My Personal Review:

Before I review the DVD, I want to make something clear: Other than this DVD, I have no other knowledge or "Superstar" Billy Graham. I didn't grow up watching him, so if anything significant is missing from the main documentary feature, I couldn't tell you what it is.

I love WWE DVDs like this one. 20 YEARS TOO SOON is unlike any other WWE production released. It uses the same "talking heads" and "montage" formats, but this apple is very different from the rest of the barrel.

The most successful superstars of today often give credit to guys like Hulk Hogan, Ric Flair, or Dusty Rhodes. I'm sure there are many others, but those seem to be the big three. Well, Rhodes and Hogan will be the first to tell you that "Superstar" Billy Graham was the original pioneer of sports entertainment. After watching this DVD, I'm sure most viewers will agree. Even though there were many great wrestlers who got plenty over with the fans, Graham --- according the documentary --- was the first to break through and put a pop culture spin on the product.

As with all other WWE programs like this, 20 YEARS TOO SOON highlights Graham's greatest matches, most famous promos, and struggles with success.

The match highlights mainly include Bruno Sammartino and Dusty Rhodes. There isn't much coverage in this area, but Graham wasn't an active competitor for very long (15 years, I think). We do get to see some good footage of his rivalries, each very easy to understand why they
important for their time. I hate when WWE just assumes we know things from 20 years ago, don't you? For example, later in his career, "Superstar" used a bizarre "karate persona". I'll leave that one for you to learn about.

The promos are as masterful as they come. Graham wasn't an overly energetic personality like Hogan, Flair, or Rock. He's much closer to Jake Roberts, where his chosen words and body language didn't require a loud voice. If you want to compile a Top 10 list of the greatest talkers in televised wrestling, Graham easily deserves a spot.

I've read that Graham had stints in other promotions, which aren't included in 20 YEARS TOO SOON. If that's true, I don't know why they were left out. Since I'm someone who didn't know much about Graham, I wouldn't have noticed that anything was missing. But again, I don't think the pro wrestling itself is the heart of the story.

The struggles that Graham endured are what I want to address the most, because they are the true core of what the "Superstar" wants to be about. 20 YEARS TOO SOON isn't a traditional WWE feature. It's more of a biography, with wrestling in the background. Whoever made the final cut of the documentary is to be commended for taking a unique approach to this material. First off, "Superstar" Billy Graham is such a humble and grateful interviewee that it's impossible to dislike the man. He shows no anger, bitterness, or jealousy throughout the program. While he acknowledges how innovative he was for his time, Billy Graham equally enjoys seeing how his style influenced many of today's talent.

The documentary does address Graham's battle with drugs, health, and being physically unable to recapture his magic. I don't wanna get into a steroid debate, but Graham's story makes a good case for having a testing policy of some kind. His health issues are easy to understand why they happened, how they affected his career, and how Graham adapted to them.

Another strength in the documentary is that it doesn't focus too long on the negative aspects. Sure, it gets pretty rough in a few spots, but we are always reminded of the light at the end of the dark tunnel. 20 YEARS TOO SOON is ultimately a celebration of life. I don't wanna give anymore away, but I will spoil this tiny surprise. Vince McMahon actually gets a tad teary-eyed when he talks about "Superstar". I'll leave the rest of the gripping tale for you to discover.

The 2-disc set includes a handful of matches, deleted scenes, and promo footage. I like the selection of matches overall, but a few are a tad short. None are exactly masterpieces, but I always like trying to pretend that I'm watching a 70s broadcast live on TV. Fake nostalgia, I know.

The deleted scenes are all great; I have no idea why they aren't just in the main cut, other than WWE showing this on PPV. And as I said before, the
promos and interviews are genius. I dare you not to laugh when Graham talks about "crushing coconuts".

20 YEARS TOO SOON is a DVD any fan will enjoy, as long as you're aware that the actual wrestling is secondary to the biography and historical details. I'm convinced that "Superstar" Billy Graham is most responsible for sports entertainment as we know it. He was ahead of his time and never got the incredible legacy he deserved. But because his peers know how much he mattered, I'm convinced that pro wrestling is in good hands.

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