**WHY BARON CORBIN’S WWE PUSH WAS HALTED**

Little more than a week ago, it seemed as if Baron Corbin was on his way to becoming WWE’s next big thing, at least on the Smackdown brand. Despite still lacking polish on the mic and in the ring, it was clear that the Lone Wolf came a long way from the time he surprised everyone by winning last year’s Andre the Giant Memorial Battle Royal at Wrestlemania 32. He seemed to get along with the crowd despite his portrayal as a vindictive and ruthless heel leading to his push to the 2017 money in the bank contract. And it went downhill from there…

To start with the woes, It began with Baron unsuccessful cash in against WWE champion, Jinder Mahal. And while he could have had a chance to redeem himself against the man who cost him that cash-in, all it took was one AA from John Cena to finish Corbin off in clean and decisive fashion at Summerslam. We also have to mention the myriad reports of backstage heat, as Corbin appears to be the blue brand’s version of Enzo Amore in terms of unpopularity with co-workers. With all that in mind, one really has to wonder – is WWE burying Baron Corbin after once being so high on him?

If we are to look at recent history, the answer would be a resounding “yes.” Remember the time Rusev had a long undefeated streak and an unstoppable reign as United States Champion? Ever since Lana outed the fact that the two of them were engaged, the Bulgarian Brute has become an injury-prone creative afterthought and looked like a total patsy when Randy Orton destroyed him at Summerslam. Likewise, Enzo Amore popped the Barclays Center crowd last night when he slicked himself up with baby oil and escaped from his shark cage…only to eat a big boot from Big Cass.

Those aren’t the only examples from recent years we can mention. Dolph Ziggler, Emma and Damien Sandow had heat with officials for speaking their minds – Ziggler’s been taken off TV for a bit of rebranding. Emma is barely present on *Raw*, while Sandow was jobbed out by Cena, then released by the WWE. Or what about Jack Swagger and Rob Van Dam? While your mileage may vary when it comes to marijuana use, they did get caught smoking the herb at the worst possible time, and their WWE pushes never recovered.

Yes indeed, WWE takes backstage and off screen misconduct seriously these days, and Baron Corbin’s heat levels ahead of last week’s events were apparently nuclear. It seems that Baron’s surly demeanour is more than just an act, as he’s been picking fights on Twitter with former military man-turned wrestling podcaster Mike Gilbert, and no less than the great Dave Meltzer himself.

Somehow, It was believed that there may have been a good chance he was tweeting in character, but after getting up to speed with the latest Corbin backstage heat rumours, it would seem that he’s more of a Josh Mathews-type when it comes to social media beefs—there’s a better chance he’s simply being himself, and not playing a villainous character. And speaking of being himself, it’s long been rumoured that Corbin’s “Lone Wolf” persona is not an act, he’s an aloof loner by nature who refuses to mingle with co-workers. That’s not going to get you anywhere in any kind of business, pro wrestling definitely.

Reports have previously shown that WWE appears to be souring on Corbin because of his still-subpar promo skills and childish responses on Twitter while talking trash with colleagues. Weak to average promo skills can improve by leaps and bounds with hard work and the right circumstances, as we saw years ago from Bret Hart and just recently in AJ Styles, and even Neville and Braun Strowman. But as these newer reports are suggesting, Corbin’s tendency to put his virtual foot in his mouth on social media is the bigger problem, and we think that’s something he needs to fix ASAP before working on any in-ring or on-mic deficiencies.

For now, we expect Baron to struggle with Smackdown live’smid-card, and who knows, he just might be used to put over babyfaces who need a break, guys like Sami Zayn, Luke Harper, heck, even Tye Dillinger for that matter. It might not happen overnight, but unless Corbin gives himself a good attitude adjustment—and we don’t mean John Cena’s finisher—you may be calling yourself lucky to see him on TV at this same time next year.

At this point in his career, he still has some upside to work with. You can still call him a young prospect at 32, as he joined the world of wrestling at 27, not long after his last failed NFL tryout, and has just one year of main roster experience on his resume. And while he may be getting punished right now for his misconduct on Twitter and heat with co-workers, what he needs to do right now is to take accountability for his actions, and stop behaving like a man-child who hasn’t outgrown his schoolyard bully days. Based on history, that’s no guarantee of redemption, but it’s the least he can do to regain the promise he apparently lost together with his Money in the Bank cash-in attempt.