



Chris & Nancy: The True Story of the Benoit Murder-Suicide & Pro Wrestling's Cocktail of Death

By Irvin Muchnick

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The Benoit murder-suicide in 2007 was one of the most shocking stories of the year, and a seminal event in the history of wrestling. It laid bare the devastating prevalence of steroids and its effects on users. In order to tackle the whole story, dig up the facts, and connect the dots, Irvin Muchnick gives the most sensational scandal in pro wrestling history the full true-crime treatment in *Chris and Nancy*. Muchnick – the author of *Wrestling Babylon* and a co-author of *Benoit: Wrestling with the Horror That Destroyed a Family and Crippled a Sport* – has parsed public records and interviewed dozens of witnesses, inside and outside wrestling, to put together the first thorough and authoritative events of the gruesome June 2007 weekend in Fayette County, Georgia, during which World Wrestling Entertainment superstar Chris Benoit murdered his wife Nancy and their seven-year-old son Daniel, before proceeding to kill himself. But this book goes beyond the crime itself to answer some of the most important questions behind it. The biography of Benoit, a wrestler's wrestler, makes it clear that his tragedy was a microcosm of the culture of drugs and death behind the scenes of one of North America's most popular brand of sports entertainment. The author probes the story of the massive supplies of steroids and human growth hormone found in his home – all prescribed by a “doctor to the stars” who got indicted by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, and all dismissed by a WWE “wellness policy” that promoted everything except its talent's wellness. The Benoit case led to unprecedented scrutiny of wrestling's overall health and safety standards, by Congressional investigators and others, and this book is the primary source of what they found and what they should continue to look for. The ebook edition includes a new introduction that looks at recent events in sports, and further contextualizes the story of Chris Benoit and the figures surrounding his career.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Irvin Muchnick is hell-bent on discovering the essence of the cover-ups. [H]e provides more details and more insights that ultimately increase frustrations, but at the same time, must be examined if you choose, like myself, to claim to be an informed fan of an industry that had its blissful ignorance torn to shreds."

—*Wrestling Observer*

"Incredible retelling of the tragic story . . . Highly recommended." —Georgia Wrestling Online

"The tragic events surrounding the Benoit murder-suicide calls out for greater scrutiny, and Muchnick painstakingly obliges." —Alternative Weekly Network

"A great read for anyone who cares about wrestling or is interested in true crime." —Bookgasm.com

"An extremely well written account . . . the best book published on the subject to date. Trust me when I say there is a lot to be learned in reading this book." —PW Mania

About the Author

Irvin Muchnick is the author of *Wrestling Babylon* and the coauthor of *Benoit*. His work has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Penthouse*, and the *Village Voice*. He is the nephew of legendary wrestling promoter Sam Muchnick. He lives in Berkeley, California.

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The horror of Chris Benoit's June 2007 murder-suicide rampage is as good a reminder as any that it is high time to demystify professional wrestling. For too long, this industry has been inoculated from scandal by a banal mystique, the widespread belief that it is an enterprise whose offbeat rhythms simply cannot be mastered, and one whose players' motives lie beyond ordinary human understanding. Baloney and double baloney. Beneath the carny lingo and Mafioso code of silence rests a conventional profit-driven sector of show business, studded not only with glory-seeking performers but also with television executives, writers, technicians, chic-seeking kitsch kings, two-faced politicians. This is nothing less than the Periodic Table of the Elements of mainstream American pop culture. "Sports entertainment" is sports and entertainment, only more so.

The industry's dominant company, World Wrestling Entertainment — controlling more than ninety-five percent of the North American market and a vast majority worldwide — has grown into a multinational with more than a billion dollars in capitalization. It features an accompanying dark side as broad as a half-moon, hidden in plain sight. The brainchild of Vincent Kennedy McMahon, trailer-park incorrigible turned Forbes 400 squatter, WWE flowered in Connecticut, the same greenhouse that produced Phineas Taylor Barnum.

The state's former governor, Lowell Weicker (once upon a time a hero of the Senate Watergate Committee), is a charter member of the WWE board of directors. In the 1990s, when McMahon was sinking under the first round of steroid and other scandals in what was then called the World Wrestling Federation, Weicker had helped rehabilitate his image with an appointment to a prominent position with the Connecticut branch of the Special Olympics.

In May 2007, a month before Benoit strangled his wife, Nancy, snapped their seven-year-old son Daniel's neck, and hanged himself, Vince McMahon delivered the commencement address at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, Connecticut. SHU is the New England region's second-largest Catholic university. Vince McMahon's wife, Linda, the chief executive officer of WWE, is on the SHU board of trustees. As the university explained it, "Using self-deprecating humor to explain his choice as recipient of a Doctor of Humane Letters Degree and commencement speaker, McMahon ... left most graduates and those in the audience with a sense of hope that anything is possible, even in the face of overwhelming obstacles." The mother of the student government president, in a sound bite no doubt crafted by the campus public relations department, called McMahon "a good choice for the school considering how he started his career and how he has parlayed it into this multimillion-dollar organization."

In sum, ladies and gentlemen, girls and boys, you can tell the players without a scorecard.

And enough with the Talmudic musings about how to categorize wrestling; they are irrelevant to whether the benefits of unregulated junk spectacle trump the public health cesspool that "sports entertainment" has turned into. In 1982 a Hollywood star, Vic Morrow, and two Vietnamese-American child actors were killed in a gruesome late-night helicopter mishap during the filming of an action sequence of *The Twilight Zone: The Movie*. Reforms of filmmaking standards and California child labor laws quickly followed. By contrast, Nancy and Chris Benoit were approximately the ninth and tenth of the approximately twenty-one wrestlers and in-ring personalities who died before their fiftieth birthdays in the year 2007 alone. Some scores or hundreds of others fill parallel lists over the past several decades — choose your time frame and methodology. Dave Meltzer, publisher of the authoritative *Wrestling Observer Newsletter*, said the list of eighty-nine deaths under the age of fifty, from 1985 to 2006, in my earlier book, *Wrestling Babylon*, was "incomplete, to be sure." Giving the numbers the best context I have seen, Meltzer drew up a list of sixty-two young deaths in "major league" wrestling organizations from 1996 to 2007.

The profile and tabloid details of the Benoit case shed a useful light on a generation-long legacy of shame; to dismiss this — and the probability that wrestling's drug-and-lifestyle deviancies, induced from the very top, are major factors in the equation — is to make scoundrels' arguments.

Yet here is what has changed as a result of Benoit: almost nothing. Dissecting how that came to be is the second mission of this book. The first mission is to compile a comprehensive and accurate history of what happened in Fayette County, Georgia.

Users Review

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This book untitled Chris & Nancy: The True Story of the Benoit Murder-Suicide & Pro Wrestling's Cocktail of Death to be one of several books in which best seller in this year, that's because when you read this reserve you can get a lot of benefit on it. You will easily to buy this specific book in the book retail store or

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