

HE'S NEVER
ROYAL
WON A RUMBLE
Never Been Crowned
KING OF THE RING
NEVER HELD
ANY
CHAMPIONSHIP IN
WWE
SO WHY IS
JAKE
ROBERTS
being enshrined in the
WWE HALL OF FAME?

BY JOHN MIHALY

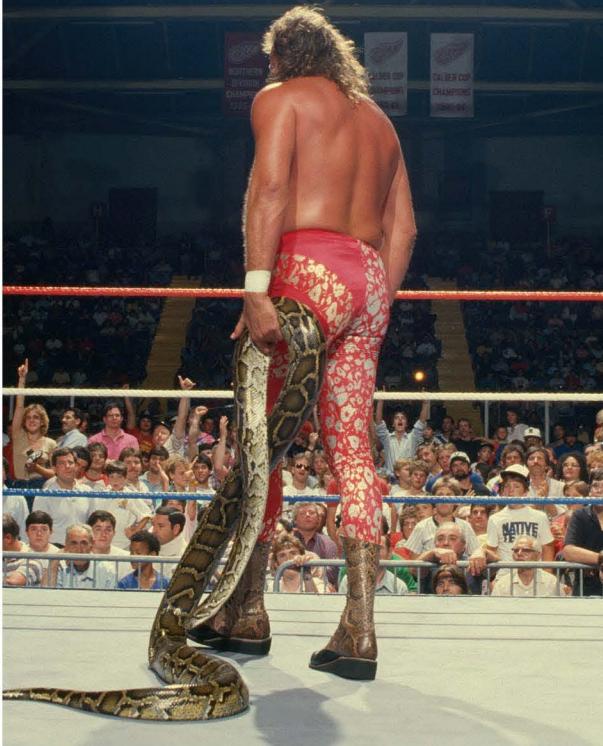
The answer to that question is quite simple, really. Whenever "The Snake" spit a promo, it chilled you to the bone. Whatever his opponents threw at him, his patented DDT always put them down for the three count. Wherever "The Snake" slithered, truly memorable things happened in and out of the ring. Learn all about this undeniably Legend as we welcome back Jake Roberts to the WWE Universe.

Tell us about the origins of Jake "The Snake" Roberts. Whose idea was it to bring a giant reptile to the ring?

I originally approached Mid-South Wrestling with the idea and was told in no uncertain terms that, "This is not a circus" and that the idea was "stupid." When I came to Mr. McMahon, the snake was a big part of it. I really jumped on it. But I forgot one thing, I was terrified of snakes. Life is a funny thing: The need not to fail was bigger than my fear. I had a troubled youth; I had a lot of things happen to me in my life that I didn't like to talk about a whole lot. I had to lie to get out of gym class because I didn't want anyone to see my legs. I guess it really helped me in my character development because you learn to give an interview that's believable, because your life is on the line, your past is on the line. If there is anything that was good that came from that bad situation, it was that I learned how to lie. So getting over the fear was very simple. You have a job. If you don't put on those damn spandex tights, or laced-up boots, which I did not want to do either, and carry a snake, the only other option was not to and not have a job. So it wasn't really that hard to figure out.

Wait, not only did you have a fear of snakes but you also had a strong dislike for wrestling gear, too?

Back in the day, we had these long road trips. One night I sat down and figured out that it takes me 15 minutes a night to put my boots on and take them off. Seven days a week, twice on Saturday and twice on Sunday. You know you're talking about a couple of hours a week. Add that up over 38-plus years. So my problem was I really didn't end want to end up at the gates of heaven or hell and tell whoever is in power there that I'm a dumb son of a bitch who spent three months of my life doing this. And other than the fact of being lazy, that was the look they wanted. Spandex



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tights I did not want to do either. The persona I developed wore loose-fitting karate pants because I have skinny legs. My defense for that was have you ever seen fat legs on a racehorse? I have a comeback for just about everything. That's part of the snake thing too, quick thinking, think on your feet.

You've been known as one of the greatest mic guys in the history of this business. Did promos come naturally to you?

Well, one of the things that probably should be known is the reason I never yelled in my interviews was because I can't yell. I had a knee dropped to my throat when I was 20 years old that crushed my voice box. If I try to go loud, you can't even understand what is coming out; if I scream, nothing comes out...which really sucks. As far as my thought process, it was really pretty simple: I would steal. My thought was, if I say something you heard before, you automatically start believing what I'm saying for the simple fact that you heard it before. I might

have stolen, a lot was from music, whether it be from Pink Floyd, which was my favorite, or The Rolling Stones. Your brain hears it and says this is true because you've heard it before, so therefore it must be true. So now you're agreeing with my interview no matter what I say.My nickname was "One-Take Jake." I could do two hours of interviews without missing one of the countdowns. And I was just so bored I would come up with stupid things. Give me a word and they would say, "spaghetti." When you're doing a great interview, you have to believe what you're saying. That's the key to telling a good lie, you have to believe what you are saying. So that was the key to my success. And the fact that I probably do have the sexiest voice on the planet. I happen to have the greatest mustache of all time, too.

Jake, now that you're back in the WWE Universe, what do you have to say to your fans, both old and new?

I have some apologies that I want to make to WWE and my fans because I could have given so much more had I not been struggling with addiction. I wouldn't have been what I was had I not been through what I had been. There was a lot of pain involved in this character, a lot of shame involved in this character, a lot of anger involved in this character. In my life, I was always alone.

Chances are if you are carrying a 15-foot snake around, not many people really want to know about you. So if I brought it in the locker room with it beside me, I didn't have a problem needing room.

Whether it was Earthquake squashing the "snake" in the bag or the Blindfold Match or the cobra biting Randy Savage's arm, Jake Roberts was always at the heart of some of the most memorable moments in WWE history. But he was never a World Champion. Why was that?

Well, it just didn't work. It wasn't something that I had to have to make me a star, and I'm so grateful to Mr. McMahon for giving me the opportunity to spin that story time and again, whether it be with Steamboat or DiBiase or Bad News. The greatest compliment I ever got was the fact that I kept getting opportunity after opportunity to work with all this incredible talent. I'm sure there was some jealousy involved, because I wanted more but if you quit wanting more, brother, then you should get out of the business. 