

Monday Night Raw – June 4, 2001 – The Body!

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 4, 2001

Location: Target Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Attendance: 11,417

Commentators: Paul Heyman, Jim Ross

Back to the Invasion era (kind of) as we're rolling up to King of the Ring. Last week Benoit got his title shot in a great match so tonight it's Jericho's turn. Also I think we begin qualifying matches for the tournament as I remember watching the Rhyno vs. Tazz match that's on the card tonight. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the rematch from Smackdown where Benoit almost won the title again. That match might have been even better. Those two had some scary chemistry. Benoit destroyed Vince with a chair and Austin stole the win with tights.

Intercontinental Title: Kane vs. Christian

The tape on Kane's arm is shrinking. Christian runs down Minnesota because everyone from there is a freak. The bell rings twice for some reason and Kane hammers away quickly. He hits the top rope clothesline but Edge has the referee. He interferes again so Kane goes after him but the power of Canada causes his bad arm to go into the steps. Christian gets a low dropkick for two but I don't think his offense is going to be lasting much longer.

The challengers gets slammed off the top but Edge distracts from the chokeslam. Edge takes one instead and HUGH MORRIS runs in, hits a moonsault (complete with a big WCW logo on the Tron and a siren blaring) and leaves. A BIG layout powerbomb

kills Christian and Kane keeps the title. Shane celebrates in the production truck.

Rating: D+. Just a squash but the whole point was to have Morrus do the ending which is still cool looking. Acknowledging that it's WCW is a nice touch as everyone knew who it was but it's cool to hear it. This was a huge moment but unfortunately it wouldn't get much more exciting than this. The match was just there.

Here's Vince and he's mad. He says that Shane isn't going to cause trouble in his company. Now onto Benoit and Vince REALLY isn't happy with him. He lists off things that his injuries could be called and the fans cheer louder each time. Benoit is never getting another title shot because he's sadistic. Only a sadist would give Austin ten suplexes in a row. Tonight, Benoit gets Big Show.

Cue Foley to a BIG ovation. He has his new book with him so what do you think he'll be talking about? Foley thanks the fans for making it a bestseller for the second week in a row. He's in People Magazine also. However, he's here to talk about the piece of paper he's been using as a bookmark. It's a contract, one of which he signed while Commissioner. This one says he can make a main event for any Raw he chooses. Tonight, it's Austin vs. Jericho for the title. Benoit and Vince are banned from ringside. Vince says that contract doesn't count because we're not in Connecticut or something like that.

Foley has a counter for that though. He brings out GOVERNOR JESSE VENTURA. Vince looks TERRIFIED. Jesse puts on his glasses and looks at the contract. He says that he's the highest elected official in Minnesota and since Vince couldn't control him when he worked for Vince, he certainly can't control him now. What Vince needs to learn is that there are people in the world more powerful than he is, and Jesse is one of them. He shakes Mick's hand, says have a nice day, and that's that. Jesse is one of those guys that is just awesome

every time you see him and it worked here. Foley says he has a big surprise for Vince later.

King of the Ring Qualifying Match: Jeff Hardy vs. Matt Hardy

Well isn't this interesting? They come out together which isn't something you see that often. Matt is European Champion. Jeff grabs a rollup for two very quickly. Matt tries the Twist but Jeff counters. Expect to read the word counter a lot in this. The fans like Lita the best and in that pink top I can't blame them. Whisper in the Wind gets two for Jeff. Out to the floor and Jeff tries to run the railing but Matt ducks.

In a SWEET spot, Matt charges at Jeff while Jeff is up against the ring. Jeff backdrops him up against the ropes and in a Tajiri like bounce, Matt bounces off of them and hits a DDT to Jeff. The middle rope legdrop misses and Jeff loads up the Swanton but gets crotched. Jeff shoves him off and tries the Swanton again but it hits knees. The Twist is countered into a backslide for the surprise pin for Jeff.

Rating: C+. The idea here of course was that they knew each other so well and they kept countering one another. Having the ending be quick like that was the right move and it worked out well. Good stuff here and WAY better than their match at Mania and Extreme Rules, but that could just be due to this being when they were young and motivated to have good matches.

Austin is polishing the belt when Vince comes in. He has some bad news for Austin: he has to defend the title tonight against Jericho. Vince blames Linda so Austin says just give her half of your money (\$500 million) because if you can't live on \$500 million, you're planning on living too long. In a funny bit, Austin starts to say that no woman deserves that but looks at Debra and says NEVER MIND. Funny stuff.

Trish is in the back when Foley comes up. She's mad about being challenged to a bra and panties match by Terri. Foley asks if Trish is scared and turns this into a story about

Alexander Hamilton dying into a duel. If he had a bra and panties match, he'd still be alive. Trish: "He'd be over 200 years old." Foley: "EXACTLY! It's part of your duty as an American to compete tonight." Trish: "Mick, I'm Canadian." Foley: "Which is part of...North America." Trish: "You're right!" HILARIOUS segment.

Regal and Tajiri are in his office and Tajiri gives him some tea. It needs to be two degrees warmer. Kurt comes in and Tajiri is sent off for more tea. Shane has accepted Kurt's challenge at King of the Ring. Angle also mentions that he wants to win the King of the Ring again so Regal puts him in. He also wants Spike Dudley so Regal adds him to the Holly team and adds Spike to the Dudleys so it's a six man.

The Dudleys aren't happy because Spike is their partner.

Molly Holly is at WWF New York and looks great in a blue dress. She thanks the fans but more importantly, Spike for all the flowers he sent. She says she likes him. Spike sees it and freaks out.

Dudley Boys vs. Hollies/Kurt Angle

Six man tag here. Hardcore and Kurt have a quick argument due to the whole severely broken arm Kurt gave Hardcore a few years ago. D-Von and Hardcore start but Spike comes in before there's any contract. Kurt wants to come in but gets decked quickly and it's back to D-Von, giving us two tags before there was any contact between the legal men. We get going and D-Von hits a powerslam for two.

The fans want tables but that would be a DQ here, so do they want the Dudleys to lose? Actually who are the faces here? The Dudleys want to put Molly through a table which is hardly a good guy action. Hardcore beats on Spike for a bit, including the punt to the "abdomen". Off to Crash for such a short time that I didn't see him do anything. Back to Hardcore who hits a suplex for two.

Crash comes in and there's a distinct lack of Kurt in this, which I think is the point. Spike manages a tag to Bubba but the fans miss it. Kurt does get in and Spike GOES OFF, until Hardcore gets in a shot and Spike gets killed by a German. Spike blocks a superplex and hits a double stomp off the middle rope.

Double tag brings in Bubba and Hardcore and a Bubba Bomb puts him down. Crash takes a Samoan Drop and Hardcore takes a Doomsday Device. Kurt pops in for a German on Bubba but the moonsault misses. Hey Kurt. WHAT'S UP??? Bubba calls for a table but it's a 3D to Crash instead. A quick Angle Slam pins Bubba though.

Rating: C. Again this feud is just kind of fun. There's no main event or title implications to it but the feud works very well. It's well done and the feud makes perfect sense. For some reason, that just can't be done today. It seems that everything has to be part of a bigger purpose and a bigger story. Nothing can be a small and self contained story anymore.

Big Show vs. Chris Benoit

Show runs over Benoit to start as we hear again that Benoit was an undefeated WCW Champion. We'll ignore that it was because he never defended it I guess, much like everything about Benoit is ignored anymore. Off to a bearhug by Show which Benoit bites out of. Gorilla press drop by Show and Benoit is in trouble. Show goes up (GULP!) but misses a middle rope elbow. Swan Dive is caught into a chokeslam but Benoit counters that into the Crossface and Show taps out! Too short to rate but that ending was pretty awesome. I'm a sucker for Benoit going all wrestling master and countering stuff into the Crossface.

Taker arrives, over halfway into the show.

Here's Taker in the arena and he's ticked off because of the

stalking of his wife. If someone wants to do something with him, do it now and keep his family out of it. Taker says nothing is going to be easy until this ends. And then he turns to JR. JR was the first one to get the letter about the tape. Taker doesn't think JR has something to do with it but if there's something JR isn't telling him, he'll be the first name on Taker's list. Heyman says the words "old lady" and is promptly punched in the face. JR suggests that he go ask Vince.

Taker says that's a good idea and we get another video of Sara outside and it looks like she's watering plants or something. The voice says that if he wanted to get closer then he would. Taker's dog is out there too. Sara goes inside and the voice says she thinks she's safe in there. Back in the arena, Taker goes to the back and isn't happy.

Classic KOTR: Taker vs. Mankind in the Cell.

Back from a break and Taker kicks in the door to Vince's office, demanding answers. Vince says he has nothing to do with this. He may have an ego but he doesn't have a death wish. Vince suggests it might be the same person that flashed the WCW logo: Shane. Taker threatens Vince with the insertion of the WWF into a place it isn't designed to go on Vince's body if he's lying.

King of the Ring Qualifying Match: Rhyno vs. Tazz

Rhyno is Hardcore Champion but this is non-title. Nice pop for Tazz. Rhyno pounds him into the corner to start and hits what would have been a Gore had it not been for the corner. This is Tazz's first match since Mania? I didn't really miss him. Rhyno comes off the middle rope but jumps into a suplex. Tazz Gores Rhyno for two and I remember that from when I was 13. Tazz hooks the Tazmission but Rhyno uses the Bigelow Breaking The Ring counter. Gore ends this.

Rating: D. I have no idea why this match sticks out to me but

it does. Not a good match or anything and you can see Tazz is completely gone. Rhyno would make the semi-finals of the KOTR but wouldn't go anywhere until the Invasion started when he moved up to the midcard with a few quick main event shots.

Austin and Debra are a bit nervous about Mick's surprise with the champ being moreso. Debra goes off to find info from Foley.

Video on Smackdown Your Vote which is a cool idea.

Debra is looking for Mick. He's sitting on some steps and they exchange pleasantries. She gives him what appears to be candy and asks about the surprise. He won't say but she gets an autographed copy of the book.

Christian and Edge have some weird self-help moment and both say they want to be King of the Ring. They're both in the tournament too.

Jericho tells Cole to shut up (AMEN) and that he's accomplished a lot, including telling Vince he is rather small. I'm assuming he meant that Vince had one and that it wasn't a rather embarrassing announcement. Jericho says he'll treat Austin like a sl** and that he'll win the title. He steals a bunch of Austin catchphrases while saying this.

Terri vs. Trish Stratus

Bra and panties here so I'm not sure what you want me to say about it. Heyman says this is in the tradition of the Funks and the Briscos. JR says that the Briscos never had a bra and panties match, officially. I really don't want to know some of the stories that JR has. Both of the girls look good and they can't wrestle yet, although Trish is trying. Terri loses her top and is out there in heels. Trish loses her top and Terri stands on her hair. Oh ok Trish hadn't lost her top yet. Perry Saturn comes out in a robe...and has lingerie on under it. The distraction lets Trish win. I think you can figure this one

out for yourselves.

WWF World Title: Steve Austin vs. Chris Jericho

Foley's surprise is that he's the troubleshooting referee. He'll be outside while there's a regular one in the ring. Austin beats him into the corner before Jericho can even get his title off. He tries the Thesz Press but Jericho counters it into the Walls. Austin runs for the ropes and we go to the floor. Jericho gets sent into Foley and Austin goes into the steps. Back in the Lionsault hits knees and Jericho is down.

Spinebuster messes up Jericho's ribs even more as does an elbow drop. Jericho is in trouble here as Austin is having to protect his back and ribs due to the Germans from the other Canadian on Thursday. Jericho fights out of a bow and arrow but gets kicked low. That only gets two and JR mentions that Austin wouldn't mind getting disqualified. Why doesn't he do that then? It can't be that hard.

Austin yells at Foley for some reason and the distraction lets Jericho get in a low blow to shift the momentum again. They slug it out which is won by the Canadian. Missile dropkick gets two. Middle rope hurricanrana gets two. Austin ducks the forearm and Jericho takes out the referee. Foley, like an idiot, checks on the referee as Jericho hooks the Walls. Foley slides in but leaves his feet out of the ropes so Regal makes the save. Jericho and Regal get into it and Foley accidentally cracks Jericho with the chair. Regal takes Foley out and Austin only gets two! And never mind as the Stunner ends this.

Rating: C+. Pretty fun match and the main event of the King of the Ring should be pretty obvious at this point. Regal coming out was pretty clear given how Foley was positioned but I think I can let that slide here. Not a great match but they needed more time and they've had better matches before. I can't think of any right now so maybe they haven't.

Regal gets the Walls and the Claw to close the show.

Overall Rating: B-. This was really more about setting the stage for King of the Ring and that's fine. The main event of course would be Austin in a triple threat with the Canadians. The idea here is that Austin can barely beat one of them so how can he beat both of them? Well considering Benoit would break his neck in the match and would be out almost a year, that might give you a hint. Anyway good stuff and the Invasion is still building.

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