



## "ANDRE THE GIANT" to Debut on HBO

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NEW YORK & STAMFORD, Conn.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- HBO Sports, WWE® (NYSE:WWE) and the Bill Simmons Media Group will produce ANDRE THE GIANT, a documentary film examining the life and career of one of the most beloved legends in WWE history, it was announced today by Kevin Dunn, WWE Executive Producer, and Peter Nelson, Executive Vice President, HBO Sports. The ambitious and wide-ranging documentary film will explore Andre's upbringing in France, his celebrated career in WWE and his forays in the entertainment world.

This Smart News Release features multimedia. View the full release here: <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20170213005865/en/>

"Andre the Giant" and "Macho Man" Randy Savage (Photo:Business Wire)

"For more than 20 years, Andre the Giant's larger than life personality and unique charisma captured the imagination of fans around the world," said

WWE Chairman & CEO Vince McMahon. "I will always value our friendship, and I am proud to tell the story of the 'Eighth Wonder of the World'."

Bill Simmons, who joined HBO in the summer of 2015 and founded The Ringer, will serve as an executive producer of the film. "Going back to 2007 and 2008 when I was creating and developing '30 for 30' for ESPN, Andre's story rode the top of every single sports documentary wish list I ever made," said Simmons. "We always hear about unicorns these days – Andre was the ultimate unicorn. He's a true legend. Everyone who ever crossed paths with him has an Andre story – and usually four or five. I'm delighted to join forces with Jason Hehir and WWE so we can capture Andre's amazing story once and for all."

Emmy®-Award winning director and producer Jason Hehir will serve as the film's director. HBO Sports and WWE are partnering for the first time ever on this full-length signature presentation, which will combine never-before-seen footage and revealing interviews for a comprehensive and intimate portrait of one of WWE's most beloved, yet largely unknown figures. Interviews will include WWE Superstars, sports and entertainment executives, athletes, media, family, friends and associates.

André René Roussimoff was born in 1946 in Grenoble, France. Early in his teenage years, he exhibited signs of gigantism, rapidly growing to more than seven feet, though he was not diagnosed with acromegaly until his twenties. He began his training in Paris at 17 and eventually became known in wrestling circuits around the world, including Europe, Australia and Africa. In 1970, Roussimoff made his Japanese debut, which put him on the radar of Vince McMahon Sr., founder of what is now known as World Wrestling Entertainment.

In 1973, Andre joined the organization where McMahon Sr. famously billed him as Andre the Giant. Andre's unique voice and athletic prowess, coupled with his more than 500-pound, seven-foot, four-inch frame, made him an unforgettable attraction.

During his ascension to the top of the ranks, Andre engaged in memorable matches with Killer Khan, Big John Studd and King Kong Bundy and compiled an undefeated streak that lasted for the better part of a decade. In 1987, Andre hit the pinnacle of his career during his rivalry with Hulk Hogan, one of the biggest stars in WWE and pop culture history. As a new villain, Andre squared off with Hogan at *WrestleMania® III* at the Silverdome in Michigan, and in one of the most memorable moments in history, Hogan body-slammed Andre to retain the championship in front of 93,173 fans.

While wrestling's fan base continued to grow, Roussimoff's health began to decline. Despite his health issues, the "Eighth Wonder of the World" remained at the forefront during the company's golden era. Following *WrestleMania III*, Andre took on other WWE Legends such as Jake "The Snake" Roberts™, "Macho Man" Randy Savage™ and The Ultimate Warrior® and participated in numerous marquee events until 1991. Andre became the first-ever inductee into the WWE Hall of Fame in 1993.

Roussimoff's larger-than-life personality also allowed him to pursue a career in acting. He appeared in television sitcoms and films during the '70s and '80s, often playing himself or some variation of a human giant, and is remembered for his role as Fezzik in Rob Reiner's classic "The Princess Bride."

Outside the ring, Andre Roussimoff was a gentle giant. The subject of stares and ridicule for his size throughout his life, he was a self-declared introvert. On Jan. 27, 1993, Andre Roussimoff succumbed to his gigantism and died of congestive heart failure. And while WWE has had a memorable cast of larger-than-life stars during the two decades since his passing, Andre the Giant is still remembered as one of the greatest.

**About WWE**

WWE, a publicly traded company (NYSE:WWE), is an integrated media organization and recognized leader in global entertainment. The company consists of a portfolio of businesses that create and deliver original content 52 weeks a year to a global audience. WWE is committed to family friendly entertainment on its television programming, pay-per-view, digital media and publishing platforms. WWE programming reaches more than 650 million homes worldwide in 25 languages. WWE Network, the first-ever 24/7 over-the-top premium network that includes all live pay-per-views, scheduled programming and a massive video-on-demand library, is currently available in more than 180 countries. The company is headquartered in Stamford, Conn., with offices in New York, Los Angeles, London, Mexico City, Mumbai, Shanghai, Singapore, Dubai, Munich and Tokyo. Additional information on WWE (NYSE:WWE) can be found at [wwe.com](http://www.wwe.com) and [corporate.wwe.com](http://corporate.wwe.com). For information on our global activities, go to <http://www.wwe.com/worldwide/>.

### **About HBO Sports**

Over the past three decades, HBO Sports has earned a reputation as one of sports television's most prolific storytellers. From compelling documentaries to unscripted reality programming to world championship boxing to magazine-style studio shows, HBO Sports has been a trailblazer. The department has earned 11 prestigious George F. Peabody Awards for production excellence in long-form programming and introduced a host of innovations and enhancements to increase subscriber satisfaction. Since 1991, HBO Sports has also earned 128 Sports Emmy® Awards and has been recognized with three duPont-Columbia University awards for excellence in broadcast journalism.

### **About Bill Simmons Media Group**

Bill Simmons Media Group was founded in 2015 and immediately launched the multimedia company The Ringer. The Ringer is comprised of a website ([theringer.com](http://theringer.com)), Newsletter, Podcast Network, Social Media network, and scripted and non-scripted video production. The Ringer and HBO have collaborated on various productions including After The Thrones, Any Given Wednesday and now the Andre the Giant project. Eric Weinberger is the President of The Ringer and was formerly the Executive Producer at NFL Media. Bill Simmons received three Sports Emmy® Awards and a Creative Arts Emmy while serving for six years (2009-15) as an executive producer of original film productions under ESPN's Peabody-Award-winning "30 for 30" banner. Simmons was a co-creator of the "30 for 30" series.

### **About Jason Hehir**

Accomplished film director Jason Hehir, who spent seven years at HBO Sports (2001-08) before launching his career as an independent director, will direct the Andre the Giant project. Hehir was a member of the HBO Sports production team that captured Emmy® Award recognition for the groundbreaking "24/7" reality franchise. Hehir's film credits include "The Fab Five," "Down in the Valley," "Jose Canseco: Last Shot," "Bernie and Ernie" and "The '85 Bears."

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HBO:

Kevin Flaherty, 212-512-5052

or

WWE:

Chris Bellitti, 203-352-8759

or

Kovert Creative:

Lewis Kay, 310-907-5300

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