

A photograph of Chris Jericho, a professional wrestler, with long blonde hair, wearing a black button-down shirt and a gold chain with a cross pendant. He is smiling and gesturing with both hands open, palms facing forward. The background is a bright, out-of-focus outdoor setting.

**PILEDRIVER ONLINE**

**Edition One**

**Chris Jericho**

**Kendo Nagasaki**

**Tributes to Bam Bam Bigelow, Bad News Brown and Mike Awesome**

**News, reviews and Interviews**

# **The Piledriver Point**

**By Steve Ashfield**

**Twoshedsreview.com Writer of the Year 2006**

Welcome to the first ever edition of Piledriver Online. Some of you will already be familiar with this publication as it has previously been available at shows and on subscription but now it has a new home on the internet in full colour and I sincerely hope you all enjoy this debut edition.

So what's different about Piledriver Online? Well, using this format one main difference is that the information here when it's put online is more up to date than if we were like other mags that unavoidably have to go to the printers a couple of weeks before getting in the shops. We also have more pages and give plenty of coverage to UK wrestling, have more news coverage, more interviews and a look back at the history of professional wrestling home and abroad. Oh and of course it's free to read! We will soon be launching Piledriver Plus and that will give you more news, competitions and features that will not appear in the main magazine all for just ten pounds a year (current subscribers need not apply). More about that at [www.piledriver-online.co.uk](http://www.piledriver-online.co.uk) soon, oh and don't forget to join our forums and if you're interested in advertising with us at incredibly cheap rates and in full colour just go to our website for more details.

We're just weeks away from Wrestlemania now and the card is gradually taking shape, in fact the two main title matches were confirmed even before 'No Way Out' took place on February 18th which isn't always the case as that PPV usually has a match to determine who gets a title shot at Wrestlemania and it's not that long ago since the WWE title even changed hands at that PPV when Eddie Guerrero beat Brock Lesnar. So we already know that at Wrestlemania 23 it's going to be John Cena defending his WWE Title against Shawn Michaels and Batista putting his World Heavyweight Title on the line against The Undertaker. Two face v face matches are pretty uncommon two and there's no real signs of any heel turns just yet, then again Vince Russo isn't doing the booking anymore is he? Both matches have real potential despite the limitations of both champions.

To be honest after the rave reports that the clash between Undi and HBK got in the concluding moments of the Royal Rumble, it's a shame that a match between the two veterans couldn't be manufactured somehow. Will The Undertaker keep his unbeaten record at Wrestlemania? Is Shawn Michaels preparing for another WWE Title reign and why can't heels such as Orton or Edge force their way into the title picture on the biggest card of them all? We'll have a comprehensive preview of Wrestlemania 23 and the WWE Hall of Fame in our next edition due out in the week beginning March 26th

The rest of the card certainly has scope for a few trips to the toilet or kitchen (I always have to keep eating to stay awake!). The prospect of Kane v The Great Khali and Melina v Ashley doesn't exactly guarantee that huge buy-rate that Vince expects this time of the year. However, the feud with Donald Trump is getting Vince McMahon a lot of publicity and should attract fans to see just who's going to get their head shaved (or as they call it these days, 'having a Britney'). I imagine Mr McMahon has already purchased a few terrible wigs for his appearances on WWE TV in April.

Well, that's all for me for the moment. I really do want some feedback on Piledriver Online, so either email me, call me or just join our forum. We'll be back in a few weeks time, details of content in Edition two will appear on the website throughout the month.

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# DVD Reviews and News

## RQW—Rebirth



One of the best venues in London isn't actually anywhere near being the largest. Venues such as the Royal Albert Hall and Wembley Arena may hold many memories but it's the York Hall in Bethnal Green that fans adore especially if they're into wrestling and boxing. Sadly for a few years wrestling was absent from the York Hall but in November 2006 it returned as RQW began their monthly shows televised for TWC Fight!

To win a tournament you have to be in it and for one of Martin Stone and Doug Williams, that wasn't going to be the case as they headlined 'Rebirth' in a qualifying match for the tournament held the following month to determine a new RQW Heavyweight Champion. With these two great wrestlers in the ring a high quality match was virtually guaranteed and that's exactly what happened as Martin Stone began his trip along the road that would eventually see him crowned RQW British Heavyweight Champion.

Wrestlers from promotions all over the UK and Ireland appeared on this card and there was definitely something for everyone. Fans of high flying action weren't disappointed as Jonny Storm took on Pac and Bingo Ballance from IWW. Those looking for a few laughs were totally satisfied with the match between Darren Burrige and the insane Mad Man Manson complete with the craziest 1PW Dance Off you'll ever see. 'Jezebel' Eden Black was up against Canadian star Portia Perez in a successful defence of her RQW Women's Title and the ongoing feud with Jetta continued. More technical wizardry as Hammerlock's Jon Ryan took on James Tighe for the first time.

Drew Galloway drew tons of heat as he defended his IWW World Title against Jody Fleisch and more cruiserweight action followed as 'The Heretic' Red Vinny beat Bubblegum, Marty Scurll and JP Monroe in an elimination match setting up the Bubblegum v Vinny Cruiserweight title match and a guest IPW:UK match saw The Dragon Hearts defend their tag titles against Maximum Head.

Tons of matches, some of the best British wrestlers around, this was a great nights entertainment and you really need to get your hands on this DVD. Go to [www.realqualitywrestling.com](http://www.realqualitywrestling.com) for more details.

## El Ligero: Rare and Unseen plus Live and Loco



If it's hot UK Lucha action that you're looking for then look no further than these two DVD releases from the Mexican sensation El Ligero who seems to be wrestling all over the UK these days.

Rare and Unseen features seven matches that took place between 2004 and 2006 topped by a battle of the masked wrestlers as Ligero took on the current PWG World Champion El Generico on TAP's March Madness card held in 2005. This is such a hectic match both wrestlers needed a few seconds sitting on the front row to get their breaths back.

Other highlights on this DVD are a match against long time rival Rob Hunter, a 4-way dance, a great match against Bubblegum and a triple threat against Scotty Hexx and Raze in NBW.

Live and Loco is action all the way and includes a Last Man Standing match against Rob Hunter as their year long feud came to a violent climax. The BHW title tournament is included as El Ligero tries to get the advantage over both Hunter and Stixx and there's a brutal no holds barred match with JC Thunder that goes all over the arena. Count the crowd in the OPWO match, there's a great match against Spud and a tag match sees Ligero with Hunter up against Project Ego for GPW.

For more details go to [www.ligero.co.uk](http://www.ligero.co.uk)



# Past, Present and Future: Real Quality Wrestling

## Interview with Len Davies

*Each month in Piledriver Online we'll be taking a close look at a wrestling promotion. This month we interview Len Davies, owner of RQW (Real Quality Wrestling) in what I'm sure you'll agree is a fascinating chat that took place at the York Hall in Bethnal Green towards the end of last year.*

### When did you first become interested in professional wrestling?

Basically from the very start for me as far as I can remember. I've got a funny story about how I got into wrestling. I was eight years old, I went to Hastings for a holiday and I was with my mother, she's coming here tonight, she's 80 years-old. She was standing on her chair beside me when the Royal brothers were doing their thing and somebody was doing something particularly nasty and she was screaming at the top of her voice 'Leave him alone you bastard!' But I suddenly thought at that point, where did that passion come from? To make her stand on a chair and scream at someone. From eight years of age I was turned onto it, that was a long time ago, 1962.



(c) Sarah Barracough - www.britishwrestlingpictures.com

### What's your background?

I've always been a creative person pretty much that's where I come from more than anything, musically, video wise, creatively it's my thing. I'm just a natural exhibitionist who likes to be on stage basically. I've been in bands in my time, did some acting, done a bit on telly. Only in the last couple of years when I started to get to know some wrestlers because I went abroad, I went to Germany for seven years so I was out of the British culture altogether and I was fully engrossed in the WWE side of things because the German scene is quite heavy.

So I came back in 1996 and I was working in TV for a while. Funny enough my interest in British wrestling back then, I didn't really think about it all that much because I didn't really realise that British wrestling was still ongoing. It was taken off the TV a year before I went to Germany.

I became slowly aware of Hammerlock and the FWA and about five years ago I started doing DVD authoring for Delta. A couple years ago I started making contact with some of the guys, accidentally more than anything, one thing led to another and then I started promoting myself.

Basically my first contact with a means of getting involved was a year last April, that was with RBW and I went to their show in Chingford and I thought basically these guys need help. So basically, I gave assistance to them and filmed a couple of their shows and released them on DVD which was ok for a first show, nothing major. The wrestling was OK, nothing world class. Then I met Phil Powers, we became partners and to be perfectly honest, RQW at that time was running, it was his thing but the name was never used, the name was never employed. The name never really go to stand for anything so I thought to do something with it we needed to make it worth something. The name itself is too good to throw away. It means something.

"Basically as far as I'm concerned every promotion that comes on board gets to share what we've got. I mean it's in my interest and Spectrum Multimedia's to let my kit go to another promotion providing it's a good venue that looks good and enhances the image of British wrestling rather than a little church hall in Chingford. For example, Broxbourne Civic Hall is a great venue and the last show that IPW:UK did, that was filmed there and it looks really good, the lighting helps it, the presentation helps it and yes it looks like a presentation. The thing is York Hall for me, there's so much history here and I was so gutted when it wasn't held here anymore. So it's a gamble, the big thing is I've got some people slate me for this and I don't know why but I'm not in it to make money with the tickets. I'm here to make good TV which we can sell worldwide, that's where the income comes. But everybody wins."

Production values really are important to Len Davies and he recalled the problems Ricky Knight's WAW had with their Fightmare show. "Why did he have problems with that? I know how much it would cost to film Fightmare 2. I've already made Ricky an offer and if he wants us there, we're more than happy to come on board. It'll still be in his hands, it's not in my hands. Sky took it out of his hands to edit it as far as I understand. That being the case he was totally put out of the loop and that's the biggest part of it."

I could be a right pain when I was a kid and can still remember playing cricket in the park and going many years without being given out LBW simply because I owned the equipment. Isn't there a danger as apparently nearly happened up in Doncaster recently, that as Len owns the equipment he could easily take it away just as easily as he gives it?

"There is that possibility. The only answer I can give is that I'd like to think I'm above that anyway and at the moment, there are characters in the wrestling industry who I don't normally agree with. If that situation ever happened it would have to be something really extreme."

So onto the RQW Seal of Approval which certainly got the forums talking when details were given out on the RQW site towards the end of last year. Their website states: "RQW is the new national seal of UK wrestling approval that is currently being used or in the process of being used by every Real Quality wrestling company in the UK. By April 2007 all good UK wrestling companies will carry the seal on their company posters, websites and other promotional aids. The aim is to give UK wrestling fans a clear guide as to what is good and what is not so good in the world of British professional wrestling." Len now explains a bit more about what RQW are trying to achieve.

"It's not a case of us turning around and saying this promotion is better than this promotion. It's a bit like advertising, a form of protection. There was a case recently of a thirteen year-old trying to run shows. Bless him if he's got the money together and got the wrestlers. But the wrestlers weren't covered, there'd be no insurance guaranteed. At that age you haven't even got the guarantee he was going to get the money and pay them so he could have been stringing them a line straight off. Certainly there's no guarantee of safety for the public. I don't think there was public liability insurance."



**Davey Richards in his recent match for RQW against Jody Fleisch**

That's definitely a problem that's prevalent in British wrestling at the moment, there does seem to be a heck of a lot of new promotions springing up all the time and fans, particularly new ones, don't really know which are in the hands of experienced promoters and those that aren't, the seal of approval can help ease that situation as Len explains.

"Hopefully what we're trying to do is, it's just if you've seen the seal, you'll know that some of the bigwigs in the industry are involved somewhere down the line and that is basically it. Put two posters side by side, backyard wrestling and RQW, both costing a tenner to get in and you'll turn round and say where is my ten pounds going to be better spent? Where am I going to get more entertainment?"

The day I interviewed Len, RQW held an eight-man tournament to crown a new RQW British Heavyweight Title. Robbie Brookside had vacated the title, results from the tournament are given below

**Qualifier held at 'Rebirth'**

Martin Stone beat Doug Williams

**Quarter Finals**

Pac beat Ashley Reed  
Drew Galloway beat El Ligero  
Martin Stone beat Iceman  
Aviv Maayan beat Jody Fleisch

**Semi-Finals**

Pac beat Drew Galloway  
Martin Stone beat Aviv Maayan

### Final

Martin Stone beat Pac

The title which can be defended by him on any card for any promotion and also earns Stone a place in the King of Europe Cup representing RQW. I remember Doug Williams winning a similar tournament a few years ago for what was described as a Unified title, I asked Len more about the title and how important a standing it can have in British wrestling. "It just makes it a unified championship. He can pretty much choose who he wants to represent, who he wants to go with. If he decides he wants to defend it in an IWW ring or an FWA ring or whatever that's entirely up to them. It's not meant to be more important than anything else, it's just meant to be a symbol of the people who are coming here tonight, whichever promotion they represent."



Being described in that manner, it does remind me of the NWA Heavyweight title back in the days of the territories when the belt was defended all over the States. "Calling it more important than any of the other titles is belittling other titles and that's totally wrong because there are some incredibly capable champions out there and I would love to see these incredible capable champions face whoever the new RQW champion is. Whether it'll start a new thread of history I've no idea where this is going I really don't.

It's like Jezebel (right), in all fairness, she's stepped up to the limelight and is doing really well. A few people have called her the British Women's champion but again as proud as we are to think that, it's not what it's all about. If somebody officially comes out and states that we will now say this is the official British Women's Championship but that's certainly not what we're trying to do. That's because it is a symbol of co-operation.

RQW now have a regular programme on TWC Fight! and monthly shows at the York Hall in Bethnal Green but what does the future hold for the promotion and indeed British wrestling in general?



"Since 'Rebirth' in November I've had one interesting contact from a non-satellite based broadcaster, I can't say how far that's going to go, yet I have more meetings. If that happens, which is what we're all looking for, if that happens it's going to have a major impact on the way it's going to go. We have characters in British wrestling and JP Monroe, Jezebel, The Heretic, Mad Man Manson, Aviv Maayan, Martin Stone, these are world class athletes, they can face off with anyone the world wants to throw at them and in March we are holding 'Taking on the World.'

"I see Britain standing up for itself again, at the moment we're in the shadow of WWE, TNA and ROH. There's room for all those companies to come to Britain and do what they want to do but there's also room for the Brits to stand equally with them and say yes we can sell out the NEC in Birmingham. I really think we can, if we can get Channel 4, Five or whoever to come on board then we can do live PPV's, we can talk about all that stuff. If I'm doing this off my own back, imagine what we can with four or five of us? If I've got any say in the matter that'll be happening in the next few months."

RQW recently put out a press release applying for new staff to help them expand in the months to come, the future of RQW looks bright, we'll have more news about them in future editions and in this month's Piledriver News Centre.

Coming soon to Piledriver Online

Tributes to:

Giant Haystacks

Interview with The Amazing Kung Fu

And lots more

## Interview with Martin Stone

It's been a great few months Martin Stone that's for sure and 2007 promises to be even better. 2006 ended with him winning the RQW British Heavyweight Title at the York Hall in Bethnal Green and already this year he's had the honour of facing The Great Muta and winning matches in IPW:UK as he prepares for the Final Frontiers showdown against FWA on March 25th. I managed to catch a few words with Martin prior to his match against The Great Muta in January, so time to look back at his career and his hopes for the future.

**So how did you feel when you found out you were going to be wrestling The Great Muta?**

Wow, one of the biggest matches in my career

**With your wanting to go to Japan in the future, this is a great opportunity for you, does that put pressure on you?**

Fingers crossed, no not at all. All I can do is just go in there. Wrestling is a learning experience anyway, so I'll gain so much out of this match.



(c) Sarah Barraclough - [www.britishwrestlingpictures.com](http://www.britishwrestlingpictures.com)

**You did some MMA before becoming a pro wrestler**

Very, very briefly. I had a couple of fights, didn't like it and got out.

**What didn't you like about it?**

Punches, kicks to the head, didn't want it.

**You trained at Dropkixx, what was that like?**

Awesome, you don't really get a better training than with the Scarlo's.

**What is it about them that's so special?**

The realism of wrestling. They teach you that you have to make everything as real as possible and not everybody does that, but that was one of their main things.

**Not just a case of learning the moves but ring psychology too.**

Ring psychology, you only really pick up when you wrestle.

**So what was your debut like in ASW?**

First match in ASW, hey just put me in there. I was really inexperienced, I did it, couldn't say no. It was pretty ropy but I couldn't say no to it.

**How did your career progress from then on?**

I must have spent three to four months working for Dixon, working tag matches and Rumbles.

**When was the moment when everything seemed to click?**

I went to the States and trained with Dave Taylor and Steve Regal, that's when it really clicked into place.

**How did that come about?**

I just emailed Dave and managed to go over there, it was great, wicked.

**How different was that training from what you had with Dropkixx?**

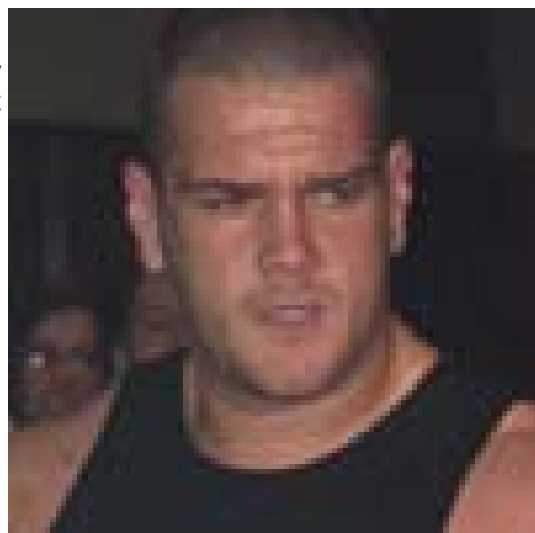
Dave is a former Heavyweight Champion of Great Britain and been up and down the country like Dave Finlay. He gave me the chance to learn about how to slow the match right down, heavy hitting and make stuff look really real.

**Might those links help you next time WWE are looking for new wrestlers?**

Can't really say, might do.

**You've had several hardcore matches against Iceman, what have they been like?**

I'm not really a hardcore wrestler. If you see any of my hardcore matches I'm not really that hardcore. I don't mind





hard hitting but that barbed wire isn't my thing. I'm a wrestler through and through.

**But you do have a cricket bat, how did that come about?**

Well, I wanted something British. I was a heel at the time and working for IPW:UK and wanted something similar to Finlay's Shillelagh or Triple H's sledgehammer. I'm a British wrestler so a cricket bat, you can't really get more British than that can you?

**You can't really use a football can you?**

No

**Your time wrestling for RQW has been really successful and it was really emotional for you after you won the RQW Title.**



It was really emotional for me. All that hard work had paid off. When anyone puts a title on you it shows they trust you to carry the promotion on your shoulders.

**It's a title you can defend in other companies**

It's a huge, huge opportunity.

**How do you see the state of British wrestling after the problems with 1PW recently?**

It's one of those things. There's so many TNA guys and as TNA gets bigger their wages are going to go up and up. It did give a lot of British guys a chance to shine and work against people like Samoa Joe.

**You've wrestled Samoa Joe, what was that like?**

I'd worked with him before when he came over, he's just massive. But the loss of 1PW means British wrestling is shrinking.

**Aside from that how do you see the state of British wrestling?**

It's got its good and bad things. Some are fantastic, make it look really strong. It's sad when people go along to less quality shows and haven't seen British wrestling before and that's their first look at it and it's not good. They see 15 year-old kids who ain't got a clue what they're doing, it's not their fault, just promoters trying to make money, it's not their fault at all. It's just one of those things that's a shame as for some people it's their first impression of British wrestling.

**More news about upcoming Martin Stone matches in the Piledriver News Centre**

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**Pictures currently cost £3 for a 6" x 4" print, and £5 for a A4 print which includes delivery.**

**If you want to collect pictures from a show which we will be in attendance, the price is £2.50 for a 6" x 4" print and £4.50 for a A4 print.**

**If you wish to select this option, please check the calendar first to check if the pictures will be able to be collected, and please inform us of this fact so your order will be ready for you.**

**More info at [www.britishwrestlingpictures.com](http://www.britishwrestlingpictures.com)**

## In Conversation with... ROH Star Davey Richards

*After appearances in the UK last year for PWG and ROH, Davey Richards returned to our shores in January to wrestle for RQW and 3CW. It's been a great couple of years for Davey and 2007 promises to be a hectic one as he faces Samoa Joe in ROH this month and then returns to the UK for the ROH tour and representing in the King of Europe Cup. I caught up with him prior to his match against Jody Fleisch at the York Hall.*

### **So how was the flight over to England?**

Good, actually the plane to England was empty so I was laid out and had the place to myself for six hours.

### **So when did you first get into pro wrestling?**

I did shoot fighting for a little bit and then I got hurt. At one of the fights that I was at, there was a promoter, who ironically never ran a show, said 'you should get into pro wrestling.' I'd watched it as a kid with my grandfather, NWA mainly, I wasn't really interested in WWF at the time because it was cartoony stuff. Then I saw Japanese wrestling and that sparked my interest so that was only about three and a half years ago. Then I went to Atlanta, they told me there was this place, The Power Plant I trained there for a few months before that went out of business then I went home to Seattle and was trained by Tony Kozina in Portland, Oregon, that's how I got my start.

### **At the Power Plant you were trained by Buddy Lee Parker and Paul Orndorff, what was that like?**

It was hard, I think they were kind of bitter because they didn't have a job anymore and I was a small guy and they were used to big guys. I got beaten up, but once they saw that I was going to keep coming, they kind of opened up to me and obviously I can't beat the training of Orndorff. After a while it got better but at first it was really hard.

### **There's the ring psychology to learn as well as the moves**

It was more of us sitting down watching tapes and really focusing and taking notes. As for moves, a lot of it was amateur wrestling they were more focused on that than any moves. I didn't really get to do pro wrestling really until I went down to Oregon.



### **What do you remember of your pro debut?**

I wasn't ready, I got thrown in the ring

### **No one ever seems to be ready when they make their debut**

Me and the guy who was there, we were thrown in. It was a five minute match against a guy called Mr Sexy in Tacoma, Washington. It was a basic easy match, it was fun and I was really nervous going in but after I got out it was 'well it wasn't too bad'.

### **After that how did it go, did it get any easier and were you learning more?**

I learned more and more. The guy who I was working for, the company I started with was IWC in Washington. Lots of the guys there weren't properly trained so it was almost like the blind leading the blind but after I started going to California my career started

### **With the blind leading the blind isn't that really dangerous, you**

### **could have really got injured**

Absolutely. I was the smallest guy there and there were big guys there so as I've said no one was properly trained. A lot of guys did get hurt but I didn't thank God.

### **You had a hip replacement when you were just ten years old**

Yeah, when I was ten, riding bikes. Bikes don't fly so I just landed, it didn't hurt that bad at first and I got up. I think my body went into shock right away. I crashed, I've got to get up, my legs weren't moving and I had to have surgery.

### **At that time you couldn't have imagined you'd be able to have a career in pro wrestling or any other active sport?**

Yeah well, they said you'd probably always have a limp but so far the other leg hurts more. They did a really good job, I had a really good surgeon. so I think that was part of it.

**Isn't there a danger you could re-injure it in a sport like this?**

They said it'd take a lot to break it, it's made of steel.

**When do you feel your career received its big break?**

Definitely going down to LA was a big one. I went there to do something called Pro Wrestling War and they gave me good matches with Super Dragon and Low Ki and stuff. I got to learn too. That got me into Pro Wrestling Guerilla, and if it wasn't for them, I'm saying I've made it at all but I wouldn't even be here where I am right now at all, I owe them everything really. They gave me Samoa Jo, all the tag matches with Dragon, I got to learn. That was definitely my first big break.

**You have a match against Samoa Joe in ROH in March, what's that going to be like?**

Brutal, we'll beat the crap out of each other but I always love working with Joe. I think he's the best wrestler there is right now. It'll be fun, a learning experience.

**What's it like to work in a company like ROH?**

It's great, I really like all the wrestlers there, obviously they're the best. It's fun man, Me and Gabe get on really well, me and Cary get on really well.

**You're often labelled as the hottest prospect and the next big rising star, does that put pressure on you?**

No, because I don't, you know I get asked what my hobbies are outside of wrestling and I don't really have any because wrestling is my hobby. I've wrestled all my life, I did amateur wrestling as a kid. I don't really care if I'm a star, even if I was back in Washington I'd still be doing it because it's fun. You know, I want to go to college and get my degree in history. My goal is to better myself. Some people play football, some play basketball, for me it's always been wrestling so I want to be the best wrestler I can be. So far as what people say it's nice to hear that but I don't put a lot of pressure on myself to be a star and make a lot of money, it's something I enjoy and I get to travel and that's awesome.



**You wrestled in the UK last year for both PWG and ROH, what do you think of the UK scene?**

I think it's awesome. I've always wanted to come to the UK anyway just because I'm into history. I'd like to come here for a couple of months with my wife and hang out and stuff. The show we did in Liverpool was really great, really fun. I've had a lot of fun over here.

**Colt Cabana came over and spent a few months wrestling here.**

I would love to come and wrestle, I'd love to do that.

**What do you think of the quality of British cruiserweights?**

They're great here, Pac is a crazy guy.

**What are your plans for the rest of the year?**

Try and win The King of Europe Cup. I'm hoping that works out and I want to get over here a few more times.

**What are people in the States thinking of the King of Europe show?**

Everything I hear about it at home is really positive. I see it as something really huge, it's a really good concept so I think it'll be really successful. I've had fans in the States say they want to buy tickets to come over and see it, so that's a pretty big deal and I believe it will be a really big success.

**For more information about Davey go to [www.daveyrichards.com](http://www.daveyrichards.com)**

**In the Next Piledriver Online**

**When Andy Kaufman became a wrestler  
The History of Wrestlemania**



# The Piledriver News Centre

## 1PW

Plenty of problems at 1PW recently but Version 2 will debut at 'Resurrection' at the Doncaster Dome on April 6th with the show beginning at 6.30pm. Tickets are priced between £15 and £45 and available from [www.store.1pwnonline.co.uk](http://www.store.1pwnonline.co.uk) or call 01302 370 999.

'Resurrection' is headlined by Ulf Hermann defending his 1PW Heavyweight title against Iceman. Fans can go to [www.1pwnonline.co.uk](http://www.1pwnonline.co.uk) to vote for what kind of match this is



going to be, options are an 'I Quit' match or 'First Blood' The use of barbed wire and light tubes has been banned at the venue. It's also going to be possible to vote for the stipulation on the night of the card. Team SHAG (Cabana/Burridge) have been re-instated as tag champs and defend their belts against Doug Williams and Nigel McGuinness 1PW are now working with Italian company

NWE and this card sees stars such as NEW Champion Romeo Roseli, Heidenreich, Ultimo Dragon and Juventud Guerrera appearing. Guerrera challenges Pac for the Open Weight Championship, Heidenreich meets Mad Man Manson and Roselli defends his NEW title against Sterling James Keenan. Ultimo Dragon takes on El Ligero, Spud meets Jay Phoenix and also due to appear are Mark Sloan, Ollie Burns, Jody Fleisch, Jonny Storm, Kruger and Darkside. More info at [www.1pwnonline.co.uk](http://www.1pwnonline.co.uk)

## Garage Pro Wrestling.

Dirk Feelgood successfully defended his GPW International Heavyweight title when he pinned Heresy at 'Back With a Bang' held at the Monaco Ballroom in Wigan on January 19th. Also on that card, Project Ego beat Jack Blade and Dylan to retain their tag titles.

On February 16th, Dirk Feelgood retained his title against Kenzo Richards, Juggernaut beat Dangerous Damon Leigh to win the GPW British title, WKD won the GPW Tag Team Championship in a Gauntlet Match featuring champs Project Ego, The Holmes Bros and The Mil-Anfield Connection. El Ligero beat Juice, Elroy and Bubblegum and Dom Travis v Heresy ended in a double count out. Their next card is at the Ballroom on March 16th with Leigh deciding whether or not to join SIN. More info at [www.gpwrestling.org.uk](http://www.gpwrestling.org.uk)

## 3CW

After the problems 1PW had with their January card, 3CW

stepped in to hold events at the Doncaster Dome on January 13th. At 'Fight Club' held in the afternoon, Darkside beat El Ligero, The Kraze (Cameron Kraze & Marky B. Kraze) defeated Martin Kirby & Majik, MsChif beat "The Jezebel" Eden Black getting revenge after the defeat on an RQW show the night before. Dragon Aisu beat Dan Evans to retain his 3CW Heavyweight Title and Team Dormanstown neat The New Best Kept Secrets to keep their 3CW tag title. Finally, Pac beat Steve Lynn.

'3CW- Will Not Die' was held in the evening in front of a crowd of 1,200. Stevie Lynn won a six-way elimination Scramble match, Cheerleader Melissa beat Skye, Davey Richards beat El Ligero by submission and The Damned Nation beat Team SHAG-IT and Storm/Fleisch to win the 1PW tag titles (this decision has since been overruled by 1PW). In the RQW tag team title tournament first round, The Untouchables beat Team Dormanstown, Sterling James Keenan and Spud then got a win over The Untouchables, Pac beat Kid Kash in a defence of his 1PW Open Weight Title, a match which saw Kash inexcusably attack a female photographer and Ulf Hermann beat Iceman to win the 1PW Title after Abyss had been stripped of the belt.

At 'Free IV All' in Billingham on January 26th, Darkside won a thirty-man Battle Royal to win a title shot against Dragon Aisu at History in the Maiming on March 23rd, also in Billingham. Also on the card, 'The Celtic Tiger' Blake Norton beat Marky B Kraze to retain his Young Lions title and The New Best Kept Secrets beat Team Dormanstown to keep their tag titles. SUWA beat Darkside and the team of Doug Williams and Dan Evans beat Dragon Aisu and Vincent D.

At Hambletonn Forum in Northallerton on February 23rd Dragon Aisu pinned Dan Evans to retain the 3CW Heavyweight Title, Team Dormanstown beat The Untouchables to keep their tag titles, The Last Ninja pinned El Ligero and Johnny Moss defeated Vincent D.White 'History In The Maiming' takes place on March 23rd in Billingham and the card so far is: Dragon Aisu v Darkside for the Heavyweight Title, Blake Norton defends his Young Lions title against Cameron Kraze, Team Dormanstown put their title belts on the line against The Best Kept Secrets plus Johnny Moss v Doug Williams, a Vegas Street Fight between Vincent D. White and Dan Evans and a Young Lions title eliminator between EdEn, Martin Kirby, The Last Ninja, El Ligero, Marky B. Kraze and one more wrestler yet to be named. More info about future shows at [www.3cw.co.uk](http://www.3cw.co.uk)



### **Insane Championship Wrestling**

Drew Galloway retained the ICW Title at Serious Assault on February 11th when he beat Allan Grogan. Also on the card, The Tenacious Gunn's beat Fight Club in a Falls Count Anywhere match, Darkside beat William Grange and Jay Phoenix beat Lionheart.

Once Upon A Time In Maryhill takes place at the Maryhill Community Centre on May 6th with Allan Grogan taking on Scott Renwick and Jay Phoenix meeting CJ Hunter.

### **FWA: A**

Graduation Day was the final ever FWA Academy show and takes place at the Buckland Community Centre on January 27th. LT Summers beat Mark Sloan to keep the Academy Title, Jamie Brum pinned Wade Fitzgerald, Harry Mills beat Dan James, James Tighe pinned Joel Redman, Raj Ghosh won a 3-way blindfold match against Rishi Ghosh and Max Voltage, Dan Head beat Ollie Burns and the team of Mark Haskins and Tommy Langford beat Doug Williams and Jake McCluskey.

### **FWA**

Jonny Storm won the right to face the FWA British Heavyweight Champion, Robbie Brookside, when he won the Gold Rush after eliminating Andy Boy Simmonz and finally Five Star Flash to earn the title shot at The War in the Shore at Morecambe on April 7th.

Earlier on the card, Brookside successfully defended his title against Darren Burrige wining by two falls to one. Other matches saw Johnny Phere beat El Ligero, The Manchester Massive finally got a win in the FWA when they beat Andy Boy Simmonz and FWA British Flyweight champion Ross Jordan after interference by El Ligero, a loss would have meant the Manchester Massive having to leave the company. Johnny Angel beat Stevie Knight in a 'I Quit' match after Knight was knocked unconscious.

The FWA, captained by Darren Burrige will be defending the Inter-Federation Cup at War on The Shore in Morecambe on April 7th against a WAW team captained by 'Rowdy' Ricky Knight. Confirmed for the FWA is Johnny Phere and The Kraft will be on Team WAW. Also likely to take place is Ross Jordan defending his FWA British Flyweight title against El Ligero and of course the Brookside v Storm title match,

On Saturday March 31 the FWA return to the Sudbury Sports Centre I Suffolk for 'FWA...And Then There Was One!' The title suggesting of course that they'll have wiped out IPW:UK the week before. The main event sees Robbie Brookside defend his FWA British Heavyweight title against an opponent yet to be named and there's also a three-way Falls Count Anywhere match between Jonny Storm, Darren Burrige and Paul Tyrrell. RQW Women's Champion 'The Jezebel' Eden Black meets Jade and Jetta, more about that on page 79.

Tickets are now available to purchase via The Sudbury Sports Centre in Suffolk and are priced at £15 for front row, £10 for adults and £8 for children. For more info go to [www.frontierwrestling.co.uk](http://www.frontierwrestling.co.uk)

### **IPW:UK**

At 'No Escape 2007' held at the Orpington Halls on January 28<sup>th</sup>, Andy Boy Simmonz retained his IPW:UK Heavyweight title beating Tommy DeMorey. Iceman beat Leroy Kincaide to win the All-Engladn Title and Sam Slam retained his under-23 title against Marty Scurll. The IPW:UK v FWA feud continued as Martin Stone beat Jorge Castano and Spud pinned Jonny Storm. In the main event, the team of Pac, Paul Robinson and Batallion (replacing Kid Kash) beat The Untouchables and Darkside.

At 'Battle One' held at The White Oak Leisure Centre in Swanley on February 11th, Andy Boy Simmonz beat Pac to retain his IPW:UK British Title, Aviv Maayan beat Blok Busta, The Kartel beat Maximum Head in a Swanley Street Fight, The Dragon Hearts beat The Untouchables to earn themselves a tag title shot against Swiss Money Holdings at Battle Two on February 18<sup>th</sup> and in the two IPW:UK v FWA matches, Mr IPW Ashley Reed beat 'The Messiah' Brandon Thomas and Martin Stone beat Doug Williams giving IPW:UK a 4-1 lead in matches against the FWA so far this year.

At 'Battle Two' held at the Orpington Halls on February 18th, The two IPW:UK v FWA matches saw Ashley Reed and Brandon Thomas go to a no-contest due to Reed being attacked before the match. Martin Stone made the save and then later in the evening beat James Tighe who then defected to IPW:UK.

FWA owner Greg 'The Truth' Lambert told the fans that Alex Shane's neck injury would need surgery and won't be meeting Martin Stone at Final Frontiers. The evening ended with the IPW:UK roster hoisting Lambert on their shoulders and throwing him out of the fire-exit!

In other results, Dave Morales beat Pac, Maximum Head defeated The Kartel in an Orpington Street Fight, Andy Boy Simmonz and LT Summers beat

JC Thunder and Blok Busta in a match where if Simmonz had been pinned he'd have lost his IPW:UK Title. Jack Storm beat Paul Robinson, and Swiss Money Holdings beat The Dragon Hearts to retain their IPW:UK tag team titles

Final Frontiers will take place at the Broxbourne Civic Hall at the Orpington Halls on March 25th, will IPW:UK be forced out of business on their home territory? Martin Stone now scheduled to meet the biggest name that the FWA can recruit and whoever loses will see their company go out of business. Also on the



card, Andy Boy Simmonz takes on The Duke of Danger, Spud meets Hade Vansen, Iceman defends his FWA All-England title and there's debuts for Dirk Feelgood and FWA referee Steve Lynskey.

Doors open at 6.30pm with the show beginning at 7pm, tickets cost £14 general admission (£8 children), £25 regular ringside, £35 special admission ringside. Family ticket available for £40. Ticket's available in the IPW, FWA and Neutral sections.

The company will now be holding shows in Portsmouth and Havant after the closure of the FWA Academy. Their first card takes place on April 1<sup>st</sup> at the Mountbatten Centre with a tournament to decide who represents the company at the King of Europe Cup in Liverpool on April 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. In the semi-finals James Tighe meets Jonny Storm and Pac takes on Darkside. The show starts at 5.30pm and tickets are £12 for general admission (£6 children), Ringside £15 and a family ticket £30, there's special student tickets for £5.

On April 13<sup>th</sup> they debut at the Hayling Island Community Centre (ticket prices the same as at the April 1<sup>st</sup> show) and on the 1<sup>st</sup> and on the 14<sup>th</sup> they're at the Buckland Community Centre. IPW:UK will also be holding shows on both afternoons of the King of Europe Cup tournament, more about that on page 30. On April 22nd it's Battle Royale at the Orpington Halls and confirmed for the over the top event are Pac, Jack Storm, Dave Moralez, Maximum Head, Mad Man Manson, JP Monroe and Sam Slam. More info at [www.ipwuk.com](http://www.ipwuk.com) where there's also news about how to buy the Martin Stone shoot interview.

## LDN

Jon Richie won the LDN British title from Tex Benedict at 'Hostile Takeover in Ware' on January 27<sup>th</sup>. On the same card, Mike Mendoza drew with Phil Powers in the Spirit League match (more about that in a moment) and Jetta pinned Erin Angel.

The Spirit League will "represent the glory days of British wrestling." That means matches contested under the rounds system, A British legend will be at the event to officially launch the Spirit League and there's the return of the Golden Grappler Tournament that in years gone by has been competed for by stars such as Johnny Kidd and Steve Grey, both still active in the UK wrestling ring It's a ten-man knock-out tournament that is scheduled to take place over 5 shows with the winners then competing in a round-robin league to crown the 2007 Golden Grappler. Competitors include : Steve Grey, Johnny Kidd, 'Goldbelt' Brian Maxine, Mal Sanders, Yorghos and Mikey Mendoza. Matches will be over six three-minute rounds over the best of three falls. Steve Grey will be competing in the first match on the 17<sup>th</sup> against an opponent yet to be named.

Spirit's Golden Grappler tournament launched at Saturday 17th February at the Wosley Hall in Cheshunt. In results from the show, Yorghos beat Kade Callous, Jon Ritchie beat Barry Ryan in two minutes, Mike Mendoza beat Kurrupt in the first Golden Grappler tournament match, Ashe beat

Ricky Hype, Jetta beat Violet Rayne, Jamie James and Riccardo Young beat Mark Sloan and Ollie Burns and Jon Ritchie beat Steve Grey to retain his LDN British Heavyweight Title.

'Heart of Stone II' takes place at the Central Park Leisure Centre in Romford on March 17th. Matches include Jon Ritchie defending his British title against Mike Mendoza, Project Future putting their tag titles on the line against Saint and Sinner, Steve Grey meets Stu Odyssey in the Golden Grapplers Tournament, Ashe v Dominator and Zack Sabre Jr. v Yorghos. The card starts at 7pm and tickets can be booked on 0871 220 0260.

You can see LDN on TWC FIGHT! on Sky Channel 427 every Tuesday 11pm, repeated Saturday 12 noon and Thursdays 5pm

## lwW

Bingo Ballance became the first ever Zero-Gravity Champion was crowned at the Combined Community Centre in Balbriggan, Dublin on January 14<sup>th</sup> beating Pac in the Final. In a tournament that also included Kid Kash, newly crowned RQW cruiserweight champ Bubblegum, El Ligerio and 'The Heretic' Red Vinny, Balance defeated Brother Skelly in the first round and in a 3-way semi-final defeated Bubblegum and Emil Sitoci from wXw. The other semi saw Pac beat Kid Kash and 'The Heretic' Red Vinny.



envisioned him taking the belt to previously unseen heights. "Unfortunately immediately after Drew won the lwW Title Belt his career seemed to take over simultaneously and, coupled with university commitments at home, it led to him being unable to travel to Ireland on a regular basis and defend the title in previously scheduled bouts." A new champion was crowned on January 18<sup>th</sup> at Gym War 18 with Vic Viper beating Mad Man Manson, Kid Kash and The Ballymun Bruiser. Also on that card, Bingo Balance beat Bam Katraz in the first defence of his Zero Gravity title.

The big news is that there's a SuperShow taking place at the Donnycarney Youth Centre on March 18<sup>th</sup> headlined by Steve Corino taking on Mad man Manson in an asylum rules match. Also appearing are Christopher Daniels, Nigel McGuinness, Kid Kash and

Colt Cabana For more information on tickets, email [info@irishwhipwrestling.com](mailto:info@irishwhipwrestling.com) or call (087) 2725106. There's a meet and greet session between 4 and 5pm with tickets costing 10 Euro's.

## **BOBW**

The new Best of British Wrestling training school opened on January 7<sup>th</sup> at the Colchester Arena. Training is taken by Charlie Rage and training costs are £10 per person. For more information call 07931 978 977 or email [bobwrestling@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:bobwrestling@hotmail.co.uk). Sessions are held every Sunday from 9.30am to 2.30pm.



## **All-Star Wrestling**

James Mason made a successful first defence of his ASW British Heavyweight Title when he beat Sheamus O'Shaughnessy at the Bristol Hippodrome.

Dean Allmark has been voted All-Star's Wrestler of the Year winning by just one vote from James Mason and Robbie Brookside. The Newcomer of the year award went to Drew Galloway who pipped Stu Sanders. Match of the year was the four-way British Heavyweight title bout that saw James Mason beat Robbie Brookside, Doug Williams and Drew McDonald to win the vacant title, runner up was a tag match between Flatliner and Justin Starr against the Heartbreak Express. The Telford Four won the Fan of the Year award just beating 'Mad' Eli Collins. There was a presentation at the Telford show on February 2<sup>nd</sup> and Eli also received a special award at the recent Bristol show.

The moment I heard Gangrel had been released by WWE, I could have sworn I heard Brian Dixon calling him to come back to the UK to wrestle for ASW and lo and behold that's exactly what's happening. Gangrel is back in the UK with the company and chasing James Mason's British Title and has a title challenge scheduled for March 31st in Hanley.

Nigel McGuinness is also wrestling for ASW in March and has his eyes set on the British Heavyweight title and gets his chance at the Southampton Guildhall on March 8th, we'll have a full report on that show in our next edition. At The Southampton Guildhall on March 8th as well as the British title match, there's also Miss Italy v Lisa Fury plus Bad Bones, Absolute Andy and Gangrel. At the Charter Hall in Colchester on the 9th, Gangrel takes on Nigel McGuinness and Seamus O'Shaughnessy meets Doug Williams. On the 10th at Middlesbrough Town Hall it's James Mason v Gangrel and on the 12th at the Civic Centre in Aylesbury it's Gangrel v Robbie Brookside and Stu Sanders v Absolute Andy plus Seamus O'Shaughnessy v James Mason.

Robbie Brookside gets a title shot on April 11th at the Pacific Road complex in Birkenhead. Also making their

debut for the company are Donna Taylor, son of WWE star Dave Taylor, Kris the Bambi Killer, Miss Italy Bulla Punk and Eric Masticola.

Full details of upcoming ASW shows can be found at [www.bigtimewrestlinguk.com](http://www.bigtimewrestlinguk.com)

## **Norton British Wrestling**

NBW returned to Notts County football ground on Sunday February 18<sup>th</sup>. Results from the card saw Dave Fraser retain his NBW Middleweight title against Stiro, Killer Instinct beat Bubblegum and Stixx to win the Tag titles, Stephanie Scope beat Penelope Price, Ross Jordan defeated British Born Steel, Paul Malen beat Chebby Savage and the team of El Ligerio and Fatboy-Slim beat Kris Travis and the Northern Alliance.

Their next show is in Nottingham on April 1st. 'April Fools Brawl' sees Bubblegum defend his Cruiserweight title against Ross Jordan with Stixx refereeing, Curve takes on Paul Malen, Killer Instinct will be defending their tag titles against opponents yet to be named, a four-way match between Kris Travis, El Ligerio, Spud and Brad Flash will decide the number one contender for the cruiserweight title and Imperial Dragon takes on AD Wright. More info at [www.nortonbritishwrestling.co.uk](http://www.nortonbritishwrestling.co.uk)

## **WzW**

Iain 'Xpress' Robinson became the companies first ever Zero-G champion on January 12<sup>th</sup> at the Shildon Civic Hall, when he beat Kid Richie, Little Dragon and Max Heat in a 4-way ladder match. On the same bill, 'Livewire' Anthony McIntyre retained his Heavyweight title beating Lance Thunder and Sir Jonathan Britain beat Iceman. In Hartlepool on January 27<sup>th</sup> Anthony McIntyre beat Wolfgang to retain the wZw British Title, Iain Robinson successfully defended his Zero\_G title against Darkside and Max Heat and in a Gang Warfare Elimination match Iceman was the sole survivor.

March sees a card at the Peterlee Leisure Centre on the 31<sup>st</sup> which holds over 400 people. At 'The Empire Strikes Back!' Iceman will face The Colossal Powers in a No DQ Handicap match, Sir Jonathan Britain faces Chris Whitton, Heavyweight champion Anthony McIntyre meets Zero-G Champion Iain Robinson in a TLC match with a decision being made on the night about whose title will be on the line.

There's also a Gauntlet match to decide the next challenger for the Zero-G title, wrestlers yet to be announced. In September they'll be holding Thunderdome at a 2500+ seater venue as the company expands. Two men will face each other in a Thunderdome death match which will see only one man leave! More info at [www.wzwuk.com](http://www.wzwuk.com)



## RQW

Bubblegum won the RQW Cruiserweight title tournament final when he beat 'The Heretic' Red Vinny at 'No Pain, No Gain' at the York Hall, Bethnal Green on January 13<sup>th</sup>. That card was headlined by The Great Muta defeating RQW Heavyweight Champion Martin Stone. The Jezebel Eden Black beat MsChif and Cheerleader Melissa to retain her RQW Women's title and Davey Richards beat Jody Fleisch. The card also saw the start of the RQW tag team tournament. The Hated Heroes (Simmonz/Maayan) beat Jonny Storm and Kid Kash and the bizarre team, Madder Than You (Manson/Monroe) beat Darren Burrige and Kikutaro. The tournament continued in Doncaster the following day when Dave Moralez and Jack Storm beat Team Dormanstown (Richie/Whitton).



The February show at the York Hall, held on the 17<sup>th</sup> (while I was in bed with a lousy cold!) saw Martin Stone retain his RQW Heavyweight title against 'Rowdy' Ricky Knight. Jody Fleisch beat Pac and Jonny Storm to earn a crack at Stone's title at the York Hall on March 24<sup>th</sup>. Jack Storm and Dave Moralez beat Bubblegum and El Ligero and The Dragon Hearts beat The Kartel in the RQW Tag title tournament. Darren Burrige beat JP Monroe, Destiny beat Sweet Saraya, James Tighe beat Leroy Kincaide and Ashley Reed beat Paul Robinson to earn himself a cruiserweight title match against Bubblegum.

The "Not Just For Christmas" DVD, featuring the tournament held on December 16<sup>th</sup>, and "Real Quality Wrestling – The Series: Volume 1" featuring the first 4 programmes from the TV series has now been released.

On March 24<sup>th</sup> it's 'Taking on the World' also at the York Hall. Confirmed matches so far see Jody Fleisch challenging Martin Stone for the RQW Heavyweight Title, Jezebel defending her women's title against Allison Danger and in the first semi-final of the tag team tournament, The Hated Heroes take on Madder Than You. Jon Ryan will also be appearing. Venue information is available by calling the York Hall on 0208 980 2243. Tickets are priced at £25 ringside, £15 general admission, £10 under 16/OAP and concessions. Real Quality Wrestling's new TV show can be seen exclusively on TWC Fight! every Wednesday night at 11pm. More info at [www.realqualitywrestling.com](http://www.realqualitywrestling.com)

## Real Deal Wrestling

Paul Malen beat Sykes to become the first RDW Middleweight champion in Scunthorpe on January 25<sup>th</sup>. Also on the card, Stixx and Stephanie Scope went to a no contest against Mick Romeo and Bubbles.

Sam Slam won the King of the Castle Tournament held at the Suncastle in Skegness on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. First round matches saw Luc Harrison beat The Dominator, Sykes defeat Ricky Knight by pinfall, Dragon Aisu beat Darkside and Sam Slam beat Pac. In the semi-finals, Sam Slam beat Dragon Aisu and Lee Harrison defeated Sykes with Slam getting the win in the final against Harrison. Also on the card, Sweet Saraya beat Jade and in an RDW Tag title match, the team of Zak Zodiac and Ricky Knight beat The UK Pitbulls. Regular cards will be held at the Suncastle throughout July, August and September.

On the 24<sup>th</sup>, at the Scartho Village Community Centre in Grimsby, Kaos won the RDW Academy title in a 10 man Battle Royal. Also on the card, Sykes beat Sweet Saraya, The Dominator successfully defended his Lincolnshire Regional title against Danny Blaze and Destiny beat The Norfolk Dolls.

Nigel McGuinness was due to make his RDW debut on March 9<sup>th</sup> in Mablethorpe but sadly that card has been cancelled. His match against Ashe will take place at a later date. Their next card is now an Academy show on March 24<sup>th</sup> at the Scartho Village Community Centre with RDW Heavyweight champion Mick Romeo taking on Sykes in an All or Nothing Tables match where the loser has his hair shaved AND has to retire from professional wrestling. Also on the card, The Dominator takes on Paul Malen with a poll on the RDW forum deciding whose title will be on the line. Chaos defends his Academy Title against Havok. More info at [www.realdealpromotions.co.uk](http://www.realdealpromotions.co.uk).

## Anti-Watershed Wrestling

At the Irish Club in Digbeth, Birmingham on January 25<sup>th</sup>, Johnny Lee beat Dan Ryder in a Hardcore match, Mad Man Manson defeated Geraden, Carnage beat Keego Ward and British Born Steel defeated Latz.

On February 15<sup>th</sup> at the same venue, Latz beat Dan Ryder, Carnage beat Violent TT and Marcus Kool defeated Johnny Lee, those three now meet BBS in a 4-way match for the AWW Title at Aston University on March 1<sup>st</sup>. Nick Knight won a Rumble to win the right to come in last in the Battle Royal match on March 1<sup>st</sup> at Aston University. Results from that show saw Carnage win the AWW Title and Axel Adams won the Battle Royal to become Number one contender for the AWW Title. Also on the card, Jonny Storm beat Pac, Keego Ward beat The Bouncer, Bill Duffy beat Danny D and Dan Ryder beat Johnny Lee in a TLC match. More info at [www.awwrestling.co.uk](http://www.awwrestling.co.uk)

## Herts and Essex Wrestling (HEW)

Ricky Relentless was named as the new HEW Heavyweight title after it was revealed he'd beaten Hade Vansen in Puerto Rico. He successfully



defended the belt against Tiger X at 'The Devil's Temptation' card held in Bishops Stortford on January 20th. Also on that card, The Kraft beat Zak Zodiac to retain his WAW British Heavyweight Title and Ricky Knight beat Steve Lynskey in a loser leaves town streetfight.

HEW have announced a partial card for "Living On A Prayer III" held on Saturday 24th March at the Takeley Silver Jubilee Hall, in Takeley, Bishops Stortford. Currently announced matches are: Kraft vs. Domino HEW Title: Ricky Relentless (c) vs. Doug Williams Falls Count Anywhere - No Holds Barred Match: Zak Zodiac vs. Sam Knee

### **Varsity Pro Wrestling**

All Japan Pro Wrestling's Suwama and D-Lo Brown made their debuts for VPW as part of a new working agreement between the two companies. At the Crediton Town Hall, The UK Kid beat Suwama and in the main event, Joel Redman, Chris Andrews and Suwama beat The UK Kid, Spiro and Phil Powers. At the Exmouth Pavilion, Suwama beat Phil Powers and D-Lo Brown beat The UK Kid and in Bridgewater, Suwama beat Phil Powers and the team of D-Lo Brown and Robbie Everest beat The UK Kid and Spiro.

More info at [www.varsityprowrestling.com](http://www.varsityprowrestling.com), next dates are scheduled for April.

### **Combat Sports Federation (CSF)**

A sellout crowd of 450 at the Winter Gardens Pavilion in Weston Super Mare on January 20th saw Canoe Tangoe win the CSF All-Nations Light Heavyweight Title from Aaron Fusion. Also on the card Pac beat The Urban Warrior.

### **Power Trip Wrestling**

This is a brand new wrestling company ran by Piledriver columnist Pete Staniforth. Defiance took place at Luton Rugby Football Club on March 2nd. We have a report from the show and an interview with Peter Staniforth on pages 70-71 of this edition. More information at [www.powertripwrestling.co.uk](http://www.powertripwrestling.co.uk)

### **Triple Team Promotions**

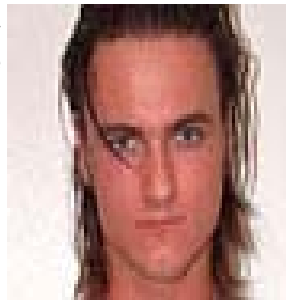
Their first cards of the year took place on the 17th of February at the Manor Quay Nightclub in Sunderland with Thunder and McIntyre beating Team Dormanstown, Jack Jester defeating Tony Spitfire and Pain Inc beating The Nattrass Boys. The following night The Nattrass Boys beat The Best Kept Secrets, Jack Jester beat Spitfire and Team Dormanstown beat Pain Inc.

### **WILD**

WILD Wrestling Promotions presented their first show of the year at the Albert Halls in Stirling on February 23rd. Spinner McKenzie retained his Scottish Lightweight title with a draw against Allan Grogan, Red Lightning beat Drew Galloway Liam Thompson beat Stu-Pendous, The Bonecrushers

defeated El Mayorista and Jungle George and Mike Musso beat Jamie Impact.

### **BCW**



At the Kilmarnock Grand Hall on February 24th, Drew Galloway beat Martin Stone to retain his BCW Heavyweight Title. Also on the card, Lionheart beat Red Lightning in a defence of his BCW Openweight Title, Darkside beat Scott Renwick and Fight Club beat Liam Thompson and Mike Musso.

### **Summit**

Summit Wrestling held their first card of the year on February 4th in Rayleigh. Phil Harlow and the Cougar Kid beat Dark Angel Ashe and Jimmy Starr, Flying Mike Bird beat Vladimir Gretkov, Edd Ferris beat Mark Knichols, Ethan Moore defeated Meximuscle and Paul Robinson beat Marty Scurll by two falls to one.

Their next card is on March 16th at the Puls8 Sport Centre in Kings Lynn. Scheduled to appear are MaxiMuscle, Ricky Knight and Danny Blaze with more to be confirmed.

Tickets can be booked on 01485 518 841 and more info at [www.summitwrestling.net](http://www.summitwrestling.net) Summit will be holding holiday camp events during the summer with cards at the New Horizon in Hemsby on April 11th, May 30th and then July 18th and every Wednesday until August 29th.

They're also at the Scratby Holiday Park on April 11th and July 18th and every Wednesday till August 29th.

### **LPW**

On January 28th at 'Clash of the Champions', Ronin pinned John Bull to add the British Iron Man title to his LPW Heavyweight title, Dragon Aisu beat Dan Evans to retain his 3CW Heavyweight title and Ashton pinned Keith Myatt.

At 'Aftermath' held in Birmingham on February 9th, Gabriel Grey was the tournament victor, Gang won the Battle Royal, Ronin and Quentin Hyde Styles wrestled to a double countout with Ronin keeping his LPW Title and Mad Mike retained his Central Counties Title beating Pete Bod.

On February 23rd at Minworth, The Firm beat Ronin, Mad Mike and Chris Charizma, Ashton pinned Gangster to win the Phoenix City Championship and

Chris Stone beat Scott Grimm in a British Ironman Championship tournament qualifier, At the Leahall Sports and Social club in Birmingham on the 25th, Ronin beat Gang to retain his LPW Title. He also announced he'd be vacating his British IronMan title.

Also on the card, Ashton beat Carnage and Gabriel Grey to retain his Phoenix City Title, Keith Myatt beat Omen and Mad Mike retained his Central Counties title after a double count out with Chris Stone. Their next show is on March 16th at the Leahall Sports and Social Club and Gang gets another LPW title shot in an I Quit Match.

## **WAW**

At Fakenham on February 10th, The Kraft defeated Ashe and Tank, Nick Aldis beat Danny Blaze, The Norfolk Dolls beat Sweet Saraya by DQ, Zak Zodiac beat Scott Fusion by two falls to one and Swede Johanson beat Ricky Knight. The following night the King of the Ring tournament was held at the Marina Centre in Great Yarmouth. In the Quarter Finals, Ricky Knight beat Steve Quintain, Zak Zodiac beat Jimmy Starr, The Kraft beat Nick Aldis by coin toss after a draw and Chris Reynolds beat Scott Fusion. In the semi finals, Zak Zodiac beat Ricky Knight and Chris Reynolds beat The Kraft. The Final saw Zak Zodiac defeat Chris Reynolds. Also on the card Sam Slam and Taurus beat Danny Blaze and Johnny Cougar.

Results from the WAW Academy show in Costessey on March 5th, Kraft won a four-way match against Nathan Spark, Leo Marshal and Jonny Cougar, Kid Quintain beat El Skeletor, Destiny beat Britani Knight, Joe FX beat Scott Fusion, Slash beat 'The Whimp' Jamie Scott, Lee Chaos beat Danny Blaze, Sweet Saraya defeated Melodi and the team of Zak Zodiac and Mike Mercury beat Sykes and Havoc from RDW.

In March there are cards at Hunstanton Town Hall on the 23rd with Nick Aldis taking on Ricky Knight, Dark Angel Ashe up against Sykes, Chris Cougar v Zak Zodiac and Allison Danger up against Sweet Saraya.. Tickets for this show are £10 adults £7 children u14 £30 family of 4 and on the 25th at the Marina Centre in Great Yarmouth, The Kraft defends his British title against Nick Aldis over ten three minutes rounds and best of three falls, Ashe and Jimmy Starr take on Zak Zodiac and Ricky Knight. tickets for this show are £10 ringside £8 general £25 family

Fightmare 2 takes place at the Waveney Centre in Lowestoft on May 12th. The WAW World Heavyweight title is being resurrected and will be contested by WAW British Heavyweight Champion, The Kraft and Norway's Erik Isaken (managed by Dean Ayass). Jonny Storm defends his WAW British Lightweight title against Zak Zodiac, Steve Quintain defends his WAW British Cruiserweight title against Johnny Kidd and The UK Pitbulls take on Fremtiden from Norway (Isak Rain and Victor Dale with Dean Ayass), Doug Williams takes on Martin Stone plus there's a team match between England and Scotland.

The WAW World Women's title is up for grabs as Destiny and Kharisma take on The Norfolk Dolls. If Destiny is pinned by one of her opponents they not only take her title but Destiny will

leave WAW and WAWW. There's also a 4 a-side elimination tag match between Team Summit and as their captain Nick Aldis comments "anyone who fancy their chances against us." Team Summit will be Nick Aldis, DA Ashe, Chris Reynolds and Jimmy Starr. Also scheduled to appear are Frankie Sloan, Lisa Fury, Ricky Relentless and other WAW and RDW regulars.

Tickets cost £15 ringside, £12 2nd row, general, £10 adults £7 children. £30 family of 4 and doors will be at 6-30pm with a 7-15 belltime More info at [www.freewebs.com/sweetsaraya](http://www.freewebs.com/sweetsaraya).

## **Premier Promotions**

Premier returned to the Worthing Assembly Hall on February 19th and the main event saw a very controversial Battle Royale match in which Referee Flash Barker declared the match null and void after eliminated Kris Kay teamed up with Karl Krammer to try and eliminate Robbie Brookside leading to the pair attacking Barker. The former FWA British Heavyweight Champ is now due to come out of retirement to tag with Brookside against Krammer and Kay, the next Worthing show is on April 2nd.

In March there are cards at the Plinston Hall in Letchworth on the 10th (01462 672 003, 7.30pm start) The Grange Centre in Midhurst on the 17th (01730 816 841, 8pm start) and The Brighton Centre on the 25th (0870 900 9100 3pm start) The promotion recently staged some end-of-the-pier shows in Worthing as part of the 80th anniversary celebrations of the Pavilion Theatre. Steve Grey beat Johnny Kid in the final of a Legends Trophy that also included Mal Sanders and Brian Maxine. More information on [www.premier-promotions.co.uk](http://www.premier-promotions.co.uk) or for details of the line-ups for both shows call the Premier Wrestling Line 09068 800669.

## **NWA Hammerlock**

At the Tap N Tin in Chatam on February 28th NWA British Commonwealth Champion Paul Tracey beat David Deville to retain his title, Zack Sabre beat Jimmy Havoc in a defence of his NWA-UK Junior Heavyweight Title, Jon Ryan and Dragon Aisu went to a double count-out and Omer Ibrahim beat Mikey T. For more information go to [www.hammerlockwrestling.com](http://www.hammerlockwrestling.com)

## **KSW**

At King of the Ring 2007 held at the Perry Common British Legion Club on February 10th, Tyler Rayne beat Brandon Thomas to win the King of the Ring title, Franco and Cupid beat The Hunter Bros to retain their tag titles and Carl Mizery beat Kid Flash to retain his KSW British Title.

## **4FW**

At the Pinehurst Community Centre in Swindon on March 3rd. Saul Adams retained his 4FW Heavyweight Title beating The Saint, The Bruiser Street Mob and THE EntouRAGE reached the final of the tag title tournament with wins over Chaos and The Kartel respectively, Iestyn Rees beat Martin Stone by DQ, Dave Sharp pinned Luke 'Dragon' Phoenix and Ashton Brown retained his Jr Heavyweight Title beating Bubblegum and El Ligerio in a ladder match.

On the 10th there's a card at the Churchdown Community Centre in Gloucestershire with The Kartel taking on Saul Adams and Iestyn Rees, Ashton Brown v David Sharp, The Saint v Dean Christ and an open challenge by Van Wicked.

## **South Wales Championship Wrestling**

At 'You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet' in Rhymney on January 18<sup>th</sup>, Maddog Maxx retained his SWCW Southern Heavyweight title after a draw against Dave Sharp. Also on the card, Ashton Brown beat Mike Bird, Caiman and Jonny the Body beat Ricky Hype and Chris Petherwick in a NHB match and The Saint beat The Man they Call Bassey in a lumberjack strap match.

The scheduled match between Lacey, Daizee Haze and Jetta didn't take place as they were stranded in Dublin due to bad weather.

On February 16th at the Riverside Social Club in Ebbw Vale, South Wales, Maddog Maxx beat Dave Sharp and Kade Callous in a triple threat after beating Marcus Kool to get into that match.

Also on the card, Caiman beat The Saint by DQ after interference by Iestyn Rees. SWCW return to Rhymney RFC on March 15, and Dave Sharp receives his last ever shot at Maddog Maxx's Title. Also on the card, Allison Danger meets Jetta. The Best of Wales tournament will be held in Rhymney on April 26th.

## **Celtic Wrestling**

'Love To Hate You' took place at the Alberrillery Arena on February 18th with Maddog successfully defending his Celtic Wrestling Title against Jonny Storm and 'Thunderbolt' Tommy Dean retaining his Interactive Title in a hair v hair match against Adam Paris.

A tournament is due to take place shortly to crown new tag champs with 'Ultimate Chaos' at the same venue on the 10th.

## **ACW**

At "Over The Top 2007", held at the Hitchin Town Hall in Hitchin, on February 24th Brendon O'Shea beat Brian Baddock to retain his ACW Heavyweight Title, Bull Harley and Sam Steel beat Rich n Famous and Kyle Kraze to win the tag titles and DOA won a Battle Royal to earn a shot at the ACW Title on March 31st at Wrestlestock which is being held at the Burgess Hall in St Ives

## **W3L**

Their next cards are at the Broxburn Sports Centre on March 9th and the Carnegie Leisure Centre on the 10th. Scheduled to appear are W3L champion Allan Grogan who defends his title on the 9th against Iceman, Mike Musso, Carl Conroy, Invincible, W3L Tag team champions the Tenacious guns, Fight Club and the return of Los Pervitos.

Tickets are on sale now from the box office at both venues and are also available at [W3Lwrestling.com](http://W3Lwrestling.com)

## **SWA**

Clan Wars takes place at the Sir Matt Busby Sports Complex on March 17th. It's a 6.30pm start and tickets will be released a month prior to the event at £7 (or £6 in advance) and available from Scotsman Models, Trongate (behind the Trongate theatre, next to A1 comics), Glasgow, members of Area52 and online at SWA's eBay store. The main event sees Conscience v Johnny Moss for the NWA-UK British Heavyweight title.

There's Traditional Clan Wars matches with The A List taking on Team SWA with the A list getting to run the company for a night as guest commissioners if they win plus Ladykillers and Meat v The Institute and The Superstars. Falcon takes on Lionheart and Majik faces in Laird of the Ring qualifiers and The Shamrockers face GN Security

An announcement will be made at the upcoming Clan Wars III show which will shake Scottish professional wrestling to its foundations. One theory states that the SWA will be holding some kind of special event to coincide with the end of Conscience's one year SWA contract.

This is the only rumour which has been addressed in any way by the SWA office, which stated: "This is bigger than one man and will change everything... forever." Other theories are running rampant, but none have been addressed by the SWA. The only piece of concrete information issued to date is that due to the significance of the 29th of September, the annual Battlezone match will be moved to May 19th. The Battlezone is SWA's biggest event of the year, and whatever the subject of the forthcoming announcement at Clan Wars, it must be of unprecedented significance to warrant a scheduling upheaval of this magnitude.

## **Ringside Promotions**

On February 22nd at the Princes Theatre in Clacton-On-Sea, Jonny Storm beat Paul Tyrell, Karl Kramer beat Charlie Rage, Eamon O'Neil defeated Andy Boy Simmonz, Marty Scurll and Damien James beat The Spider and Bulldozer and Luke Smith pinned Rocker Richards

### **Futureshock Wrestling**

At the Stockport Guildhall on February 18th, G-Man beat Sparx, Dirk Feelgood beat William Lovejoy McBarnaby IV, Jack Domino beat El Ligero and the team of Dangerous Damon Leigh and Simon Valour defeated Dom Travis and Clinton Steel. Their next card is at the Guildhall on March 24th

### **MEW**

Main Event Wrestling return to the People's Theatre in Newcastle Upon Tyne with a show entitled Fools Gold. It's headlined by former WWE star Heidenreich taking on Seamus O'Shaughnessy, Iceman meeting General Trent Steek in a hardcore match, I.O.D. v The Assassins, Mad Man Manson against Mid-day Ryder and Allison Danger. Tickets are priced at £9.50 each, or £30 for four and are on sale now! From both Newcastle Wrestling Store (01912303894) and People's Theatre box office (0191 265 5020).

### **Comic Relief card**

On March 10th at the Lordswood Leisure Centre in Chatham there's a fundraising card for Comic Relief. Confirmed is Jimmy Havoc v JP Monroe v Paul Robinson, and also due to appear are Jon Ryan, Zack Sabre Jr, Exodus and more.

### **Wrestlefest**

At the Harlow Playhouse on February 16th, Paul Tyrrell and Charlie Rage beat The UK Pitbulls to win the Wrestlefest Tag titles. Also on the card, Darren Burrige beat Alex Shane and Jonny Storm beat Phil Powers in a ladder match to win a permanent contract with the company.

### **BWA**

At the Knutton Ex-Service Men's Club in Newcastle-Under-Lyme on February 21st, Darren Burrige beat Keego Ward, Spitfire beat Stixx and In England v Canada matches, Eric Masticola beat Paul Malen and Joe Legend retained his PPW Super Heavyweight Title beating Iceman after interference by Stixx. Iceman got revenge by winning the Rumble eliminating both Legend and Stixx.

### **Future Championship Wrestling**

Reckless Abandon took place at the Baggeridge Social Welfare Centre in Dudley on February 25th. In a semi-final match in the FCW tag team title tournament, Kev O'Neil and Brandon Thomas beat Stevie Valentino and Weasel, Keego Ward beat Jay Icon, The Bouncer and Blade beat Marc Hogan and Celt Kennedy, Laken Xander beat El Ligero, Carl Mizzery beat Staxx and "Bird of Prey" Falcon beat Todd Hunter. In the main event Saul Adams beat Damien Grant in a Dudley Streetfight to retain his FCW Heavyweight Title.

Intimidation is being held at the Baggeridge Social Welfare Centre in Lower Gornal on March 25th. Doors open at 7pm and the show starts at 7.45, tickets cost £6 or a Party Of 4 -

£20. The card includes the final of the FCW Tag team title tournament with Swift Justice taking on The Hunter Bros and PL4Y plus Pippa L'Vinn takes on Allison Danger.

### **UCW**

At a card held in Peasdown near Bath on February 24th, Instinct retained the UCW World Title when he beat The Gangster by DQ. Also on the card, American Ali-Star and Miss Vicky beat Atom and Stacey in a mixed tag match,

Johnny Lee and Dan Ryder beat The House of Pain to retain their tag titles and Bill Duffy beat Bounty Hunter but then lost a UCW UK Title match to holder, Hubert. Aphrodite won the Royal Rumble.

Their next card is at the Trowbridge Civic Hall on March 16th. For more information go to [www.ucwwrestling.co.uk](http://www.ucwwrestling.co.uk)

### **NWL and GNP**

On Saturday March 31st, Northern Wrestling League and Gerry Norton Promotions combine to put on a wrestling show entitled: The Championship Series with the show's proceeds going towards the NSPCC.

Matches announced include Brad Flash defending his GNP British Counties title against Scotty Hexx, there's a 4-man NWL Championship tournament with Rainz v Joseph Connor and Kris Travis v Spud. Mick Romeo takes on Jay Phoenix, Paul Malen meets Dave Frazier, Tiger X takes on Angelblade and in a handicap match, Dr. Devious, Michael M James and 'The Messiah' Constantine take on The Red Haired Loon and James E Real. There'll also be live music from Warning Shot and A Station Story.

### **British Hybrid Wrestling (BHW)**

Two titles got new owners at 'To Hell and Back' held in Thurmaston on January 20th. Dave Frasier beat Dan Head to win the NBW Middleweight title and El Ligero pinned Stixx to win the BHW British Heavyweight title. Also on the card, Iceman pinned eXodus and Jay Phoenix beat Keith Myatt. Their next card sees El Ligero defend his belt against Jay Phoenix and Andy Simmonz takes on Keith Myatt.

### **SAS WRESTLING**

The Good, The Bad, and The Elite takes place at the Collingwood Centre in Great Barr, Birmingham on March 24th. Doors open at 5:30pm, tickets cost £7 and can be booked on 07984 230 029 The card is headlined by SAS UK Wrestling Champion, 'Sadistic' Jack Storm defending his title against Spud in a Falls Count Anywhere match. Also scheduled is Luke 'Dragon' Phoenix against Dave Morales



**CWC**

At the Chamberlayne Leisure Centre in Southampton on February 17th. Youth Gone Wild beat Craig Matthews and Johnny Allen to stay number one challengers for the tag titles currently held by Team Beautiful. Jay Knox retained his CWC All-In title after a double count-out with Neil Beforme, Cameron Steele beat Gino Perrin to win the vacant CWC All-Counties title, Brett Summers beat Mike Venom and Big Tim Burns and Aphrodite beat Glamour in an intergender match.

On February 24th CWC made their Welsh debut with 'Chaos in Caldicot' at the Caldicot Leisure Centre. Jay Knox retained his All-In title beating James Baker, Neil Beforme beat Glamour, Aaron Fusion pinned Shaq Hammer, Phil Hyde beat Craig Matthews and Brett Summers and 'Big' Tim Burns beat Los Gringos Locos in a two v three handicap match. Their next card is in Southampton on the 17th of March with Cameron Steele defending his title against Glamour.

**LWL**

'Hell or Highwater' takes place at the Legend's Members Club in Wolverhampton on March 13th with Kade Callous defending his LWW Heavyweight title against Marcus Kool, Stevie Valentino puts his LWL National Pride title on the line against Brett Banner and Sky-Hi Express (Lee/Ryder) defend their tag titles against Beer Fuelled Violence.

There's also a SWCW Southern Heavyweight title match as Mad Dog Maxx defends his belt against an opponent yet to be named. Tickets cost £5/£3(cons) and it starts at 7.30pm.

**Proper Pro Wrestling (PPW)**

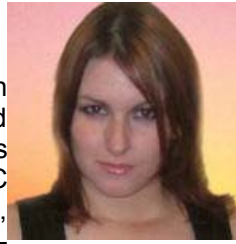
PPW hold their first card 'Bitter Redemption' at the Kirkstall Leisure Centre in Leeds on June 2nd. Already announced for the card are Darren Burrridge, El Ligero and Andy Boy Simmonz plus ring announcer 'Sweet' Stevie Aaron.

Tickets are on sale now via [www.ppwrestling.co.uk](http://www.ppwrestling.co.uk), or direct from Kirkstall Leisure Centre, on Kirkstall Road, Leeds, LS5 3BE. Tel: 0113 2144556.

They are priced at just £17 for Front Row ringside seats, or £10 for general admission unreserved. Tickets will also be available for cash sale on the door at the event, but advance purchase is recommended to avoid disappointment.

**SLAM**

At the Tamworth Assembly Rooms on February 24th, Jonny Storm pinned Ross Jordan, Jetta beat Skye, Staxx defeated Shabazz, The Murderers beat The UK Pitbulls, Kid Flash beat Carl Mizzery and Jexodus beat Paul Malen and Stixx.



There's a card at the Melton Mowbray Theatre on 24th March. So far a match between Jetta and Stephanie Scope (right) has been announced.

**PBW**

At Urban Assault held at the Greenock Sports Centre on the 18th of February, Brad Fusion beat Allan Grogan, Carl Conroy and Damien Diamond beat Mike Musso and Red Lightning, Lionheart beat CJ Hunter and Johnny Star, Conscience beat Judge Jimmie James, Jay Phoenix beat Darkside and Wolfgang beat Liam Thompson to retain his PBW Title

Their next card is at the Barrhead Sports Centre on March 17th. Wolfgang defends his PBW title against Lionheart, Darkside, Cameron Kraze and Johnny Star take on Allan Grogan, Judge Jimmie James and El Ligero, Liam Thompson meets CJ Hunter and the tag titles are on the line with Brad Fusion and Bubblegum defending the belts against The Tenacious Gunns.

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# WWE News

## The Countdown to Wrestlemania 23

Wrestlemania 23 takes place on April 1st at Fort Field in Detroit and the two main events are already confirmed. Over on Raw, John Cena defends his WWE Title against Shawn Michaels who recently beat Edge and Randy Orton to win the right to challenge Cena and on Smackdown it's Batista defending his World Heavyweight Title against the winner of the Royal Rumble, The Undertaker, who of course has never lost at Wrestlemania.

Just one other match has been confirmed so far and that sees a Battle of the Billionaires as Vince McMahon and Donald Trump choose, as Mr McMahon's choice, Umaga, now the Inter-Continental Champion after his recent victory over Jeff Hardy taking on Trump's choice, the ECW World Champion, Lashley. Guess that means we have no IC or ECW title matches on the card.. Whoever's representative loses will see their boss have their hair shaved off so get ready for a bald Vince McMahon in April. Special guest referee for the match is 'Stone Cold' Steve Austin.

There's plenty of speculation over other matches that will take place at the biggest card of the year. The Money in the Bank Ladder Match so far includes Edge, King Booker, Mr Kennedy, Jeff and Matt Hardy, Finlay and CM Punk, look for Randy Orton to get included too as this year there are eight competitors chasing a title shot. Also it's likely The Great Khali will take on Kane and new Women's Champion Melina will defend her title against Playboy model Ashley, Chris Benoit will take on MVP and there'll be a tag match between the ECW Originals and the New Breed. We'll have a massive preview of Wrestlemania 23 in our next edition.

### NO WAY OUT

**Reviewed by Julian Radbourne**

The road to Wrestlemania continues as WWE's Smackdown brand presents the 2007 version of No Way Out, headline by a tag-team encounter pitting John Cena & Shawn Michaels against Batista & the Undertaker. As usual, our hosts for the evening are Michael Cole and John "Bradshaw" Layfield

We begin with six-man action, as U.S. Champion Chris Benoit teams with Matt and Jeff Hardy against the combination of MNM and MVP. Even though the Hardys and MNM have gone at it numerous times over the past few months, I never tire of seeing these two teams in action, and adding Benoit and the improving MVP to the mix didn't harm the match in any way.

A great match with some great action, a perfect way to open the show, with Benoit in particular looking like he's at the top of his game at the moment, getting the win as Mercury tapped out to the Crippler Crossface

Backstage, Kristal catches up with Vickie Guerrero, now sans neck brace. Vickie talks about certain opportunities, and then says she's going to make an announcement or something on Friday night. She then thanks Kristal for her help, and gives her a hug

Finlay then drags the Little Bastard along the corridor. The little guy is kicking and screaming, and he tells of how he's scared of the little Boogeyman. Finlay tries to console him by giving him a hug, then throwing him in a dumpster for his own safety - a dumpster that is occupied by the little Boogeyman. The less said about this segment the better.

Back in the arena, it's time for the Cruiserweight Open, with the Cruiserweight title on the line, featuring Gregory Helms, Scotty 2 Hotty, Daivari, Funaki, Shannon Moore, Jimmy Wang Yang, Jamie Noble, and surprise entrant Chavo Guerrero. A great example of cruiserweight action at it's best, with each and every man putting in good performances, particularly Jimmy Yang. It looked as if Yang had won the title after he pinned Noble, but Guerrero's surprise entry led to him eventually winning the title, pinning Yang after a frog splash off the top rope. The boring chants weren't justified here folks.

Backstage, Kristal chats with John Cena. Kristal makes a slight boob when she calls Shawn Michaels' Cena's "Wrestlemania tag-team partner". Cena basically says he's more worried about Batista and the Undertaker than he is about Michaels.

Mixed tag-team action, of sorts, next as Finlay and the Little Bastard take on Boogeymen big and small. This match was a joke, and the sad thing is that not even someone of Fit Finlay's talents could make the still limited Boogeyman look good. The less said about this the better, as Finlay pinned the Little Boogeyman after clobbering him with his shillelagh.

Backstage, Kristal catches up with Shawn Michaels, and basically asks him the same questions she asked Cena. Michaels promises that he will watch Cena's back.

It's a battle of the former champions next as King Booker, as always accompanied by Queen Sharmell, takes on the monstrous Kane, following their altercations at the Royal Rumble. This was a really enjoyable match between two wrestlers whose styles were very suited to each other. A back and forth encounter which saw Booker dominate the monster for the larger part of the match, before Kane was able to come back with the big guns, and not even a distraction from Sharmell could stop Kane from

be matched against each other again.

Backstage, Kristal chats with World champion Batista. The big guy promises that Smackdown will "beat up" on Raw. But then Kristal reminds him that the Undertaker has choke slammed him before, and asks if the animal is intimidated by the dead man. Batista ends by saying he's not intimidated by anyone.



Time for the second title match of the evening, as Brian Kendrick and Paul London defend the WWE Tag-Team Championship against the new team of Deuce and Domino, who bring Cherry along for company. I guess someone was watching a certain John Travolta film when they came up with this gimmick. This was actually the first time I'd seen this new tag-team, and they impressed me. Deuce and Domino spent a great deal of time dominating London, before he managed to get the hot tag to Kendrick. Kendrick then cleaned house, but when it looked like he was about to get taken out with a doomsday device, Kendrick ducked and got the pin with a roll-up, with London and Kendrick retaining the titles.

Backstage, Kristal catches up with Mr. Kennedy, and asks of his thought on Bobby Lashley. He describes Lashley as a phony wannabe, proceeds to insult the locals, then promises to beat Lashley. It's then that the man himself appears, and claims that Mr. Kennedy has a stinky breath, before knocking Kennedy off his feet.

The third title bout of the evening follows, with Mr. Kennedy challenging Bobby Lashley for the ECW title. This was definitely a hit and miss affair, an overlong match which saw Kennedy spend a great deal of time working on Lashley's knee, the big guy coming back with his usual power moves, the ref getting accidentally clobbered, Kennedy grabbing a chair and walloping Lashley, and then Lashley getting disqualified when the now recovered ref saw what was going on.

And then came the best part of the match as Lashley took Kennedy apart near the entrance with several chair shots. Not one of the best matches that the Smackdown brand has put on pay-per-view in recent months, and one that will probably be forgotten in a few weeks.

After a look at Steve Austin's new movie The Condemned, Michael Cole chats with audience member and co-star Vinnie Jones. This is actually the second times Jones has been on a WWE show, and the former footballer claims he can kick Stone Cold's ass!

The Miz, the annoying little prick that he is, then introduces the Diva Talent Invitational, featuring Divas from all three brands. Now I was really looking forward to this one! The usual awful segment as we get the ECW girls doing a dance and Jillian Hall with her awful singing, then lambasting Candice Michelle, Maria and Ariel. The three of them then come down to the ring, and we get the obligatory cat fight. Then, to top it all off, Ashley makes her appearance, and shows us her "talents", and is declared the winner. While I have nothing against attractive women showing us their "talents", I just kept wondering what the hell this sort of thing was doing on a wrestling show.

Main event time, as WWE Champion John Cena and fellow World Tag-Team Champion Shawn Michaels take on World Champion Batista and the Undertaker, Raw's Wrestlemania main event against Smackdown's Wrestlemania main event. Now this was a hell of a match, with four great performances, all the bits in all the right places, and an absolute ton of drama.

I really can't speak too highly of this match, but if these guys put as much effort into their Wrestlemania matches as they did here, then it's going to be a scorcher. After what seemed like an eternity of great action, Batista shocked everyone when he took the Undertaker down with a spine buster, just when it looked like the Smackdown team were about to deliver the final blow.

This gave Michaels and Cena, who had taken an absolute pasting, time to recover. Michaels delivered sweet chin music, Cena delivered the FU, and the Undertaker was pinned for the victory. Again, a hell of a match, and one I'll definitely watch again someday.

In conclusion - once again I read the various reports on the internet from the so-called "experts", and in many cases I use that term extremely loosely, about how bad this show was. Well, guess what my fellow scribes?

Not all of it was a bad as you all made out. Sure, the Lashley/Kennedy match was overlong, the Boogeyman will never look good, no matter who they put him with, and the Diva Talent Invitational was a taste of airtime, but when you look at the other matches, the six man tag, the cruiserweights going at it, Kane/King Booker, the tag-title match, and the main event, that's five good matches out of seven, and even though that's not a perfect show, it's still a good show in my book

## News Round-Up

Don't all cheer at once, Mark Henry is on his way back. After seven months out of the ring, Henry who at one time was rumoured to be booked for a spell as World Heavyweight champion until his injury, made his in-ring comeback on an OWW card last week.

Poor ratings in the past and possible strike action by members of the Writers Guild are the main reasons why the planned Saturday Night Main Event in March has been cancelled. An event will take place in June but the cancellation is a big blow to the company as they attempt to build a big buy-rate for Wrestlemania.

Andrew "Test" Martin was released on February 27. 'Test' who's recently been feuding with Lashley over the ECW Title was nearly fired in January after apparently failing drugs tests. Now the Lashley feud is over, so are Test's days in the company.

Look for Chuck Palumbo to be back on Smackdown in the next few weeks after making several dark match appearances in recent weeks wearing a strange top hat. What gimmick next I wonder?

The Brand extension seems to be getting more and more confusing as the weeks go by. Wrestlers seem to be turning up on shows regardless of what brand they're supposed to be on. In fact Lashley is on all three shows this week and just why were Mr Kennedy and Johnny Nitro in Money in the Bank qualifiers held on the ECW brand?

It now seems confirmed that all PPV's will include wrestlers from all three brands as PPV rates aren't quite what WWE have been hoping for. That's definitely the case with the dreadful ECW PPV which only saw 90,000 purchases, the lowest ever figure for a WWE PPV. The Armageddon PPV had 239,000 buys, 51,000 down on 2005 though Cyber Sunday and The Survivor Series had slight increases on the previous years draws.

The latest set of financial results published in February saw increases in attendances at live shows in North America, PPV revenues were down by \$1m due mainly to poor performances by Vengeance and Summerslam compared to their 2005 shows. International buys of PPV's was up from 37% to 39%. Whereas merchandise and TV licensing rights increased in value, there was a massive drop in advertising revenues of \$15m due to their distribution agreement with the USA network.

ECW now regularly sees Mr McMahon on its show, even more so now that Lashley is in the McMahon v Trump feud. ECW wrestlers are no longer called 'Extremists' but just ordinary everyday common garden 'Superstars'.

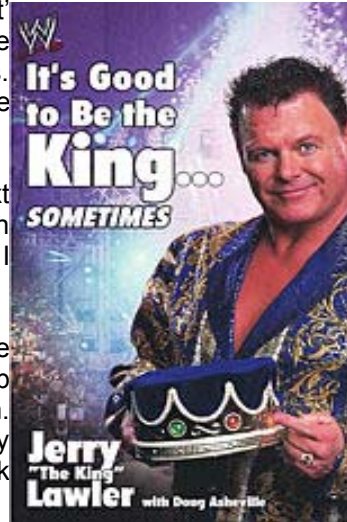
The next ECW PPV is 'One Night Stand' which takes place in Jacksonville on June 10th. Hasn't the whole concept of that title disappeared though with ECW now back full-time? New tag champs are soon to be crowned in ECW which at the moment just has the singles title.

Rapper and producer Timbaland looks to be appearing at Wrestlemania 23 after posting an announcement saying he'd be performing at the show on April 1st. A link up with John Cena could be on the cards perhaps? His new album comes out the following Monday.

WWE Champion John Cena, ECW Champion Bobby Lashley, Edge and Randy Orton were on the American version of "Deal

or No Deal" on March 4th. It didn't take long for the States to have celebrity episodes did it?

So far four names have been announced for this year's Hall of Fame. Dusty Rhodes, the late Curt Hennig, Nick Bockwinkel Jerry Lawler are all to be inducted at a ceremony to be held the night before Wrestlemania 23.



We'll have a comprehensive preview of the Hall of Fame in our next edition. Others rumoured to be inducted this year include The Samoans and The Von Erich family. Ric Flair is rumoured to be the big inductee for 2008 especially as he's indicated this might be his last year in the ring.

The Cruiserweight division on Smackdown looks to be getting a boost. Mistico has just received a try out and Shannon Moore is back on Smackdown after his uneventful spell on ECW.

With Chavo Guerrero back as champion, the big question is whether Rey Mysterio might return to the division when he finally makes his full-time return to the company after recent surgery.

Word is that Vickie Guerrero is soon to become the new GM on Smackdown, sounds like a disaster to me.

Mick Foley made his return on the March 5th Raw conning Vince into giving him his job back and being able to publicise his 'Hardcore Diaries' book, when Vince mistakenly thought that he was going to be the special guest referee in the Umaga v Lashley match.

### Ohio Valley Wrestling

Seeing the Brits are dominating this WWE developmental territory at the moment I thought I'd make sure the latest news was included in Piledriver Online Paul 'The Ripper' Burchall retained his OVW Heavyweight Title when he beat Deuce on February 24th. Also on that show, Harry Smith tagged with Kofi Kingston as 'The Commonwealth Connection' going down in defeat to La Resistance.

Boris Alexiev became number one challenger to Burchall after beating Los Locos in a handicap match. Katie 'Nikita' Lea remains OVW Women's champion and Steve Lewington is also on the roster.



# Indy News

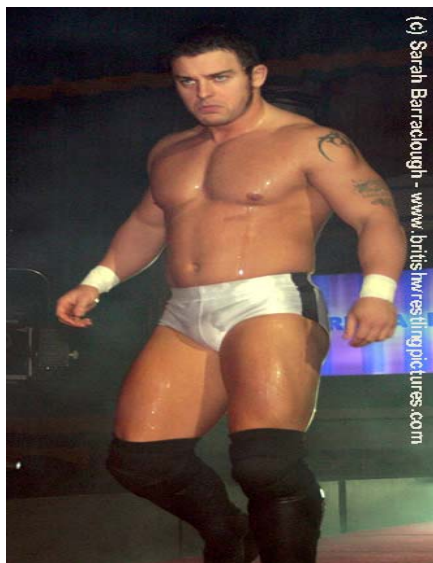


## Ring of Honor

Ring of Honor made their second tour of the UK last weekend with two shows at the Liverpool Olympia on March 3rd and 4th as part of their Fifth Year

Festival.

On the 3rd in front of a crowd of 1500 people, Samoa Joe in his last weekend with the company beat Nigel McGuinness by submission, Shingo and Naruki Doi from Dragon Gate beat The Briscoes to win the ROH World Tag titles meaning the singles and tag world titles in the company are now in Japanese hands (The Briscoes had won the tag titles from Christopher Daniels and Matt Sydal on February 26th). ROH are due to tour Japan later in the year in joint shows with Dragon Gate and Pro Wrestling NOAH.



Roderick Strong pinned Pac to retain his FIP World Heavyweight Title. Also on the card, Homicide beat Davey Richards, Jimmy Jacobs and Jimmy Rave beat Colt Cabana and BJ Whitmer when Jacobs pinned Whitmer, Matt Sydal beat Delirious by two falls to one and in a SHIMMER match, Sara Del Ray beat Allison Danger.

The following night, Samoa Joe pinned Homicide in his last ever match for the company, Naruki Doi and Shingo retained their tag titles beating the team of Davey Richards and Roderick Strong when Doi pinned Richards, Nigel McGuinness beat Jimmy Rave in a Fight Without Honor Match, Delirious pinned Colt Cabana, BJ Whitmer beat Jimmy Jacobs in a Falls Count Anywhere match, Matt Sydal pinned Pac, Mark Briscoe had a ten count draw with Jay Briscoe and in a SHIMMER Match, Allison Danger and Sara Del Ray beat 'The Jezebel' Eden Black and Jetta when Del Ray pinned Jetta.

Takeshi Morishima is the new ROH World Champion after his victory over Homicide in Philadelphia on February 17th.

ROH World Champion Takeshi Morishima retained the title by

defeating KENTA in Tokyo on March 4th in front of over 13,500 fans in the main event of NOAH's huge Budokan Hall event. His next defence is against Nigel McGuinness in Edison on April 14th. New tag champs Naruki Doi and Shingo will defend their belts against former champs The Briscoes on March 30th in Detroit. March 6th:

'All Star Extravaganza III' takes place in Michigan on March 30th followed by 'Supercard of Honor II' in Detroit on the 31st where Bruno Sammartino will be signing autographs. Booked for that weekend are CIMA, Dragon Kid and Ryo Saito

One of the main events for the 31st is a pure Dragon Gate six man pitting CIMA, Shingo & Susumu Yokosuka vs. Dragon Kid, Ryo Saito & Masaaki Mochizuki April sees cards at Long Island on the 13th and Edison on the 14th. That weekend sees the return to the company of former Pure Champion, Doug Williams.

## FIP

On March 10th it's the first annual Eddie Graham Memorial Battle of the Belts. This features an eight man tournament to crown the first ever Florida Heritage champion. Taking part are Roderick Strong (FIP World Heavyweight champion), Jay and Mark Briscoe, Shingo, Larry Sweeney, Jimmy Rave, Delirious and Erick Stevens. More info at [www.FullImpactPro.com](http://www.FullImpactPro.com)

## WSX

Amid rumours that WSX has been cancelled by MTV, the company behind WSX, Big Vision Entertainment made this statement on March 2nd.

"MTV is making no statement in regards to canceling Wrestling Society X. However, WSX will be pulled off the Tuesday night lineup in order to strategize the best way to bring the show back to the network and to the fans," explained Big Vision CEO Houston Curtis.

"Although the show has not been performing as well as the network had hoped in the Tuesday night lineup, we have been told that other MTV departments including MTV 2, MTV Online, MTV Mobile, and MTV Video-On-Demand are 100% behind Wrestling Society X. Additionally, the Creative and Development executives at MTV have commended us on the production of the show and are saddened by the lack of response due to scheduling mishaps and under-promotion. "

The six remaining unaired episodes have been pulled from MTV's schedule. All four previous episodes will be available on WSX.MTV.COM along with their WSXtra counterparts.

After initially seeing a million viewers watch their premiere episode, the company had lost half those viewers by week three and run into censorship problems.

Big Vision Entertainment will keep the rights to the show, with the option to shop it around to other networks. WSX never aired in Canada, even though Calgary's Ted Hart and former Stampede Wrestling standout Jack Evans were two of the promotion's biggest stars.

## **UXW**

Hardcore Wrestlewar took place at the Central Florida Fairgrounds on February 24th. Matt Bentley beat Vordell Walker to win the vacant UXW US Title, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels beat Black Market and The Lifeguards to win the vacant UXW Tag titles, Raven beat Steve Corino to retain his UXW World Title. Corino had earlier tagged with Ricky Landell to beat The Heartbreak Express and The Christopher Street Connection in a match for the AWA World Tag titles, Jake Roberts beat Danny Only, Billy Gunn beat Bruce Santee and Krazy K won the UXW X-Treme Title.

## **PWU**

Pro Wrestling Unplugged's "St. Patrick's Day Massacre" takes place on Saturday, March 17 at 7:30 pm in the New Alhambra Arena. Raven and Luke Hawx take on Ian and Axl Rotten, PWU World Heavyweight Champion Devon Moore takes on Jose Maximo, PWU Tag champs Joker and Ricky Reyes defend against All Money is Legal and Johnny Kashmere takes on Tod Gordon's surprise opponent,

## **UWF**

UWF make their debut at the Georgia Mountains Centre on March 2nd with the main event seeing Scott Steiner taking on Kishi (formerly Rikishi) and Steve Corino is up against Dustin Rhodes, The Naturals meet Jerry Lynn and D-Lo Brown, James Storm takes on Petey Williams and Amy 'Lita' Dumas makes her UWF debut. The following night UWF travels to Chattanooga, TN with the following already scheduled: Scott Steiner v. Cowboy James Storm Elix Skipper v. Jerry Lynn, Steve Corino v D-Lo Brown and Amy Dumas

## **CZW**

'Redemption' takes place at the New Alhambra Sports and Leisure Center on March 10th. Matches announced so far include: BLK Out defending their tag titles against Checkmate, an ultra-violent TLC match between Vortakz and Grim Reefer, Justice Pain and ? v Adam Flash and Messiah and Tough Crazy Bastards v Mitch Ryder and DJ Hyde.

## **IWA-MS**

IWA returns to Plainfield, IN with a huge event. Ticket prices

are \$20,\$15 and \$10. Belltime is at 8 pm. Already signed is Claudio Castagnoli vs. Mike Quackenbush; Ian Rotten vs. Freak Show; Drake Younger vs. Insane Lane and more!

## **CHIKARA**

The team of Mike Quackenbush, Jigsaw and Shane Storm won the King of Trios tournament defeating Miyawaki, Yoshiaki Yago and Kudo in the Final on February 18th in Philadelphia.

On March 23rd 'Best Imitation of Myself' takes place at The Riverside in Reading. Due to appear on the card are Mike Quackenbush and Tom Carter against Sicodelico Jr. and Lince Dorado. On the 24th Chris Hero and Ricochet will be appearing on a card to be held in Hellertown.

That card also sees Mike Quackenbush take on Claudio Castagnoli to decide the Chikara representative at the King of Europe cup in Liverpool. More about that on pages 30 and 31.

## **Cleveland All-Pro Wrestling**

Their next card is on March 11th and includes a Legends match as The Honky Tonk Man takes on Lord Zoltan. At their last card on February 11th, Zach Gowen beat Johnny Gargano to win the Junior Heavyweight Title.

## **WORLD-1**

Steve Corino regained the AWA World Heavyweight title at 'Rebirth or Destruction' when he beat Ric Converse despite interference by Sterling James Keenan and Ricky Landell. However, Converse claims that because the first referee was down, the title shouldn't have changed hands.

At World-1 Wrestlebowl 2K7 on March 11th, Ricky Landell defends his World-1 Heavyweight title against Steve Corino and Sterling James Keenan. King Kaluha defends his WORLD-1 Internet TV Title against Claudio Castagnoli and Josh Daniels and Greg Spitz meet for the US Title. On April 15th Jimmy Snuka appears for the company and Raven is due to make his debut for the company later in the summer. News about the women's division on pages 74 and 75.

## **International Wrestling Syndicate (IWS)**

Current NWA Heavyweight Champion Christian Cage is heading back to Canada to appear for IWS at their 'Un-FN-Sanctioned' show in Montreal on March 24th. Christian Cage will be teaming with "Canadian Dynamite" Maxime Boyer to battle Quebec wrestling legend Pierre Carl Ouellet and veteran "Paranoid" Jake Matthews. Necro Butcher

who will challenge Viking for the IWS title Azriel will travel to Montreal on March 24th to face EXeS "to teach that bully some manners More info at their recently relaunched website [www.syndicatewrestling.com](http://www.syndicatewrestling.com) .

### **IWC**

In March there's 'The Road to Super Indy VI at Elizabeth PA on the 17th and Night of Legends 3 in Franklin PA on the 24th. On the 17th, Ricky Reyes defends his IWC World Title against Homicide, Sterling James Keenan takes on Dennis Gregory and there's two Super Indy VI qualifiers as Jimmy Jacobs takes on Shiima Xion and Jason Gory meets Hentai.

On the 18th Larry Sweeney is challenging for the IWC World Title, a 4-way tag match, AJ Styles v Abyss plus Tito Santana taking on Greg Valentine, Jim Neidhart against Salvatore Sincere and Dominic DeNucci v Larry Zbysko (interviewed in Piledriver Online soon). Super Indy VI takes place in Elizabeth, PA on April 14th, already through to the 8-man single elimination tournament are Jerry Lynn, Azrieal, Jay Lethal and Larry Sweeney. The card is also scheduled to see the return of Samoa Joe to IWC.

### **JAPW**

Davey Richards is set to make his JAPW debut in Rahway on March 17th at 'Wild Card III.' There's also an Elimination Gauntlet Match for the vacant JAPW World Heavyweight Championship. Since this is a WILD CARD event, all entries will not be announced until they enter the ring that night. Eight competitors will take part and so far the following have applied to take part: Low Ki, The Necro Butcher, Chris Hero, Davey Richards, Bboy, Ruckus, Jay Lethal, Frankie Kazarian, Azrieal and Monsta Mac

All-Star Weekend #5 takes place on April 7th and 8th and confirmed so far is an appearance by NJPW's Kaz Hayashi who's taking on Alex Shelley on the 7th and Pac from the UK on the 8th. More about the shows in our next edition.

### **PWG**

Album of the Year takes place on March 10th with El Generico defending his PWG title against Davey Richards. Also on that card, Arrogance take on Kevin Steen and Franky the Mobster, The Human Tornado meets Frankie Kazarian, Claudio Castagnoli takes on Ricky Romero and Colt Cabana wrestles Karl Anderson.

### **Juggalo Championship Wrestling**

JCW are embarking on a national tour of 22 cities. Booked by the William Morris Agency, the Tempest Release Party tour also features 3 live bands and a live DJ. The entire event will be hosted by ICP—The Insane Clown Posse! The wrestlers confirmed for ALL dates on the JCW tour are: JCW World Champion, Corporal Robinson; WSX World Champion, Vampiro; Mad Man Pondo, Zach Gowen, 2 Tuff Tony, Nosowa, Leather Face, Jason Vor Heeves, Necro Butcher, Trent Acid and Tracy Smothers.

Also CONFIRMED to appear on the tour from the 13th through the 15th, his first time back in America in 6 years... The Great Muta!

Every night of the tour will be filmed, as part of an ongoing, 22 episode, brand new internet show entitled SLAM TV, with every episode emanating from a new city and venue. They will be posted weekly on [InsaneClownPosse.com](http://InsaneClownPosse.com), starting in March and for the next 5 months following. Each episode will be part of an ongoing, epic storyline, and will feature 2 full-length matches, on top of vignettes, interviews, and highlights.

### **Jersey Shore Wrestling**

Jersey Shore Wrestling made its debut on March 3rd at the AWA Wrestling School in Union City, NJ with The Out Cast Killers defeating The Sneaky Silver Bullets., Kevin Matthews beating Justin Corino, Corvis Fear defeating KC Blade, The Panda beating Sylvester Greendexter!, Danny Demento beating 2 Hot Steve Scott and Azrieal and Bandido Jr beat The Grim Reefer and Deranged. For more info visit [www.jerseyshorewrestling.org](http://www.jerseyshorewrestling.org) or email Frank at [FATFRKJAP1@AOL.COM](mailto:FATFRKJAP1@AOL.COM)

**In the next  
Piledriver Online**

**The Undertaker never loses at  
Wrestlemania OK!**

**'Doctor Death' Steve Williams**

**Tribute to Giant Haystacks**

**Interview with 'The Amazing  
Kung Fu'**

**IPW:UK v FWA—The outcome**

**The Rock**

**Andy Kaufman**

# TNA News



The next TNA PPV is 'Destination X' and takes place on March 11th. Announced for the card are: Christian Cage defending his NWA World Heavyweight Title against Samoa Joe, Rhino taking on AJ Styles in an Elevation X match, Sting takes on Abyss in a Last Rites match where the winner must strap his opponent to a bed of some kind, Scott Steiner takes on Kurt Angle, Chris Sabin defends his X Division title against Jerry Lynn and in a Ghetto Brawl, Tag champions LAX defend their belts against Team 3D while it's also expected that Bob Backlund will take on Austin Starr. Full results in our next edition. TNA are losing the rights to the NWA Titles and a parting of the way is due to take place at 'Destination X.'

At 'Against All Odds', Christian Cage beat Kurt Angle to retain his NWA World Heavyweight Title in a match that saw plenty of interference from the likes of Tomko, Scott Steiner, AJ Styles and Samoa Joe. Sting beat Abyss in a Prison Yard match, LAX beat 3D in a 'Little Italy Street Fight', Senshi beat Austin Starr, Christy Hemme beat 'Big Fat Oily Guy', Lance Hoyt defeated Dale Torborg, James Storm and Jackie Moore beat Petey Williams and Gail Kim and AJ Styles beat Rhino in a Motor City Chain match.

Elix Skipper & David Young who had been teaming since 2005 as the Diamonds in the Rough were both been released from their TNA contracts this week. Their manager Simon Diamond will be staying on with TNA as an agent.

TNA officials are happy with early ticket sales for the Lockdown PPV in St. Louis. One of the main reasons St. Louis was selected is because they are among the top rated cities for iMPACT! viewership.

'The Fallen Angel' Christopher Daniels is getting a new gimmick, although it is not known as to what it is just yet. Vignettes will continue to air until he is reintroduced. Also, he won't be doing any wrestling until the unveiling

Christy Hemme is scheduled to go heel soon managing a heel team vs. VKM. TNAWrestlingNews.com is reporting that The Heart Throbs have been talked about but have not signed any sort of deal with the company as of right now. TNA management apparently liked their ring entrance during a tryout several weeks ago but were not very fond of their in-ring work. We'll keep you posted.

When James Mitchell returns to TNA he is scheduled to bring in someone to feud with Abyss who will be a babyface by that point. Plans can always change though. The TNAWrestlingNews.com site is confirming that James Mitchell will definitely be taking 1-2 months off very soon. We'll keep you posted

Spike TV and TNA are in continued talks about expanding Impact into a two hour show. Spike TV officials were in attendance at last night's Impact tapings and threw the company an after-party at the end of the shows.

TNA star Kurt Angle made his debut for New Japan Pro Wrestling on Sunday in Tokyo. Angle teamed with Yuji Nagata defeating TNA star Travis Tomko and former WWE star Giant Bernard (aka A-Train/Prince Albert). An estimated crowd of 11,500 were said to be in attendance for the event. New Japan President Simon Inoki was very happy with Kurt Angle's New Japan debut over the weekend, and plans to send out another offer at once.

Nikkan Sports said New Japan invited Angle for two reasons, one to assist the company's ongoing reactivation and the other to strengthen their ties with TNA. If all goes well, there could be more productive talent exchange between the two promotions from now on.

'Lockdown 2007' will be held live at the Family Arena in St. Louis on April 15, airing exclusively on pay-per-view. TNA President Dixie Carter made the announcement live on "The Stranglehold" radio show (KFNS 590 AM) in St. Louis. She also confirmed that the April weekend in St. Louis also will include an all-access chance to meet the stars of TNA at "TNA Fan Interaction," which puts the stars of TNA up close and personal with the fans for a once in a lifetime meet-and-greet opportunity. TNA has released the list of names that are currently scheduled to appear at the Lockdown Fanfest and they are Kurt Angle, Sting, Christian Cage, The Monster Abyss, Rhino, Jeff Jarrett, Team 3-D, Rhino, Samoa Joe, Scott Steiner, Tomko, Showtime Eric Young, Robert Roode, Kevin Nash, AJ Styles, Christopher Daniels, Raven, Serotonin, Petey Williams, Cowboy James Storm, Wildcat Chris Harris, the TNA Knockouts, LAX, Voodoo Kin Mafia, Lance Hoyt, Jerry Lynn, Chris Sabin, Don West, Mike Tenay, James Mitchell, Ron Killings, Senshi, Jay Lethal, Austin Starr, Alex Shelley and Sonjay Dutt. Slammiversary is being held on June 17th and will be the next PPV after Lockdown to go on the road. It's also planned for Bound For Glory to be held outside of Orlando.

Hector Guerrero is to join TNA working behind the scenes and as part of the Spanish broadcast team.

When recently asked about the possibility of Hulk Hogan joining the company, Dixie Carter replied "The fans should just stay tuned."



# European News

## NWE

As you'll have read on page 12, Italian company NWE are working with 1PW for their Resurrection show in April. We'll have more about NWE in our next edition including an interview with Sylvano.



On February 17th they held a card in Cremona, Italy with the following results. Fire Angel beat Thunder Storm and Hajime Ohara, Lisa Fury beat Irene, Sheamus O'Shaughnessy beat Mima Shimoda in an intergender match only to be attacked by former WWE star Matt Morgan afterwards. Fire Angel then beat Thunder Storm.

On a card in Ascoli, Thunder Storm beat Fire Angel, Matt Morgan beat Marurizio Repetto in a 15,000 Euro challenge. Morgan also beat Sheamus O'Shaughnessy on the card, Ultimo Dragon beat Hajime Ohara, Mima Shimoda beat Lisa Fury and Irene and Romeo Roselli beat Juventud Guerrera to retain his World Heavyweight Title.

## Westside Xtreme Wrestling

Just one week after the King of Europe Cup ([www.KOEcup.com](http://www.KOEcup.com)) Westside Xtreme Wrestling will promote their second annual 16 Cart Gold Tournament with a slightly different concept than in 2006. 16 promotions are invited to send one of their top wrestlers to compete in this knockout-3day-tournament. A few promotions vary from the KoE-lineup. Several top promotions from continental part of Europe are represented here

Tickets will go on sale March 1st. A 3day ticket pass is only 54 Euros (~36 UK pounds)! A single ticket is 20 Euros and for two days you will be able to attend for 39 Euros. There are no seats – you will stand ringside and will never be able to come closer to ring action than this!

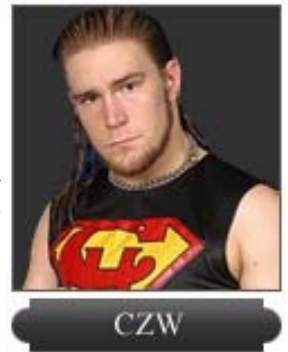
There's 300 tickets for each day, so if you want to make the trip hurry up and be prepared for March 1st when tickets go on sale on [www.wxw-wrestling.com](http://www.wxw-wrestling.com)

There are several cheap flights to Cologne, Dusseldorf, Dortmund who are all very close to Essen. Take a look at: [www.easyjet.com](http://www.easyjet.com) / [www.ryanair.com](http://www.ryanair.com) / [www.germanwings.com](http://www.germanwings.com) / [www.hlx.com](http://www.hlx.com) / [www.airberlin.com](http://www.airberlin.com)

The company are willing to help overseas fans with transport and finding a hotel which aren't expensive apparently.

## Here's the lineup so far

1. Westside Xtreme Wrestling (GER) (Q: Ares, won the ranking system January 27th 2007)
2. Ring of Honor (USA) (Q: Nigel McGuinness, named by RoH Management February 11th 2007)
3. Pro Wrestling Guerilla (USA) (Q: Davey Richards, beat Rocky Romero on December 2nd 2006)
4. International Pro Wrestling-UK
5. Combat Zone Wrestling (USA) (Q: Chris Hero, named by CZW Management on December 9th 2006.
6. CHIKARA (USA) Either Mike Quackenbush or Claudio Castagnoli
7. Premier Promotions (UK)
8. Pro Wrestling Holland (NED)
9. Rings of Europe (AUT)(Q: Emil Sitoci named by RoE Office on February 4th 2007)
10. International Catch Wrestling Association (FRA) Q: Bad Bones won 8-men tournament on January 22nd 2007)
11. Pro Wrestling NOAH (JAP)
12. International Wrestling Syndicate (CAN) (Q: El Generico beat Jagged and Kid Kamikaze)
13. Eurostars (FRA)
14. IWA Mid South (USA) (Q: Matt Sydal, named by Ian Rotten on January 18th 2007)
15. 3 Count Wrestling (UK)
16. Dragon gate (JAP)



First round matches are on May 4th with Emil Sitoci taking on Bad Bones so far confirmed. The quarter final matches take place on the 5th with the semi-finals and Finals on May 6th plus other matches.

## Just who will win the King of Europe Cup in April? Massive 16 company tournament debuts in the UK

April may well begin with Wrestlemania 23 but it'll end with the first ever King of Europe Cup tournament in Liverpool with wrestlers from all over the world heading for Merseyside.



The King of Europe Cup sees sixteen of the top wrestling companies in the world sending a representative to the UK. Japan's Dragon Gate are the latest company to sign up for the tournament. Event

organiser Alex Shane said of the news: "The move is a logical step as the KOE Cup is the sponsor of the upcoming ROH UK tour events. ROH has just announced two Japanese shows, one with NOAH, who is already in the KOE Cup and the other with Dragon Gate. This helped finalise the deal although the announcement had to be held off until both ROH Japan shows were announced as to not give anything away. We are all extremely happy to have such a fresh and exciting company on board".

Also competing are: Pro Wrestling NOAH, ROH, TNA, IPW:UK, 1PW, RQW (who are sponsoring the event), FIP, IWA-MS, Chikara, Premier Promotions, IWC, CZW, PWG, wXw and PWU.

Each company has been deciding who to send to Liverpool and the following names have so far been confirmed: Nigel McGuinness (ROH), Roderick Strong (FIP), El Generico (IWC), Chris Hero (CZW), Davey Richards (PWG), Martin Stone (RQW- who qualified after winning the RQW Title tournament in December), Matt Sydal (IWA-MS) and Pac (IPW:UK). PWU will be represented by the winner of the match between Trent Acid and Gary Wolfe on February 24<sup>th</sup>. Dragon Gate will be represented by either CIMA, Naruki Doi or Masato Yoshino. Chikara's representative will be decided on March 24th when Mike Quackenbush takes on Claudio Castagnoli.

The tournament will then continue with a three day event between May 4th and May 6th at the Musikpalette in Essen, Germany.

The event is the brainchild of Doug Williams and Alex Shane who have spent the past eighteen months negotiating to organise this event. Organisers are in talks with companies in Italy and France about the concept of having tournaments of their own during the week in between the huge UK and German event

Doug Williams is without question the greatest overseas ambassador for the British wrestling industry of the last 10

years. He made the following comments regarding his reasons for getting involved in the project. "I really began to make a world wide name for myself after my appearance in the American King of the Indies tournament. After my performance there a world of opportunities opened to me from promoters in more than 20 countries. Ever since then I have often wondered why no one has ever taken the concept and used it in Europe. After speaking to Alex Shane, we both discussed how great it would be to take that tournament to the next level and really do something on a scale that has never been done. We used all our contacts made over a combined 25 years plus in the wrestling business and decided to see what we could pull off".

The current Pro Wrestling NOAH European ambassador continued "We have worked on this for over a year and are confident that this will become one of the biggest events on the worldwide wrestling calendar. 16 of the best promotions from around the entire world sending their very best talent to represent them is a massive deal. To have this tournament then go over to Germany for a 3 day follow up weekend is even bigger. We believe that within two years this will already be considered a must see annual event for fans from all countries and are fully expecting them to travel from all over the world to see it in April."

Alex Shane holds the boost of organising the biggest independent wrestling shows in UK of the last decade. From making the FWA once the most talked about promotion in Europe to the unbelievable International Showdown to the recent and highly acclaimed Ring of Honour UK tour Shane has experience and success in this field like no other. The current ROH European Head of marketing and promotions said

"Everyone involved in this event from the organisers to the 16 companies on board believe that this event will put the UK on the map in a way that no other event has done before. We want to make the King of Europe Cup and annual event which has the world's top promotions clamoring to be involved. We are confident that this will be a massive boost to the UK industry.

For the several UK wrestlers that are picked they will surely be seen by promoters worldwide. UK Promotions will be able to get their product seen on global stage by thousands of potential new fans and British fans that will witness some of the best wrestling that the current stars of today can possibly offer. I am in no way afraid to say that this will be the single most important event I have ever promoted".

The two-day event begins on April 28<sup>th</sup> with a 'Taste of IPW:UK' show from 2-4pm which will feature several overseas stars and see Andy Boy Simmonz defending his IPW:UK Heavyweight Title. Tickets cost £8.50. From 4.30 to 5.30pm there's a chance to meet and get autographs from the wrestlers competing over the weekend. Entry cost £2-50. Then it's on with the first night of the tournament with doors opening at 5.45pm with the show beginning at 6.30pm. The first night sees the eight first round matches.

On Sunday there's another IPW:UK show and signing session followed by the final night of the tournament which sees the King of Europe crowned plus matches involving those knocked out on the Saturday evening. Then it's time to party with the biggest ever wrestling party in history. Held at the Grafton Ballrooms, next door to the Liverpool Olympia, fans can present their KOE Cup tickets and receive reduced entry for £15. Then once inside ALL drinks are 100% free of charge and the number of drinks you can get is UNLIMITED! Wrestlers from all over the UK are invited to this event regardless of their involvement in the KOE Cup so this massive and certainly unforgettable night. The night will feature fans going head to head with wrestlers in grand slam giant sumo contests and for the first time ever in UK wrestling a special King of Europe Cup wet T shirt competition!! The doors open from 10pm and the night will go on until 3am the next morning. This event is strictly over 18's only. For a 3-D tour of the club go to the venue section on the official KOE Cup website at [www.kingofeuropecup.com](http://www.kingofeuropecup.com) or [www.koecup.com](http://www.koecup.com)

There's two interactive features to the event with the concept of prizefighting being introduced. There's already a \$1000 pot in place for the match of the night awards and fans can add to that pot by making donations to reward what are bound to be some great matches by making donations. These can either be made over the two nights or beforehand at the King of Europe Cup website. Fans will be asked to name their top three matches of the night in order, the top three will then take their share of the overall prize fund: the winner gets 55%, second 35% and third 10%. Those making a donation of £20 or more will receive a free gift. Fans will also be able to choose two of the matches that take place on the Sunday card. Of the eight wrestlers who'll be eliminated on Saturday, fans will be asked to nominate two matches they'd love to see, those with the most votes will take place the following night.

*Tickets for this event are as follows*

**Gold Ringside for one day = £75**

Includes free entry to IPW:UK pre show, free entry to signing session and free event poster.

**Gold Ringside ticket for both days = £130** (£20 saving)

These must be booked together. The promoters will try to give you the same seat for both shows but cannot guarantee it.

**Silver Ringside for one day = £60** Includes half price entry to IPW:UK pre show, free entry to signing session and free event poster. **Silver Ringside ticket for both days = £105** (£15 saving) These must be booked together. Again the promoters will try to give you the same seat for both shows

but cannot guarantee it.

**Bronze Ringside for one day = £45**

Includes free entry to signing session and free event poster. **Bronze Ringside for ticket for both days =**

**£80** (£10 saving) These must be booked together.

Again the promoters will try to give you the same seat for both shows but cannot guarantee it.

**VIP packages available**

There are also several VIP and sponsorship packages. These are fantastic for fans who are either in larger groups or fans who want this once a year event to be as special as it possibly can be. *The packages are as follows:*

**VIP Balcony box for 10 - 12 people**

Includes: special post show meet and greet in your VIP box with the stars of the show, free entry and VIP access at post show party, selection of free drinks, free food buffet, hostess to deal with drinks orders, VIP box for afternoon shows, free access and early entry to fan autograph session, free event merchandise selection. This is guaranteed to be an amazing experience for the lucky group who purchase this.

**Price for one night £1,500 Price for both nights**

**£2,250** (this is a saving of £750) There are two boxes only available per night

**Promotion or wrestler sponsorship** You can sponsor your favourite promotion and/or representative/wrestler at two different prices.

**Gold sponsorship**

Includes: 2 VIP Gold Ringside tickets (more can be added on request at fee), free entry and VIP access at post show party, free access and early entry to fan autograph session, free event merchandise selection, a post show meet and greet with your chosen wrestler, mentions of website, during show and in event programme. **price of package £500** (is valid for both nights)

**Silver Sponsorship**

Includes: 2 VIP Bronze Ringside tickets (more can be added on request at fee), free entry and VIP access at post show party, free access and early entry to fan autograph session, a post show meet and greet with your chosen wrestler, mentions of website, during show and in event programme. **Price of package £350** (is valid both nights)

**Other seats are priced at £25 and £20 for ground far ringside, £15 middle balcony and £10 upper balcony**

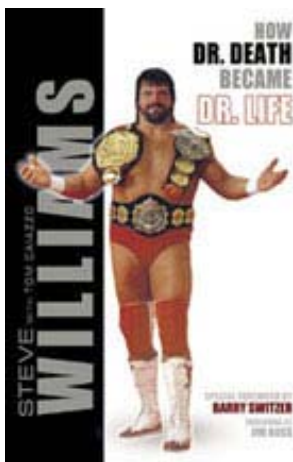
Tickets are available on line by going to [www.kingofeuropecup.com](http://www.kingofeuropecup.com) and are on sale NOW!! Telephone ticket orders can then be made hotline on: **0151 263 6633** lines are open Monday to Saturday 9.30am until 5.30pm The official website is now online at [www.kingofeuropecup.com](http://www.kingofeuropecup.com) or [www.KOECup.com](http://www.KOECup.com)

# Shelf Life

## How Dr Death Became Dr Life By Steve 'Dr Death' Williams and Dr Tom Caiazzo

(Sports Publishing : [www.sportspublishingllc.com](http://www.sportspublishingllc.com))

It's a tough life being a wrestler but often the problems life throws at you in your life outside the ring can be even tougher. Steve 'Dr Death' Williams has had a tremendous career in the ring not just in the States but in Japan too. But in 2004 his life changed forever when he was diagnosed with throat cancer. Just a couple of days before this edition was put online I received his autobiography. In



our next edition I'll be focusing on his career in the ring but this time around I'll be looking at the most important fight of his life.

It's fitting that the first chapter of the book is entitled 'The Fight of my Life.' Waking up covered in blood after a nightmarish three month period of chemotherapy and radiation followed by surgery and months of emotional torment, Steve Williams never even dared dream of one day making it back into the ring, just surviving was his desire. Surgery was required

to plug the hole in his throat taking two and a half feet of muscle from his thigh, an operation that left him unable to speak for months.

It was in 2003 just after Christmas that the nightmare began for Steve Williams. He'd been getting continual pains in his throat and swallowing was becoming difficult. Yet Williams still had a busy schedule, he'd just opened a training school and was due to leave for a tour of Japan and China. Serious illness really has a sense of bad timing doesn't it.

Williams went ahead with the tour but his health problems continued especially with regards to his voice and swallowing. In January 2004 he saw a throat specialist and tests indicated he had throat cancer. Williams writes: "the idea that I might have cancer was inconceivable." It wasn't just any kind of cancer but T4 cancer, the most devastating one you can get and he had a tumor the size of a golf ball in his neck. He was just 42 but had spent years smoking, chewing tobacco and dipping snuff.

Shocked at the news Williams sought a second opinion and made phone calls to doctors all over the world. But the medical centre he'd been diagnosed at was regarded as the best in the world. He knew he had no option but to go back to Houston and begin "the biggest match of my life."

Intensive radiation and chemotherapy treatment began, a treatment so terrible that the man considered as one of the toughest, if not the toughest, in the business almost contemplated committing suicide. But he had the love of his family, particularly his mother who'd survived a battle with breast cancer and from wrestlers and fans around the world.

After three months of treatment, initial X-rays came up negative and within days he was back in the ring. Amazingly he'd been contacting companies in Japan arranging dates despite the treatment he was receiving. It wasn't just a medical nightmare he was going through but a financial one too as the medical bills piled up.

All seemed back on track for him until a phone call he received while on tour in Japan changed his life once more. He wasn't cancer free after all. Williams immediately returned home and was told the dreadful news that the cancer wasn't just back but worse than before and he required life-saving surgery.

That took place in September 2004 with his head being cut open from ear to ear in a nine hour operation that saw his vocal cords, thyroids and deltoid muscles and nerves removed leaving him unable to speak for months. That was the last thing he'd expected while making that brief comeback tour of Japan.

More surgery followed but Williams is no quitter that's for sure and he longed to be back in the wrestling business that he loves. He'd lost a lot of weight and for a period of time he needed to stick his thumb in the stoma—an artificial hole in his throat that allowed him to breathe—to talk. Williams writes about how his life changed 'emotionally, financially, mentally and physically.' Amazingly he was just one credit short of being able to claim disability from social security.

That return to the ring in some form or another was still a major ambition and amazingly it came with the WWE who he'd had a disappointing run with a while back (that's featured in part two of my review in our next edition). WWE were running the Legends storyline with Rob Conway and while attending a Raw taping, Vince McMahon invited him to be part of it.

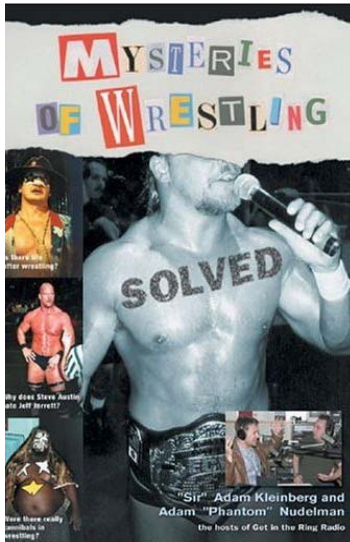
Being back in the ring and hearing the crowd both cheer and boo him was all he dreamed of. More appearances followed and training stints in OWW and DSW, WWE's developmental territories.

Religion plays an important part in his life and he's also appeared for the Christian Wrestling Federation. This part of the book is highly inspirational. As his son wrote in a poem, 'Dr Death soon died and became Dr Life.'



## Mysteries of Wrestling Solved by 'Sir' Adam Kleinberg and Adam 'Phantom' Nudelman (ECW Press)

The wrestling world is full of mysteries isn't it? How has Hardcore Holly managed to stay in WWE for so long and



why does Vince McMahon believe anyone over 7 foot tall is bound to be a good wrestler? The answers to those mysteries are yet to receive an answer but many others are solved in this excellent book by the presenters of the 'Get in the Ring' radio show.

The bonus here is that it isn't just two radio presenters giving their views. There are plenty of expert witnesses who are called upon to solve mysteries such as why does Steve Austin hate Jeff Jarrett? Was there really a

cannibal in wrestling? And Is Hulk Hogan the best friend a wrestler can have? The 'witnesses' include Kamala, Matt 'Doink the Clown' Borne, Jake Roberts, Sid Vicious, Ted Dibiase, Jim Duggan, Jeff Jarrett and Steve Austin. Each topic is given a chapter with more than a touch of humour and it's a great read.

The Hogan chapter is particularly impressive as it's not just the Hulkster who gets a bashing. Harley Race really sticks the boot in (but not followed by a legdrop and a soft pin) when he starts talking about Brutus Beefcake, or whatever his name was on a given day. Race talks about Hogan's desire to have "yes people" around him and how it upset other wrestlers who found themselves lower down the card at the expense of Beefcake.

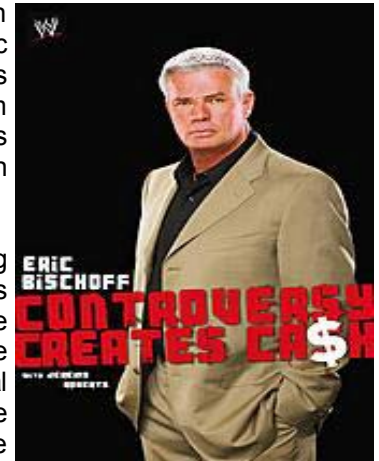
It gets even more interesting when they actually interview Brutus who tells how he owes Hogan a lot (no one shocked there methinks) and Hogan told him to be a wrestler. Cue discussions over what would have happened if Hogan had said to his friend "Brother we're going to be a Drag Queen." Poor Brutus really gets hammered here and won't be sending Jake Roberts any Christmas cards anytime soon. A really scary thought comes from Matt Borne who tells us that there were plans for Hogan to meet Doink the Clown at Wrestlemania IX.

A truly bizarre chapter is the one entitled 'Is Paul Orndorff Dead?' Wrestlers come and go in this business and all someone has to do is miss a booking and the rumours start that they're dead. Remember the Corporal Kirchner incident last year when WWE said he'd passed away when he hadn't? According to rumours, The Ultimate Warrior, Viscera, Kevin Sullivan and of course Paul Orndorff are no longer with us. Wrestling must be full of zombies by now!

longer with us. Wrestling must be full of zombies by now! This really is a great read and a good insight into the wrestling business.

## Cash means Controversy By Eric Bischoff (Pocket Books)

Hero or Villain? The man who should always be remembered for taking WCW to heights they barely dreamed of, or the man who helped destroy the company? That's always the main questions when you talk about Eric Bischoff but finally this autobiography gives him the chance to give his version of his career in wrestling.



Getting into pro wrestling wasn't really Bischoff's number one target in life and he could never have imagined how influential he would become in the business during the 1990s. He joined Verne Gagne's AWA as a salesman and only a financial crisis led to him becoming an on-screen presenter and he puts right the rumours that he was in fact their booker and general manager.

After failing to get a job in the WWF and with AWA floundering and his own financial problems mounting, Bischoff found employment in WCW and a company that seemed to be forever changing. Morale was low, particularly when Bill Watts took over and Bischoff describes that period as "the most miserable time in the company's history." Though he didn't know he'd be responsible for plenty more misery in the years ahead. When Watts got the sack, Bischoff saw his chance and landed the job of Executive Producer and the WCW revolution was about to begin.

Bischoff recalls the struggles he faced in getting policies such as filming and writing stories well in advance (internet spoilers would have had a heyday) and filming at Disneyworld. Despite WCW having stars such as Flair, Sting, Vader, The Steiner Brothers and Rick Rude, the company still wasn't making any money. Add to that booker problems with Rhodes and Flair and it needed something big to change things around and of course that's where Hogan comes in.

Getting him to come on board wasn't easy despite his problems with Vince at the time. Bischoff reveals how initially Hogan didn't respect him and how he owed a great deal to Ric Flair in persuading the Hulkster to join WCW. The story of how Hogan got creative control over his character is definitely interesting and doesn't put Flair in a good light.

A surprising story is how Nitro was created and how it was the last thing Bischoff had on his mind when he called a meeting with Ted Turner. With the two hour live show in his pocket Bischoff didn't mind playing dirty and tells how his 'screw the rules' policy scared some of WCW's staff, particularly those who fancied jumping ship one day.

His opinion on Jesse Ventura is certainly controversial as is his claim that firing Austin from WCW was the best thing that ever happened to him. More revelations follow as he writes about his trip to North Korea, what he should have done to Alundra Blayze's WWE Title belt and why Rey Mysterio had to lose his mask.

The story of the New World Order and Hogan's heel turn are told in depth including an analysis of just why it worked so well. He claims not to have paid ECW a great deal of attention (apart from when he just raided their roster of course),

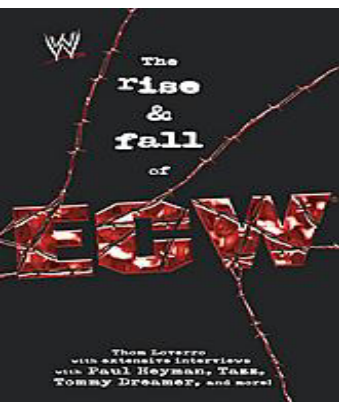
As much as it's good to hear about his achievements, an evil part of us all just want to read about how WCW disintegrated under a mountain of debt. Well, that mountain wasn't quite so high according to Eric and he puts most of the blame on the Time Warner takeover and officials who told him what to do without even knowing what night Nitro was being shown, though the title 'Monday Night Nitro' does have a vague clue!

Basically it's a story of losing control and that was never better summed up when Bischoff found himself as purely an on screen character in WWE, the company he nearly destroyed.

It's an enjoyable book for sure, unless you're an internet writer because he just loves having a go at them. Definitely recommended.

### The Rise and Fall of ECW (Pocket Books)

No this isn't the story of 'December to Dismember' but the latest book to take a glance back at the life and times of one of the most influential wrestling companies of the past twenty years.



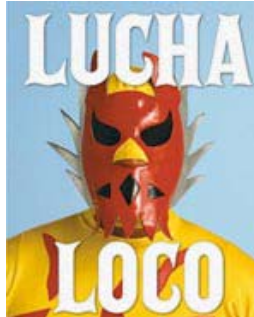
The advantage here is that many of the stars who appeared in ECW are included here giving their views on the highs and lows of the Philadelphia promotion, including of course Paul Heyman plus Taz, Tommy Dreamer, Steve Richards, Mick

Foley and Chris Jericho.

Definitely worth getting your hands on. I wonder if the paperback will include what's happening nowadays. If it does perhaps it'll be titled 'Why Vince should have left ECW alone and let its fans live on their memories.'

## Lucha Loco By Malcolm Venville

Masked Mexican wrestlers always make for a great spectacle and this book is full of fantastic photos. Using large format film photography and traditional camera techniques in a Mexico City studio, Venville purposefully plucks each character from his immediate environment to simply focus on his essence. Beside each wrestler's portrait sits his fighting name in custom designed Mexican-style typography along with a revealing quotation carefully selected from an in-depth interview with the subject. The result is a unique and compelling window into the life of a Luchador - a world normally shrouded in mystery.



I interviewed Malcolm just prior to the book being released last year and began by asking him when his interest in professional wrestling began. "I actually grew up in England watching McManus and Pallo, classic British wrestling." So what made him decide to publish this book and what is it about Mexican wrestling that fascinates him? "No one had



done a comprehensive study of the wrestlers. It's a magic sport, weird, a different sport. It can be dangerous and violent. It's tremendous, very visual. It says a lot about Mexico, it's highly Catholic, lot of mysticism. WWE is very easy to understand, just meatheads running about. Mexico has very light wrestlers, a lot of it is fought up in the air. It's a feast of colour and art but although it's like circus theatre, it can be a brutal sport. There's great wit and humour, Rambo's wife comes out and has a go at everyone then he tells her

to shut up."

So why is this book so different from others? "I've been into photography for many years but I'd never seen this shot in colour, usually up against grey."

Mexican wrestling was featured in the movie 'Nacho Libre' last year, what did Malcolm think of the movie? "Nacho Libre was a lot of fun, it's close to the wrestlers and what it means to Mexicans." The photos really are stunning, for more information on the book go to [www.luchaloco.com](http://www.luchaloco.com)





## Wrestlers in the Movies: Part One

### Our look at professional wrestlers who make their way into the movies begins with Kane and John Cena

#### SEE NO EVIL

#### And you thought Kane was scary in the ring!

One of the most popular wrestlers in World Wrestling Entertainment, Kane has made a name for himself as a bad-boy in an industry already teeming with out-sized personalities. At 7 feet tall and over 300 pounds, the volatile wrestler made his first appearance in 1997 and wasted no time in breaking all the rules: during one broadcast, he set RAW announcer Jim Ross on fire; and he stunned audiences when he "tomb-stoned" WWE CEO Linda McMahon, effectively picking her up and dropping her on her head. In light of this penchant for savagery, it comes as no surprise that Kane would take on the role of Jacob Goodnight, the unstoppable homicidal psychopath in Lionsgate's grisly horror film, 'See No Evil', as his first foray onto the silver screen.



"There are a lot of similarities between myself and Jacob Goodnight," says Kane. "We both had what some people would say are horrible childhoods. And we both grew up to be extremely large powerful men who can now do whatever we want to do. The only difference is that Jacob Goodnight does what he does on a movie screen and I do what I do in the ring."

A hulking mass with razor-sharp, pointed fingernails and a steel plate embedded in his bare skull (a patch-up from a past gun-shot wound), Jacob lives in squalor in an abandoned hotel. But when eight juvenile delinquents arrive to help clean the hotel in exchange for reduced sentences, Jacob hunts them down one by one through a maze of decrepit hallways and rooms. Seeing sin in the eyes of his victims, he kills them and plucks out their eyes, which he collects in specimen jars.

"I think fans of Kane are going to love Jacob Goodnight because he's so brutal, so violent and so sadistic. It's a natural fit," says director Gregory Dark. Joel Simon, President of WWE Films, sees Kane's move into the film industry as a natural extension of his massive popularity. "In Hollywood, the first thing you need to find is an audience for your film," says Simon.

"Kane has that audience. American viewers tune into WWE

shows every single week, 52 weeks a year. We have millions and millions of people who watch us weekly around the world."

And to be sure, WWE audiences don't expect to see Kane in a romantic comedy. "He can be a pretty extreme, horrific guy, so his fans obviously expect something in the horror genre," explains Simon. "We were lucky to find a story that suits him as well as it does." "The movie's definitely more graphic than people will be expecting," says Christina Vidal, who plays Christine, one of the six unfortunate delinquents. "It's just blood and body parts and nastiness all over the place."

No stranger to violence, Kane was unfazed by the severed limbs and buckets of blood that adorned the set. "Personally, I find the gore in the movie comforting. I relate to it," he says. "It's like living out some of my dreams on the big screen." Apart from the scares and the gore, however, SEE NO EVIL distinguishes itself by portraying Jacob Goodnight as

more human than monster. As the story progresses, flashbacks and surprise twists reveal the reasons for Jacob's psychosis, transforming him into a more complex character than most movie



boogey-men. "The Jacob Goodnight character has much more depth than characters like Jason or Freddy Kreuger," says Dark.

"We get an understanding of how he arrived at the place that he did. As a killer, he becomes real and relatable to the audience, which makes him much more frightening than simply a supernatural killer." Adds Kane, "Jacob Goodnight, like myself, is scarier because he's real. He's a living, breathing, human being who does what he does because he likes to do it."

Since Jacob has very little dialogue throughout the course of the film, the burden fell on the director to effectively develop the character with images, something that came easily thanks to Dark's background in music videos. But Dark ultimately credits Kane's performance as the most effective tool

in communicating Jacob's story. "Kane as an actor is incredibly talented," says Dark. "All I had to do was give him a note and he would adjust immediately. He became so invested in the violence and the angst and the insanity of the character that it just showed on his face." "I'm a firm believer that actions speak louder than words," says Kane. "In the ring I speak with my fists and with my feet. Jacob just speaks with an axe and a chain."



While he found a film shoot to be less physically demanding than a professional wrestling match, Kane admits that the actor's trade has its unique challenges. "It's easier to go into the ring than it is on set," he says. "In the WWE, you have 30,000 people screaming your name or hating your guts; whereas here, there's no audience. I had to look inside for my motivation."

Kane's wrestling expertise, however, was an asset during the action-packed

shoot: he performed his own stunts and encouraged his co-stars to do the same. Luke Pegler, who plays Michael, a hardened drug dealer, was so impressed with Kane's skills that he allowed Kane to simulate smashing his face against a wall during a brutal, pivotal scene.

"It looks like he's crushing my skull in his hands and smashing my face against the wall, but in reality I'm not feeling a thing," avows Pegler. "I felt completely safe. He's a master."

Still, Kane still manages to frighten his fellow actors on set. "He scares the crap out of me," admits Michael J. Pagan, who plays Tye. "I didn't really have to act in the scenes or worry about my motivation. When he came crashing through a wall, all I wanted to do was run."

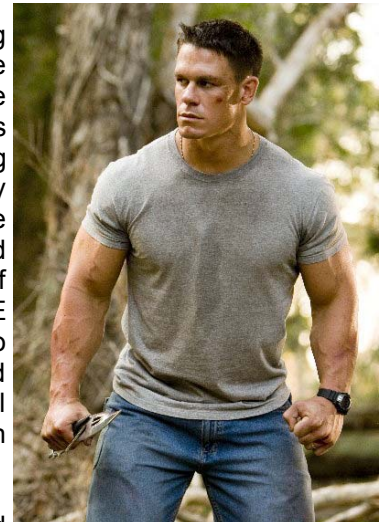
Due to Kane's naturally menacing look, Dark and prosthetics supervisor Jason Baird felt little need to alter his appearance with make-up and prosthetics. "Kane's look by itself is extraordinarily frightening and quite unusual," explains the director. "You don't have to do much. He already has a completely shaved head. He's seven-feet tall and he's huge. All we had to do was make him really filthy and add a few cuts and scars."

Kane, in particular, is pleased with the result. "WWE fans and hardcore horror fans are gonna love this movie," he proclaims. "Because of all the sick, demented stuff that I do on TV, it's nothing compared to what I do when I get on a 30-foot screen."

## From Rapper to Marine

WWE Champion John Cena makes his motion picture debut in the rugged action thriller 'The Marine' Cena is John Triton, a heroic Marine who returns home after being discharged – against his will – from the war in Iraq. Stateside, he finds himself back in action, when his wife (Kelly Carlson) is kidnapped by a murderous gang led by the merciless Rome (Robert Patrick). With everything on the line, the Marine will stop at nothing to carry out his toughest and most important mission.

For WWE, 'The Marine' represents an exciting new venture into the motion picture business. Comments McMahon: "Having successfully submerged itself in the world of television and generated a host of superstar talent, WWE is ideally positioned to bring its unique and powerful cultural sensibility to the motion picture industry."



I am extremely excited about taking WWE into the film business, and we believe that we will achieve new artistic and commercial successes on the big screen." Adds Joel Simon, "The WWE is about entertainment and that's what we wanted to do with 'The Marine' – give the audience pure entertainment – character, action and fun."

The film is character driven, which was important, with a protagonist who's in the wrong place at the wrong time. Then it becomes pure guttural action, which is another reason we selected this script. It's the perfect action vehicle for John Cena, who is one of the WWE's biggest talents. We really do believe that he's the next major action star."

### MAKING "THE MARINE".... IN THE WORDS OF THE FILMMAKERS JOHN CENA: FROM RING TO SCREEN

**John Cena:** "My character in 'The Marine', John Triton, fights for his country – and loves doing so. He has a good wife, and he's really focused on family. He's a down-to-earth, grounded guy."

"How did I get the role? That's like asking me how I became a professional wrestler. I think it is the dream of a lot of people to be both; it certainly was mine! There was really no transition from wrestling to motion pictures. It's not a move up – they're both on the same level. My goal is to keep wrestling, until I can no longer handle it physically. I just want to add movies



and acting into the mix.”

“In ‘The Marine’ I’m not as over-the-top as I am in the ring, where I’m usually the one talking trash and making fun of my opponents. In the film, I have to be soft-spoken – a walk-softly-and-carry-a-big-stick kind of guy.”

“I missed the roar of the [wrestling] crowd while I was filming, and I can’t wait to get back to that. Filming is a whole different experience from wrestling.”



“Robert Patrick plays the lead bad guy. He gets to be the witty character – the guy who’s a snazzy dresser and shoots first and asks questions later.”

“Kelly Carlson plays my wife, a character very different than her role on ‘Nip/Tuck.’ In our film, she’s very clean-cut and wholesome – but still very sexy.”

“Kelly [Carlson] can fight. She and Abigail Bianca, who plays the villainous

Angela, have a fight sequence in the film, where they went at it WWE style! I think [the WWE wrestlers] The Divas would be proud of their work. Kelly and Abigail were really in [their fight scene] with each other. They made sure each kick and punch meant something. When I heard that they accidentally really connected [blows] by mistake, I patted them on the shoulder and said, ‘Welcome to the WWE.’”

“I wanted audiences [seeing ‘The Marine’] to get their money’s worth. You’re going to see some great action – and you’re going to believe in John Triton.”

#### ROBERT PATRICK: RETURN TO VILLAINY

Patrick: “I don’t think I’ve ever worked with anybody as powerfully built as John Cena. Arnold [Schwarzenegger] in ‘Terminator 2’ was big – but John’s enormous. I’m sure he’s not an easy guy to throw around the [wrestling] ring.”

“John Cena should be the next Terminator. I told John he should go ahead and take that job.

#### JOHN BONITO: A NEW ACTION FILM MAESTRO

John Bonito: “I was not familiar with John Cena’s work as a wrestler, but after working with him on THE MARINE, I was very impressed with his work ethic – every day he came to play. He was a consummate professional.”

“John Cena did many of his own stunts: He jumped cars, smashed into cars, jumped out of burning buildings. He was blown up, shot at, stabbed, punched and kicked. He also has a natural charisma; the camera loves him.”

#### JOEL SIMON: A NEW ERA FOR THE WWE

Joel Simon: “Vince and Linda McMahon told me what they were looking for in a film company. They wanted to make a full commitment to the motion picture business. Most of all, we all wanted to fulfil the expectations of the WWE fans. We have this wonderful audience that watches our programming every week. Fulfilling their expectations for WWE funded movies was what most excited me.”

“When I [co-produced] ‘X-Men,’ it took six years to get the film off the ground. It took ‘Wild, Wild West’ [on which Simon was an executive producer] five years in development. That’s just the pace of Hollywood. Vince McMahon’s pace is very simple: He wakes up on Monday morning with an idea, and that idea is on TV the same night.”

“The first thing we [WWE’s Vince McMahon, Linda McMahon and Simon] decided was that we’re never going to make films about wrestlers. We are not going to be in the wrestling-film business because that’s what we do in our day jobs.”

In our next edition The Rock talks about his new movie and we look at other wrestling related movies out soon including a biopic of Andre the Giant plus the latest news about the new Steve Austin movie..

### In the Next Edition of Piledriver Online

Steve ‘Doctor Death’ Williams

The WWE Hall of Fame

April Hunter

King of Europe Cup Update

ASW at Southampton Guildhall

The Top Ten Title matches at  
Wrestlemania

And lots More!

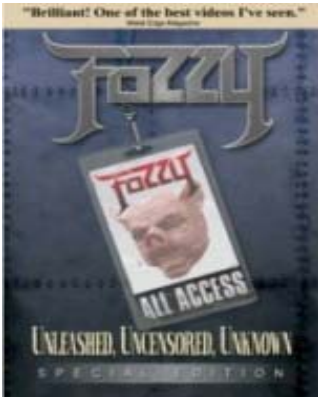
## Life Inside and Outside of the WWE

### Piledriver Online interviews Chris Jericho

So which wrestler do you miss most? For some it's Hogan, others yearn for the return of The Rock or Steve Austin but for me I just wish Chris Jericho would make a comeback. He left WWE in 2005 and hasn't been seen in a ring since. I interviewed him last year in a rather small changing room at the Wedgewood Rooms in Southsea just prior to a Fozzy concert. It proved to be an interesting chat about life inside and outside of WWE and with his band Fozzy.

#### So how's the tour going?

It's going great, the first three shows were sold out and tonight looks good so it's great. It's the fifth time here in the last twelve months and it's getting better and better every time



#### Why do you think British fans love Fozzy so much?

I don't know it's hard to say. Maybe they're not as much as a trendy culture as it is in the States where people like what they like and that's it, so they're not worried about what the music industry says or the radio says or whatever.

#### So how did the band get started?

I met Rich (Ward) backstage at a wrestling show back in 1998 when I was in WCW. Just thought we had a lot in common and just decided that since I was a musician and I was a fan of his and he was a fan of mine, we just started shooting the breeze and said why don't we put together a band and have some fun, play some cover songs and it started out like anyone else does. Just got more serious about it as we worked on it and six years

later here we are.

#### Initially there was a storyline attached to the group?

We were playing a lot of covers and rather than it be like any other covers band we had a whole storyline, a Blues Brothers kind of thing. That was a fun thing and it made it more creative and that was fun for a while, I t just ran its course and I said that we continue playing that stuff or we just stop playing, there's a lot we can do, a lot we felt we could accomplish.

#### Which is it hardest to make it in, the music business or professional wrestling?

Probably music. There are so many bands and in wrestling there's so few talented guys that if you have talent you'll make it eventually. It's not easy but eventually you make it if you stick with it. In music there are a lot of talented guys that never make it. That's just the way it goes and I'm sure there's a million bands who think the level that we are is like playing Madison Square Garden

#### People know your name from WWE do you have to prove yourself musically even more just to show you're not making it just because of your name?

Exactly but I've been a musician for a lot longer than I've been in pro wrestling. I've been playing in bands since I was twelve and singing and playing bass since I was ten. It's something I've always wanted to do and had my sights set on. Even when I started wrestling I always had a band and wrote my own songs and I recorded my own demo's, things along those lines, so a lot of people check on this band because of who I am and a lot of people don't check on the band because of who I am and at the end of the day when they hear the music it doesn't matter whether I'm a butcher, baker, candlestick maker, the point is that the music is good and the band is great.

#### It's been good though to have WWE to help push your music

In some ways it was but we specifically stayed away from that a lot. We didn't promote it the way John (Cena) promoted his record with the title belt on the cover. This is not a WWE project, it never has been. It's my project, my band and I've played WWE a couple of times but then after a while, the last time they wanted us to play I didn't think it was right for Fozzy to play as a WWE product with the idea just to be out there to be booed just because I was a heel

This was not a wrestling project, people like my band and people like watching me wrestle and it's two separate things. They intersect from time to time but like I said the way things are going here, we're slowly climbing up the ladder outside the confines of wrestling and that's the only way we can do this.

#### Are you enjoying your time away from WWE?

Absolutely, absolutely.

**Was it a difficult decision to make?**

It wasn't difficult at all. I made the decision probably about a year ago and told Vince about it four months before my contract expired. He asked me to stay on an extra month till Summerslam and I did. It wasn't a hard decision to make at all. I've been doing it for so long, for about fifteen years and I'd accomplished everything I wanted to accomplish and a whole lot more and there just wasn't anything more for me to accomplish in WWE at that point of time. It wasn't a hard decision to make, there's a lot of things I want to do, what I want to work on. I want to stay at home more with my family and my son. I could still be there, could be there till I'm fifty if I wanted to just say I've done it. Mentally I think I was burnt out, physically I wasn't, and I think I was at the top level that I could be at. I went out at the top level and that's the way it should be. I don't want to be one of those guys who stay there just to be there, there's other things I can do.



**What did Vince think when he found out he was losing one of his top wrestlers?**

I don't think he was too happy about it but I didn't leave him in the lurch. I gave him four months warning and I stayed on for an extra month and I stayed on for an extra show. I wasn't supposed to work after Summerslam but he asked me to do that weekend and I did. So he can't have any work after Summerslam but he asked me to do that weekend and I did. So he can't have any complaints about it like I said with the way his talent roster is now, I think the level of popularity or what you want to call it or the level of professionalism I bring to the ring and to the whole show is a big loss but he survives, the business goes on.

**What's Vince McMahon like to work for?**

He's great, the best boss I ever worked for.

**How did WWE compare to working in WCW?**

There's no comparison. In WCW I didn't know who the boss was. There were about sixteen different bosses because Hogan was the boss, and Nash was the boss and Savage was the boss and Eric who was supposed to be the boss was kind of boss but not really the boss. You go into WWE and see how Vince's ship is run and that's the way you run a business. There's ups and downs and they have their faults as well but as a boss, as a leader, when you work in the WWE you know who the boss is. There is no doubt about who the boss is.

**So are you going to go back to WWE?**

I'm not sure yet. I'm in no rush. I don't miss it, I still watch it, not all the time but from time to time, some things I like and some things I hate.

**What do you hate?**

There's a lot of stuff I don't like. I don't like the live sex. I don't like the whole thing about Eddie and how they're kind of prostituting that but that's Vince he has no inhibitions. He'll do whatever he thinks he can. To get controversy and get business but that's not why I got into wrestling to watch a live sex show, it's a waste of time, a waste of my time as a fan, as a performer but wrestling is still fun to watch and I enjoy it but I'm in no hurry to return at this point.

**How will you feel when it's Wrestlemania, will part of you wish you were there?**

I don't think so. I haven't felt that way for Royal Rumble or for anything else. Wrestlemania is a great time, there's no doubt about it but I stole the show at Wrestlemania 19 with Shawn Michaels and I headlined Wrestlemania 18 with Triple H so it's not like I have any reason to go back for personal goals. I'll watch it but I won't miss being there.

**Is there a part of you that doesn't want to go back?**

I wouldn't say I don't want to go back but if I never went back I probably wouldn't be sad because there's no unfinished business that I have. If there was something that I wanted to do, like if I hadn't been champion or maybe if I wanted to wrestle a sixty minute match or something that I hadn't done but there isn't anything like that, that I haven't done so like I said, when the time is right I'll know if I'll go back but I'm happy doing what I'm doing now.

**What was it like when you found out you were going to be Undisputed Champion?**

It was really cool. I didn't find out about it until a week before. I did a match with Steve Austin about two weeks before and he beat me clean and I didn't understand why we were doing this four-man tournament if he beat me clean two weeks before but now I know why.

**Is it easier for champions in WWE now when there are two champs?**

It's changing and you forget that I was the first undisputed champion and I had it for the longest. I had it for four

months, Triple H had it for a month, Hogan a month, Undertaker had it for a couple, Rock for a couple and then Brock had it and that was it. Only a handful of guys had it but I had it the longest. Yeah man the two champions make it a little bit easier for the champion now, with the one champion it rested on his shoulders. It wasn't just like it was me at the top but it was definitely a big part of the puzzle and the buy rates while I was champion were great buy rates. There's other reasons for that but I was the champ in the title match for all three of those PPVs.

**What do you feel about the brand split?**

I thought it was an experiment maybe worth the try. I kind of understood why they did it but I thought it was a bit weird. In retrospect now they've tried it, sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. I think maybe it's time to go back together again. I don't think what they've wanted to achieve has been happening. They're trying to create the stars but it's not like they have the star quality on the roster.

**You mentioned about the Rey Mysterio and Eddie Guerrero storyline, why do you feel they're doing this?**

I don't know, I don't understand it. I understand there's the respect factor and Eddie was a popular guy with the crowd but there's only so far you can go before it starts feeling dirty. It starts feeling why are they doing this? Why is he allowing it to happen? But I'm not there so it's just my opinion and what do I know I don't work for Vince

**So going back in time, how did you get started as a pro wrestler?**

I just grew up watching wrestling. I watched it with my grandmother all the time. It was just something I wanted to do, enjoyed the athleticism, the character's individual personalities and thought that's the way I want to go.

**How difficult was it getting started?**

It was really difficult. Back in 1990 there was a lot of places to work, a lot more places to work than there are now. It was still the big man era and that didn't start changing until 1995 when WCW started using some of the cruiserweight guys and ECW brought in the guys who had made it in Japan, the Junior Heavyweights. So it was kind of hard to break in. I broke-in in Canada, started out at a small level, built a name from there and got the chance to work overseas. That was the way in and I wouldn't change it for anything. The guys today, they've been in OVW for about six weeks or six months and I feel sorry for them because they're not ready.

**That's kind of what happened to Paul Burchill who didn't really have a tremendous amount of experience even before joining WWE**

And the thing is that if Paul Burchill came and punched me in the face I wouldn't know who he was. I don't think I've ever seen him on TV. I knew everyone in the business because you saw them around but good for him, if he trained over here he's probably better than half the guys

More information about Chris Jericho, who's about to start a meet and greet tour around the USA at [www.chrisjericho.com](http://www.chrisjericho.com)

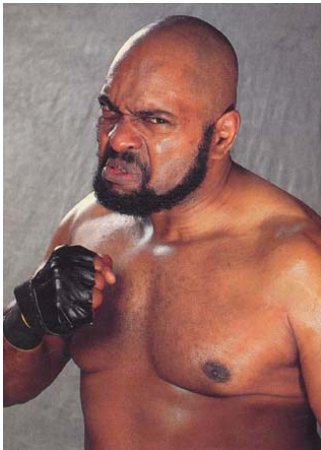
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## In Memory



### Allen Coage: aka Bad News Allen and Bad News Brown

Former Olympic judo bronze medalist Allen Coage -- better known as Bad News Allen and Bad News Brown died suddenly on March 6th in Calgary having been rushed to hospital with chest pains, he was 63. He'd recently had hip replacement surgery.

Born in Brooklyn he represented the USA at the 1976 Montreal Olympics winning a Bronze medal in the Judo Heavyweight category. It was in judo that his competitors started calling him 'Bad News.' and then began training as a pro wrestler in Japan making appearances for NJPW as Buffalo Coage. He then returned home and became Bad News Allen in the Calgary Stampede promotion.

He's probably best known for his spell in the WWF in the late 1980s as Bad News Brown. He won a Battle Royal at Wrestlemania IV with Bret Hart the last eliminated. A feud followed with Hart now a face. December 1988 saw him unsuccessfully challenge Randy Savage for the WWF Title. At Wrestlemania VI he faced Roddy Piper in the match that saw Piper painted half black. His time in the company wasn't an enjoyable one and he only did it to raise money for his family. Talking about his time in the company, he said: "They handcuffed me. They pretty much didn't let me do what I should have done. He eventually retired due to knee problems and worked as a commentator for Stampede Wrestling and in later years as a security guard. We'll have a full obituary in our next edition.

## Mike Awesome

Former ECW World Champion Mike Awesome committed suicide on February 17th. Awesome grew up in Tampa Bay and after leaving college trained as a professional wrestler under Steve Keirn making his pro debut in 1989. his big break came in Japan where as 'The Gladiator' in FMW he achieved tremendous success winning the FW Independent World Title in 1996 beating Wing Kaneura.. He returned to the States periodically wrestling for ECW in 1994. He returned to the States in 1999 and joined ECW winning the ECW World Title at Anarchy Rulz beating Taz and Masato Tanaka in a three-way dance dethroning Taz.



Awesome held the tag titles as well teaming up with Raven but it was the manner in which he lost the ECW World Title that he'll probably be best remembered for. As many ECW wrestlers did in those days he left the company and joined WCW in 2000. Trouble was when he made his debut on Nitro attacking Kevin Nash, he was still the ECW champion. WCW had planned a storyline in which Awesome put the ECW belt in a bin but Paul Heyman got an injunction stopping that happening.

With Awesome still under contract ECW received compensation and WCW had to acknowledge the fact Awesome held the ECW title. Heyman also asked for Awesome to wrestle one more match in ECW against an opponent of his choice in which the title would change hands. On April 13, 2000 Awesome did just that and wasn't even allowed in the building before the match or told his opponent who turned out to be the WWE star and former ECW Champion, Tazz.

WCW gave Awesome some pretty terrible gimmicks as 'The Career Killer', 'The Fat Chick Thriller' and 'That 70's Guy.' He did have some success with the company with feuds against Bam Bam Bigelow, Lance Storm, Jeff Jarrett and DDP. He was part of the New Blood Gang with Billy Kidman, Sean O'Haire, Chuck Palumbo and Shane Douglas.

When WCW closed, Awesome was initially part of the Invasion storyline winning the Hardcore Title from Rhyno at Madison Square Garden, then teaming up with Lance Storm losing to Edge and Christian at the Invasion PPV but in 2002 he was released by the company. A brief spell in TNA and Japan followed and in 2005 he had one hell of a match with old rival Masato Tanaka at One Night Stand. He retired in 2006 to sell real estate but on February 17th he was found dead after hanging himself.

# Timeslip

## A Look Back at the History of Professional Wrestling

### Did Showmanship damage British Wrestling in the 80's?

Anyone who knows me will tell you that I love masked wrestlers and gimmicks such as The Wildman of Borneo, Pedro the Gypsy, Rikki Starr etc etc. However, as much as I like the outrageous characters I equally appreciate the talents of stars such as Johnny Saint (interviewed next month in Piledriver Online), Mark Rocco, Steve Grey, Mike Marino and many more. Anyway, during one of my weekly trawls around the charity shops of Southampton, I came across a World of Sport annual from 1980 for just £1. It included an article that certainly got me thinking.

It was a two page article under the heading 'Too much showmanship could ruin wrestling' says Kent Walton (who was the commentator for the 4pm wrestling show). An interesting argument for sure especially at that point in British wrestling history. There were shows all over the country most nights and attendances were very high, as Kent Walton says: "I've seen people standing eight deep in the halls with every seat taken." But what was causing this boom in wrestling attendances?

Walton felt that it was the gimmick wrestlers who were partly responsible and it had put the promoters in a pleasant quandary. "The promoters have a problem because they want to see people coming in the halls. At the moment they're getting that and they may be reluctant to make changes."

In the 1980's British wrestling did see chain and ladder matches take place but that didn't really damage professional wrestling to the extent that Kent Walton perhaps thought it did. The fact those matches often included stars such as Mark Rocco, Marty Jones, Kendo Nagasaki, Drew McDonald and Fit Finlay hardly meant they were being contested by untalented wrestlers.



Walton felt sure that the rise in attendances was down to the showmanship and his fear was that "the razzamatazz and showmanship that has appeared will take over from the proper stuff." There was still plenty of great talent on show though and any card that included Breaks, Saint, Grey, Jones, Rocco etc wasn't going to disappoint the fans.

There's no specific names included in the article but the one action photo features Big Daddy in a match against Kojak Kirk and definitely any article about showmanship possibly damaging British wrestling in the 80s has to take a look at the Big Daddy phenomenon. Take a look at two of the biggest British wrestling cards of the decade, both headlined by Big Daddy at Wembley Arena against Giant Haystacks and Mighty John Quinn.

The arena was packed out and any current wrestling promoter would kill for that attendance at such a prestige venue. But what about the actual main events? The ring entrances were longer than the actual matches and that just about says it all. Mighty John Quinn wrestled all over the UK and enjoyed runs as World Heavyweight Champion having memorable feuds with Tony St.Clair and Wayne Bridges but he lost to Big Daddy in a couple of minutes, knocked out, not even pinned. Sure there was a big attendance and the fans probably went home happy as their hero triumphed again but were they really entertained and was such a short main event good for British wrestling?

The continual use of Big Daddy in tag matches was just oh so predictable. Put Daddy in with a lighter wrestler who gets a good bashing from their two heavier opponents and then in comes Daddy to beat them both in just a few minutes. Longer matches than at Wembley but with inevitable endings. Fans just got bored with it in the end and definitely Big Daddy helped kill the golden goose.

Kent Walton was worried that "the real skills of wrestling are being left behind" and he was concerned about the fact that wrestlers weren't coming through the ranks the way they used to by winning junior titles and then becoming senior champions. He also spoke out against all-in wrestling which he thought was "ridiculous." Heaven knows what he would have made of today when wrestlers seem to make their debut after a few weeks training and hardcore matches are common place.

Walton was a big fan of the technical side of professional wrestling and adored stars such as George Kidd and Mike Marino who "have true ability and skill." But even when he began covering wrestling in the 1950s there was a showmanship element to professional wrestling. In the years that followed he must have seen wrestlers such as Ricki Starr, Quasimodo, The Wildman of Borneo and masked wrestlers aplenty.

British wrestling may have enjoyed success in the early 1980s but the loss of coverage on World of Sport definitely harmed it. Ironically it was that programme showing action from the WWF where showmanship was taken to a completely different level, that helped put the nails in the coffin of the famous 4pm slot.

Undoubtedly the Big Daddy era has to be blamed for a lack of top level technical wrestling in the main events that people saw on television but there was always a place for technical wrestling on cards around the country.

What do you think? Why not email me via the website.

## Wrestling Memories

By Ian Dowland.

I was at Oxford Town Hall one night back in the dark ages; The Tarantula and I were working for Brian Dixon. On this particular night The Tarantula with Mr.C.J. Percival (me) as his Manager wrestled Monty Swann. During this bout Monty Swann rolled The Tarantula over to get the winning fall, Monty's bum was in the air as he got The Tarantula trapped, so as I was sat in the outside corner of the ring I could see that The Tarantula was about to lose the match so as the referee started his count I grabbed a walking stick from an old man that was sat in the front row and I took it and from outside of the ring I poked Monty Swann up the bum and pushed him forward off from getting the winning fall, The Tarantula took full advantage of my actions and he got the stunned Monty Swann and pulled him down and The Tarantula took the winning fall. With that the house 'went up' the Fans surged forward and they grabbed me as I was trying to get into the ring, I had one leg inside the ropes and one leg outside the ropes and the Fans had me they pulled me to the ground and was kicking me and punching me, Monty Swann obviously was angry by my actions of pushing him off from getting the winning fall so he jumped out of the ring to the area that I was being beat up by the Fans, Monty Swann took over beating me up and the Fans stood around calling for my blood.

The Fans really took me apart on that night and they pulled my shoes off and I never recovered them. Other Wrestlers and officials had to come out of the dressing rooms and to pull Monty Swann off of me, they eventually rescued me from Monty and the Fans and they got me back to the dressing room. When we were backstage Monty burst into our dressing room and started on me again but I had The Tarantula there to help me but Monty was in a rage and The Tarantula and I had to make an escape and leave the venue as everything was brewing up with other Wrestlers taking Monty's side.

OK it was wrong of me to have used that walking stick in the way that I did but I had to do what I was paid for, and that was to help in any way that I could to ensure that my Wrestler won his match.

We have all heard these stories about wrestling not being real, but I can tell you that I was very lucky on that night to have got out of Oxford alive. I have been in a lot of situations similar to this and it is not funny. It is not much fun being beat up by a Wrestler but it is even worse when a whole audience goes for you.

Monty Swann never did forget that night and when I appeared on same shows as him after that night in Oxford I had to stay well out of his reach. You might say that Monty Swann was a "mid-carder" and things like that but I saw him as a very hard man with a hard fist that gave me a black eye plus I got concussion and cracked ribs from him.

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## Timewarp

### A Look Back at events in March through the ages

#### Timewarp International

Over the next two pages we look back at what happened in March in the years gone by. We start by looking at events around the world.

It's not that common that major titles in WWE, WCW and NWA changed hands overseas but March seems to be an exception to the rule. Back in 1994, WWE were on tour in England and the dreadful Men on a Mission won the tag titles from The Quebecers in London, however two days later in Sheffield, the Canadians regained their titles. Ten years before that, the NWA Heavyweight Title changed hands twice in two different countries. Harley Race beat Ric Flair to win the belt in Wellington, New Zealand and two days later Flair began another title reign with a win in Singapore. The WCW Cruiserweight title also changed hands in 1996 when Shinjiro Otani beat Chris Benoit in a tournament final.

19 years ago March began without a WWE champion. Andre the Giant had beaten Hulk Hogan and tried to sell the belt to The Million Dollar Man leading to the title being declared vacant. A one-night tournament was held at Wrestlemania IV. The first round saw The Million Dollar Man Ted Dibiase (whose shoot interview we're reviewing in our next edition) beat Jim Duggan, Dan Muraco beat Dino Bravo, Greg Valentine beat Ricky Steamboat, Randy Savage beat Butch Reed, The One Man Gang beat Bam Bam Bigelow and Rick Rude drew with Jake Roberts causing both to be eliminated. Hogan and Andre met in the quarter finals and both were disqualified for using chairs after just 5 minutes of action. That effectively meant that the quarter final between Dibiase and Muraco became a semi-final and Dibiase won in 5 minutes to reach the final. Randy Savage beat Greg Valentine to secure a semi-final match against The One Man Gang who had a bye through due to the Rude/Roberts double elimination. Savage reached the final with his opponent disqualified after four minutes. Savage then won his first WWE Title beating Dibiase after interference by Hogan. The whole tournament lasted just 70 minutes and 15 of that was Rude v Roberts!

The Undertaker has never lost at Wrestlemania but his bid to get the World Heavyweight title off Batista is only his second title match at Wrestlemania. Back in 1997 he beat Sid to win the WWE Title.

Back to the 1970s now and the WWE tag titles changed hands in 1978 when the team of Dominic DeNucci and Dino Bravo beat Professor Tanaka and Mr Fuji. The IC title changed hands twice in 1999 as Jesse James beat Val Venis and then two weeks later lost the belt to Goldust. Wendi Richter won the women's title in 1985 beating Lelani Kai at Wrestlemania I and in 2000 Stephanie McMahon won the title with a win over Jacquelyn.

Way back in 1922 Ed 'Strangler' Lewis beat Stanislaus Zbysko to win the NWA World Heavyweight Title.

March 2003 saw Samoa Joe win the ROH World Heavyweight title and he held it for 21 months before dropping the belt to Austin Aries.

In Japan, Big Van Vader lost his IWGP Title to Tatsumi Fujinami in 1991. The following year he tagged with Bam Bam Bigelow to win the IWGP International Tag Titles from Hiroshi Hase and The Great Muta.

#### Timewarp UK

We start this month at the Royal Albert Hall in London and a card 51 years ago in 1956. Back in those days overseas imports were mostly from Europe rather than the States. That year, Mick McManus beat Julien Morice from France and Judo Al Hayes who was later to find fame in the USA lost to Dave Armstrong, while Mike Marino beat Jean Boyr.

To 1976 now and a famous match between two great masked wrestlers. On March 24th, Kendo Nagasaki beat Kung Fu and the loser unmasked. Here Eddie Hamill aka The Amazing Kung Fu talks about that match.

"My fight with Kendo Nagasaki took place on March 27th at the Royal Albert Hall in London which was THE prime venue in the UK. It was a top of the bill match which had been demanded by the fans as they wanted to see two of the most popular masked wrestlers in British wrestling at that time in the ring together. It was billed as a fight to the finish with the loser to unmask. Although taking on a strong opponent four stone heavier than myself it was a fast and exciting contest in front of nearly 5,000 fans which filled the hall to capacity. The atmosphere was electric with the audience divided into two camps and cheering on their favourite. After three grueling rounds it came to an end in round four when Kendo executed his 'Kamikaz Crash' which resulted in a knockout win for him. Being the loser, I had no alternative but to unmask." More about Eddie at [www.theamazingkungfu.co.uk](http://www.theamazingkungfu.co.uk) and in our next edition. Also on that card, Mike Marino and Steve Veidor beat the team of Giant Haystacks and Big Daddy who was a heel at the time. March 1979 saw a tag team KO tournament won by Big Daddy (now very much a fan favourite) and Steve Grey who had





earlier beaten Ed and Gary Wensor and then defeated Bruiser Muir and Banger Walsh who'd previously beaten Clive Myers and the late Chris Adams.

The card also saw Mal Sanders beat Mick McManus and Pat Roach defeat Mighty John Quinn. Now reality TV shows aren't that new you know. Back in 1980 Esther Rantzen's show 'The Big Time' had an episode about wrestling and in March of that year, 'Rip Rawlinson' made his debut and lost to John Naylor.

Back to Kung Fu , at Digbeth in March 1978 he won a KO tournament beating Barry Douglas and then The Zebra Kid by KO in the Final. That same month he lost a title shot against Mark Rocco as he attempted to win the British Heavy/Middleweight Title.

Back 30 years now to 1977 and a tournament in Reading was won by Big John Elijah who beat Tug Holton and then Butcher Bond in the Final. Great tag match in Bedworth as the team of Mick McManus and Steve Logan beat The Royal Brothers. More tag action in Worthing as Steve Veidor and Robby Baron beat Kendo Nagasaki and The Mad Axeman.

The legendary Dynamite Kid was still in action in the UK back in 1977 and had a great victory over Alan Dennison in Wolverhampton on a card that saw Kendo Nagasaki team up with Count Bartelli, the man he famously unmasked, to beat Wild Angus and John Kowalski.

To 1980 now and in Bedworth Mick McManus beat Brian Maxine. Belle Vue saw a team match that concluded with Big Daddy, Kid Chocolate & Chris Adams beating Mark Rocco, Banger Walsh & Sid Cooper. Mr Yasu Fuji was on tour in the UK and filmed a match for World of Sport at Digbeth as he lost to Colin Joynson. Later in the month he had some matches with Marty Jones, Wayne Bridges and Chris Adams and beat Johnny Wilson in Chelmsford.

25 years ago in March 1982, Fit Finlay beat Young David in Bristol and probably didn't dream he'd be appearing at Wrestlemania a quarter of a century later. Mr Fuji was back, this time tagging with Mighty John Quinn and losing to the team of Johnny Kincaid and Tony St. Clair.

That month's World of Sport filming was in Hemel Hempstead and Big Daddy beat Big Jim Harris, better known of course as Kamala. That card also saw Kwik Kik Lee beat Lucky Gordon. The St. Clair v Quinn feud was big that month and it included a win for the Brit in a ladder match held at Dunstable.

In another gimmick match that month Marty Jones beat Mark Rocco in a chain match held in Glasgow. That card also saw Alan Dennison beat Jim Breaks and Pat Roach beat Big Jim Harris. Could the month get any worse for him? It sure did as he broke his ankle during a match with Kwik Kik Lee in Cleethorpes. Meanwhile in Preston the tag team of Dangerous Danny Lynch and Crusher Mason, who used to scare the hell out of me as a kid beat the team of Bobo Matu and Honey Boy Zimba. Finally for

1982 we go to Croydon and Sid Cooper got himself disqualified yet again, this time losing to referee Max Ward. The following year Cooper had a Double KO with another referee, Ken Lazenby.

### Title Matches

In 1978 Johnny Saint beat Jim Breaks to retain his World Lightweight Title. That same year, The Dynamite Kid beat Jean Corne to win the European Welterweight Title, Mark Rocco beat Bert Royal to retain the British Heavy/Middleweight Title

Steve Grey beat Jim Breaks by DQ to reach the final of the KO Tournament for the vacant British Lightweight Title, John Naylor drew with Bobby Ryan in the second semi final. Ryan won the rematch and the title match took place in April with Grey winning the belt.

In 1981, Jon Cortez beat Jim Breaks at the Royal Albert Hall to become European Lightweight champion. The following year saw Mark Rocco beating Marty Jones to retain his World Heavy/Middleweight title and Mighty John Quinn beat Tony St.Clair to retain his World Heavyweight Title.

Mixed results for Jim Breaks in 1983 as he lost a title challenge to Steve Grey for the British Lightweight title but three days later beat Alan Dennison to retain his British Welterweight Title. The following night he lost again to Grey.

1984 saw Mighty John Quinn beat Pete Curry and Wayne Bridges in defences of his World Heavyweight Title and Jackie Robinson beat Mike Jordan to retain the European Lightweight Title. Alan Kilby beat Dave Duran to retain his British Heavy/Middleweight Title and Fit Finlay beat Vic Faulkner to retain his World Mid/Heavyweight Title while Mitzi Mueller beat Klondyke Kate to retain the British Ladies Title. Tony St. Clair beat King Kong Kirk in a defence of his British Heavyweight Title.

In 1986, Brian Maxine beat the late Rocky Moran to retain his British Middleweight Title in Kings Lynn, Mike Bennett beat Steve Logan to win the Grand Prix Belt shown on ITV's Wrestling Show and Jim Breaks beat Jackie Robinson to retain his European Lightweight Title while Jon Cortez beat Johnny Saint to keep hold of his World Lightweight Title.

Twenty years ago, Fuji Yamada beat Mark Rocco to win the World Heavy/Middleweight Title and the late Owen Hart was in the UK. He lost to Gil Singh in Cheltenham and fought Marty Jones for the vacant World Mid/Heavyweight Title with the Brit getting the win in Bradford. He also tagged with Skull Murphy going down to the team of Marty Jones and Richie Brooks.

A bad night for Jim Breaks as he lost the European Lightweight Title to Peter Bainbridge on the 9th. In 1991 Fit Finlay beat Dave Taylor to retain the British Heavyweight Title...

## The Legend Lives On A Four Page Tribute to Kendo Nagasaki Beginning with an interview with the legendary star

***Disclaimer from "The Man Behind the Mask":***

***As was stated on BBC's Arena programme, "Masters Of The Canvas," Kendo Nagasaki is only ever experienced in the wrestling ring, following deep meditation, and he does not speak. However, the man behind the mask, who is the medium which channels the spirit of Kendo Nagasaki, can try to answer your questions on his behalf.***

***Kendo Nagasaki exists on a spiritual plane – he has been incarnate in earlier times, but now communicates wisdom and power through a mortal medium.***

**When did you first become interested in professional wrestling**

I now realise that my whole life was a dawning of awareness towards Kendo Nagasaki, but before I was fully aware of him, he was unconsciously guiding me towards judo, aikido and – finally – the Samurai-derived art of kendo. This began in 1957



**Once that interest was formed, how long was it before you decided to become a professional wrestler?**

In 1963, a traumatic event in my life was the trigger to focus all my skills, training, and experience on wrestling – all this was required in order to channel Kendo Nagasaki.

**Who trained you and how hard did you find the training process?**

Kenashiro Abbe was my sensi for judo and the oriental arts, and my wrestling skills were progressed by Billy Riley. The training was extremely arduous and required enormous personal discipline.

**What advice would you give to anyone who wants to become a professional wrestler?**

It's necessary to become highly proficient in the techniques and skills of submission wrestling, and then to fine-tune your professional ring presence and to develop an original persona.

**What can you remember about your professional debut in 1964 and the early days of your career?**

This was Kendo Nagasaki's debut public appearance. It was a dark, wet, and windy November night, and the hall was packed to capacity. My opponent, Jumping Jim Hussey, was a seasoned professional, and I was aware that a lot depended upon the outcome of this contest. There then ensued a period in which Kendo Nagasaki developed a reputation for being so dangerous that some of the professional wrestlers who had something of a reputation to lose avoided being matched with him.

**Were there any links between yourself and Count Bartelli?**

After the period of some other wrestlers avoiding Kendo Nagasaki, wrestling promoters decided to team him up with Count Bartelli in order to make the package more attractive to audiences and other professional wrestlers.

**Just two years after your debut you beat and unmasked Count Bartelli in a match still vividly remembered to this day, how did that match come about and what are your memories of the encounter?**

After wrestling as a tag team for some time, Count Bartelli felt that his style and Kendo's style conflicted, and it was decided by the promoters to have a single match where the loser would unmask, the outcome of which is well-known. Count Bartelli was a hard and proud man, and any match where there was a possibility that his mask would be removed would have to be a match that could only be described as bloody and brutal in the extreme for its day. At that time it would not have been the sort of match that could have been shown on national television, because the moment blood started to flow, there was a tendency on the part of the TV company to edit it out.

**For most of your career from the 70s onwards you've always had a manager or someone accompanying you to the ring, what are your memories of 'Gorgeous George Gillett' and Lloyd Ryan in particular?**

Gorgeous George was extremely flamboyant, articulate, funny, and therefore a total contrast to the character of Kendo Nagasaki; he also became Nagasaki's voice, who until that point had been totally silent. When due to illness George was no longer able to be the voice of Kendo, Lloyd Ryan took over, but portrayed a totally different character, in as much as he was more abrasive and direct, in the tradition of the old fairground promoter.

**What were the reasons behind the ceremonial unmasking at Wolverhampton Civic Hall?**

Japan was isolated from the Western world during the Tokugawa domination in the Edo Period (1600 – 1868), and similarly, Nagasaki was karmically restricted behind his mask. The unmasking was a similarly symbolic liberation from isolation, as he gained enlightenment and spiritual strength from this liberation. After a period of 8 years away from the ring, Nagasaki was destined to return, guided by the samurai warrior spirit, once again wearing the mask.

**You wrestled for a short time without the mask, how different was that?**

As explained above, this was the appropriate means of expression for Kendo Nagasaki at that time; there was no practical difference – with or without the mask, it was still the manifestation of Kendo Nagasaki.

**How difficult was it to make that comeback after eight years out of the ring?**

It was not difficult at all - because of Kendo's originality and enduring appeal, his return to the ring was destined to be just as dynamic and sensational as his original debut.



**How did professional wrestling change from when you began to when you retired?**

Professional wrestling when I began was more blood, guts, and sawdust, and on my retirement it was far more of a spectacle, and acrobatic.

**Who were the toughest opponents you faced in the ring?**

Billy Robinson, Albert Wall, Billy Howells, Steve Veidor, and Wayne Bridges, and, of course, the great Count Bartelli were some of the greatest opponents.

**What was the hardest part of being a wrestler?**

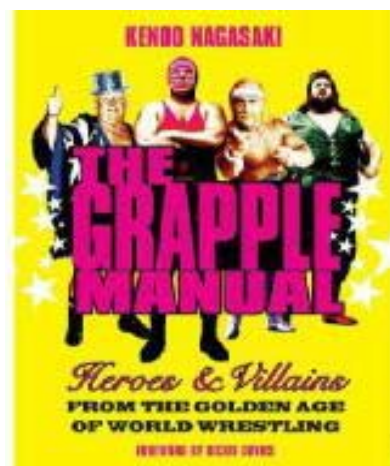
Being able to maintain the fitness, the competitive edge, and the charisma to remain a top-of-the-bill wrestler.

**You retired in 2001, how have you been spending your retirement and do you still follow professional wrestling?**

Kendo Nagasaki has not retired and still makes public appearances, and maintains a lively interest in the contemporary wrestling scene.

**Earlier in 2006 you published 'The Grapple Manual' will the success of the book lead to your long-awaited autobiography?**

Yes – Kendo's autobiography is a work in progress with a view to publication in 2007



**In November 2006 you appeared at 'Universal Uproar' as part of a World of Sport Hall of Fame Ceremony.**

Kendo and myself are deeply honoured and humbled by the appreciation that is shown to us.

**For more information about Kendo Nagasaki go to [www.kendonagasaki.net](http://www.kendonagasaki.net)**

## Memories of Kendo Nagasaki By Dave Icke followed on page 49 by Rob Cope

My interest in the wrestling scene started in 1972 when I was at the ripe old age of 11, I was also a fan of mysteries and anything inexplicable when I discovered .....the wrestler in the striped mask who's face no one had seen. That was it...I was hooked and little did I realise that some 40 years later I would have over 1000 photos of this man and over 1000 cuttings and newspaper articles and hours and hours of video tape and also one of his masks that he had wore in the ring.

By the age of 16 I had realised that he lived very local to me, I was in his fan club and knew that he ran a local garage as well and of course I was obsessed with trying to find out more! ... if only I could have drove but anyway it did not stop me from getting to know his manager George Edward Gillett who was always happy to talk at their local hall (and mine), Wolverhampton Civic Hall and in fact one sunny Sunday afternoon, after arranging it with George himself I went down to the residence they shared.

Although I did not go in (George said that Kendo was doing his faith healing) I had a good chat with George himself who really was a great chap. At this time I was following Kendo to live shows around Birmingham (Digbeth and Solihull) and Wolverhampton and watching him destroy opponent after opponent with his unique wrestling style. The other unique feature of course was that here, was Britains' most hated and most loved wrestler, there were fans who were literally following him around the country and there were fans who despised the man but whatever you thought you just had to see him if he was in town. The mystery...mystique whatever it was Kendo Nagasaki was the unique wrestler in Britain and everyone wanted to see him. There were also promoters and wrestlers alike who could see the potential in putting on a striped mask and calling themselves Kendo Nagasaki but little did they realise that being the consummate professional that he is, he had already registered the name to himself in April 1972, during October 1974 Nagasaki himself served a court injunction at ringside to an impersonator who along with his promoter, found himself regretting his actions very much.



There were a few wrestlers with fan clubs around and Kendo had a very successful one that actually had two secretaries, one based in London running the Southern area and one based in Birmingham running the Midlands and North. To this day I still have all the newsletters from George Gillette, he went out of his way to get dates off promoters to enable the Nagasaki fans to know where he would be appearing in advance. The attraction from one side was this mysterious top class wrestler and of course from the other point of view there was this rule breaking cheat who people lived in hope would have his mask ripped off to reveal his identity, but of course apart from an incident a few years ago on TV with Billy Howes it just did not happen until .....November 1975 !!!!!

When Dickie Davies on ITV's World of Sport revealed that today, although it had nothing to do with the result of the contest we would see the face of Kendo Nagasaki !!!!

Well my mind was doing overtime, did I really want to see what he looked like after all this time ??? Would it spoil all the mystique if he looked "normal" ??? Possibly but alas no, when the mask came off my thoughts were..."this man is not normal at all !" I could not believe the site, and although I now have it on video, the site stayed in my mind for many many years !!! Still the mask stayed on after that and that was it, things settled down and I was happy again, I hated Shirley Crabtree for pulling the mask off but I was content that things were back to normal so to speak, that was until early December 1977 when leaflets were being given out to advertise the next show at Wolverhampton in a fortnights time....."The Unmasking of Kendo Nagasaki" My heart sunk, I thought "No Way" but as always I had to be there. Well, I will never forget Tuesday 20th December 1977, I stood with Chris Cox, the secretary of the Kendo Nagasaki fan club from Birmingham who assured me the mask would be coming off, I still thought that it surely won't happen. Well the rest is history, one well known fan was sobbing her heart out afterwards as we followed Kendo, George and Co outside and watched them drive off wondering if that was the end of the road





## Rob Cope

My first memories of seeing Kendo wrestling live were in Stoke in the late 1980s when he had returned to the ring following a nine-year absence. I recall the first time was when Brian Dixon was promoting shows at the Theatre Royal in the city and there was a tag match featuring Kendo and Mark 'Rollerball' Rocco. Those appearances were with of course, the great 'Gorgeous' George Gillette. George had real charisma in the ring and very much made up for the fact that Nagasaki himself refused to speak. It was only a short while before George became too ill to continue and died shortly after to be replaced by Lloyd Ryan.



Lloyd was in his own way an excellent manager, much more aggressive than George. I always compared him to a rather mouthy London cabbie, you know the sort, people who thrust their opinions down your throat and don't want to listen to anybody else. He could always stir the crowd up ready for the actual match.

I've been lucky in seeing some fantastic feuds at the Victoria Hall between Kendo and a wild assortment of wrestlers. Marty Jones, Pat Roach, Giant Haystacks—great wrestlers and entertainers one and all. Latterly of course I have been privileged to accompany Kendo into the ring on several occasions most notably at his final match in December 2001. Even backstage he is an imposing figure. Whilst all the other wrestlers on the bill stand around chatting, Kendo always stood alone and silent until the very moment the music is heard and he made his entry into the hall.

Way back during my first encounters with Kendo I was working on the stage crew of the Theatre Royal and remembering Brian Dixon telling us: "All the wrestlers are fine, but when he's ready, the only one to be wary of is Kendo Nagasaki. If you get in his way you'll know about it." Naturally we all went and hid out front with the audience when he came on.

It's hard to define why Kendo was so hated—and ironically therefore so popular—and I have tried to analyse it with lots of people—even the great man himself. All I can really put my finger on is sitting there as part of the audience and when it was announced the match with Kendo was to start there was a shift in the mood. A palpable sense of excitement, maybe a little fear, spreading around the hall. The paying customers knew that whatever happened in the next half hour or so certainly wasn't going to be dull. How right they were. I have seen audiences virtually rioting in response to Kendo's villainous antics. Thanks to the TWC Fight a few of Kendo's 1970s matches have been seen by a new generation. His name is still held in awe by wrestlers all over the country and indeed the world who are hearing stories of his antics both in and out of the ring. Kendo has always had a massive amount of respect for his fans and they in turn have responded with a loyalty that has lasted for the forty years of his career. Long may the master of mayhem and mystery continue to enthrall and delight all those of us who witnessed a true legend of professional wrestling. The message from Kendo himself is: "Expect the unexpected, Nagasaki will return."

## Who is my Kendo Nagasaki? By Asher Thompson

Each and everyone of us has his/her own personal Kendo Nagasaki. It all depends on who you are and where you led your life to. For me, Kendo filled the empty space at a time when heroes were few and far between in Britain. Marc Bolan's star had waned, Johnny Rotten was still in the future, the Stones had lost direction after 'Sticky Fingers' and Prime Ministers like Heath, Wilson and Callaghan didn't mean much to me (little did I know what was to follow).



Count Bartelli and Kendo Nagasaki before the bout in which Bartelli was unmasked

So in desperate need of a hero and being underweight, bespectacled and the butt of schoolboy cruelty I found my hero at 4pm on a Saturday. Not everything that Kendo did was strictly according to the rules but when it climaxed in the Kamikaze Krush, you just knew that there's no getting up from that. And that was exactly what I needed to get over my childhood and now, somewhere in the back of my mind, whether it's just at work, or out running (I found my sport on the road, not between the ropes but I found my sport) but also when I'm accompanying handicapped Scuba divers in the Red Sea I know that the man behind the mask had a part to play. I particularly remember the great moments at the rear entrance to Cheltenham Town Hall when the great man would arrive already in the mask of course with Gorgeous George, and silently vanish into the dressing rooms. George would collect the autograph books and we'd get them back with what we hoped and believed was a real Kendo Nagasaki signature.

# Classic Book and DVD Reviews

## **Headlocks and Handbags: Wrestling at New St James's Hall by Archie Potts (Black Cat Publications £8.99)**

From 1931 to 1968, wrestling was a regular feature at Newcastle's new St James' Hall. Despite being opened to stage boxing matches, the hall actually held more wrestling bouts during its history. Anyone interested in the history of British wrestling should get their hands on this excellent book written by local historian Archie Potts, as he takes a look back at the history of professional wrestling at the venue. What was then called all-in wrestling (until Lord Mountevan revised the rules) was held every Saturday night from 1936 to 1968 after becoming a hit in 1931 when Henri Irslinger booked former ballerina George Begenski against the British Heavyweight Champion Arthois Oakeley, with the champ winning a bloody battle.

Back in those days any wrestler guilty of 'dangerous play' could be fined with the money going to the injured party if it meant they had to miss future bookings. One wrestler threw a stool into the audience and was banned from appearing again. One part of the book I adore is the adverts and posters. Main events for 1965 saw The Royal Brothers (more about Bert later) up against The Destroyers (Bobby Graham and Leon Arras), Jackie



Pallo v Alan Colbeck, Billy Joyce v Albert 'Rocky' Wall and Kendo Nagasaki, advertised as a karate champion, up against John Allen, The Yorkshire farmer. Not bad for £1 at ringside. The adverts include Jack Pye's cream and a Jackie Pallo shirt.

A lot of the book is taken up by Archie looking back at the wrestlers who appeared at the Hall, split as is often the case into categories. Villains such as McManus and Pallo all made regular trips up to the North East. Overseas wrestlers included Quasimodo. Many masked wrestlers appeared at the hall including of course Kendo Nagasaki, pictured wearing what looks like a totally black mask rather than the usual striped version. Then there was The Ghoul, The Mask and Bert Royal. Yes, Bert Royal wrestled under a mask at one stage. Not appearing was Doctor Death (soon to be interviewed in Piledriver Online) and all will be explained why soon.

This really is an interesting book and I'm sure similar books could be written about other great venues that are no longer with us – The Winter Gardens in Bournemouth for example. The end came for wrestling at the hall in 1968. Boxing was barely being held there and wrestling was struggling as promoter Paul 'Doctor Death' Lincoln was staging bills at the

Newcastle City Hall. As so often happens, the venue became a bingo hall before finally being knocked down in 1976.

## **Bang Your Head The Real Story of the Missing Link By Dewey Robertson and Meredith Renwick (ECW Press)**

He lived in a nudist camp alongside a group of swingers and enjoyed the greatest moments of his career behaving like a caveman, it could only be another wrestling autobiography couldn't it? Dewey Robertson is best known as 'The Missing Link', a big star in the 80s but like many wrestling autobiographies at times the wrestling has to play second fiddle to the stories of drug and alcohol abuse, or as he writes: "the good, the bad and the ugly."

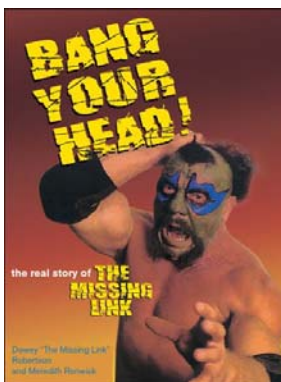
It wasn't always that way though but like many wrestlers it was just a question of getting in with the wrong crowd.

Robertson wasn't that big a kid when he was growing up and at the age of 19 and weighing just 140 lbs, he started going to a bodybuilding and wrestling gym in Hamilton, Ontario, owned by former British Heavyweight wrestling champion Al Hamilton. The area was known for producing wrestlers including Ivan Koloff, Mighty John Quinn and the Talos brothers. Robertson worked with Bill and Jim Rowling and they influenced his decision to become a pro wrestler.

His early career saw him working for Bruno Sammartino and having to drive 325 miles to wrestle for just \$25 but he showed himself to be an eager learner as he got pounded by the likes of Haystacks Calhoun, Killer Kowalski and Gorilla Monsoon. In time he began working for Maple Leaf wrestling which was part of the NWA.

Like any wrestling book there's plenty of road stories and this book is no exception as we learn about the 600 lb Haystacks Calhoun's nightmares in taxis, stories of Robertson's time as The Crusader feuding with The Original Sheik and working in Japan and of course the nightmarish behaviour caused by his addictions.

If there's one thing that bugs Robertson's career it



was the fact he never won the NWA Heavyweight title, he had the talent but was continually overlooked. He believes that one match he had with Ric Flair doomed him to never wearing the belt.

The late 1970s were to change his life as he moved to Mid Atlantic Wrestling and joined the wild party scene that changed the way this family orientated guy behaved dramatically. He also began to use steroids despite the fact he was already 245lbs by now but he was told he had to use the stuff to "keep up with everyone else."

In 1979 he won the Canadian Heavyweight title beating Greg Valentine in the tournament final but despite being a main eventer in Canada, he was still a mid-carder in the States and he goes into depth about the financial struggles that brings. That desire to win the NWA Title led him to move to Kansas but by now his addictions were getting worse and it was his wife who was suffering verbal and physical abuse as his behaviour spiralled out of control. 1983 saw Flair defend his NWA Title in Kansas but not against Robertson, he did get a shot against Harley Race but he was never going to get a title victory against Race in Texas was he?

Desperate to escape Texas, he moved to World Class Championship Wrestling and eventually The Missing Link was born though really he wanted to wrestle as a Mongol and even got the hair style for it. He ended up working for Bill Watts (we have a feature on him in our next edition) and finally began working as The Missing Link, though where the name came from isn't confirmed. Initially Watts wanted the face paint to be brown and black but that eventually became green and blue.

At first the character spoke but in time that stopped as he became more and more like a caveman. He became the Link 24/7 and didn't speak to anyone else, he even drove home wearing the Link costume (I never saw Fred Flintstone drive a car) and of course there's the inevitable story of when he was pulled over by a very surprised police officer. But the substance abuse was still continuing.

1983 saw him in WCCW as part of Devastation Inc with Kamala and Skandor and when he went home, it was to a nudist camp. He'd been to such camps in the past but didn't realise this was a swingers camp. It didn't please his wife a great deal but the promiscuous husband didn't mind. Two years later they moved into another nudist camp but without any swingers in sight.

The same year he joined the WWF but his time there wasn't a great success. He didn't get on with his manager Bobby Heenan, didn't like the fact he was booked to lose matches and Vince McMahon didn't want Robertson's wife beside him as Sheena. His leaving the WWF and his lack of success there is another thing he greatly regrets.

He continued to find Indie work and even wrestled a bear but by the time he reached 50, his time in the ring and his behaviour outside the ring were beginning to take their toll. He went from working for the WWF to not even being wanted to unload their van. The inevitable happened and he

ended up in rehab and battling with depression that led to suicide attempts. Definitely a good read and highly recommended.

## The Classic PPV The 1993 Royal Rumble



Two important facts to tell you immediately. Firstly, this is a really important Royal Rumble as far as I'm concerned because aside from going out and buying videos, this was the first PPV I saw after finally persuading my late father to get Sky. Also by the time this was shown he'd gotten over the shock of the workmen drilling a hole in our living room wall! Secondly, this was the first Rumble where the

winner was guaranteed a title shot at Wrestlemania, so just who would be getting that crack at Bret 'The Hitman' Hart, who successfully defended his title against Razor Ramon earlier in the evening.

Going into the PPV, the momentum was most definitely on the side of Yokozuna, who'd made his PPV debut at the previous years Survivor Series almost literally squashing Virgil. Getting this guy over the top rope wasn't going to be an easy task that's for sure. With Wrestlemania IX due to be held at Caesar's Palace in Las Vegas, Julius Caesar and Cleopatra (nice to see them getting on well again) came to the ring to make a proclamation. Cleo was just happy I suppose that Jake 'The Snake' Roberts wasn't on the card but I know we have to suspend our disbelief but didn't these two dies centuries ago? Anyway, a rather quiet bored crowd listens to the old 'Friends, Romans, Countryman, lend me your ears' speech while UK viewers still had 'Infamy Infamy They've all got it in for me' going through their mind. Thankfully this crazy routine didn't go on for too long and we were back to the matter in hand.

Just twelve months before this show Ric Flair had one of his biggest career highlights when he lasted over an hour to win not just the Royal Rumble but the WWF Title as well. A year on, he was in his last days in the company and the fact he wasn't going to be at Wrestlemania was probably confirmed when he came out as number one, quickly followed by another former champion, Bob Backlund. Flair didn't get much offensive in early on but then nearly got Backlund over the top rope but the former champ wasn't there to be eliminated in just a few minutes. Next in was Ted Dibiase, one half of the tag champs and he quickly got Backlund tied up in the ropes leading to a double team. Surprise surprise, in next was Nasty Boy Knobbys who was feuding with Dibiase and IRS at the time (though the Wrestlemania tag title match was to



be Hogan and Beefcake challenging Money Inc). He doesn't last long as he's one of the first idiots to charge at someone on the ropes only to end up going over the top and being eliminated. Memories of Memphis next with Jerry Lawler arriving on the scene and having a right set to with Ric Flair. Failed gimmick Max Moon is next in and soon gets eliminated by Lawler, he's followed in by Tenyru who swaps a few chops with Flair but face it he's never going to get a title shot is he and Flair has more important things to worry about. Mr Perfect makes his way to the ring, still smiling despite realising he's going to have to meet The Narcissist Lex Luger at Wrestlemania. Just 24 hours later Perfect was due to meet Flair in a loser leaves the WWF match (that Luger challenge had given that result away for sure) and he warmed up for that bout, which I wish had been on the Flair DVD, by eliminating Flair from the Rumble.

With the winner getting that title shot, it did affect the Rumble because we knew that the midcarders just had no chance of winning, not with PPV revenue at stake. So the likes of Skinner, Bezerker and Koko B Ware really were just padding the card out, though it'd have been handy if a future feud had been created for them somehow. Mr Perfect was really on a streak as he also eliminated Skinner and Lawler but the King returned to eliminate Perfect, though no feud came out of that action. The next stage of the Rumble was about to begin as The Undertaker came to the ring led by Paul Bearer but he was about to get a big shock and a lousy feud. After eliminating Dibiase and Tenyru, an uninvited guest came to the ring in the shape of the Giant Gonzalez, who commentator Gorilla Monsoon claimed must have been at least 8 foot tall. He attacked Undi leaving him unconscious until revived by the urn, Undi was led back to the dressing room (or casket) probably thinking to himself 'I deserve better than this you know.'

Back to the mid carders again with Damien Demento, Tatanka and IRS showing that the company had plenty of talent but not that many great stars. Typhoon and Fatu (of whom none of us could have guessed what he'd look like a few years later when he became Rikishi) and then Earthquake who surprisingly eliminated his tag partner but again nothing seemed to develop from those actions. Finally Yokozuna arrives and the Rumble really begins though for some reason Monsoon tells the viewers he thinks IRS might win! Yoko is quickly followed into the ring by Carlos Colon (Carlito's dad) but he's eliminated by Yokozuna setting up a showdown with Earthquake, oh and guess what, Backlund is still in the Rumble though sensibly keeping out the way. The battle of the giants proves to be an anti-climax as Earthquake can't get the big guy down and soon gets eliminated. Monsoon is back with his crap predictions once IRS bites the dust as he now believes that Owen Hart is going to win, I hope that guy wasn't a gambler. Last man in is Randy Savage and pretty soon we're down to just Yokozuna, Savage, Martel and Backlund who lasts over an hour and breaks Flair's longevity record. Eventually though he takes on Yokozuna and there's only going to be one winner of that battle leaving it to Yokozuna and former champion Savage to fight for the title shot at Wrestlemania. They actually had a decent fight which makes you wonder why they didn't have a feud in the months to come. Poor old Savage finally gets Yoko down on the floor and for some

insane reason, goes for the pin only for Yoko to throw him over the top rope and get the title shot. Not the greatest Rumble and poor compared to the previous year but there's been worse.

## WCW Starrcade 1989 By Daniel Evans

WCW Starrcade 1989 was the last WCW PPV of the 1980's and its aim was to crown the Wrestler of the 90's, and how would they do this?, simple, by holding a 4 man round robin tournament, with Ric Flair, Sting, Lex Luger and The Great Muta. The PPV was also going to determine the best tag team in the world, as The Road Warriors, Steiner Brother, Wild Samoans and Doom would compete in a 4 team Round Robin tournament. The rules for the tournament were that each participant or team would face each other in the tournament, and the participant or team with the most points at the end of the night would be crowned Wrestler of the 90's and Iron Man Tag Team, respectively. Each match would have a 15 minute time limit and the points were awarded as follows - 20 for a pin or submission, 15 for a count out win, 10 for a DQ win and 5 for a time limit draw. The best match of the night had to be Ric Flair vs. Sting in the final match of the card. The points at this stage were, Luger 35, Flair 25, Sting 20 and Muta 0, so basically if either Flair or Sting won, they would win the tournament, but if they drew on a time limit, Luger would win, so basically Flair and Sting had everything to fight for. The match wasn't a classic, but it came close. Both Flair and Sting performed on top form as usual, the match was your typical old school affair, and it worked well. The only thing that bothered me was that the ending seemed a little rushed because of the time limit. However this was easily the best match of that night, not the best Flair vs. Sting match, but still fairly good. Another notable match from the show was Lex Luger vs. The Great Muta, this fundamentally was a good match, Luger's best match of the night, but again he suffered from a bit of a rushed ending.

The worst match of the night was The Wild Samoans vs. Doom. This match was extremely boring, the VHS clipped the match which was a relief, but that match was still very mind-numbing, and even worse was the fact that it had a horrible finish, just one of the matches from the PPV that's worth skipping. Overall it's not the greatest show in the world; in fact it's far from it. Its worth watching because of the nostalgia fact, but that's about it. There isn't really one outstanding match on this card, and all the matches apart from Flair vs. Sting are mediocre at best. One of the biggest problems of the PPV was the actual concept; basically most of the matches hadn't any background history to them which took the effect off some of the matches. Secondly, they were so many matches crammed onto the card; many of the matches were rushed. My suggestion is if you can pick this video up for a bargain price, and then go for it, but it's not worth forking out loads of money for it,



## A Visit to Rocco's Lair

If there was a question on 'Family Fortunes' asking the contestants to name famous British wrestlers, the usual suspects would be given: Big Daddy, Giant Haystacks, Kendo Nagasaki and Mick McManus. There might be a bit of confusion as the youngest member of the family comes out with Spud, Andy Boy Simmonz and Marcus Kool but I bet you my bottom dollar that the name of Mark 'Rollerball' Rocco would find its way onto the list somewhere.



Rocco is one of the best wrestlers this country has ever produced and his matches against wrestlers such as Marty Jones and The Dynamite Kid will never be forgotten and of course he

was a big star in Japan too.

This excellent shoot interview with Mark Rocco gives you a great insight to the world of professional wrestling and his illustrious career. It's packed with anecdotes that any wrestling fan will lap up with joy.

Find out how his father, Jim Hussey didn't even know until the night he made his debut that his son was going to be following him into the wrestling business. Discover why some wrestlers were jealous of him because of his talent, crazy nights in Glasgow, the advice Max Crabtree gave to him and the story of the night his wife gave birth to their first child.

There's an hilarious couple of stories about Giant Haystacks, one about when they went swimming together and the second about his problems in airplanes which weren't made any easier when the Dynamite Kid was on the same flight.

Find out about why he left the UK to wrestle in Japan, what it was like to wrestle at Madison Square Garden and a conversation he had with Greg Dyke. There's a look at his life in Spain and a rather strange segment concerning Colt Cabana.

At 151 minutes this is an absolute treat, to get hold of a copy email [bwl@andy98560.karoo.co.uk](mailto:bwl@andy98560.karoo.co.uk) The DVD costs £8.99 and that includes postage and packaging.

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Available to order soon and reviewed in the next edition of Piledriver Online

### WOS 'GLOBAL!

A special compilation of wrestlers from the glory years of ITV British wrestling who went global! This will include globetrotters such as Steve Regal (William Regal), Fit Finlay, Dynamite Kid, Davey Boy Smith, Fuji Yamada ( Jushin Thunder Liger), Sammy Lee (Tiger Mask), Owen Hart, Rollerball, Rocco Robbie Brookside, Giant Haystacks and Marty Jones.

### Wrestling Gold:Busted Open

If it's some classic American wrestling you're looking for then this is just for you. Aided by brilliant commentary from Jim Cornette (feature on him in our next edition) and Dave Meltzer there's some real gems here. There's early appearances by Sherri Martel and Shawn Michaels that show just how talented they were even in the early days. There's some great tag action on this DVD as Tully Blanchard and Gino Hernandez take on The Grapplers with a shocking end that leads to the next match on the DVD but you'll have to buy a copy to find out exactly what happens.

Bob Orton Jr. takes on Adrian Adonis for the World Heavyweight title, Jerry Lawler is up against Bob Sweetan and if it's blood and guts you're after then look no further than Bruiser Brody against Abdullah the Butcher. Definitely recommended and available from Double D (details above) and you'll also discover how the world of wrestling was changed by pig excrement, I kid you not.

**Reviewed soon**

**Shoot interviews with Jim Cornette and Ted Dibiase**

# The Rise and Fall of WCCW

Vince McMahon Jr couldn't have been a happy man. He was seeing his company beaten in the TV ratings and the rival company had an impressive roster he'd just love to raid. Could his dreams of domination in the USA be about to end? This isn't an article about the Monday Night Wars and there's not a mention of Eric Bischoff here. This is a story of



missed opportunities and personal tragedy, it's the story of World Class Championship Wrestling (WCCW) and the Von Erich family.

In a bizarre way the story begins in Nazi Germany, well it does in the mind of whoever it was who created the character of Fritz Von Erich in the early 1950s. Whereas the American scene was later to be dominated by Russian, Japanese and Iraqi heels, post World War II saw Nazi sympathisers getting the boos. Von Erich was one of the main heels having being told by a German officer to "recapture our physical

prestige by becoming a wrestler." Von Erich vowed to "cripple every schweinhunt of an American wrestler I meet." In reality though, Fritz was Jack Adkisson (Erich was his mother's maiden name), he'd been a promising American footballer but injury had wrecked his career so he became a wrestler instead.

In time Von Erich decided to become a promoter in his home state of Texas but what was to become known as World Class Championship Wrestling was to be seen all over the world on television. With stars such as Kamala, Gentleman Chris Adams, The Freebirds, Big Daddy Bundy and of course his sons, the company had an impressive roster but they also had something else to offer.

In November 1981, their TV show began with Fritz doing Color Commentary. They had multi-cameras, close-ups, entrance music for each wrestler, instant replays and female valets. The show became the number one rated programme on CBN.

There were some great feuds as Adams battled 'Gorgeous' Jim Garvin and Kerry, David and Kevin Von Erich took on the Freebirds. Their show was on 85 stations and shown in 25 countries around the world and the WWF couldn't say the same. Mike Von Erich made his debut but it was David who was making waves.

He hadn't always wrestled for his father's company and had made his name wrestling at the chase in a match with his father against Harley Race when he put the claw on Race and opened him up so much that the match was stopped. He loved the business saying "I'm not a great wrestler but I love it up there. I won't quit. I love the comeback and when I hear that crowd, man, I just work harder." Bruiser Brody

called him 'Spider' because he was "all arms, all legs, no body." David was concerned about his weight so Brody told him "Eat like I do Spider, order everything on the right hand side of the menu"

David Von Erich was seen as a future NWA World Heavyweight champion but he had problems outside the ring. His two-year-old son died in a cot death, he became depressed, drank too much, took too many painkillers and his marriage hit the rocks. He also had stomach pains that he should have had medical treatment for but in 19 he travelled with Brody to Japan to make his debut there. Sadly David Von Erich never made it to the ring. When he didn't turn up at the arena, Brody rushed back to their hotel and found him lying dead on his bed. He found painkillers and other drugs and flushed them down the toilet. Brody said: "I don't want to believe it, he had so much to live for, this had to be an accident."

His last ever match was against The Missing Link who writes in his autobiography: "He was far and away the most talented wrestler of all the Von Erich boys and everyone was sure it was only a matter of time before David became NWA Champion."

The official cause of death was a ruptured intestine but of course the fears were that it was drug related. Writing in his autobiography, Ric Flair says: "Everybody in wrestling believes that he overdosed." It's said that when Fritz was told there was bad news, he simply said 'Which one?'

On May 6th a massive tribute show 'Parade of



Champions' was held in front of nearly 50,000 people. The main event saw Kerry Von Erich defeat Ric Flair for the NWA World Heavyweight title but a long title reign was out of the question. Flair writes in his book about how

difficult it was to wrestle Kerry because of his drug problems, not remembering what he had to do, staring at women in the crowd and not even having his boots tied up. "Every promoter understood that having Kerry as anything but a short term champion was a liability to the NWA." Kerry held the title for 18 days before Flair regained the belt.

1984 saw Chris Adams turn heel to feud with Kevin Von Erich and he was joined by Gino Hernandez to create 'The Dynamic Duo.' With the Midnight Express and The Fantastics also on the roster, WCCW had tag teams Vince would love to have

today. The TV show continued to expand but tragedy was always seemingly around the corner. Mike Von Erich got a staph infection that gave him a temperature of 106 degrees and close to death. He recovered but was never the same again and again drugs were rumoured to be responsible.

Back to the Missing Link and a telling quote: "It's no secret that most of the Texan wrestlers were a hard partying bunch and by 1986 it was starting to catch us up." That was proved to be true when Gino Hernandez, a regular cocaine user died at the age of 29. The same year, WCCW pulled out of the NWA and recognised Rick Rude as its champion.



By now Vince McMahon was ruling the roost and had his eyes on most of the WCCW roster. He'd actually been in talks with the company to see if they could work together but Fritz just wasn't interested. WCCW had the chance to expand to other areas of the country, areas that had already seen the product on television

and were dying to see it live, but Fritz just wouldn't do it.

Inevitably WCCW began to struggle as stars began to leave and join the WWF. The fact Fritz always booked his sons to win didn't help a lot. 1986 continued to be a terrible year when Kerry had a serious motorcycle accident that ruled him out for a year. Without Kerry on the bill, ESPN dropped the WCCW show. Attendances began to fall the following year but worse news was around the corner.

Mike Von Erich struggled in his comeback but outside the ring his life was falling apart. He was pulled over by the police for drink driving and pills and marijuana were found in his car. The police released him on bail, Mike went home and wrote a suicide note then left and was never seen alive again. His body was found a week later, another Von Erich son was dead. His name was added to the David Von Erich memorial Parade of Champions but only 6000 attended this time.

Too late Fritz decided to revamp his product and launch the 'Von Erichs across America' tour but it was all too late. He sold the promotion with Dutch Mantell getting 40% and Kerry and Kevin getting 30% each. The storylines began to deteriorate with the Christmas Day card seeing Fritz fake a heart attack (as if there wasn't enough real tragedy in the family) before Kerry challenged Al Perez for the WCCW title.

Kerry's injury problems were getting worse, he pumped his leg full of novacocaine but it was still too painful and Kerry wrestled with a prosthetic foot. He left the company and joined the WWF, winning the Inter-Continental Title.

Eventually WCCW was sold to Jerry Jarrett who merged it with his own and created the USWA. For Fritz though, the tragedies continued. Chris Von Erich was always in his brother's shadows. He had asthma and that stunted his growth so the cards were stacked against him and in 1991 he shot himself dead. Two years later Kerry was arrested for forging prescriptions despite already being on probation for cocaine possession. He shot himself dead on February 18th at the age of just 33.



Four years later Fritz was diagnosed with brain cancer, he died later that year. Jerry Lawler comments: "You can't help thinking his heart was broken by then."

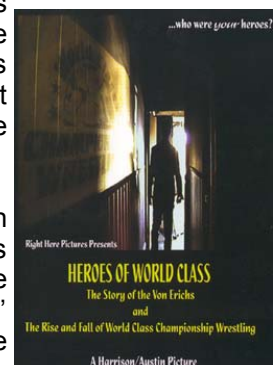
It's a tragic story for sure but could anything have been done to prevent it happening? The brothers didn't appear to be doing something they detested though Mike and Chris always struggled as they were constantly in the shadows of Kerry, Kevin and David.

Jerry Lawler writes: "Everybody knew that the Von Erich brothers were messed up all the time but Fritz wouldn't recognise the problem. He was in denial." That D word crops up again in Bill Watts book. He spoke to Fritz in 1985 about the problems his sons had but got nowhere apart from being sued, a case dropped when he agreed not to show a tape that had Kerry profess his love for a Playboy Playmate despite being married at the time. After Chris committed suicide in 1991 Watts tried again but says "I've never talked to a person in as much denial as he was by then."

Ric Flair's view is that "drugs not wrestling killed the Von Erichs. I also wish that Fritz had opened his eyes and held his kids accountable for their behaviour. If he had I think those boys would still be alive."

Tragedies aside, this is the story of a promotion that was seen worldwide by fans sitting in front of their television set, but not by fans sitting in an arena. If the company had expanded across the country in the same way that the WWF had, history could have been so different.

To find out more about the Von Erich family and World Class Championship Wrestling, get the DVD 'Heroes of World Class.' We'll have a full review of the DVD in our next edition.





## The History of the Royal Rumble

*Each month in 'Piledriver Online' we'll be taking a look back at the many classic wrestling shows that are part of the history of professional wrestling. We begin the series this month with a look at the history of the Royal Rumble, next month it's Wrestlemania that goes under the spotlight.*

To begin the story of the Royal Rumble, we need really to go back to late 1987 and the continuing rise of the Vince McMahon empire at the expense of anyone who got in his way. Standing between Vince and further success was Jim Crockett and the NWA. Starrcade had been their biggest show and not just in arenas but on closed circuit too. The 1987 event was due to be their biggest ever with the show being held in Chicago and a main event between Harley Race and Ric Flair for the NWA Heavyweight Title with over 200 cable companies agreeing to put the show on PPV. However, Vince wasn't going to let them have a big PPV success and announced that on Thanksgiving he would be holding the first ever 'Survivor Series.' No titles on the line just a series of tag team elimination matches featuring his biggest stars. However, Vince really played dirty telling cable companies that if they wanted to screen the Survivor Series and future WWF PPV events they must not carry Starrcade. Just 5 companies stayed with the NWA product and another nail was put in their coffin with McMahon definitely holding the hammer with that horrible grin on his face.

With cash flow problems aplenty and Dusty Rhodes as booker, Crockett was in deep trouble. Rhodes came up with the idea of the Bunkhouse Stampede which had two dozen wrestlers in a ring in a Battle Royal format dressed in stetsons and spurs. Eight successful events were held and it was decided to hold a PPV in January with the 8 winners meeting in a cage match. However, Crockett made the mistake of moving the card to Long Island which definitely wasn't NWA territory. Again McMahon played dirty and decided that the Royal Rumble would be held the same night on the USA network completely free. 8m households tuned in, a record for the USA Network and again Crockett saw his product suffer enormously. Jim Cornette said: "We wanted to be there like we wanted to have our mothers hooked up to a machine. The crowd was dead, they hated everything because they'd never seen it."

That first event wasn't just special for the company as it was the beginning of another crown jewel for Vince McMahon but it was also held in Canada on January 24<sup>th</sup>, 1988 at the Copps Coliseum at Hamilton, Ontario. You can tell it was the 1980s as the card included a match for the Women's tag titles in the days when the company actually had 4 women who could put on a decent wrestling match. It was a best of three falls match that saw the team of The Jumping Bomb Angels (Noriyo Tateno and Itsuki Yamazaki) defeat The Glamour Girls (Judy Martin and Leilani Kai) to win the titles. Ricky Steamboat beat Rick Rude by DQ (surely two candidates for this years Hall of Fame?) and in another best of three falls match, The Islanders beat The Young Stallions. So onto the Rumble and the winner was someone still wrestling in WWE today, yes it was Hacksaw Jim Duggan who was the winner with One Man Gang being the final man eliminated. There were only 20 competitors and the whole Rumble took just 33 minutes. Other entrants included The Hart Foundation, Hillbilly Jim, Harley Race, Tito Santana and The Ultimate Warrior. So where was Hogan I hear you ask? Well he was there and signed the contract for the Wrestlemania III match against Andre the Giant.



1989 saw the Rumble held in Houston and on PPV. Jim Duggan tagged with the Hart Foundation to beat Dino Bravo and the Fabulous Rougeaus, Rockin' Robin beat Judy Martin to retain the women's title, Haku beat Harley Race in 9 minutes and The Ultimate Warrior beat Rick Rude in a posedown. This time around the Rumble lasted just over the hour mark but again it had a surprise winner who didn't really get the kind of push winners of the Rumble get nowadays. The late Big John Studd was the winner with the Million Dollar Man Ted Dibiase (who fiddled it so he was the 30<sup>th</sup> man in) the last to be eliminated. Hogan took part this time around and was the 18<sup>th</sup> man in. He lasted 11 minutes before being eliminated by Akeem and the Big Boss Man. Just about all the big guns were on show but despite the presence of Savage, Warrior, Andre and Mr Perfect (who survived for just short of 28 minutes), it was Studd who won the Rumble, he came in 27<sup>th</sup> and had to wrestle just 11 minutes for the victory. First two in? None other than Ax and Smash from Demolition but the biggest nightmare was for The Warlord who lasted just three seconds before being eliminated by Hogan.

Into the 90s now and things were back to normal as it was Hogan winning for the first time. Other matches on the card included Duggan continuing his unbeaten record at the Rumble with a DQ win over The Big Boss Man, The Bushwackers beating the Fabulous Rougeaus, Brutus Beefcake having a double DQ with The Genius and Ronnie Garvin beating Greg Valentine in an 'I Quit' match. Onto the Rumble itself and Hogan's win with Mr Perfect (who'd earlier interfered in the Beefcake v Genius match) being the last man eliminated. After being the last man in last year, Dibiase was number one this time but lasted just short of 45 minutes before being eliminated by The Ultimate



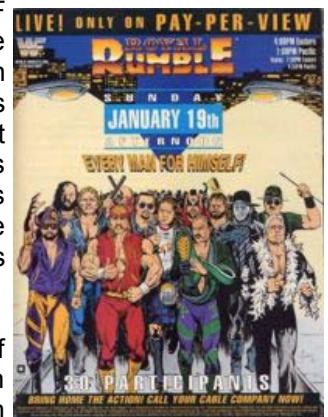
Warrior. Hogan came in 25<sup>th</sup> and only competed for 12 minutes but that did give him the chance to be in the ring with The Ultimate Warrior. Who lasted just 12 seconds before being eliminated by The Ultimate Warrior? None other than Shawn Michaels.

To 1991 and Miami and another Hogan win! The card saw The Rockers beat The Orient Express, The Big Boss Man defeat The Barbarian, The Mountie beat Koko B Ware, Dibiase and Virgil defeat Dusty and Dustin Rhodes but finally Virgil turned on his master setting up their Wrestlemania VII match and for the first time ever the WWF Title was defended on the show. Nightmare time again though as cashing in on the problems with Iraq, Sgt Slaughter took the title from The Ultimate Warrior after interference by Randy Savage.



The Rumble saw further continuation of the Hogan v Earthquake feud with the pair being the final two left before Hogan became the first man to win the Rumble two years in a row. The Undertaker made his debut in the Rumble lasting 14 minutes before being eliminated by the Legion of Doom. Two veterans had really long stays this year with Greg Valentine lasting 44 minutes but it was Rick Martel who broke the record lasting 52 minutes before being eliminated by the British Bulldog. Hogan came in 24<sup>th</sup> and this year had to wrestle a massive 19 minutes.

Now onto Albany and perhaps the most famous Royal Rumble of all. In 1992 the winner of the Rumble would also become the WWF Champion after it had been declared vacant after the problems being Hogan and The Undertaker at 'Tuesday in Texas.' The undercard saw all the other major WWF titles being defended for the first time. The New Foundation (Owen Hart and Jim Neidhart) beat The Orient Express, Roddy Piper beat The Mountie to win the IC Title (little did we guess he'd have to wait 14 years to win his second title in the company) The Natural Disasters beat The Legion of Doom by countout but Hawk and Animal kept their belts and The Beverly Brothers beat The Bushwhackers. Now how the hell did they get nearly 15 minutes which was longer than the IC and Tag titles matches put together!



Onto the Rumble and the best commentary Bobby Heenan ever gave as he nearly died of a heart attack when Flair came in third and had to wrestle for just less than an hour to win the title after Hogan was eliminated by Sid Justice and then grabbed Sid's arm getting him eliminated and handing the belt to Flair. Logic would have created a situation where Hogan (who was in the ring for just 11 minutes) and Flair would meet for the belt at Wrestlemania VIII but Hulk was about to leave the company so met Sid instead. The Dibiase push was definitely over, again he was one of the first two men in the ring but only lasted a minute being eliminated by the British Bulldog.

1993 saw the event held in Sacramento and for the first time ever, the winner of the Rumble was guaranteed a title shot at Wrestlemania. The undercard saw The Steiners beat The Beverly Brothers, Shawn Michaels beat Marty Jannetty to retain his IC Title, Bam Bam Bigelow beat The Big Boss Man and Bret Hart successfully defended his WWF Title beating Razor Ramon in 17 minutes. Another 'highlight' saw Bobby Heenan introduce us to 'The Narcissist', yes Lex Luger was finally in the WWF.

So onto the Rumble and that chance to get a title shot at Wrestlemania IX.. Ric Flair did even worse in the draw this time coming in first and surviving just 18 minutes before being eliminated by Mr Perfect who'd defeat Flair on Raw to force the former champ out of the WWF. Who was second in? Well it was Bob Backlund who was the 28<sup>th</sup> man out lasting a record 61 minutes. That's slightly longer than the third man in, Papa Shango who was there for just 28 seconds before Flair eliminated him. Not the quickest exit though, that was Terry Taylor who was eliminated by The Million Dollar Man in just 24 seconds. The moment we'd love to forget? The Undertaker found himself eliminated by the Giant Gonzalez who wasn't even entered for the Rumble. So who got the title shot? It was the late Yokozuna who guaranteed himself a match against Bret Hart finally eliminating Randy Savage who bizarrely tried to pin Yokozuna!

Providence staged the Rumble in 1994 and if The Undertaker thought the previous year had been a nightmare, worse was to come as he lost a WWF Title match fought under casket match rules and then, like you do, ascended to heaven. Other matches on the undercard saw Tatanka beat Bam Bam Bigelow, The Quebecers successfully defended their tag titles against the team of Bret and Owen Hart (the rows between them were far more important than the title belts) and Razor Ramon beat IRS to successfully defend the IC Title.

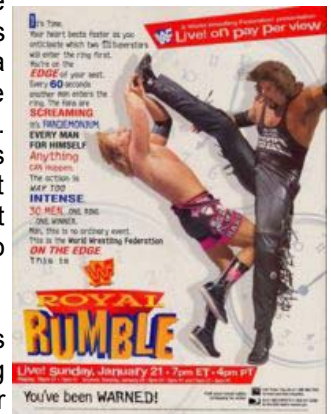
The 1994 Rumble was one of the most controversial as Bret Hart and Lex Luger were joint winners as both men's feet touched the floor at the same time thus giving both of them title shots at Wrestlemania X. The Rumble lasted

just 55 minutes as this time there were only 90 seconds between entrants. Just like they did with Demolition a few years back, Scott Steiner found himself in the ring with his brother Rick but nothing of note really happened. Star of the evening was Diesel who eliminated six wrestlers, Bam Bam Bigelow lasted half an hour and there were appearances by the Great Kabuki and Genichiro Tenryu while Jeff Jarrett lasted just over a minute!

Tampa hosted the Rumble in 1995 and it was even shorter this year, just 39 minutes with a new wrestler coming in every minute. After his disastrous Rumble in 1994, Jeff Jarrett won the IC title beating Razor Ramon, The Undertaker beat IRS as the saga of the urn continued, Bob Holly had his one night of glory in the company as he tagged with The 1-2-3 Kid to win the vacant tag titles against Bam Bam Bigelow and Tatanka and Diesel retained his WWF Title drawing against Bret Hart in a match ruined by interference by Owen Hart, Bob Backlund, Shawn Michaels and Jeff Jarrett.

So onto the Rumble and a victory for Shawn Michaels eliminating the British Bulldog who'd been convinced he'd got rid of the Heartbreak Kid. Amazingly both men were the first two in the ring and Michaels was the first man to come in at Number one and win the Rumble. Not a classic year for Rumble entrants, just look at this lot: Eli Blu, Duke Droese, Timothy Well, Doink the Clown, Kwang, The Mantaur, The Bushwackers and Mo (who lasted just 9 seconds). No wonder it only lasted 39 minutes.

Onto 1996, Fresno and a record-equalling Rumble as Shawn Michaels became only the second man to win the Rumble two years in a row and thank heavens it was back to its usual time-span. In a 'Free For All' before the main card, there was embarrassment for a future winner as Hunter Hearst Helmsley lost a Free for All match against Duke Droese meaning the Dumpster would enter the Rumble at Number 30 and Helmsley at Number 1. The card itself began with Ahmed Johnson beating Jeff Jarrett by DQ (yep the guitar was responsible), The Smoking' Gunns beat The Bodydonnas to retain the tag title, Goldust beat Razor Ramon to win the IC Title in a match that saw Terri Runnels make her debut as the cigar smoking Marlana and The Undertaker beat Bret Hart by DQ due to interference by Diesel but that meant Hart kept the WWF Title.



It wasn't Diesel's night as he was also the last man eliminated in the Rumble as Michaels won again, this time in 58 minutes. Big push of the night was for Vader who despite being eliminated by Michaels came back in the ring to throw Michaels, Bob Holly and Hunter Hearst Helmsley over the top rope (none of which counted for a change) before being ordered by WWF President Gorilla Monsoon to get out and stay out. Helmsley lasted 48 minutes, Jerry Lawler 36 minutes and the huge Squat team (better known as the Headhunters) lasted less than two minutes between them.

1997 saw the Rumble come to San Antonio Texas and another night of glory for Shawn Michaels who pinned Sid to regain his WWF Title. Also on the card, Hunter Hearst Helmsley beat Goldust to retain the IC Title, Ahmed Johnson beat Farooq by DQ, Vader beat The Undertaker who by now must have been sick of this PPV and Héctor Garza, Perro Aguayo and El Canek defeated Jerry Estrada, Heavy Metal and Fuerza

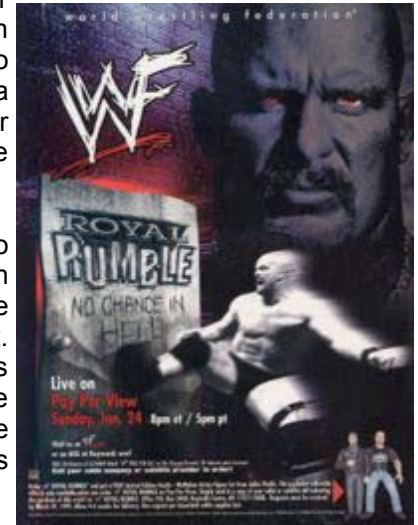
As for the Rumble itself, we'd entered the Stone Cold era as Austin won his first Royal Rumble with Bret Hart as the last man eliminated. Austin came in 4<sup>th</sup> and wrestled for 45 minutes but should he have done that? The Hitman had earlier eliminated Austin but the referees didn't see this so Austin just got back in the ring to the disgust of Bret. Little did he know 1997 just wasn't going to be his year! The fake Razor Ramon lasted just 17 seconds while Jerry Lawler nearly broke the record for shortest time in the Rumble lasting 4 seconds before being thrown out by Bret Hart. The AAA connection continued with the legendary Mil Mascaras competing alongside Pierroth, Cybernetico and Latin Lover. A certain Rocky Maivia competed and lasted 13 minutes before being eliminated by Mankind.

Another year and another history equalling Royal Rumble as in 1998, Steve Austin joined Michaels and Hogan as wrestlers who won the Rumble two years in a row. The rest of the card saw Vader beat The Artist Formerly Known as Goldust, Max Mini, Mosaic and Nova defeated Battalion, El Torito and Tarantula, The Rock beat Ken Shamrock by DQ to retain his IC title and in another unsatisfactory finish, the Legion of Doom beat The New Age Outlaws by DQ but didn't get the belt. Shawn Michaels nearly had another hugely successful Royal Rumble as he beat the luckless Undertaker in a casket match to retain his WWF Title. However the back injury Michaels sustained in the match were to mean this would be his last Rumble for a while. He herniated two discs and crushed one thanks to that casket. Meanwhile, The Undertaker had the casket set on fire by Kane, that guy just hates January.

So onto the Rumble and a win for Austin in 55 minutes (back to a wrestler every 90 seconds), coming in at 24 and wrestling for a quarter of an hour. This was a weird Rumble if your name was Mick Foley. He was first in as Cactus Jack lasting 9 minutes before being eliminated by Chainsaw Charlie (aka Terry Funk) but then Mankind came in at Number 16 lasting just a couple of minutes before being thrown over the top ropes by The Artist Formerly Known as

Goldust. That wasn't the last of Foley though as lo and behold, Dude Love came in at Number 28, only to be eliminated after 7 minutes by Farooq. Quickest exit was Tom Brandi in 12 seconds, 8-Ball, D-Lo Brown and Blackjack Bradshaw both lasted over half an hour

Could Austin make it three in a row in 1999? No way, this was the year that Mr McMahon himself was the winner (well he does own the company). Elsewhere on the card, The Big Boss Man beat Road Dogg, Ken Shamrock beat Billy Gunn to retain the IC Title, X-Pac beat Gangrel to keep his European title, Sable beat Luna Vachon in a strap match to retain her women's title (not a great night for challengers eh) and The Rock beat Mankind in a savage I Quit match to win the WWF Title (oops I spoke too soon)).



So just how did Vince win the Royal Rumble? Easy, you get your Corporation to attack Austin and then spend ages hiding under the ring. McMahon and Austin were the last two left but Vince got the win after interference by The Rock. Just like the Michaels and Bulldog Rumble, Vince and Austin were first in and last out. Quickest exits were by Gillberg in 7 seconds, Golga (Earthquake) in 15 seconds and Gangrel in 26 seconds. Chyna became the first woman to compete in the Rumble but was eliminated in 35 seconds by Austin. Vince didn't get his title chance at Wrestlemania, losing the right to fight for the title at the St Valentine's Day Massacre. Austin eliminated seven people in the Rumble.

So we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century and not just the first Royal Rumble to be held at Madison Square Garden but one that Channel 4 would never forget. The Rock won the Royal Rumble for the first time and elsewhere on the card, Tazz ended the unbeaten run of Kurt Angle in just three minutes, so why is Tazz now a crap commentator and Angle one of the best wrestlers in the world? The Hardy Boyz beat The Dudley Boyz in a great Tables match, Mae Young won the Miss Rumble 2000 swimsuit contest and gave Channel 4 bosses their first unwanted call at that time of the night, Chris Jericho beat Chyna and Hardcore Holly to become undisputed IC Champ (Chyna co-held the title beforehand), The New Age Outlaws beat The Acolytes to retain the tag titles and Triple H beat Cactus Jack in a streetfight that probably ended Channel 4's relationship with the WWF forever.

The Rumble itself proved to be a controversial one with The Rock winning after eliminating The Big Show but it was later proved that Big Show's feet hit the floor first, come on they're big enough to spot that in the first place aren't they? Again it was 90 seconds between entrants so the Rumble only lasted 51 minutes.

The Mean Street Posse and Kai En Tai continually entered the ring despite not being entered. The Rock came in 24<sup>th</sup> only wrestling for 14 minutes. Quick exits were Farooq in 18 seconds and Steve Blackman in 44 seconds, Chyna was in there again but only lasted 37 seconds this time. Bradshaw only lasted 25 seconds, no future for him in the company then!

New Orleans was the venue for 2001 and history was made as Stone Cold Steve Austin became the first man to win the Royal Rumble three times. The tag team titles changed hands as The Dudleys beat Edge and Christian and Chris Jericho beat Chris Benoit in a ladder match to win the IC Title. Ivory beat Chyna (another one fed up with the Rumble PPV) in just three minutes with Chyna collapsing after a back handspring elbow and being stretchered out the ring. He lost in three minutes the year before but 2001 proved to be a much better year for Kurt Angle as he beat Triple H to retain his WWF Title. What about the man who beat him in 2000? Well, Tazz was in the Royal Rumble and lasted ten seconds before being eliminated by Kane! Austin won that Rumble which lasted 61 minutes and earned himself another Wrestlemania title shot. He worked really hard to win this Rumble, well he was in the ring for 9 minutes! Surprise entrants were Haku who was actually WCW Hardcore champ at the time and Drew Carey who eliminated himself! Farooq had another nightmare Rumble lasting just 58 seconds, you can imagine a cosy chat between him, Chyna and The Undertaker reminiscing about their great Royal Rumbles. Other quick exits were by The Godfather in 14 seconds and of course that great effort by Taz (I love him really). Jeff Hardy was eliminated by his brother Matt, Kane lasted 53 minutes, eliminating a record 11 wrestlers and The Rock 38 minutes but this was Austin's night, well 9 minutes anyway.

Atlanta staged the 2002 Royal Rumble and it was the first win for Triple H. I take back what I've said about Tazz, he had a great 2002 as tagging with Spike Dudley he beat the Dudley Boyz to retain the tag titles. William Regal beat Edge to win the IC Title, Trish beat Jazz to retain her women's title and Chris Jericho beat The Rock to retain the Undisputed Title. Ric Flair was back for his first Rumble since 1992 and beat Vince McMahon in a street fight that lasted longer than the IC, Women's and tag title matches.

Triple H secured his Wrestlemania title shot in a Rumble that lasted over an hour. He entered at 22 and wrestled for

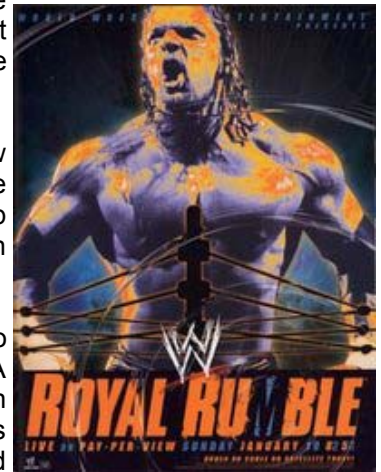


23 minutes with Kurt Angle last eliminated. The Undertaker disposed of 7 wrestlers but it was still another nightmare for him as he was eliminated by Maven after just seven minutes. Other quick exits were by Farooq in 36 minutes (just don't enter it mate). Albert in 48 seconds, Booker T in 33 seconds and The Hurricane in 39 seconds. Mr Perfect competed in a Rumble for the first time in 9 years and survived 15 minutes and was the 28<sup>th</sup> wrestler eliminated.

To Boston for the 2003 Royal Rumble and a triumphant night for Brock Lesnar. He had to win an elimination match against The Big Show to even get in the Rumble but then his first victory seemed almost inevitable as Rumble's have tended to become since the 'winner gets a Wrestlemania title shot' rule came in.

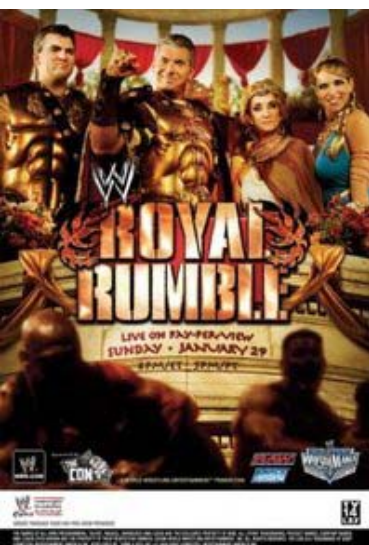
Not such a good year for William Regal this time as with Lance Storm he lost the Raw tag titles to the Dudley Boyz. Torrie defeated Dawn Marie, and in the two main title matches, Scott Steiner beat Triple H by DQ in a lousy match which saw Triple H keep his World Heavyweight Title and in a classic, Kurt Angle beat Chris Benoit to retain the WWE Title.

Onto Lesnar's victory in the Rumble and two records. At 29 he was the latest entry to win the Rumble and at 8 minutes and 59 seconds spent the least time in the ring. A nightmare nearly turned into glory as The Undertaker was the last man eliminated. In fact the last two men in were the last two survivors with Undi lasting just six minutes before seeing his long-awaited win denied him. Shawn Michaels made his return and again drew the number one spot but lasted just two minutes before being eliminated by Chris Jericho who went on to last 38 minutes. RVD lasted 32 minutes but not lasting quite so long were Tommy Dreamer (48 seconds) and Goldust (47 seconds).



Philadelphia staged the 2004 Rumble and it was the start of a great year for Chris Benoit as he finally won a big one, taking the Royal Rumble. Elsewhere on the card, Ric Flair and Batista beat the Dudleys to retain their Raw Tag titles, a match that lasted just 4 minutes. That's longer than the cruiserweight title match as Mysterio beat Noble in three minutes while Eddie beat Chavo. Some may hate the Rumble PPV but Hardcore Holly must love it, he got a crack at the WWE Title but thankfully lost to Brock Lesnar in six minutes. The World Heavyweight title match was much better but a dodgy finish as Triple H kept his belt in a double count out in a Last Man Standing match against Shawn Michaels.

So how did Benoit win that Rumble? Well he had to do it the hard way, equalling the record of Shawn Michaels as the only man to draw Number one and win the Rumble surviving 61 minutes, an all-time record and all on his Rumble debut. Just as at Madison Square Garden, The Big Show was the last man eliminated Goldberg made his debut, he came in last but was eliminated after two minutes by Kurt Angle.. Randy Orton was drawn at 2 and lasted 33 minutes before being eliminated by Mick Foley. Quick exits were made by Bradshaw in 38 seconds (and look what he did later in the year), The Hurricane in 19 seconds and WWE wasted Shelton Benjamin again giving him just 37 seconds.



It was back to Fresno in 2005 and again a first-time winner with Batista victorious in the Royal Rumble, though it'll be most remembered for what happened to the guy who won the Rumble back in 1999. On the undercard, Edge beat Shawn Michaels, The Undertaker beat Heidenreich in a casket match, JBL beat The Big Show and Kurt Angle in a triple threat match to retain his WWE Title after pinning Angle and Triple H beat Randy Orton to retain the World Heavyweight Title.

So onto the Batista victory that would destroy Evolution forever. Just 51 minutes this year and John Cena was the last man eliminated though both would go on to win titles at Wrestlemania 21. Slightly controversial though as both wrestlers went over the top rope which wasn't the scheduled finish. Out comes Vince who promptly injures himself and while lying on the floor restarts the match and Batista got the win. McMahon tore his quadracep muscles putting him out of action for a fair while. Batista came in at 28 and wrestled for just under 11 minutes, Chris Benoit came in at 2 and lasted 47 minutes, Rey Mysterio lasted 38 minutes (but even he couldn't have dreamed what would happen a year later) and both Chris Jericho and Eddie Guerrero survived 28 minutes. Quick exits were made by Simon Dean in 20 seconds and Kurt Angle by Michaels in 37 seconds setting up that classic Wrestlemania 21 match

In 2006, Miami and a sentimental win for Rey Mysterio as the Eddie tributes carried on and on. Elsewhere on the card, Gregory Helms defected from Raw to win the cruiserweight title in a 6-way match that lasted a marathon 7 minutes! Mickie James beat Ashley in a match that lasted 4 seconds longer than that cruiserweight title match, The



Boogeyman beat JBL in 114 seconds (long enough for Boogeyman to use all the holds he knows), John Cena beat Edge to regain his WWE Title and Kurt Angle beat Mark Henry to retain his World Heavyweight Title in just 9 minutes with The Undertaker appearing at the end to challenge Angle for the belt.

Rey Mysterio won the Rumble which lasted 62 minutes, coming in at Number 2 and beating Benoit's record for the longest time survived in the Rumble. Triple H was drawn at Number one and was 28<sup>th</sup> eliminated after 1 hour. Last man eliminated was Randy Orton who drew Number 30. Quick Exits were by Simon Dean in 45 seconds, Jonathan Coachman in 30 seconds while both Sylvan and Booker T lasted just 18 seconds! Carlito and Benoit both made it past the half hour mark.

And so finally we arrive in 2007 and to San Antonio in Texas where for the first time ever the Royal Rumble match would see competitors from Raw, Smackdown and ECW. Favourites going into the event included Edge, Randy Orton, Shawn Michaels and The Undertaker and after years of heartbreak it was the Undertaker who finally won the Rumble to secure a title shot at Wrestlemania.



The rest of the card saw John Cena retain his WWE Title winning a Last Man Standing match against Umaga, while Batista beat Mr Kennedy to retain the World Heavyweight Title and Lashley kept hold of his ECW title with a win over Test, while The Hardy Boyz beat MNM.

To the Rumble then and the first ever win for The Undertaker. We were back to 90 second gaps between competitors and the Rumble lasted just over 56 minutes. The first two in the ring were veterans Ric Flair and Finlay. No heroics for Flair this year, 15 years after he won the Rumble and the WWF Title, he was first out eliminated by Edge after just five minutes. Finlay did better though lasting an impressive 32 minutes before becoming the 12th wrestler eliminated when Michaels threw him over the dreaded top rope.

Also surviving over half an hour were Edge (who lost the WWE Title at the 2006 Rumble), who came in fifth and lasted 44 minutes being the 28th wrestler eliminated when Shawn Michaels finally got rid of him.

CM Punk and Randy Orton both lasted 27 minutes, Shelton Benjamin 22 minutes and Shawn Michaels 24 minutes before being the last man eliminated. That was of course by The Undertaker who in typical part-time fashion, became the first wrestler to come in at number 30 and win the Rumble. In fact he was only in the ring for 13 minutes. It's the third time he's entered at number 30, the previous times being in 1997 and 2003.

Shortest stays were by The Miz who came in at number 29 and seven seconds later was eliminated by The Great Khali. The Sandman who came in via the crowd lasted just 14 seconds before being eliminated by King Booker. Unluckiest superstar? It has to be Kane, making a record 11th appearance in the Rumble which sounds impressive until you think a) he's never won it and b) that means he never gets a big singles match, who got rid of King Booker but the royal one returned to eliminate him. The Giant Khali managed to eliminate seven wrestlers in his 225 seconds in the ring.

So that's it, the history of one of the WWE's biggest PPV's of the year and a vitally important one when it comes to shaping Wrestlemania. In our next edition it's the big one as we look back at the History of Wrestlemania.

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## THE TWO SHEDS REVIEW by Julian Radbourne

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You can tell Vince Russo is back in the wrestling business, can't you? Since his return to TNA a few months ago, we've had to put up with pointless skits on pay-per-view, including Eric Young competing in a bikini contest, and the James Gang changing their name to Voodoo Kin Mafia, and going on anti-WWE rants, even offering Triple H and Shawn Michaels one million dollars to compete in a shoot fight. While TNA's wrestling product continues to provide a viable alternative to WWE, these segments are really letting the side down, and the sooner they get rid of these skits, the better.

In the week where I watched a women's boxing bout on Eurosport that outshone every male bout on the card, I found out that an American wrestling promotion were holding a show called Chickfight virtually on my doorstep. Their show this past Sunday (January 14th), featured the cream of British female wrestling talent, as well as some of the best from the American indy scene. But each time I think of the name Chickfight I shudder. You see, I'm a strong advocate of women's wrestling. You can thank my former best friend for that. But if a young, red-blooded male walked down Marine Parade in Great Yarmouth and saw the word Chickfight on a billboard, he'd probably think it was something to do with the local lap dancing club, and nothing to do with professional wrestling.

Whoever thought that the word Chickfight would be a good way to promote women's professional wrestling should be taken out the back and given a good thrashing. And if you want further evidence of what I mean, put Chickfight into a search engine.

Was he brave or was he stupid? Watching the match between Rated RKO and D-Generation X at WWE's New Years Revolution show was a painful experience, especially after Triple H suffered another possible career-ending injury, tearing his left quadriceps. Some will commend his performance, doing what he did on one leg, but others will question his decision not to call for an early finish. After all, how much more damage did he do to his leg by executing a pedigree on the announcers table? And how much more damage would he have done had the table collapsed?

1PW is now history, and while I've always been a strong supporter of Steven Gauntley and his efforts to bring great wrestling action to Britain, I have to admit that I did see this coming ages ago. To say that the internet wrestling community, most notably the UK Fan Forum, have been unkind to Steven and his family would be an understatement. Unlike certain other wannabe promoters in Britain, Steven went into this thing with an plan, and it's just a shame that things didn't go to plan, and that 1PW, and its parent company 1 Up Games, are now no more. Although I must give credit to both Real Quality Wrestling and 3 Count Wrestling for saving what they could of this situation. At least British fans got to see the legend that is The Great Muta at the York Hall in Bethnal Green. That's one RQW show I'm going to make an effort to watch on TWC Fight. So will we see a time when there is a national wrestling promotion here in Britain? Or perhaps a Joint Promotions style of organisation? Not while there are numerous over-inflated egos unwilling to compromise in the British grappling game.

I have to admit I'm still in two minds with regards to The Wrestling Channel re-branding themselves TWC Fight and including mixed martial arts in their schedule. I enjoy a good MMA scrap as much as the next man, but some of the stuff currently on the schedule doesn't really appeal to me, and in particular, Andy and Dave on the Cage Fighter show just seem to be a couple of cut-price Mitchell Brothers. TWC Fight should go all out and show other combat sports as well. As a fan of boxing, kick boxing, muay thai and others, I would certainly make the effort to watch. Of course, TWC's loss of TNA programming is a big blow to the channel, but I can certainly see TNA's thinking on this. In order to gain more of an audience here in Britain, they needed to get on a more mainstream channel, and lets face it, TWC Fight is not really a mainstream channel. Imagine what would happen now when a channel surfer, and sometime wrestling fan, stumbles onto TNA Impact on Bravo 2 one Saturday night. It's a good move on TNA's part.

Log onto [www.twoshedsreview.com](http://www.twoshedsreview.com) to find out more!

And finally, some of my work has made it into book form, with the first two stories of my 1990 Anglo-Force series, co-written with my brother Paul, available to buy online at [www.lulu.com/twosheds316](http://www.lulu.com/twosheds316).

# MASSAGING THE CORPSE

## By The Cynic

I've spent the last year without wrestling. I was too busy writing and getting my sitcom, "Acting Up", produced (you can see it at [www.maggot.tv](http://www.maggot.tv)) to find much time for it. The world didn't end. My eyes didn't fall out. I still knew who Hulk Hogan was (unfortunately). But now, thanks to this column, I've been pulled back to the squared circle, and, like a vicar returning to a pox-ridden whore, there's a certain sleazy thrill.

It's not just the grappling that interests me, it's the politics, the business of wrestling, and I think they are indivisible from the action itself. Of course, if you read about business for too long, something's bound to disgust you, and so it with a current angle in the WWE.

It's said that Elvis makes more money now than when he was alive, and that might be true, but it's true that being dead is certainly no bar to bringing in the green. And so it is with wrestling. When Eddie Guerrero died, the suddenness of his passing shocked us all – the WWE did a good and appropriate job with their valedictory programmes, we mourned and moved on.

Except that the WWE is a Corporation. It exists solely to make money. Not to produce wrestling. Not to entertain. To make money. Everything else is secondary to that need. In fact, we could even call the wrestlers commodities. In the world of profit and loss, Eddie made cash – he was charismatic, people liked him and his merch figures must have been good. To lose him would lose money, and that's bad for a Corporation.

But the Corporation does have his memories to trade on, and as well as selling that all-important merch, their faltering "superstars" have received the Eddie charisma rub, even from beyond the grave – Rey needed to pique our interest some way, he hasn't got the stick skills on his own, Batista's tears (though authentic, I am sure) bought us closer to him and Chavo, who was about to be consigned to the bad gimmick drawer as Kerwin White, became the closest thing we had to Eddie.

Now, don't get me wrong, I'm not painting the WWE as the originator of this practice – it's long been used by wrestling, and the entertainment industry – all those specials with "never seen before" footage; I'm not stupid (despite what MENSA said), I do know this happens. It's just that, as if not content with trading on his memories, the WWE have made it much more personal. They've bought his wife into it. Vickie Guerrero is now involved in a pretty ordinary feud with Chris Benoit, and that's what brings the bile to the very tip of my throat.

You see, to me it just appears that the Guerreros, like the Harts before them, only exist inside that rung. And only when the WWE extend the favour. I'll except that it may not be that way at all, Vickie may have lobbied Vincent K for months, in an attempt to emulate the in ring skills of her late hubby, but it certainly doesn't look that way. Does it cheapen Eddie's memory? You betcha. But not as much as another aspect of this tacky feud.

To use Vicky as a quick fix to get the angle over is bad enough, but to promote violence against women is unforgivable. The WWE has a patchy record on its gender stereotypes; non-wrestling women were usually there to titillate (Elizabeth's skirt at Summerslam '88, Sheri's stockings, etc), but as the era of "Attitude" arrived and social mores changed, so did the Playboy antics of the sexless Sable and Torrie and the brainless Diva Search. Women have seldom had their own voice in the WWE – those who wrestled being the most independent (I'm thinking of Trish, not Lita here) and now we have the teased physical abuse of a woman presented as entertainment.

Think I'm overstating the case? Then please understand me, I'm no Right to Censor guy (even I'm funnier than that!) nor am I an Andrea Dworkin for the noughties (look it up!) – I'm not precious, but here I think it's necessary to raise a hand and point something out. Just imagine a young boy watching Chris Benoit being cheered for putting a woman in the Scorpion Deathlock. What message does that give to him? Only one – that if a woman "gets what she has coming to her" (and Vicky is presented as a nasty, spineless heel), it's not only ok, it's to be praised. Now think again. The only thing precious here is my talent.

I think to celebrate this is disgusting and dangerous too. It cheapens everybody associated with it, and anybody who watches it too. Don't blame Vickie – she may be looking into a financial abyss. Don't blame Chavo – TNA doesn't need another mid-card Cruiserweight. Blame the bookers. We still have a huge stock of good memories about Eddie, and that is essential for this cheap little angle to work – if we didn't care about him, we'd disregard this feud faster than a Big Slow match.

There is an argument that there is no such thing as history. There can't be, because the facts we're having presented to us can't be objective, as soon as anyone starts to work on it, they put their own stamp on it, and consequently it's subjective, not a true representation of what happened. In fact, as soon as someone is involved with a "fact", it ceases to be in any way objective. I subscribe to this theory (as do a few other of my huge-brained friends) and it worries me. I worries me that anyone with an editing suite can change the way they want history to look, change the way matches are seen and the way what people say is perceived. It skews our remembrances and, if we're not careful, we begin to remember things in the way that we've been told to.

Please don't remember Eddie in the way the WWE may want you to right now – as the basis of a tacky, played out angle. Don't let the WWE dictate the way you enjoy wrestling, they've already got control of a lot of libraries from other Federations – other Feds they really had nothing to do with. Now, I'm not saying the WWE would mess with those much-loved programmes and matches, but if you've got memories of them, hold onto them and don't let anyone tell you that you're wrong.

Eddie Guerrero had a great, incident-packed career, and it was recent enough for us all to have our own memories of him. Keep them, they are yours, don't let the WWE dictate what you should think, don't let them lead you to a conclusion or push you to a prejudice. Keep a little objectivity in your enjoyment. Because if you don't, one year you might be saying to yourself "That must be how it happened". And there may be a new tag team in the ring – Burke and Hare.

## **The State of *SmackDown!* Address**

### ***SmackDown! in 2006 – The Good, the Bad and the Boogeyman* by James Moreland**

*People move forward into the future out of the way they comprehend the past. When we don't understand something in our past, we are therefore crippled.*

Norman Mailer

In my inaugural column for the Piledriver Newsletter I examined the potential for the WWE to develop the *SmackDown!* brand into a modernised "WCW", in order to capitalise on the positive aspects and nostalgia relating to that promotion's late 1990s heyday. After arguably cementing its place as the prominent WWE brand, industry commentators are predicting a stellar 2007 for *SmackDown!* – but before we look into what this New Year holds, let us take a retrospective look at how the brand excelled in 2006 - in The Good, The Bad...and the Boogeyman.

#### ***SmackDown! in 2006 – The Good***

##### **Batista vacates the World Heavyweight Championship**

On January 8<sup>th</sup> 2006, flag bearer of the *SmackDown!* brand Dave Batista was dealt a cruel blow, suffering the third tricep injury of his WWE career. The tear would require surgery, and forced the sorrowful Champion into vacating his status as the Blue Brand's top belt holder on the subsequent edition of the show after a two-hundred and eighty-two day reign. This would prove to be something of a blessing in disguise in later months as Kurt Angle and Rey Mysterio title reigns were sandwiched between Batista's own and the man whose rejuvenation proved to be a highlight of the *SmackDown!* brand's year...

##### **All Hail King Booker!**

Sufficed to say, the artist formerly known as Booker T had been well and truly coasting in the WWE since his odd couple *RAW* tag team with Goldust concluded in 2003. Mired in lacklustre storylines, stagnant booking and feuds had handicapped the former five-time WCW World Champion, to the point where it was generally accepted his retirement was coming sooner rather than later. Following a transfer to *SmackDown!*, he was criminally restricted to the United States Championship division during 2004 and 2005. That year, however, saw the addition of his non-kayfabe wife Sharmell to his side – a move which would be instrumental in his rise to the top of the brand. Booker would tread water on *SmackDown!* in an abortive feud with the horrendous Boogeyman, even losing cleanly alongside his wife in a handicap match to the aforementioned invertebrate enthusiast at Wrestlemania XXII. After an end to the Boogeyman feud and several defeats to newcomer Gunner Scott, few could have predicted the transformation Booker would soon undergo...

Following a four year hiatus, the *King of the Ring* concept made a refreshing return on the *SmackDown!* brand in April 2006. Booker dropped Matt Hardy in the quarter-finals, and an injury to Kurt Angle provided him with a bye into



the KOTR finals, taking place at May's *Judgement Day* pay-per-view. It was there that, when many had predicted the WWE's next "chosen one" Bobby Lashley to kickstart his career by winning the title, Booker T was victorious and became the *King of the Ring*. Suddenly, as if the proverbial fire had been lit under his backside, "King Booker" was born and was soon becoming the focal point of the brand. He formed his Royal Court, consisting of his wife, "Queen" Sharmell, William Regal, and Finlay. King Booker's involvement on the brand would often be the highlight of the show; he developed and perfected the exaggerated, stereotypical mannerisms of an aloof Sixteenth Century English king, arriving in arenas to the jeers of the crowd and Regal's bellowing, monotonous declaration "All Hail King Booker!", his curtseying Queen perennially at his side.

The WWE finally seemed to recognise the talent in their hands, and through sound booking (Booker's dastardly Court would often rescue their leader from potentially perilous situations), and the industry of Mr. Huffman himself, fans and commentators alike sought to put the failure of the Rey Mysterio title reign behind them. This was confirmed when, to the relief of many, King Booker became only the second African-American World Title holder in WWE history, defeating Mysterio at July's ill-fated *Great American Bash* pay-per-view. He wrestled the recently returned Batista at *Summerslam* for the World Heavyweight Title, losing by disqualification and thus retaining the championship. The King then successfully defended the belt against three high profile adversaries (Batista, Finlay and Lashley) at *No Mercy* in October. He attained yet more recognition with a somewhat contrived conquest at *Cyber Sunday* (it was generally assumed that whichever wrestler whose belt was chosen by the fans to be defended at the event would be the subsequent victor) in a "Champion of Champions" match.

Despite his much improved performances both inside and outside the ring, having been a particularly great foil to his babyface challenger Bobby Lashley, industry commentators and "smart" fans now accepted Booker was little more than a placeholder for *SmackDown!*'s darling, Batista. And indeed it was not long before the King's reign was brought to an abrupt end, Batista fulfilling the mission he'd set out ten months prior by destroying the Champion at November 26<sup>th</sup>'s *Survivor Series* in Philadelphia. King Booker remains an important element of the blue brand, but one who is now (perhaps undeservedly) overshadowed by his nemesis Batista, the priority feuds going on around him and stranded in the upper-midcard once again. 2007 may not see Huffman hit the heady heights of his World Heavyweight Title reign, but 2006 will forever be remembered as "the Year of the King".

### **The Luck of the Irish...**

Who would have thought a near-fifty-year-old man carrying a club and escorted by a faux-leprechaun for comedic effect would become the most consistent and effective worker on the *SmackDown!* brand? Dave Finlay, former British and Irish Heavyweight Champion, WCW Television Champion and WWE Diva Road Agent, burst onto the scene after a series of vignettes proclaiming "My name is Finlay, and I love to fight". In terms of both his blunt, aggressive character and consummate aptitude for controlled violence in the ring, Finlay astounded onlookers who were suddenly exposed to the true meaning of wrestling.

This was evidenced in his first match against Matt Hardy, where Finlay was disqualified for a vicious steel steps-assisted assault on his opponent. This was a real veteran and practitioner of the art; not some washed up sports entertainer or young pretender. In early 2006 following his debut, Finlay was placed into a high-octane feud with Bobby Lashley, the pair's smash-mouth styles complimenting each other in several knock-down drag-out brawls which not only blew live crowds away but whet the appetite for the understated yet intense youngster. The ill-tempered Finlay soon began wielding traditional Irish weaponry in the form of his shillelagh, a heavy wooden club with which he would inflict brutal assaults on his opponents, including Lashley, once their backs were turned. Finlay was rightly credited with bringing Lashley's in-ring qualities along, surely contributing to his current standing as ECW World Champion. At *Wrestlemania XXII* Finlay fought against five other men in the Money in the Bank Ladder Match, coming up short in pursuit of the title shot afforded to the victor. Consistently impressive, Finlay had cemented his place in the upper-midcard tier.

He participated in the returning *King of the Ring* tournament, losing out to his rival Lashley once again. Then, on May 26<sup>th</sup> 2006 came "The Little Bastard". A midget dressed as a leprechaun (in a move many thought would kill the credibility of the Finlay character), would appear from underneath the ring at opportune moments to attack the Fighting Irishman's opponents, and in some cases, secure him victory. This could so easily have become just another ill-judged sports entertainment embarrassment, but the Little Bastard himself became a genuinely amusing highlight of the brand's shows; many would anticipate his appearances, and indeed *cheer* for the little guy! Somehow, you could sense an intangible mutual affection between the two, despite the kick up the backside regularly delivered by Finlay to his miniature friend!

Finlay would strike up a working relationship with Booker T at *Judgment Day* 2006, his assist proving instrumental in the newly crowned King Booker's victory in the *King of the Ring* final. Soon the Irishman found himself "knighted" by the narcissistic King, and "Sirs" Finlay and Regal would defend Booker to invariably nefarious ends. Finlay entered his most successful period in the WWE at this point, scoring wins over World Champion Rey Mysterio in a non-title

affair and eventually besting his old nemesis Lashley for the United States Title, which he defended a number of times before losing it to Ken Kennedy in a triple threat match on the September 1<sup>st</sup> *SmackDown!*. Putting over opponents left, right and centre, Finlay was still anything but enhancement talent, and indeed he would move into feuds at an increasingly higher level over the coming months. He would even compete against his King in matches and was involved in a fatal four-way World Heavyweight Title bout at *No Mercy*.

The court was quietly disbanded, but Finlay teamed once again with King Booker at the *Armageddon* pay-per-view, losing to Batista and John Cena. Finlay, along with King Booker, has been a mainstay of *SmackDown!*'s upper card in 2006. His professionalism and dedication to his art has won him huge acclaim across the board, and many have called for the Fighting Irishman to be rewarded with a title reign in the near future. With his craft mastered, a grizzled scowl across his face and the ominous shillelagh never too far away, could 2007 be the year we crown an Irish World Champion in WWE?

## KENNEDY!!

Working the mic is a skill few WWE workers are able, or at least given the opportunity, to perfect. Often scripted by failed soap writers, promos come off as bland and invoke little emotion from live crowds. In 2006, we saw the breakout of a classic mic worker, with quality in-ring skills to boot. His name was Mr. Kennedy...Kennedy. A six-month stint in WWE developmental territory Ohio Valley Wrestling, following six years of plying his trade in the minor leagues and wrestling as enhancement talent on various WWE and TNA B-shows, prepared the blue chipper for his debut on the *SmackDown!* B-show, *Velocity*, in 2005. Taking the bull by the horns, billed as "Ken Anderson", he impressed many with his forthright addresses and crisp skills between the ropes.

To compliment his cocky character, he would take a mic and make his own ring announcement prior to matches. A name change to the more merchandise-friendly Mr. Kennedy soon became fruitful, as fans would join him in bellowing his surname before and after matches. Kennedy was involved in high-profile matches against Batista, and most poignantly, Eddie Guerrero, for this was to be "Latino Heat's" final televised match before his tragic death on November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2005. Unfortunately for Kennedy, he tore his latissimus dorsi muscle on the Italian leg of WWE's overseas tour in December of that year – ending his in-ring activity until May 2006. He worked off the ring rust down in OVW, before moving back to *SmackDown!* and defeating Scotty 2 Hotty at the June 9<sup>th</sup> TV tapings. Following an injury to Mark Henry, Kennedy was thrust into a brief feud with the returning Batista, who he defeated by disqualification in a brutal outing. He took a further count-out victory over the Animal, then going down to a Batista Bomb and pinfall in their third encounter. It was clear at this point that Kennedy had the potential to be a huge draw for the WWE – and unlike certain other headliners, could work well both in the ring and on the mic. He had a great look; his striking blonde hair, athletic physique and soon, a new t-shirt complete with his catchphrase resonated with many "smart" fans, and he was rightly dealt the card as one of very few potential main event superstars of the future.

In September Kennedy scored his first WWE title victory, defeating Bobby Lashley and Finlay in a triple-threat U.S. Title match on *SmackDown!*. Then, in October, Kennedy was given an indication of the lofty prospects his WWE career held, as he was placed in a feud with the Undertaker (a spot reserved for main event stars and the WWE's latest hopes for the future). A disqualification win at October's *No Mercy* boosted Kennedy's ego once more, but he lost the U.S. Title to Chris Benoit at the next edition of *SmackDown!*, the Undertaker providing the distraction which would prolong their feud. The feud would be extended to include fellow upstart egotist Montel Vontavious Porter and the Undertaker's kayfabe brother Kane. MVP and Kennedy took on the Brothers of Destruction in a variety of matches, both individually and in tag matches. Kennedy dropped the Undertaker in a First Blood match with unwitting assistance from MVP, but lost decisively at the *Armageddon* pay-per-view in the Deadman's speciality "Last Ride" match.

On the first *SmackDown!* of the New Year, Teddy Long announced the first *SmackDown!* "Beat the Clock Sprint", where the wrestler to win their match in the fastest time would secure a title shot against the World Heavyweight Champion, Batista. Kennedy set a time of 5:07 by defeating Chris Benoit, and on the following week's *SmackDown!* only the Undertaker came close to beating Kennedy's time, ultimately failing by a single second. Ken Kennedy will now face the Animal at the *Royal Rumble* in a match few predict he will be able to win, but a competitive performance will signify Kennedy's arrival in the *SmackDown!* main event scene.

A growing legion of fans, the WWE merchandising machine backing his push and consistent improvement in and out of the ring should all contribute to a huge 2007 for Ken Kennedy. A positive attitude to constant improvement while continuing to play on the fact he has beaten seven former World Champions will stand him in good stead over the next twelve months, but he must be backed and booked effectively by the company. Kennedy's forte is his mic work, and as such a move to *RAW* this year would give him the ideal opportunity to perfect his craft in front of a live audience of millions, and expose him to the world on the WWE's flagship show. He also needs to work extended feuds with renowned performers such as Shawn Michaels, and be involved in marquee matches at pay-per-views in the course of 2007 – the move to *RAW*, perhaps following *Wrestlemania XXIII* is clearly Kennedy's route to

superstardom. And if 2006 is anything to go by, Mr. Kennedy will be a sports entertainment icon before the year is out...

#### **ECW's Return paves JBL's new Smackdown path**

Riding on a tide of nostalgia stimulated by 2005's original ECW *One Night Stand* pay-per-view, WWE promoted the second *One Night Stand* from the Hammerstein Ballroom in New York City. This would provide the springboard for the return of ECW, albeit in a watered-down fashion as a third brand under the WWE banner. A colour commentator was required to call the show alongside Joey Styles, and SmackDown!'s Tazz was the natural fit for the role. The four-year strong announcing partnership between the former ECW Champion and Michael Cole had ended, and *SmackDown!* was short of a colour man. Step forward one Mr. John Bradshaw Layfield.

JBL's in-ring career appeared to be at a standstill, as WWE desperately threw the title around the retrospectively unsuitable Rey Mysterio's waist at *Wrestlemania XXII*. His challenge to Mysterio at Judgement Day faltered, and he soon lost his United States Title to Bobby Lashley on *SmackDown!* in late May. A serious back injury was the reason for a hiatus from in-ring action. This paved the way to his appearance at June's One Night Stand 2006, where he riled the crowd and announced his move to the *SmackDown!* announce booth, as Tazz' replacement.

JBL's transition was ultra-smooth – he and Michael Cole began to develop a rapport based on the kind of fundamental, confrontational exchanges that defined the great announcing combinations of years past. Cole would defend the faces; JBL would come straight back at him with a character-derived insult, to which Cole would retort with a smart comment in an attempt to put JBL in his place, though this invariably failed. Michael Cole is, and likely never will be the renowned lead announcer he clearly yearns to be, but with JBL at his side he has the perfect foil with which to hone his craft. Particularly enjoyable would be his rants on the cross-dressing Vito, the worm-quaffing Boogeyman and the abhorrent "Miz" character, for all of whom he never failed to express his abject disgust. This in turn resonated with the "smart" fans that identified with JBL's comments, such were these characters perceived as blemishes on the improving brand.

JBL reminded us of his promo skills when he attacked Teddy Long for placing MVP in an Inferno Match against Kane, and berated the fans for revelling in the suspect "entertainment" provided in the bout. While his bickering with Cole has been wholly entertaining in 2006, JBL is far from a one-trick pony. With an inside knowledge of the business from top to bottom, as well as a highly professional attitude to his work, Layfield is able to contribute great insight to the television viewers' *SmackDown!* experience. He offers facts about current superstars (win/loss records, lengths of title reigns, etc), as well as a detailed knowledge of relevant wrestling history which he applies appropriately throughout each edition of the show. In many cases he will use this knowledge to put over the deserving workers he sees before him. Just ask Gregory Helms, Ken Kennedy, Paul London and Brian Kendrick how effectively Layfield's commentary compliments their matches.

In 2006, John Bradshaw Layfield may have stumbled upon what could in future years be regarded as his greatest contribution to the wrestling industry. He's been a tag team specialist, a World Heavyweight Champion, and plied his trade at the most prestigious show of all, *Wrestlemania* – and now he is the benchmark for the modern colour commentator. Mr. Layfield, I salute you.

*In the second part of Smackdown! 2006:The Good, The Bag and the Boogeyman, we take a look at the decisions, characters and storylines which did not pan out quite as well as McMahon and the gang intended...*

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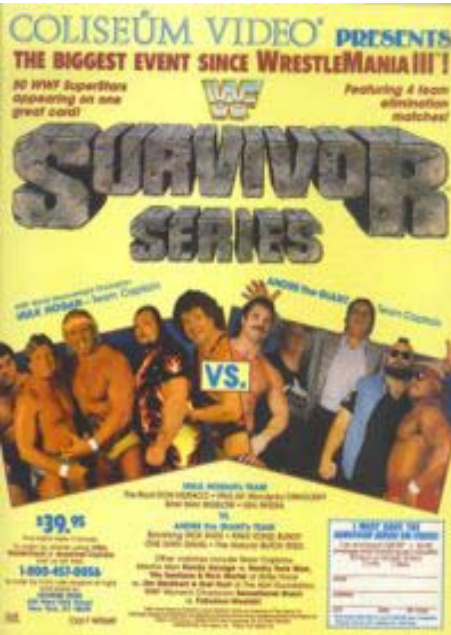
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## Remembering Bam Bam Bigelow (1961-2007)

“He was one of the toughest S.O.B’s you could ever ever face in the ring.” That was the reaction of Tazz on [www.wwe.com](http://www.wwe.com) when reacting to the news that Bam Bam Bigelow passed away on January 19th at the age of 45. His death was due to multiple drugs in his system, cocaine and benzodiazetine (an anti-anxiety drug) at lethal levels. He was also suffering from heart disease.

Scott Bigelow was, in my humble opinion, one of the best wrestlers never to wear the main singles titles in WWE and WCW. He seemed to have everything a wrestler would want; a great look especially for a heel and he could work the microphone. Despite being a huge guy he wasn’t slow but for some reason he never really got the opportunities that he deserved.



Bigelow certainly got a great start to his career as he was trained at Larry Sharpe’s ‘Monster Factory’ in Mount Laurel, New Jersey. His debut came in Memphis in 1985 but not as Bam Bam Bigelow. Instead, managed by his trainer, he was given by Fritz Von Erich, the name of Crusher Yukov, a Russian heel. The following year he won his first professional title when he won a Battle Royal to become the Southern Heavyweight Champion, three months later he became the WCCW TV Champion. Eventually the name Bam Bam Bigelow arrived, far better I suppose than Fred or Barney.

1987 saw Bigelow get his big break as he joined the then WWF but as a face rather than a heel. At the Survivor Series he was in the main event joining Hogan, Orndorff, Muraco and Petera to take on the team of Andre, Bundy, One Man Gang, Butch Reed and Rick Rude. He even lasted longer in the match than Hogan being the last wrestler eliminated as the heels got the victory.

At Wrestlemania IV, he took part in the tournament held to determine a new WWF Champion after Andre the Giant had the title stripped from him after trying to sell it to The Million Dollar Man. Bigelow lost by count out to The One Man Gang in the first round in just three minutes. Knee surgery caused him to leave the company in 1988, that promising debut just never turned into a big push.

Fitness regained, Bigelow made his debut in the NWA and unsuccessfully challenged Barry Windham for the US Title at Starrcade 88. He also appeared at Capital Combat in 1990 tagging with Kevin Sullivan and Cactus Jack to lose against the team of The Road Warriors and Norman the Lunatic.

It was in Japan though that Bigelow was really appreciated. Wrestling for NJPW he formed a fearsome tag team with Big Van Vader and won the IWGP Tag titles from Hiroshi Hase and The Great Muta in March 1992, holding onto the belts for three months before being defeated by the Steiner Brothers. Bigelow left NJPW later that year and wrestled for other Japanese companies before returning to the States and another run with the WWF. At the 1993 Royal Rumble he beat The Big Boss Man (sadly also no longer with us) on the undercard, this time wrestling as a heel. A big push looked likely but both the main titles in the company were in the hands of heels (Yokozuna and Shawn Michaels). Bigelow didn’t make it onto the card for Wrestlemania IX but he did get that push at the King of the Ring tournament. A victory over Jim Duggan in the first round saw him reach the final after Lex Luger fought to a double count-out with Tatanka. He lost in the final to Bret Hart and it all seemed to go wrong for him after that.

Hart went into a feud with Jerry Lawler and instead Bigelow found himself teaming with The Headshrinkers to take on Tatanka and The Smoking Gunns at Summerslam and ending up on the losing team, then came the Survivor Series. In a nightmare match he teamed with The Headshrinkers and Bastion Booger to take on and lose against the Four Doinks – The Bushwhackers and Men on A Mission.

1994 wasn’t much better. He lost to Tatanka at the Royal Rumble and was then given Luna Vachon as a manager. At Wrestlemania X the clowns returned and Bigelow found himself tagging with Luna to take on Doink and Dink but at least he got the win. The 1994 King of the Ring tournament saw him lose to Razor Ramon in the first round and he then joined the Million Dollar Corporation tagging with IRS to beat former tag partners The Headshrinkers at Summerslam.



Another victory followed at the Survivor Series and when the tag titles became vacant, Bigelow teamed with Tatanka, reaching the final, held at the Royal Rumble only to lose to the team of Bob Holly and the 1-2-3 Kid. However, that night proved to be one of the most important of Bigelow's career. He was involved in a scuffle with NFL star Lawrence Taylor who was sitting at ringside. That led to Bigelow main eventing Wrestlemania 11 and even though Taylor got the win, it put Bigelow in prime position for a push or did it?

Bigelow turned face and began to tag with Diesel and beat Sid and Tatanka in the main event of The King of The Ring but by 'In Your House 2' he was only up against Henry Godwinn and just months after headlining two PPV events he lost to Davey Boy Smith at 'In Your House 3'. At The Survivor Series he lost to Goldust and his days in the company were numbered.

Bigelow left the company but wasn't out for work for long joining ECW for a while before heading back to Japan and a disastrous MMA match against Kimo Leopoldo which he lost in the first round. 1997 saw Bigelow return to ECW for a longer and more successful run that saw him team with Chris Candido and Shane Douglas to form 'The Triple Threat.' Bigelow finally won a major singles title when he won the ECW World Title beating Shane Douglas in 1997, Douglas getting the belt back the following month. March 1998 saw him win the TV Title with a victory over Tazz at Barely Legal, the famous match in which they went through the ring.



Like many ECW wrestlers at the time, Bigelow left for WCW in 1999 and after a win against Wrath at 'Souled Out' he was put into a feud with Goldberg. Predictably he lost to him at Superbrawl and then found himself relegated to the Hardcore and Tag ranks. He won the Hardcore title from Brian Knobbs in 2000 holding it for just 13 days before Knobbs regained the belt. WCW Tag team title gold followed when he teamed up with Diamond Dallas Page and Chris Canyon to form the Jersey Triad, who had two title runs in 1999 with a combination of any of the three wrestlers. Starrcade 1999 saw him lose an ambulance match to Mike Awesome, Bigelow stayed in the company right till the very end losing to Shawn Stasiak at the final WCW PPV 'Greed.' Vince didn't sign Bigelow for a third time and he stayed at home waiting for his WCW contract to expire, which it did in June 2002.

Bigelow announced his retirement but as is always the case in wrestling, he returned soon after wrestling occasionally on Indy cards. He finally retired in 2004 and opened a restaurant which wasn't a great success. At one time no one even his best mate Shane Douglas knew where he was. 2004 and 2005 saw him involved in road accidents, the latter nearly ending in serious charges. Scott Bigelow died on January 19 2007, he'd been suffering from persistent infections and diabetes. Another great wrestler passed away, he may not have always received the pushes he deserved but he'll always be remembered as one of the best big guys of the 80s and 90s.

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## From Internet Icon to Wrestling Promoter

### Piledriver Online interviews Peter Staniforth, boss of PTW

**Has it always been an ambition of yours to run your very own promotion?** Definitely. For around 2 years or more now, certainly; maybe longer. Eventually when you do something, anything really; you feel the urge to prove you can do it yourself. Mine is mainly an urge to prove it to myself, although there's one or two people it's going to be fun to prove a point to. At some point everyone has the chance to prove their doubters wrong, and this is mine.

**With so many new and established promotions having financial problems, how big a risk is this for you?** Everything is a risk. Everything in life is a risk, in my view. Everything you do, everywhere you go. It's about how you calculate and plan for every occurrence, and always having a plan b, plan c, and plan d. I even have a plan dd - god I love dd's! I'll be making sure we take this carefully and sensibly, because this is a long-term plan and not short.

**How difficult is it setting up your own promotion and what advice would you give to others thinking of doing something similar (apart from not promoting in Luton of course)?** I don't know if I'm in a position to give advice really. I've built up a lot of favours and such over the last nearly eight years, and am finally calling some in. I have, apparently, a good reputation amongst wrestlers; because I've always gone out of my way for them with a belief of trying to keep the business ticking over and moving on, and I think all the good I've tried to do in the past is coming back to me a little bit.



**Peter Staniforth in a coat that costs slightly less than the one Greg Lambert has**

**So can you tell my readers more about PTW and what we can expect if attending any of your shows?** You can expect a genuine atmosphere, a 'real' feeling about us. Expect wrestlers from all around the UK, and hopefully one higher level name star per show. You'll see people you've not seen before that I want to give the chance to, you'll see people you know and people you don't .... yet. One thing you will see, though, is people who have the same drive and desire and determination as myself and my business partner in PTW.

**You've got more contacts than a lonely hearts column so that must be a great help to you as you launch this promotion?** Honestly, it has made all the difference. I'm not a new guy trying to be a promoter, I've been around the block quite a few times and people know who I am. It does make a lot of difference.

**Will we be seeing any overseas stars in the future given your expert knowledge of the American Indy scene?** I've had some great names contact me already. I'm blessed that a lot of the US indy scene knows who I am from past work, be it journalistic or talent relations; so I've got quite an amazing list of people who'd come over if asked.

**If you had the revenue to put on a really massive show, name me three matches you'd love to promote.** Oh. That's taken me aback a little. I don't think I'll ever be in that position really, but seeing as you never know..... I'll give you the first three people off the top of my head that I would love to book if money was no object and circumstances allowed - Samoa Joe, William Regal, and Sexxy Eddy.

**You're well known from not just your writing but also your work as a manager and 'owner' will we be seeing you in the ring in PTW?** Of course. You can't keep me out of a ring, as manager or owner, and even if I lost the urge (which won't happen!); then my Clipboard Of Doom would probably walk into the ring and hit people by itself. I literally live for that buzz from the crowd and the boo's and the hated reaction, it's a high you can't beat.

**Any chance of seeing you in a dress again?** Much as I know you loved the pictures of that, I'm sorry but I don't imagine it will happen again. I did it as a gesture to a company that didn't appreciate it one bit, to show I was genuine; but they were too into themselves to see it. It's their loss, and one that I think they're realising more than ever now as I up the stakes with PTW to a point that with all due respect I don't believe they can compete with. But hey, it was fun to wear a dress; and I'm glad I did it.

**On a more serious note, you suffered a couple of concussions last year, how are you feeling now and does that make you wary of getting in matches again?** It does a bit. I'm certainly no wrestler, and it has affected my life quite badly. It's made me realise I'm a little bit more mortal than I like to believe, and made me realise that my family come first too. I just won't put myself in a position to get hurt again if I can help it, but it won't stop me and the

Clipboard getting involved if we need to!

**The first PTW show is in Luton , which I know you love, especially the football team, will you be spreading to other areas in the near future?** Maybe. Right now I just want my hometown, and to run it on a regular basis. I'm taking this slowly, and other venues and towns is something that right now really isn't on my mind that much. I'll consider that when the timing is hopefully right.

**Some general questions now, how do you see the state of professional wrestling in the UK at present both in terms of promoters and wrestlers?** Wrestler wise, I actually think we're pretty good right now. There are some really good wrestlers out there, if I name names it will show bias and possibly people I want to bring in for PTW in the future so I'll keep my cards to my chest there! Promoters, I think I'll keep my thoughts to myself there mainly. There are some decent ones, some okay ones, some that mean well but don't do too well, and some that are purely selfish.

**What do you think of the proposed RQW seal of approval?** I hadn't paid any attention until you brought it up and I researched it, but having read about it now, it appears to be a very good idea. I myself have always preferred to be a little more independent, and such; but it's not an idea I'd rule out wanting to get involved with and I hope it works and achieves the goals they've set.

### PTW Launch with DEFIANCE

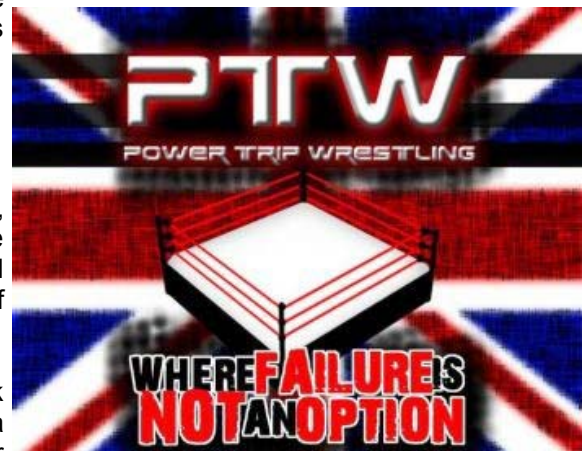
What an evening! What a day, to be honest. For PTW's "Defiance", we had approximately 190 fans in attendance, and considering we had a murder investigation and police closing both ends of the road off until 6pm with a 7.30 start for the show (unrelated to PTW of course!) - we're still standing tall. Here's the results from the show!

PTW Owner The 'Internet Icon' Peter Staniforth came out to thank the fans for coming, and to start the show. Peter was received with a huge ovation and wild cheers from the fans, which was said by Peter after the show to have really shook him emotionally. In the opening match, Ashton Brown defeated Dean Christ, In the Ladies Match, Chelsey Karter defeated Miss Vicky, Nick Aldis defeated Dr. Stretch, In a major contender for Match of the Night, 'Wonderkid' Jonny Storm defeated Atom. After the intermission, Humongous was the winner of the 20 Man Royal Rumble. Humongous was attacked by a bitter Special Agent, who was then attacked by an angry Leon X, who was then jumped by Jim Brooks. After an argument in the ring, PTW Owner Peter Staniforth came out to another huge cheer and asked the fans if they wanted to see these guys go at it - but not right now ..... In April, on the next show!! The crowd roared their approval as Peter made it a Fatal Four Way match, Hardcore rules; for the next PTW show. In the 'Old School vs New School Challenge', with the TBW Heavyweight Title on the line, Shabazz defeated Keith Myatt (w/ Dan Edge) And the main event - Falls Count Anywhere - Gangster & American Allstar (w/ Miss Vicky) defeated "The Sky Hi Express" Dan Ryder and Johnny Lee. The Sky Hi's weren't at all happy with Miss Vicky at ringside, and felt they needed someone in their corner to neutralise her presence. Peter Staniforth's music hit, and we'll quote him direct - "I could get you someone big and scary from the back. I could... but I won't. How about someone with pretty blonde highlights.. ..who's downright good looking....and swings a clipboard?"

The crowd were thrilled, and Gangster & Allstar fumed with anger as Peter told the Sky Hi Express that he himself would be in their corner for the match. It was a wild match, going all around the building, a ladder was brought into play with devastating effects; and on separate occasions during the match Peter hit both Gangster & American Allstar in the head with his metal clipboard. It wasn't enough though, as the victory went to the bad guys; who then proceeded to taunt Staniforth on the microphone. Peter finished the show by promising 'something special' for Gangster & Allstar next month, and thanking the fans for their support on a night that had truly been a show .... of "Defiance".

### The Next PTW Show

The next Power Trip Wrestling show is 'Superstitious' to be held at the Luton Rugby Football Club on Friday April 13th. Doors open 7pm, start 7.30pm. Tickets : Adults £8, Children/OAP' s/Students £5, Family of four £20. For more information go to [www.powertripwrestling.co.uk](http://www.powertripwrestling.co.uk) or email [info@powertripwrestling.co.uk](mailto:info@powertripwrestling.co.uk) with your thoughts and feedback on the website, we welcome all comments. There's also a MSpace site at [www.myspace.com/power\\_trip\\_wrestling](http://www.myspace.com/power_trip_wrestling)



## Inside the Insane World of Mad Man Manson

When RQW boss Len Davies suggested I interview Mad Man Manson little did I know what I was letting myself in for. Believe me there are few signs of sanity in this interview but when you're dealing with someone who later that evening was to lose a match after submitting to a hold he placed on himself, what do you expect!



**When did you first become interested in professional wrestling?**

I first became interested in pro wrestling while stranded on a desert island with the members of ABBA and a couple of them were very into pro wrestling and I got into it through them.

**Which two members, blonde or brunette?**

Both of them, all of them.

**I've heard Agnetha is a big wrestling fan**

She is a huge wrestling fan to this day. Is she dead?

**No**

Well she's huge into it, crazy about it.

**You haven't been in touch with her then?**

Well, we had a falling out. For legal reasons I can't go into why I fell out with her but let's just say she wouldn't put her shoulders down for me if you know what I mean. That's not sexual.

**She did get divorced though didn't she?**

I did get divorced several times, yes.

**OK, so while on this desert island, somehow they had TV.**

Yes they did.

**And who were the wrestlers who really impressed you?**

Myself for one. I watched some of my old stuff, that was good, a couple of fake wrestlers you may never have heard of.

**Who were they?**

Me dressed up as famous wrestlers.

**Such as?**

Well me dressed as Mad Man Manson the most famous wrestler to have ever come out of Ireland for a start and also I was quite impressed with (Charles) Manson, he was good, an extremely good wrestler.

**Not one to invite to parties?**

He doesn't get out much now he's been pregnant for a couple of years. He's going to be a hell of a wrestler.

**So how did you get off the desert island?**

Obviously I swam while dragging the bodies of ABBA with me as a flotation device, only one survived?

**Who?**

Guess

**Agnetha?**

No you have to guess

**Benny?**

Wrong

**Frida?**

Wrong, the 5th member of ABBA survived, Manson survived.

**So you must do well off the royalties of ABBA?**

I am possibly the greatest human in history so yes I do very well. I am a member of the Royal Family, yes.



**So you became interested in professional wrestling whilst watching recordings of your career which apparently started before you got interested in professional wrestling.**

My career was going for seven and a half years before I ever stepped in the ring. It's not your standard way of getting into wrestling. Most people watch it as kids, join a training school, get trained up and become wrestlers. Not for Manson. Manson travels the road less traveled. He can also walk on water.

**If you can walk on water, why didn't you just walk away from the island instead of swimming?**

Cardio. I needed cardio, a big part of wrestling.

**I didn't know that was in the rule book**

It's in the book, about page 7 or 8 I'm not really sure. It's something to do with turnbuckles, it's a technical thing.

**Ok. So what's your ring style like?**

Amazing in every single way. It's sixteen foot by sixteen foot, that's my style. It's got turnbuckles, ropes, a canvas and some steel underneath. That's my ring style, it's also square.

**What do your opponents make of your sixteen foot by sixteen foot ringstyle?**

They sometimes make wrestling matches, occasionally they make cups out of pottery and sometimes they even make amends.

**Like Blue Peter then**

Very much like Blue Peter but without the badges, though I do give every opponent a badge after I've worked with them.

**What do they say?**

It's blank. They can put on their own message to themselves from themselves. I think it's fair that way.

**If they're still able to write of course?**

Well this is the 90s, everyone has the ability to do a lot of things.



**So what opponents would you like to meet?**

I once knew a woman with a twisted knee and the more she twists the more I see. I'd like to work her more than anything.

**Was it Agnetha?**

No, her name was Jenny, she's probably the girl I'd like to wrestle most. Apart from her I'd like to wrestle Senator Bob Dwyer of the US Senate. I would enjoy wrestling him one day, sadly he killed himself several years ago.

**That would make it easier**

Easier and more difficult. It's one of the mysteries of pro wrestling

**A twist in the coffin match perhaps?**

It would be a twist on a coffin match. I would also twist his body into several submission holds and then tap out myself out as a mark of respect.

**Or you could wrestle other men to get him out of the coffin?**

I like it, I like your style, you're hired.

**What is the most mad thing that has happened during Mad Man Manson's career?**

The maddest thing that's ever happened to me during my wrestling career was sitting in a chair in a room with nothing else in it. I couldn't handle it, eventually I left the room through the door. I'll never forget it, it haunts me to this day.

**So you must be lying awake at night thinking of that chair?**

I sometimes lie in my bed asleep at night and then wake up and go about my daily business. That is my answer to your question.

**So perhaps the way to beat you in a match is to have a chair match and actually bring that chair into the ring and you'll run away scared.**

That's pretty much what would happen, I can see it happening. Get onto every contact you know and book the silver chair in the middle of a room match.

**That and the casket**

And the casket. Get the bodies of Bjorn Again and ABBA members and throw them in and lets get a part on, it's Christmas soon.

**And of course Santa is an anagram of Satan**

Santa is an anagram of God that is correct. Your spelling once again amazes me.

**Bring on Hulk Hogan**

I wrestled him

**What was it like wrestling Hulk Hogan?**

Wet

**Why?**

It was under the sea.

**Was it during the escape from the island?**

Several years before and after, it was a long match. It was in rounds. After the first round I went to the island, learnt to be a wrestler, got off the island, second round was in Atlantis if I remember correctly which I almost certainly do. Eventually I got tired and let him pin me.

**Did you meet the man from Atlantis?**

I've never met anyone, no

**He's (Patrick Duffy) in panto down the road in Woking**

I may go there after the match or probably instead of the match tonight.

**Or perhaps a triple threat match with The Ugly Sisters?**

That could work, or a match with Jesus Christ in the manger. If a booker wants to book it I'll do it.

**You'd put him in the casket for three days and he'd rise again**

Sets on Manson v Jesus 2.

**So what lies ahead for Mad Man Manson in 2007?**

Hopefully it'll be 365 days, 12 new months and 1000 new Manson matches every day. Manson works everywhere, every single community hall Manson is there. Whether he's been booked or not Manson will be wrestling on your card. I will wrestle for you whether you book me or not.

Don't you just love a wrestler who lives up to his name!

## DVD Reviews

### IPW:UK Extreme Measures 2 - DVD Review Written by: Julian Radbourne

Over the last couple of years I've heard a lot about Daniel Edler's International Pro Wrestling: UK promotion. Since their inception, they've had shows broadcast on TWC Fight, have gained quite a reputation for solid shows amongst the British wrestling faithful, and are, from what I hear, currently embroiled in an inter-promotional war with the once mighty Frontier Wrestling Alliance. But the thing is, even though I've got some of their DVDs, I've never actually watched one of their shows. Well, today I'm going to rectify this, as we take a look at their Extreme Measures 2 show, held in August 2005. Our host for the evening is Rob Lansdowne.

The show begins with the first round of the Extreme Measures tournament,



and the first match features two guys I've seen quite a bit of over the past couple of years in the form of "The Human Hate Machine" Dave Moralez and Spud, the perennial plucky underdog. Although Moralez is a member of "Charming" Don Charles Team Charming faction, Mr. Charles is conspicuous by his absence here. Lots of jaw jacking at the beginning as Moralez is angered by the fan's response to his mere presence.

Spud, as always, plays the underdog role to perfection as Moralez uses his size and strength advantage to dominate the smaller man, while Spud uses his speed to surprise Moralez with quick pin attempts and high-flying moves. It certainly makes for a good match, because no matter what the big guy does to him, Spud continually kicks out of the pins. But soon Spud emerges victorious, taking Moralez down with a satellite DVD to get the winning pin to advance to the next round.

The next tournament match features "The Pukka One" himself, Darren Burrige, against the ever improving Aviv Mayaan. Burrige certainly got the crowd warmed up with his antics, which did include a pair of fluffy dice hanging down from the front of his trunks. It's a great match here, starting off with some great technical wrestling from both men, before it broke down slightly with a brawl around the ring, and then returning to the ring for some more great action with an excellent ending, a fast exchange of moves ending with Mayaan getting the winning fall with a run-around DDT, a great way to end a great match. Afterwards Burrige congratulates Mayaan on his victory, and then gets him to join him in a dance.

The third quarter-final sees Jack Storm facing Dragon Phoenix. This grudge match starts off quickly and before the bell with some fast paced action. This is certainly a tension filled match, with Storm constantly breaking the rules, and getting threatened with disqualification by referee (and my old buddy) Chris Hatch. The action in this one was tremendous, probably the best match I've seen Jack Storm in, with Phoenix not far behind him performance wise. In the end it was Storm who emerged victorious, catching Phoenix with a low blow out of sight of the ref before taking him out with a cradle pile driver to go through to the next round in a great bout.

The final quarter-final sees American star Jake take on a young guy I haven't seen in a while, Flaming Red. Red brings along his fellow Chav Army members Smokey and the Bandit with him. Jake really impressed me when I saw him on an SAS Wrestling show, and it was the same here, while Red has improved a hell of a lot since I saw him working for WAW in 2004. So put an improving Red and an impressive Jake together and you've got another great match between two guys who looked like they were made for each other.

But after what seemed like an eternity of great action, referee Chris Hatch got clobbered when Jake went for the Cop Killer. This snooze time gave Red the opportunity to throw powder into Jake's eyes, and later, as Smokey and the Bandit distracted the ref, Red clobbered Jake with a chain (for the second time) to get the winning pinfall and to the next round.

With the first round of the tournament complete, Matt Damian takes on the Chav Army's hired gun, Battalion. Battalion entrance is clearly inspired by Taz in his ECW heyday, complete with black towel covering the head, and folded-arm stance in the corner of the ring. Battalion literally obliterates Damian here, suplexing him all over the ring, and while Damian came back with a brief flurry of offence, Battalion soon took him out with a sit-down pile driver, followed by his version of the Taz-mission. The only thing I can say about the big guy here is wow.

Then it's time for the tournament semi-final, a four-way match, fought under no-disqualification rules, featuring Spud, Aviv Mayaan, Jack Storm and Flaming Red, with the winner going on to get a title match, a thirty minute Iron Fist match with IPW:UK Champion Martin Stone. It's a fast paced match here, and after Storm took out Spud with a chair, Red and Storm spent time doubling up on Mayaan, but neither could decide who should pin him, which eventually lead to the dissolution of their temporary alliance.

But as all three remaining men were brawling around the ring, they failed to notice Spud climbing to the top rope, and after Mayaan put Red down with a sit-down suplex, Spud got the only pinfall needed after a frog-splash to get the title shot against Stone. A nice little, albeit short, little match here.

Time for the first title match of the evening, as AK47 team of Ashe and Linell defend their IPW:UK tag titles against The Kartel of Sha Samuels and Terry Frasier. A good example of tag-team wrestling here, and the Kartel put in a good showing for themselves, as did the champions, but sadly, a good match was ruined as the Flaming Red and his Chav Army attacked AK47, and all hell broke loose as they joined the Kartel in attacking AK47. Order was finally restored when Tony Sefton and Ashley Reid, came to help out the champions, cleaning house and sending the villainous heels running, with Flaming Red taking a pasting from both Sefton and Reid. The result - the Kartel were disqualified, which didn't sit too well with them. But things didn't stop there.

For a moment it looked like AK47 and their next challengers, Sefton and Reid, were going to go at it, until Red grabbed the microphone and stirred things up a bit more. Finally, Ashe takes the microphone, and suggests that all four teams involved in the brawl engage in a spot of TLC action at the next show. Well, the match was enjoyable up until the disqualification, but what happened afterwards did tend to drag on a little bit.

Main event time, as tournament winner Spud challenges IPW:UK Champion Martin Stone in a thirty minute iron fist match. The rules for this match were simple - the match would be fought over a thirty minute time limit, with the man with the most falls being declared the winner. However, if one man knocks out the other, the match is ended immediately. Now this was a match. Spud went two falls up, first when referee Chris Hatch made a dodgy call by counting Stone out when it seemed like he hadn't been outside the ring that long. The second fall came via disqualification as Stone clobbered Spud with a cricket bat that Jack Storm had brought down to the ring.

But as the clock ticked down and the time limit neared, Stone tried everything he could to put Spud away, but the plucky underdog kept kicking out of each and every pin attempt. Then, in the final two minutes, as it looked like Spud was going to win the title, Stone connected with his variation of the DDT to knock Spud out. A ten count later, and Stone had retained his title in what was a highly charged and very dramatic encounter.

Sadly, no extras on this DVD, so let's get straight into it.

In conclusion - having read for the past couple of years about how good Daniel Edler and his promotion are, I can finally say that this reputation is wholly justified. I really enjoyed the majority of this show, and had it not been for the mass brawl at the end of the tag-team match, this one would surely have been a five-star show. But every other match excelled, and I'm glad that I finally got round to seeing some IPW:UK action.

For more information on IPW:UK, their official website can be located at [www.ipwuk.com](http://www.ipwuk.com). If you're interested in buying a copy of this DVD, check out [www.a-merchandise.co.uk](http://www.a-merchandise.co.uk).

# Evolution of Shining Wizard: A History of The Great Muta

By Chris Isenberg

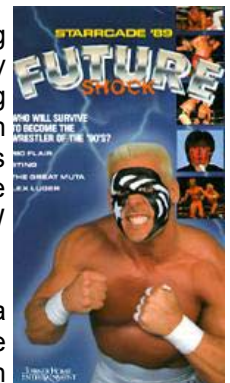
For the last 23 years Keiji Mutoh has wrestled all over the world to sold out crowds. He has been an innovator and pioneer in the sport of Professional Wrestling, rising to legendary status. For all of Keiji Mutoh's title reigns and accolades, his legacy has another face. A methodical, calculating masked warrior who both unnerves as well as excites the fans who watch his matches with eager anticipation. That face has a name- The Great Muta. The Great Muta will be making his 1PW debut this month when he seeks to add Sterling James Keenan to his long list of accomplishments along the warrior path at 'No Turning Back 2007' (check the news center for more info).



Keiji Mutoh was born in Yamanashi Japan on 23rd December, 1962. He trained in Judo throughout his school years, and excelled. In April 1984 he successfully entered the New Japan Pro Wrestling dojo and began training under Hiro Matsuda. His professional debut was in October of that year in the Koshigaya city gymnasium against Masahiro Chono. Early on Mutoh competed under the moniker 'Space Lone Wolf' and gained some attention. Mutoh also competed in the tag team ranks and also won the IWGP Tag Team Titles along side partner Shiro Koshinaka. He later moved on to Puerto Rico and competed in the World Wrestling Council as the Super Ninja. While there, he won both the WWC Puerto Rican title as well as the WWC Television Title. In November 1985, he traveled to the United States, and competed in the CWF in Florida teaming with his 'father' The Great Kabuki as well as enjoying a Heavyweight Title reign. He would later part from that territory and emerged in Texas' World Class Championship Wrestling as the Ninja.

Returning to America in the late 1980's, Mutoh soon caught the eye of David Crockett, who was looking to expand his National Wrestling Alliance which was in the process of becoming World Championship Wrestling), and signed him immediately. It was here in the NWA that we first saw The Great Muta. Introduced on their weekly Television show by Gary Hart and Hiro Matsuda, Muta proceeded to pummel a jobber while a young Jim Ross, gave the play by play. Managed by Gary Hart, he was a part of the J-Tex (Japan -Texas) Corporation along side Kendo Nagasaki 'The Dragon Master', Mad Dog Buzz Sawyer and Terry Funk.

Soon after his arrival on the scene, he began one of the most talked about feuds in wrestling history. His battles with Sting were some of the greatest matches in NWA history, including a highly talked about match in Baltimore, Maryland on 23rd July 1989 which resulted in no contest, leaving Muta's undefeated streak intact. This left the Television title vacant, and at their rematch in September of that year, Muta won the gold. His unbeaten streak came to an end at Starrcade '89's 'Iron Man Tournament', but he continued to carry the Television Title for four more months before dropping it to Arn Anderson in January the following year. To this day he's gone down in WCW history for having one of the longest undefeated streaks in the history of the company.



Later that year, Mutoh left to return to his homeland and continued to blaze a path to history in a frenzy of title reigns and highly memorable matches including two more IWGP Tag Team title reigns with both Masahiro Chono and Hiroshi Hase. He alternately competed both as Keiji Mutoh and The Great Muta. In 1992 he won his first IWGP Heavyweight Title in an incredible match against Riki Choshu cementing his legacy as a legitimate Wrestling superstar in Japan. WCW during this time continued it's relationship with New Japan and organized several 'Super Shows', which saw several revivals of his feud with Sting, and later the two would team together to take on Rick and Scott Steiner in several matches.

On 4th January, 1993 he defeated Masahiro Chono to unify the NWA World Heavyweight Title and the IWGP Heavyweight Title. He would drop the NWA Title a month later to Barry Windham in North Carolina at Super Brawl, but Mutoh carved his place in history as no other wrestler before or after him has held both of Wrestling's most prestigious titles simultaneously.

Mutoh continued to defend the IWGP belt as both himself and Muta until September of that year when he was defeated by Shinya Hashimoto. He soon bounced back though, teaming again with Hiroshi Hase to capture the IWGP Tag Team belts from the Hell-Raisers- Road Warrior Hawk and Power Warrior (Kensuke Sasaki) in November



of 1994. The duo held the titles successfully until vacating them in May the following year when Mutoh regained the IWGP Heavyweight Title back from Shinya Hashimoto. Later that month, Mutoh would again make history by unifying both the IWGP title and the UWF title by defeating Nobuhiko Takada.

Takada was able to reclaim his title and the IWGP on 4th January, 1996. 1996 would prove to be a hard year for Mutoh, as he was suffering from severely injured knees which limited his time in the ring, but certainly did not stop him. In the late 90's the New World Order was tearing WCW apart from the inside and before long spread to New Japan. After many attempts to convert him, Masahiro Chono recruited Mutoh into the NWO, and not long after the



two regained the IWGP Tag Team Titles. During his time in NWO Japan, he made a few appearances on WCW's Monday Night Nitro his first U.S. television shows in several years. NWO Japan was a huge success, but the 'Natural Born Master' would have his reign cut short as he had to under go knee surgery to repair the damaged years of wrestling had brought on. He returned soon, recovered and ready to reclaim his spot, and again won the IWGP belt defeating Scott Norton on 4th January, 1999, but dropping the belt to Genichiro Tenryu in December of that year.

Also that year, he had one of the more infamous matches of his career. Japanese hardcore legend Atsushi Onita had begun an offshoot of The Great Muta, calling himself The Great Nita. This culminated in an insane Barbed-Wire Barricade Electric Land Mine Double Hell Deathmatch which pitted Muta against Nita. Muta emerged victorious, and sent The Great Nita into wrestling oblivion. In 2000 WCW and New Japan conspired a way to bring The Great Muta back to American television. Muta made his re-appearance on Monday Night Nitro, to a huge pop from the crowd. Sadly, WCW was unable to capitalize on Muta's return, and he was put into some rather disappointing (and as someone who spent every week with his VCR ready to tape during this time, I can attest to that) programs with Vampiro, Three Count and the Jung Dragons.

His feud with Sting was renewed, but sadly the magic of the original feud was unable to be recaptured. He did make somewhat of an impact during his return though, advancing deep into a tournament to crown a new United States Champion and after forming a tag team with Vampiro, was able to briefly capture the WCW Tag Team Championship. Mutoh could now boast holding both singles and tag team titles in both Japan and the United States.



Mutoh largely took a self imposed hiatus for the most part of 200 and into 2001. He returned to New Japan with a new look, shaving his head and debuting a new move, the 'Shining Wizard'. Not only did he revamp his image and gimmick, but his alter ego underwent a change as well. Gone was the Great Muta's facepaint, and it was replaced with a variety of masks ranging from simple spiked versions to one resembling Japanese Manga character Devilman. His in ring attire also was stepped a notch or two as well. 2001 proved to be another monumental year for Mutoh, as he challenged Genichiro Tenryu for the All Japan Triple Crown Championship and won it. Also that year he would go on to win All Japan Unified Tag Team Titles and the IWGP Tag Team Titles, giving Mutoh a total of six belts resulting in him being known as the '6 Crown Champion'. In addition to all of the he formed the group BATT along side Don Frey, Taiyo Kea and Jinsei Shinzaki with the later addition of Hiroshi Hase.

In 2002 Mutoh shocked the Japanese wrestling world (and largely the rest of the wrestling world as well) when he left New Japan Pro Wrestling to make the rival All Japan Pro Wrestling his home. Even more shocking, he did not jump ship alone, he took Satoshi Kojima, Kendo Kashin and Kaz Hayashi with him. In September of that year the widow of All Japan founder Shohei 'Giant' Baba, Motoko Baba turned over all stock in the company to Mutoh making him President of the promotion. Despite being placed into the high position Mutoh continued to compete both as Keiji Mutoh and The Great Muta and has taken the All Japan organization all over the globe. He has also stepped into the acting arena, with parts in several movies most notably the biopic film about Puroresu legend Rikidozan. While he shows no signs of slowing down anytime soon, his legacy as one of Japan's (and possibly the world's) top wrestling stars and will go down in wrestling history as a true innovator and icon.

*Chris Isenberg lives in Baltimore, Maryland. He is a former Professional Wrestler as well as an artist and has run one of the first and largest English archive websites dedicated to Keiji Mutoh and his career since 1998, <http://www.greatmuta.net>*

## Fighting Females

Our section dedicated to the world of Women's Pro Wrestling

### News Centre

#### WAWW

WAWW return to the venue of Chickfight 7, the Marina Centre Gt Yarmouth with 'Women At War 2' on Sunday 10th June. Overseas stars appearing include Blue Nikita who will be taking on Sweet Saraya and Wesna. More information in our next edition.

#### SHIMMER

After her release from WWE, former WWE Women's Champion Jazz is heading for SHIMMER at the Eagles Club in Berwyn on April 7th and her appearances for the company will be available as part of Volumes 9 and 10 of their DVD series. The great news is that RQW Women's Champion, 'The Jezebel' Eden Black will be traveling to the States to make her debut for the company. Also scheduled to appear are Amazing Kong, Cheerleader Melissa, Allison Danger, Sara Del Ray, Lexie Fyfe, Daizee Haze, Malia Hosaka, Lacey, MsChif, Portia Perez and Nikki Rox. Also making her debut for the company is Rebecca Bayless and also former WCW star Daffney will be present to reveal her SHIMMER goals to the crowd.

Volume 6 is now available at [www.rohwrestling.com](http://www.rohwrestling.com), matches include a last woman standing match between Cheerleader Melissa and MsChif, Rebecca Knox v Allison Danger plus Nikita v Daizee Haze and a tag match between Cheerleader Melissa and new WWE recruit Nattie Neidhart up against the Dangerous Angels, Sara Del Ray and Allison Danger.



MsChif for capturing the NWA Women's World Championship on Saturday night, 1/27, in Lebanon, TN. MsChif defeated Christie Ricci after blowing the mysterious green mist to lead to the pinfall. MsChif will now defend the NWA Women's World Title across the various NWA affiliate promotions. MsChif becomes the third SHIMMER alumna to hold the NWA Women's World Title (along with Ricci and Lexie Fyfe).

#### Chickfight in the UK

ChickFight 7 was held at the Marina Centre in Great Yarmouth on January 14th. The Quarter Finals saw Cheerleader Melissa beat Sweet Saraya when Saraya was hung in the ropes and couldn't continue due to injury, MsChif beat Jade, 'The Jezebel' Eden Black beat Lacey and Daizee Haze defeated Skye. In the semi-finals, Cheerleader Melissa beat MsChif and Jezebel beat Daizee Haze. In the Final, Cheerleader Melissa defeated Jezebel with the Kudo Driver and was immediately challenged by Sweet Saraya. The card also saw a win for Destiny and Kharisma over The Norfolk Dolls.



ChickFight return to the UK in April with ChickFight 8 taking place at the Liquid Nightclub in Gloucester on April 22nd. After a successful UK debut back in January in what some have called the greatest women's wrestling show of all time ChickFight were keen to get back to the UK as quickly as possible to bring you more of the hardest hitting women's wrestling action from many of the top stars around the world. The UK will once again see the prestigious ChickFight tournament take centre stage as 8 of the top female athletes battle it out in a one night international knock out tournament to determine a winner.

The first 2 entrants confirmed for ChickFight 8 are Canada's Portia Perez and the UK's own "Minx" Sarah Jones! Despite being just 19 years old, Portia Perez has travelled the globe competing for such promotions as AAA in Mexico, Shimmer in the United States of America, Queens of Chaos in France as well as all over her native land of



Canada and on April 22nd makes her first appearance for the global leader in female wrestling; ChickFight with a desire to win the most prestigious female wrestling tournament in the world that will without a doubt catapult her name to the top of the sport!

Sarah Jones AKA Minx shares that same desire! After an impressive 2006 the 20 year old Sunderland, UK native began 2007 with a bang when on January 21st she won The Princess of Chaos European Championship in Paris,



Also at ChickFight 8 as exclusively revealed on the S & M Wrestling Radio Show it has been confirmed that the 2 time ChickFight tournament winner Cheerleader Melissa will once again be heading



back to the UK and will compete on April 22nd in a match that will crown the first ever truly global women's champion in the form of the Trans-Atlantic Championship! Cheerleader Melissa recently defeated Sara Del Ray and Allison Danger in a 3 Way Dance at APW's Gym Wars in San Francisco to determine the U.S. number 1 contender to the title; and on Saturday March 31st at the FWA Live event at the Sports Centre in Sudbury, Suffolk UK "The Jezebel" Eden Black, one half of The Legion Of Womb: Jetta and "Da Essex Gurl" Jade will square off in another 3 Way Dance to name the UK's number 1 contender to the Trans-Atlantic Championship. The winner of this 3 Way Dance will face Cheerleader Melissa on April 22nd in Gloucester at ChickFight 8 to determine the First Ever Trans-Atlantic Women's Champion! For more information keep checking back to [www.ChickFight.tv](http://www.ChickFight.tv) and [www.XSportsWrestling.com](http://www.XSportsWrestling.com) for more details!

Tickets for both ChickFight and the FWA event at the Sudbury Sports Centre featuring the very special ChickFight Guest Match to name the UK's number 1 contender to the Trans-Atlantic Championship are now available to purchase online by going to [www.TicketLine.co.uk](http://www.TicketLine.co.uk) or by calling 0871 424 4444! FWA tickets are priced at £15.00 front row, £10, Standard and £8. kids with a special family of 4 ticket costing just £30 while tickets for ChickFight 8 cost just £10. each!!! \*\*PLEASE REMEMBER CHICKFIGHT 8 ON APRIL 22nd IS STRICTLY FOR THOSE AGED 18 & OVER ONLY\*\*

## W1-JOSHI

World-1 now have their own women's promotion and on March 11th at The Academy Hall n Pottsgdown, there's a card featuring Sara Del Ray against Nikki Roxx, Cheerleader Melissa against Allison Danger in a no DQ match and Tiana Ringer v Cha Cha

## Queen's Cup Tournament

Cheerleader Melissa defeated Allison Danger in the finals of the Queen's Cup tournament in a match that can only be described as "Order The DVD"! Melissa will travel to Japan for Pro-Wrestling SUN in March to challenge for the WORLD-1 title.

## Queens of Chaos

At 'Chaos with a Revenge' April Hunter beat Jazzy B by three falls to two in a thirty minute Iron Queen match in defence of her Queens of Chaos Title. Also on the card, Jersey beat Lacey and the European Title tournament was held. In the qualification matches, Minx beat Shadow and Jetta defeated Jennidee. In the final Minx beat Jetta to become the first ever Queens of Chaos European Champion. On March 18th in Nanterre, France there's a Double Queens of Chaos/FSF show. April Hunter again puts her title on the line against Germany's Jazzy B, Minx defends her European title against Roxi and Jersey takes on Allison Danger.

## Allison Danger in the UK

Allison Danger is on an extensive tour of the UK, Ireland and Europe in March. Appearances include matches v Jennidee in IWW from the 9th to 12th, SWCW on the 15th against Jetta, a match against Blue Nikita in Germany on the 17th and against Jersey for Queens of Chaos on the 18th, then back to the UK for a match against Sweet Saraya in WAW on the 23rd, a crack at the RQW Women's Title against Jezebel on the 24th, two shows for FCW on the 25th and 31st against Pippa L'Vinn and Sweet Saraya and then the MEW show on April 1st. For full details go to [www.ukwomenswrestling.co.uk](http://www.ukwomenswrestling.co.uk)



## The Fighting Females Interview

### Former WWE Women's and Cruiserweight Champion Jacqueline Moore



**When and why did you decide you wanted to be a professional wrestler?**

Growing up in Dallas, Texas I used to love watching wrestling. I would sit in front of the T.V. set and watch the women wrestle. Right then and there I knew I would be a wrestler.

**I read a book by Amanda Storm which told of how difficult it was for her to get trained as a wrestler rather than a valet, how hard was it for you to break into the business?**

It was very hard for me to break into the wrestling business. When I first started, some of the men in the business told me that I wouldn't make it in the business. They would say that I'm too small and also because they didn't like women in the business. Also, when I used to get in the ring with some of the guys they would slam me hard or punch me hard to make me quit. But I never gave up, so I got their respect because I didn't quit.

**How was women's wrestling changed since you made your pro debut?**

I think they worried too much what the women look like and not their talents.

**You've worked in both WCW and WWE, how did the two companies compare?**

There is no comparison between the two companies. The WWE was run more like corporate America and the production value was amazing.

**Our magazine has a regular feature about the training of wrestlers, what advice would you give to anyone who dreams of becoming a professional wrestler?**

It's a lot of work, but if it is meant to be, then it will happen. Always follow your dreams and never give up.

**What were the highlights of your time on 'Tough Enough'?**

Just training the contestants. Because it was my first time training anyone to wrestle and the special bonds that I developed with the contestants on the show. They became like a part of my family.

**You've said in the past that you initially found the modelling side of being a WWE Diva a bit difficult. How did you feel about the fact so much emphasis is placed on looks rather than ability to wrestle in WWE?**

Beauty comes in different shapes and sizes and also in different races.

**I seem to remember you did go topless in the ring once, if my memories correct, how did that come about?**

That was an accident. It was not planned. I am so physical in the ring and when I wrestle my top will come down.

**Did you prefer being a fan favourite while in WWE or your time as a villain when teaming with Marc Mero against Sable?**

I love to be the villain, because I love to break the rules. Plus, it's more fun and you can get away with a lot of stuff.

**How important a role has Dave 'Fit' Finlay played in WWE as regards to training the female wrestlers?**

Dave 'Fit' Finlay is one of the best agents in WWE. Dave has done a lot for the women's division, because he takes time out to work with the women and he cares.



**What was your most memorable match in WWE?**

There are so many. But I would say all my matches against the male wrestlers.

**Of the Raw Diva's, you were one of the few who had a lot of wrestling ability, but despite that you seemed to be used less in the ring than other Diva's, why was that?**



I really don't know but I'm guessing because I am too physical in the ring. Some of the women had a problem with that. Remember I wrestle more men than women.

**How did you feel when WWE switched you from Raw to Smackdown and then decided to give you the cruiserweight title?**

I have no idea why they switched me over to Smackdown. But I was really happy that I won the cruiser weight title. I wish that WWE would have built the storyline up between me and Chavo Guerrero Jr. better, because I really enjoy wrestling Chavo Guerrero Jr. and his dad.

**That wasn't the first time you'd wrestled a man, you did that on many occasions, especially when ~Miss Texas, do you enjoy those inter-gender matches?**

Yes, I really enjoy wrestling men, because men are very competitive and more creative in the ring.

**Why did you leave the WWE so soon after that title push?**

It wasn't my decision to leave. It was WWE's decision to release me out of my contract. I was told by the company that the creative department couldn't come up with a story line for me after I lost the cruiserweight title to Chavo Guerrero Jr.

**How do you feel about the recent Raw Diva Search competition?**

I didn't find the Raw Diva search entertaining. Waste of T.V. time. There are a lot of wrestlers in the WWE that have been there, that don't get enough time. They need to get back to wrestling.

**Tell me more about Celebrity Fear Factor, what was the worst moment on that show for you?**

I really enjoyed being on Celebrity Fear Factor I am very competitive and I don't like to lose. The worst moment on the show for me was not being able to do that last stunt because I have short legs

Jacqueline is now in TNA having made her return to the company (she made her debut in the company in 2004 losing to Trinity and appearing as a referee) at Final Resolution 2007 on January 14, 2007 as Miss Tennessee eventually reverting to "The Pride of Tennessee" Jackie Moore, joining forces with James Storm by attacking his erstwhile manager, Gail Kim.

Coming soon to  
Fighting Females

Interviews with Amanda Storm and April Hunter

Women at Wrestlemania

Tribute to The Fabulous Moolah  
And More!

# How Can Something That Looks So Good...Hurt So Bad?

By April Hunter

[www.aprilhunter.com](http://www.aprilhunter.com)

Hi Peeps!

I just got back from Germany and France ...WITH my luggage. I'm a very happy (albeit jet lagged) nudie model. If you came out to the shows, thank you! I won the women's tournament after 3 matches for German Stampede Wrestling (vs. UK 's Pandora , Germany 's Blue Nikita & USA's Lacey) and will return in March to fight Wesna. When that was announced there was a few people who started chanting, "Wesna's gonna kill you."

Whatever. Vas ist Scheisse. We Americans might not do beer, chocolate or bread very well...but I can assure you, we DO ass kicking. Spectacularly. And if she does kill me...well, I got a free trip to Europe . Line up the shots!

5:30 a.m.: On Sunday, after a leisurely speed of 230 km/hr and 6-7 hour drive from Marburg to Paris...long story short, they didn't have enough room in one car for 5 people and all their bags. Apparently I'm the only American they've ever seen who can drive a stick shift-LOL, luckily both Kid Kash and I did-so instead of napping, I drove. Kash climbed in with me and kept me company chatting about this and that until he crashed out...and I was stuck with really bad French radio. I must have heard Cat Stevens a record number of times in a single day. And Michael Jackson. Once is good. Over and over again...not so much.

Then, on almost no sleep, I (luckily) retained my QofC title in a 30 minute iron woman match vs. Jazzy B for Queens of Chaos in France-Catch the next day. I'm back in France in March for an upcoming title defense. (A shout to Simon for coming all the way from England. You rock, baby! And to DeJan, who drove my bag down to me after I left it in the parking lot-thank you, thank you, thank you!)

And I finally got to see a damn castle, try Mead and brought some absinthe home - the perfect birthday gift for my lil brother. Good times!

Except for the fact that I HURT EVERYWHERE RIGHT NOW, all is good. I'm so sore. And tired. Huge thanks to both promotions for having me over and to my opponents for being tough, talented babes and taking so many German suplexes!



Lotsa gossip and stories to follow if you're a site member. I traveled with Kash, roomed with some crazy European girls, got questioned by police after someone went to jail on a show... it was an interesting time. It was also heartwarming to how many fans made Bam Bam Bigelow banners in Europe . (Sadly, he passed away just a few days ago at the age of 45 and I know he has a young daughter.)

I updated my page with a fan photos from Deutschland and a few photos I did of myself(pre black eye, which I earned during a match with Nikita and will probably still have this weekend) when there was nothing on German TV.

...Which was most of the time. There's only so much German MTV and BBC news one can watch.

I caught the movie Children of Men. Really good. David Beckham in America ? Can he bring soccer to the USA ...? I'm thinking not. He's amazing, but I think it would take more than just him to get Americans interested. I could (hopefully) be wrong, though.

And lastly, I updated my website with a hot exclusive photoset, "Maid Service". 45 new pix, so enjoy!

Thanks for reading.

Kisses!! Auf weidersen! I probably spelled that wrong...

## The Wonderful World of WEW

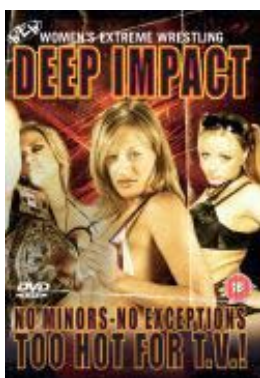
Women's wrestling comes in all shapes and sizes and all forms of attire and lack of attire. That's definitely the case in WEW, Women's Extreme Wrestling. Basically it's what Vince McMahon would love to be showing but doesn't get allowed. In this edition we speak to April Hunter, who wrestles for the company and review three of their latest releases distributed in the UK by [www.deltamusic.co.uk](http://www.deltamusic.co.uk)

Formerly in WCW, April Hunter wrestles all over the world including WEW where with Talia Madison as Team T&A, they're currently tag team champions.. I asked April for her views on the company.

"WEW is crazy, but fun. It's kinda cool to be in a locker room that's all female and the guys get the closet down the hall to dress in, lol!

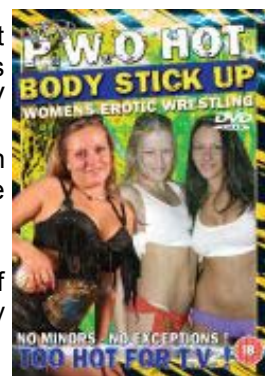
It's actually a very professional work place, though, despite how light-hearted (you like that??) the product is.

And the promoter is usually good about putting wrestlers with wrestlers. He wasn't at first...the older dvd's will have wrestlers vs strippers, but now he's good about matching talent up. They try to give the customer a little of everything.



Me, personally, I look forward to the shows. We just have fun. Is it serious and will it compete with, say, Japan women's wrestling? It's probably safe to say a definite "no". But it's a chance to get some TV time, when no one else is doing that for women's wrestling right now. The shows themselves tend to be a little rushed...we don't have much time to go over matches much because we're taping 3 shows in the night, plus promos, vignettes, pictures, etc so it's rush, rush, rush."

Onto the DVDs of the companies PPV events. There's kind of everything here, some good wrestling matches, hardcore action in the ring, plenty of comedy and hardcore action in the bedroom too!



'Deep Impact' includes Lady Storm v G.I Ho for the Undisputed WEW World Title in the main event while there's also a match between Riptide (who's toured the UK for ASW) up against Alexis Laree who you'll know better as former WWE Women's Champion Mickey James. There's also a 'I Hate Ho's' tag team match featuring The Hohaters against Psycho Bitch and 'The Smoked Out Icon' Tai Killer Weed. The weird side of the company is shown in an inter gender Midget match that features King Sleazy who used to be in WWE at one stage.

Whereas WCW and WWE had the NWO, it's probably not a surprise that WEW had the PWO which of course just has to stand for the 'Pussy World Order.' They make their presence felt (in fact they feel just about anything going) in 'WEW Makes The PWO Takes.' G.I Ho is up against 'The Man Beast' Amanda Storm in the main event (we see quite a lot of G.I. Ho as she gets ready for the fight) which features the G.I. going topless before the PWO arrive and well, you know how the New World Order loved the spray paint, the PWO have something similar to spray the letters on but also useful for licking off!

The eventual kidnappings and scenes in the limo had me nearly falling off my bed! Also on this DVD which is the best of the three is a TLC match, Bar Room Barbie and the amazing Poppa Mae. Once you've seen this enormous guy give a stink face you might just need a bucket handy.

'PWO Hot Body Stick Up' features some decent wrestling matches that are probably better than what you see in WWE at the moment. Sumie Sakai takes on Simply Luscious and the main event sees Lexie Fyfe up against DD Venturi in a FCA match that ends in a swimming pool. There's also a WEW Title match between Tai Killer Weed and Pussy Willow.

There's plenty of entertainment of all kinds here. Definitely worth a look. For more information go to [www.deltamusic.co.uk](http://www.deltamusic.co.uk) for details of DVD releases and to [www.wextremew.com](http://www.wextremew.com) for the latest news fro Women's Extreme Wrestling.

**Coming Soon to Piledriver Online**

**Interviews with April Hunter and Amanda Storm**

# A Manager's Life For Me!

## Part one of our look at management in Pro Wrestling

*One of the first things that struck me when I first starting watching wrestling, particularly from the USA was the use of managers. In the UK there was always the great Gorgeous George who accompanied Kendo Nagasaki to the ring and really got the fans going as he proclaimed (quite rightly) how great Kendo Nagasaski was. Fit Finlay of course had Princess Paula as his valet but I didn't really get to see managers used to their maximum benefit until I started watching American wrestling. All-time greats such as Bobby 'The Brain' Heenan, Jim Cornette, Slik, Mr Fuji and Paul Bearer to name but a few really added to the attraction of the in-ring action.*

*British wrestling took the hint and we showed the Americans that we could do anything they could as Dean 'The Twisted Genius' Ayass and Greg 'The Truth' Lambert became the men fans loved to hate. Over the next couple of issues Piledriver Online will be taking a look at what it means to be a manager and the skills you need to be successful. In this edition we put the focus on the UK as we interview Dean and Greg and also have the views of the Internet Icon himself, Peter Staniforth. Next month the focus turns to Europe and America including tributes to Bobby Heenan and Jim Cornette including reviews of their shoot interviews.*

### Dean 'The Twisted Genius' Ayass

**What qualities do you feel a manager needs, is it just being good on the mic?**



Not at all, being good on the mic is just one of many things. The most important quality a manager can have is knowing how and when to react to something in or out of the ring. If something goes wrong, the ability to think on your feet is crucial, especially if you've got a relatively new guy working with you. Knowing when to do something - I've seen some people who have thought that a manager's work is simply to shout at the crowd, which only serves to distract the audience from the match, which to me, is totally disrespectful to the wrestlers who are risking their physical health in that ring. A manager should never take away from a match, just add to it. For example, I will only shout at the crowd if I feel that the crowd is coming down a little and needs to be livened up.

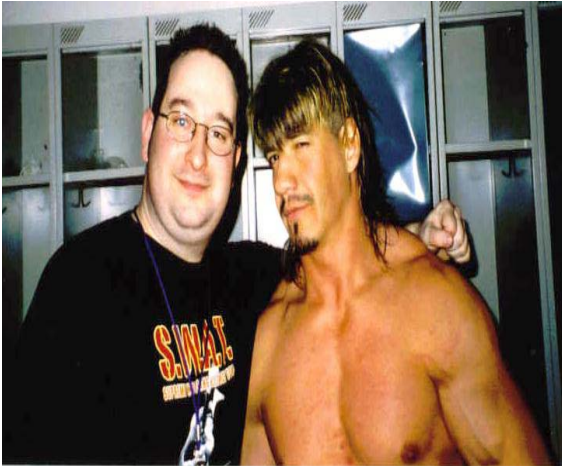
So you'll never see me shouting at the crowd when my wrestler's hitting his finishing move, apart from saying something like "Look at this!" which draws their attention to the wrestlers in the ring. On the other hand, some guys don't react to the audience at all, which makes me question why they're there in the first place. It's all about finding the right balance. The manager should be the one who gets his wrestler into a situation, and the wrestler is the guy who works his way out of that situation. For example, I might say that Stixx & Stone are the best tag team in Britain and that we'll face anyone, anytime. That could bring out a new set of challengers, a situation I've got them into. So they have to wrestle that match to retain their belts and prove that they are the best team in Britain. But they stick with me as their manager because I'm the one who got them their title shot and led them to where they are now. That's how it should work in the minds of the fans.

**The best managers always seem to be heels, do you think that's correct?** Definitely, simply because a face manager or valet can't really interfere or cheat or get involved in things like a heel can, unless they've been pushed and pushed to breaking point by a heel, which takes months to build up, if not longer. I remember talking to Jimmy Hart about this at FWA British Uprising III in Coventry, and he said that he found it a struggle when he was managing Hogan as a face, as I told him that I found it difficult managing Paul Birchall as a face. I thought that, if he, one of the greatest managers of all time, found it difficult, then it wasn't just me being awkward!

**There seem to be fewer managers around these days, why do you think that's the case?** A lot of people see a manager as an additional expense and so they don't bother booking one because they want to cut costs or fly in some indie guy for their own viewing pleasure. That then means that the only people who they use as a manager are



either their friends/relatives/spouses etc or a mark who'll work for free just to be a part of a show. As you can imagine, both of those types of people are usually awful because they don't know what they're doing, and so the promoter's opinion of managers is that a manager is a role given to someone as a favour, rather than a role given to someone to add something to a show and to guide and assist a rookie in the initial stages of their career. That's why I was put with Birchall originally, and he's not done badly for himself, has he? Although I don't really know how much credit I can take for that, Paul was one of a kind. But, to give you an example, I worked a show for Herts. & Essex Wrestling recently, where I had been managing the UK Pitbulls for a year. I brought in Stixx & Stone to turn against the Pitbulls and tell the crowd that it had been a set-up all along.



Now, only a handful of fans knew who Stixx & Stone were, being a non-internet crowd, but they knew who I was, and because I'd done a good job as a manager over the past year, they hated my guts! So when Stixx & Stone turned on the Pitbulls, the heat transferred through me. They didn't know who they were, but if I'm managing them, then they must be a proper pair of bastards! So by the end of the show, the crowd, who had booed me and the Pitbulls out of the building at the beginning, were chanting "Pitbulls! Pitbulls! Pitbulls!". And that's what a manager can do for a show. Stixx & Stone have had this jump start with the crowd because of their association with me, they don't have to build themselves up slowly with the crowd, they're instant major heels.

**Who have been your favourite managers and if prospective managers wanted to learn the art of being a manager from any one manager who would that be?** Jim Cornette would have been fantastic in the UK as his style's perfect for an old school crowd. I can

just imagine him working at the Fairfield Halls or something. Heenan was excellent, as was Jimmy Hart. I think my favourite manager though had to be Paul E Dangerously, because he was about when I was starting to get smart to the business and realised what a manager really did on a show. I know a lot of people over the years have said that they can see the Paul E influence on me. I never, ever attempt to copy anyone but I guess that maybe it's rubbed off subconsciously. In Britain, I must say that I've not seen too many managers working, so there's a lot of names that I've read about, but can't comment on, names like Charles Boddington and a lot of the guys up north.

But I must reserve special praise for Greg Lambert. When he first came on board, he'd make a beeline for me after his match or segment and ask for my feedback and advice. He listened to what was said to him, and is now a great manager and a credit to British wrestling. There are also a lot of people who are good managers or valets but aren't exclusively non-wrestlers, I mean some of the women like Saraya and Erin Angel are great at ringside in a managerial role, as is Tyrone Johnson from the FWA Academy. He's another one who always asks for my opinion.

**What do you think makes a good promo?** One that makes money. Now that's really simple but it's something that people often totally overlook. A promo isn't to make me look clever or funny or whatever. It's not to make my wrestler look amazing. It's to make people want to come back to the next show, to lay their money down and want to see my wrestler beaten and see me, as their manager, shut up once and for all. If it also makes me look clever, or my wrestler look amazing as well, then great, that all helps and can contribute to that "bums on seats" factor, but there's nothing better than my wrestler winning a match, maybe through cheating, and for me to then get on the mic and say how great we are, and how nobody can beat us, because people will just want to come back next time and see us lose.

I learned a great deal of this not just through watching wrestling but through watching my local boy Chris Eubank as a world middleweight boxing champion when I was a teenager. Eubank, outside of the ring, is an eccentric but genuinely nice guy. In the theatre of the boxing spotlight, like a wrestler, he was in character and made people loathe him. But he outdrew all other British boxers when he was on top.

**Looking back at your own career, what were the early days like in Hammerlock?** It was great in some ways, because there was a load of guys getting their first break in the wrestling business, so there was this air of excitement and enthusiasm about the place. But it was also strange, because it was our first adventure, and so we had nothing to compare it to. I believe that what happens in the dressing room stays in the dressing room, but there were some things that happened at Hammerlock that I've not seen happen anywhere else. The problem was that, as time went on, that initial enthusiasm and novelty wore off, and as people weren't really allowed to work anywhere else for fear of what they might discover, the match-ups and shows got stale for the workers, because you'd be going to ten different towns doing the same show, with the same guy. So people wanted to leave.

Once Doug left, and prospered and got to wrestle a load of other experienced opponents like Mal Sanders and

Danny Collins, it showed everyone that there was life outside of Hammerlock and the floodgates opened, and guys like me, Alex, Jody, Jonny, Justin and others all soon departed. That said, don't get me wrong, I'll always be grateful to Hammerlock for giving me my start, but it was a world away from the promotions I worked for afterwards. One thing I discovered from the few times I'd worked for TWA or All Star, where the veterans are about, was that they didn't really consider working for Hammerlock as being "in the business", maybe because of the, erm, unique pay structure there! But I think that Hammerlock in the mid 90s was a pioneering promotion, because we had new guys doing a new style of wrestling, mixing the old World of Sport style with aspects of the American style as well, and it meant that a lot of other places modernised as well. Plus Hammerlock were the first guys outside of All Star to bring in American names for an exclusive tour, much like you see in a lot of places these days. We brought Adam Bomb (Bryan Clark) in, who was one of the nicest guys I've ever met in my life, and Jim Neidhart, who was a lot of fun to be around.

**Why did you decide to become a manager and what training or advice was given to you?** I decided to become a manager after my first training session as a wrestler. When I couldn't walk the next day properly and ached for five days afterwards, I realised that it takes a special kind of person to be a wrestler, and I wasn't that type of person. But I wanted to be a part of the wrestling business, I wanted to work on shows and climb in the ring and address the crowd, it had always been a dream of mine ever since I was a kid going to shows at the Brighton Centre or the Dome. I wanted to be a manager in Hammerlock, but Andre Baker, the booker, wouldn't allow it, as he didn't want to lose me as a ring announcer, which was my job for five years in Hammerlock.

When my good mate Mike White turned from a referee into a heel manager, I knew that I'd never be a manager in Hammerlock, and that was one of the factors behind my decision to leave in 1998. When I approached the FWA in 2001 to get back into the business, the original plan was for me to be a commentator alongside Mark Priest, but they decided to introduce me as a manager first to get the crowd acquainted with me, so I became a part of the Old School angle, which took off beyond anyone's expectations, and the rest, as they say, is history. As far as training or advice goes, I was pretty much self-taught initially and then learned on the job basically.

**You're best known for your work in the FWA, I have particularly fond memories of the Old School storyline, what are your memories of that feud?** It was fantastic, it really was. But it was very hard work, because I was often working three matches a night, which I always felt was too much. I much prefer a manager to have his appearances limited on a show. But being able to work alongside guys like Drew McDonald and Flash Barker, guys with tons of experience, was so good, because they would give me advice as I went along, and the Old School feud meant that I could work alongside legends like Dave Taylor and Robbie Brookside, I mean how can you not learn from guys like that?. Justin Richards and I always had so much fun at shows and we had a natural chemistry between us that meant that we always knew where the other one was, which made cheating and winding up the crowd so easy. In fact, I'd love to manage Justin again, even if it was for just one more match. I'm sure we wouldn't miss a beat.

**Who have you most enjoyed working with in your career?** Probably Justin, just because it was so much fun. It's great to look back at managing Paul Birchall now that he's in the WWE, and working with Terry Funk is a treasured memory I'll take to my grave because I was such a huge Terry Funk fan growing up. They always say that you should never meet your idols, and I've met a couple of people who I grew up watching who turned out to be disappointing in reality, but Terry was an absolute gentleman and an absolute pleasure to work with. Christopher Daniels was a total pro as well, and I love commentating on his matches, because he always makes sure that all of his matches tell a story, which makes a commentator's life easy.

**What was it like working alongside Paul Burchill?** It was really good to see him develop over time. I really wanted to work with him right off the bat, so I was delighted when the FWA decided to put me with him to oversee his performance in the ring initially, as I mentioned before. But it soon became clear that I needed him far more than he needed me, because he listened to what was told to him and learned things so quickly. I always chuckle to myself when I watch him on WWE, because I was the one who encouraged him to let out that neanderthal like "Come on!" roar that he still does to this day, because I like wrestlers who are vocal. It got frustrating for me in a way that we had to be turned face because of the crowd, because it limited what I could go, and the FWA wouldn't allow him to speak on promos, except on the last ever show at Gold Rush against Alex, but it was a good time, because the crowd really held us, well him a lot more than me, as something special.

I don't think anyone was surprised to see him go to the WWE, that was always his dream. I always said to him that for the WWE to sign a Brit, you've got to be unique, because otherwise they won't bother going to all the additional effort required, they'll just get a Yank in instead. Believe me, it took months and months for the WWE to sort out all of Paul's paperwork, visa etc etc. It was a lot of effort for them. That's what makes me laugh when I read people on the internet saying that they'd let him go after a few months. If they knew the effort it took to get him over to the States, they'd know that the WWE rate him as a long-term asset, and the fact that they've given him the pirate gimmick shows that they have plans for him. Quite what those plans are, I sometimes shudder to think, but it's better than being plain old Paul Birchall from London, England.

## Greg 'The Truth' Lambert

**What qualities do you feel a manager needs, is it just being good on the mic?** A manager's job is to get heat for his wrestler. So I think being naturally dislikeable is an important factor. Although in real life I am a nice guy, honest (!) I do have a dark side to my character and I just let that come out when I'm managing. I think it's also important to be active at ringside and react to what's happening in the ring, not just stay rooted to the spot and expressionless.

**The best managers always seem to be heels, do you agree and why do you think that is?** Babyface managers are pointless because they don't get heat! They are little else but glorified cheerleaders. If you want a cheerleader, then get The Spirit Squad.



**There seem to be fewer managers around these days, why do you think that's the case?** I don't know, I think the manager is making a comeback. Look at Father James Mitchell and Daivari. And also Armado Alejandro Estrrrrrrada. He's great!

**Who have been your favourite managers and if prospective managers wanted to learn the art of being a manager from any one manager who would that be?** I loved the WWF managers in the late 80s. Jimmy Hart, who I've had the pleasure of meeting and having breakfast with at Uprising 3, Slick and of course, the incomparable Bobby Heenan. Heenan was the ultimate manager. Great talker, such a sharp wit and he took bumps. I felt a bit of a fraud until recently by not taking bumps but that's all changed after the recent FWA shows!

**What do you think makes a good promo?** One that plays off the audience. I used to script everything in my head and go over it over and over again before I went out into the arena. Now I just have a few bullet points I want to hit and I adapt it to the crowd reaction. It's come with experience and it's much more spontaneous that way.

**Why did you decide to become a manager and what training or advice was given to you?** I didn't really see myself as a manager but Alex Shane did. He had faith in my ability and I'm very grateful to him for all his help and advice. After my debut at New Frontiers 2003 he described me as "a natural" and so I had no training as such. The best piece of advice I ever had was that a manager is there not to get himself over, but to get his wrestler over, and if he gets himself over at the same time then that's a bonus.

**You're best known for your work in the FWA, I have particularly fond memories of 'The Family' storyline and the feud with Alex Shane, Ulf Hermann and Nikita, what are your memories of that feud?** It was great fun although I reckon I aged several years trying to keep out of the way of all those flying weapons!

**The FWA crowd really have it in for you, what have been your most memorable moments of their behaviour?** The whole Greg Lambert's wife inflatable doll gimmick was fantastic. Little known fact - Midlands wrestler SC Supreme was actually the man who used to bring that thing to ringside. He wasn't a plant, though, he was a fan back then! It was all his own work!

**Who have you most enjoyed working with in your career?** I enjoyed doing angles with Dean Ayass as 'manager v manager' and The Family stuff was also a real highlight for me. But I also enjoy being at Iceman's side. It's nice to manage a singles wrestler after previously being known mainly for managing tag teams.



## Next Edition

**Bobby 'The Brain' Heenan**

**Jim Cornette**

**Sylvano**

## **Managing....to cope with the wrestling business!"**

**By P.Staniforth**

When asked by Piledriver guru Steve to do a small article on management and my being that dying breed known as a male manager in professional wrestling, I didn't quite know where to start. Then it dawned on me, that I could do what I always do - talk about myself! I never wanted to be a wrestler. I never tried to do moves on my friends when I was younger though I confess I chokeslam (or 'dadda-slam'!) my kids, and do the 'dadda-bomb' (a power bomb) too now; but that's a parental right! You'd always find me in the mirror practising talking and challenging people, and working on that side of things; even though I never believed I'd get near enough to the wrestling business to justify the hours put into it.

I loved Bobby Heenan's humour on commentary, but didn't feel I could copy him as such. Jim Cornette was always someone I loved to watch, but when I saw Paul (.E. Dangerously) Heyman; that was it. That was the guy I wished I could be like one day. TO put a timeline on that, this was 1989/1990 roughly. ECW came along after that, and seeing as I was a early Philly smart mark (Bill Apter's magazines kept me in touch with the Tri State Wrestling Alliance), I followed fascinated and still dreaming.



As the years went on, male managers got faded out and replaced by women who'd only have two decent talents and often they'd even be fake, plastic, or at least enhanced. When I got into writing for websites, magazines, newsletters and more; I still dreamt of being a manager. Everything I ever did in wrestling, was great and a dream come true for me; but I always wanted that one thing extra. August 2005 was the month that dream came true, and I've been 'The Internet Icon' ever since. Well, actually, I was christened that a month or so earlier to that by someone; and I chose to keep it as I felt it was rather fun and catchy.

I've been ringside managing in TLC matches, I've guided wrestlers to championships (singles and tag team), I've got young guys who had some talent but not much personality reacted to as heels by a crowd. I've had crowds literally hating me, and I love that; it is one of the greatest feelings you can have to get that reaction from them and know you've made them feel that way. People think the only thing to be in this business is a wrestler. I can promise you, the reader, from my personal experiences that view is wrong! In fact, I wouldn't swap being a manager for the world. Because, as my two catchphrases say - "I'm better than you, because I'm from Luton", and "If you're not me, then you suck"!

'The Internet Icon' Peter Staniforth

**Just wondering but why....**

**Did someone on Sky Text really believe that Samoa Joe was part of the Wild Samoans tag team and Monty Brown is in fact D-Lo Brown??**

**Does Vince McMahon think anyone actually enjoys his use of Eddie Guerrero storylines**

**Does WWE still have a Hall of Fame that doesn't include The Dynamite Kid, The British Bulldog and Rick Rude**

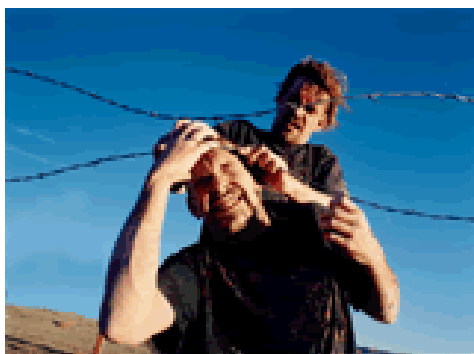
**Do TNA think hiring so many ex-WWE stars will make them look anything but a promotion that isn't full of WWE rejects.**



## The Backyard comes to ITV4

*The documentary 'The Backyard' can be seen on ITV4 on Saturday March 10th at 11.05pm and again the following day at 12-55am. I don't condone backyard wrestling in any way but when the documentary was released I had the chance to interview Chaos and Scar. Their stories and the danger they place themselves in shows just why I don't condone it.*

The Backyard is a terrifying but often hilarious award-winning documentary that uncovers the extremely violent and often bizarre world of backyard wrestling. Throughout the U.S. and even the U.K, Director Paul Hough discovers that unofficial backyard wrestling groups can be found in almost any town. Made up of mainly teenagers - with a few twenty something's - these groups meet regularly like real-life fight clubs.



Armed with barbed wire wrapped baseball bats, broken glass and thumb tacks, the film shows the wrestlers justifying why they risk permanent neck and spine injuries for an audience of one to three people; what the thrill of being set on fire with only a damp towel nearby holds for them and how to enhance the spectacle of bloodshed by multiple aspirin taking.

Meet Chaos and Scar, they inhabit the violent and sometimes bizarre world of backyard wrestling where light-bulbs, fire, barbed wire, thumbtacks, mousetraps and glass are weapons of choice.

### Tell me about the documentary -The Backyard?

**Chaos:** The Backyard is a documentary on people like me living their life and doing what they love and it's a great movie that should be seen by everybody.

**Scar:** The backyard is pretty much a kick ass documentary about the inside world of backyard wrestling and what goes through our minds when we're wrestling. It's also very entertaining and shocking after you see some of the movie; you just wonder why we do this, so this film will give you a good idea how and why it happens.

### How did you get involved with the project?

**Chaos:** I got an e-mail from Paul Hough, he asked to come to a show and it was from there we began discussing the project.

**Scar:** Well, first I heard from Ryan aka Chaos from HIW that some film maker was coming to Tucson to film HIW for an upcoming film, so I emailed the filmmaker and told him about me, so he was interested in meeting me in Tucson since I live in Phoenix. So when I got to Tucson and met him, he was very interested about getting to know more about my life and why I do backyard wrestling.

### Do you think Director Paul Hough has depicted a fair representation of the sport?

**Chaos:** I think Paul has done more then make a fair representation of the sport. Now everybody, everywhere, knows that these Backyard Wrestlers aren't just retards trying to copy the professionals, they are people who just love wrestling and want to do it. I, myself am now a professional wrestler.

**Scar:** Oh yeah, I don't think he was bashing backyard wrestling at all, he just wanted to make a film that stayed true to the topic which was backyard wrestling. Overall I think he's a cool guy to hang out with and an excellent filmmaker.

### Who or what inspired you to become a wrestler?

**Chaos:** A childhood friend by the name of Jon Johnson who I still wrestle with, inspired me to become a wrestler and build a ring in my backyard

**Scar:** Probably Sandman from ECW or Tommy dreamer from ECW. Well I wasn't really inspired by a lot of wrestlers I guess I would say ECW inspired me to do all this.

### How did you come up with your wrestling gimmick?

**Chaos:** I don't really have much of a gimmick- I'm more of a guy who just puts on a good show. I guess a lot of people say my gimmick is a no nonsense straight forward guy but then again that's how I am in real life.

**Scar:** Easy, I was myself; I had scars all over my bodies so I decided to call myself Scar.

**What is your favourite kind of match, and weapon of choice?**

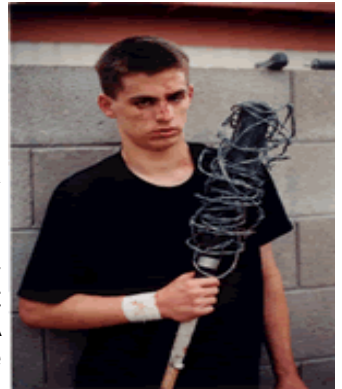
**Chaos:** My favourite type of match is a Thumbtack Deathmatch and my weapon of choice... I'd say it's a tie between the Thumbtack Bat and the Barbedwire Bat.

**Scar:** Anything that involved something in the match, I never liked plain single matches, I would always love to be involved 3 way, 4 ways, tag teams, ladder matches, death matches, etc. Just about anything that would pop a crowd and I would do so well at it

**What is the worst injury you have ever sustained in the ring?**

**Chaos:** Dislocated shoulder and a fractured ankle. Nothing too bad I've never broken a bone! Geeze I hope I didn't jinks myself.....!

**Scar:** Well this past February of 2004, I broke my back after trying to do a 450 off a ladder but the ring was so bad and the ladder was so terrible, so shit happens. I landed right on my lower back and ended up getting 10 hour surgery. A 16 inch metal rod is in my back that's never going to be taken out, and has pretty much ended my career. But I don't think this metal rod will stop me, I promise myself I would get back in the ring one more time.



**Why do you think Backyard Wrestling has become so popular?**

**Chaos:** Because of people like Rick Mahr, who unfortunately is only out to make money and isn't as passionate about the wrestling.

**Scar:** Because it's just so damn fun, what's not to like? Getting together with your friends every week or every month, away from your jobs and drama, and just having some good old fun by beating the crap out of each other but you know you don't really mean it, you're just having fun.

**What is your advice to those wanting to try Backyard Wrestling in their own homes?**

**Chaos:** Don't do it or you'll regret it if you want to become a pro wrestler.

**Scar:** If you want to damage your body, beat the crap out of other people, or get together with friend's every week, then by all means who's stopping you? You can't like say "oh I'm not going to do that because it's dangerous" if it's not dangerous to you then do it, it's your call, not mine.

**Have you had the chance to play the Backyard Wrestling video game?**

**Chaos:** Yeah and I didn't think it was very good.

**Scar:** For like 3 minutes, it's f\*\*\*ing terrible.

**Due to the high risk nature of the sport, would you like to continue as a Backyard Wrestler, or venture into a sports entertainment federation such as WWE or NWA: TNA?**

**Chaos:** I believe I am a pro wrestler and I'd rather stay in the independents or go to Japan. I'm not all about the money I just wanna wrestle.

**Scar:** The Backyard has been praised by critics and won numerous awards. Were you surprised by how well it was received by the mainstream media?

**Chaos:** I knew it would do well. Paul put a lot of work into this movie and we busted our asses to make sure the mainstream media would be surprised when they saw it.

**Scar:** I would always stick with the backyard wrestling because if I worked for wwe, nwa, tna or whatever, they would need me full-time and my body cant put in full-time. I'd rather wrestle part time.

**Thank you for your time,**

**Chaos:** No problem and thank you for giving me the chance to answer your questions. A big shout out to HIW (High Impact Wrestling)

**Scar:** Oh yeah, I didn't think it was going to be that big, but it won so many awards and I get a lot of emails from fans around the world saying how much they loved the film. So I think it's pretty cool to be in a documentary and be heard about all around the world. I mean wouldn't you?









