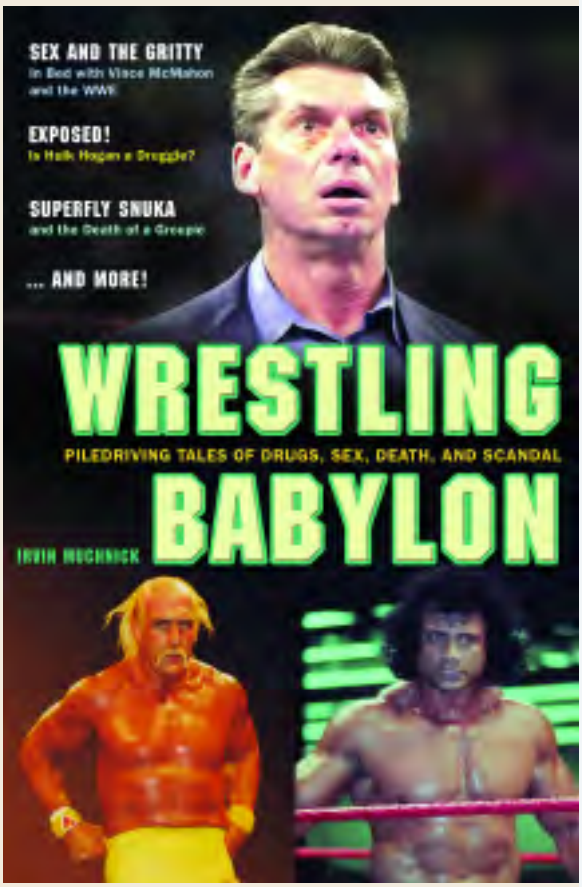


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## Wrestling Babylon

Piledriving Tales of Drugs, Sex, Death, and Scandal

Irvin Muchnick

**ISBN-13: 978-1-55022-761-1**
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**6 x 9", 200 pages, paper**
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Irvin Muchnick — a widely published writer and nephew of the late, legendary St. Louis wrestling promoter Sam Muchnick — has produced a book unlike any other on the astonishing growth of professional wrestling and its profound impact on mainstream sports and society. In *Wrestling Babylon,* he traces the demise of wrestling's old Mafia-like territories and the rise of a national marketing base thanks to cable television, deregulation, and a culture-wide nervous breakdown. Naturally, the figure of WWE's Vince McMahon lurks throughout, but equally evident is the public's late-empire lust for bread, circuses, and blood. As this book demonstrates, the more cartoonishly unreal wrestling got, the more chillingly real it became.

What truly distinguishes *Wrestling Babylon,* however, is Muchnick's ability to show how professional wrestling has become the ur-carnival for a culture that feeds on escapist displays of humiliation, revenge, fantasy characters, and sex. His *People* magazine article on Hulk Hogan blew the lid off the drug abuse of the sport's signature superstar. His award-winning *Penthouse* profile of the ill-starred Von Erich clan was the first to connect the dots between wrestling, televangelism, and MTV-style production values. His never-before-published investigation of the death of Jimmy "Superfly" Snuka's girlfriend suggests the cover-up of a murder. The book's appendix — a comprehensive listing of the dozens of wrestlers who died prematurely over the last generation, with little or no attention — is both a valuable resource for wrestling historians and a shocking document of the ruthless way sports entertainment eats its own.

IRVIN MUCHNICK has written about media, business, higher education, and sports for many major magazines and newspapers, including *The Village Voice* and *The New York Times.* A native of St. Louis, he lives in California with his wife and four children.