

# The defiant ones

■ Booker T leads the WWE RAW wrestlers to the Kansas Coliseum.

BY JEFF LUTZ

Wichita Eagle correspondent

**W**hen World Wrestling Entertainment merged with World Championship Wrestling in March 2001, Booker T was the WCW champion.

His first feud was with the biggest star in the business at the time, Stone Cold Steve Austin.

But in a sense, Booker T, whose real name is Booker T. Huffman, had to start from scratch.

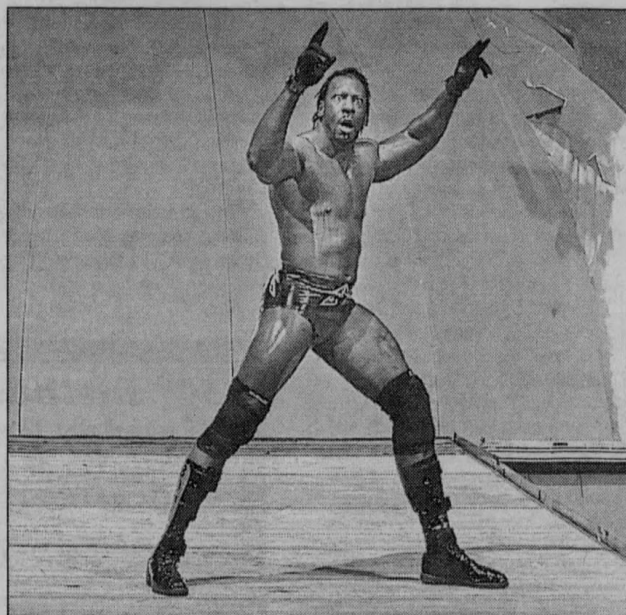
"I didn't want to live on the accolades I gained in WCW," Huffman said. "I wanted to prove to my peers here that I was WWE-worthy."

Booker T and the rest of WWE's RAW wrestlers will be at the Kansas Coliseum on Saturday as part of the Tour of Defiance.

Holding titles is nothing new to Huffman. He entered WWE as a five-time WCW champion, a six-time Television champion, a 10-time tag-team champion and one-time U.S. champion.

"I didn't play sports or anything when I grew up," he said. "I was in the band and all the kids teased me. I felt like an outcast. To make it where I am is amazing."

It's especially amazing considering the way Huffman grew up in a Houston ghetto.



Courtesy World Wrestling Entertainment, Inc.

Booker T says he felt like an outcast as a child. "To make it where I am is amazing," he says.

He was the youngest of eight children — one of his brothers, Stevie Ray, teamed with Booker T as Harlem Heat in WCW — and lost both of his parents by the time he was 14.

"I've had trials and tribulations as far back as I can remember," Huffman said. "I can't say I had a bad childhood or anything like that. It's just that the things I didn't have, I didn't miss. It was a normal life for me. My mother provided a lot for us."

When Huffman arrived in WCW in 1990, he enjoyed almost immediate success teaming with Stevie Ray.

It took him a decade to establish himself as a true singles star. He won his first WCW title in July 2000 at the Bash at the Beach pay-per-view.

Now Booker T, 37, is arguably the most popular WWE superstar. He has the most recognizable move, the Spinnerooni.

"My popularity is at an all-time high," Huffman said.

"If it happens, it'll be great. But if not, I'm happy with my career."

If Bill Goldberg was WCW's answer to Austin, then Booker T was its answer to WWE superstar The Rock. The WCW even gave him a finishing move, "The

## IF YOU GO

**What:** World Wrestling Entertainment: Tour of Defiance

**When:** 7:30 p.m. Saturday

**Where:** Kansas Coliseum, 85th North off I-135.

**Tickets:** \$40.50, \$30.50, \$25.50, \$15.50 at the Coliseum and Select-A-Seat outlets. Charge by phone, 755-SEAT.

Book End," similar to The Rock's "Rock Bottom."

"The Rock has his own thing," Huffman said. "I always represented myself in the way I dress, the way I talk, the way I do business. The people never got a chance to see it because I never got to do interviews. All they knew was my in-ring persona."

Lately, WWE has been trying some extreme tactics in an attempt to boost sagging ratings. In recent weeks, it has incorporated themes of homosexuality, violence against women, even necrophilia into its program.

Huffman doesn't have a problem with such risque story lines. Then again, he hasn't been involved in any of them, either.

"A lot of people have opinions about how far we go across the line," he said. "But we're entertainment just like anything else. When it's time to push the envelope, we push the envelope."

"I like the direction we're going right now. It's all entertainment to me."

Booker T

Clipped By:  
jeffdlutz13  
Oct 23, 2025