



Me. Carmen and little Santiago



WOW!



Soaring through the air, I feel as free as a bird



Performing is my life

Warren Brophy, 29, is a daredevil dad who wows the crowds

Ready to launch in front of 60,000 people

I'm a human CANNONBALL!

On the count of three, the crowd gasped as a man shot out of a

cannon and into the sky. 'Wow, that's something I'd like to do,' I told my dad, Warren, then 43.

I was 16 and we were at a circus that was visiting Melbourne.

Dad hailed from one of Australia's longest-running travelling circuses, the Perry Brothers, and I'd grown up performing.

At just 11, I'd done rope spinning and whip cracking.

But the human cannonball enthralled me.

'Cannon is a different beast,' Dad said, wisely.

Not one to shy away from danger, he performed a high-wire motorcycle act.

But he said the cannonball act was one of the most dangerous, with just a handful of people in the world performing it.

And none in Australia. By the time I was 23, I was

doing nerve-crunching motorcycle acts too, but I never forgot the excitement I'd felt watching the human cannonball.

Meeting my partner, Carmen, now 29, who was a trained flamenco dancer, I showed her a YouTube video of a human cannonball.

'I love it!' she said.

Then, in 2016, Carmen and I were planning a new act together. On a whim, I messaged Jennifer, an American human cannonball.

'Oh, I am retiring,' she told me.

She'd done the act for 25 years.

Things snowballed, and soon I was on a plane to Missouri, US, to train with her.

'If you're scared, that's good,' Jennifer said as I eyed up the cannon.

It was the middle of winter and snowing as she fired sandbags out of the cannon to show me the ropes.

'Double check and triple check your landing net,' she warned me.

Then, the cannon was redesigned to fit my height and weight so I'd be able to try it out once it was shipped to Australia.

It weighed about 1.5 tonnes, and at 6m tall looked intimidating.

'It's huge,' Dad said, in awe. Placing a safety net for me to land in 10 metres from the cannon, I started practising.

Climbing inside, in a helmet and full body suit similar to what Formula 1 drivers wear, I waited to be

ASTOLD TO ASTHA GUPTA. PHOTOS SUPPLIED: KEEARA & REECE, ALIS GONZALEZ, SCOTT BELZNER

shot into the air. 'Three, two, one!' Carmen said before hitting the fire button.

The pressure I felt on my body was immense – it's like what astronauts and fighter pilots experience.

I loved it, but it wasn't plain sailing going from zero to 60 km/hour at the snap of a finger. After a bad landing, I hurt my back and spent weeks

recovering. Then I broke my fingers.

Carmen, who was pregnant with our first baby, had to learn the technical side. She had to consider the wind direction and temperature to make sure I hit the net.

'If anything happens, I'll be known as the wife who fired her husband from a cannon,' Carmen joked.

But as the act had been deadly in the past, we didn't take anything for granted. And Dad was there to help.

Then, in February 2018, our incredible son Santiago was born. When we started training again, I was even more conscious of making sure nothing could go wrong.

I was a daredevil dad, but I couldn't afford to have anything bad happen.

Finally, in January 2019, I was ready for my first performance at the

Melbourne Cricket Ground in front of 60,000 people.

My heart raced as I walked out. Carmen kept lifting the cannon higher as I walked to its mouth.

Sitting on it, I winked at her. 'I'll see you in a few minutes, but first I gotta do this,' I mumbled.

crowded erupted.

I'd flown 40m at 70km/h.

We have now been performing our act in Australia over the past year – and I'm the only human cannonball in the country!

Carmen, Santiago and I also travel the world together.

Now almost two, our boy

cheers us on and has even started doing the countdown!

'Three, two, one!' he chirps.

He's heard people call me a daredevil, and sometimes he tries to copy them.

'Daddy daredevil,' he says.

Performing is our life and as long as we can make our audience happy, we'll keep doing bigger and better shows. 🙌

Sliding into the cannon, I took three deep breaths

It was our show tradition. Sliding inside the cannon, I took three deep breaths.

Lowering my head to my chest, I wrapped my arms around myself.

When it went off, I had a second or two to get my bearings as I felt as free a bird soaring through the air.

Then I got ready to land, hitting the net safely as the



I've always been a daredevil

CARMEN, 29, SAYS:
We have a unique job that we both love. I think it's fun firing my hubby out of the cannon. I don't think there's another woman in the world who gets to do that. I enjoy it more than the audience sometimes!