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Chris Velardi: h

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writing it. There was another writer writing it that I was working with. By the

just texted him. He's like, "Yeah, dude, it happened. I don't care. Go ahead and tell it. LOL." That's what kind of guy he is. It's like, yeah, he doesn't care. Nothing could embarrass Cole after everything he has gone through at WWE.

[00:07:00] Yeah, I did, some people, I sent chapters ahead of friends so much to make sure I wasn't offending, but just to, "Hey, this is how it happened, right? This is how I remember it" They gave notes back and everything, but I haven't heard anyone, especially, the book's been out now for three and a half weeks or whatever it is and I haven't gotten any like, "Oh boy, this person's really upset that you wrote about this," which is either a combination of them having not [00:07:30] read it, or more likely, I'd like to think the most likely, is them being like, "Oh yeah that's a fun story. Go for it. I think it's good."

Chris Velardi: These are big people. You don't necessarily want to make them angry at you, I would imagine.

Brian Gewirtz: That's true.

Chris Velardi: Not a great idea. In terms of your experience at ~~WWE~~ and really telling these stories and building these characters, [00:08:00] did you ever run into situations where you've got this story that this narrative, this character, where the character him or herself says, "You know what? I really don't want to be there and be that guy or that person?" How do you deal with that kind of thing? Because it's not like you've also done this, it's not writing a sitcom. It's a [00:08:30] different type of show.

Brian Gewirtz: That happened pretty much every week, and you're right, it is different. Roddy Piper, who was my favorite growing up, and I wrote about and dedicated the book to him and my dad, there was this show called Legends House that WWE did awhile back that basically had all these legends in a reality show ~~space~~ ~~thing~~. It was one of their early WWE network [00:09:00] concepts. It was a crazy, wacky reality show where they brought Gary Busey in of all people, to talk to them and teach them meditation and everything. Busey was basically trying to say, "You're just playing a character. You don't have to worry about, you don't have to blend the two." Roddy, very sagely said, "Well, here's the difference between you and me, Gary [00:09:30] Busey. When you go on the street, people go, 'That's Gary Busey.' They don't say that's..." I think the character's name was Joshua or something like that, from Lethal Weapon or something. When I go on the street, they don't say, there goes Roderick Toombs. There's Rowdy Roddy (r)23.7 (D

My instinct, my reflex to that was always somewhere in the area of, well, I don't think Michael Criton was chasing down dinosaurs, but he somehow wrote Jurassic Park [00:14:00] and selling sequels to it. It's like, if you're good, you're good, and if you're not, you're not. Give us a chance and let's try to work together.

Chris Velardi: Fair. Obviously trust that you built, the relationship you built with Dwayne Johnson, The Rock, has led to where you are now. Talk about that process and getting from writer, WWE, to [00:14:30] being a right hand man to some degree in this production company.

Brian Gewirtz: I write about it obviously in the book and everything, but my entry into WWE was, basically, Dwayne was essential in that. Again, it's ~~so~~ ^{not} it's actually also a Syracuse related entry, I guess.

Chris Velardi: Which we love. That's [00:15:00] what we're here to talk about, really.

Brian Gewirtz: The short version of it is, at Syracuse, and we graduated as you know, as I'm sure everyone knows, the same year. We were in the same freshman dorm, Day Eight. I had Professor Thompson, Professor Robert Thompson.

Chris Velardi: Who's still here?

Brian Gewirtz: Yeah, and I actually [00:15:30] had him freshman year. Most other freshmen didn't have him freshman year, because I had already taken Comm 107 in the Syracuse pre-college program in between junior and senior year of high school. I

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hey, maybe you're great, maybe [00:17:30] you suck. I don't know, but I'll give

Brian Gewirtz: Yeah, exactly.

Chris Velardi: One of the things that's interesting, [00:20:30] I think, about you getting into WWE, is that you came in as a fan, right?

Brian Gewirtz: Yeah.

Chris Velardi: You were a fan before you were an employee.

Brian Gewirtz: What's funny is when we went, and I'll out us here as far as our age. Our freshman year was fall of '91. Insane. That sounds like, it does ~~seem like~~ it's that long ago, but it is possible. Incredibly long ago. I can't even [00:21:00] compartmentalize in my head how long ago that is.

Anyways, WWE36-:zzz

Brian Gewirtz: Oh no. Yeah, we'd be in lounge or whatever. "Brian who's this?" [00:23:30] I'm like, "Well, kind of looks like Lenny Dykstra." "You're right." The next thing you know, he's on Letterman.

Chris Velardi: Another podcast waiting to happen, I think. Maybe a Day Eight ~~cup~~ podcast.

Brian Gewirtz: Day Eight reunion podcast, yeah. Gar, it was like, I don't know. Whenever I watched The Boys on Amazon, kind of reminds me of Gar a little bit because it's like, I don't know what the most useless superpower would be if you were a superhero, but I would say the ability to [00:24:00] emulate every batting stance of every baseball player that ever existed is one of those cool but somewhat

Chris Velardi: It's definitely a niche kind of thing, but man, he's made a life out of ~~that~~ digress. We digress. I do want to ask though, coming into that job, knowing the history, having been a fan, did that color your approach? Did it help [00:24:30] you? Did it hinder you? Did you feel some things that you were like, I got to get past th

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Chris Velardi: That's exciting, and I think that is one of the exciting things about entertainment now, is that to be successful, you've got to be able to be a Swiss Army knife in a lot of ways and be in a lot of places and do a lot of things. But man, for someone who is a creative person and enjoys the process, there can't be anything better.

Brian Gewirtz: Yeah, nolt's funny. Again, I was [00:30:30] tunnel vision on a sitcom writer since third grade, basically. That's what, I studied TRF at Syracuse, television, radio, film, writing. Most of my friends were in TRF production. I was always on the writing side. It was when we all moved out after college to go to LA, we all had that goal in mind, and a lot of us did it. Our friend John Beck, he's [00:31:00] very successful.

Chris Velardi: He wasn't on Day Eight, but he is class of '95.

Brian Gewirtz: No, we'll allow it. He wasn't on Day Eight, but that's true. But yeah, all the people that we used to gather and watch WWF pay per views in college, they're all working in some form of entertainment from those of us who moved out to LA. It's really cool to see. But I never thought I'd be a wrestling writer and I never thought I would, furthermore, be a [00:31:30] creative development person. I didn't even know what that was. It takes some, life takes some interesting twists and turns, but it works out for the best, as you know.

that about any college, I guess. There's this shared experience, but you just run into so many Syracuse people, both for me in the two places that I've lived, New York and Los Angeles in my lifetime. They're everywhere. It's always such a great [00:34:00] connective tissue and force. I got to go back. I've talked to Professor Thompson about coming back. I've been back literally once since I graduated in '95. That was at a 2003 UU TV or Hill TV or Citrus TV, whatever the student run TV station is currently called.

Chris Velardi: It is Citrus now, yeah.

Brian Gewirtz: Okay, Citrus. I went back in 2003. All sudden you look up and that's 20 years ago. [00:34:30] I'll be coming back soon, because it's been far, far too long and it's like stepping in a time machine.

Chris Velardi: One of the things that alumni say when they come back, particularly those who haven't been back for awhile, is something so familiar about coming back that you're instantly home as it were, but also ,it's changed so much. There's so new. There (t)-27.3 ((d s)-1 6.7 (a)20.4 (bo)11 (o)1.6 ()-6Tc -0.101 20.4 (w)-10.4 (24.7((0.3h)