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whacked Out wrestling: Memorial

A tale of Headlocks, Hurricanranas, and High School

by Thomas Greene

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Contact the author at:

SorceressKnightReflecto@gmail.com

Chapter One:

"In Loving Memory of Trahn 'Jimmy' Ng."

September 4, 1997: Providence, Rhode Island.

WHENEVER I THINK about it, it always seems that my life has always tended to take a turn for the worse when the decades change. I mean at this point, I haven't experienced that many decade changes, what with only being around for fourteen years at this point, but I think it does work. I mean, assuming the theory of reincarnation is correct, then my previous life would have probably ended somewhere around the years of 1980 and 1982, and I kind of assume that dying is something I wouldn't want to experience. Maybe I managed to get a firm hold of the '80s by experiencing the decade as a young kid, but that's something that could be expected- I mean, rampant amounts of parents spoiling their kids, great kids' TV shows, video games becoming de rigueur for households...who could ask for anything more? I was lucky enough to get proper amounts of the necessary spoilage, and luckier that I was able to experience most of the benefits of the '80s popularity as a kid- specifically, that of the first major boom of professional wrestling as mainstream entertainment. All the great names of the '80s rise of Panda Wrestling Federation that you remember growing up with and/or watching over in Great American Wrestling these days- people like Superman Samson, "Wildman" Willie Wallace, The Amazing Big Boi, Ricky Fighter, and all the rest? My father...well, he wasn't one of those greats, but he did lose to every one of them on national TV. Yes, that's right- my father was Johnny Goddard- one of the few, the proud, the career jobbers- one of those guys who spent their career dedicated to the important goal of making the people everyone comes to see look good. The pay was surprisingly decent, he managed to see a lot of the country, his notoriety as a nationally televised worker (even if that was in losing to everyone with a pulse) allowed him to get good money from smaller promotions, and most importantly for any young kid- even if your father's losing on TV, having a father who was a pro wrestler pretty much meant you automatically won every single "My

dad can beat up your dad" argument on the playground- both a plus because it meant I could lead any wannabe elementary school gangsta crying home to mommy and a minus because of all the people who thought that my father's being a wrestler would likely mean that I was also able to fight (usually proving that, following my dad's example, I too ended up kissing my fair share of soil and/or blacktop on the playgrounds.) However, eventually the beatings began to toughen me up, and by the end of first grade, I was actually able to hold my own with most of the people in my grade in a fight- which wouldn't have been a problem, if I wasn't getting beaten up by fourth and fifth graders on a regular basis. Despite the beatings, I still hadn't really felt bad about my situation in those years. In fact, I might even go past what most of my teachers and therapists would have claimed about me and say that I had a good childhood. However, then the decade changed again, and this childhood pretty much ended with it.

You see, during a match in July of 1990, my father suffered a heart attack in the ring and died. It was a fairly big shock in the state of Rhode Island, but it didn't serve to wake anyone up for this. My father was never a major superstar to really shock people nationwide, and it was a much earlier time period so that it was seen as more of a "minor inconvenience" for the business instead of that one major death that'd get people to change the way they did business. As a result, the only times people even seemed to mention my father were in minor forms afterwards- a quick exhibit for evidence when people got irate at hearing that people actually used steroids in pro wrestling, the one time this one writer decided to try to do a long-form obituary on him, and other minor things like this. My mother really lost most of her mind on this, and began to turn all her grief outwards. She ended up blaming pro wrestling for his death; I knew in my heart that it was not to blame for this. Following her blaming the sport, it led to more problems for me- in addition to just losing my father, my mother got more angry at the other parts of this- specifically, the fact that my older sister Sharon had already been following in my dad's footsteps since 1985, and my brother Shane had already started training at Robbie's wrestling school with plans to do the same. My mother threw a hissy fit over this, eventually telling both of them to choose between the

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business and her. They chose the business, and my mother immediately broke off all contact with both. As almost one last little "fuck you" to my life, she decided to put the entire state behind her and took the first transfer she could get at her job, sending us to Johnstown, Pennsylvania that summer. At seven years old, I had to take stock in my life going into the last decade of the 20th century: my father had just died, I could only hope to see my brother and sister on television, and I was being moved away from all of my friends. Upon reflection, I could safely say that this was one of those rare situations that managed to both suck and blow.

Due to these things, the last seven years of my life have pretty much been one of those awful blurs that you really hate to relive. My mother was a major portion of this- after my father died, she still hasn't remarried- I don't even think she's had one date since the time he died, and I rarely hear her telling me that she's gone out with any friends (or even if she still has any friends left.) All I knew was, my mother spent most of the time since her death focusing on work. It has always seemed to me like my mother gets off more on professionally castrating her male co-workers than she does anything else in her life. Since that move, there were a number of different places my mother carted us off to in an attempt to try and make her money, power, and respect grow- Cincinnati, Sacramento, Charlotte- all places that ended up as stops on my history. It didn't seem too bad, but eventually, it's gotten to be pretty hard for me. Every time we moved somewhere new, I could never manage to truly make any friends, just knowing that eventually, that other shoe would drop and my mother would say she got a transfer. It got harder considering the fact that in addition to being alone from all my friends, the fact that I was kept from most of my family made it harder- with two siblings I couldn't see and a mother who spent most of her time at work, I had a nearly non-existent level of role models in my life all this time. As it stands, Homer Simpson and Al Bundy were the closest things I've had to a father figure, which is kind of bogus when you think about it. The only thing that kept me some measure of a sense of self throughout this period were my grades- since I had so little time with other people, it was easy to pour myself into my studies. However, even that seemed to be a problem for this, as evidenced by the fact that roughly every two months, I had taken to deliberately

throwing one of my tests solely so my mother would get angry with me (learning early on in this that my mother would pay more attention to me if I got an F than if I got an A.) It was through this blur that sometime back in July, I got the words from my mother that I never expected I'd hear again...

"Harold, I wanted to give you the information- I was given another promotion again..." By this time, I didn't even think of asking for more problems- I just resigned myself to the next move.

"I see, Mom...where are we moving this time?"

"Well...this might cheer you up...I was moved back to the New England offices- we're moving back to Providence..." I still felt a little giddy at that news. I mean, I knew it wouldn't be a problem, but I was still hoping I could see the people I had known beforehand again and have some hope of reconnecting before I left again. I was happier than I usually was for the move, counting down the weeks until my mother had to finish the transfer. Finally, about a week ago, the last boxes were packed up as we headed off for our new old life. As we headed into my mother's car, she turned to me once more.

"Now, Harold, I had to tell you one last thing before we go up there. Now, we're moving back home, but I want to warn you one last time. I don't want you having anything to do with...your father's son, your father's daughter, your father's old friends, or any of those things. The only thing I want you to keep of your father's is that name- by now, I don't doubt they've forgotten about him just enough so you'll be able to live the normal life you were destined for. Do you hear me?" Great. I finally get to go home again, and my mother still wouldn't allow me to even see any of the people who made me consider Providence my true "home" in the first place.

"Yes, mother- I hear you..."

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"Good. Now, take a look at this- it got sent in the mail a couple days ago, and I knew you'd need something to read on the ride up..." Mom passed me a small booklet. On the front of it was the name "Sachs Preparatory High School- Student Handbook". I sort of recognized the name- Sachs had a good reputation of being one of the better schools in Rhode Island (or at least one of the most expensive private schools in the state.) Due to those things, I still wasn't sure whether I was going here because my mother wanted me to get the best education money could buy, whether she wanted me to go there because she thought she'd get more credibility at work by saying her son went to Sachs High, or a little of both. (I always tried to give my mom the benefit of the doubt and say that it was the first option, but the more I know about her, the more likely I'd say it was probably option three.) I proceeded to read the handbook, then eventually fell asleep, not to be awoken until my mother decided it was time to stop at a hotel (which would roughly be the traveler's equivalent of the hospital patient woken up in order to be administered a sleeping pill.)

The next day was relatively easy- the drive was enough so that we were finally able to get to our new house- something that seemed to go with my mother's intense problem of whether to spend money or whether to look like she spent money, leading her to get us the nicest house in one of the crappiest suburbs that she could find. The house looked a little like the house that we had before we left (back when my father was making us the money), but it still didn't feel the same- where I once remembered a mixture of nice-enough people (outside the ones who wanted to beat me up), the new area was filled with suburban lower-middle-class kids who wished they lived in the ghetto, with a nice mixture of rednecks who claimed to be in a gang and numerous girls who, while they looked like I could probably stand a chance at nailing them, also had that look in which I would have to put a 2 by 4 around my waist to keep from falling in if I did so. I tried to get things set up, but my mother came up to me before I could do so carrying a ticket of some kind and called to me...

"Now, Harold, I know you haven't had a chance to do much in the last couple weeks except prepare for the move, so I tried to have them call

ahead and get you a ticket to go over to the public pool. Just relax a little bit today, all right?"

My mother handed me the pool ticket as I proceeded to open up the bag I kept my clothing in and got one of the pairs of shorts that could likely double as a bathing suit a little pleased. This is the main reason I've never been truly able to hate my mother for how she's acted- just as she does things that are really bad to me, she does some relatively nice things to almost counteract it. I remembered the pool was over on Mello Avenue, and from where the new house was over on Wilson Street, I knew it was within walking distance- if I was correct, just 6 streets over and you'd be there. I managed to make it over to the pool. I showered off and headed into the poolside area towards the deep end. I looked to see if the diving board was in use...and that's when I saw her for the first time. She was a vision of loveliness in a relatively conservative black swimsuit and a white swim cap. Her face was immediately stunning, enhanced by a body that'd make a priest kick out a stained-glass window. I stood entranced waiting for her to go off the diving board, only to see her pull off a perfect back flip into the pool. I headed up the diving board, seeing her imperfect backstroke show that she was still looking towards the board. Struck by her unintentional gaze, I stood firm...and proceeded to do a face-first Nester Plunge into the pool. I heard her chuckle as I righted myself up. Trying to make it look like this didn't matter; I swam a couple laps before slinking back to the shower area. I could see her still up at the diving board, and as I headed past it, I heard the semi-amplified footsteps of her going off the board as she headed over to me and let loose a sweet shout...

"Wait a minute...Harry? Is that really you?"

Chapter Two:

“Oedipus Used to Blaze with the Makers of Aqua-Fresh Toothpaste.”

AS I HEARD the voice, I was shocked. I had just moved here today, and already this girl had apparently known my name. I had to go through all of the possible worries- did I put on my makeshift bathing suit inside out, allowing one of my mother's stress-induced name tags to be visible for everyone who went to this swimming pool to see? Was she talking to some other guy...I mean, it is a fairly common name. Sometimes, it's seemed to me like every Tom, Dick, and Harry was named Harry in these places. I was still puzzled as to what that meant as she headed over, finally being face-to-face with me.

"Um, yes it is..." I stammered out as she got a bigger smile on her face.

"I knew it! I...I don't suppose you remember me, do you?" I took a closer look at the girl. At that moment, I had to say that if I didn't remember who she was, it'd probably be better off if I at least pretended to know in the hopes it would get me closer to her.

"Well...of course I remember you...but I have had a bit of car lag...perhaps some water in the ears wreaking havoc on my mind's working...could I get your name again?" Oh dear "Bob", that was one of the biggest choke jobs in the history of ever.

"Aww...I knew you wouldn't remember me. I guess I wasn't that memorable after all...honestly...after seven years, I'd assume that you would remember me. I'll go leave you be..." I saw her head over towards the women's locker room as she took off her swim cap, revealing her jet black hair. I thought through my time at home beforehand, finally able to match a child's face to the girl's...

"Jocelyn...? Wait, don't go!" Just then, I saw her turn back to me...

"So- you remembered who I was? I KNEW you wouldn't have forgotten your best friend from elementary school, Harry!" My hunch was right. I almost felt like a huge idiot not remembering who she was immediately. When we were in first grade, she was easily the prettiest girl in our class. All the boys wanted her to be the one watching and cheering for them as they beat their friends up under the guise of playing Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, while the more adventurous ones tried to make her another notch in their patients' records in their parents' garages. However, I had known I had the inside track that led her to spend most of her time at school with me- specifically, the fact that Jocelyn's father was "Rock'N'Roll" Robbie Richter, a legend in the Rhode Island area (partly due to his skills in the ring, partly due to his popularity with the fans around the state, but mostly because he was the head booker in whacked Out wrestling and as such was one of the most powerful men in Rhode Island's wrestling scene.) Because of this, her father served as my father's regular boss when he wrestled locally, was the agent who got my father the best possible deals to wrestle regionally, and due to my father's national notoriety from his jobber appearances, booked himself as my dad's regular tag team partner (allowing him to leech off my dad's almost-fame and get himself regular opportunities to job for national federations in one fell swoop.) Because of all the time my dad spent with Robbie, he would often take me with him when he headed to Robbie's house- allowing me and Jocelyn to become fast friends. I always thought the fact that she was ripped from my life when my mother moved us to Pennsylvania that year was the biggest reason I had grown to hate the frequent moves. I headed over towards her and spoke again...

"Um...of course I wouldn't have forgotten you...um...I was just pretending?"

"Yeah. Sure. Uh huh. I believe you...really..." She smirked at me as I looked over at her.

"...What's that supposed to mean?"

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"Well, come on...I mean, I could have bought it if you really didn't remember me, Harry...I mean, it's been seven years and...well...you can see how I've changed...I mean, I've become so..." She didn't need to tell me that twice. I knew she was probably angling for me to pay her a compliment there- somehow, a line like that was begging for one. However, my head took me back to some junk e-mail I got which said if you wanted to make a girl like you, you had to be cocky and funny with them. As this came to mind, I knew the only option I could do for this...

"...pudgy?"

Instantly, I saw her hand drop back as she proceeded to slap me with such authority that I could have sworn that the slap replayed a couple more times afterwards in slow motion (both of the replays hurting just as bad.) When my head got past those seeming replays, I could see her storming off towards the ladies' locker room shouting "Harry, you jerk!" as I mentally told myself to never trust spam ever again. Considering how it's kind of a bad move to stay somewhere after you've had a cute girl leave in a huff, I headed to the men's locker room, showered off, got dressed, and headed back home. When I got there, my mother was waiting for me...

"Harold- you're back so soon...what happened to your face?" My mother got her compact, opened the mirror, and passed it to me as I saw the handprint still on my face...

"Um...I was swimming so hard I ended up hitting the wall of the pool?" I said sweetly. I knew my mother would worry, but I think it's easier than saying "I reconnected with an old friend who was the daughter of one of Dad's wrestling buddies..."

"Well, if that's all that happened- that's fine. I made up a bed for you. Get some rest..." I headed to my room. I saw that my mother did manage to pull out my pillow and comforter and managed to make my bed up. I managed to pop into bed and fall asleep...

That night, I felt myself enter a dream. In the dream, I was inside a high school gymnasium. I saw the logo for whacked Out wrestling on the ring aprons, while also seeing my father and Jocelyn as she looked when she was 6 at the announcers' table. Seeing my father alive again made me want to head over to him. I headed towards the announcers' table and tried to talk to my father, only to hear him whisper "Now is not the time, son...now you have to fulfill the family destiny..." I took the view and headed into the ring to wait for my opponent. Just then, I saw the Grim Reaper head into the ring. I began to run to the outside to my father, only to see him begin to disappear, not before saying the words "This is our family's destiny, Harry...make me proud..." I headed into the ring, and began to fight with the Grim Reaper. Just then, I saw him perform a strange attack on me, sending me down. I felt myself get up from this...only to see that my soul had left my body. The fans began to boo as my soul began to ascend to heaven. As I began to pass through the ceiling of the gymnasium, I woke up with a shudder. I tried to get back to sleep; finally managing to just before I was due at school for orientation.

The next morning, I awoke and waited for the bus in order to get to the orientation meeting. Somehow, I never thought I could tell much about the school from the buses that they used. When I saw the short bus pull up to my house, I should have gotten an idea of what I would be getting into. I heard my mother tell me that the only reason for this bus was because it was a small private school, which seemed to keep me somewhat sated from these things. I got on the bus and proceeded to take the drive from the school- a much easier thing due to the fact that I was pretty much the only person from this area going to Sachs Prep. This seemed like a good thing- any excuse to keep some much-needed free time to myself on the ride up (and get extra time to sleep and/or do homework with nobody to bother me) was a plus. When we got to school, I looked for the auditorium. I asked an older student where it was, only to have him laugh in my face and point me down to the all-purpose room in the basement. I headed down the flight of stairs, only to find when they meant an all-purpose room...they pretty much meant all-purpose. The room seemed to serve as the cafeteria, school store, library, computer lab, and audio/visual room in one fell swoop, with a large amount of old, seemingly unused

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books adorning the shelves that seemed to give the viewer the impression that you could just steal any of them and no one would ever be the wiser. I proceeded to look for a place to sit in the mob full of freshmen waiting for the place. I ended up finally finding a seat (or at least a fairly small place on the carpet to plop down) next to two people- one a fairly muscular (well, for a 14-year-old) guy on my left and a guy who, with leather pants, a shiny silver shirt covered by an opened Michael Jackson jacket, and a short cut with a leopard-style print for his haircut, looked like he'd be less out of place at a rock concert or the set of a third-rate porno than he would in a high school on my right. As I sat down, I saw a youngish, mousy looking woman sitting near the teachers stand up and start talking...

: "Ah, hello students, and welcome to your new home away from home for the next four years, the Sachs Preparatory High School. I am Ms. Camarillo, and I'm one of the English teachers here at this fine school. It's my first year here, too, so I hope that I'll learn from all of you the same way that you'll learn from me over the next four years...okay? Okay..." Just then, I felt the guy to my right nudge my shoulder and whisper...

"I'd like to teach HER a thing or two...if you know what I mean, and I think you do..." Just then, the guy on my left turned to the guy on my right...

"Steve, come on...we should be listening right now..." The guy on my left looked a little nervous as Steve continued...

"Ah, come on, Jared...this guy seems to be fine with it, aren't you?" Steve punched my arm a little as I, not knowing how to respond that I wanted to listen, just nodded in approval in the hopes he'd finish. I heard Ms. Camarillo continue...

"Now, here at Sachs Prep, we have a firm belief that students learn at their best when they're given the freedoms of the adults they are. To this end, we feel you should have more responsibilities than most schools will give you. In our view, if you want to go out and slack off on the streets of Providence instead of going to class, feel free to do so...you'll just be

responsible for what you miss in class that day all the same..." Instantly, I saw almost one of those cartoon smoke clouds pick up all around the room as a number of people left the room.

"Yeah, I doubt they'll be coming back here...but whatever, it's their prerogative, right?" Just then, I felt Steve nudge me again...

"I'd be coming on her back...oh yeah, you know what I mean..." Just then, I felt Jared pull me over towards him...

"Steve, will you stop? We're trying to concentrate here. Not everyone's interested in slacking off all four years like you are..."

"Aww, Jared...you're like ants at a picnic, man. Relax- we're in High School now. I'm telling you, man...me, you...um, this kid here...we're going to be the biggest things at Sachs for the next four years!" Just then, Jared then proceeded to turn to me...

"Sorry about my friend. I knew this guy since elementary school, and he's usually like this. Ever since we found out we were both coming here, he's been convinced that we're going to be the biggest things here at Sachs Prep..." I turned and whispered to Jared afterwards...

"Well, he certainly does seem like a big Sach right now- he's already part of the way there..." Jared turned to me and had a weird look of disdain on his face...

"...somehow, I think you and Steve are going to get along just swimmingly..." Jared and I turned to hear Ms. Camarillo continue once more.

"...our freedoms go beyond what most schools offer people- unlike most schools in the state, we're perfectly fine with our students smoking as long as it's kept to the designated areas outside...if you want to go have a cigarette, feel free..." Just then, I saw another seeming cartoon smoke

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cloud head up as the room was almost empty. I saw Ms. Camarillo look frustrated as she continued.

"Well, I assume this was an easy test to weed out the people who will just view this place as a diploma factory- you know, all of that rubber stamp, thank you very much, here's your one-way ticket to working over at the nearest burger joint that wouldn't frown upon people with dreadlocks working there...I mean, I love the freedoms we have, but the first lesson I can tell you kids is that you have to balance these things out. Like Spiderman said, with great power comes great responsibility...you all will do well to remember that in your time here..." Just then, Jared nudged me this time...

"Wow...an English teacher who is actually able to quote from Spiderman? Stop me from jumping on the nearest desk and screaming 'O CAPTAIN MY CAPTAIN!'..." I turned back to Ms. Camarillo and tried to listen...

"So, who'll be the first to introduce themselves to the rest of us? Come on, I can't be the only one talking here...okay...you, go ahead..." I saw her point at a blonde at the side of the room with a fairly nice body and a cute-enough face sitting in one of the seats by the computers. The girl stood up and tried to speak.

"Um, okay, Ms. Camarillo...geez, why'd you have to ask me to go first...um...my name is Jamie...Jamie Dorian. My interests are staying active, and to be honest, ma'am... I'm not really sure what to say here...I mean, I didn't really want to have to go first..." I saw her fall back into her seat and turn beet-red...

"Okay...now, how about we get these boys here..." I saw Ms. Camarillo turn to us, first pointing at Jared as he looked a little embarrassed..."

"Um...uh, my name's Jared Steele...I like reading comics...oh, I really like wrestling, and placed fairly well down in junior high..." I saw Ms. Camarillo roll her eyes at that remark before responding...

"Oh...great...another one of these muscled-up bohunks trying to come in here...you know, I had heard something about this school having a good wrestling team, but I still can't see it...why anyone would want to go in and watch sweaty men in tight clothes hold each other tightly unless it's in the proper context is beyond me..." I saw Ms. Camarillo blush a little bit as she tried to turn to me before Steve jumped up and shouted...

"ATTENTION, SACHS PREP, LOCK UP YOUR DAUGHTERS, YOUR SHEEP, AND YOUR WARM APPLE PIES BECAUSE STEVE EVANS IS IN THE MOTHERFUCKING HIZZ-OUSE! If you must ask for my occupation, I get paid to rock the nation, biyotch!" I saw Steve wake up the room and basically do stuff as the teacher got a little flustered as she turned to me...

"Geez...a wrestling nut, a shrinking violet, a freak...hopefully you're normal..."

"Um, well, my name is..." Just then, I heard a shout from behind me...

"...wait, HARRY?" I spun around to see the voice shouting (though part of my head already knew...)

"What the...JOCELYN? AAARGH!" I saw her look just as flustered as I was...

"NOOOO! Why'd you have to come here?" I saw Jared and Steve turn to me and try to high-five me...

"Wait a minute...you know that girl? SCORE!"

"Yeah, Harry- I have to also give you props on pulling that, man..."

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"It's not what you think! This...this...mean Meany...he..."

"Hey, I'm not the one who never wrote one letter to me when I was gone- Seven freaking years! I mean, GOD! What's the problem here?"

"The telephone goes both ways, you know..." I heard Ms. Camarillo start shouting to stop the argument...

"All right! All right! I give up! Go home, I'll see you when school starts! Aargh...why'd this have to happen my first day..."

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