

# Fear the kickboxing zombie

WINNIPEG FIGHTER, ONCE THE ONE-ARMED KING OF THE RING, NOW ONE OF THE LIVING DEAD

By: Taylor Allen

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A one-armed guy from Winnipeg going on to become a world champion kickboxer.

It's a story not even Hollywood would try to foist off on us.



Baxter Humby as a zombie in Fear The Walking Dead. (Supplied)

But it's more believable than you'd think and Baxter Humby is living proof. Humby's journey to the top of the kickboxing world has the makings of a classic underdog sports movie and it might just wind up on the big screen one day.

"There's a couple friends that are in the business that want to make a movie," said Humby in a phone interview from his home in Pacific Palisades, Calif.

"We'll see, because it's all about who they know and how much money they can get into it, so we'll see."

You'll hear all about how he knows people in the movie business in a minute.

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Humby's story begins in Gillam, Man., where his right arm from the elbow down was amputated at birth because it was entangled with his umbilical cord — an incredibly rare complication. His family would move to Winnipeg a year later where his dad, a boxer himself, would teach him how to box at a young age. Humby would go on to become a black belt in Taekwondo before being introduced to Muay Thai. He'd win the Canadian Super Welterweight Kickboxing

Championship in 1996 and 1997 before moving to California to pursue a professional kickboxing career.

"The reason I moved to California was because I was the Canadian champion in Winnipeg and none of the promoters wanted me to go on their fight cards because they had a hard time finding opponents for me," said Humby, now 46 and retired from the fight game.

"Basically it was a losing battle because either you'd beat up a one-armed guy or you'd get beat by a one-armed guy."



Baxter Humby wearing his World Boxing Council National Champion belt. (Supplied)

More often than not, opponents were getting beat by the one-armed guy known as "The One-Armed Bandit." Humby would retire in 2012, amassing a career record of 70-12-2, highlighted by one amateur and three professional world titles, including the International Muay Thai Council World Super Welterweight championship. He's the first combat sports athlete to win multiple world titles with one arm.

It's hard to understand how someone missing a limb could step into the ring with some of the toughest people in the world and beat them, but Humby didn't view it as a disability. It's all he's ever known, and in some ways, he thinks it might have actually helped him.

"I've actually thought about it," said Humby, who also ran for the Canadian National Track Team in the Paralympics in Barcelona 1992 and Berlin 1994, when asked if he believes he would have been a better fighter with two hands.

*'Basically it was a losing battle because either you'd beat up a one-armed guy or you'd get beat by a one-armed guy'*

– Baxter Humby on opponents' rationales for dodging him in the kickboxing ring 'I've got the zombie thing down'

"I was always a good athlete doing whatever with one hand. I think that actually motivated me. So many people said I couldn't so I had that fire and determination to prove everybody wrong. I think that maybe led to me being as good as I was because people said I couldn't do it. I had that extra drive."

Known for his vicious kicks, Humby would often break opponents' arms. However, he saved arguably his most impressive kick for last. Less than a minute into the final pro fight of his career, Humby knocked out Dominic Zedov with a reverse sidekick to the solar-plexus. The kick went viral and Humby was nominated for an ESPY Award for Best Male Athlete with a Disability in 2012.

While he didn't win, it did lead to his post-fighting career. A Hollywood stunt co-ordinator saw the fight and offered Humby the opportunity to be a stuntman in *Spider-Man 3*. Humby got to be Spider-Man himself, as they used him in a fight scene where the popular



Baxter Humby  
(Steve Gazzulo / Supplied)

superhero punches through the Sandman's chest.

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Humby's athletic background and one hand has carved out a unique position in the industry, leading to numerous roles in television and film.

Need someone to lose an arm in a fight scene? How about a zombie getting its arm chopped off? Humby is the guy to call.

"I have no problem with it," said Humby, who's done a mix of acting and stunt work. There hasn't been a ton of opportunities lately owing to COVID-19, but Humby was a zombie on *Fear the Walking Dead* at the beginning of the year. You'll also be able to see him in theatres in 2021, as he played a role in a soon-to-be-released movie called *Army of the Dead* starring former WWE superstar Dave Bautista.

This is the 11th instalment in a periodic series called Catching Up.

Taylor retells the stories of former Manitoba sports icons while also providing an update on what they're up to today.

Have a certain sports figure in mind? Email [taylor.allen@freepress.mb.ca](mailto:taylor.allen@freepress.mb.ca) with your suggestion.

"I'm glad I have my little niche because it's pretty cutthroat out here... I've got the zombie thing down."

When he isn't working on his acting chops, Humby keeps busy with real estate, investing and spending time with his family. He and his wife Sonja have two daughters: Mila 10, and 8-year-old Ally.

A member of the 2020 Manitoba Sports Hall of Fame induction class, Humby takes pride in the titles he's won and seeing his name in the credits, but more importantly, he hopes his story can inspire others.

"I like to say the only limits you have are the ones you put on yourself. So, if you don't put any limits on yourself, there are no limits."

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Baxter Humby's post-fighting career has included the opportunity to be a stuntman in Spider-Man 3 and a zombie in Fear The Walking Dead. (Supplied)

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### **Taylor Allen**

*Reporter*

Eighteen years old and still in high school, Taylor got his start with the Free Press on June 1, 2011. Well, sort of.

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