

Acromegaly is a hormonal disorder that results when the pituitary gland produces excess growth hormone (HGH). Most commonly it begins with a tumor. Acromegaly most commonly affects middle-aged adults and can result in serious illness and premature death. Because of its insidious pathogenesis and slow progression, the disease is hard to diagnose in the early stages and is frequently missed for many years. Wrestler and actor André the Giant, 7' tall after back surgery; his original wrestling stats listed him at 7'4". He died at the age of 46, when most sufferers weren't expected to live past the age of 40. (He chose not to be treated and died from disease).

André the Giant was the stage name of **André René Roussimoff**, (May 19, 1946 – January 27, 1993) a French professional wrestler and actor. He was at least (6 ft 10 in) tall and believed by many to have been over (7 ft) at his tallest. His great size was a result of a condition known as acromegaly, and led to him being dubbed "The Eighth Wonder of the World".

André was born in Molien, France, to Boris and Marianne Roussimoff, who were of Bulgarian and Polish descent, respectively. He was the third of five children. André was a good student but left school after 8th grade because he did not feel that it was important to have a high school education to live and work on a farm that was not his own. André was drafted into France's peacetime army, but was rejected during his physical because there were no shoes big enough to fit him. He made career for himself as a popular wrestler.

In the A&E documentary, Arnold Skaaland mentions how André wished he could see a Broadway play. Arnold offered to buy tickets, but André then passed up the opportunity, citing how he was too big for the seats and that people behind him would not be able to see. This was cited as a principal reason for why André frequented taverns more than anywhere else.

In the A&E *Biography* episode, Arnold Skaaland tells the story of when André was in a bar one night, four men came up to him and began harassing him about his size. At first, André attempted to avoid confrontation, but eventually he proceeded to chase the hecklers until they locked themselves in their car. André then grabbed the car and tilted it over to its side with the four people trapped inside. André was never arrested for the incident, presumably since local police officers had a hard time believing four inebriated men's story about an angry giant having overturned their car.

Screenwriter and author William Goldman once said that André loved going out for dinner, but regardless of who extended the invitation, he would always pay for the meal. One time, one of his friends slipped away to give their credit card to the maitre'd and felt himself being lifted off the ground, carried back to the table, and deposited back in their chair "like a little boy". Concluding, Goldman added that the friend in question was Arnold Schwarzenegger.

André died in his sleep on January 27, 1993, in his Paris hotel room, where he was discovered the following morning by his chauffeur. He was in France to attend the funeral of his father. It was later concluded that he died of congestive heart failure, a byproduct of the growth hormone-secreting pituitary tumor he had much of his life and chose not to have treated.

André's body was cremated in accordance with his wishes and his ashes scattered at his ranch in Ellerbe, North Carolina. According to his A&E *Biography*, his wishes to be cremated were almost not carried out, since a crematorium in France could not be found that could handle his ample frame, thus his body was shipped back to America where a crematorium was found.