# Ventura, Jesse (1951-) Encyclopedia Article

## Ventura, Jesse (1951-)

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# Ventura, Jesse (1951—)

With his surprise election as Governor of Minnesota in 1998, former professional wrestler Jesse "The Body" Ventura (whose real name is James Janos) captured the attention of the nation. Representing the Reform Party, Ventura parlayed his gift for gab, his celebrity status, and public disgust with "politics as normal" to become an instant icon. Within days of his election, Ventura was the talk of the nation—appearing on countless talk shows (where he announced that he should now be dubbed "The Mind"), becoming the subject of both serious news analyses and numerous jokes, and morphing into a *Doonesbury* character. The A&E cable channel quickly put together an episode of *Biography,* two networks started work on TV movies, and Ventura found time to pen a political autobiography called *Ain't Got Time to Bleed.*

Ventura's diverse resume includes time as a Navy Seal, TV broadcaster, radio talk show host, and a very successful stint in professional wrestling. Ventura was named the "The Body" due to his impressive physique, but when a blood clot forced his early retirement from the ring, it was his ability behind the microphone as a color commentator, coupled with a penchant for boas and outrageous costumes, which earned him an impressive fan base and won notice by Hollywood producers. Ventura acted respectably in roles in *Predator* (1987), *The Running Man* (1987), and *Batman & Robin*

**Jesse "The Body" Ventura**
(1997). As typifies late twentieth century American popular culture, the road to politics was only a step away.

## Further Reading:

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Ventura, Jesse. *I Ain't Got Time to Bleed: Rebuilding the Body Politic from the Bottom Up.* New York, Villard Books, 1999.