



HISTORY &
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HAPPY BIRTHDAY
Geena Davis



Chris Benoit

Athlete, Murderer, Television Personality (1967–2007)

Chris Benoit was a popular professional wrestler who, in 2007, killed his wife and son and then committed suicide.

Synopsis

Born on May 21, 1967, in Montreal, Canada, Chris Benoit transitioned from bodybuilding to wrestling and made his pro debut in 1995. Benoit won his first championship in 2000 and moved thereafter from league to league, having major success. In June 2007, Benoit, his wife and their son were found dead. It was determined that Benoit had killed his family and then himself for reasons still unclear.

Background

Chris Benoit was born on May 21, 1967, in Montreal, Canada. Before becoming a pro wrestler, Benoit was an amateur wrestler and bodybuilder. He got his feet wet in pro wrestling training with Stu Hart, father of wrestlers Bret and Owen. Benoit enrolled in the infamous Hart family "Dungeon," a legendary training facility, in late 1985 and began his pro wrestling career in November of that year in a tag match for Stampede Wrestling.

In 1989, Benoit joined the New Japan Pro and wrestled under the names Pegasus Kid and Wild Pegasus, winning key matches and seeing his star rise in the circuit.

After finishing his stint in Japan, Benoit wrestled around both Mexico and Germany, his appearances leading to him signing with Extreme Championship Wrestling (ECW), where he became the Canadian Crippler. He soon landed on the radar of the World Wrestling Federation (WWF, known as WWE beginning in 2002) and underwent trial matches to join the organization, but it didn't pan out.

Success With Four Horsemen

In 1995, Benoit signed with World Championship Wrestling (WCW) and took his division's championship. With WCW, Benoit was teamed up with Ric Flair, Arn Anderson and Brian Pillman as a new Four Horsemen, a popular wrestling squad. Even with the success and publicity generated, a few years later Benoit left the group, thereby forfeiting his title, to make the leap to the WWF. Success quickly followed, as Benoit took the intercontinental title and saw his fan base swell as part of the Radicalz, a foursome Benoit had formed upon joining the WWF.

NAME
Chris Benoit

OCCUPATION
Athlete, Murderer,
Television Personality

BIRTH DATE
May 21, 1967

DEATH DATE
June 24, 2007

PLACE OF BIRTH
Montreal, Canada

PLACE OF DEATH
Atlanta, Georgia

AKA
Chris Benoit

FULL NAME
Christopher Michael
Benoit

In June 2001, however, Benoit suffered a career-threatening neck injury and underwent major surgery to repair a ruptured disc that had entered his spinal column. He was laid up for more than a year and returned to the ring in early 2002.

WrestleMania Champ

He was soon drafted into WWE's SmackDown, where he won the 2004 Royal Rumble. He then entered WrestleMania and defeated Triple H to become the World Heavyweight Champion.

Along the way, Benoit and wrestler Kevin Sullivan developed a rivalry, and into the mix was thrown Sullivan's wife, Nancy, who also appeared around the ring as the character "Woman." The rivalry led to a real-life scandal when Nancy left Sullivan for Benoit, and the two were later married.

Murder/Suicide

Benoit's success had grown steadily, and his switch to the WWE brought him more fans, fame and money than he'd ever had before. He had won the World Heavyweight and Tag Team championships and become a wrestling superstar.

In June 2007, he was drafted back into the ECW and was scheduled to fight for the ECW World Championship, but he failed to appear. The next day, Benoit, his wife and their 7-year-old son, Daniel, were found dead at their house in Atlanta.

According to police reports, Chris strangled his wife, then drugged and strangled his son. He hung himself the next day.

An analysis of Benoit's brain uncovered severe brain cell damage—likely due to the multiple concussions he suffered during his career—which can lead to dementia. While observers suspected the tragedy was a result of "roid rage," no anabolic steroids were found in Benoit's system.

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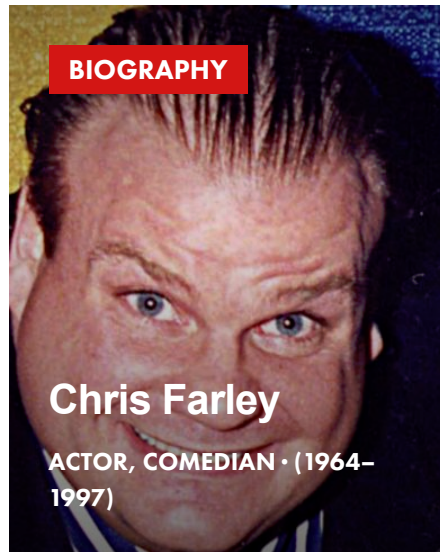
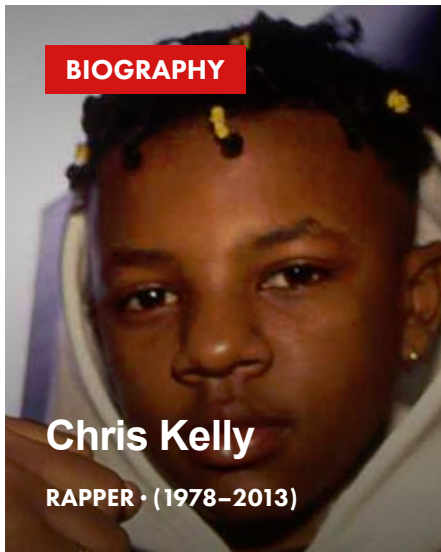
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