

Billy Heaven: An Introduction

When the boy was born on the thirteenth of June, anno domini 2002, everything changed for William Heaven. After a lifetime of producing only female offspring, seven of them to be exact, he finally produced a child with a Y chromosome with his second wife.

A suitable heir for a lifetime of business ventures, notably in the professional wrestling industry but in a few others too, to pass his legacy along to. *At last*. He joked with family and colleagues that his divorce had finally paid him a dividend, but in some very real ways, he was being completely serious. He needed a boy to carry on his family name. He was his father's pride and joy.

He was forty years old the day Billy was born. He had ample and generational wealth despite some rather steep alimony and child support payments. What that meant for Billy was the finest clothes, the latest toys, and the best schools money could buy. And William was happy to do it. Not *just* because his namesake needed these things to grow and learn, but because he genuinely loved his son.

It wasn't until 2011 that his entire world changed. When William Heaven produced a second son with his much younger wife, it was less like a new son to love and show the way and more like a mulligan.

By the time Billy was nine years old, he had already been ousted from two private schools — once for academic underachievement, the other for smacking the son of a prominent Hollywood accountant with a PSP Vita he snuck in as contraband in his backpack. William didn't have room in his heart for two heirs. Didn't have the time for corrective action. Too busy.

Instead, Billy was shepherding into a public schooling system that had no idea how to handle a spoiled, affluent trust fund baby. He was such a pain in the ass in classes that the friends he *did* make only kept him around for the spectacle of what he might do next. And when school let out, he spent summers with a rather attractive Norwegian au pair named Astrid that was hired to keep tabs on him, but instead she just smoked weed with the neighbor in the pool house.

All alone. The natural progression of things led Billy Heaven to act out even further. His only *real* crime was a son's need for his father.

But that was going to end today. Because today was Ari's Bar Mitzvah, to be held at Congregation Ner Tamid. And today, Billy was going to make his father proud, at long last.

"You ready for the show, boy?" asked Billy, adjusting the lapels of his suit jacket, standing outside the front doors of what was a very modern evocation of an ancient temple. The pyramidal nature with which corrugated wire glass seemed to form the head of a spear and point towards the sky like it was attempting to mortally wound it would've taken back most onlookers. It even took Harold by surprise. But not Billy. He lacked any capacity for such regard.

"Hey man, once again, I have to restate what a *terrible* idea this is," said Harold, shaking his head. "Are you sure you wanna do this? There's still time."

"There's no time," said Billy, aggressively extracting what looked like a switchblade from his front right pocket. He hit the button and from the lateral chasm opened up a comb. He began working his wavy brown plume into a side part. "No time like the present."

Once again, Harold shook his head. It was his only recourse and his most common response to Billy's movements through the world. If he said what he wanted to say, he'd have been out of a job. The Heavens paid him well to make sure Billy didn't get beat up by those agitated by his antics. Or unwittingly commit crimes. All he could do was hope this current plan fell into the gray area of *couldn't be helped*.

"What do you hope to accomplish here, Billy? This isn't gonna do you any good." Billy knew that Harold meant well. He also knew there was probably some merit. But daddy always told him to take initiative, so in his estimation, this was a proactive step. And besides. When in Rome, *fuck* it.

"El Papito got some wet ink on a contract for me and I gotta let the world *know*. A baller like me can't afford to be looked at as some kind of nepotism baby. America and all its amber waves and trains are gonna *learn* about Billy Heaven." He gave a decisive nod. It occurred to Harold that correcting his verbal mishap was a frivolous pursuit.

"Alright, man. I get paid either way. I'm just trying to do you some good."

"Do me some good by getting that live stream going, fam," said Billy. "The *shabbos* guy don't get that paper to play life coach. Tell 'em, Harry." He looped his finger around in a circle. "Go on. Send 'em the signal."

Against his better judgment, Harold lifted the walkie talkie to his lips and pressed down the button.

"We're live in thirty. Thirty seconds. Everybody in position." It felt like he was calling in a drone strike, except instead of hands free murder, it was idiocy.

"It's time," said Billy, taking a deep breath, handing Harold his iPhone, his case a white backdrop adorned with golden sparkles and upside down pineapples.

"Let me know, Killa."

"We're live now, bro."

"Aw shit, really?"

"Yes, bro."

"Alright, shit. Alright. Fuck. What's up, what's up, what's up, ESS-SEA-DUBYA. BH THE SEQUEL up in this joint. Now I know a lot of y'all have questions about what you've seen of late, and you'll get your answers in due time. But for now, let's put that off to the side. We haven't been properly introduced. My name is Billy Heaven, Jr. Ever since I was a kid, my dad told me I was destined for the bread lines. And since now I know that bread *actually* means US dollars, I got a vote of confidence that can't be shaken."

From inside the temple, a subwoofer echoed with bass so hard that it shook the glass on the door.

"So what do you need to know about your new idol? Superior genetics, superior fitness, superior athlete. Billy. MF. HEAVEN. Oh, and one more thing," he reached into his back pocket and pulled out a session dotted yarmulke.

"I'm *Kosher*. So show some damned respect."

And with those poignant words spoken, Billy slung the doors open, letting the noxious bass out into the LA air. He took the microphone handed to him by Harold and made his way inside. The stir of the congregation was notable; there wasn't a head that didn't seek out the source of Tommy Richman's "Million Dollar Baby."

I AIN'T EVER REP A SET BABY!

A two-step through the door.

I AIN'T DO NO WRONG!

A shimmy and a hard stop.

I COULD CLEAN UP GOOD FOR YA! OH I KNOW RIGHT FROM WRONG!

A sharp three-hundred degree pivot on the ball of his foot, a crisp landing in a split-legged stance, left hand pointing to the sky.

'CAUSE I WANNA MAKE IT, SO BADLY!

A sharp retraction of his upward pointed hand into an intense pump, thrust, and strut forward.

I'M A MILLION DOLLA BAYBAY, DON'T AT ME!

To conclude his crisp and fresh entrance, Billy gracefully slid his arms up, making soft abducting circles, followed by an exhale. *Yeah. Yeah, Billy. That was the SHIT.* His mind was racing with anticipation of a hot crowd reaction. But regrettably, still, nobody noticed him. Nobody except Ari, who stood on the bimah in his pressed Pearl suit, neatly fringed tallit katan under the jacket, mouth agape. He must have been doing his reading of the Torah. Billy's mouth curled into a half-smile. His brother shook his head in plain hatred of his older brother.

These people really missed that? Alright. Plan B, then. Billy reached into his pocket, shaking his head, removing a fire cracker and a lighter. He lit the wick with some irritation and tossed the explosive into the aisle. It went off with a raucous *POP*. There were some screams. Some people dove and ducked.

"Yo, yo, yo," he spoke into the microphone.

"Attention to the back, *please*, ladies and gentlemen. It's a business doing pleasure with you, but I'm going to need you to turn your *fucking* attention to the back, right now. Please. Thank you."

Billy paid special attention to the front row. The moment his mother and father turned their heads to see, he knew he hit pay dirt. Senior's fire engine hue matched that of the rabbi, who was on the bimah next to Ari, frantically waving his arms from top to bottom in attempt to stop the music. But he had no such sway, even in his own temple.

"Ayo, DJ, bring that down a couple notches before we get a *NOISE* complaint up in this shul," he ordered loudly. The music barely turned down. "That's better. First and foremost, as the blue chip brother from the same mother, a big shout out to Ari Heaven for entering manhood! From eatin' his own boogers to schemin' on the sugars. Yo, props, brother. I mean that. And as your role model, I wanted to give you a special little gift to get this thang poppin'. So let's have it. Members of the Young Soldiers Greater Los Angeles County Urban Dance Corps? *Spin*, fools! Spin!"

The prompt seemed to dislodge several members from the congregation from their seats. Stepping into the walkway, each wearing a white yarmulke and a crisp black suit, they tore off their

jackets to reveal stark white T's emblazoned with the image of Billy Heaven, Jr and what clearly was an African American arm, presumably Harold's, pointing at him — only William's face was superimposed onto his personal security detail. And then, they launched themselves into their energetic and athletically charged movements, impressively spinning on head and hand, legs whirling around like helicopter blades.

It had the desired reaction. While the congregation was digesting the chaotic scene that had overcome their place of worship, Billy emphatically grabbed his suit right down the middle and gave a curtain-pulling yank, revealing that the suit was in fact, a tearaway. Underneath there was nothing but white boots, white kneepads, and a white Speedo that sported a pair of praying hands on the backside.

"And that brings me to number *two*. Because when you're an impact player, sometimes you just gotta go viral at all costs. The whole world knows about BHJ signing a multiyear, *RECORD BREAKING* deal," he embellished with gusto, accentuating on the microphone amidst the startled and offended chatter taking place among the congregation, "but what it *DOESN'T* know is that in a few weeks' time, the Trios Tournament, henceforth to be known as a *YOUNG KING'S ARRIVAL*, is already in the *bag*. And that's because of what I *GOT* in *MY* bag. The Young King always, Trail Blazin', Goliath Slayin', Honey Courtin', Star of David Sportin' *NON-STOP ATHLETIC 'CAN I GET A SLOW MOTION REPLAY' MACHINE!*"

"BILLY!" From the front row, his father shouted. There was a look of rage in his face that was unparalleled. Billy hadn't seen that shade of him maybe ever. He made the only logical assumption he could.

"Ayo, lastly, let me get a quick round of applause for my father! Local wrestling legend *BIG BILL HEAVEN*. And see, that's why we're here today, brothas and sistas! Because Big Bill has been racking up a big bill in the wrestling industry, and this coming week, *LIVE*, he's finna pay that bad boy off in one straight payment! This is for you, pops! SEND IT!"

Billy stopped and pointed upwards, head down. Nothing happened. Harold was supposed to light off some bottle rockets at this time. He missed his cue. "Harold, send it, would ya?" Nothing happened. "Harold. Brotha. For the love of *FUCK, PLEASE* send it."

Yet still, in spite of insistence that it be sent, sent it was not. When he reached peak annoyance with the lack of blind compliance, he turned around, hands on his hips. "Harold? What the fuck?! Where are the bottle rockets?"

He couldn't hear Harold over the booming of the music. His only mode of communication in those conditions was lip reading.

No, bro. I'm sorry. It was a betrayal. Harold was supposed to be a rider. And yet, here he was, decidedly not riding. When Harold said he wasn't going to light off bottle rockets in the synagogue, Billy's assumption was that he would be so moved by the moment taking place that he would button it with explosives imported from Pennsylvania. It felt like a knife to the back.

Which was to say nothing of the double-leg takedown that thirteen year old Ari Heaven laid on his much older brother, who ran down an aisle without a single person to run interference. He narrowly evaded flailing and brachiating extremities and viciously brought Billy to the ground.

Finally, the music turned off abruptly. William Heaven had found the source emanating from the balcony and had immediately pulled the plug on the entire party. The shrill shrieks and commotion

from the crowd were now much more audible as Billy, legs wrapped up in a teenager's vining arms, attempted to wriggle free.

Ari's fury proved inescapable. His little brother rolled him over, mounted him, and drove his fist into his face in front of an audibly shocked capacity temple.

There was blood on his undershirt, a tissue stuffed into his nose, and a bottle of Dos Equis in his hand on the concrete stairs leading into the Ner Tamid. He was regrettably still in his wrestling gear. He brooded from his seat on the second step, taking a sip of his beer at 1:04 in the afternoon, the Los Angeles Sun threatening to pan sear him the same way it had his father.

Upset members passed him by in silence. It was a place that never grasped the magnitude of his stardom. At his own bar mitzvah he had attempted to replace his own Torah reading with some stand-up comedy that he wrote after watching a Chris Rock special. His intentions were purely comedic, but he was scolded for his blatant disrespect and misuse of common Yiddish phrases his father taught him.

"You're such a fucking shmendrik," he heard the fresh pubescent voice of his younger brother come from behind his ruminative crouch. "Dad's finally gonna disown you over this."

"He ain't gonna do all that, calm your *bitch ass titties* down, fattie." He gave a side nod up to the teenage paunch Ari, at 5 feet 2 inches, was waiting to grow into. He maintained his hardened, icy gaze on the distant horizon.

"No, you're probably right. He won't, and it's because mom would never let him."

Blow for blow. Billy went low, Ari went lower. It was the trend their brotherly scraps had a history of following.

"When you were a baby I used to take your dirty ass diapers and give you noogies with them," claimed Billy.

"You trash bag," sharply answered his younger sibling, "no you did not."

"Smiling the whole time, too, like the stupid little asshole you are now. Little shit marks rubbed all up those stupid locks. Terrible shit, bro. You loved it."

"I'm gonna kick your ass again," came the threat.

"Go ahead, bitch, my back ain't turned this time. I'll pop a cap in that ass, proper." He took a rapid swipe at Ari's leg, who quickly stepped back.

"I fucking hate you," uttered Ari, shaking his head and walking away. It was clear that his emphatically destroyed entry into manhood being left incomplete had stung. Feeling the deflation in his brother's energy, he felt the need to fix it.

"Ari."

His brother turned around, rolling his eyes and gesturing 'what' with his hands.

I'm sorry, Ari. Only it didn't come out that way. It came out in a menacingly raised middle finger. Ari scoffed and continued on his hate march.

This sibling rivalry was as unnecessary as it was petty. It had existed since an eight year old Ari was lauded by his own grandfather as a chess prodigy. That wasn't the problem. The issue was he had been comprehensively beating Billy since he was six.

His mother and father walked briskly past, not saying a word. Her arm was nestled into the crook of his elbow, and she looked back at him only briefly, a maternal desire to turn around and soothe her eldest son's wounds.

"Fine, fuck you, then," he muttered under his breath. It must have resounded in William's ear like a hydrogen bomb. He stopped dead in his tracks.

"Keep walking, honey," his mother urged, panic present in her eyes. William appeared to be trying to resist the impulse to turn around and let his first begotten son have it.

"*I'm going to fucking kill him.*" He wasn't sure if he heard it right, but it would have been the second meanest thing he'd said to him all week aside from his vague threat to destroy the Hot Wheels track he'd spent an entire day building.

"Just keep moving," she lovingly encouraged, giving him a pat on the shoulder and a peck on the cheek. "Leave him alone. Take some time and breathe. Okay? We're leaving. We're leaving." After a brief moment, William unlocked two feet frozen in anger and kept moving. His mother turned around and gave him a pathetic smile before they continued onto the distant parking lot.

That was the least desirable reaction Billy could have received in totality. A tongue lashing would have suited him better. At least his father's incisive utterances gave him some utility. After all, Ari was right. Mom really was always the buffer between Billy and an orphanage. He wondered briefly what would have ever become of him had his mother not constantly stood in his dad's way.

But the mind of a gangsta was a profoundly complicated thing to Billy. In order to keep things '*a hunnit*', he felt as though he needed to suppress the negative feelings he was experiencing in order to maintain his rep. And so he did.

Time marches on. He took a sip of his Dos Equis, wiped his mouth, and launched the mostly full bottle down the steps and onto the sidewalk.

When he stood up, he took in his surroundings. The only person left on scene was Harold, whose face was buried in his cellphone. Billy was filled with the holy fire.

"Yo, *BITCH*," yelled out Billy like he was calling for help from a canyon rather than talking to someone who was twenty yards away, "you did *not* ride for me today. What the fuck, man?!"

Harold held a finger up to him without even looking up. "I am not giving any more warnings today. Enough of that shit, man. No more."

Sensing that this was probably more genuine than vague threats from the past, Billy held his tongue. Harold was his only friend, and in order for that to remain in good standing, a fee was required.

Billy approached Harold in earnestness. He wasn't sure why, but he couldn't shake the feeling of absolute defeat. "Aight, fine, dawg. Whatever. But don't pretend you didn't puss out on me on those bottle rockets. That shit cost me big time today, bro."

Harold cocked an eyebrow. "How do you go through life seeing everything that happens completely ass backwards? You really think the synagogue needed more explosives today? C'mon Billy, think this shit through."

Billy thought about it. He really lacked the self-awareness required to understand whether or not this was a serious question.

"Damn. Fine. Sorry. I guess it's just me, the streets, and a mint julep, then."

Dejected and distraught, the self-sabotage artist detached himself from the employer-employee dynamic and was left to fend for himself — at least for the rest of the day. He was sad. He needed some time for reflection.

“Ay yo, Billy.”

“What,” he answered, void of energy.

“This video was posted live less than an hour ago and already has over 10,000 views. Yo...”

Billy’s eyebrow jolted into an electrical current. A five digit number temporarily assuaged his impending depression. “Say *whaaat? Really?*”

“Dude, these *comments*, though. I’m dying.”

You can’t keep a good man down. “Read ‘em.”

“No,” quickly snipped Harold. “Almost 11,000 views.”

“My dawg. Refresh it again. Maybe there’s more.”

“11,003.”

His flair for life returning, he gave Harold the grace of a few seconds. “Refresh it again.”

Harold was annoyed, but his curiosity led him to do it. “11,034.”

“Refresh it again.”

“Shut the *fuck* up.”