

DEADLINE

Lance Armstrong On Schwinn Bicycles Documentary 'No Hands'

By Stewart Clarke · October 19, 2026

EXCLUSIVE: No Hands: The Wild Ride of the Schwinn Bicycle Company documents the extraordinary tale of the titular bike brand with Lance Armstrong serving as both an interview subject and narrator.

Armstrong tells Deadline about this rags-to-riches-to-bankruptcy tale and how things could have been different for the iconic brand if he had been on board a Schwinn as he raced the Tour de France, in turn creating a boom in the U.S. market for road bicycles.

“It doesn’t have the greatest ending for the family, but it’s an incredible American story,” he says of the feature documentary. “It’s the story of an immigrant. It’s the story of starting from scratch. It’s also the story – and I love thinking about this – of the importance of the bicycle on American culture, and I think sometimes that’s lost on people.”

Unfeared Films founder Daniel Clarke directs the film, which comes from the people behind The Lego Brickumentary, narrated by Jason Bateman, and Loopers: The Caddie’s Long Walk, which was narrated by Bill Murray.

“There are a few brands in the history of whatever that have really owned the category, or, said another way, have named the category,” Armstrong says of Schwinn. And the feature doc duly shows how ingrained in U.S. culture Schwinn became as it got to a point of making over a million bikes a year. “Schwinn equals bike, bike equals Schwinn,” Armstrong said of its glory years.

He got involved in No Hands: The Wild Ride of the Schwinn Bicycle Company via Jim Packer, the Lionsgate exec who is an EP on the documentary, which uses AI to bring historical pictures and sequences to life. Deadline has a first look at the trailer (see below) as the film embarks on a festival run.

No Hands recounts how Ignaz Schwinn traveled from Germany to the U.S. and, in 1895, he and Adolph Arnold launched the iconic bike brand, setting a manufacturing base in Chicago. Different generations will get misty-eyed over various models Schwinn produced, from the humble safety bike to the Sting-Ray, which took its design cues from American muscle cars, to sleek race bikes such as the Paramount.

Armstrong, a veteran of the world's biggest bike races, has his own memories: "I did the [1989] Junior World Champs on a Paramount, and to this day, for whatever reason, I still think that's the best riding bike that I've ever ridden."

The film shows how Schwinn was cutting edge in many ways. The brand leaned into what would now be called influencer marketing, with the likes of Roy Rogers, Frank Sinatra and Joan Crawford seen aboard their bikes. It pioneered having its own stores – nowadays the A-list bike brands have their own concept stores – and it had groundbreaking designs and detailing. Having gotten generations of people onto two wheels, it had huge influence on BMX, mountain biking and cutting-edge design, but did not capitalize on these trends as they changed the face of cycling.

Armstrong's succinct take captures it: "They were innovative until they weren't."

He rode a Trek bicycle in multiple editions of the Tour de France and cycling's other blue ribband events. As U.S. audiences saw their man in the Yellow Jersey, sales at the likes of Trek and Specialized exploded. But Schwinn had been left in their dust, filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in 1992. The Schwinn brand continued under new ownership after the bankruptcy and the No Hands filmmakers said they have no relationship with the current Schwinn Bicycle Company.

"There's a world where, somehow, they had agreed to offshore production, or got into the carbon game, and if they had done that in those early years...if that was a Schwinn instead of a Trek [I was riding], we would 100% be having a very different conversation," Armstrong says.

Sadly for Schwinn, that was not the case, but the rise and fall story takes in how a family business became a cultural icon. No Hands: The Wild Ride of the Schwinn Bicycle Company opens with scenes from film and TV that reference Schwinn, underlining how it became shorthand for cycling.

Director Clarke says his film "is the love letter to Schwinn that generations of kids deserve." He adds: "The documentary feature explores Schwinn's storied history, from the iconic Sting-Ray to its widespread influence in the worlds of BMX and mountain biking.

"Through the accounts of fans, collectors, cycling pioneers and the Schwinn family themselves, No Hands tells the story of a brand that changed cycling forever and survived through the struggles of American manufacturing, family drama, fads and business forces that ultimately led to its bankruptcy."

Armstrong was keen to get involved. "I watch probably an unhealthy amount of documentaries, so there's just my general interest in the category, and then obviously I had a

touchpoint here, I have a lot of history with this brand.”

Having been the subject of numerous docs, this was new for Armstrong in that here, he is narrating and being interviewed, and the doc isn’t focused on him.

“I thought it was a fun thing to try. You hope the audience appreciates it. I think the film is great. I enjoyed the hell out of being a little bit involved in the process, obviously sitting for the interview, but then just getting in the studio and recording the narration.”

While No Hands is a family story, a business story, a sports story and a story about moments in history, ultimately, it taps into the simple and timeless joy of riding bicycles, with which Schwinn is synonymous. The simple premise is: you never forget your first bike.

In the film, Armstrong talks about the excitement and freedom that a first bike can bring. Decades later, the fire lit by his first steed, a brown Schwinn Mag Scrambler, still burns bright.

“It’s not lost on anybody, my history with the bicycle, with the sport, with all of the races, with the Tour, all of the things associated with it,” he says.

“Still to this day, at 55 years old, if I can wake up and go for a bike ride ... and it borders on sounding a little corny, but when I talk about how that makes me feel, how that is still an escape for me, in many ways, it is like church.”

No Hands comes from Tiburon Productions and Gem Pictures in association with Brookwell McNamara Entertainment and KSQD Media, and is produced by Human Design. Packer is an EP alongside Chris Brown, David Brookwell, Carl Cramer, Khristian A. Howell and George K. Howell.