



TIME HEELS

**CHEATING, STEALING, SPANDEX
AND THE MOST VILLAINOUS MOMENTS
IN THE HISTORY OF PRO WRESTLING**

**JON CHATTMAN AND RICH TARANTINO
FOREWORD BY TOMMY DREAMER**

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1

Introduction – The Bad Guys Win

FEW of us wanted the witch to get the best of Snow White. We highly doubt anyone wanted the Sea Hag to snatch away Sweetpea. You probably didn't root for Clubber Lang to beat that 'fool' Rocky Balboa, nor do you have a poster of Manuel Noriega on your wall. Yes, for the most part, no one really likes to see the bad guy win.

Well that is unless it's in the world of professional wrestling where the villains arguably out-rank, outnumber, and out-perform the good guys. From the days of The Great Kabuki to the nights of the New World Order (nWo), wrestling baddies – or 'heels' in industry lingo but you know that already – have resonated with fans even more than the good guys. If you listen closely after reading that sentence, you'll hear John Cena getting booed somewhere.

Time Heels celebrates the notion that bad guys in wrestling do it better, and always have. For decades, or at least as long as Zach Gowen has been alive, wrestling has been called a soap opera for men and it's true...it's damn true.

Like the best soaps, some fans are torn between loving to hate the baddie (Alexis Carrington was one glorious bitch) and loving the good guys (Blake Carrington was lame). This constant see-saw of emotion is what has made this soap opera a hit with all the toothless wonders that watched wrestling in back alleys and in the territories to World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) viewers of today. We would give the slight edge toward the villains, because they are the reason everyone keeps watching.

To make a crappy analogy, let's look at things this way: the pro wrestling platform is like a hot girl who doesn't know she's hot dating a jock who is the biggest douche in the world. As the story always goes, all of this girl's friends tell her she is with the wrong guy, but she stays with him even though there is a guy who would do anything for her – equipped with nothing but a good personality and good intentions.

Just as women are gravitated to the 'wrong guys', men are drawn to bad boys as well. Heels provide audiences with a sense of danger, and an element of surprise. Heels usually have the better mic skills, finishers, and managers in the business. There is a reason for that: they draw. Good guys? Well, they die young – just ask Billy Joel.

If you look into wrestling history or ask anybody who was a fan before Vince McMahon's *Pac-Man*'d World Championship Wrestling (WCW), people's disdain for heels drove a company or a territory. Manny Fernandez and Nikita Koloff put asses in seats because people wondered what they would say next to rile up the crowd. One of the reasons Ric Flair has had such a long career is because fans always wanted to not just hear what he would say, but they would be curious as to what cheap shot he would take out next on his opponent.

In the late 1990s, when the aforementioned and groundbreaking stable the nWo was reigning supreme, during each 'Hey Yo' promo Scott Hall did, he would take 'a little survey' to see if the audience favoured the good guys – in this case WCW – or his band of misfits. While the outcome wasn't as contested as fatties choosing between Samoas or Tagalongs, it always seemed that no matter what city the artist formerly known as Razor Ramon name-dropped, audiences went wild for the 'bad guys'. Ironically, Hall would always say, 'survey says... one more for the good guys'. It was the bad guys, however, who were too good not to root for.

We can drive this sentiment home, but we would rather start the book, which is a quirky look at the world of heels over the past 30 years or so. We count down the top heel moments of all time, ask grapplers to weigh in on their favourite bad guys of all time, provide wacky top ten lists of our favourite villainous trials and

tribulations, and get a first-hand fan perspective of heel highlights that moved them.

Wrestling has its fair share of inspiring good guys, but the bad guys do it better – just ask those aforementioned sluts earlier who dated all those tools in high school. So let's get to it. Put on your tights, cue the entrance music, and get your ass into the ring. Hating wrestlers so passionately is what makes this great form of sports entertainment so damned likeable and addictive. They say time heals all wounds – well, we say heels have stood the test of time.

2

Top H.E.E.L.S

WRESTLING enthusiasts Jon Chattman and Rich Tarantino first began research for the H.E.E.L. Rating Scale as youths in the mid-1980s during separate trips to the Westchester County Center located in the suburbs of New York City.

As most pre-pubescent youngsters of this era were ogling at the sight of an animated Baroness in the G.I. Joe glory years, the brothers from different mothers were knee deep in LJN Superstars toys, foam fingers and *Piledriver* albums all while secretly in the early stages of creating this sophisticated formula for rating the most heinous acts in the history of professional wrestling.

What we aimed to do was not only rate the most celebrated moments of villainy in the squared circle but to take a closer examination at the impact these events had on the dastardly individuals that were

closely involved while also focusing on the reaction of the fans, the entertainment value, the rise and fall of careers and the historic ramifications they had or continue to have in the ring both inside and out.

The scale was perfected over a period of 25 years through advanced research, countless hours of wrestling videos (which included the *Rock 'n' Wrestling* cartoon sans Mr Beefcake) and culminating with several trips to the capitol of pro wrestling, Parts Unknown.

As we all know, the key to being an effective villain in the world of pro wrestling is the uncanny ability for wrestlers to get fans to hate their guts. Whether it is through a charismatic promo, potent mic skills or an obvious disregard for rules followed by a blatant shot at a hapless opponent's man parts, the bad guy is essentially the most vital aspect of any wrestling angle and perhaps the best workers in the business. For several decades the heel has taken short cuts, rule breaking and foreign object use to new heights and thus the battle in the squared circle between good and evil has flourished.

These infamous antagonists have continued to run roughshod throughout the business and we felt that these larger than life performers, albeit a few bad seeds, should be showcased and remembered for their treacherous wrongdoings and over the top performances.

We have broken the H.E.E.L. Rating Scale into four separate categories with each being just as crucial as the

next. Without any further ado here is the breakdown for each one:

Heat of the moment
Entertainment factor
Elevation of character
Longevity in the ring

We hope you enjoy this section just as much as we did researching it. It is not all here but there is a pretty good taste of flaming tables, higher power reveals, foreign objects, and Orndorff turns. Oh, and of course, the leg drop that broke our red and yellow hearts!

At-ten-hut!: The Sarge Joins Cobra... (Well sort of)

Heat of the moment:

Robert Remus has lived a truly great life in and out of the wrestling business. Best known by his guise as a United States Marine Corp. Drill Sergeant, Sgt. Slaughter has been ‘cobra clutching’ evil-doers for well over 30 years. With his popularity through the roof the American-made wrestler was even introduced into the G.I. Joe toy line as well as making appearances alongside Snake Eyes and Gung Ho in both the cartoon and comic book adaptation of the highly popular action figure franchise (take that Dwayne Johnson).

While some think his career in camouflage began in the ring, Remus was in fact a retired United

States Marine Sergeant turned pro wrestler. While he first started his rule-breaking ways against the Pat Pattersons and Bob Backlunds of the world, the future Hall of Famer soon turned face and began the defence of the American way in a bloody feud with the Iranian superstar, the Iron Sheik. Their historic feud culminated in an unforgettable boot camp match that headlined a sold-out Madison Square Garden crowd and helped turn Sgt. Slaughter into a household name among patriotic fans across the country.

While his path to the top never seemed to derail, much like the Lex Express experiment of 1993, Slaughter eventually made his presence known as part of the American Wrestling Alliance (AWA). After five years or so of wrestling in Verne Gagne's backyard the Sarge once again set his sights on WWE in 1990.

Slaughter, however, was not to return in his trademark stars and stripes this time around – he was aligning himself with the enemy. As tension between the United States and Iraq was increasing Vince McMahon decided to have the country's proudest son (that wasn't named Hulk Hogan) turn his back on Old Glory and support the cause of real life dictator Saddam Hussein.

Entertainment factor:

Albeit controversial the Slaughter turn was pure genius. Claiming America had gone soft the Iraqi sympathiser was soon donning Arab head-dresses along with his sheik-inspired curled toe boots. Adding

insult to injury the turncoat even began using the infamous camel clutch submission manoeuvre as his finisher. Although it made for some riveting television if truth be told, the venue for WrestleMania VII had to be changed to an indoor facility in light of death threats and security issues that surrounded the newly-found hatred the Slaughter gimmick ignited.

Elevation of character:

Feuding with Col. DeBeers across Minnesota can only get you so far so when Sgt. Slaughter captured the WWE Championship in January 1991 it was no surprise that he had fully reached the mountain top despite a controversial victory over the Ultimate Warrior. If winning the strap wasn't enough he reached top heel status the same year when he secured a match against the ultimate babyface Hulk Hogan on the grandest stage of them all.

Longevity in the ring:

You can bet Cobra Commander could not be any prouder of the treachery that Sgt. Slaughter dealt to Hogan and his band of wrestling heroes but despite being the top badass for the better part of a year the former champion soon took the Cpl. Kirchner route and was once again leading the 'U-S-A' chants in arenas across the country.

After a fully-fledged heel run Slaughter eventually became an on-air authority figure via the Jack Tunney route and he was soon the butt of D-Generation X

jokes throughout the early years of the Attitude Era, even becoming one of McMahon's stooges for a short time.

Current-day Sarge, years removed from his greatest Benedict Arnold impression, still makes the yearly trip to WWE Raw where he is often jobbing to up and coming talent.

King Kong Bundy Crushes Little Beaver 29 March 1987

Heat of the moment:

More than 93,000 fans packed into the record-breaking Pontiac Silverdome on a legendary spring night that still remains as one of the most talked about events in the history of World Wrestling Entertainment. As Andre passed the torch, Piper was embarking on the first of his many retirements and Steamboat and Savage stole the show, it was a gimmick match for the ages that still resonates in the minds of devoted wrestling fans all over the world.

Standing at 6ft 4in and close to 500 pounds during his best heel run as a card-carrying member of the famed Heenan Family, King Kong Bundy stands as one of the most massive superstars of all time. The over-sized behemoth sent shockwaves throughout the industry during a mixed tag team match at WrestleMania III when he teamed up with Lord Littlebrook and Little Tokyo to face the threesome of Hillbilly Jim, The Haiti Kid and of course the 4ft 4in 60-pound Little Beaver

who soon fell victim to the Walking Condominium's body slam and unforgettable elbow drop.

Entertainment factor:

Only in the pre-determined stage show of wrestling can we glorify the blatant disregard of the rules and just as brutal as it was to watch (and not brutal to watch in the Katie Vick storyline sort of way) it still trumps any and all elbow drops that have come and gone.

Elevation of character:

Sure, Bundy's brightest days were behind him as his headlining steel cage main event against Hulk Hogan less than a year before was clearly in the rear-view mirror.

However his claim as one of the industry's top heels was never in question despite him being relegated to a mid-card showdown with Hillbilly Jim and just two years removed from his nine-second squash of Special Delivery Jones at the inaugural showcase of the immortals.

We can only imagine that it was his public display of un-affection towards one of the more popular midget stars of his day that still kept him in the 'most hated villain' conversation.

Longevity in the ring:

Mainstream recognition was no stranger to Bundy but the sun soon settled on his main event career and he was soon gone from the WWE only to make a

brief return in the mid-1990s as a part of the Million Dollar Corporation. Remaining as one of the more recognisable combatants of his era, it is no surprise that in its heyday even his LJN figure can smash a solid window or two. These days a much slimmer version of the Bundy character can be seen cracking jokes on the comedy circuit, making the occasional indy appearance and most likely still posing a threat to little wrestlers the world over.

Memo to Hornswoggle – your 15 minutes should have been up years ago so maybe it is time for the New Jersey big man to re-introduce the avalanche to a whole new crop of *Raw* and *SmackDown* viewers.

Mega Powers Explode **3 February 1989**

Heat of the moment:

Starting in 1987 and lasting for two years, wrestling universes collided when the worldwide phenomenon known as Hulkamania was able to co-exist with the Macho Madness of ‘Macho Man’ Randy Savage. Dubbed the Mega Powers, the superteam known best for its amped-up interview spots and over-the-top handshakes went in full motion during the climactic finish to WrestleMania IV’s 14-man tournament where the immortal one, Hogan, helped his partner become the WWE Champion by smashing Ted DiBiase with a chair to set up a patented Savage elbow drop from the top.

The win not only catapulted the reign of the Macho Man but it also helped solidify the Mega Powers as the strongest force in the wrestling business. Although they never captured team gold their unity helped usher in the inaugural SummerSlam with a victory over the Mega Bucks (DiBiase and Andre the Giant) and an appearance by scantily-clad Mega Powers eye-candy Miss Elizabeth.

Of course in the wild world of pro wrestling nothing lasts forever, except of course Mark Henry's unexplainable push and Undertaker winning streaks. With that said the Mega Honeymoon was soon over. During a nationally-televised *Saturday Night's Main Event* during the winter of 1989 the company's two greatest faces of their era were embroiled in an epic showdown between the Big Bossman and Akeem the African Dream. Who knew that it would be the former One Man Gang who would start the rift between the two icons when he tossed Savage out of the ring and on to Elizabeth, knocking her out cold?

Hogan, being the goody two shoes that he was, carried the fallen goddess from the ring to the training area for some much needed 'medical attention'. When she finally awoke a disgruntled Hulkster returned to ringside but it was too late as Savage took his Twin Towers beating and was clearly pissed at the moustachioed Mega Power for abandoning him on prime-time television.

Despite being Macho-slapped by a distraught Savage, Hogan got the win for his team but as he

arrived in the back to check on Elizabeth he was attacked by the champion who claimed Hogan was stealing his woman and his spotlight, sealing the deal for their eventual showdown at the fifth instalment of the Super Bowl of wrestling.

Entertainment factor:

The WrestleMania V match for the WWE Championship ran the suspenseful course we have known to grow and love over the golden wrestling years. A fully-fledged Hogan comeback followed by a big boot and leg drop ushering in yet another reign backed by the sea of red and yellow.

Savage, who was now in full heel mode, ditched the innocent valet gimmick and replaced the Mega Powers' manager with Sensational Sherri Martel, giving him instant bad guy cred.

The Madness also aligned himself with Tiny Lister, the actor turned wrestler known best as Zeus, leading to one of the more lesser known PPV events this side of This Tuesday In Texas, No Holds Barred: The Match, The Movie.

Elevation of character:

Despite coming up short against his Mega Powers partner, Randy Savage was still one of the industry's top superstars, which was capped by his coronation as the 'Macho King' after defeating perennial good guy Hacksaw Jim Duggan and using his royal sceptre to end the Ultimate Warrior's title run.

Longevity in the ring:

Randy Savage always made for a better heel and was making history as the guy fans loved to hate long before ‘Stone Cold’ Steve Austin and The Rock began headlining the Attitude Era. An eventual Mega Powers reunion came in the now-defunct WCW but the Monster Maniacs just never sounded right in the first place even though they captured our hearts once again by conquering Kevin Sullivan’s Alliance to end Hulkamania. Soon enough it was like *deja vu* all over again as the Mega Powers traded spray cans and heel turns throughout the hostile takeover of World Championship Wrestling and not even the fake Sting was safe.

Et Tutu, Hulk Hogan?

Heat of the moment:

His ‘Hollywood’ persona and New World Order heel turn may get all the press, but for us, Hulk Hogan’s first memorable bad guy role came in 1993 when he turned his back on the fans that made Hulkamania run wild by appearing as a wrestler-turned-nanny in the would-be comedy *Mr Nanny*.

It would have been bad enough for the Hulkster to have *Suburban Commando* in his arsenal but he opted to make this comedy, which tried to replicate the ‘big guy playing against type’ success *Kindergarten Cop* had three years prior. It played like a turd floating in the sandbox instead.

Entertainment Factor:

None – that is, unless you count watching the Hulkster dance around in a tutu and make breakfast for a pair of bratty white kids.

Elevation of character:

Appearing in a comedic flop with Sherman Helmsley didn't boost Hogan's run in WWE at all. But, it didn't deter fans from loving him any less and tuning in to watch him in the ring. Hulkamania continued to run wild for a few more years in WWE and WCW in spite of the tutu turn.

Longevity in the ring:

Hogan has made more stinkers than a 12-year-old boy after a Taco Bell meal. There has been *Thunder in Paradise*, *Gremlins 2*, and that unnecessary sequel to the 3 Ninjas franchise with Loni Anderson. Thankfully for the Hulkster, portraying super nanny Sean Armstrong and other lame film characters hasn't derailed his career. Not even a sex tape can stop the unstoppable Hulk Hogan. That said, there's a reason no 'Nanny 4 Life' t-shirts were ever made.

Ref Ref Whine

Heat of the moment:

Die-hard wrestling fans probably knew that WWE referee Danny Davis (real name Dan Marsh) wrestled under a mask for years as Mr X, but it came as a sur-

prise to most viewers when he retired his Foot Locker uniform in favour of Sweeney Todd-like wrestling tights.

The build-up of Davis as a heel was a natural progression. At the tail end of 1986, he was ruining matches for the industry's top babyfaces by calling quick pins and provoking disqualifications. Gorilla Monsoon, who with Bobby 'The Brain' Heenan made up one-half of quite easily the best announcement team the business ever had, had also questioned his character, noting how he probably took bribes from the heels he helped out.

Davis had a series of misfires as ref that led to him being stripped of his ref shirt and competing as a wrestler. Some notable matches included prematurely awarding Paul Orndorff a win over Hulk Hogan in a steel cage match (that call would be overturned), and a pivotal match between the Hart Foundation and the British Bulldogs during a 26 January 1987 edition of *Superstars* in which Bret Hart and Jim Neidhart double-teamed their way to a Tag Team Championship on Davis's watch.

As a result, fake WWE president Jack Tunney suspended Davis, and Jimmy Hart got him to join the Hart Foundation. Thus, 'Dangerous' Danny Davis was born.

Entertainment Factor:

Having Jimmy Hart in his corner just made us love to hate him even more. Danny Davis's re-branding to 'Dangerous' Danny Davis was a new storyline that we had never really seen before. We had seen babyfaces

turn bad, and managers betray their own ‘clients’ but we had never seen someone stop being a ref so they could fight guys in the ring.

It may not have worked had it been another personality (sorry Joey Marella), but Davis played the role of ref-turned-heel to a tee. And he wasn’t a one-hit wonder. He helped secure wins for the Foundation by interfering in their matches, and won a six-man tag match with them at WrestleMania III.

Other highlights during his two-year run as a grappler included defeating Tito Santana and Junkyard Dog in the 1987 King of the Ring tournament, competing at the very first Survivor Series, and trying to steal Damien from Jake ‘The Snake’ Roberts. Seriously, who steals a snake?

Elevation of character:

Davis went from being a sub-plot to a main storyline in the world of wrestling, and his association with the Harts made him an almost instant top heel for over a year and, at the very least, a solid mid-carder. He also gave a mean Boston crab.

Longevity in the ring:

After a two-year-plus run, Davis’s appeal went the way of the buffalo, and he eventually dusted off that Foot Locker uniform and became a referee again. By the early 1990s, however, he was off WWE television and a new era of crappy refs was born courtesy of the Hebner twins.

Train, Say Your Prayers, And Take A Clothesline

Heat of the moment:

It is fitting that ‘Mr Wonderful’ Paul Orndorff made his WWE debut on the same night Hulk Hogan beat the Iron Sheik to claim the WWE Championship at Madison Square Garden on 23 January 1984. The two grappling greats seemed to be associated with one another throughout most of the early 1980s – originally as foes, then friends, then foes again, and then, yes, friends again. One heel turn, however, stands out in the course of both careers.

It was 1986. The New York Mets were on a World Series run. America was runnin’ on Fred the Baker and his Dunkin’ Donuts. Eddie Murphy dappled in the music industry. That infamous year was also the time in which Mr Wonderful turned his back on his tag-team partner Hulk Hogan, and started a feud that ran longer than a *Dynasty* spin-off.

It all unfolded in the year following the very first WrestleMania. The Hulkster and Mr Wonderful were at opposite sides of the ring in that contest with Hogan partnering Mr T (with Jimmy Snuka in their corner) against the wonderful one and ‘Rowdy’ Roddy Piper (with ‘Cowboy’ Bob Orton in their corner).

In that epic main event, Hogan pinned Orndorff after Orton mistakenly hit him with the cast on his arm. The fall-out from the match included Orndorff firing his manager Bobby ‘The Brain’ Heenan on television,

and engaging in feuds with his former partners Orton and Piper.

Orndorff's babyface about-face led him to run wild with Hulkamania. The two were an unstoppable force, but the wheels eventually fell off the bus. During their match against Big John Studd and King Kong Bundy, Orndorff let Hogan take a beating at the hands of the two large-and-in-charge superstars, and just when you thought he would help the Hulkster out, he turned faster than a *Walking Dead* zombie.

After he helped Hogan to his feet and raised his hand in the air, Mr Wonderful gave him – apologies to JBL – a clothesline ‘from hell’ followed by a piledriver. Thus, another feud was born, brother!

Entertainment factor:

Even a blind man could see this inevitable parting of ways, but the build-up to this eventual break-up between Hogan and Orndorff was extremely enjoyable. Whether it was Adrian Adonis getting under Mr Wonderful's skin by referring to him as ‘Hulk Jr’ or the ‘accidental’ bumps Hogan and Orndorff took from each other during their ring exploits leading up to the feud, this was wrestling storytelling at its best.

Elevation of character:

Paul Orndorff was arguably the biggest heel in the WWE during his ‘re-feud’ with Hogan. Watching him re-unite with the Heenan Family really propelled him to great heights, and made him a bankable bad

guy for the company. More importantly, he became a man fans loved to hate. The Hogan/Orndorff steel cage match from *Saturday Night's Main Event*, which Orndorff lost, is still discussed today as was a match they had in Toronto that took place outdoors in front of – according to Wikipedia – about 76,000 fans.

Longevity in the ring:

Orndorff is a WWE Hall of Famer, and rightfully so, but the aforementioned feud with Hogan was the biggest push he would ever see – in the WWE anyway. Following another run as a babyface, he reteamed with the Hulkster at the first Survivor Series (with Don Muraco, Ken Patera, and Bam Bam Bigelow) and took on Oliver Humperdink to manage him, but a serious injury he sustained during the Hogan feud caught up with him and forced him to retire.

We all remember reading reports of his death in the late 1980s, but he actually retired and became the owner of a bowling alley (which in some circles may be worse than death).

Orndorff returned to wrestling shape in the 1990s, and wrestled on-and-off with WCW and the independent circuit with mixed results. He won tag team gold with a then known as ‘Stunning’ Steve Austin, and held his own in singles competition until injuries once again forced him to re-retire. He spent the rest of the 1990s training talent at the WCW Power Plant in Atlanta, and in 2005, Heenan inducted him into the WWE Hall of Fame – fittingly.

Marty Jannetty Is Not My BFF

Heat of the moment:

Toiling in the tag team division for years and competing against teams such as Demolition, the Hart Foundation and the Brain Busters, the Rockers were the pretty boy faces similar to the high-flying style of the Rock n' Roll Express. Shawn Michaels and Marty Jannetty captivated crowds throughout the American Wrestling Alliance (AWA) until finally arriving in WWE all while hanging with some of the world's top teams. Eventually however the sun set on the charismatic duo and its impact continues to be felt to this day.

During a memorable visit to Brutus Beefcake's Barber Shop an emotional Rockers reunion seemed to be eminent after some recent close calls that were obviously setting the two apart. After appearing to settle their differences Michaels hit Jannetty with his now trademark super-kick finisher known as sweet chin music. Adding fuel to the fire, the mullet-haired melee was capped off by an enraged Michaels tossing his former friend head first through the window of Brutus's Barber Shop.

Entertainment factor:

This was one of the more memorable heel turns. Jannetty getting thrown through a window certainly upped the ante and made for a more entertaining finish to the end of the Rockers' run. It would turn out to be a downward spiral of sorts for the one-time

Intercontinental Champion who would eventually become the Andrew Ridgeley of the wrestling world.

Elevation of character:

While Jannetty embarked on mid-card mediocrity for the rest of his career his former partner has become one of the most recognised characters in wrestling history. The Heartbreak Kid has become synonymous with being a main event star and headlining some of the more classic WrestleMania matches in recent memory.

Longevity in the ring:

Since the shocking window shattering the two grapplers have gone in completely opposite directions. While one has made a Hall of Fame career and won every title known to man (even the WWE European Championship) and to this day continues to milk the 'Mania moment cash cow, his former Rocker mate is touring the independent circuit with Sean Waltman (known as the 1-2-3 Kid, X-Pac and various other names).