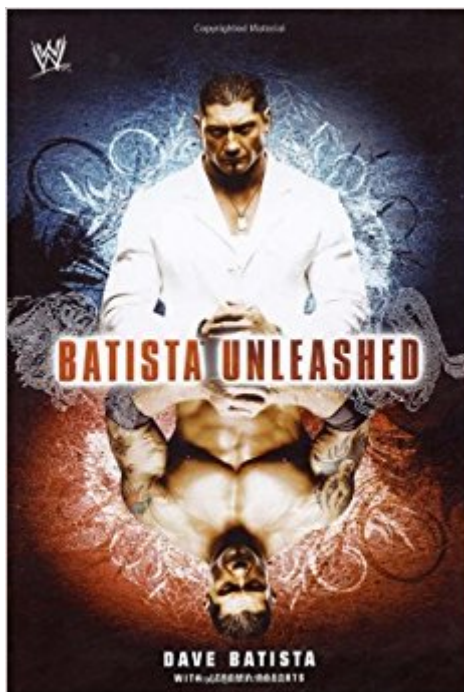


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Batista Unleashed



Synopsis

People around the world know Dave Batista as World Wrestling Entertainment's "the Animal," the rope-shaking, spine-busting World Heavyweight Champion, one of the most popular Superstars in recent years. The crowd turned Batista from heel to babyface after they were electrified by his awesome physique and physical wrestling style. Few fans, however, know that Batista didn't join the profession until he was thirty years old -- an age at which many wrestlers are thinking about hanging up their boots. Nor do most fans know the tremendous toll the climb to the top has taken on Batista's personal life. While successfully staying away from hard drugs and -- usually -- liquor, he found sex too tempting to resist. "Women were my drug of choice," the Animal confesses. That addiction cost him his marriage, destroying a relationship that had helped him climb from poverty to the pinnacle of sports entertainment in less than two years. Now, in "Batista Unleashed," the WWE Superstar comes clean about the choices he made and the devastating effects they had on his family. He talks about the injury that stripped him of his title -- an injury he blames on Mark Henry's carelessness. While being sidelined cost Batista untold hundreds of thousands of dollars in lost income, it also set the stage for a tremendous comeback that cemented the Animal's reputation as a true champion. Batista talks about growing up in the worst part of Washington, D.C., where three murders occurred in his front yard before he was nine. He speaks lovingly about his mother -- a lesbian -- and how hard she worked to keep the family not just together but alive. He talks candidly about his own criminal past: a conviction on a drug charge and another, since overturned, on assault. He speaks of his days as a bouncer and a lifeguard, and tells how bodybuilding may have saved his life. Once he made it to the WWE, Batista realized he wasn't really ready for the big time. His career seemed headed for a fall until Fit Finlay took him under his wing. But his real education came when he joined Evolution and rode with Triple H and Ric Flair, two of sports entertainment's all-time greats. Batista talks about what they taught him, and details some of their wild times on the road. But the champ also reveals a kinder, gentler side. While his soft-spoken manner in the locker room has sometimes been misinterpreted as arrogance, in truth Batista's always been somewhat shy and quiet. Emotional by nature, he reveals for the first time that the tears fans saw at "WrestleMania 21," when he won the World Heavyweight Championship for the first time, were very real. And he speaks movingly about his problems with his ex-wives and teenage daughters, and how it felt to become a grandfather. While his straight-shooting mouth has occasionally gotten him into trouble -- most notably in a backstage confrontation with Undertaker after some remarks about "SmackDown!" -- Batista is his own harshest critic. He explains his early limitations as a wrestler and the work he has done to overcome them. Interspersing his memoir with accounts from life on

the road, Batista lightens the narrative with a surprising sense of humor. An Animal in the ring, he reveals himself as an honest and even humble man in everyday life.

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Customer Reviews

Jeremy Roberts (cowriter) has written on a variety of subjects. His nonfiction work includes biographies of Mussolini and Joan of Arc for A&E Books.

DEAD MEN Every story has a beginning. Mine is in Washington, D.C., in 1969. Washington, D.C., in the sixties, seventies, and eighties was one of the poorest places in the country. Murder was common. Crack cocaine was just getting its start. Life expectancy for kids was worse than in many third world countries. The politicians were corrupt, homelessness was at its peak, and even lawabiding people viewed the police as the enemy. But to me, it was home. I won't say I was unaffected by the poverty and crime around me when I grew up. It's not like I lived on a safe cul-de-sac around the corner from the ghetto, either: three people died at different times in my front yard before I was nine. But to me, D.C. wasn't the life-sucking hellhole it was for a lot of people. And the big reason for that was my mom. **FAMILY** I was born January 18, 1969. For some strange reason, the date is a big controversy in the wrestling world. At some point very early in my career, someone wrote a story somewhere saying that I had been born in 1966. That year seems to have stuck with a lot of people for some reason. There have been other dates published, too. There have

been so many, in fact, that when I give the right date, some people think I'm lying about my age. I swear to God, it's like it's a big deal. Just last week some guy told my girlfriend I was lying about my age, that I wasn't really thirty-eight, that I was forty-two. Maybe he was trying to pick her up, I don't know. I don't lie about my birth date -- I try not to lie about anything, but especially not that. It's no secret that I came to the business really late. I was almost thirty when I got into wrestling. That's real old for a wrestler starting out. I never lied about my age then, so it would be really crazy to lie now. And if I was going to lie about my age, I wouldn't say I was thirty-eight. I'd knock at least five more years off. I have a sister, who was born about a year later than I was. Our parents weren't very original when it came to naming us. I was named after my father, David Michael Bautista. I'm Dave Junior. My sister was named after my mother, Donna Raye Bautista. She's a junior, too. It made it easier for people to remember our names. (I spell my name Batista for wrestling, but on my birth certificate it has a u after the first a.) My father was born in Washington, D.C., but his family was from the Philippines, and as a wrestler I've always felt a strong bond with the fans in the Philippines because of that family connection. His father, my granddad, was in the army; he didn't talk much about what he did, but I know he was in World War II and was wounded or hurt in some way. The family legends have him down as a hell-raiser when he was young, but I don't know much more than that. I always heard that he was a real ladies' man, and that he got into some trouble in San Francisco when he was younger. Supposedly he was running numbers for gangsters and did something for which, for some reason or another, they wanted to kill him. Whatever it was that he did, trouble chased him out of town and he came east. Those bad days were long gone by the time I came along, and he never told me about them, even though I was his favorite and he wasn't afraid to show it. On the contrary: he used to brag about it. According to the family stories, my grandfather would never really hold any of my cousins or me when we were babies. He wasn't the nurturing type. But then one day my mom had to run to grab something burning or something like that and she just threw me in my grandfather's arms. His face lit up. By the time she came back to get me, he and I had bonded somehow. From that day, I was his favorite grandchild. I still remember him asking how much I loved him and holding my hands out to say, "This much!" When he died in 1988, it just broke my heart. He's buried in Arlington Cemetery, an honor reserved for men and women who have served our country. My grandfather had a bunch of jobs in the Washington, D.C., area, but I only knew him as a barber. He had his own shop in Oxen Hill, Maryland, an old-fashioned place with four chairs in it. He had to be one of the most popular guys in the neighborhood. Everybody knew him. You'd go into a McDonald's with him or just walk down the block and everyone would say hello. He was very friendly and very well liked. He was also a very generous

grandfather. When I was around six or seven, we lived real close to the shop, maybe a few blocks away. I'd go into the shop and sit in his chair, just hanging out. He'd give me lollipops all day. My cousin Anthony, who was a little older than me, would stop by, too. Sometimes, my grandfather would give us a few bucks and we'd go to Toys "R" Us. It was right across the street. It was funny. For a while we had a regular little scam going, me and my cousin. We'd buy the toys and play with them; then, after we got a little tired of them, we'd break them and take them back. "This toy's broken," we'd tell them. So they'd take them back on exchange and we'd get more toys. Anthony and I were close while we were growing up, very close. He was my only male relative in my generation, and for a while I lived with him, his sister, and their parents. So that made him the closest thing I had to a brother as a kid. He could be a bully sometimes, like any older brother. Nothing too serious: he would tease me until I cried, things like that. But I still loved him. I always looked up to him and wanted to be like him. Unfortunately, he died a few years ago in a terrible car accident. It really shook up the family. I still miss him.

LESBIAN AND DEMOCRAT My mom's father, Kenneth Mullins, was in the service, too. He was in the Marines during the Korean War and got both the Purple Heart and Silver Star. Both of my grandfathers were men to look up to and feel proud of, because of their service to our country. I was never very close to the Greek side of my family, mostly because my mother wasn't. But she still tells the story of how when I was born, all of her Greek relatives came over to visit. They started yelling when they saw me: "He's Greek! He's Greek!" They were all happy and proud, pointing out this and that facial feature that they said was due to Greek genes. Of course, the Filipino side of the family was there, and they got pretty upset. They claimed I looked more Filipino than Greek. My mother calls herself the black sheep of her family. She was always a lot more liberal than her parents: Granddad was a conservative, she was a left-wing Democrat. After she and my father separated, she fell in love with a woman. At some point, her father caught her in bed with another woman, which was how he first found out that she was a lesbian. I think she may regret that a little bit, but she and her dad have gotten closer over the years, and I know there's a lot of love between them now. She still jokes, though, that she did two things that disappointed her father: told him that she was a Democrat, and told him that she was a lesbian. "Of the two, being a Democrat was far, far worse," she says. "Not even close as far as he was concerned." My mother's sexual orientation was never an issue for me. She made it clear that she loved my sister and me, and there was never any doubt in my mind about that.

THE GONG SHOW My father was a different story. He and my mom had been high school sweethearts and got married right out of school. They were both really young. I don't know exactly what happened, but it seems clear to me that my father wasn't ready to be a father. They did try, on and off, to get

together and get back together. Some of those attempts were halfhearted. But I don't really remember them sharing affection, hugging or kissing or anything like that. I remember us all watching The Gong Show together. That was about the extent of family togetherness for my mom and dad. In all the years after my parents split up, basically since I was able to walk, I never felt that my father supported us. My mother says now, "You can't get blood from a stone." I don't know about that. It seemed to me he was making a pretty good living at the time, and we just lived in a dump. We had nothing. I always felt something was wrong with that. We recently talked for the first time in, let me see, over ten years. But it was really awkward. I felt as if I'd been forced into talking to him. Things are still hard between us. I don't really think he ever wanted to be a father. He told me recently that he never knew how to be a father. That was fuckin' obvious. But he could have taken a better shot at it. He said it made him sad that we hadn't talked in a long while and didn't have any contact. I told him that it didn't make me sad. I didn't miss him. The reason I didn't miss him was that I never really felt like I had a father. I knew he was there, I knew he was my father, but I grew up without the feeling of having a father around. My mother played the role of mother and father, and she was what I knew and what I was used to. He was just never there. I really didn't miss him in my life because he was never there. Knowing what kind of father he was makes me know what kind of father I don't want to be. My own first marriage didn't last that long -- only long enough to have two kids -- and honestly, we only got married because my wife was pregnant. But I never felt like I didn't want to be a dad. I always wanted to be there for my children. I loved them. And still do. It's a hard thing to put into words. It's something you really just have to feel. And I feel it very strongly. WASHINGTON, D.C. D.C. was -- still is -- pretty rough. I don't know how much you know about D.C., but basically it's subdivided into four quadrants -- northeast, southeast, southwest, northwest. There are a lot of nice neighborhoods in D.C., and some of the city is being gentrified, but at the time we lived there it was a pretty violent ghetto. We lived ... --This text refers to an alternate Hardcover edition.

I'll start with what I think is the moral of this story that is ongoing because the subject is thankfully still alive; Follow your dreams and don't let anyone tell you that you can't succeed at it. I don't pretend to know Dave Bautista but I feel like what I read was in his words and not someone else telling his story. I didn't mind that the telling went back and forth from the past to the present. He talked about growing up poor, and the decisions that shaped his life both good and bad. He's had some tragedies in his life and seems to have learned from them and I hope that young people who pick up the book learn those lessons without going through some of the things he had to. There is

some swearing so parents be aware this isn't really suitable for young teens. I watched wrestling as a kid and just started getting back into it in the past few months so I actually learned some things about the business that I would have never known. I watch the matches now with a different mindset while still realizing it is sports 'entertainment'. In light of Mr. Bautista leaving the WWE this year I wonder what could now be added to this story. The last three years since this book ended must certainly be equally entertaining. All in all I thought it was a good read and I wish him luck in his future endeavors. If nothing else he seems to be a fighter and if Dave Bautista can channel that determination he can do just about anything in his personal and professional life.

I have felt that I walked through Batistas journey while reading this book. I really enjoyed his stories about his early years as a bouncer, later wrestle in OVW and finally WWE. Batistas relationship with Afa was a shock to me because I didn't know The Rocks relatives had a role in shaping Batista. What touched me the most was his relationship with the late EDDIE GUERRERO because he understood Batista and Batista was comfortable with him. Batistas ride to the World championship at Wrestlemania 21 against Triple H and later 23 with the undertaker were his glory days that I enjoyed. Check this book out if you want to walk with "THE ANIMAL".

Have read many wrestling Bios and went into this one thinking it would be similar to Stone Cold and The Rock's books. Readable but not memorable. Wow I was wrong. This is a brutally raw and riveting book. This what those of us who love to read behind the scenes books on wrestlers more than actually watch wrestling hope for. Very highly recommended even to no. Wrestling fans.

This book is tremendous!!! It gives you an inside look into the person we all know and Love as "The Animal... Batista" Its funny in spots and serious in others....But overall the book is very well written and very insightful... Great Reading!!!! You will Definitely ENJOY!!!!

I read the whole book in about three hours some parts were really boring and dragged in my opinion. I enjoyed reading the stories on the road and how he grew up but the rest was kinda a drag ok book but there are better books out there .

I enjoyed reading about his life. He says he doesn't understand the interest but I just found it interesting! He speaks about his childhood (murder in his front yard before age 9) and about working with wrestlers past & present. For a quiet guy, he has a lot to say and I, for one, am glad!

I really enjoy reading about Batista

I've never read any of the other books from any of the other wrestlers before, but I'm very glad I decided to get this one. I never knew all the difficulties and hard work it takes to be a wrestler, plus reading about Batistas personal struggles made it even better of a book to read. You really get the experience of this mans life and becoming the Animal. If your a fan of Batista or even just a fan of professional wrestling, this is one book to get.

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