

# THE COMEBACK KID

The American Dragon, **Daniel Bryan**, recounts his return from Nexus exile, hiding out at *SummerSlam*, The Miz's best career advice, and his favorite "worst song" of all time.

**Y**ou've had one roller coaster ride of a Rookie year in WWE. At any point after your exile by The Nexus did you think that your dream of Superstardom was done? A few weeks after I was kicked out of The Nexus, people were chanting for me at pay-per-views. So I knew I was in demand. If you create demand for yourself, they're going to want you back. Even though it took me 10 years to create that demand, to the point at which WWE actually wanted me, I'd do it all over again. It's not the first time I've been let go by WWE, and it might not be the last.

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DANIEL BRYAN

**Where were you when you got "the call" that you'd be returning at *SummerSlam* as a member of Team WWE?** I was at the veterinarian, looking at this overweight beagle I was thinking of fostering. She was really sweet, but she weighed 65 pounds, and I'd never seen a dog that fat. That's when I got the call. I was a little flustered. It was definitely unexpected.

**How did you keep the secret of your return under wraps?** At *SummerSlam*, I was hidden away. I'm not going to say nobody knew I was there, but I hid in a room with the door draped off so no one would even think of walking in. By the time I arrived backstage, the doors to the show had already opened. I was wearing a hooded sweatshirt and sunglasses. I went straight from the car into that room and just stayed there. When I made my entrance, even the Gorilla area was cleared so no one would see.

**From day one on *WWE NXT*, you and The Miz butted heads. But as your Pro, did he give you good advice?** What I really appreciated about The Miz is that he wanted us to

be the focus of the show. I think that's an admirable quality. One thing that I've learned just by watching him is that he always carries himself like a star—and that's something I need to work on. On the independent level, I could just walk to the ring like I was walking to the grocery store, but walking from the TitanTron down to the ring is much more difficult than people think. The Miz does it very well. He looks like a star.

**You're a vegan. How difficult is it to maintain your diet while on the road?** The hardest part is retaining muscle mass, so I have to be careful about my protein intake. I'm a vegan for health reasons: Last year, I had five different skin infections, including three bouts of staph. I have a weak immune system, so I'm susceptible to that sort of thing. I get sick all the time, even when I was a kid. So my doctor recommended I go on a vegan diet, as meats, cheeses and milk are very difficult for the body to digest. Eating plant-based food leaves you more energy to fight off bacteria. This year, I had two major sicknesses and no skin infections. For me, that's a really good year.

**Finally, other than Gob Bluth (Will Arnett on *Arrested Development*), has anyone done more to promote the song "The Final Countdown" by Europe than you?** I started using "The Final Countdown" in 2005. I was traveling to Japan a lot at the time and I got the idea from a *Blender* article I was reading about the 50 worst songs of all time. "The Final Countdown" was in the top five. I thought it would be great entrance music as a kind of a gag, but the song really caught on. 🐉



## THE AMERICAN DRAGON'S TAP LIST

Five Superstars Daniel Bryan is most looking forward to locking up with in WWE!

* John Cena	"Because I wrestled him back in 2003, and because he's the most popular Superstar in WWE."
* Randy Orton	"I'd like to wrestle him for the same reason that I'd like to wrestle Cena: He gets great crowd reactions."
* William Regal	"We wrestled on <i>WWE NXT</i> , but I'd like something more sustained with him, maybe even a series."
* Finlay	"What can I say, other than he's incredible and just awesome?"
* Evan Bourne	"I guarantee that we'd contest really fun matches that people would enjoy seeing."

