

Dwayne Johnson reflects on discrimination he faced as a child: 'Racial prejudice was pretty prevalent'

The WWE wrestler turned actor who starred in films such as *Journey to the centre of the Earth* has a new TV series that focuses on his developmental years

By [Jessica Napoli](#)



[Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson](#) has become one of Hollywood's most amazing success stories.

The former WWE star turned actor turned producer/businessman detailed his inspiring story in a recent candid interview with [Cigar Aficionado](#). The 48-year-old leading man reflected on how he started from humble beginnings and faced discrimination being a half Black, half Samoan child.

"When I was a kid, up until I was 10, 11 years old, we were in Texas, Tennessee, Georgia, Florida, North Carolina, so it was predominantly throughout the south where racial prejudice was pretty prevalent, pretty strong," Johnson admitted.

DWAYNE 'THE ROCK' JOHNSON RECALLS 'INCREDIBLY COMPLICATED' RELATIONSHIP WITH FATHER ROCKY JOHNSON

The "Fast & Furious" star described how as a teenager he was angry and resorted to committing petty crimes.

"That's when I started getting arrested and getting into trouble," he recalled. "The dumb stuff that I was doing — from theft, fighting, truancy, skipping school — looking back I was one of those kids who was always playing angry because of the situation that I was in. I didn't realize it at the time."

"We go back and we illuminate timelines in my life, living a very on-the-go lifestyle," he hinted. "In the world of pro wrestling, there was such an intersection of worlds that I had, meeting professional athletes, from Muhammad Ali —



my dad would spar with Ali, my dad was also a boxer, he would spar with George Foreman... You can imagine what my dinners were like, with Andre the Giant and these wrestling stars... It begins at about 10 years old, then 15 years old, and then 18 years old."

Johnson's wrestler name, The Rock, has taken on a double meaning for a man who seems to have an impenetrable surface of chiseled muscle, pearly white teeth and an infectious smile. Because, yes, Johnson smiles. A lot. His image is that of a man with a perfect life. But beneath that surface is a man who spent years battling expectations and a wrestling industry that rarely knew what to do with a star like him. For kids like me, he was a black superhero before he was a black superhero. We'll always remember.

In 2004, Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson quit wrestling to become a movie star. As we speak, The Fate of the Furious, the latest instalment in one of the most successful and most diverse film franchises ever, is scheduled for an April 14 release. It's on its eighth episode, and The Rock has starred in four of them. The seven years he spent as a wrestler prepared him to be Hollywood's biggest action hero by placing in his path just the kind of obstacles and pitfalls he'd face before film cameras. In truth, for The Rock to make it to Hollywood, he had to fight his way through wrestling's own showbiz universe.

In a recent interview, Johnson added (when asked about the pandemic): "Myself and my two-year-old daughter, we were the last ones standing until the very end, but of course we both tested positive. We were on the fortunate end for something that has been so traumatic to the world. We got through it."

"What's important to me now, and what will be important to me five years from now, eight years from now, 10 years from now, is legacy," he said. "January 15 [2020], my dad died suddenly. Gone. I didn't have a chance to say goodbye to him. That's a tough one to reconcile. We all lose our loved ones, but when we don't get a chance to say goodbye, that's tough. So this idea of legacy and what that means, not only leaving a legacy, but sustaining it, and how much more can we push the legacy along, how much more can you expand it, where you can take it. Legacy."