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JEROME YOUNG, NEW JACK, PASSES AWAY

By Mike Johnson on 2021-05-14 19:14:00

PWInsider.com is extremely sad to report that Jerome "New Jack" Young passed away earlier this afternoon following a heart attack in North Carolina, where he had lived in recent years. PWInsider.com was informed by Young's wife Jennifer of his passing. Young was 58 at the time of his passing.

At times, Young was one of the most controversial wrestlers in professional wrestling, but he was also one of the more intense and charismatic performers over the last several decades. The New Jack name was inspired by the film *New Jack City* once Young imagined fans chanting it while he was in the ring, a vision that certainly came true countless times over.

After breaking into the business in Georgia while mentored by the late Ray Candy, New Jack formed The Gangstas with Mustafa for a run in Smoky Mountain Wrestling that put the duo, empowered by Jack's incredible, edgy interviews, on the map, leading to the team headlining against everyone from The Rock N' Roll Express to The Undertaker.

After SMW, the duo moved to Extreme Championship Wrestling during the summer of 1995. Jack and ECW were a perfect match as the product pushed everything as far as the envelope would allow at the time, providing Jack with a perfect backdrop to paint violent, bloody pictures as he and partners brawled all over buildings while Ice Cube and Dr. Dre's Natural Born Killaz blasted over, creating a real life movie fight scene like never before or since in pro wrestling.

While Jack held the ECW World Tag Team Championships several times, he might be far better remembered for diving out of balconies to put hapless opponents through tables, something that he devised as a way to make sure that the audience's attention and their memories were about him no matter whether he was booked to win or lose. Over time, his fearlessness at doing the dives took its physical toll (especially after a planned fall at *Living Dangerously 2000* went completely wrong) but any highlight reel of ECW would be incomplete without those insane moments.

Young's life and career were chronicled during the second season of *Dark Side of the Ring* and he also made a memorable appearance in the Barry Blaustein documentary *Beyond the Mat* back in 1999, where Blaustein famously remarked that none of his other friends had justifiable homicides on their record.

There will be a lot written about Jerome Young in the days to come, good and bad, but the reality was this - he loved to perform and he loved to be New Jack in the public eye. He put himself through a lot of physical and mental pain in order to live his life as New Jack and once famously told our own Dave Scherer that he made the decision to do so, that he knew what he was getting into and that he would have no regrets, because it was the decision he chose to make.

PWInsider.com will have far more on the life and career of New Jack to come, but there is no denying his place in wrestling history and that he blazed a trail as a performer unlike anyone before and likely, like no one who will ever follow.

Everyone at PWInsider.com sends our deepest condolences to New Jack's family, especially his wife Jennifer as well as his friends and fans.

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