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The Road Warriors: Danger, Death, And The Rush Of Wrestling



Synopsis

Delivering an inside account of one of wrestling's most famous fighters, this autobiography offers a rare chance to learn about Joe "Animal" Laurinaitis's life both inside and outside the ring. Revealing riveting stories about his participation in the 1980s and 1990s superstar wrestling team the Road Warriors, it recounts memorable fights with his partner Mike "Hawk" Hegstrand. He describes how he and Mike rose to become a revolutionary tag team; reinventing themselves with spiky accessories and wearing face paint before it was popular; and chronicles famous rivalries, movement between different wrestling associations, and dealing with Mike's longtime struggle with drugs and alcohol. He also invites fans into his personal life and discusses his family and newfound Christian faith. Featuring stories of incredible physical feats and deep-felt companionship, this testimony will help fans relive the glory days of a wrestling legacy.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Pro-wrestling fans will instantly recognize Laurinaitis as one half of the Road Warriors, a tag team who were, for roughly 20 years, superstars in the wrestling game. With his friend Mike Hegstrand, Laurinaitis helped turn pro wrestling from a sideshow curiosity into a mainstream sport and a business empire. Laurinaitis takes us through his professional career, and while the book includes its share of descriptions of in-the-ring dramatics, it also has some pretty shrewd commentary on the wrestling business. You don't often see, for example, a wrestler come right out and say that the fighting is faked, but here Laurinaitis takes us through the training process and shows how he and Hegstrand learned to put on a show for fans without inflicting any real physical punishment

(slamming their foot down hard on the canvas, for example, while pretending to punch an opponent). He also touches on such subjects as steroid abuse, psychological trauma, choosing a character, and the behind-the-scenes business of pro wrestling. A lively, highly informative look at an ever-more-popular though still controversial sport. --David Pitt

"A riveting memoir that pulls no punches and is every bit as powerful as the pair that once dominated the wrestling scene." #151;Mike Mooneyham, Post and Courier (March 2011)"In a business where so many copy so many others, the Road Warriors stand tall as originals in both performance and presentation and are undoubtedly the greatest professional tag team wrestling duo of all time." #151;Powerlifting USA"This excellent book will bring him back, hopefully to the WWE Hall of Fame."#151;Alan Wojcik, Gerweck.net: Pro Wrestling and MMA News (March 4, 2011)"If you are a fan of The Road Warriors, then you definitely want to read this book. The writing is easy to follow, and once you pick it up, you won't put it down. In the end, The Road Warriors: Danger, Death, and the Rush of Wrestling was a #145;rush." #151;Rick Rockwell, The Examiner"An extraordinary tour de force, enthusiastically recommended to wrestling fans in general and Road Warrior fans in particular." #151;James A. Cox, Midwest Book Review (March 2011)"A unique insight into professional wrestling. . . . Laurinaitis speaks with a welcome candor." #151;Publishers Weekly (February 2011)

Like other wrestler's of their era, reading about the poor training, poor working conditions and generally getting screwed by promoters seems to be a theme. It's interesting to read about everything about Paul Ellering, Hawk and Animal, their lives outside and inside of the ring. Animal pulls no punches in discussing how they enjoyed bouncing and generally beating people up. As a kid watching wrestling at the time, I had no idea of all the strange relationships between the Road Warriors and various other wrestlers. Hawk can no longer tell his side of the story, and Animal shows signs of being pretty angry with him throughout the book, but time and time again forgiving him. The story takes an odd turn as Hawk and Animal find Jesus along with Shawn Michaels and Nikita Koloff. It's after finding god and cleaning up that Michael Hegstrand finally meets his maker. It seems early in their careers there was no real difference between in and out of ring personas of Hawk and Animal. But as they mature in the business and learn as much as they can, it is then that Hegstrand and Joe Laurinaitis emerge as separate entities, for Joe much earlier than Hawk. The Road Warriors were originals, but by no means did they come up with their own ideas. Some of the copies, such as the Blade Runners originated from the same people who gave the Road Warriors

their trademark look. Joe gives credit where credit is due. He also takes jabs at some people along the way who probably deserved it. They took an original idea, they ran with it, they went where no other performers had previously gone and in many ways changed the face (literally) of professional wrestling. Theirs is a unique tale complete with pitfalls and copycats, sometimes by their own friends. Joe writes of refusing to put some workers over, and generally has good reasons for it, but it's still questionable. He speaks very highly of some workers. And the match that turned them from monster heels to babyfaces... from which they were never able to return no matter who they turned on. The mastermind that was Paul Ellering was another story, he probably deserves his own book. A legitimate genius who knew how to negotiate. A man who could do anything but made the mistake of picking up a ventriloquist dummy. If you're a fan of pro-wrestling from the 80s and 90s, this is a must read.

Having followed professional wrestling during the kayfabe era, this book was a great trip down all the halls of memories of the NWA, the AWA, and the WWE. Joe Laurinaitis shows the rocky road of training to wrestle professionally, being scouted, being recruited, the disappointments, the near giving up, and ultimately the success. I believe the Road Warriors are the greatest tag team of all time, and to see their career through Animal Joe's eyes is great, but this book is more than that. This book allowed me to relive the history I saw on television in the 80's and 90's as well as seeing what was going on behind the scenes. This book shows the development of the Four Horsemen, the way Nikita Koloff came to be, and the interaction between the Road Warriors and famous wrestlers such as Ric Flair, Hulk Hogan, and the Ultimate Warrior. Whoever knew that Road Warrior Animal and Nikita Koloff were very close friends? Who knew Nikita Koloff flew to Minnesota to stand as best man for Animal Joe's wedding? The stories of the rise and fall (and death) of wrestlers such as Rick Rude and Curt Hennig were sobering to say the least. And of course, seeing Joe's first hand view of Mike (Road Warrior Hawk) spiraling downward and suffering the ill effects of his choices was amazing to read. Without spoiling anything, I just want to say I was greatly and happily surprised at what Joe describes happening to his life and the life of his family in chapter nineteen. The most fascinating part of the book for me was the description of what was going on when professional wrestling "came out of the closet" and told the world it was not an actual sport, but a dramatic representation of sport. As we heard about it in the news, it was like someone finally being brave enough to say the Emperor has no clothes. To see it from Animal Joe's perspective was amazing. I own the DVD of the Road Warrior's history, and having read this book will give that documentary much more depth.

I loved wrestling when the Road Warriors came out. Everyone else was just 6'0 to 6'2, not as muscular and definitely not as intimidating. The only reason I don't give this 5 stars? Poor Mike the 'Hawk' of the road warriors had all ready passed away. We can never really hear his side of the story, his point of view. This book really covers Joe 'Animal' of the road warriors and his memories of the occasions. Maybe one was scared and the other pumping them up...maybe lying to each other because they wanted to be the Chicago badass wrestlers they claimed to be. Even then, if you loved the road warriors, you'll want to read this. Animal does a great job with his memories and if anything, he may be a little too honest letting you in on some of the kayfabe. Maybe its best to just keep playing the roles. Let the fantasy, with its truth be revealed as you speak. Thank You Joe for telling us about the Legion of Doom, after the Hawk was gone. If you found this review helpful..please click yes at the bottom of this review..Thank You.

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