

Lita: A Less Traveled R.O.A.D.--The Reality of Amy Dumas (WWE)

By Amy Dumas, Michael Krugman

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The autobiography of one of the wrestling world's top women stars - the flaming redhead and dragon-tattooed diva who fought her way back to the top after a devastating stunt accident threatened to end her career. Lita put paid to the idea that the role of female wrestlers was to stand in the corner looking pretty. Her style was explosive, leaving the ropes to execute breathtaking aerial manouevres that few but the best could master. Breathtaking trademark moves like the Hurricanrana, the swinging DDT and the moonsault from the top rope won her the World Wrestling Entertainment women's championship. But one fierce piledrive into the canvas while she was performing as a stunt artist on the set of the TV show Dark Angel changed her life forever. Lita: It Just Feels Right is the story of a free spirit who literally broke her neck and battled right back. Her life has been characterised by determination and independence: before she became a star she had travelled the world in search of adventure, played bass guitar in a rock band, and studied judo and kickboxing. A heroine to millions of WWE fans worldwide, Lita's story is one of inspiration, thrills, and success against impossible odds.

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Lita: A Less Traveled R.O.A.D.--The Reality of Amy Dumas (WWE) By Amy Dumas, Michael Krugman Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #473266 in Books
- Brand: Brand: World Wrestling Entertainment
- Published on: 2003-09-30
- Released on: 2003-09-16
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.44" h x 1.13" w x 6.28" l,
- Binding: Hardcover
- 352 pages

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Editorial Review

About the Author
Michael Krugman is the cowriter -- with Matt and Jeff Hardy -- of the *New York Times* bestseller *The Hardy Boyz™: Exist 2 Inspire.* He has written for a wide variety of national publications and online media outlets, including RollingStone.com. He is the coauthor of *Generation Ecch!* and author of *Oasis: Supersonic Supernova.* He lives in Brooklyn, New York.

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Chapter One

Every year, on the morning of April 14, my mom calls at 10:36 to wish me "Happy Birthday."

My parents -- Christie and Mike Dumas -- got married right out of college. My dad started out as a schoolteacher, but after a few years, he went to work for a company in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, that did wall coverings for various hotels and businesses. When I was little, he would bring home books of wallpaper samples. I really enjoyed looking at the different colors and designs -- it was like reading through a book without a story. I would always go and show him which ones I liked best.

We moved around a lot because my dad's position in the company kept changing. Every time he moved up, we'd have to relocate. It was all in the same region, but still far enough away to where it was like starting a new life each time.

When I was two, my family moved from Fort Lauderdale to Jacksonville. One of my earliest memories is of riding to the Magic Market on the back of my mom's bicycle. She had a brown ten-speed and I had a yellow bike seat on the back.

From Jacksonville we moved to Winter Park, right outside of Orlando. That's where my brother Billy was born. Billy is almost five years younger than me -- he was born New Year's Eve 1979. To be honest, we were never that close. I was a good-natured easygoing kid, but Billy was always just totally evil tempered. He was a real terror. None of my friends wanted to come to my house to hang out; Billy was that bad.

As a baby, he just cried and cried. My mom would hold him under his arms and say, "I'll make you do a little dance if you don't stop crying." She'd tiptoe him with his little feet touching the table, but he wouldn't stop screaming. His face would be totally purple, bawling at the top of his lungs.

No question about it, Billy was a handful. Even when he got older, he had an incredibly short fuse. I'd be watching TV and Billy would say, "Give me the remote control, stupid." I would be in the middle of a show, so I'd say, "No," then he'd start beating me up. I had to run away so I wouldn't get in trouble -- my parents always told me that I was the older sister and I should've known better than to provoke him. I'd go into my room and lock the door and he'd kick the door open. All the locks on every door in the house were broken because of Billy's temper.

One day when I was seven, we were in the car with my mom, running errands. Billy was whining and crying because he swallowed his gum, so my mom gave him another piece.

"I want another piece of gum, too," I said.

"You don't need another piece," Mom replied. "Now wait in the car, I'll be right back."

That was the last straw. I had had enough. So when we got back home I decided to run away. I went to my room and packed up the TWA Airlines bag my grandfather had given to me. I packed socks, underwear, and a Ziploc bag full of peanuts. Then I wrote my mother a note: "*Mommy, I'm running away because it's not fair that when Billy chews his gum and swallows it and starts crying he gets another piece but if I ask for another piece of gum you say, 'No, you already have one.'"*

My mom was in the shower getting ready for one of the little cocktail parties my parents used to throw. I took my bag and walked to the end of the first block of the cul de sac where we lived, which was as far as I was allowed to ride my bike without supervision. I got brave and walked another block, to the intersection of the main street, which was a pretty big four-lane street. When I got there I just stood on the corner for a few minutes. *I don't know where I'm going,* I thought, *so I probably should go back before I get in trouble.*

When I got home, my mom was getting dressed and I told her that I ran away. I wasn't even gone long enough for her to notice! My note was still sitting right there where I'd left it. Of course, my mom felt really bad. We sat and talked for a good while. My mom still has the note.

Because of my dad's job, I kept getting uprooted from my schools and my friends. I think moving around so much was what made me such a loner as an adult. I was never miserable about moving, I just accepted it. *This is how it is,* I thought. *You have to take care of yourself because you never know if your friends are going be there the next day.*

I was in second grade when we moved from Winter Park to Deerfield Beach, in South Florida. Deerfield Beach is like the not-so-rich town in between all the rich towns around there, like the multimillion-dollar mansions in Boca Raton a couple miles south.

I was pretty much okay with it at first, but then reality hit. I realized that everything I was used to was not going be there anymore. I said to my mom, "Could we at least take our house with us?" I'd seen trailers on the highways, and thought we could just move the house.

We were in Deerfield for a pretty long time, all the way though sixth grade. That house is where I have my best childhood memories. It wasn't a big house, but it was nice. My father was doing pretty well at work, so it wasn't a real stressful time for us, financially speaking. We got a hot tub and my mom got a new convertible.

Those were good times. My parents were getting along really well in those days. My parents were both big tennis nuts, so we'd go to the swim and tennis clubs and to keep me busy I'd be at the pool while they would play tennis. That's how I got into being on the swim team.

My favorite Grandma, my dad's mother, had a condo in Pompano, which is just south of Deerfield Beach. We called her "Maga." That came from one of my older cousins. When he first started learning how to talk, all his words came out kind of backwards. So instead of "Grandma," he said "Maga." And it stuck.

When my parents went on little weekend trips, playing in tennis tournaments, Maga would come stay with us. I just loved hanging around her.

Maga was just a really neat lady. She would tell me stories, drinking her Schaeffer beer and smoking her long brown More cigarettes. She talked about what a good guy my grandfather was. Like my dad, his role in

the family was to discipline the kids and bring home the money. He came from a fairly affluent family. He was in the military and was killed in the Korean War.

That was Maga's heyday. She had a good husband from a well-respected family, she had good kids, she went to fancy parties. Her life was relatively perfect. But after my grandfather died, she had to become the fighting single mom. It was a hard life, raising kids on her own without much money. She pinched pennies and always did the best she could.

In a lot of ways, she lived through her memories of the good old days. I loved hearing her stories. I always thought that was a great way to deal with life -- she had a good time early in life which she enjoyed to the fullest. She accepted that those days had ended. Maga rolled with the punches and made the most of her situation at the time, whatever it was. She never acted depressed, at least she never did in front of me.

She had a great attitude towards life, she was very open-minded and always supportive. She would never put me down or say that any idea I had was stupid. Parents have to question you -- "Are you sure you don't want to go to college?" -- but because she was my grandmother, she didn't have to.

I always enjoyed spending time with Maga. When my parents would go away for the weekend, Billy and I would either stay with her or she'd come stay with us. Maga had an old car and for some reason, there was no backseat. It was just carpet and the wheel wells. My brother and I would be back there and when Maga would flick her cigarettes out the window, they'd always come back in through the back window. "Quit doing that, Maga," I'd say. "You're burning me!"

"No, I'm not," she'd reply. "I threw it out the window."

But every time she flicked her cigarette, it would always come right back in.

Eventually my mom gave her our old family car. We were doing pretty well and when Mom bought a '84 Mustang GT convertible, she gave Maga our Impala. She wanted to make sure that we had seatbelts on when Maga carted us around.

In seventh grade, my family moved to Atlanta, which really broke Maga's heart. My parents made me tell her the news over Thanksgiving dinner. I guess they knew she wouldn't be happy about it and they wanted me to tell her in order to soften the blow. They told me to say, "The good news is my dad got a promotion, but now we have to move to Atlanta."

Of course I didn't say it like they told me to. I said, "Guess what, Maga. Dad got a promotion."

"Oh that's great," she said. "Congratulations, Michael, I'm real proud of you." She was so happy, and then I said, "But we have to move to Atlanta," and Maga started crying. It was real sad.

We moved to Marietta, Georgia, which is maybe twenty-five minutes north of Atlanta. We lived in a little development called Chimney Lakes. Our house there was pretty big. That's when we started running into financial problems. I think my parents were a little overzealous when they bought it.

It was pretty nice. Chimney Lakes had a neighborhood pool and of course I was on the swim team. That was the one constant in my childhood -- no matter where we went, I was on the swim team.

Because I started swimming at an early age, I was always pretty good. But it wasn't until I got to Atlanta that I started swimming year-round. The team I was on was called Swim Atlanta and they were very serious people -- the guys would shave their whole bodies, and some people were training for the Olympics.

I would go there after school and swim, sometimes four nights a week. Once a month, the team would participate in a swim meet. They were mostly in the same region, but sometimes we'd travel three or four hours away from Atlanta. They were big events, two or three days long, especially compared to the neighborhood meets, which would usually take all of two hours.

I played other sports in addition to swimming, like soccer and softball, but swimming was definitely what I was best at. I was never the top swimmer on any team, but I was good. My stroke was the butterfly, which a lot of swimmers hate doing, so therefore I was a valuable asset, especially on relay races which start off with the butterfly.

The coach would try to get me excited -- "Amy, we really need you to get us started, you're the lead swimmer going into the race and the team needs you!" -- but those type of talks never really hyped me up. *I'll swim the butterfly as best I can,* I thought. *Obviously I can't do it any better than I can do it, so why are you telling me this? I'm not going to try any harder because you gave me this pep talk.*

I was always really into my times. For example, 32.4 seconds was a good time for a 50-yard race. I didn't care if I got first place, but if I did 32.6, I'd be really mad at myself. The truth is, I've always been more in competition with myself than anyone else. I was much more interested in my personal best than how the team did. I think that's one of the things that led me to wrestling -- it's very much a sport for loners.

My Most Vivid Memories of Childhood

1. Catching lightning bugs at my grandparents' house in St. Louis. I'd put them in mayonnaise jars with holes in the lid that I made with an ice pick.

2. Collecting little snails after it rained in Winter Park. I named them all "Shirley."

3. Walking along the railroad tracks with my dad and finding "special pink rocks" to bring back home.

4. I had an imaginary friend named "Makey." We drew together with crayons on the hardwood floor under my bed -- which my mom discovered when we moved from Jacksonville to Winter Park.

5. My parents had a dinner party the night before my brother and I were having our portrait photographed. I got bored and went into my parents' room and cut off a big chunk of hair with my mom's sewing scissors. The next day, I had a cute little bowl cut for the pictures!

6. Spending weekends with my grandmother. I loved sitting in her parrot chair, which I thought was just the coolest.

7. I was ten-years-old when Pee Wee's Big Adventure came out. I decided to imitate the bicycle scene and ended up the same way Pee Wee did -- scraped hands and knees! If you don't know what I'm talking about, put this book down and go rent the movie. It's my all-time favorite!

8. Hanging from the top of my swing set, falling, and knocking my tooth out on the swing below.

9. They put up a new jungle gym in the kindergarten playground. I got pushed off and cracked my head on the concrete ring at the base of the fireman's pole. That was the only time I ever got stitches...until I got to WWE!

10. I was supposed to clean my room on weekend chore days, but I'd always procrastinate and play until I heard my mom coming in her "mad shoes" -- she wore flip-flops while doing chores, so I could always hear

her coming towards my room to bust me!

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Users Review

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