

My Wrestling Journey



The travels of Our Man from Down Under

John Shelvey

Part 8...Moider in Melbourne!



Mitsu Arakawa.
"Red Cloud, I take your
tomahawk chop and raise you
a karate chop!"



The premature news of his
death, sent a dark cloud over
Red Cloud. Happily the grey
skies cleared up and Billy put
on a happy face.

I left the cafe and wandered across the road to the Stadium, where the early birds were milling around the box office. Looking around for a face I might know casually, I realised there was a touch of excitement in the air, as pockets of punters were chatting away and some were even gesticulating dramatically.

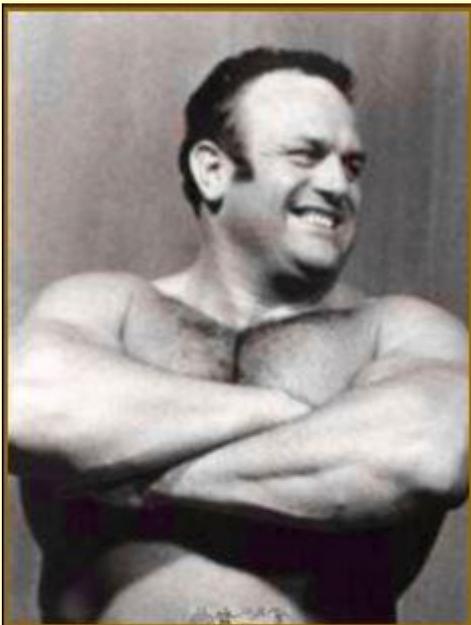
I spied a young gal I had said hi to a few times, peel away from a small group, so intercepting her, I said 'Hello. Is something up?' Without greeting me she gushed excitedly 'Mitsu

Arakawa killed Chief Billy Red Cloud with a karate chop'!

Meanwhile back at the factory, I was now a fully fledged apprentice wood machinist. A little man, scruffy in a baggy suit and trilby, visited me at the factory and launched into a lecture on unionism. Being sweet sixteen, I think I tuned out of his diatribe after about three minutes. Sometime later, the union man noticing my glazed look, said rather pointedly 'So you understand, you can only be an apprentice if you join the union'. Now I had seen enough episodes of *Dragnet*, *Naked City* and *Seventy Seven Sunset Strip*, to know I was about to become the victim of a 'shakedown', however I kept Mr Trilby happy and signed up for five years, meaning that my poor labourers wages now became even more meagre as I would be paid a lower apprentice wage and leaner again, as I would have to pay union dues also.

The buzz was, that the dastardly Japanese wrestler, had smote the (cough) Native American Indian a wicked and deadly 'chop' across the throat, thereby sending the Chief to the happy hunting ground in the sky. This tragedy was said to have played out in Melbourne within the last few days. My first albeit brief, first thought, was one of commiserations to the poor fella', my next brief thought was that this could well end the arguments surrounding the veracity of the sport, as you can't get anymore real than death! This was despite the fact that I now realised that the WCWs' results were pre-ordained, wrestlers were told to win or lose. I knew it, I just hoped no one else had come to that conclusion! Anyway, I quickly decided I didn't believe the rumour as apart from finding it hard to believe I could be on the periphery of a murder (I was a wrestling fan, I knew of and had seen live, both protagonists) I was pretty sure that Melbourne held their wrestling on Saturday nights and here we are the following Friday in Sydney and we are only just hearing about it? It transpired that it was, as the small p president would say, 'fake news'. The Indian Chief lived to fight another day!

A very smart looking Killer Kowalski turned up at the t.v. studios to give an interview, only for the angelic looking, second generation grappler Dickie Steinborn, to take a dislike to the Killer's choice of wardrobe and proceed to tear his suit jacket. (This happened a few times over the years to different workers, the method used was to go the less strenuous route of tearing only the jacket pocket, which I guess would be easier to mend). Kowalski took umbrage and the two would meet next week in the main event. Kowalski was around the 6'5 mark and Dickie was about 5'8 (ringing wet or dry). I was concerned that if they put Dickie over such a big, veteran of the mat, then wrestling credibility would be at breaking point. Back then, the adage 'A good big man will always beat a good little man' was considered to be true.



Hercules was having a giggle with Norman Wisdom when he was deeply saddened to hear he had to 'put over' an ageing Johnny Kostas.



Feeling guilty of being disparaging about J.K.'s age and weary physique (not to mention thinning barnet), I present a vision of a more Greek God like, Johnny.

You may recall how I waxed lyrical about the Mighty Hercules (Cortez). Well, wrestling being the fickle lover she is, the promoters, looking for a hero to entice Sydney's Greek community, gave a guernsey to globetrotter Johnny Kostas. John, looking a little portly, with a receding hairline, was a few years past his sell-by date and the Greek populace didn't buy him. However in the promoters attempt to put him over, he wrestled a fifteen minute draw with said Hercules, easily escaping from the giant strongman's attempts to subdue

him. In a remarkable show of humility (especially as he hadn't been beaten by Kostas) Cortez went down on his knees while raising Johnny's arm as a sign of the Greek being the much better man. The Greek quickly became a mid carder before leaving Australia. Hercules remained a favourite, returning in 1966.

Next time... 'Say, wrestling fans, tonight is Dickie Steinborn night' (will sanity prevail).