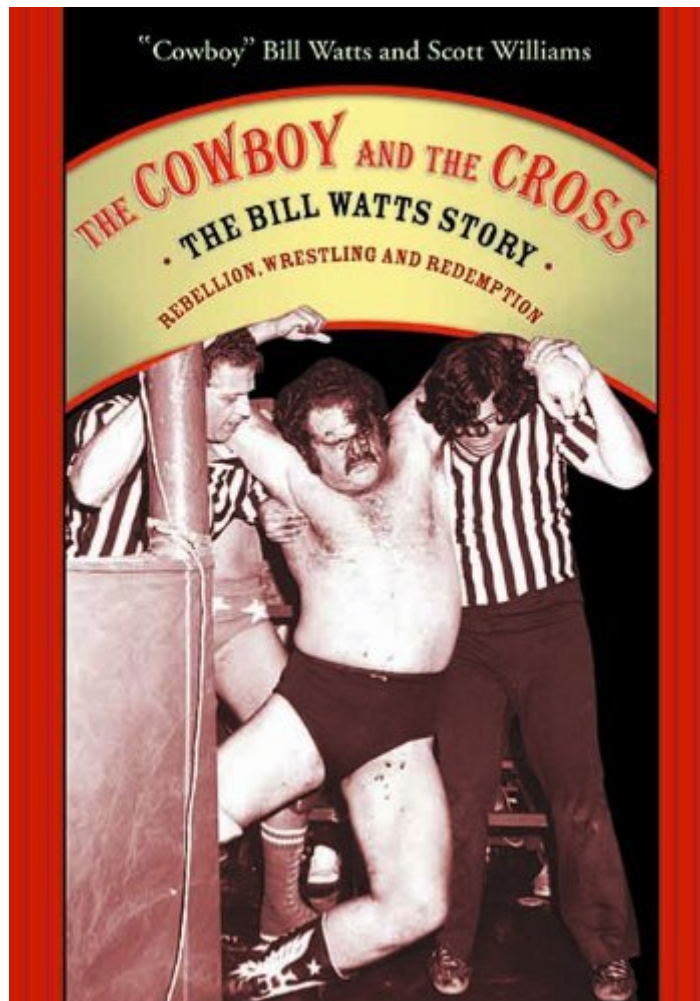


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# The Cowboy And The Cross: The Bill Watts Story: Rebellion, Wrestling And Redemption



## Synopsis

In *The Cowboy and the Cross*, Bill Watts takes us from his stormy upbringing and his tumultuous years at the University of Oklahoma, to his days in the wrestling business, sparing nothing in his details about football coaching legend Bud Wilkinson, ugly encounters with some of the top names in wrestling in the 1960s, and frightening stories about skirting tragedy and the law in violent altercations. Watts talks about all the top stars of his legendary Mid-South Wrestling promotion. He explores the oil crunch that killed his company and the problems that killed his marriage. His personal tribulations coincided with his reawakened spirituality, and Watts gives readers a lot to think about as he narrates the story of the profound change God made in his life. Wrestling Observer newsletter editor Dave Meltzer calls this book a "must-read" for anyone in the wrestling business.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I never was able to see Bill Watts wrestle until YouTube. I was a fan from the WWA Los Angeles wrestling territory. I knew of Watts from *Wrestling Revue* or other 1960's wrestling magazines. Watts made numerous mention of the wrestlers from the 1960's and 1970's. It was a different era vs the

1980's, 1990's, and current professional wrestling. If a wrestler became stale, they moved to another territory, then back. Today that really isn't an option for a WWE star. One thing came out loud and clear. The fans had more of a personal relationship with the wrestlers in earlier years. Pay Per View TV has distanced the wrestler from the fan. In many ways it has contributed to the emphasis on the wrestler rather than the fan. Make no mistake about it, without fan support there would be no John Cena, Randy Orton, Sting, etc. The book covers both wrestling and promotion during the era well. Bill Watts is a Christian and so am I. Watts clearly delivers the Gospel message. It was though we attended the same Church. See John 3:16 (and not Austin 3:16). Someone said this book could have been reduced by 50 pages. I agree. I ended up skimming some pages or read them quickly. Overall, the book is a good read.

As a teenager, the Mid-South (soon to become The Universal Wrestling Federation), was easily my favorite wrestling promotion, bar none. I mainly know Cowboy Bill Watts as a promoter. His reputation often precedes him - abrasive, stiff, and not one to mince words. Watts pulls few punches in his book, discussing wrestlers who let their personal demons get the best of them, who he got along with and who he didn't, and his own shortcomings as a business man, father, and husband. Watts talks about his upbringing, his days as a high school and collegiate athlete, his early days in the wrestling business as an active wrestler, working as booker and later as owner of his own promotion and its eventual demise. He also details his conflicts in WCW and working for Vince McMahon in the WWF/WWE. The names you expect are discussed from Bruiser Brody and Stan Hanson to Danny Hodge, The Funks, Gorilla Monsoon, Bruno Sammartino, Junkyard Dog, Hacksaw Jim Duggan, Jim Ross, The Fabulous Freebirds, Dr. Death Steve Williams, Sting, Jim Cornette, and Dusty Rhodes as well as other wrestling promotions like the WWWF, the AWA, Florida, World Class, and Crockett's Mid-Atlantic. Throughout the book, Watts talks about his conversion to Christianity and his struggles he had working in a business that paid the bills but was in opposition to his personal beliefs. Good read from one of the best minds in the wrestling business. Recommended.

I started reading this book because I was a fan of Mid-South/UWF wrestling. My father used to bring me to the matches in Alexandria, La. When I started reading this book I almost put it to the side because I thought it would be nothing but a sermon. I have been having a crisis in my faith since my father died of cancer and I had a sister and nephew murdered. I am SO glad I kept reading. Not only is it a very eye opening story about the world of professional wrestling but the way he explained his

Faith was very eye opening. If you are a fan of wrestling this is a great book. If you are in a crisis of faith this book will help you so much.

The book gave enough of what I wanted which is dollar amounts and gossip on other wrestlers found it light on the "cross" side. The guy does seem to tale the same tale over and over off knocking people cold and threatening to walk out of companies, but if that's how he lived his life so be it. It's like he said it's how you run the whole race that counts. I loved Mid South and UWF as a kid and this is a good insight to it. I'm glad I got to witness something so special while the other half of the country got to watch George Steele main event against Iron Mike Sharpe. This book brought me back to those days.

My introduction to "Cowboy" Bill Watts was say the least, impressive! On KTBS Championship Westling Watts took on one of my favorites, Alex Perez. It was a frustrating match for Perez. Watts countered everything Perez threw at him. The coup de grace came by Watts hoisting Perez to his shoulder, carry him across the ring, then driving him into the mat. What an application of skill, strength, and talent. Watts met my expectations by claiming the North American title and latter the Brass Knucks title. To add to it, he exceeded my expectations as a commentator. He brought a formal level of analysis and insight to the broadcast. On the surface he was a champion of justice. But, what lurks below the surface of his "babyface" wrestler psyche is revealed. Shockingly, parts his private life is full of horror stories. He airs it all in this book. It is not for the faint of heart. Watt's savagery in barroom brawling is say the least - unnerving! A "Hero"? Only if the script calls for it...Opportunist? Well, the boot sure fits. There are humorous antidotes. For example: Danny Hodge, a gentle spirit blessed with Samson like extraordinary strength, had a flair for practical jokes. I found myself laughing out loud from his pranks. The cliché: "You can pick your nose, but not your parents" is true. Therefore, on a personal side I identified with Watt's childhood. The abusive trails he suffered. It really struck a chord with me. Then, there were his amature years. Playing collegent football under "The end justifies the means" / "Bear Bryant" mentality of his coaches. The big cowboy notes of thier personal brutality. Later in life Watts confronts a few of these brutes in a bar. Yeah, baby! It's payback time! I would have loved this book as a teenager!

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