drivers, Marco Piccinini, Mauro Foguerri and Piero Ferrari. And we hear from Foguerri and Piccinini, I think, for the first time talking about that. And then the events that led to Zolder in two weeks' time and then to, you know, Hock and I for Peroni. Yeah, really, really powerful stuff.

For me, the star of the show was Enzo Ferrari's PA. She was magnificent. I forgot her name. Because they were her boys. They were her boys. She said this. She was funny. I mean, she mentioned she was the only woman in a factory of 200 men or something. And she was having a lot of time of her life. But she had some insights, very direct insights, because she knew what Enzo was thinking about the drivers and how it was, you know, not how you'd like it to be.

I have to say as well, guys, it made me love Gilles Villeneuve even more. I'm not sure that was actually possible, but before I actually went into the cinema, but just some of the shots as he sideways through the corner and driving on that edge and beyond it at all times. That's what we want from our racing heroes.

And that's why he was a hero, you know, I think. And in many ways, you know, I think that's the image that people remember of Gilles. Whereas actually I look to the other side of it, which is, you know, Harama 81 Monaco, where he qualified on the front row, Peroni two rows on the back. And those were actually not swashbuckling drives with wheels hanging off. Those were almost Alan Prost's drives where he calculated and managed the car and the tires and one. And I think, you know, there's there's so many sides to this amazing character. And tragically, we didn't get to see if he could have become that world champion that everyone thought he was going to be.

Greatest driver, never to have won a world championship.

It's a big question, isn't it? But he's a few candidates.

Stirling monster. I was going to say, second after Stirling Moss, I'd say.

Okay, second after Stirling Moss. Now, sadly, champ can't bring popcorn round to everyone's house to watch this because, well, he hasn't got that much money or that much time to be fair.

He has set up a business now doing it. I mean, you just put me up perfectly.

Damon delivers. Hilaru. We can have this now. It'll be fantastic. But you can experience this magnificent documentary. And I think the three of us, well, I'm going to give it 10 out of 10.

Yeah, it's a must. If you have any interest in the sport, you have to watch it. It tells

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you the history, where this sport's come from. It shows it in the raw. It's a fascinating and brilliantly made documentary film.

So we got lucky. We got to see it first. You get to see it next. Straight after qualifying, Sky Sports F1 and Sky Documentaries on Saturday evening. And then if you are not available on Saturday to watch it, you can catch it after the race as well on Sunday. Villeneuve Pironi. It is a tragic tale, but it is a magnificent film and you need to watch it.