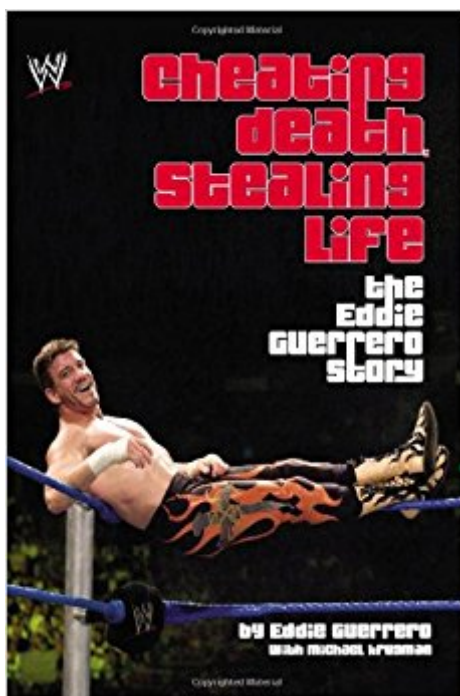


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Cheating Death, Stealing Life: The Eddie Guerrero Story (WWE)



Synopsis

This full and frank story of a charmed life almost wrecked by addiction and redeemed by grit and determination is one that every wrestling fan will want to read.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Michael Krugman is the cowriter -- with Matt and Jeff Hardy -- of the New York Times bestseller *The Hardy Boyz: Exist 2 Inspire*. Krugman has also worked with Amy Dumas -- better known as Lita -- on her autobiography, *Lita: A Less Traveled R.O.A.D. -- The Reality of Amy Dumas*. He has also written for a wide variety of national publications and online media outlets, including *RollingStone.com*. He is the coauthor of *Generation Ecch!* and author of *Oasis: Supersonic Supernova*. He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Chapter 23 After Starrcade, we were given a very brief Christmas break. My marriage wasn't in big trouble yet, but it was well on its way. Vickie and I were arguing all the time, usually about my partying. She was dealing with it as best she could, but I could see her frustration mounting. Even though my drinking had been a part of our life for as long as either of us could remember, it was clearly growing out of control. "Let's throw a New Year's Eve party," Vickie suggested. "That can be my turn to have some drinks and enjoy myself." It was a fun party. All our friends and family came over, and of course everybody got pretty wasted. After everybody had gone home, Vickie and I had

a bit of a spat, though to this day, I don't remember what set it off. Vickie went to bed, but I decided to stay up a while longer. I was feeling pretty hungry and started looking through the kitchen for something to munch on. For some reason, I had an intense craving for eggs. We didn't have any in the fridge, so even though it was three in the morning, I decided to go to the store. As I was getting into my TransAm, I grabbed a bottle of Renutrient and threw it into the backseat. Renutrient was a legal form of GHB, a drug that promotes fat reduction and muscle building by stimulating growth hormone release. It also gives you a hell of a buzz and makes you pass out. Looking back, I realize I was still feeling upset from my fight with Vickie and thinking very bad thoughts. I'll show you, I thought. I'll hurt myself. The store was closed, so I went ahead and drove to the next convenience store up the road. I bought some eggs and a twelve-pack of beer, and then got back in the car. Before I drove off, I decided to take some of the Renutrient. It's a liquid, taken by the capful. Usually one or two caps would put me down, but God help me, that night I took five good-sized shots. I blocked that memory for so long. It wasn't until much later that I remembered what I had done. It was a suicide attempt, plain and simple. Maybe I did it subconsciously, but no matter how you slice it, that was what I was doing. I was tired of life and wanted to die. I had given up believing. I had tried to fill the empty place in my heart with wrestling. I tried to fill it with booze and pills. I was making good money and I was still feeling empty. I was miserable in WCW. I knew I wasn't going to go any higher there, and jumping to WWE hadn't even crossed my mind. I couldn't stop wondering, Is this it? Is this what I worked my whole life for? It didn't help matters that I was constantly fighting with Vickie. I think that night was a culmination of all those bad feelings. The hole inside me had just gotten too large. I took those five caps knowing that I was going to fall asleep. If I make it home, I thought, then I make it home. If I don't, that's okay too. I just didn't care anymore. I just wanted the pain to stop. I wasn't thinking about Vickie or the kids. I was being selfish, thinking only of myself. I wasn't knowingly trying to commit suicide, but it was clearly going on deep inside my subconscious. Why else would I do something like that? I started driving, heading down Highway 54. I pushed down on the gas pedal and felt the power of my TransAm -- Vrooom! Here we go! The next thing I knew, there were doctors all around me, holding my leg. As my eyes opened, the first thing they said was, "What are you on?" "What?" I had no idea where I was or what was going on. "You've been in a car accident," one of the doctors told me. "You're in the emergency room. Your leg is in very bad shape and we need authorization to start surgery on you." I sat up and looked at my leg. "Oh wow," I said. "I'm pretty fucked up." The doctor looked straight at me. "Yep," he said, "you sure are." And then I passed out. I woke up again as the doctors were trying to work on me. I freaked out and started trying to fight them off, but they grabbed my arms and held me down. Again they

asked me, "What are you on?" "Alcohol," I told them. "No, you're on more than that. What are you on? Tell us what you're on." They kept pushing and finally I said, "Renutrient." "What's that?" "GHB." "Okay," the doctor said. "Can you give us any contact information so that we can call your family?" I managed to give them our phone number before going unconscious again. I was in and out of consciousness for a couple of days. I remember opening my eyes and seeing Shaul by the bed, with tears streaming down her little face. I knew I was in bad shape -- they don't allow little kids into the intensive care unit unless they think the person isn't going to survive. My family all came to the hospital the afternoon after the accident. My brothers and sisters all flew in from their respective homes. My mom had just flown home to El Paso after spending the holidays with us in Tampa -- she literally got to Texas, then turned around and flew back to Florida. All my friends, like Dean and Tury, came to see me. Our family pastor came and prayed over me. When I finally came to, the police told me what had happened. I had fallen asleep at the wheel -- obviously -- while going upwards of 130 miles per hour. I came to a curve in the road but didn't make it. The car went off the embankment into a ditch and just started rolling. The embankment basically acted like a ramp, sending the car into the air, soaring up over some trees. They knew this because they found parts of the car in the treetops, which weren't all mangled like they would've been if the car had hit them. The car flipped so many times it was flattened like a pancake. It looked like a Coke can after somebody stomped on it. Luckily for me, I shot out through the T-top as the car started rolling. I must've flown a hundred feet or so before landing in the gravel on the roadside. Vickie thinks an angel pulled me out through the T-top, because had I stayed in the car, there is no way on earth that I'd have lived. The cops came to the scene and started dealing with the traffic situation. They saw me lying there and just assumed I was dead. Fortunately for me, a lady who had pulled over to volunteer her help saw me moving. They called for an air evac -- a helicopter ambulance -- and immediately flew me to St. Joseph's Hospital. My injuries were pretty brutal. I'd fractured my collarbone and compressed a few discs in my spine. I had severe scrapes all over my body from the gravel and broken glass -- Vickie was still pulling little pieces of glass out of my back a month later. I was bruised and swollen all over from the trauma. Both of my legs were a complete mess. I'd broken my right hip socket and shredded my left calf. A piece of glass had severed the nerves and ligaments so badly that there was no way the doctors could reattach them. Instead, they just pulled the skin over the wound and sewed it up. They literally removed a pound of my calf. The worst injury I'd sustained was a badly lacerated liver. When Vickie first got to the hospital, the doctor pulled her aside. "We suggest you call your family," he told her, "because we don't believe he's going to make it through the next two nights." By the grace of God, somehow I didn't hit my head.

My brother Mando jokes that it was because of my dad's training. He taught all the Guerreros to tuck and roll whenever we fall. I guess it was instinctive. Even when I was shooting a hundred feet out of a flying car, I still managed to tuck and roll and protect my head. I only found these things out after all was said and done. A lot of what happened -- in the accident, in the hospital afterward -- remains a mystery to me. I suppose I could've asked more questions, but I don't think I ever really wanted to know all the details. All things considered, I was very fortunate. My hip socket broke cleanly, so they didn't have to repair it surgically. All I had to do was give it time to mend and it'd be all right. I wasn't so lucky with my other leg injuries. After performing reconstructive surgery on my calf and thigh, the doctor told Vickie that he doubted I would ever walk again. "What does he do for a living?" he asked. "He's a professional wrestler." "Oh no, he'll never wrestle again," the doctor replied. "That's certain. He'll have to find another career. That is, if he makes it." Within a couple of days it became clear I was going to survive. My liver showed definite signs of healing and it looked like I was out of the woods. The doctors told me that my physical condition was a huge factor in my ability to heal. A normal thirty-six-year-old, without my level of physical activity, would've probably been crippled for life. Still, the doctors were all pretty surprised. They would come into my room and tell me how fortunate I was. "You're a lucky, lucky man," they said. Yeah, right, I thought. Sure I am. While I was in the hospital, the doctors had me on morphine drip all day long. I was able to push a button and get a dose every seven minutes. And believe me, I pushed that button every time. Obviously I couldn't do that after I went home, so I started taking a lot of pills. Anything to stop the hurting. How could I do the physical therapy if I was in terrible pain? I had to dull the pain before I could begin learning to walk again. But as a result of having so much painkiller in me, I was pretty much in a fog. I was like the walking dead -- only I couldn't walk! I started physical therapy about a month after the accident. My whole body hurt, like I'd taken the worst bump ever. I was in pain all the time, on the inside. My hip socket was still in the process of healing, but I couldn't wait anymore. The physical therapy was as frustrating and painful as anything I'd ever experienced. I didn't want to be there and behaved like a real asshole. They were poking and pushing at me, and all I wanted was to go home and take more painkillers. >

Cheating Death, Stealing Life is the biography of Eddie Guerrero, chronicling his early life up until shortly after he won the WWE Heavyweight title. Confession Time: I was a big professional wrestling fan for a quarter of a century. Eddie Guerrero was one of my favorites ten of those years and his death was one of the big reasons I quit watching. One of the early indicators of how much I'll like a pro-wrestling biography is how quickly they make with the wrestling action. This book wasted no

time. The wrestling stuff started on page one. Eddie covered a lot of ground in the early goings, from growing up in a wrestling family and eventually breaking into the business in Mexico. He touches on his partying lifestyle early, which is good since later parts of the book show how much that lifestyle would threaten to destroy his life. In fact, it probably contributed to his early death. Eddie's story goes from Mexico to Japan, from ECW to WCW, and finally to the WWE and the battles with addiction that eventually got him fired. Unlike in the ring, no punches are pulled. Eddie talks about all the times drugs and alcohol nearly cost him everything, eventually seeing him living in a crappy apartment and wrestling on the independent circuit just to make ends meet. When Eddie finally got his s*** together, his life got back on track and he was called back up to the WWE. It was actually pretty hard-warming for a wrestling book. Other than my usual gripes about there not being enough interesting road stories, this was a solid book. *Cheating Death, Stealing Life*, frog-splashed its way into my wrestling book top ten.

Great book, Eddie, thank you for all you were and all you've done. I miss you.

This is a deep, personal, and honest chronicle of the life and career of Eddie Guerrero. Although released under the WWE banner, the story told within felt forthright. I could "hear" Eddie's voice as I read his words describing a complicated and troubled life. The book contains a nice amount of photos; there are black and white pictures spread throughout the book and eight pages of color photos in the center of the book. I've only known about Eddie from his time in WCW, so it was nice to get a fuller picture starting from the earliest points of his career in Mexico going all the way to his final moments in WWE where he finally won a World Championship.

This is an incredible read, and somewhat saddening. It's hard to read the book and, even after five years, believe that he's gone. Parts of the book bring tears to my eyes, when Eddy speaks of his own mortality, in a way the book feels like it foreshadowing his untimely passing. He never blames anyone for his problems and how it affected himself and others, only himself, and he feels such remorse for his old ways and his desire to change them. He looks with such enthusiasm and hope toward the future, that you can't help but want to cry at it was not to be. As a person and as a professional wrestler, I've forever been affected by this book and use it as an inspiration to not allow myself to fall into the same traps that has plagued and claimed far too many lives in this business over the last decade if not further. I am saddened that I will never be able to meet Eddy, but his work in and out of the ring has inspired me as a performer and as a person, and for that I will be

forever grateful. Thank you Eddy.

I have been really read this again. I was a huge fan of Eddie. The thing I like about is his addiction. Before I read this in 2005 I didn't really know about it alot. I was like Eddie family I thought if you drank to much you could just stop on your own. After I read this I understood it alot better. I always happened to his girls. Especially the youngest. I know we will probably never find out which I am ok with that. RIP EDDIE GUERRERO YOU ARE TRULY MISSED. I HOPE YOUR UP THERE WITH ALL THE OTHERS PUTTING ON A SHOW.

My son loved this book and he read it all the time

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One of the best books I've ever read. Eddie was and always had been one of my personal Heroes. Rest in peace Eddie. You deserve it. :)

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