

Dory Funk talks what it was like in the glory days of the Amarillo territory

Funk's Corner - Just to give you an idea of what it was like working the Amarillo Territory.

Saturday morning we would meet in Amarillo (Puckett Place) at Jerry Kozak's house at 8:00am to lay out the card for the Saturday morning television show. Dory Sr. Terry, myself and Herman Gust. Eddie Kozak always had coffee.

By 10:00am we were at the channel 10 TV studio in Amarillo to meet the wrestlers and give the matches to them.

Showtime was 11:00am. for the TV taping.

We were out at 12:30pm to grab a bite to eat and hit the road for either Colorado Springs or Pueblo by 2:30pm. The drive was straight to Springs or Pueblo.

We gained an hour going to Colorado so it helped a lot.

Saturday night was a show in Springs or Pueblo, good towns that did good business. Pueblo at the Fairgrounds and Springs at I believe the City auditorium. Herman Gust was the promoter.

After the show it was an all night drive to Albuquerque, checking in at 3:30am at the Del Camino Hotel.

Sunday began with promos done live at the TV Station at 10:00am. Albuquerque was a hot town and if we had good promos, we knew the town would be good that night. The tape had been sent from TV 10 in Amarillo overnight by bus.

Next it was lunch and sleep a couple of hours. Showtime at the Civic Auditorium was 7:00pm. Mike London was the promoter and he ran a tight ninety minute show. The building was often sold out. Ricky Romero was hot and was the top face. Heels were Von Steiger, Mike Dibiase, Viking, Nelson Royal, Karl Von Krup, Sheik, Abdula the Butcher, JC Dyckes and the Infernos, The Von Brauners and many others.

A lady at the concession stand had charged Mike London's daughter for a cup of ice and from that day on he never slowed the show for intermission, hence the tight ninety minute show. The same thing happened to Joe Murnich's wife in Raleigh NC and for the rest of Joe's days of promotion he never slowed for intermission. Joe used to tell me, "Can you imagine how much that fifty cent cup of ice cost those people."

The Albuquerque show was over and we were on the road by 10:00pm for the trip to El Paso. We would arrive in town around 3:00am and would go across the border to Mexico to club Noa Noa and other horrible places to quaff some beer, taquilla, scotch and what ever else.

By 6:00am we were back on the El Paso side for breakfast at the Good Luck Cafe. Their Munudo was out of this world.

By 7:00am we were checking in at the Rhodeway Inn on Interstate 10. The price was about \$12.00 and it was like getting two days for one. We would crash until food at around 3:00pm and show up at the El Paso Coliseum at 7:00 for an 8:00 o'clock show. Gory Guerrero was the promoter.

Again Ricky Romero was a hot card. Kids running around were Baby Eddie Guerrero, Hector, Mando and Chauvo Guerrero. Mascaraes and El Santo sometimes also made appearances along with El Gran Goliath and Black Gordman.

After the show in El Paso we were back across the border for more good times. Some times it was too good for our own good. One night, JJ Dillon, Karl Von Steiger, and a couple of others spent the night in the Juarez Jail. They say Steiger urinated on stage at club Noa Noa. Georgeous George Jr is said one night to have smuggled a hooker out of Juarez and into El Paso in the trunk of his car.

The next morning around 1:00pm we would get in the car and head for Odessa, Texas.

Leaving El Paso begins with I-75, but we always took a short cut through Orla, Texas, a small town, really small between El Paso and Odessa. At a crossroad in the road was a gas station owned by Rattlesnake Phillips. We always liked to stop and see what kind of rattlesnake gimmicks he had.

For first timers, He would show them a cage with a rattlecat. combination rattlesnake and bobcat. Just when they would get their nose real close to the cage, Rattlesnake Phillips would push a button and the door would fly open and an old bobcat hide would fly out in your lap. It scared the Hell out of a lot of first timers.

The trip continued on to Odessa, Texas and the Antlers Hotel where the guys would check in just before the wrestling matches at the Ector County Coliseum where, Rowdy Pat O'Dowdy was the promoter.

At the Ector County Coliseum the show was always great but the ring was horrible. If you hit the ropes on one side, the other side of the ring would fly up. Finally one week, Terry Funk came in with tools in his car and did his best to fix the ring but it always was bad.

After the show in Odessa it was a 260 mile drive back to Amarillo for some time with family.

Wednesday at 5:00pm we would leave Amarillo for Lubbock, Promoter who recently passed away, Nick Roberts. The show was at the Fair Park Coliseum. Lubbock was a hot town. The biggest draw who led Lubbock to being the number one town in the state for a while was The Sheik.

In wrestling, the show always goes on. One night in Lubbock the show started and the coliseum lights went out. We opened up the doors in the back of the building and pulled several pickup trucks in and shined the lights on the ring and the show went on to completion.

After Lubbock it was a hundred mile drive back home.

The next morning at 10:00am it was interviews for the whole territory at TV channel 10 in Amarillo.

To explain a little, wrestling depends on television and the Saturday Amarillo show was bicycled throughout the territory. It showed in Amarillo Saturday afternoon and was sent right out by bus to Albuquerque for the Sunday 10:00am show at KOAT TV. Albuquerque then sent the tape to Lubbock for showing the following week. The tape then went to Odessa, El Paso, Abilene, and finally Colorado.

We had a five week bicycle to be aware of when we did promos.

If a hot match off TV was Terry and Dory vs Infernos one week we had to be aware of where that tape was playing as it bicycled around the territory and cut promos accordingly. The same was true if the following week the hot match was Ricky Romero vs Sir Nelson Royal.

Promos lasted from 10:00 till 1:00pm.

Some of the boys who were very good on promos were Terry, King Curtice, Karl Von Krup, Dory Funk Sr.

After promos it was family time until the show Thursday night at the Sports Arena in Amarillo. Show time 8:00pm. The promoter was Jerry Kozak and he did an excellent job covering the newspaper, and three TV stations on the sports shows.

On Friday we would leave Amarillo for the trip to Abilene, Texas. The promoter was Don "The Lawman" Slatton. He also ran shows in San Angelo, Sweetwater, Brownwood, Breckenridge, Snyder and others. They had beautiful coliseums and his shows did well. The trip was 270 miles and we left Amarillo about 3:00pm and drove fast. The reason we were always traveling fast was to get some time at home with family. It was difficult. I liked to take the back roads cutting across from Tulia to Turkey and south to Spur, Texas where a little shack served the best Bar B Q sandwich ever. Jess's Bar B Q.

Abilene was a good town especially when we moved to the coliseum. The Lawman's ring was never too good either. I remember wrestling Jack Brisco there and the whole ring fell apart and the match had to be stopped. Our publicity was the match was so great but the truth was the ring was the s***s.

After the show we always made the trip to Impact, Texas. Abilene was dry and one city block incorporated itself and voted wet and they could sell beer. The only drawback was they had to sell it at room temperature. We would load up, ice it down and in twenty minutes the beer would be just right.

The trip home put us back in Amarillo at 3:00am Saturday morning.

At 8:00am on Saturday it was time to meet at Jerry Kozak's house and make out another TV show and we got to do this all over again.

In between we would find time to also run Clovis, Hereford, Plainview weekly and spot show the Lawman's towns mentioned above. Also Lamesa, Borger, Trinidad, Cannon City, Guymon, Liberal, Tucumcari, Elk City etc. etc.

I loved it. Dory Funk Jr. ***** If you would like to become a professional wrestler and appear on !BANG! TV Call about our new training schedules and programs at 352-895-4658. Next !BANG! TV Tapings are Support Your Troops 35, "Hell's Bells I and Hell's Bells II coming to the Funking Conservatory December 21 and New Year's Eve, December 31. PWI's Number One Ranking Woman Wrestler in the world, Awesome Kong is Coming to the Funking Conservatory and !BANG! TV December 21st. !BANG! TV presents All Matches in a Steel Cage Sunday

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<http://www.dory-funk.com> The Funking Conservatory is the Official American Training Center for All Japan Pro Wrestling.