

# THE AMERICAN LAWYER

RUM WARRIORS

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## RUM WARRIOR

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By Arian Campo-Flores

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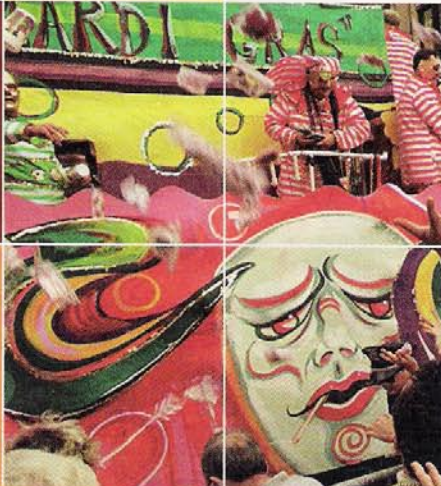
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# The A Team

They're bound together by more than securitization law—or even hard work. Three young associates push the limits of their friendship in adventure racing.

By Karen Hall

ROBERT WATCHED AS his sweat dripped on to the asphalt. Sixty-one, 62, 63. The push-ups and the humidity—it was the first day of a summer heat wave—were starting to get to him. Should he collapse—or just whine? But then all 36 of his fellow trainees would have to start over again. “Damn, this is tough,” Robert thought. Trying hard to keep his rhythm, Robert glanced over his shoulders, at Amber to his right and Alastair to his left. Sixty-six, 67. Amber’s hands and knees were starting to bleed.

They’d been challenged: Quit now, if you’re going to quit. That’s what their instructor, former Navy SEAL John “Jack” Walston, had told them right off the bat. And, sure enough, before the day had even dawned, four trainees had thrown up and dropped out. “Nothing like starting the day with a quitter,” Walston sneered as they fell out.

Five more in the group would be gone before the week was up. Walston didn’t care. He was a man with no sympathy. Once a SEAL (trained to do battle at SEa, in Air, and on Land), always a hardnose. Walston’s regimen called for endless sit-ups, push-ups, windsprints—and a whole lot of noise. He would yell at the trainees, and the trainees would yell back. “Hoo-yah!” they’d holler whenever it got too quiet.

It’s not like they hadn’t asked for it. They had. The dog-eat-dog life of a junior associate, by itself, left them cold. They were a team of young lawyers bound by a de-

sire to discover their limits, at work and at play, and to push beyond them whenever possible. As hard as they worked, they needed something else, something tougher, more real. And they needed to do it together.

They were willing to pay for what they lacked: \$495 for the privilege of being broken by Walston, whose company runs SEAL-style boot camps in New York, Nevada, and Texas. “We are experts in overcoming the impossible,” the company boasted in its advertisements. “What you get is plenty of Push, Sweat and Motivation! At the end of each session you will know you worked. Hard! And, at the end of the course, you will feel like you

can face anything the world has to offer.”

As the workouts wore on, and the first-day wounds began to heal over and scar—Robert and Amber still have the scars on their backs from doing sit-ups—Walston’s mantra began to sink in. It was all about individual achievement: See how it feels to move beyond your comfort zone—and linger there as long as you can. And it was about becoming a team: Finish as friends, and never leave a teammate behind.

For many in the group, learning these time-honored SEAL lessons was an end in itself. But for Amber, Alastair, and Robert, SEAL boot camp was only the cornerstone of a four-month-long

A TEAM MEMBERS (LEFT TO RIGHT) ROBERT LADD, AMBER RAILLEY, AND ALASTAIR ONGLINGSWAN ARE BOUND BY THEIR LOVE FOR ADVENTURE.

