

Some Quick Wrestling Book Recaps

So I was at the Half Price Bookstore (praise be its name) and found a nice selection of reasonably priced wrestling books earlier in the week. Five days later and I've read them all so it's time for some quick recaps.

The first three are all by my, for lack of a better word, mentor Scott Keith, who has been doing what I do for about 20 years now. He wrote a bunch of books back in the day and here are a handful of them.

First up we have *The Buzz On Professional Wrestling* from 2001, which is more like a textbook for newcomers. It maps out the basic ideas of the major wrestling companies and professional wrestling in general. This was about 99.9% recaps for me and would be for most people reading this, but it's designed to be mainly the basics, which is an interesting concept.

Second was *Wrestling's One Ring Circus* from 2004, which is much more focused on a single period. In this case, the focus is on the time period from the Invasion up through *Wrestlemania XIX*, breaking down each time period and all major points in between. This was a quick read and is meant as more of a mockery of HHH and Stephanie during this period, but there are definitely some valid criticisms of a time period that not a lot of people are fans of. It's also interesting to see John Cena mentioned as a young potential star without the tongue planted firmly in cheek.

Finally from Mr. Keith we have 2006's *Wrestling's Made Men*, which is the same concept as *One Ring Circus* but focusing on post *Wrestlemania XIX* up through mid 2005. In this case it's a collection of pay per view recaps with extra details filled in. This isn't as interesting of a time but there is definitely a lot of stuff worth checking out in it.

Finally overall we have a more traditional wrestling book with Bill Watts' *The Cowboy and the Cross*. Watts is one of the more controversial figures in wrestling history as he's a very old school guy who pushed

Mid-South to a very impressive place in wrestling. He's one of the few bookers who was destroyed by a force completely outside his control (the collapse of the Texas oil industry), but that style didn't exactly work well in WCW.

The problem with Watts is he comes off as someone who has almost never been wrong in his entire life and seemed to have every great idea in the history of the business. If someone disagreed with him as a talent, it was time to throw hands and no one ever beat Watts. Like ever, including Verne Gagne, who would rather back down than fight him.

He also loved Danny Hodge at a level that is probably unhealthy. Don't get me wrong: Danny Hodge is one of the toughest men to ever live and probably the only wrestler who could defeat Kurt Angle in a shoot (note that I said could, not would), but you would think he cured cancer, invented pizza and single handedly got the Kardashians off TV and Justin Bieber deported to Mars.

Overall though, Watts is definitely someone whose story is worth reading, though you should take some of it with a grain of salt. He comes off as one of those guys who was successful, but I have some issues with a few of his stories. Also, there are some moments where he doesn't do himself any favors shaking the stereotypes of being a bit of a chauvinist and racist, but it's not the worst in the world.

One final note: a lot of his book is dedicated to talking about his Christianity. I have zero issue with that and always enjoy hearing someone talk about it, but there comes a point where even I was thinking "good grief man, we get it already." The book is worth checking out for some of the details on stuff, but like I said, some of the stuff he takes full or even majority credit for sound a bit shaky.

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