

# Behind the Mask: 02.03.2015

February 3, 2015 | Studio

## OLD SCHOOL VS. NEW SCHOOL

A response to Chris Hopper

Tale as old as time.

(Some of you just sang that, then sang the next line. Admit it.)

I have a story to tell, so please just indulge me. It's a secondhand story, so I might get some details wrong.

Once upon a time, there was a wrestling promotion that was on the cutting edge of the industry. It had a years - long legacy, it had changed formats in a revolutionary fashion, it had the top names in the industry come through, time and time again.

It had a World Champion that was both talented and controversial and a roster filled with unproven - but hungry - homegrown talents just itching for the chance to show their quality.

So, what does this revolutionary and groundbreaking wrestling company do? It brings in a name from the past, who brings in his entire posse, who immediately bury all of the homegrown talent. Either the interlopers win all the time, or they lose by the skin of their teeth and immediately get their 'heat' back. Any value that the legend could have provided by taking on the homegrown talent is negated by the fact that he will only wrestle against fellow legends, neither of whom have anything to gain. Today, years later, the legends have left the company, most of the homegrown talent that were so promising have left the company as a direct result of the legends being handed high profile matches without having earned them in that setting, and the company itself is on life support without having run a house in months.

Chris Hopper, you tell me - were the 'legends' worth it?

I respect The Spectre as a Hall of Famer in the UTA. Six time Champion, years - long war that's spanned companies with Sean Jackson.

I don't respect the notion that he's tried to put forth, that Spectre being money in the UTA in 2003 automatically means he's money in the UTA in 2015, the intermittent twelve years be damned.

Turnover is so high in professional wrestling these days, you don't get the Hornet- in- the- CSWA style franchise player anymore, that the UTA from December 2013 to now is, for all intents and purposes, a completely different company than it was in 2003. To that end, the legends in Spawn are coming into a company that honored them in the past, that has nothing in common with that past company, except for the name on the marquee.

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To the credit of Crimson Lord and Mr. Fantastic, they appear to get it. From what I've watched and listened to from the two of them, they acknowledge both the legend of who they used to be, and have balanced that out against the reality that to succeed in the UTA of today, they need to prove themselves all over again against the athletes who are part of the UTA of today.

Even Ron Hall... has he earned the right to face the World Champion in his first match back in this company? That's debatable. But - again, to his credit - he's not challenging for the UTA Championship, he's challenging to see which of the two of them will have the right to compete for it.

Chris Hopper, you're a legend. I freely admit it, and I think anyone who knows their wrestling history would, as well. You and my dad never worked full time for the same companies but he always respected you as a hard worker and a box office draw. Why did you not get the same 'Legend Scrutiny' from myself and others who gave the same to Spectre?

It's simple: you wanted to come in and show us that the work you're doing today matters more than the legend you built yesterday.

What do I want? I want the same thing that everyone in this industry who's in it for the right reasons wants: the opportunity to succeed. I want the opportunity to be called a legend in fifteen years. But I tell you, Chris - in fifteen years, if I'm in a position to come into a wrestling promotion based on my reputation, I won't be telling everyone about it and holding it over their heads.

Spectre has expressed his hatred for me for disrespecting him and that I'll never, ever, ever, get a match with him. If he's as good as he says he is, and I'm as bad as he says I am, getting into the ring with me and pinning my ass for a three is the fastest way to dial me back.

What I'd be doing, if I came into a wrestling company riding on reputation, would be to tell any of the disgruntled journeymen who don't think I'd earned what I'd gotten to that point, if you think you can take my spot then I'll see you in the ring and give you the chance.

I understand the concept of bringing in yesterday's names to make money. I appreciate the fact that the legends that are in this company now - with one notable exception - are working just as hard as the rest of us to make the UTA even better.

I shudder at the notion that a wrestling promotion would sacrifice its future to promote its past in the present. Would the UTA do that? I'd like to think they wouldn't, but it's happened in too many companies before.

We're having two separate arguments, Chris. We're in agreement on a wrestler that calls himself a legend but continues to wrestle needs to constantly validate that legend. We're in agreement on the fact that the rookies and journeymen and undercard wrestlers who believe that they have what it takes need to step up and take it from the main eventers and legends to prove that they belong.

But let me ask you something, Chris. What do we do when the legends refuse to give us the opportunity?

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What do I do when The Spectre tells me he doesn't trust me because I didn't handle Kathryn Vermont Thomas exactly as he told me to - thus implying that there's only Spectre's way and the wrong way - then tells us that nothing is black and white - then tells me that I'm wrong for dismissing him after he dismissed me and that he'd never give me a match?

What do I do when you, Chris Hopper, refuse to give me the chance because I'm a woman?

But that's a conversation for another day.

I am The Second Coming.