

AN ORIGINAL PLAY: IN THIS CORNER, WEIGHING IN AT 236
POUNDS, FROM PETOSKEY, MICHIGAN, THE INVENTOR
OF THE NORTH COUNTRY CRUSH,
MAULER MAN MOZE

THESIS

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INTRODUCTION

The Sport of "Rasslin"

The sport of wrestling has a history as old as recorded time. The most elemental of all contests, it has been practiced through the centuries in all parts of the world. In Roman times it was the sport of the gods; in the Middle Ages it was the pastime of the princes; in Japan they wrestled for an empire. The King of England was once eager to match his skill with that of the French Monarch.¹

Wrestling's annals, perhaps more than for any other sport, are full of tales of man's strength and courage even against impossible odds. Babylonian legend tells of the folk hero Gilgamesh, sixteen feet tall and hated as a bully, who wrestled Enkidu, a rival created by the gods to challenge him. In their furious battle they won the respect of each other and made peace, became friends, and set off on adventures together.² There was

¹Geoff Winningham, Friday Night at the Coliseum (Houston, Tex.: Allison Press, 1974), p. 5.

²Ibid.

the Roman Emperor, Commodus of the second century A.D., a man of cruel and licentious habits, who loved to show his prowess as a wrestler and a tamer of wild beasts, claiming even to be an incarnation of Hercules.³ There was the battle of Clayton Square, in which a company of English wrestlers took on the Liverpool police.⁴ The champions of India and Turkey, the Sumo giants of Japan, the travelling strongmen and wrestlers of medieval Europe, all are part of wrestling's rich and varied history. At the end of the nineteenth century, names like Hackenschmidt, the Russian Lion, and William Muldoon were household words.⁵

After 1915, the most interesting era in wrestling developed. This is the time that the sport became known as "rasslin."⁶ Finding itself without great box office appeal after the war, primarily due to the movies, wrestling took a new form; it became a sport for the audience.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶This terminology evolved from the common man's pronunciation of the sport. It is used in this thesis and certain other essays to distinguish amateur from professional wrestling. See "Rasslin Was My Act," Saturday Evening Post, 6 February 1954, p. 20.

The rasslin promoters had to vie for audiences against the new medium of the films. As with any other sport, there were the die-hard fans, but as any promoter will testify, these individuals do not pay the bills. Something was needed to bring people back to the sport. Contests involving just the skills of grappling were not enough.

A new type of contest developed where showmanship became part of the competition. The rasslers were not so much concerned with winning as they were with being remembered by the fans. Rasslin developed personalities as well as rasslers. Men like Whiskers Savage and Man Mountain Dean appeared before packed houses in the thirties. Ironically, in the Depression when people barely found enough money to buy food, they found money to go the matches. Arenas all over the country were packed week after week.⁷ These were the times of great attendance. To keep the sport alive the rasslers had to be remembered.

Rasslin still remained a small-time business until after World War II, and the advent of television. Rasslin was ideal for television. It was inexpensive to

⁷Winningham, Friday Night at the Coliseum,
p. 68.

stage, it was easily contained into a small arena, the length of the show could easily be controlled, it was simple to cover with only one cameraman, and all the action could easily be followed by the viewer. So a perfect union was formed between television, eager for an audience, and by rasslin and its promoters, anxious to build the sport into big money. The result has been the oldest continuously broadcast program in history with over 125 stations carrying it throughout the United States and Canada.⁸

The second change to greatly increase rasslin's popularity has been the introduction of a full cast of characters. All of this can probably be traced to an out-of-work truck driver from El Paso, Texas, by the name of George Raymond Wagner. With the help of a clever promoter, he let his hair grow long, died it blond, hired a valet, and changed his name to Gorgeous George. He is also responsible for changing the apparel of rasslin. He draped himself in a Louis XV robe and would follow his valet, Jefferies, and his lady-in-waiting around the arena to the tune of "Pomp and Circumstance," while they sprayed the arena with perfume. He was repeatedly referred to as "Your Gorgeousness" by his attendants and

⁸Ibid.

by many other names by the fans. He could well afford to listen to their insults while he masqueraded as an effete snob. He took home over \$250,000 a year.⁹

The promoters, always aware of how a "buck" could be made, quickly introduced new talent, spectacles and gimmicks. The more outrageous, the better the fans liked them. Bert Randolph Sugar, in his article on the sport, terms rasslin "a violent form of vaudeville."¹⁰ The characters arose out of our folk heroes and stars of popular entertainment with names like "Wild Bill Hickcock," "Jungle Boy," and "Batman and Robin." The need for heroes also brought about a need for villains. When it became popular to hate Russians, the rasslin fans could release their hostilities as well as their debris upon the likes of "The Mighty Igor," and "The Cossack." The villains became parodies of whatever met with current American disfavor.

Other gimmicks, such as masks and the use of blood, greatly aided rasslin. The mask was a natural, owing its introduction to the art form of the Western

⁹Bert Randolph Sugar, "Sport's One-Ring Circus," Argosy, March 1974, pp. 44, 80-81.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 80.

where the "bad guy" was easily identified by the mask that became a sign of his guilt. It was also a saving grace for the rassler as he could rassle twice in one night as two different people. Blood was introduced when the fans' need for more action and excitement became great enough. It was introduced in a number of ways. The old "method bleeders" originally used single-edged razors taped on their fingers so that they could lightly cut their foreheads on cue. But that involved some pain, so now most rasslers use a gelatin capsule, containing chicken blood, stored in the mouth or hand.¹¹

All of this has helped to make rasslin the spectacle that annually draws more than forty million people to arenas all over the United States.¹² It has become a rich blend of sport, circus, theatre, dance, comic entertainment and, to some, a religion. The number of fans is growing at a steady rate. The close proximity of the action, the keen sense of performance that the rasslers themselves have, and the clear didactics of the

¹¹"How It's Done," Newsweek, 22 November 1954, p. 44.

¹²James Stewart Gordon, "The Wonderful World of Professional Wrestling," Reader's Digest, March 1959, pp. 130-31.

drama all contribute to this. It is certain that no other spectacle has a more loyal, committed following than rasslin. The blend of brutality, grace, skill and showmanship all contribute to this intensity of involvement, and it has remained for a play dealing with these aspects to be written.

Author

My beginning as a playwright started during my sophomore year of high school in New Braunfels, Texas. The school at that time had a somewhat progressive and enthusiastic drama instructor by the name of Patricia Coston. Ms. Coston's philosophy of teaching was to introduce her students to all forms of creative experience: acting, directing, scene design, and playwriting. By introducing her students to these different areas, she not only better educated them in all forms of theatre but interested them in fields that they might someday wish to specialize in.

During one of our sessions with playwriting, each student was required to submit a one-act play. Several of the more promising plays would then be submitted

for competition in the Trinity University Speech Festival. My first dramatic attempt, which was a satirical spoof on the science-fiction television shows of the day, was selected. The play was entitled All That Glitters Is Not Creamcheese. It was not so much a play as it was a skit. But to me it rivaled Hamlet and at least had a much better title.

Much to everyone's surprise, the play received an honorable mention in competition and the title alone drew more interest than any of the winning plays. It was this sudden glory that briefly launched my career as a playwright. Encouraged by my enormous literary contribution (the play was ten pages long), I sought out Eugene McKinney, playwright-in-residence at Trinity University and Dallas Theatre Center. Listening very intently to his criticisms, I became encouraged and at the same time sobered by the fact that my play was not really all that great. Sitting there in his office, little did I know that this same man would end up being a consultant on my thesis and that I would again listen intently to his criticisms and again come to the realization that my play is not really all that great.

I transferred to Southwest Texas State University. It was here that I considered my formal drama

education began. It was here that I decided that the theatre really was something worthwhile. As an undergraduate I concentrated mostly on acting, trying to be in every possible play that I could. I had little time to sit down and write plays.

It was in 1969 that I enrolled in my first playwriting course, taught by the late Ramsey Yelvington. I enrolled in the course not so much to write plays but to learn about playwrights as told by a man I thought knew them best. To pass the course I needed to write two one-act plays. We were told that the only way any of us would ever write a play would be just to sit down and do it. We could not wait for inspiration. This was the hardest thing I believe I have ever done, but it produced two plays, Never Hide Your Tommy Gun in the Oven and In This Corner, Weighing In at 236 Pounds, the Inventor of the North Country Crush, Mauler Man Moze.¹³ The former was an absurdist comedy dealing with the rampant violence in America. The latter was the germ idea for this thesis and its evolution will be discussed later. During the spring semester of that year I had the opportunity to see Never

¹³Hereafter referred to as In This Corner/ Mauler Man Moze.

Hide Your Tommy Gun in the Oven produced by a senior directing student.

Having been greatly encouraged by actually seeing what I had written performed on stage, I wrote two more plays during the year 1970-71. The plays were A Confederate General from Big Sur, a one-act adaptation of Richard Brautigan's novel of the same name, and Custer Had It Coming, written for a multimedia show entitled Quack. Custer Had It Coming proved to be quite successful in production. It was an episodic satire on the Indian/White man relationship from the first landing to the present day.

In the summer of 1972, another play was begun. This time it was a musical called The Frog Pond. It was a collaboration with a very good friend and musician, Robert Zamora. I wrote the play and Robert wrote the music and lyrics. The play was a satiric allegory about a frog pond beset with ever-encroaching pollution and the frogs' attempt to deal with it. The play was completed in the fall of 1972 and promptly put on the shelf. The play stayed on the shelf unread for several months, not because we were not happy with it but because it was an experiment in mutual creativity and neither of us were too sure of its acceptance. After graduation from college,

I continued my education at Southwest Texas State University and enrolled in another playwriting course taught again by Ramsey Yelvington. I submitted The Frog Pond to Mr. Yelvington for criticism. He liked it, called it a children's show and suggested to Mr. James Barton, the Director of Theatre, that it be done during the upcoming summer season. Much to my displeasure, I was the one who would have to direct it. Regardless of this handicap, the play turned out well. It was anything but a children's show in performance and instead became what it was intended to be in the first place, an adult fairy tale.

The last play directly preceding this thesis was a long one-act entitled John Dillinger Died for You. It was a comedy about the last hour before Dillinger's death. The play was written for the fulfillment of a problems course taught by Mr. Eugene McKinney. Mr. McKinney is a fine playwright/instructor and took over the role as my thesis consultant with the untimely death of Ramsey Yelvington. Mr. Yelvington's death was a great loss to the theatre in the Southwest and to all those who knew him and worked with him.

This briefly traces the plays which I have written for the theatre and does not include numerous

sketches and comedy routines that have been written for coffee houses and cabarets.

Background of the Play

The spectacle of professional rasslin has always intrigued me. I was drawn to it by many of the same reasons that are responsible for the sport's great audience appeal. The characters, the action, the mock brutality, the clear separation of good and evil, all of these truly make rasslin "the sport that gives you your money's worth."

During my grade school years, I grew up in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. I had a second cousin by the name of Danny Hodge who lived in nearby Perry and used to rassle in Oklahoma City on occasion. Danny had extensive credentials as an amateur wrestler. He had won several N.C.A.A. titles while attending the University of Oklahoma and later went on to wrestle in the Olympics in Melbourne, Australia in 1956. There he won a silver medal in the light-heavyweight class and became the first wrestler to have his picture on the cover of Sports Illustrated. Hodge was also a capable boxer. He started in Golden Gloves and the national championships in New York City. Danny

progressed into professional boxing and had a seven and one record when he fought the heavyweight contender Nino Valdes. Valdes scored a TKO in the eighth after opening a cut over Hodge's eye. Danny quit after that saying, "The reason was because the promoters and managers gave me the shaft and I never did get a penny from that purse. I never want to have anything to do with boxing again."¹⁴

In 1959, Hodge gave professional rasslin a try. He had a popular name in the area so he quickly became a local hero at the Coliseum in Oklahoma City. It was during this time that I first saw him rassle. At age ten it was quite a thrill to have an actual hero related to me and this intensified my first impressions of the spectacle of rasslin.

Throughout the intervening years I had somewhat of a passive interest in the sport as the business of growing up did not leave the time that an avid fan needs. My only contact was through television. I would usually watch rasslin for lack of anything else to do. It did offer a pleasurable diversion and I marvelled at the skill the rasslers used to execute their heroic tricks.

¹⁴Al Eschbach, "Hodge's Feats Still Amazing after 13 Years," Oklahoma Journal, 1 (February 1970), p. 11.

Somehow I knew it was staged, but I still became involved with the basic struggle of good over evil.

It was from these beginnings and early impressions that the idea to write a play dealing with rasslin came about. The original play was a one-act and at that stage of my writing I was unable to develop the idea to any great length. This first play served as a germ idea that I retained until I thought I might have the facility to develop it into a full-length play. My interest in rasslin started to move from passive to active. I began to build upon my knowledge and impressions of the spectacle.

During my undergraduate career I had written several short plays and with the completion of each play I kept telling myself that I would next begin on a new version of the original one-act. I kept putting it off, feeling that I needed still more ideas and research. It was not until I decided to pursue playwriting in my graduate program that I reasoned now would be a good time to begin the full-length play that I had so long contemplated.

It was not easy to start the second version of the play. I felt that I had some perfect work in my mind and that it would be sacrilege to put it down

on paper, but due to the requirements of the thesis, I was obliged to do so. The original title was kept along with the basic concept, but the story was changed a great deal. This first draft was finished rather quickly. It was my feeling that it would be best to get my basic ideas down on paper so that I would have something tangible from which to build.

After discussion with my playwriting consultant, Eugene McKinney, I began the third draft, adding what we felt was needed and discarding or relocating the rest. The previous draft had shown me that I had sufficient ideas for a full-length play so my main problem in this draft was to clean them up. I was not confronted with the problem of throwing out a large portion of material, but instead to add to what I had for the sake of clarity.

More discussion followed and I began on what is basically the final play. The only other rewrite that was made was during the rehearsal of the play. It dealt with the last eight pages of the play and was suggested by the director, Susan Brooks.

Analysis

The analysis of my play is divided into five parts: character, situation, subject, dialogue, and

action. The first three are the materials and the last two are the tools that enable them to come to life on the stage.

Character

The characters in my play are real and at the same time are caricatures of the rasslers that they portray. They lead double lives and therefore have to be able to cope with the multiple identities that they create. In the eyes of the fans they are either good or bad, clean or dirty. They are seldom both. Professional rasslin is an elemental struggle between good and evil. It is melodramatic in the truest sense of the word. The characters that the fans create and the rasslers intensify are still real and alive. They are representative of the fans' fears and hates as well as their ideals. These men who dress as cowboys and Japanese warlords are a vicarious extension of the rasslin fan's real-life conflicts. They make coping with these conflicts easier.

The men who act as these characters must be able to change and modify them according to the whims of the fans or the instincts of the managers and promoters.

They are constantly living out make-believe dramas in the ring. It is this versatility that bears upon the longevity of a rassler's career. Some rasslers are able to hold onto their characters with little or no modification. Others are in a constant state of change to keep their performances fresh.

It is on these basic observations that I base my characters and their interrelationships. Mauler Man Moze is the protagonist. His make-believe foes in the ring are his real-life antagonists. Mauler Man views his predicament much the same way the fans view it. He sees only absolutes in his relationships with the other rasslers. This is one of Mauler Man's major conflicts in the play, his inability to play the game and his resulting frustration that finally motivates him to accept something less than he planned. He is able to choose his own destiny, but unable to cope with the many factors that play upon it. For all its apparent chaos and confusion, the world of rasslin is a well-ordered scheme that must be followed by its participants. Mauler Man's naïveté and idealism force him to see this world in black and white. As a result, his goals are unrealistic and he is faced with the choice that compromises his dignity.

Dignity is something that is very important to Mauler Man. It is his entire reason to be.

I have tried to use caricatures of rasslers and fans to intensify Mauler Man's unrealistic view of himself. I have used them to show that he is really nothing more than a pawn that is being manipulated. The scene between the tag-team participants in Act II illustrates another attempt at contrasting Mauler Man's view with that of real-life rasslers, not caricatures. These rasslers are able to accept their position. They may not like it, in the case of Flung and Dung, but they are able to cope with it. Mauler Man cannot.

Situation

The play represents a typical evening's card at any arena on any night. It also represents the progression of Mauler Man's career from his beginnings in professional rasslin to his final bout as a heavyweight world champion.

A rasslin card is as well structured as a good play. It is easily compared to the dramatic form. It has its exposition and complication in the form of the

preliminary matches. These matches are where many young rasslers get their start. It is also where many old timers end up. These matches set the scene for those to come. One of their primary purposes is to get the audience into the spirit of rasslin and to stimulate their interests and primitive emotions. In my play I use these early matches to introduce Mauler Man to the audience as well as to create the atmosphere of rasslin. The establishment of the proper atmosphere is very important to the success of the play. Professional rasslin establishes many conventions that the audience is willing to accept as long as it is done in the proper atmosphere.

The climax of the play comes with the final match of Act I. Many traditionalists may disagree, as it is not a true psychological climax but a purely physical climax to the play. I have been leading the audience in the first act to this one moment when Mauler Man becomes the World Champion. It is through these preliminary matches and Mauler Man's discussions with Otto and the Announcer that the audience is brought to this climactic moment. The action can go no further without a reversal. This also happens to be an appropriate place for an intermission as it diminishes the continuity problem that would

be created if I tried to continue and possibly stop later on. The play needs to flow to the climactic moment without interruption.

Act I is structured to build the character of Mauler Man up to his goal--the World Championship. Act II is the disintegration and resulting resolution of his situation. The opening tag-team match is not necessarily part of this disintegration, but is intended solely as a means to open Act II strongly. Following this match Mauler Man is able to make his first real discoveries about his situation through his observations and conversations with his tag-team participants.

Mauler Man's dignity is then broken down further with the interview scene. In this scene he becomes aware that now even his thoughts and ideas are not free of manipulation. Otto, like so many others in his position, has decided to use controversy to attract attention to his star. This controversy only helps lead to Mauler Man's downfall.

The farcical match with Randy Starr is an attempt to make a fool out of Mauler Man by showing his complete inability to handle the ballet dancer. Mauler Man wins this match, but in reality loses the respect of

the fans. He realizes that winning the match is not everything that crowd approval is.

In the next scenes with Otto and the Announcer, Mauler Man is now somewhat aware of his place in the world of rasslin. He is given the choice by Otto of staying with it and sacrificing his dignity or salvaging what dignity he has and getting out. Mauler Man decides to stay in, partly because he cannot do anything else and partly because he needs the crowds, good or bad.

Mauler Man is now fully aware that whatever he thought he had done for himself had been done by Otto. Mauler Man has been made by Otto and in the end he will be destroyed by him. Otto finally creates the "Polish Sausage Grinder" and Mauler Man is now nothing more than a ludicrous clown in a circus act with the promise that when the "Polish Sausage Grinder" is worn out he will get to rassle a live bear. Mauler Man has come full circle and is now the same as Don de la Guano or the Armenian Albino. He realizes he is not different.

The concluding match is also the conclusion of Mauler Man as we knew him. He is now the "bad guy" hiding behind a mask, but the mask offers no consolation as his dignity is lost and he knows it. He had entered rasslin

with the same idealistic values of a boy scout, only to have them destroyed by a game that respects no values. Rocky Steele replaces Mauler Man and will no doubt follow the same path as Mauler Man. In the jargon of rasslin, this final match is called a "lights out match." It is the conclusion of the evening's card and also serves one of the same purposes as the preliminary bouts, that is a tryout ground for new rasslers and a place to work for the old timers. At the conclusion of the match which he loses, Mauler Man leaves the empty arena only to return on another night to act another contest for the benefit of the fans.

Subject

I have dealt with the subject of the play on two levels: one level is the rasslin matches reenacted to satirize the sport as well as to entertain; the other level is a deeper, more psychological level in which Mauler Man discovers the realities of the sport and the people who function within it. For the purpose of clarification, I have termed these scenes the "motivational" scenes. I have tried to achieve a balance between the two levels.

The play is a satirical look at rasslin as well as being a tragicomic portrayal of a naive and idealistic rassler, Mauler Man Moze, who in the end sacrifices his dignity to the sport. If I were to name my main reason for the writing of the play, it would have to be to entertain. Satire is my most effective vehicle, so I have employed that, but if entertainment were my only goal in this play, I would only have to invite an audience to witness a real rasslin match. A play cannot compete with its spontaneity and skill. I have chosen to humanize the sport by alternating satiric matches with dramatic confrontations of its participants. This gives the audience something to grasp mentally and helps them view the matches with new insight. It is not my intent to duplicate professional rasslin but to dramatize it. I have chosen to parody a parody by selectively using observed aspects of rasslin and intensifying them, the degree of intensification being most crucial. John Lahr, in his book Astonish Me, elaborates on this.

Theater cannot compete with the ritual experience of sports spectacle, but it can learn from it. As a handicraft industry in a technological age, theater has lost its sense of ritual and forgotten how to deal with primal impulses. Too often our theater is overly polite and self-conscious. It rarely

understands the spectacle it offers and how to capitalize on the forms of pleasure which feed its audience's "collective unconscious." The fact of theater being a game is often forgotten in an attempt to make a serious statement. Yet the process of "gaming" can have a more profound effect on an audience than a narrative plot.¹⁵

I have tried to combine the two, narrative plot and the spectacle of rasslin, to tell the story of Mauler Man Moze.

Rasslin is a means, through make-believe, of coping with the world. That is what it has in common with theatre. But as the opportunity for physical accomplishments and simple heroism is denied modern man, the spectacle of rasslin has assumed a potency and ritual importance that most theatre has lost. Mauler Man cannot cope with rasslin or, as a result, the world. That is what the play is about. I have tried to combine the spectacle and drama into a viable play.

Action and Dialogue

As I have stated earlier, I have dealt with this play on the levels of the rasslin matches and the motivational scenes. In discussing the action and dialogue,

¹⁵John Lahr, Astonish Me (New York: The Viking Press, 1973), p. 35.

they must be viewed in regard to these levels: the action arising from the matches and the dialogue from the motivational scenes.

With the exception of the Announcer, there is little dialogue during the rasslin matches. All dialogue, including the Announcer's, merely illustrates the action that is taking place. Action, not elevated and refined thought, is the prime objective; the values of bravery, strength and courage are tested by men of action in heroic battles and miraculous escapes. As the Announcer puts it, "Devastating!" Astonishment overcomes temporary confusion as the real audience, with the help of the crowd-actors, adapt to the rules of the game. The action brings the people together in a new way. As with any sporting event, the audience can become part of the action that is taking place or remain totally passive. The action is the externalization of feelings and emotions. Only in a sports situation is this acceptable. The rasslin feeds off the actions of the participating audience members and vice versa. I have supplied my own audience to help initiate and guide the desired responses of the real audience. In the final analysis, the rasslers, not the crowd, are in control of the action of the play.

The real dialogue emanates from the motivational scenes. The ring is transformed into a neutral space for action that results in the dialogue predominating and humanizing the characters. It is from this dialogue that we learn about the sport of rasslin on a different plane and also about Mauler Man. The dialogue takes the form of plain narration, interviews, and conventional character to character confrontations.

In my play, dialogue and action contrast with each other and from this contrast I hope to convey a clearer understanding of both the satire and the tragic-comic story of the play.

Evaluation

I am extremely fortunate as a playwright to be able to have seen my play in production shortly after its completion. It has been a learning experience that I highly value and would encourage its continuance. Working closely with the director on the production, I was able to learn a great deal about the actual process of creating a play totally. From that I mean all the problems that one encounters transferring the words from manuscript to

the stage. These problems inevitably arise and I believe until a playwright goes through this process his work is only partially complete.

I had the opportunity to go through this experience last summer when I directed a play I had written called Frog Pond. I generally knew what to expect. It was a conventional play, but with In This Corner/Mauler Man Moze, I was taking for granted a concept that I was not at all sure would work. That concept was audience participation. I did not know how the audience would react to the matches. I theorized that if the crowd-actors were placed among the real crowd that they could instigate the desired responses, but I had nothing to base this on other than my own intuition. Susan Brooks, the director, wisely introduced the crowd-actors to the rehearsals early and made sure that they became an integral part of the action. They were treated as a very important part of the production. This proved to be a smart move as the crowd-actors worked well in the production and seemed to be accepted by the real audience. We experienced a few problems technically in the transition between the rasslin scenes and what we termed the motivational scenes, but after these were eliminated by a

simple dimming of the lights, the real audience had little trouble knowing when to respond.

Another problem that concerned everyone but myself was the rasslin scenes. Most were skeptical as to whether the actors could handle the matches. I felt that anyone with any athletic ability and self-discipline could handle the matches very well. It is also my feeling that a good actor knows his body and can control it. The basic difference between actors and rasslers is the size of their biceps and bank accounts. I was not proved wrong and was also amazed at the ease with which the actors were able to execute the matches. There was a good share of bruises and sore muscles, but that is unavoidable even with the likes of Gorgeous George. The matches were anticipated to be the biggest stumbling block in mounting the show, but proved to be the easiest and, by the response of the audience, the most enjoyable. There were two actors that liked wrestling so much that they were constantly "going at it" on the mats during lulls in rehearsal.

Due to the shortage of male actors during the time of the production, I was called upon to play the role of the Announcer. This, in some ways, makes my

objective evaluation of the overall performance difficult. I was on stage a great deal and was unable to watch the flow of the production. I did, however, make some observations about the play's structure in performance. I do not feel that I created and built the character of Mauler Man as well as I could have. I need to establish his greater tragic potential. I felt the audience wanted to know more about him and to sympathize with his final decision in the end. As a result, the audience became too involved with just the spectacle of the matches and not with the motivational scenes. I had hoped to achieve a more even balance between the two. Although I feel that this is a very definite weakness in the play, it seemed not to bother a great many people. They were satisfied with the spectacle alone.

All in all, I was extremely pleased with the production. When you create something in your mind it can never be fully achieved in reality. You can never realize that perfect ideal. I feel that Susan Brooks' production came very close. She and the very able cast worked well with what I gave them. A lot has been said about the merits of ensemble playing in the theatre, and this production supports that premise. It was truly a

group effort with everyone sharing and contributing to the play's success. I can only take credit for the basic ideas. Susan Brooks and her cast brought them to life.

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FROM PETOSKEY, MICHIGAN, THE INVENTOR
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MAULER MAN MOZE

by
William Black

ACT I

The action of the play takes place in and around a professional "rasslin" ring complete with ropes and turn-buckles. Ringside there are a table and chair that are used by the Announcer during the matches. On the table are a large bell and claw hammer that are used to signal the beginnings of the matches. There are at least two alleyways that the rasslers use to enter and exit from. Suspended above the ring is the American flag, somewhat faded and smoke stained but still old glory. Tacked to the bottom of the flag is a silk banner, brightly colored, that reads, "Professional Wrestling-The Sport That Gives You Your Money's Worth." The audience members are to be arranged in the same manner that they would be in an arena of this sort. Room should be provided between the aisles for movement of the different refreshment vendors that will be working the entire performance. It is suggested that the ringside seats be far enough from the arena as to allow sufficient movement and to guard against perspiration overspray. Suspended above the ring are four very stark scoop lights.

The audience members take their seats as the refreshment vendors are busy hawking their goods. The public address is divided between Sousa marches and announcements

about 1960 Impalas with their lights left on. Ring attendants are busy sweeping and sprinkling talcum powder on the mats. After the audience is seated and equipped with provisions for the evening's entertainment, a portly man, an ex-wrestler himself, waddles up to the ring, grabs the mike from the table, and squeezes through the ropes. He checks his program of the coming events as Mauler Man Moze enters from one of the alleyways. He is accompanied by a policeman who is obviously not needed for protection. Mauler Man is dressed in blue trunks and a rather ordinary robe devoid of all ornamentation. The Crowd checks their programs to see which rassler this is. Mauler Man ascends the ring and begins his warm-ups, looking around the ring in anticipation of what is to come. The Announcer notices that he is in place, walks over to the table, pounds the bell several times, and begins.

Throughout the play members of the Crowd are referred to as one autonomous group. They will be represented by a chorus made up of types of rasslin fans. They include Old Lady, Tough Guy, Fat Lady, Black Girl, and Old Chicano. They should attempt to initiate desired responses and at all times lead the actual audience into action. This

convention should be clearly established and not lead to chaos. They represent a cross-section of crowd conscience and attitudes.

ANNOUNCER

In this corner, weighing in at 236 pounds, from Petoskey, Michigan, inventor of The North Country Crush, Mauler Man Moze. (Mauler Man cautiously steps to the center of the ring.) Mauler Man looks and acts like a man that has never been sick a day in his life. He is 6' 2" and weighs a flat, hard 236 pounds. He can wrestle at top speed for sixty minutes without appearing tired or exerted. Yet, if he was to advertise the fact, Wladek "Mauler Man" Moze is the living example of what a former 97 pound weakling can become if he sets his mind to it. As a small boy in Michigan, young Wladek Moze was frail, sickly, and forever catching colds. At school even the small kids picked on him. Running from the playground to the shelter of the cloak-room was all the exercise that he got. Offspring of sturdy Polish immigrant stock, Wladek Moze was a physical paradox. Then one day on a trip to the library to do research for a boy scout project, he came across a book on health. Always aware of his shortcomings, young Wladek decided to borrow the book and see if maybe he could find something in it to help him. He did.

MAULER MAN

The book said coffee was bad for anyone taken in great amount, and not good at all for children.

ANNOUNCER

From that moment on he quit coffee and hasn't had any since.

MAULER MAN

It was cold where I grew up, very cold. So we drank a lot of liquids to keep warm. A great deal of this was coffee. I drank it three or four times a day. Everyone did. It was cold. But I decided if the book said coffee was bad for children then I would give it up.

ANNOUNCER

Wladek didn't know it then, but he had taken the first step in developing a personal philosophy that might lead him to the professional wrestling championship of North America.

MAULER MAN

I also grew more aggressive on the playground. I began to fight back.

ANNOUNCER

Two years after this decisive step young Wladek went back to the very same library and checked out another book on health.

MAULER MAN

That second book on health had an outline for a diet that, combined with a regular set of progressive exercises, was guaranteed to add weight and muscle to a withered frame and develop the stamina of a gladiator. One of the big requirements was patience. Patience I got.

ANNOUNCER

Now young Wladek had the plan and a blue print for a magnificent body. He also had two overdue books. Everyday the diet was followed and so were the exercises. By the time he was sixteen, young Wladek's frame no longer looked like a boney clothesline for wrinkled flesh. Instead, it had meat on it. Plenty of meat and plenty of muscle and plenty of natural-born competitive meanness that began to manifest itself into all sorts of contact sports. He made the starting squad on the football team.

MAULER MAN

I was tough. But I never got enough because the referee always blew the whistle and I wanted to keep going. I got lots of penalties for that.

ANNOUNCER

Mauler Man searched for other sports which would suit his need for contact. That was how he stumbled into wrestling. He joined the high school wrestling team and became the best amateur wrestler in the state. Out of high school he received plenty of offers to play football but decided instead to follow his new-found passion. The pressures of athletics and his studies became too great for Wladek. He quit college in his junior year right before the N.C.A.A. national championships. Alone and confused he returned home frustrated by the fact that the fame he had possessed a few short weeks before had gone.

MAULER MAN

I didn't know what to do.

ANNOUNCER

Then one day on a trip to the grocery store to buy a loaf of bread for his mother, he passed Otto's gym.

MAULER MAN

I couldn't help but hear the grunts and groans from the open windows. These were the same noises I became used to during my days as a collegiate wrestler. It was like music to my ears. I went up and found what I had been looking for. Two guys were going at it on the mat. I don't remember their names, but one was rated number seven on the National Wrestling Alliance polls. I used to go down to the gym a lot and watch. Then one day I asked Otto if I could go a few rounds with one of the wrestlers. He said, "Sure kid, it's your funeral."

ANNOUNCER

Little did he know that the man he was wrestling was Wolf Man Gursky, the dirtiest wrestler around. Though naive and inexperienced, Wladek Moze's natural ability and clean wrestling enabled him to destroy the Wolf Man.

MAULER MAN

He was a real dirty wrestler. He did things they never would have allowed in college, but I knew I would win if I wrestled clean. I did. Otto asked me if I would like to turn pro and do this for money. I agreed and he signed me on the spot. He had to, I ruined his best wrestler.

ANNOUNCER

From then on Mauler Man, as he was to become known, worked and trained constantly at Otto's gym putting in twelve hours a day on the mats trying to learn the holds and develop a technique. He lived like a monk as Otto shaped him into the magnificent example of a clean wrestler that you see before you. Tough but clean was Otto's motto concerning Mauler Man. Otto has described him as a super man, Hercules, and maybe even a little Charles Atlas thrown in. But he can't be compared to anyone else because he is his own man. And now with the gut determination that he innately possessed, he has now decided to conquer another field of endeavor, that of professional wrestling. He is proof positive of what a person can do when he sets his mind to it. (Several of the members of the audience rise to the occasion in support of the new hero. From the other alleyway another rassler appears amid boos and taunts. He is Don de la Guano. He is dressed in mask and tights with a long cape that is scalloped at the bottom to resemble bat wings. His costume is entirely black like his soul.) And in this corner, from Monterrey, Mexico, a man with a heart as black as a bat, the Northern Mexico light heavy-weight professional champion, Don de la Guano. (Much booing.) This is a preliminary one-fall, no-time-limit match.

(A referee bounds up on stage. He is dressed in suitable attire. He appears to be an ex-rassler himself. He checks the two rassler's trunks and boots and warns them about infractions. All of this comes off in pantomime to the audience. Don de la Guano takes a swing at Mauler Man who retaliates by knocking the "bat" to the floor, much to the Crowd's displeasure. The bell sounds and the match begins. The matches are by no means meant to reenact exactly the real things, but instead to be selective in the holds and movements of actual rasslers. Some degree of stylization will be necessary to achieve this, as actual reproduction would be beyond the capabilities of most actors.)

ANNOUNCER

(Over the P.A.) Good evening wrestling fans. Looks like we have some extraordinary matches on the card tonight. It should be a real extraordinary evening. Our pre-lim pits that ever-unpopular Don de la Guano against a new wrestler hailing out of Michigan, Mauler Man Moze. Some of you might remember him as Wladek Moze, that promising young collegiate wrestler. Well tonight he'll find that this is no Joe College he's going to wrestle. Don de la Guano can be described in just one word, real dirty. Besides that. . . (match begins) . . . well there's the bell and we've just

begun in case you've joined us late. It's Mauler Man Moze against Don de la Guano. There goes Guano with a head lock. By now I bet Moze wishes he was back in school. Moze broke out of it! Whoops, he's back in it again. Guano is gouging Moze's eye. Moze protests to the referee but to no avail as Guano digs in deeper. Moze breaks clean and lets Guano have it with the palm of his hand to the chest. He goes for the bat's feet and has him in a figure four leg lock. Guano pulls a hand full of that bushey Michigan hair and is free on his feet. The referee warns the bat but he disregards the warning and goes for those eyes again. Moze is quick to counter with a right to the mid-section. The crowd seems to take to this young wrestler as is evidenced by the cups flying in the direction of the bat. Moze is off the ropes and onto Guano and he brings the malevolent monster from Mexico to his knees. Looks like the tide has turned and Moze seems to be in control. The crowd wants him to finish Guano's career right now. Moze showing quite a flair as he plays to the crowd. They love him. Guano is up but ends up on the mat again with a hard body slam. Looks like the bat has just about had it as Moze seems to be mounting the ropes in preparation for his favorite hold, The North Country Crush. Outstanding! Guano

has been pinned. Moze is the winner. Looks like this young wrestler is headed for quite a career. (Guano shakily exits the ring amid much booing and a police escort. The Old Lady jumps from her seat and starts to attack Guano with her purse. She curses wildly as the two cops escort her back to her seat.)

OLD LADY

You big oafs get your slimey hands off me before I knock you cockeyed. That Don de la Guano is no good. He never was any good. His mother should have thrown him away and kept the stork. Mauler Man is the greatest! (She sits and enjoys her beer.)

(The match is over as the lighting in the ring shifts to a more general tone. Mauler Man is still in the ring trying to loosen up after the match. He doesn't look tired at all. The Announcer has put down the mike and enters the ring.)

ANNOUNCER

You looked pretty good there boy. Stick with it and you'll do all right. You probably didn't notice but you had a real good thing happen tonight. A good omen.

MAULER MAN

Yeh, what's that?

ANNOUNCER

You see that ol' lady there at the end? She's been coming here every week for the last eight years, never misses a match. They say that she was the one that discovered Joe Bob Jones. Told everybody in the stands that he was gonna be a world champ.

MAULER MAN

Yeh?

ANNOUNCER

Just like with you. She knew it right off.

MAULER MAN

Did she know that he wasn't wrestling. He just rolled around on the mats. You better check him out; I think he wanted to throw the fight. I tried not even fighting hard and I still beat him. When I gave him a forearm to the stomach you'd have thought I hit him with a steam shovel. He just flew into the ropes. (Announcer begins to laugh.) What are you laughing about?

ANNOUNCER

You're just too strong and you don't know how much.

MAULER MAN

When we first started I was kind of just fooling around to see what he was going to do and if he was tough. He starts to act like he's gonna stick his finger in my eye but I guess he missed and he ended up puttin' it in my nose. I sure hope nobody saw that.

ANNOUNCER

(Still laughing) I hope he didn't tear any nose hair out.

MAULER MAN

Then I get him down to the mat with a headlock and he taps me and whispers, "What are you trying to do, hurt me?" Then he says he'll go down with a body slam and the match will be over. I get real pissed off and figure if I really slam him down hard that he'll get mad and wrestle, but he just lay there groaning and telling the ref to count like hell.

ANNOUNCER

(Almost hysterical) You don't really think that he wanted you to win do you? I mean, what would the fans think?

(Calming down) Don't you remember what Otto told you on your first match?

MAULER MAN

He just told me to keep my ears open and to do what I was told.

ANNOUNCER

Yeh, and Guano was the one to tell you what to do.

MAULER MAN

What?

ANNOUNCER

Look, ever since you hurt Wolf Man Gursky fooling around the gym that day we've been counting on you to fill in while he recouperates. We didn't have time to tell you everything.

(Otto, the promoter, enters toward the end of this speech. He is very well dressed and has the build of a rassler. He stands at the edge of the ring listening.)

OTTO

Say could you leave us alone for just a second; there are a few things I'd like to talk over with Wladek.

ANNOUNCER

Sure. (He exits.)

OTTO

You did real well tonight, Mauler Man, but you almost killed poor Guano. He wasn't ready for you to come out shooting.

MAULER MAN

Huh?

OTTO

You've got a lot to learn, but with the help of some good press you'll go a long way. Make lots of money. Just don't get too enthusiastic. Ol' Guano just got out of the hospital. Hemmorhoids.

MAULER MAN

I was just trying to win.

OTTO

Sit down, Wladek. You're a good wrestler and we all don't doubt that one bit. Believe it or not Ol' Guano used to be a pretty fair grappler also. Fact is, he won the amateur title in '49. But he's getting old now; he

has to rely on tricks and experience. Now with you it's different. You still have your strength and speed. When I first heard about you, people kept saying to me, "You think Joe Bob Jones was great, he couldn't shine Moze's shoes." Ever since Wolf Man got hurt, I've had to rely on you. I've found out that you know the right holds, were in great shape, in short, you knew the technique of the sport. I've always needed someone who could fill Joe Bob's shoes. And after seeing you perform tonight, I think you'll do just fine. Wolf Man has been wanting to retire, so I'll be able to devote full time to you. You got the same class Ol' Joe Bob had and that's what makes it in this business. Being a good wrestler has got nothing to do with being able to really beat Guano. The fans only look at your class and style. You are what I've been waiting for. I could get any ol' pro ball player to wrestle, but I need someone like you to fill Joe Bob's shoes. The fans tonight just strengthened my belief that you have what it takes.

MAULER MAN

But that wasn't a match tonight. He was just dancing around.

OTTO

What you don't realize is that Guano was fighting to stay in the ring tonight. I told him I wanted you to win this one tonight and he naturally thought that you knew that you were gonna win. I didn't have time to let you in on all tricks of the sport. I needed somebody to wrestle and you were there. Let me just say again that I'm proud of what you did.

MAULER MAN

You mean that all the matches are rigged, that we're really not wrestling?

OTTO

Let's just say that we cooperate. It takes everybody in the ring including the referee to make you win in the eyes of the fans. Don't worry, it took Joe Bob time before he got into the swing of things.

MAULER MAN

I don't want to be a fake. I just want to be a great wrestler.

OTTO

Look, boy, you're no fake. You know that, I know that, and most important, the fans know that. But you can't

just bust your ass five nights a week year after year. You have to play at being a wrestler. Look, nobody's being fooled. They are just seeing what they want to. Weren't you ever in a school play?

MAULER MAN

It just doesn't seem right to me.

OTTO

I'm not asking you to love it right off. Nothing is that easy. A lot of guys can't take it and get out and do something else. It's hard when you don't know anything else. That's my trouble. But you're different, you're smart. Now look, give it a chance. You show the fans a little class and I guarantee that in no time you'll be a champ. What have you got to lose. I think that you'll enjoy the fame. Their praise and enthusiasm is genuine, I know. I'll get you a ranking on the polls, put your face in the mags. It's not Sports Illustrated, but what the hell. That's all it takes to be a champion. Good press.

MAULER MAN

Look Otto, you've been good to me getting me into pro wrestling. I guess you know what's right. You've been

through it all. I guess I'm just not used to this kind of wrestling and it all seems so different. I guess I should give it a try like you say. I can always get out if I want to, right?

OTTO

Nobody is gonna keep you here if you don't want to stay.

MAULER MAN

Seems like a chance to make some money.

OTTO

I guarantee if you keep up an image you'll make a lot of money.

MAULER MAN

Yeh, I guess it'll be kind of fun out there playing like we really are hurting each other. As long as I win I don't care.

OTTO

That's right, but winning ain't all there is to it. It's what you give the fans. Remember that.

MAULER MAN

What I give the fans?

OTTO

Right, what you give to the fans. That's what is important. Most of the time the fans will want you to win. It'll be a piece of cake. I'm not saying you might not occasionally get a finger in the eye or a knee in the jewels, but it'd only be an accident. You're safe up in this ring. It's when you get out that you'll have to be on your toes. Crowds are the roughest part of this game.

(The Announcer enters at the end of this last speech. He is carrying a new robe for Mauler Man. He sets it on the stool in the corner of the ring. Tucked inside of the robe is a copy of Wrestling World.)

ANNOUNCER

Say Otto, Ol' Mauler Man got a good sign tonight.

OTTO

What's that?

ANNOUNCER

I think Ol' Wanda is on his side.

OTTO

You hear that Wladek? What more could you want? She never used to be much of a wrestling fan herself, but her husband was. He lived for it. Worked all week for

Friday night so's he could go to wrestling. Her husband died but she still keeps coming, a bigger fan than ever.

ANNOUNCER

It's like she's here with her husband in a way.

OTTO

I remember the night Joe Bob threw a flower into the crowd and she caught it. Came up to the ring and gave him a big kiss. He couldn't have picked a nicer person. She comes by the office now and then and'll give us fifteen bucks. I'll send her tickets till the money runs out. Then I'll write her and tell her that she's almost out of money. She'll find a way to come down and give us more.

ANNOUNCER

That's the kind of fans that you want in your corner.

OTTO

She'll probably die in that seat during a main event. Well I better get out of here. You've got another match coming up. I hope I didn't wear your ear out with all that bull-shit, but think about it anyway. It's all what you give the fans. It should be a good card tonight, lots of action. (Climbing out of the ring.) You just keep that class coming across. That's what they want.

MAULER MAN

No problem.

OTTO

(To Announcer.) Take care of him, O.K.? Listen Mauler Man, take it a little easier with this next guy. (Winks.) You won't have any trouble winning this match.

MAULER MAN

Who am I gonna wrestle?

OTTO

He's using the name "The Son of Adolph" this time. Remember, he's a professional wrestler and he's not used to violence. He'll go in eight after you're North Country . . . whatever it is. (He exists.)

MAULER MAN

Crush . . . North Country Crush.

ANNOUNCER

Here, put this robe on. (The Announcer helps him on with his new robe. This time the robe is a little fancier with "Mauler Man" done in sequins on the back.)

MAULER MAN

Sure. Yeh. (He notices the magazine on the stool and picks it up.) Don't want to get a cold or nothing like that.

ANNOUNCER

This Son of Adolph is a real dirty fellow. He'll make Don de la Guano look like an anemic nun.

MAULER MAN

But I'm supposed to win.

ANNOUNCER

That doesn't make any difference. He's still mean. (With extreme caution.) He carries things in the ring with him.

Things like pencils, bottle openers, brass knuckles. Anything that will hurt. He hides them in his trunks. Why, I remember one night that he had something and started scratching the other guy's eye out. The referee started to search him but he just stuck it in his mouth. About that time the other guy hit him a good one up the side of the head. He swallowed whatever he had. So now instead of trying to hide things in his trunks, he just belches them up whenever he wants to get dirty.

MAULER MAN

Yeh?

(The arena comes to full life as the vendors begin selling. Mauler Man limbers up in nervous anticipation, then relaxes reading Wrestling World.)

ANNOUNCER

Good evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to wrestling. We've got an exciting match coming up, but before we begin I would like everyone to check their programs for the night's card. In the top right hand corner you will notice a number. This number makes you eligible for one of the door prizes that we will be giving away between matches tonight. So if you will all look at your program I'll draw a number from the fish bowl that Miss Wrestling, Verlma Joe Vernal is bringing up to the ring. (She approaches the ring amidst whistles and catcalls. She

is dressed in a one-piece bathing suit. Her hair is frosted and she is all smiles.) Let's see. . . (He draws a number.) The lucky number is 1128. Who has 1128? 1128.

FAT LADY

I got it, I got it. It's my number. Here it is right here.

ANNOUNCER

Bring it right up here Miss. . .

FAT LADY

Botts. Mrs. Lavern Botts. (With much difficulty she enters the ring and goes center to the Announcer.)

ANNOUNCER

Well, Mrs. Potts. . .

FAT LADY

Botts. (She grabs mike.) I'm very happy to be here and I love wrestling.

ANNOUNCER

We're certainly glad you're having a good time and because you had the lucky number tonight you've won six free tickets to wrestling. What do you think about that?

FAT LADY

I think that is just great. I love wrestling.

ANNOUNCER

You come here often do you?

FAT LADY

I've been coming regular now for about three years. I like it. I lose a lot of tension when I come here. My doctor told me I was cheating him cause I had a nervous disorder at one time and was taking these hormone shots every week to cure it. I had gone to see him steady for about two months and then I started to the matches. I just quit going to see him. About six months later, I saw him and he asked me where I'd been. I said I'd been going to the matches to relieve tension and he up and told me that I'd been cheating him. Have you ever heard anything like that in your life? It sure beats having to pay him and get all those shots.

ANNOUNCER

You sure sound like a happier person. Who's your favorite wrestler?

FAT LADY

My favorite? Well, I like 'em all. Everyone of 'em.

ANNOUNCER

Well, thank you, Mrs. Potts, and we hope you have a good time the rest of the evening.

FAT LADY

Botts. The name is Botts, Lavern Botts. And I certainly will.

ANNOUNCER

Will what?

FAT LADY

Have a good time. (She waves to an imaginary camera as she exits.)

ANNOUNCER

Well, I can see that we are just about ready to begin the next match so I better trot over to the announcing booth to give a hold by hold account of the match between The Fabulous Son of Adolph and that popular newcomer, Mauler Man Moze.

(German "umpah" music is heard as The Fabulous Son of Adolph goose-steps down the alleyway. He is dressed in black trunks and brown tights. He is wearing a red satin cape with a swastika on the back. His shirt is khaki

and bears armbands on each sleeve. He is wearing a black tie. As he enters, there are shouts from the Crowd of "Nazi pig," "Jew killer," "go back to the motherland," etc. The Tough Guy jumps up and proclaims that he was in the big war and he "ain't about to take no crap from no pipsqueak squarehead." He is restrained by the cops as he bares his chest to display the Stars and Stripes tatooed there. The Crowd reacts with a hearty cheer. Adolph enters the ring and proceeds to "heil Hitler" to all four corners of the ring. The referee enters and begins to inspect the two rasslers. Adolph stands at attention during this procedure as if at inspection. A brief argument ensues between the referee and Adolph concerning a Luger tucked in Adolph's tights, but an agreement is reached and the Announcer is given the gun.)

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and girls, our next match of the evening will be a one-fall, no-time-limit match. In this corner, formally of Berlin, Germany, now residing in the jungles of Paraguay, weighing 310 pounds, The Fabulous Son of Adolph. (Boos) And in this corner, that dynamite new wrestler, a real clean fighter, from Petoskey, Michigan, the inventor of The North Country Crush, Mauler

Man Moze. (There are tremendous cheers that surprise Mauler Man at first and then he begins to play them.) And the referee for tonight's match, that former great, Dandy Davy Duncan. (The Crowd is unaware of who Dandy Davy was and a few voice their wonder. The bell sounds and the match begins.) It's nice to see Dandy Davy out of retirement. He was one of the truly great wrestlers and many people credit him with the Flying Sledge, the hold that made him so devastating. His style is or was similar to that boy up in the ring now, Mauler Man Moze. Here's the Mauler Man with a head lock on Adolph. Yes, Moze has certainly captured the hearts of the crowd. Adolph breaks free and counters with a kick to the stomach. Moze hails out of Petoskey, Michigan. Adolph gouges to the eyes but Mauler Man counters with a knee breaker. By the crowd's reaction you can tell that Adolph has little sympathy among them. Moze's style certainly has changed from those early matches we watched him in. He seems more professional in all his holds. Moze has the Kraut in a modified Boston Crab. Adolph brings Moze to his feet with a grab at the trunks of Moze. This is brought to the attention of the referee who obviously didn't see it. Adolph now has Mauler Man in his sadistic hold, the Arian Claw. Mauler Man obviously in much pain, but he breaks it

with a forearm to the stomach. He is still dazed. Adolph is right on him with another one of his brutal torture holds, the Gas Oven. I bet I can guess who taught him those. Mauler Man is to the mat. The referee counts. . . one. . .two. . .but he manages to raise a shoulder. Adolph now jumps on his face. Mauler Man is flat on the mat again. Adolph is now mounting the ropes for his coup de grace, the Blitzkrieg. (Adolph mounts the ropes and jumps, but through some superhuman effort Mauler Man moves and Adolph jumps with great force on the bare mat, causing himself much pain. Mauler Man counters with The North Country Crush.) Adolph misses. Mauler Man is up on the ropes with his North Country Crush. Adolph is down. . . one. . .two. . .three. The match is over and Mauler Man is the winner. (Mauler Man's hand is raised in victory. The Announcer climbs into the ring to get an interview with Adolph who is slowly getting to his feet.) Well folks, or folks, whatever the case may be, I'm gonna see if I can get a few words with the badly battered butcher from Berlin. Adolph. . .Adolph, excuse me, but can we get a few words with you about the terrible beating you just received?

ADOLPH

I was chited! Und you can call me mein Fuehrer!

ANNOUNCER

Sorry about that mein Fuehrer. Can you tell me what happened?

ADOLPH

(He grabs the mike and begins preaching to the masses.)
I vas chited by dat Zionist Pollack from Michigan! Und
I tell you die Fuehrer vill not tolerate dis disgrace!

ANNOUNCER

That's a pretty bold accusation that you made about Mauler
Man. He's known all over as a very clean wrestler.

ADOLPH

Vas ist los?

ANNOUNCER

I mean all of these fans saw it and they'll tell you it
vas, I mean, was, clean.

ADOLPH

Do you doubt your zupreme master of a zupreme race? I
vas chited on! Und if you Commies vud haf let me kip
mein veapon, I vud haf vun!

ANNOUNCER

But that would have been illegal.

ADOLPH

Not in za mutter country! Zare ve vrestle like men! Zare ve haf no little kinder rules. Ve haf rules for men! But how is und inferior race to know zees rules? I am vasting mein time in dis country. I vill go back to Zouth Amerika und vrestle mein fellow Germans. Zare I vill vin! Zare I vill conquer mankind, za world, und everything else! Heil Hitler! Heil Hitler! Heil Hitler! (He exits with a heavy escort.)

ANNOUNCER

Well fans, there you have it. Can you believe it? The Son of Adolph. Well, let me see if I can get over to talk to Mauler Man. He seems to be autographing a few pictures and talking with his fans. He displayed a devastating grappling match right here in this very ring a few moments ago. Excuse me, Mauler Man, we'd like to let our audience share some of your feelings about the last match.

MAULER MAN

Well, you know it was a tough one, but I pride myself on being a clean wrestler, one that you don't mind letting your kids watch.

ANNOUNCER

Well spoken. You certainly gave a performance tonight that any mother would be proud of. What about all those things Adolph said about you cheating?

MAULER MAN

Well, as you know there are a lot of people out to undermine the very foundations of this great country. Hippies, Yippies, to name just a few. People can see that they use the same tactics as that Adolph character. I go at it hard, but I keep it clean. I don't pull hair. I don't gouge eyes. I don't take things in the ring with me other than myself. I beat the guy at wrestling. I use my North Country Crush. Some guys fight dirty and that sets them aside. That's their image that they live up to. I'm gonna live up to mine. (Cheers)

(At this point, The Son of Adolph bounds maniacally back into the ring and begins to assault Mauler Man. He is carrying his Luger and firing it wildly in the air, shouting obscenities in his native tongue. He is giving the surprised Mauler Man a thorough thrashing, much to the Crowd's disfavor. For the time being, it looks as if Mauler Man has had it as Don de la Guano joins in the frakus. Appearing drained of all his energy, our hero,

through some superhuman effort that is beckoned from within, begins to deal lethal blows to his adversaries, all clean of course!)

ANNOUNCER

I can't believe it fans. The Fabulous Son of Adolph and Don de la Guano have both attacked the Mauler Man. Can this be possible? Is it legal? Is it just and right? It looks as though Mauler Man is done for. He will no doubt become another link on the Son of Adolph's chain of human bondage. But wait! The Mauler Man seems to be turning the tables. He is exploding with forearms to the mid-section, Flying Mares, Drop Kicks. He's throwing the whole wrestling dictionary at them!

(Don de la Guano and The Fabulous Son of Adolph have fallen into a big heap in the middle of the floor. Mauler Man mounts the ropes.)

ANNOUNCER

I don't believe it! The Mauler Man is going to attempt a Double North Country Crush! It has never been done before! Can he subdue two wrestlers at the same time? (Yes, He can!) Don de la Guano and Son of Adolph have had it! The Mauler Man has done it again!

(By this time the Crowd are in a frenzy and they begin to filter into the ring. They raise Mauler Man to their shoulders. Otto enters and hands a package to the Old Lady. It is the world champion's belt, one of many. She straps it around Mauler Man's waist and gives him a big kiss. The Crowd parades Mauler Man around the ring cheering. They exit the arena still cheering.)

End of Act I

ACT II

(This act opens much the same as the opening of the play. There are four policemen around the ring standing guard as the audience returns from intermission. They are all sporting clubs and warning any audience members who happen to get too close to the ring. There is anticipation of a great event about to happen. The Announcer strolls up to the ring and enters it. The Black Girl starts an audience chant, "We want Mauler Man." Then two (or three?) rasslers approach the ring amid the growing boos and taunts of the audience. The Black Girl throws a paper cup at them and is reprimanded by one of the officers. These objects of discontent are the Armenian Albino, a rassler dressed in all white, and Flung and Dung, the Sinister Siamese Twins. They are joined at the back. These three (two?) are partners in a tag-team match. Flung begins doing knee bends against the corner of the ropes as the Armenian Albino talks strategy with Dung. Suddenly, the Crowd moves its attention to the opposite alleyway as Brave Bobby Blue Feather and Mauler Man enter. Brave Bobby is dressed in full Cherokee regalia. As they enter the ring, Brave Bobby does a brief dance and then sits very stoically in the corner of the ring. Mauler Man plays to the cheers. Mauler Man's robe is much more heavily decorated than previously.)

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen, here it is, a match I know that we've all been waiting for, a best two-out-of-three tag-team-match. No time limit. In this corner, the World Federation and Alliance of Wrestling's top tag-team, from Yutz, Armenia, the Armenian Albino. (Boos) And his partners from Chingow, Siam, Flung and Dung, the Sinister Siamese Twins. (More boos.) And in this corner, straight from the Cherokee nation, Brave Bobby Blue Feather. (Cheering.) And his partner, the National Brotherhood of Wrestling's number one ranked wrestler, from Petoskey, Michigan, the inventor of The North Country Crush, Mauler Man Moze. (Thunderous cheering.)

(Both teams enter the ring to be checked by the referee.)

ANNOUNCER

(Bell sounds.) Here we go fans, a truly exciting match. The first two wrestlers out for each team are Brave Bobby Blue Feather and Flung and Dung. Brave Bobby is brought to his knees with a Yuliption Femur Fracture. Dung, or is it Flung, begins applying his thumbs to the temples of the Brave, while Flung or Dung administers a leg lock. The Brave is in real pain. Flung and Dung begin applying

more pressure. The Brave is begging for mercy but he can't get to his partner for a tag. Looks like he may have to give up. That or I'll bet he never does a rain dance again. It's all over! Brave Bobby has succumbed and that ends the first fall. Remember there are two more falls in this best two-out-of-three tag-team match. Very quick match but they don't call them the Sinister Siamese Twins for nothing. Mauler Man helps Brave Bobby back to the corner to recuperate. The bell sounds! Here comes the Armenian Albino and pounces upon the unsuspecting Moze! Mauler Man is down but he springs up to deliver a forearm to the face of the Albino. The Albino counters and the two wrestlers are in the center of the ring exchanging punches. It looks like the Albino is fading. Yes folks, he's trying to match the Mauler Man blow for blow but is sinking to his knees. He's down. . .one. . . two. . .three! The second fall is over just as quickly as it began. Both teams have traded falls. How's that for excitement! Yes, you see it all here on professional wrestling. This match isn't over yet. We still have one fall to decide and by the looks of things, it could go either way. Both teams are very effective at doling out their respective forms of punishment. Flung and Dung

help the Albino to his corner and try to get him ready for the next fall. He seems to be shaken up as Moze really delivered those punches, all clean of course, to the face of the arch-enemy from Armenia. It looks as though the third fall is about to get underway. He'll start out against the twins. (The bell sounds.) Now fans, we're underway. But what's this? Has Moze gone crazy? He seems to be running in a circle. He is trying a clever ploy to confuse both Flung and Dung. They are falling for it and seem to be losing their balance. They are getting dizzy. Mauler Man suddenly leaps for a Quad-Ankle Take Down! You don't see that very often. This boy has really learned the ropes. Moze quickly tags his partner to deal out some desired revenge. The twins try to get to their feet. Brave Bobby taps Flung on the shoulder. Dung turns around and the Brave lets him have it! The Brave now brings Flung to the turnbuckle and is pounding him senseless. Now the Albino has decided to join in as he has the Brave by the scalp and is administering his own brand of punishment. Now Flung and Dung start in on the Brave. All three wrestlers are really giving him hell right in his own corner with Mauler Man looking on! Why isn't he helping his partner? Is he that clean?

Yes, he's that clean! Brave Bobby finally makes a legal tag and the Mauler Man is a house afire! He has the Twins in a Double Head Lock, and at the same time drop kicks the Armenian adversary! Brave Bobby attempts to come in, but Mauler Man warns him that it would be an infraction of the rules to come in without a legal tag. Mauler Man still has Flung and Dung in a head lock and the Albino is on the mat. I think that Mauler Man kicked him a little low. Moze now stands upon the Albino's chest and won't let him up. He's begging for mercy. Will the referee stop the match? Yes, he does! Its all over! Mauler Man and Brave Bobby have won the match!

(Mauler Man and Bobby's hands are raised in victory. The Referee and Announcer leave the ring and we are transformed away from the atmosphere of the arena and left with just the four rasslers. Slowly they begin to assemble into something other than what they had been during the match.)

ARMENIAN ALBINO

(From the bottom of the pile.) Will you get the hell up now, it's over. Oh, my feet are killing me!

FLUNG

(Rising from the pile with his twin.) What are you bitching about? Have you ever tried to wrestle in a pair of tights with somebody else?

DUNG

It's no picnic for me either, you sweat like a wild ox.

(Flung and Dung begin to emerge from their costume to become two separate people.)

ALBINO

I took my kid to the zoo today and we walked all over hell and back. This is no time to break in a new pair of boots. (He hobbles over to the corner and takes them off.)

FLUNG

Looked like a good house tonight. We must have made a couple of hundred bucks each. How much did you get tonight. . . (To Dung) What's his name?

DUNG

Mauler Man.

FLUNG

What did you get tonight, Mauler Man? Five?

BRAVE BOBBY

Five! Hell, man he's a world champ. He must have got a thousand.

MAULER MAN

I got eight hundred.

BRAVE BOBBY

Ain't as much of a champ as I thought.

ALBINO

Why don't you leave him alone, Vito. You never got any eight hundred bucks.

BRAVE BOBBY

Lots of times.

ALL BUT MAULER MAN

When?

BRAVE BOBBY

Wrestling alligators down in Florida. I got eight hundred fifty a week during the summer.

ALBINO

What's a Wop doing wrestling gators in Florida?

BRAVE BOBBY

I don't know. Maybe they like Italian food.

ALBINO

Yeh, but you never got that kind of money wrestling just one match. Anway, if it wasn't for Mauler Man we wouldn't be getting as much as we are tonight. You really draw them in don't you kid?

MAULER MAN

I guess people like to see me wrestle.

FLUNG

You're the biggest draw since Joe Bob Jones.

DUNG

Easy.

BRAVE BOBBY

I wrestled with Joe Bob and he was a hell of a lot more flashy. He'd have the crowd begging for him to cream somebody.

DUNG

I always wondered what happened to you.

ALBINO

There's no use in comparing. Joe Bob never did reach his peak. He never drew as many as he could have. But. . .
(To Mauler Man.) What did you say your name was?

MAULER MAN

Wladek.

ALBINO

But Walldick here will probably be just as good. How long is up to the fans, but he'll be super. I seen 'em come and I seen 'em go. . .

FLUNG

Yeh, mostly on your back. (They all laugh.)

ALBINO

(Almost proud.) I don't mind a bit. It keeps me working steady. I can wrestle all over this country. I got quite a bit of the long green put away too.

DUNG

You've got more to show for it than I do. I'm getting out to find some other work. This traveling is killing us.

FLUNG

We're gonna go back home and do something exciting like open up a fried chicken place.

BRAVE BOBBY

That's about your style. I will admit that you've got a pretty good gimmick. I mean the Siamese twin bit. I wouldn't mind getting into that. I'm tired of this Indian crap.

DUNG

Look, we'll let you have our costume when we're finished on one condition.

BRAVE BOBBY

What's that?

DUNG

That whoever becomes your partner agrees that you two will be joined at the mouth - permanently!

(Brave Bobby gives Dung the 'ol Italian up-yours fist.)

BRAVE BOBBY

I'm gonna stay with this game and someday you guys might have the chance to wrestle me. You too, Mauler Man. You're not gonna last forever, unless you've got more brains than I give you credit for.

ALBINO

Why are you riding him?

BRAVE BOBBY

I just don't like people who stumble into things without knowing what the hell it's all about. He's got no right to be a wrestler. It ain't fair.

MAULER MAN

I work at it as hard as anybody else. It's not my fault that I just happened to be at the right place at the right time.

BRAVE BOBBY

Ah, what the hell am I worrying about. You don't have what it takes to last. You'll see. I'm gonna stay in this game and someday all of you will get the chance to wrestle with me on a main event.

DUNG

I'd rather sell chicken.

ALBINO

(Trying to change the subject.) What'd you do before you come here, Valbeck?

MAULER MAN

I went to college. Couldn't make my grades cause I wrestled so much, so I dropped out. You know what happened after that, I mean, stumbling into wrestling.

ALBINO

Wow, a college man! You play ball?

MAULER MAN

No, just wrestled.

ALBINO

I played ball in college. . .

BRAVE BOBBY

Here we go again.

ALBINO

. . .almost played in the pros, but I hurt my knee pretty bad and had to give up football. I'm lucky I fell into this or I'd still be picking cotton for \$1.75 an hour. I've been going at it for twenty years. See, you play your cards right and you can stay in this business for a long time. Me, I had to stay in it. I can't do nothing else. I'd thought about becoming a bartender, but my wife thought it might be too dangerous.

BRAVE BOBBY

See there, Mauler Man, look what you have to look forward to.

ALBINO

(Not paying any attention.) You remind me of when I started out. I remember I went to the matches as a spectator when they came to my home town.

MAULER MAN

Where's that?

ALBINO

(Proudly.) Bald Knob, Arkansas.

BRAVE BOBBY

Oh, Jesus!

ALBINO

Used to go all the time. I was a pretty big kid right out of high school. One night they offered to give \$100 to anyone who could stay in the ring with this wrestler. His name was Clancy Brannigan. I got up to the ring to get a closer look when I noticed all these people were staring at me. I guess they thought I was gonna wrestle. Well, the announcer thought that's what I was gonna do

and before I knowed it, I was up there. I started to take my shoes and shirt off. The crowd started to give some bull shit cause they wanted to know what this big dumb hillbilly was doing trying to wrestle this professional. Being young, this kind of pissed me off, so I decided I was gonna win if I had to get killed. I thought that was a good possibility. Now he had to pin me in ten minutes or I got to keep the money. I had it all planned. I was gonna stay close to the ropes. After about five minutes of this, this guy Branigan dragged me out into the middle of the ring and really started to put the squeeze on me. He was about to pin me when I grabbed his hand and bit down real hard on his finger and took the damn thing off. Spit it out right in the middle of the ring. The crowd loved it. There I was in my jeans dancing around in the ring with this big tough wrestler crying like a baby. You should have seen it.

FLUNG

Last time it was his thumb.

ALBINO

I tell you the crowd loved it. That's when I started to wrestle for regular money. Back on the country circuits. I called myself The Bald Knob Brahma. Hell, I still use

that name every once in awhile and sometimes I meet somebody that saw that match. That guy Branigan is still wrestling too. Probably was the first time he'd ever been hurt.

FLUNG

Say, we'd better get out of here. We got another match coming up soon.

ALBINO

Yeh, we'd better get a move on. Say, Balbick. . .

MAULER MAN

Wladek.

ALBINO

Yeh, well anyway, what other names do you wrestle under, in case we happen to run into you again.

MAULER MAN

Just Mauler Man. That's all.

ALBINO

That so, huh? Well look, maybe we can wrestle again sometime.

BRAVE BOBBY

Only next time I want to be against you and see how tough you really are.

FLUNG

Maybe you could rub him on the stomach and he'd fall asleep.

ALBINO

I'd wrestle with Mauler Man anytime.

BRAVE BOBBY

You'd wrestle with anyone anytime.

ALBINO

You'll be around a long time, Valbink. (Shakes his hand.)

DUNG

Where do you go from here?

MAULER MAN

I think Otto wants me to stay around here for awhile.

DUNG

Well, we sure enjoyed wrestling with you.

FLUNG

See you around. If you ever get the craving for some chicken sometime, come look us up.

MAULER MAN

Sure thing. We'll see you again. Thanks.

ALBINO

Maybe we can be the good guys next time. It won't be too hard for Vito to convince anybody.

(Once again, Brave Bobby delivers an Italian salute.)

BRAVE BOBBY

I doubt if he'll be around that long, but I'll take you up on it.

(They all exit. The Announcer enters and is carrying another robe that he folds and sets upon the stool. This robe is again fancier than the one before it.)

ANNOUNCER

You'd better limber up. There is another match coming up. Put this on so the crowd will know who you are.

MAULER MAN

Yeh, I'd better put it on. I don't want to get cold.
Say, you think I ought to quit, I mean while I'm on top?
You don't think Otto would get mad do you?

ANNOUNCER

(Looking him over carefully.) No, he'd just find somebody else. It'd take awhile, but he'd find somebody else, but you'd be crazy to quit now. You've got it made. Otto has made a lot of good wrestlers, but you and Joe Bob were something different. Quit if you want to, but you'd be crazy.

MAULER MAN

This Joe Bob, what happened to him?

ANNOUNCER

One night he was coming back to his dressing room after beating this kid from Oklahoma. There was a lot of blood. And it looked like it was a pretty brutal affair. Otto did real good getting blood splattered everywhere. But this kid had a father that thought all of it was real and he attacked Joe Bob with a pen knife. He died before we could get an ambulance. We didn't know that he was really

hurt. Thought he was just fooling because there was so much blood around anyway. It's funny how some people start taking things too serious. Joe Bob could have been the greatest ever. (The arena starts to come alive. Two stage hands appear and set up a backdrop and camera for T.V. interview.) Look, straighten yourself up a little cause you're gonna be on T.V. Come on, let's get in position. Otto has prepared some answers to the questions I'm gonna ask you. Think you can handle that?

MAULER MAN

I think so.

ANNOUNCER

Good. Just read the cards after I ask the questions. Put a little feeling into it, O.K.?

(They position themselves in front of the camera and the interview starts.)

ANNOUNCER

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to all-star wrestling. Before tonight's match, we have here to talk to you in person, a wrestler who needs no introduction in

these parts. He's wrestled here with quite a bit of success and has become somewhat of an idol. I'm talking of course, about Mauler Man Moze. The reason we have him here tonight is to answer the allegations that he has made toward a large segment of his devoted fans. I'm talking about the youth. Moze is a handsome giant. He's got it all: the world's championship, money in the bank, a college education. On the surface you would think he is the kind of athlete that any young fan could identify with. He strikes you as a man a teenager would love to communicate with.

MAULER MAN

(Reading.) Thank you.

ANNOUNCER

The all-American boy. The kids call him the all-American put-down. (Mauler Man is confused.) Why is that Mauler Man?

MAULER MAN

(Hesitating.) After a match with Doctor Z, the announcer asked if I had anything to say to the nation's youth and

I said, "Tell the kids to take a bath and get a haircut."
(Under his breath.) I never wrestled any Doctor Z. . .

ANNOUNCER

As I understand it, the levis and bead set were shocked and started to desert you. They considered you another money-grabbing phoney.

MAULER MAN

I believe in the clean way of wrestling and living, like listening to your parents, attending church and school. (A boo is heard from the audience.) I don't appreciate and I won't tolerate, young adults who smoke or drink pot. If most of these people who are deserting me fit into that category, then good riddance to them. (More booing.)

ANNOUNCER

Moze is a four-letter word to a big part of young generation wrestling fans.

MAULER MAN

Any decent youngsters wouldn't stop liking me. The nice kids know what I stand for. Maybe it's square to believe

in mother and the flag and apple pie. I believe in it and I don't care who knows it. If the Hippies and Yippies are bad mouthing me, then I want them to know I don't care. (Mauler Man begins playing the part.)

ANNOUNCER

Who said anything about Hippies or Yippies?

MAULER MAN

Well, those are the only ones who could possibly knock me. I hope to help the rest of America's youth get back on the ball.

ANNOUNCER

Seems like a strange statement from a man who seems to have alienated himself from a big part of America's youth.

MAULER MAN

As I said before, the youth I'm interested in are those who believe in what I stand for. Things like honor, love, and country. (A cheer from someone.)

ANNOUNCER

There you have it wrestling fans, you can take him or leave him. He may not be what you like, but he'll

always be the Mauler Man. Now before we begin the next match, we'll draw again for our big prize of the evening, so if our Miss Wrestling would come out with the fish bowl I'll draw another number. Here she is. . .let's see (He draws.) The lucky number is 2134. . .2134. . .Who's got 2134?

OLD CHICANO

Me. I got it! I got 2134! It's me. (He approaches the Announcer.)

ANNOUNCER

Congratulations, Mr. . .?

OLD CHICANO

Thank you very much.

ANNOUNCER

Yes, well our grand prize of the evening is being brought by our own Miss Wrestling. Here she is. It's a deluxe toaster! What do you think about that.

OLD CHICANO

It's nice, I guess. Don't you have any more free tickets?

ANNOUNCER

(Walking away from the man.) Well, there goes a happy man folks. Now it looks as though we are close to the start of the match.

(Dancing down the alleyway comes the Fabulous Randy Starr. He is dressed in salmon pink tights and matching top. He is to appear as a male ballet dancer, which he is. He walks out head held high à' la prima ballerina. He begins his warm-ups, which are dance warm-ups. There is commotion in the Crowd as another individual enters from the alleyway. He is dressed in a tuxedo and is carrying a cello and stool. He places the stool in the middle of the ring and begins to tune-up.)

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and gentlemen, tonight's match is a special benefit match for the civic symphony orchestra. In this corner, weighing 236 pounds from Petoskey, Michigan, Mauler Man Moze. (Moderate cheering.) And in this corner, his opponent from the city ballet, weighing 165 pounds, you've seen him in Swan Lake and now you'll see him wrestle the world's champion, the ever-graceful Fabulous Randy Starr. (He bows

to the audience.) And for your added enjoyment, these two performers will be accompanied by Maestro Karl Bockwinkle, first chair cellist with the civic symphony. (Karl stands and bows.) He will accompany the wrestlers with Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture." (Cheers.) And now, I'll let the music take over the commentary.

(The wrestlers meet in the middle of the ring with the Referee. Karl listens intently and when the mid-ring meeting is over, he is poised and ready to begin. The Referee pulls a baton from his trousers and taps it on the turnbuckle. The Announcer pulls out a bell lyre and taps it gently to start the match. They wrestle around Karl and he intently plays undistrubed. Mauler Man is having some difficulty wrestling in the traditional way as he is met with Battements, Plies, and Rond de Jambes. The Announcer breaks in several times to give encouragement to Karl and warn the fans to be on the look-out for Fabulous Randy's notorious hold, the Nutcracker. Mauler Man is having a good deal of trouble trying to catch Randy, but when he does, it is not long before he is beaten by The North Country Crush. Karl finishes at that exact moment and stands to take a bow. Randy pops up as if he had never been beaten and also takes a bow. They

both exit to bravos and Mauler Man goes to his corner exhausted. The arena settles down as Otto enters.)

OTTO

You did good, Mauler Man. The crowd really ate that match up. We'll have to try that again sometime.

MAULER MAN

I looked like a fool.

OTTO

Did you see the reaction of the crowd. They loved it. I had no idea that you had a knack for these novelty matches.

MAULER MAN

Some world champion.

OTTO

Look, don't take it so hard. A lot of guys are world champs and most of them would give anything to have a crowd react to them the way they do to you. The fans are concerned about what you do and say. These kinds of matches are good for press and besides, the audience gets bored when they know what you'll do and say all the time. Got to give them variety.

MAULER MAN

I just don't like to be a fool.

OTTO

Is that what's bothering you? Look, you're no fool. We both know that and besides what do you care about what the crowd thinks? You only need them when you wrestle. They pay the bills. They don't mean a thing when you're not Mauler Man.

MAULER MAN

Yes, but. . .

OTTO

(Becoming rather put out.) Look, if you'd rather not wrestle, I'll find somebody that don't mind. You've made enough money. You'll find something to do. All I have to do is to tell the press that you've become a missionary or something.

MAULER MAN

All I want to do is wrestle with some dignity.

OTTO

Man, that won't get you across the street. Look at every wrestler. They have to put up with the same garbage that you have to. It's nothing new. But they do it because that is what you are supposed to do. If I'd a told Joe Bob to go out and wrestle in his underwear, he'd have done it. Because he understood the way things are. That is what you have to do to make the money, that's what's important.

MAULER MAN

But how come it can't be different with me?

OTTO

(Long pause.) Because you're no different. You're the same as anybody else.

MAULER MAN

But I thought I was the greatest. . .

OTTO

You are what the fans think you are. That's my business.

MAULER MAN

Look, I don't want to quit, Otto. I still want to wrestle.
I can't do anything else.

OTTO

I just don't want you to do something you don't think you
can do.

MAULER MAN

I'll still wrestle.

OTTO

Remember, if you don't like it, I'll change it. I won't
guarantee that you'll draw at the gate.

MAULER MAN

O.K.

OTTO

I better go. You have another match coming up real
soon.

MAULER MAN

I only asked, Otto, cause I didn't know what it's all

about. You understand that don't you. It's not you,
it's just my pride. . .

OTTO

You don't have room for that.

MAULER MAN

Just tell me what you want me to do, Otto.

OTTO

Just remember, it's all a game. Just a part.

MAULER MAN

Yeh, that's all.

OTTO

You'll be pleased with this match. It's with a really
good wrestler. He was an N.C.A.A. champ, all-American
cornerback in college. He just graduated and wanted
to make a little money without too much pain. His name
is Rocky Steele. Real dynamite. The crowd will love
him.

MAULER MAN

Rocky Steele?

OTTO

Yeh, he wrestled in the Olympics. Won a silver medal.
There is a hell of a crowd tonight.

MAULER MAN

Sounds great.

OTTO

By the way, I have an idea for you. A new style. It
will give you a little more versatility.

MAULER MAN

What's wrong with the old style?

OTTO

Nothing. Except that it's just a little dated. People
are tired of heroes. They want anti-heroes. Don't ask
me why. Here get into this. The crowd will go wild
over it. (He gives him a package and begins to leave.)

MAULER MAN

Maybe the change will do me good.

OTTO

You better hurry. The match is about to begin. Look, just don't worry. (He exits.)

(Mauler Man opens the package and pulls out a new costume and begins to put it on. The Announcer enters the ring as Mauler Man gets into his Polish Sausage Grinder costume. He wears an old pair of combat boots that have been converted to wrestling shoes, a cut-off pair of dungarees with a red bandana in the back pocket, and a blood-stained tee-shirt with Mauler Man on the back in sausage-like letters. "America: Love it or Leave it" is on the front. He dresses as the dialogue takes place. With each new article of clothing that he puts on, it is as if he becomes a different character.)

ANNOUNCER

This should be a good match tonight. This Rocky Steele is really a showman. He has what the fans like to see, you know, the wholesome, clean-cut athletic type. You know.

MAULER MAN

Yeh, I know.

ANNOUNCER

What do you think of your new costume? Should do all right.

MAULER MAN

I don't know, I've just got it. I'm not used to wrestling with a costume on.

ANNOUNCER

Otto really came up with a great idea. This new gimmick will do a lot for you. The crowd will love it. I've always said that with a good promoter a wrestler with a lot on the ball could become almost immortal, could wrestle forever.

MAULER MAN

Forever?

ANNOUNCER

Wladek you've just started. When this Sausage Grinder thing gets worn out Otto's gonna have you wrestle a live bear. There's nobody doing that nowadays. It has some great possibilities.

MAULER MAN

I've never wrestled a live bear before. (Puts on his mask that looks like a link of sausage.)

ANNOUNCER

Shouldn't be any trick to it. He'll be muzzled so he won't be dangerous. It'll really bring the crowds in.

MAULER MAN

There's probably a lot of money in wrestling bears.

ANNOUNCER

Bound to be.

MAULER MAN

You know, now that I have this mask on I don't feel near as funny about going out and wrestling this Rocky Steele.

ANNOUNCER

(Still engrossed in the monetary possibilities of bear wrestling.) What?

MAULER MAN

I'm not used to wrestling in a mask. I mean I've never worn one before but it doesn't seem to bother me. It almost feels good. I bet that sounds crazy.

ANNOUNCER

Mask looks fine. It may not look like much, but Otto took a lot of time considering the possibilities. (Still pondering bear wrestling.) You know I remember a guy back in '52 that used a bear. His name was . . . Volga something.

MAULER MAN

(Goes to the corner and does a quick knee bend and then turns out with a fierce growl. He is obviously pleased with himself as he utters an excited laugh.) The Polish Sausage Grinder!

ANNOUNCER

(Still trying to think of the name.) No that's the name you're using. I know, it was The Volga Boatman and his Russian Bear! What the hell happened to him?

MAULER MAN

(Still warming-up in the guise of his new character.) I could probably wear a mask when I wrestled a bear couldn't I?

ANNOUNCER

I'd have to talk to Otto about it, but I'm sure he'd want you to. It'd probably have to be something to do with bears.

MAULER MAN

How about a forest ranger?

ANNOUNCER

Could be. Something like that. If you were a broad we could dress you up as Goldy Locks. Now that would bring people in.

MAULER MAN

What's this Steele guy wrestle like? I mean does he have a . . . you know . . . gimmick?

ANNOUNCER

Nope. He's just a wholesome son of bitch. Looks like he just stepped out of a jock strap commercial.

MAULER MAN

(Hesitating.) Do I beat him?

ANNOUNCER

(Long pause.) No. You see he's new and Otto wants his

career to get started off good. That doesn't mean it won't be a good match . . .

MAULER MAN

You mean I'm gonna throw this one?

ANNOUNCER

Look, you've been in wrestling long enough to know that it's not like real sports. I mean with winners and losers. Everybody's a winner. That's the way . . .

MAULER MAN

I understand.

ANNOUNCER

Do you? I mean it's not too late to get out. You're the boss. But this is the way things are. You got to accept them. A lot of guys helped you get to the top. We are all working together.

MAULER MAN

I know. It's just hard when you've been on top for so long. It's nice being a winner. I never did much losing. I don't know if I can.

ANNOUNCER

Yeh, but Mauler Man isn't wrestling anymore. You got something different now, a new wrestler.

MAULER MAN

But I know who I am even if I'm wearing this get-up.

ANNOUNCER

Look, that Ol' Mauler Man will always be a winner to the fans. He ended his career on the top. You're starting with something new. It's different now.

MAULER MAN

Yeh, I guess it is different.

ANNOUNCER

You'll see. Once you get into that ring dressed like you are it'll all be different. Haven't you ever wanted to see what it was like to be one of those guys you always beat. It'll be sort of a catharsis. Yeh, that's what it is a catharsis.

MAULER MAN

If you say so. It's gonna be hard to be the bad guy. I don't know if I can.

ANNOUNCER

Everybody can. You'll do all right. Are you just about ready?

MAULER MAN

This is it?

ANNOUNCER

This is it. Rocky Steele has a hold that he calls the Star Spangled Slammer. It's a lot like your North Country thing, so be sure not to use it.

MAULER MAN

Crush. It's called the North Country Crush.

ANNOUNCER

Anyway don't use it. You'll moon tonight right after the Star Spangled Slammer.

MAULER MAN

Moon?

ANNOUNCER

Yeh, look at the moon. (Indicating the sky) When you're flat on your back you look at the moon. Get it?

MAULER MAN

Oh, yeh.

ANNOUNCER

Well, it's time to start. (Looking him over.) You sure look different. That should make it easier.

MAULER MAN

I sure feel different. (He begins warming-up as the new character.)

ANNOUNCER

Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Tonight's match is a one-fall, five-minute time limit, lights out match. The final match of tonight's card. In this corner, weighing in at 236 pounds, from Petoskey, Michigan, inventor of the North Country Crush, Mauler Man Moze, the Polish Sausage Grinder. (There are boos from the audience and shouts such as, "dumb Pollack," etc.) And in this corner (Rocky Steele bounds up to the ring amid cheers from the audience. He is dressed in red, white, and blue tights. He is wearing a warm-up jacket that has "U.S.A." on the front and the familiar olympic circles on the back. He wears his medal around his neck.), direct from

his medal-winning appearance at the Summer Olympics, where he brought back a silver medal for the red, white and blue, weighing 195 pounds from Sterling, Colorado, Rocky Steele. (Cheers.)

(While Mauler Man is exchanging insults with the crowd, Rocky Steele is enthusiastically warming up. They are checked by the referee and the match begins. Mauler Man has obviously changed his style.)

ANNOUNCER

Looks like a good match, fans. Mauler Man seems to be going at it quite hard. He lets Rocky have it to the face and back of the neck with his closed fist. The ref warns him to keep that palm open. Moze has Steele in a headlock and is applying the finger to the ol' eyeball. Steele breaks out and brings Moze to his knees with a Flying Mare. Boy can this kid wrestle! Mauler Man in a Quarter Nelson, now a Half Nelson, a Three Quarter Nelson, and now a Full Nelson! Can you believe that! But Moze grabs Steele's trunks and brings him to the mat. The Polish Sausage Grinder is now trying to strangle Rocky. Will you look at the crowd! They are all on their feet screaming at Moze to let him go. This

just adds fuel to the diabolical Moze's fire. He's the man they love to hate. But miraculously, Rockey breaks free and delivers another Flying Mare to Moze. It has him stunned. He's reeling. He's against the ropes. Rockey is now bouncing off the ropes preparing to deliver his Star Spangled Slammer! The crowd is yelling for Moze's blood. Rockey Steele devastates him with his Star Spangled Slammer! He wins! The crowd is wild! Steele wins!

(Throughout the match a voice is heard over the loud speaker giving the amount of time left in the match. As it ends Mauler Man is still in the ropes and the crowd is on stage. The Old Lady pours a soft drink on Moze. Rockey also goes over to the helpless Moze and removes his belt. The crowd carries Rockey out on their shoulders. The arena is empty as Moze slowly, with great effort, untangles himself from the ropes. He looks around, takes off his mask and exits.

End of Play

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