

WWF One Night Only – Let Politics Ring!

One Night Only

Date: September 20, 1997

Location: NEC Arena, Birmingham, England

Attendance: 11,000

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

So more or less, this is the first European only PPV, meaning it only aired in Europe and Canada because of Bret wanting it to, so there you are. We're between Ground Zero, where nothing of note happened and Bad Blood, where the Cell and Kane debuted. This is on a Saturday for no apparent reason and other than the main event, nothing of note happens here.

Vince was really just trying to expand his audience a bit so he threw this out there to them to give them something. The main event is Shawn vs. Bulldog for the European Title which doesn't mean much but over there it would be a big deal. Oh and the other reason I'm doing this is because I want to have done everything in the 90s and this was one of the few I had left. Let's do it.

Oh before I forget, most of you have likely never seen this whole thing. Unless you have 24/7 or know how to find shows online, it's unlikely you've seen the full show. The American release was heavily cut and is missing 2-3 matches. This is the full show that was only available in Europe or Canada on tape or PPV, meaning you would have had to tape it when it aired at first.

We start with a recap of Summerslam 92 because that's the extent of mainstream wrestling. This is really just a highlight reel of Smith's career leading up to tonight, meaning it's very short. That was rather pointless.

HHH vs. Dude Love

Love had turned into what he is now at Summerslam where he entered as Mankind. Again, this feud was over, but they're not really putting a lot of thought into it. Should be fine though. The ring announcer is very Irish. Since I just got done doing KOTR 97 about 3 hours ago this is a nice companion piece. HHH is REALLY hitting his stride here as he's turning into a perfect snob but also has the muscle mass and capabilities coming in for him.

Apparently you have to be a good athlete to be King of the Ring. That's not true due to Mable but points for trying. Love, getting a big pop, gives a promo with English words thrown in. It's rather amusing. Foley is freaking TALENTED. I've always loved Dude's music for some twisted reason. They do that annoying air horn thing but accompany it with DUDE LOVE at the end instead of claps.

It's the thing where it's 5 blows of it then 4 then two more to end it. Instead of the two at the end they chant the name. Lawler keeps using British insults and Vince is getting ticked off at him for it. Foley puts a leg lock on HHH that if you look at it closely enough you can see that there's very little pressure on the leg but it looks good if nothing else. Sweet Shin Music misses. Ok now Lawler is just getting annoying.

We get another instance of HHH backing down from the referee which never gets old. HHH is mostly in control here as would be expected. He's got insane heat on him too. He goes for the Pedigree but Foley reverses with a slingshot where HHH misses the post by about 6 inches minimum. That was just awful looking.

In a spot I like, Foley puts HHH into all three buckles three times each. There's no tenth into the mat though which is odd. Chyna saves HHH from the Double Arm DDT which ticks off Foley and allows the Pedigree to hit for the pin.

Rating: B+. This was a great choice for an opener. These two have almost always had great chemistry together and this was no different.

We hear from fans about the main event tonight. They need to do that more often. They're actually fairly split but Bulldog is ahead. One chick here looks EXACTLY like Becca, but Becca would be like 6 at this point so it isn't her.

Sunny comes out to be the announcer for the next match to a HUGE pop. They make references to the Spice Girls and Page 3 girls. I actually know what those mean! She always looked like she was having fun so that's always a good thing.

Leif Cassidy vs. Tiger Ali Singh

Singh was kind of like Ted DiBiase mixed with Muhammad Hassan. He wasn't any good in the ring but whatever. He's Canadian too but whatever. His father is Tiger Jeet Singh who was a great wrestler that most of you have likely never heard of. I have no idea who the face is here but I think it's Singh, which is very odd.

Cassidy is more commonly known as Al Snow, but this is before Head showed up so no one cares and no one has heard of him. goody two shoes but no one likes him. He would become a snob soon after this. Snow works on the arm which is smart enough I suppose.

It's basic psychology but it's psychology nonetheless. We talk about Brian Christopher for no apparent reason. A random Tiger Bomb (Pearl River Plunge traditionally but on second viewing it's a bulldog so that makes no sense) ends this.

Rating: D+. There was nothing at all to this. It was about 5 minutes and just boring. I have no idea why they put this on but it was just a completely uninteresting match. Not particularly bad, but not interesting at all.

Oddly enough I just got done watching Tribute to the Troops which I guess has some similarities to this.

Sunny hits on all three of the announcers which is pointless.

We see a clip from Ground Zero where Austin cost Owen and Bulldog the tag titles in a match for the vacant titles. That leads us to this.

Tag Titles: Los Boricuas vs. Headbangers

The Headbangers had a month long run that no one remembers or cares about. Los Boricuas were just a waste of time. They're Savio Vega and a guy named Miguel. They were an offshoot of the Nation that went nowhere at all but were given a ton of TV time anyway. For some reason that I'll never understand, the champions are over. The heels jump them early and it doesn't work at all.

This crowd is approaching Canadian Stampede levels and it's FOR THE HEADBANGERS! Then we go to a headlock and the crowd DIES. The only time close to that was when Hogan lost at the Main Event where they went silent. Apparently the Headbangers went to college. Wow indeed. The heels take over so they're going with a formula. This is surprisingly decent. Good night Miguel is a freaking hairy man.

In something that makes me laugh, the referee calls Thrasher Headbanger. He can't tell them apart either. I love that. After Thrasher takes a powerbomb, Mosh jumps off the top rope for the Stage Dive (Seated Senton) for the pin. That was a very good and fast paced ending. The pop is very solid indeed.

Rating: B. This was actually really quite good. The crowd helped this match a lot as they were hot the entire time. It helped that I had zero expectations here but this came off pretty good. They were about the same kind of teams with some very basic light power stuff but mostly high flying and speed moves which made a decent match. It's no classic but it's not

bad at all.

We get a sit down interview with Davey who talks about all of his family in the arena tonight.

Flash Funk vs. The Patriot

Flash Funk is more commonly known as 2 Cold Scorpio and is a pimp without the name of being one. Patriot showed up a few weeks before this and somehow had a title shot at the previous PPV which went nowhere. Naturally he "came within an eyelash" but that didn't mean anything after that show.

Patriot has Angle's old music which it's just odd to hear in 1997. He's more or less a heel here since he comes out with the American flag. Patriot says he wears a mask because he represents the face of every American. I don't know that many men that have golden skin like that. Flash is wearing a freaking zoot suit. This isn't as good of a match as it could be but it's ok I guess.

It's about as generic as you could get but that's fine. Vince calls Flash the Funkmeister. I'm done. Patriot was just annoying as he never went anywhere. He wasn't that good at all but was built up to be this great worker which he just wasn't at all. They keep saying the reason they're not being all violent and crap is because they don't hate each other. That's better than nothing I guess.

If nothing else this should tell you everything you need to know about Patriot: his finishers are a full nelson slam called the Uncle Slam and a top rope shoulder block called the Patriot Missile. Funk's finisher is called the Funky Flash Splash. A full nelson slam ends this. That was a waste of time.

Rating: C-. Again, this was just there. It wasn't particularly good or bad, but Patriot got some decent heat which is really all you can ask for. Funk went for a big move from the top and

it missed for the Uncle Slam. That's better than nothing I guess. It could have been a lot worse I guess, but this just wasn't the best choice of a pairing.

The LOD say they'll win and they don't like the Godwins. Hawk is OUT THERE.

Legion of Doom vs. Godwins

So yet again the Godwins are heels here and it was another total failure. This started because the LOD botched the Domsday Device and injured Henry pretty badly. No motorcycles this time in England which hurts things a bit. This was around the time where they were considered American Originals, yet they're popular here.

That's just odd as they're Americans but Patriot is an American character and gets booed. That's very interesting. We start out with Henry and Animal which I guess would be the best combination but that's neither here nor there. Ross gets in a not very subtle jab at Bill Clinton that Vince scoffs at which is most odd. Oh the Godwins have a new manager that's not here named Uncle Cleatus.

It's Dutch Mantel, who until recently was a booker in TNA. They transition from a line about mad cow disease by saying there's a lot of beef in there. I'm tired of Lawler's stupid British lines already which means he'll keep going all night with them. Henry uses a Fujiwara Armbar which stuns both myself and Ross. I hate to that jump into the boot when the guy is on the mat spot. It's just freaking stupid.

Seriously, what was Phineas trying to do there? Vince saying do your job to a referee makes me laugh as back then we never knew he could fire the referee. Henry hits the Slop Drop (reverse DDT) on Hawk but waits too long and only gets two. We get a history lesson from Ross about the Confederate Flag. Ok then. After a brief brawl, the LOD hit the Domsday Device on Henry for the pin.

Rating: D+. This was an ok match I guess, but DANG how many times can these teams fight? They were the Orton/HHH of the tag division of their day as this feud just went on and on and on and never stopped until one team left the company. It never went anywhere and never got interesting at all. Somehow, this might have been the best of their matches, which isn't saying much at all. This was pretty bad, but whatever.

Apparently Shamrock is hurt and can't fight Vader tonight due to some injuries. He was just hitting his stride in the ring and was starting to get some reactions from the crowds which was the point all along. Rockabilly, Billy Gunn's current failure of a gimmick, comes down for no apparent reason. He talks trash and taps to an ankle lock to keep Shamrock hot which is smart I guess.

Bret is in the back and gets another mixed reaction. He's a heel now but in Europe he's much more popular. Never mind as he's getting booed rather loudly again. This is one of the most boring promos of all time and Vince tries so hard to make Bret the heel here as he continues to put idea in the heads of the people which doesn't work here. Bret admits he cares what the fans think to wrap this up.

Vader vs. Owen Hart

Owen is subbing for Shamrock here and Vader means absolutely nothing anymore. Vader is Patriot's friend or something like that. It was one of those hey we're friends now despite having nothing at all in common things. Owen gets a very solid pop. Lawler brings up an interesting point as he says that the fans boo Bret and cheer Owen, which is indeed odd.

This is an interesting matchup if nothing else. So I'm about 8 minutes into this and it's actually really good. Owen keeps trying to slam Vader for the kind of Hogan vs. Andre moment but of course it doesn't work as he's less than half the size of Vader. Vader uses very basic power stuff but it's working

very well. I'm not sure what it is but this is working really well for me. It's slow but it's not boring at all really.

Vader uses an ankle lock of all things and gets out by injuring his own leg. Owen keeps trying to get in various holds or shots but the power game keeps getting him out of there. He hits the middle rope splash which only gets two to stun everyone in the world. Owen hit the kick that half killed Shawn to get the Sharpshooter and the fans are INTO this. He actually gets the slam and of course it gets two BECAUSE IT'S A FREAKING BODY SLAM!

One shot from Vader and he sets for the Vader Bomb but Owen gets the knees up. That should have pretty much snapped both of his legs but whatever. He goes up and hits a missile dropkick and nips up and the crowd is going nuts. He goes up again and gets powerslammed for the pin. Awesome match.

Rating: A-. That's probably high but I really liked this. The fans helped it a lot as they were hot. This was basic big guy vs. little guy which is a formula that just flat out works. It's hard to mess that up and they certainly nailed it here. Owen and Vader could work very well when given the chance and that's what they did here. This was likely Vader's last meaningful win.

Taker says Bret should be ready to rest in peace.

WWF Title: Undertaker vs. Bret Hart

This is the rematch from Summerslam where Michaels cost Taker the title to Bret, leading to the Shawn vs. Taker feud that ended in the Cell. Taker's entrance is short here, only taking about two or three minutes. Man it's awesome to think that Bret signed again, and I'm not even a huge fan of his. This is an interesting case as Bret is clearly the big heel in America but worldwide he's far more popular, yet here he's getting booed anyway.

Taker's pop was great. Bret's...existed. I freaking LOVE that thing where Taker is getting punched in the corner and grabs the other guy by the throat and throws him into the corner to beat on them. It's easily my favorite Taker move. Less than two minutes in, Bret takes the turnbuckle pad off to really make himself the heel. Oh he didn't get it off but he tried. Ok never mind it is off. That was odd.

Vince says WHAT A MATCHUP THIS IS about 3 minutes into it. That must have been a heck of a three minute interval. The fans are unsure who to cheer for here. It's hard to believe that Montreal was less than two months away after this. After we brawl on the floor for a bit we're back in the ring as Bret uses a DDT, making him instantly cool. This is going back and forth which is always a good thing I think.

If Vince says mixed reaction one more time I'm going to freaking scream. WE GET IT ALREADY. After hitting the buckle, Bret gets his back worked over. Bret comes back and naturally goes after the leg, which makes sense. That of course goes on and on for days. Sorry Maria just came out on Smackdown so the song is in my head.

He gets the figure four on the ringpost that of course does very little pain but we'll ignore that for the sake of disbelief. Lawler calls Bret Bret-Man for some reason that I don't get. He goes to a figure four as you could almost plot out a long Bret match. Again we hear that the figure four puts pressure on seven different parts of the leg.

That number has changed about 100 times over the years so we'll go with 7 for now. After it being reversed, Bret gets the ropes to a chorus of boos. Taker, freaking learn to sell a knee. I'm tired of this. You've been a huge part of the company for the better part of ever and you can't sell a basic knee injury.

Come on man. You've had your leg worked on all night and now

you have the leg strength to run the ropes back and forth. That's just freaking stupid. Oh sure NOW your leg hurts. Give me a freaking break Taker. Bret uses the Summerslam 91 counter to hook the Sharpshooter which never gets old. Taker powers out which no one has ever seen before, so obviously they weren't at Mania 13.

A second attempt is countered by a hand around the throat. And here comes the Pheonom. The chokeslam doesn't hit, but he's back again. The lack of leg selling is just ticking me off though. Dude, limp. Is it that hard to do? Bret is even limping a bit after having the figure four reversed. He grabs the bell but a boot to the face stops that. Taker can't use it either and gets a chop block as a result.

He goes for that cannonball onto the bottom rope again but it fails as Taker kicks him through the ropes and into the camera man, giving us the eternally amusing spot of the camera going all over the place. Old School gets reversed as they're busting out everything here. Tombstone is reversed into a rollup for two as the fans are into this. Bret, like an idiot, goes for a tombstone. Because he's not named Kane, it doesn't work.

Somehow he gets his head stuck between the ropes which has to hurt badly. Taker starts hitting him which draws the CHEAP DQ ending. That earns the referee a chokeslam. Owen comes and gets Bret out along with I think Brisco who gets chokeslammed also. And now Taker gets booed. MAKE UP YOUR STUPID MIND ENGLISH PEOPLE! Bret being announced as still champion gets a, say it with me, mixed reaction.

Rating: B+. This is like Sting vs. Vader: it's freaking HARD to mess up. Do you remember a truly bad match between these two? I certainly don't. They had a solid match here but Taker's lack of selling was complete and utter crap. I hate that about Taker. Also, this was kind of a standard match between these two for the most part, but that's fine I guess.

Either way, this was very fun with the five minutes before the ending being incredibly good.

The cheapending sucked badly though. Seriously, after nearly half an hour we get a DQ over something like that? That doesn't work for me at all. If those two things are fixed, this is an easy A or A+.

Shawn says he's ready.

European Title: Shawn Michaels vs. British Bulldog

Now if you want to talk about a mixed reaction, Shawn gets a mixed reaction. I mean it's right down the middle. Davey of course gets the big old hero pop that you knew he would get. While it may seem obvious as to who is going to win here, this wasn't as in the bag as it appeared to be. Smith losing here would have caused about as big of a riot as Bret losing in Montreal.

Smith is about as over here as Vince would be in a "Who's got the biggest ego contest". Shawn walks up the ramp for no apparent reason before coming back to the ring. Smith starts off by completely overpowering Shawn who again walks up the ramp. In a cool looking spot, with Shawn on the apron and looking away from the ring, Smith hooks him for a reverse suplex and just drops him back into the ring. It looks a lot better than it sounds.

Vince says he's surprised Shawn didn't break in half. Say that again in about four months Vinny. How many freaking big time matches have these guys had? They have the final SNME match, they have KOTR 97 and now this. That's a lot for a series of big matches when you think about it, especially over that long of a stretch of time. Bulldog is ridiculously popular and is dominating.

Apparently he's dropped about 20 pounds or so, which is about 2 stones. Vince says Shawn is in his prime. I don't know about

that, but it's close enough. As Bulldog beats on him for a good while, here's Rick Rude, who was the insurance policy for Shawn in what would form into DX. They had been hanging out lately but nothing concrete had happened yet.

We hit the sleeper now to kill off a bit of time which is fine by me. Lawler says not to adjust the TV. Who does that? I mean really, have you ever adjusted your TV? I certainly haven't. The pace slows a lot with Shawn working on the arm, which means you know what's coming. Yep, there it is, as Smith shows incredible power and picks up Shawn while he's in an arm lock.

Here's HHH and Chyna as I wonder WHERE ARE THE HARTS??? Shawn starts his finishing sequence and goes for Chin Music in the corner of all places but Smith counters into the powerslam. Rude grabs the foot and we hit the floor where the kick connects. Rude and HHH beat on him as somehow the referee sees none of this which is just completely ridiculous but whatever.

HHH even hits the Pedigree on the floor. Apparently Davey is wearing a knee brace for a bad knee which hasn't been mentioned until just now. Well alright then. HHH and Chyna help Shawn and pull him about 6 inches. Seriously, how can the referee not freaking notice this??? Now Rude interferes again as this is beyond stupid now. Oh apparently Bulldog slipped off the platform that the ring is on and hurt his knee.

Well that's something I guess. The referee stops the match to give Shawn the title and the Grand Slam. There are rumors that Smith was supposed to win but Shawn and HHH played politics to get the win as close to two days before this show. Somehow, I could completely buy that. There was zero need for Shawn to win here, especially in a show never mentioned on American television.

I really don't...oh you have got to be messing with me. Shawn puts the hold back on and Smith's wife gets in to help but is picked off by Chyna and BRET AND OWEN HART RUN IN FOR THE

SAVE. WHERE IN THE WORLD WERE THEY FIFTEEN FREAKING MINUTES AGO??? COME ON VINCE WILL YOU THINK ONCE IN YOUR STUPID LIFE??? THAT MAKES NO SENSE!

If they're going to run in for the save NOW why not do it when there were three people cheating to help Shawn? DX poses forever to end this. Yeah, after that stupidity, I'd totally buy the HHH and Shawn politics thing.

Rating: B-. The ending here is just so stupid that it makes my head spin, which makes me really think Shawn and HHH had something to do with it. Honestly, what did Shawn gain here? Does anyone remember anything about his European title reign that had to do with him defending the belt? I certainly don't.

Actually, I remember him losing it on the Christmas show to HHH after Slaughter made them fight because he hadn't defended it in over two months. What in the world was the point of him getting it here other than to help his own ego? That makes zero sense. Other than that bringing this match WAY down and the Harts looking like idiots, this was a kind of slow match and overly long with the interference sucking the life out of it at the end. It's not bad, but not great at all.

Overall Rating: B. This was a good show overall. They treated it like a big time PPV and while nothing actually happened, it still came out pretty well I thought. Bret vs. Taker and Owen vs. Vader are both great and the main event isn't bad at all. The show isn't bad, but it's like a lot of other shows from this era: slow at times which hurts it a lot I think.

It's certainly good with an AMAZING crowd, but the commentary hurts it too as Lawler is beyond annoying with all of the British terms that most don't get. To be fair though, this was a European PPV so more people would get it. If you can find the full version of this, check it out for sure as it's certainly something different and worth seeing.