



The Hardcore Diaries

By Mick Foley

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The *New York Times* bestselling author Mick Foley returns to his fans favorite subject: Mick Foley and wrestling!

What was I thinking? Another autobiography? A third? Who did I think I was, Winston Churchill? Why would I want to set my pen loose on hundreds of sheets of notebook paper unless I really felt I had something worth writing about?

Besides, I had a wrestling comeback to prepare for, mentally and physically, provided I could get Vince McMahon and the WWE creative staff to embrace what I was sure was the single greatest storyline of my career.

Then it hit me: the storyline. I would give WWE fans unprecedented access to World Wrestling Entertainment, covering everything from conception to completion. I would recount how I felt about specific interviews and matches, whether they helped or hurt. I would expose the backstage politics, shed some light on my rocky relationship with Vince McMahon, offer insights into my personal dealings with WWE Superstars, and tell stories about my favorite Divas.

But I wasn't interested in writing *just* a wrestling book. I wanted to share moments from my personal life as well, from a humorous look at my unlikely dinner with polarizing neocon Paul Wolfowitz, to my haunting meeting with a severely burned boy in Afghanistan, to my peculiar obsession with a certain jolly old elf.

I knew I could make the fans care about this storyline, provided I could once again find the passion to make the story come to life in arenas around the country and on television sets around the world.

Most importantly, I had to ask myself a vital question, one upon which this whole idea, and therefore the book you hold, hinges: Was I willing to become the first voluntary member of the Vince McMahon "Kiss My Ass Club"? I sat on the idea for a few days, to let the idea ripen and mature in my mind, like a fine vintage wine, and to figure out if I was really willing to kiss his ass. I mean, *literally* kiss a man's ass. Sure, I'd been kissing the same guy's ass figuratively for a decade. But this was different. Did I really have the testicular fortitude required for such a task? In front of millions? Including my wife and kids?

I made the call.

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Editorial Review

About the Author

Mick Foley grew up on Long Island, New York. He is the author of the number one *New York Times* bestsellers: *Foley Is Good: And the Real World Is Faker Than Wrestling* and *Have a Nice Day!: A Tale of Blood and Sweatsocks*. He is also the author of two other children's books, *Halloween Hijinx* and *Christmas Chaos*. Foley wrestled professionally for over fifteen years and was the three-time World Wrestling Entertainment Champion. Foley lives with his wife and four children on Long Island.

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April 24, 2006

Dear Hardcore Diary,

Sometimes it's all in the pitch. When it comes to presenting creative wrestling ideas, I have come to learn that the presentation of the idea is often more important than the idea itself. I have heard terrible ideas pitched magnificently, and magnificent ideas pitched terribly, so believe me when I tell you that it's all in the pitch.

A little less than four weeks ago, I participated in our biggest showcase of the year, WrestleMania. Many people thought I had been in the best match on a very good show. Sometimes it's hard for WrestleMania to live up to the hype, but in this case, I think fans went away from the arena or their television sets pleasantly surprised and extremely satisfied.

Our match was one of the intangibles of the night. I felt like a major question mark was hanging over me, as if many fans, wrestlers, and WWE office personnel wondered whether I still had what it took to deliver the goods on such a major show. Hell, I wondered myself. My knees are shot, my back is bad, my neck hurts pretty much all the time, and I've had a history of head injuries. To make things worse, I'm three bills and change, about 315 before a big meal, and on certain days, every step taken seems like a major challenge. Still, somehow, with the considerable help of a great opponent, Edge, I was able to pull it off.

But not once during the buildup to WrestleMania did I ever truly feel the story. I may have done a good job pretending, but deep down, I knew something was missing.

Passion. That's what I lacked. For some reason, I just couldn't tap into that reservoir of passion that had been one of my calling cards for so many years. A passion that allowed a not-so-good-looking guy, with a not-so-good-looking body (a bit of an understatement there), with a limited supply of athleticism, to excel in a world where good looks, athleticism, and aesthetically pleasing bodies are the rule. Or maybe there was simply nothing left to tap into. Maybe the reservoir was dry.

I currently have the dubious distinction of having the easiest contract in the WWE. I owe WWE two Pay-Per-View wrestling matches a year, and a nonwrestling appearance at one more Pay-Per-View. In addition, I am required to show up at whatever number of television tapings it takes to properly promote these appearances. So, I'm basically looking at an approximate workload of fifteen days a year. Nice, right? While I don't feel any outward resentment from the other wrestlers, I can't help but feel that I would be resenting a guy like me if I were in their shoes.

I mean these guys are on the road up to 300 days a year (some will dispute that figure, but including travel and promotional days, it gets pretty close), and most are in some degree of pain around the clock. Some

awfully big guys travel an awfully long time in some awfully small coach-class airplane seats, and then do their best to put on an exciting show in a year-round business that spans a good portion of the globe. Then those sore, exhausted wrestlers are asked to step aside so an out-of-shape ghost of wrestling's past can step in and take their spot on a major Pay-Per-View.

Most of the guys on the roster genuinely like me. Some even hold me in high esteem because of what I've accomplished in the past and how much I was willing to sacrifice in order to accomplish it. But for those who may resent me, I don't blame them, especially because I haven't had the decency to show up for my ridiculously light workload with a thimbleful of the passion that's so necessary for success in today's wrestling game.

Where had it all gone? After all, it was only two years since my Backlash match with Randy Orton, a match that ended the eight-year reign of "Mind Games" with Shawn Michaels, as my personal career favorite. I'd been overflowing with passion for that match. I had thought about it nonstop, to the point of sleeplessness, to the point of obsession, to the point where every waking moment seemed filled with wild visions of thought-provoking, gutwrenching interviews, images of emotional and extremely physical, maybe even brutal, ring action.

My major challenge at Backlash 2004 was merely to take those images that were so vivid in my head and make them real in front of a microphone, and later in front of the live crowd in Edmonton and a Pay-Per-View audience around the world.

I met that challenge two years ago. I succeeded. In 2006, however, I just couldn't find the passion. I lucked out at 'Mania, but doubted I'd be so lucky when my number was called again, probably in September.

What had gone wrong in those two years? Maybe I'd just simply fallen out of love with wrestling. That happens in all facets of life, doesn't it? People simply fall out of love. But why, after all these years, had I stopped loving something that had been so good to me, something that had actually loved me back for such a long time?

Maybe it was the Ric Flair book, which had caused me to feel abandoned by WWE, due to their decision not to give me any advance warning of the literary pounding I would have to endure.

Or maybe I felt like I had taken the easy way out, by opting for the WWE contract, instead of taking a gamble with the upstart TNA promotion. My longtime buddy Raven (whose real name is Scott Levy; I actually had to ponder that for a while) had gotten in my ear and convinced me that if I were indeed to jump to TNA, it could literally make the difference between life and death for the promotion. I'll get further into my TNA temptation later in the book, as well as explain an instance where Raven inspired a major point in my novel Tietam Brown, but for now I'll just say that for a while, I did feel a certain amount of guilt concerning the decision I ultimately made.

That guilt is now gone. The passion that had been so sorely lacking has come rushing back. A giant lightbulb seemed to go off above my head, as one simple idea seemed to flush whatever creative and emotional block I had been suffering from right out of my system.

I know of several writers who create ideas simply by asking, "What if?" What if aliens came down from outer space? What if a shy, socially repressed girl had telekinetic powers? What if a bumbling fool who'd never accomplished anything became U.S. president? All very scary scenarios, right? The idea that rekindled the fire underneath my creative ass was just as frightening, perhaps more so. What if I became the first voluntary member of the Vince McMahon "Kiss My Ass Club"?

With that one simple, repugnant thought, my long estrangement ended. I went back to the one who loved me. As it turned out, she'd never really left; she'd been waiting all along. Once reunited, the pieces all seemed to fall together, like a giant mental puzzle that I was just dying to shake up and reconstruct, only this time not just in my mind, but in front of millions around the world.

I sat on the idea for a few days, partially to let it ripen and mature in my mind, like a fine vintage wine, and partially to figure out if I was really willing to kiss another man's ass. I mean, literally kiss another man's ass. Sure, I'd been kissing the same guy's ass figuratively for a decade. But this was different. Did I really have the testicular fortitude required for such a task? On international television? In front of millions? Including my wife and kids? I checked my testicles...just as I'd hoped -- full of fortitude.

I made the call.

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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