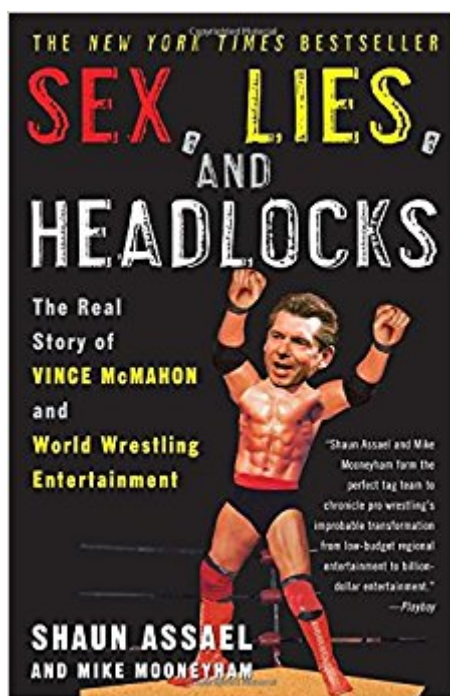


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# Sex, Lies, And Headlocks: The Real Story Of Vince McMahon And World Wrestling Entertainment



## Synopsis

“Current fans and recovering Hulkamaniacs alike should find [Sex, Lies, and Headlocks] as gripping as the Camel Clutch. Sex, Lies, and Headlocks is the ultimate behind-the-scenes look at the backstabbing, scandals, and high-stakes gambles that have made wrestling an enduring television phenomenon. The man behind it all is Vince McMahon, a ruthless and entertaining visionary whose professional antics make some of the flamboyant characters in the ring look tame by comparison. Throughout the book, the authors trace McMahon’s rise to power and examine the appeal of the industry’s biggest stars—including Ed Strangler Lewis, Gorgeous George, Bruno Sammartino, Ric Flair, and, most recently, Stone Cold Steve Austin and The Rock. In doing so, they show us that while WWE stock is traded to the public on Wall Street, wrestling remains a shadowy world guided by a century-old code that stresses secrecy and loyalty. With a new afterword, this is the definitive book about the history of pro wrestling. Reading this excellent behind-the-scenes look at wrestling promoter McMahon . . . is almost as entertaining and shocking as watching the most extreme antics of McMahon’s comic-book style creations such as Steve Austin and The Rock. Publishers Weekly “A quintessentially American success story of a cocky opportunist defying the odds and hitting it big . . . Sparkling cultural history from an author wise enough to let the facts and personalities speak for themselves. Kirkus Reviews

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## Customer Reviews

Reading this excellent behind-the-scenes look at wrestling promoter McMahon, the current ruler of the wild and ruthless world of professional wrestling, is almost as entertaining and shocking as watching the most extreme antics of McMahon's comic-book style creations such as Steve Austin and The Rock. Combining hard investigative journalism with a genuine love for wrestling's weirder tendencies, Assael (senior writer for ESPN and author of *Wide Open*) and Mooneyham (who writes the wrestling column in the *Charleston Post and Courier*) have penned one of the closest looks so far at this industry, which moved from the cheap and smoke-filled Midwestern halls of the 1930s to become one of the most successful television enterprises ever by the 1990s. The authors focus on McMahon, who rose from a difficult childhood to take command of the World Wrestling Federation and almost singlehandedly invent the current style of extreme wrestling. The authors also carefully detail how McMahon's take-no-prisoners business style led him into his own bouts with financial, legal, sexual and drug problems, until finally he had become totally seduced by the loud, angry circus he'd created. But beneath the many stories about crooked promoters, armed wives, drug-crazed and sexually profligate wrestlers, the authors also skillfully illuminate pro wrestling's influence on the media, detailing McMahon's feuds with rivals like Ted Turner and World Championship Wrestling's Eric Bischoff, as well as his byzantine dealings with notables from such companies as Viacom and NBC. This is an essential read for both fans and enemies of pro wrestling. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Professional wrestling has become a lightning rod for controversy. Critics decry the violence and the rampant disregard for political correctness, while those who savor the spectacle think those are its best qualities. At the eye of the storm is Vince McMahon, a third-generation wrestling promoter with a genius suited for the cable age. Assael and Mooneyham provide a brief history of the sport from its days as an early television phenomenon to its downslide into a regionally marketed sideshow in the seventies and eighties. The advent of cable created a need for cheap, quickly produced programming, and McMahon was there with wrestling, which he built into a show-biz spectacle. Imitators followed, and the stakes became higher as cable networks battled for viewers, steroids became de rigueur, and wrestlers died in stunts and from drug overdoses. There's no end in sight: the Rock, a premier wrestler, was a speaker at the Republican convention that nominated George Bush. Somewhere between expose and celebration, this account will be of most interest to fans who view the sport as a guilty pleasure. Wes Lukowsky Copyright © American Library Association.

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While I enjoy reading books describing the wrestling world both in the ring and behind-the-scenes (As this book does and I enjoyed reading about WCW's rise in the mid-90's and downfall in 2000-01) in my opinion, this book seems geared towards vilifying Vince McMahon and the present WWE. Other than that, it's a good read.

This book will make you love and respect the hustle of Vince McMahon and his drive to be the best. From a trailer park in the South to a billionaire businessman, Vince really did achieve the American Dream. At the same time, however, this book will make you hate McMahon. Some of the stories of his dealings (both private and public) were shocking. All in all, this is a great read and I highly recommend it.

At only 258 pages, this volume is a rather short edition chronicling not just McMahon's rise, but skimming lightly on WCW and ECW and the NWA. The beginning takes us into the highly factionalized, almost dirt-poor white-trashy beginnings where the NWA essentially owned the world with an oligarchic style ruling body, to lightly telling of Roderick "Jess" McMahon's promoting of boxing and his son Vincent James McMahon's early interest. It even goes into mild details about the wrestling business in the 50s, 60s, and early 70s, telling of the likes of Dusty Rhodes, Gorgeous George, and Lou Thesz, and including the tales of the days when there was no insider information in the wrestling world, and kayfabe was strongly enforced by promoters to keep people thinking it was all real. It gives us a short biography of Vince K. McMahon's childhood, growing up with his mother near a military base not knowing who his father was and growing up trying to fit in with the tough crowd. The business suddenly started changing around Vincent James, and with his son urging him on to sell the company to him, Capitol Wrestling Corporation, which broke off from the NWA and became the World Wide Wrestling Federation began to pick up the pace after acquiring top talent, especially after Vince Kennedy bought the company from his father, who quietly retired, and later died around 1983. The book is very bland on language, being clear and simple, and relying on the natural circus that is pro wrestling to entertain the reader. After reading the highly sensationalized, opinionated, and overall entertaining "The Death of WCW" by RD Reynolds and Bryan Alvarez, this was a sudden change, with the authors clearly showing no favor or hatred for anyone as they manage to cram mini-biographies from the likes of Jim Crockett, his son Jim Jr. and his apathy towards building his father's business, to Dusty Rhodes and his success as the

"American Dream", and Ted Turner's minor promoting of wrestling with Georgia Championship Wrestling, and McMahon's cutthroat approach to business, once telling AWA's Verne Gagne during a negotiation very simply and brutally, "I don't negotiate." Vince and his wife Linda, both taking very active roles in the WWF, from the horrors of trying to finance Wrestlemania, to recovering after the action flop starring Hulk Hogan, and the infamous steroid case of the early nineties, are portrayed almost amorally, with a true business sense to them and their actions, without explicit and graphic details of shadier practices bordering on the debauched. Sure, Vince took steroids to bulk up and look big, but once the proverbial crap hit the fan, he ditched it and never touched the stuff again. Rather than buy Jim Crockett's promotion, he waited until it went into the hole, so he could acquire it for next to nothing. From there, much of the focus is on steroids, and the scandals erupting over its use, including name-dropping on just who was on steroids, who was suspected, etcetera. From there, it jackknifes to detailing the situation in the WWF, WCW, and even mild glimpses into ECW, and how it influenced the WWF's Attitude Era. Keeping true to the focus of the book, matches and booking are given a spotlight, but the backstage workings, the politics and decisions of Vincent Kennedy McMahon are the true main event of this book. The events from this time period are delivered in great detail, even containing quotes from superstars and personnel, delivered in such a way that you imagine the events unfolding in your head, with the quoted superstar turning to talk directly to you, as if breaking the fourth wall in a re-enacted documentary. Sex: There's plenty, but not as much as you'd think. Aside from the typical groupie sex with the wrestlers, there are only two real sex scandals---one involving the infamous accusations of rape by a female referee, who (in)explicitly recounts in the book how McMahon ordered her to give him oral sex in a limo, and when she refused, forcibly raped her. The other involves Pat Patterson's aides soliciting sex and essentially creating a gay sex ring involving young men involved with the lesser jobs in the early days of the promotion, such as ring attendants, etc. In the late 80s, this was finally uncovered, and while Patterson escaped unscathed, his aides did not. Lies: Many things McMahon says and does in this book is or are lies. From guaranteeing a reality series with MTV in 2000 and then going and soliciting NBC about it, to the more deviant ones in the early years, lying to wrestlers, promoters, and businessmen for the benefit of his own company. Headlocks: I can only remember two, one of them being a headlock delivered by Ric Flair. In total, this is a very slim, quickly and easily readable book, packed with pounds of information delivered in an easy, documentary style with little dressing or relishes--as the stories told provide that themselves.

Aside from being amateurishly written, Sex, Lies & Headlocks is riddled with so many glaring factual

errors that it taints the credibility of the entire text. The sad thing is: with the wealth of video and print information available, most of these errors could've easily been avoided. (Much like the media reports around the Chris Benoit murders in 2007), this is what happens when "journalists" falsely believe they understand and can accurately report on the complex world of wrestling. Again, when a journalist makes so many factually incorrect statements, it taints their credibility and the credibility of their work. Mike Mooneyham is a respected wrestling journalist; his bio states he is "one of the nation's foremost authorities on professional wrestling." So, I ponder, how does an "authority" repeatedly make such elementary factual mistakes? As for Shaun Assael, I really enjoyed Steroid Nation, but Assael's knowledge of wrestling is pathetic at best, and years after the publication of Sex, Lies & Headlocks, Assael's comments on E:60 prefacing the Scott Hal segment proves he still doesn't have a clue about wrestling.

I just finished reading this book and it's been intriguing. Hardcore fans would know a lot of the stories in the book but it is still nice to read. However, as mentioned by most reviewers, there seems to be some misinformation and the ones that sticks for me is when it was mentioned that Steve Austin wrestled Vince McMahon at WrestleMania which was not the case. Still a good read.

I picked up this book based on early reviews, hoping for a clear unbiased review of WWF's (now WWE's) history over the past twenty years. Instead, the book really doesn't have much to say. Anyone who has been a fan for even a couple of years will have heard all of the stories told within, while anyone who is not a fan will have no clue as to who the people are or why they should care. Events are overlooked or only briefly touched upon, leaving readers with the need to fill in the blanks themselves; while research seems to be based 90% on what the writers found in old issues of Wrestling Observer and people who worked for the WCW or were fired from the WWF (no wonder McMahon doesn't come off well). It tries to cover too much in the short number of pages contained within. I had hope to read a book about McMahon's rise to power and his overtaking the other promotions to end up on top. Maybe a book like that will come out someday. Save your money unless you like to read brief recaps of the past few years in wrestling.

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