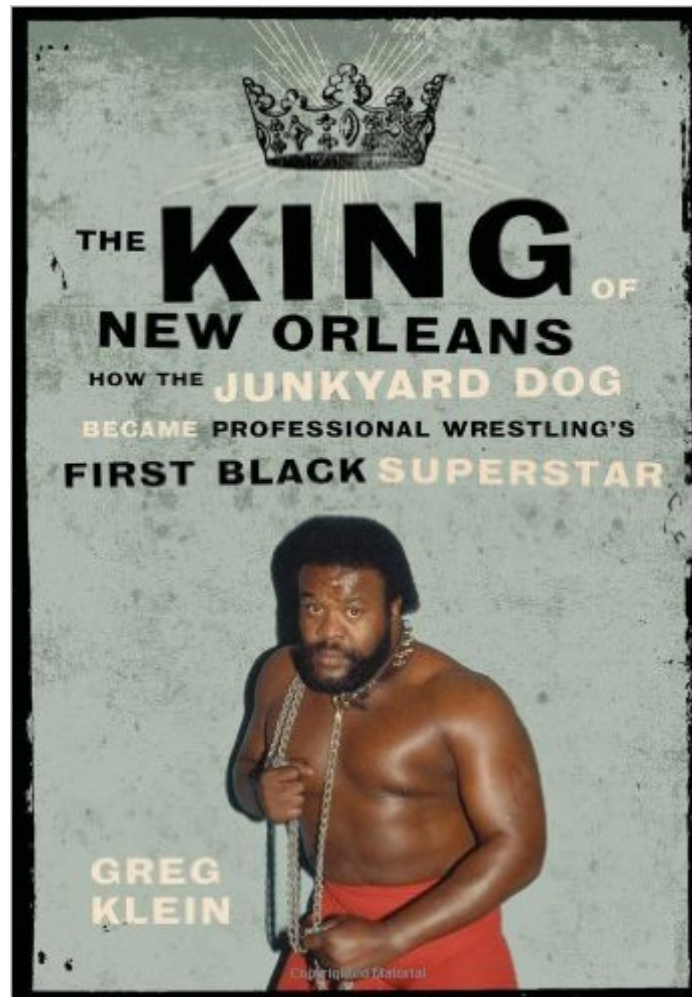


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The King Of New Orleans: How The Junkyard Dog Became Professional Wrestling's First Black Superhero



Synopsis

New Orleans was once one of the hottest cities for pro wrestling because of one man — Sylvester Ritter, better known as the Junkyard Dog. JYD became a legend in the Big Easy, drawing huge crowds to the Superdome, a feat no other wrestler ever came close to. In 1980, he managed to break one of the final colour barriers in the sport by becoming the first black wrestler to be made the undisputed top star of his promotion. This biography aims to restore JYD to his deserved place in the history books by looking at his famous feuds, the business backstories, and the life of the man outside the ring. The King of New Orleans recounts the story of how an area known for racial injustice became the home of wrestlingâ€™s most adored African-American idol. A remarkable tale of a man still remembered on the streets of New Orleans and in the hearts of pro wrestling fans.

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Customer Reviews

A unique journalistic perspective on the career of JYD, Mid South Wrestling and New Orleans in the early to mid 80's. My biggest quibble with the premise of the book is that JYD is a forgotten figure. If you ask any of my friends who watched mid-late 80's WWF Wrestling, they are likely to name JYD as one of the wrestlers they most remember. The book was a bit short for a work of its nature as I felt it could have been double the size. I recommend the book as I felt it is better than 70% of the wrestling books out there (and I've read most of them).

What can I say, a great read, especially if you are a fan of Mid-South/UWF wrestling back in the

day. Ask any Mid-South fan and they will loudly proclaim that Mid South Wrestling was the best wrestling program on the tube and that Junk Yard Dog ruled Louisiana in his day. Strange as it may seem, he did more to improve race relations in this state than any other person of whom I can think. Even my father, a product of his times and an avowed racist was a big fan of JYD. The Dog stood for everything that was good about America, that courage, hard work, and fair play would overcome bigotry, cowardice, and evil in general. Though I never met the Dog in person several of my former students got to talk with him after matches where in light of his later problems in life, he always cautioned them against drug abuse. My mom even crafted a porcelain bulldog figurine we kept by the TV, christening it JYD. Wish things had worked out better for Sylvester Ritter, may he rest in peace, knowing that he was much loved by his fans and that he brought us all a little closer.

I must admit that being a biographer of a deceased person would not be an easy task, with each passing year the memories of that person would fade in the minds of the people who knew them. That being said, one still needs to do the legwork to find the people that knew the subject and interview them. In this book, the author presents a readable but very light biography of The Junkyard Dog, one of the most famous wrestlers of the 1980's. The book is a quick read and gives some interesting stories. The problem is that it seems that the author did very little background work at all, we start off with him asking people about their memories of the Dog but after a few pages this stops and what we get is the author regurgitating the history of the JYD based on anecdotes and possible internet searching. I got the feeling that the author did very little research into the JYD other than reading Dave Meltzer's Wrestling Observer and watching shoot interviews where the Dog is mentioned. All in all, a nice read but one that could be bettered.

I applaud the author on his efforts because I thought a book on JYD was long overdue. Thus, I rated it a two for that reason only. However, I was really disappointed when I read the book. For example, I still don't have any idea about who Sylvester Ritter was as a person. It makes scant references about his personal life and provides little to no insight into his family. It mentions his daughter but doesn't go into ANY depth about his relationship with her, her mother, (who apparently was his second wife), his first wife, or the other children that he supposedly fathered. Furthermore, it provides little insight on his drug problem or his apparent use of steroids. In summary, I would NOT recommend this book to anyone.

I was a big fan of Midsouth Wrestling and was hoping to learn more about JYD and was

disappointed. The history of the various wrestling territories was nothing new and did not break any new ground for me. I was hoping for an indepth look at JYD and more about his personal life and some stories of the road.TV

Because it sure doesn't seem to be about the Junkyard Dog, Sylvester Ritter. For a self-proclaimed fan, Mr. Klein seems to lose track of the focus of this book, at times focusing too much on Cowboy Bill Watts, or on Mid-South Wrestling, or even the wrestlers who feuded with JYD. I wanted to know more about JYD, but learned more about many others instead. While it's well written, it's still a disappointment.

This was a pretty well written book, but when it says that its about The Dog's tome in Mid-South, they aren't kidding. There's no mention of his defection to the (then) WWF, time in WCW, or the end in the Indies. I wish he would would've delved more into what brought the Dog "Up North" and what he faced there. Gotta admit, I'd buy it again.

Not much here. The author seems to have interviewed almost noone that actually knew Junkyard Dog. He takes a lot of information straight from Bill Watts' own book.. This book does little more that repeat what you can find online and creates a timeline for JYD's career, with little meat. The author seems overly concerned about race. Wrestling fans are interested in their heroes, regardless of race, but the author is motivated by it. He almost seems to have a touch of white guilt--"..it pains me to admit, I was not a black fan overjoyed at the prospect of seeing a wrestler of my skin color portrayed..." His angle is furthered by the statement "The White League marker has since been moved, but it has often been a cause of racial provocations. Someday in the near future, you can imagine a Tea Party rally for its restoration." pgs. 60-61.The wrestling arena is a place people went to come together, regardless of political persuasion. The author can't get past the politics and tell us about the MAN. Skip this one unless you just have a wrestling library that needs filled. No real background information here at all. Other than a few wrestling fans who happen to remember JYD in NOLA, there isn't any real in-person investigation done. I am sure that countless wrestlers are alive today and willing to talk about JYD. Here, we have none, other than a few references to other books.I'm sure that if you like Mid-South, you can find what you really want in Bill Watts' book. Perhaps Michael Hayes will write something about that era in a no-holds barred fashion once he is done with WWE.

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