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## **BIG AIR AT KITTY HAWK reveals how iconic brothers mastered wind and waves on shores of Atlantic**

*Uncovered connection of historic first flight to the dawn of U.S. surfing stoking epic waves of frenzy from the other coast*


(April 1, 2010) A soon-to-be-published history of the Wright Brothers by former National Aviation Hall of Fame director, Ron Kaplan, is already making waves across academic and surfing history circles, as well as in the entertainment industry. Kaplan, who is also founder and CEO of Surf Ohio LLC, has authored **BIG AIR AT KITTY HAWK: The untold story of two brothers from Ohio who conquered sky and surf at turn of the century America.**

Kaplan's spellbinding book is the result of a seemingly offhand remark about the Wright's early role in U.S. surfing made to him by a descendant of the famous Brothers. That conversation propelled Kaplan on a nearly two-year journey into archives and attics ranging from the Carolinas Maritime Guild to the Library of Congress, and to surfing spots from New Smyrna Beach to Hanalei Bay.

Weaving his meticulous research into fascinating character studies, the first-time author enlightens readers to aspects of the Wright Brothers' more personal side with an emphasis on Orville Wright's rarely acknowledged youthful exposure to the ancient sport of waveriding, the mixed reception of his family to his near obsessive fascination with surfing's technique and technology, including board design, and his own recreational yet trailblazing waveriding at both the Outer Banks of North Carolina and on the Great Miami River in Dayton, his passion for the sport tragically cut short upon being hobbled at age 38 by a tragic 1908 aeroplane mishap.

An unexpected tsunami of interest in this previously unexplored side of the famous brothers from scholars and the entertainment world prompted the book's publisher, Kukui Tree Press, to publicly release today more information about **BIG AIR AT KITTY HAWK** (see abridged excerpt on [www.surfohio.com](http://www.surfohio.com)) instead of at the promotion planned originally to launch orders at BookExpo America held in New York next month.

The move comes as result of a "soft announcement" made by Kukui Tree at a gathering of booksellers at the SXSW 2010 media conference in Austin, Texas, which concluded last month. Catching everyone, including Kaplan's literary agency, by surprise, word of **BIG AIR's** epic story at SXSW rapidly spawned a TV documentary deal and a frenzy of interest from feature film studios now jockeying for movie rights.



Quoting from publisher's information shared with merchants at Austin, "BIG AIR AT KITTY HAWK brings into full-color focus a pivotal place and time known to us only through inaccurate press clippings, sketchy journal entries, fading folklore and a handful of grainy sepia tone black and white images. Scouring over a dozen historical archives and conducting countless interviews from coast to coast, the author chronicles the evolution of Orville's introduction to, pursuit of and, ultimately, his unceremonious departure from the world of waveriding. Orville's participation and contributions to American surfing, previously obscured if not ignored through the ages, are longer overshadowed by the larger-than-life achievement of the first powered and controlled flight, made by the Wrights on the sands of Kitty Hawk, mere yards from what would eventually become the mecca of East Coast surfing."

An expanded summary of the book and abridged excerpt will be posted today on the author's website, [www.surfohio.com](http://www.surfohio.com).

Before SXWS had concluded on March 21st, Kaplan's literary agency, Davidman, Hurwitz and Chin, found their Cleveland offices besieged with calls from numerous agents and producers seeking movie and television rights to BIG AIR. Production on a high-definition 3-D documentary is soon to commence with a scheduled launch date of April 1, 2011, but agency founder Sol Davidman, citing contractual obligations, would not confirm names of filmmakers now vigorously vying for rights to translate his client's BIG AIR to the big screen.

Davidman did admit that thus far he and his associates have taken separate meetings with four prominent Hollywood producer/directors and one comedian-actor boasting strong personal ties to aviation and/or the sport of surfing. According to Davidman, "All I can tell you now is that my client and I have signed more NDA's (non-disclosure agreements) than Sarah Palin signing autographs at a Tea Party bikini contest."

Kaplan, a native of Columbus, Ohio, is the former director of the Dayton-based National Aviation Hall of Fame and is the founding director of the Reel Stuff Film Festival of Aviation. He has been a contributing editor and photographer to numerous aviation publications, and served as a consultant to and is seen on several series such as PBS-TV's Legends of Airpower and Discovery's Showdown: Air Combat. Kaplan also appears on the Miramax documentary about Howard Hughes included with The Aviator dual-DVD release. He founded and designed Surf Ohio, a popular line of t-shirts and accessories, while attending Ohio University in 1978, and launched [www.surfohio.com](http://www.surfohio.com) in 2008. Surf Ohio shirts are sold worldwide and have been worn by stars like James Cameron, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Ron Howard, Robert Pollard, and the Beach Boys.

Kaplan is the father of four boys and he and his wife, Jennifer, reside in Kettering, Ohio, with two of them.

BIG AIR AT KITTY HAWK: The untold story of two brothers from Ohio who conquered sky and surf at turn of the century America is scheduled for release on August 19th - Orville's birthday - with a book tour Kaplan will start in Dayton that same day.

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