The Great Throwdini is a world-champion knife-throwing minister from Freeport, New York, who takes the world of “impalement arts” to the extreme with his death-defying Maximum Risk act.

When and why did you become a knife thrower?
"My real name is the Rev. Dr. David Adamovich and for 18 years I was a professor of exercise physiology. When I was 50, I opened a pool hall and one of my customers brought in a small throwing knife. I threw it into a tree outside and struck it perfectly. Nine months later I came second in the world knife-throwing championship."

What is Maximum Risk?
"I'm one of the world's best in competition throwing, and I've converted that skill into a stage act called Maximum Risk. The name is a line from the French movie 'Girl on the Bridge,' about a knife thrower who persuades suicidal girls to be his assistants."

Do you just throw knives at your assistants?
"I throw knives, tomahawks, axes, and machetes—but I never throw 'at.' I throw 'around!' My assistant stands in front of a board, or is strapped on to the Wheel of Death while I throw two knives per revolution, one on each side of her. I also catch knives mid-air, and throw both right- and left-handed, blindfolded, and with my back to the board. I don't know why they call it 'impalement arts' because the last thing we want to do is impale our assistants."

How fast can you throw?
"Throwing a single knife at a time, I can throw 75 in one minute. Throwing three knives at a time, my personal best is 144 knives around my partner in one minute."

Do you have any special techniques?
"I video what I do and watch it back—I study my hands very carefully. When I throw blind, I use sound to judge where to throw. My assistant sets me up facing the board, and I know exactly where she's standing."

Have you ever injured yourself or an assistant?
"I once had to stop because I stuck myself with the point of a knife and started bleeding from my fingers. Knives have bounced from the Wheel of Death and scraped the girl, but I've never impaled a girl."

Is it difficult to find willing assistants?
"Very! I don't just want a girl to stand there as my target—it's about the way she flirts with me and the audience, while facing danger."

Do you come from a performing family?
"Through my high school years I was a gymnast. I competed in the junior Olympics. One of my daughters is a surgeon who is very good with a knife in a different way! My wife Barbara was a knife thrower herself but retired—she has no wish to be my assistant."