

Monday Night Raw – July 23, 2001: Rock Is Coming Back

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 23, 2001

Location: First Niagara Center, Buffalo, New York

Commentators: Jim Ross, Michael Cole

The Invasion is in full swing and we have a new big star in the now officially named Alliance: Stone Cold turned again last night, joining up with them. You know, the company that fired him via Fed-Ex in the 90s and that he lost to Mikey Whipwreck in. Anyway, tonight will likely be promo heavy as Austin explains his actions. Let's get to it.

Taker vs. Rhyno later.

Here's the Alliance to open things up. Austin has new music. We just have the leaders here. Stephanie says she understands why so many people are angry. The truth is a bitter pill to swallow. Take it with juice. It helps a lot. She's still so bad on the mic. I can't complain about seeing her in leather though. The WWF is doomed, we are the future, all that jazz.

Heyman says we told you so and various other things. He introduces Austin, saying he who has the gold has the power. Actually Shane has something to say first. It's more of the same that Heyman and Steph already said. The Alliance fans will be better fans than the WWF ones. Now it's time to hear from Austin. Austin says he's not appreciated by the WWF and Vince. Vince was always hugging Angle behind his back. Yes, this is really what they were going with.

Also, Vince has been on the phone a lot lately and has been calling The Rock. ERUPTION for that name. Why call the Rock? Austin is right here. Vince doesn't need Rock or Angle when he's right here. He's jumped to a team that loves Austin.

They'll find him top level competition. My assumption would be that he'll fight WWF guys, as in THE SAME COMPETITION HE'S FOUGHT FOR YEARS!!! I've never gotten that point.

Anyway Angle comes out to interrupt and gets a big pop for himself. He became a star out of this whole ordeal. Austin runs his mouth and Angle hasn't said anything yet. Angle lost on Thursday because Austin wasn't there to save him. Austin recites the Pledge and Angle hits the floor and destroys him, sending Austin running after a suplex.

RVD celebrates being the Hardcore Champion and says the WWF guys want to join them now.

Hardcore Title: Rob Van Dam vs. Matt Hardy

Matt hits a baseball slide to RVD as he makes his entrance. He sends Rob into the post and we head back in. There's a ladder but Rob knocks it to the floor and hits Rolling Thunder for two. He brings the ladder back in and puts it almost in the middle of the ring. Rob goes up but Matt climbs as well and hip tosses him down where Van Dam lands on his leg. Matt climbs again (remember that it's not a ladder match) and drops a leg for two. Matt sandwiches him between the ladder but Rob kicks him low. There goes the referee and Van Dam splashes the ladder onto Matt onto the ladder for the pin. Why shove the referee?

Rating: C. Not bad here but it's so fast that the ladder didn't mean a ton. The Jeff match the previous night where Rob got the title was far better as they had a great spotfest which is what these matches should be about. This was fine but after last night's, it comes up pretty far short.

Edge and Christian runs into the Dudleys in the back. Smack is talked and a table match is proposed. Booker comes in and wants in on it. The Canadians want to know if Booker is related to Mr. T. The tables match will be elimination, meaning three people have to go through tables to end it. Edge

and Christian need to find a partner.

Page and Kanyon are in the back and Kanyon has an Invasion MVP shirt. The Alliance won 6 to 5 last night (counting the Heat match which wasn't mentioned on the PPV) and Kanyon got the deciding win.

Intercontinental Title: Lance Storm vs. Albert

Albert rams him into the corner to start and Lance is in trouble. Storm sends him to the floor but his plancha is caught in a slam. Albert is rammed into the post and Storm takes over. Back in Albert military presses Storm and follows with a splash for two. Bicycle kick looks to set up the Baldo Bomb but Mike Awesome gets the referee. That allows Hugh Morrus to hit Albert with the belt. A superkick gives Storm the title in a short match. Storm got a BIG pop for winning the title.

Post match the WWF runs out for a brawl and everyone comes into the ring in another big fight.

The Alliance bosses celebrate in the back. Kanyon comes in and Austin has no idea who he is. Kanyon: "Who better than Kanyon?" Austin: "Stone Cold Steve Austin better than Kanyon." Kanyon vs. Jericho later.

Torrie and Stacy say nothing of note.

Regal rants to Tajiri and tells him to go beat Raven.

Edge and Christian get Angle on their side for the tables match.

Tajiri vs. Raven

I miss Tajiri's music. Tajiri fires off kicks to start and knocks him to the floor. Back in a hip toss sets up a cradle for two. More kicks have Raven in trouble. Handspring elbow hits and the fans are into this. Raven chops in the corner and

we head outside again. Back in quickly and it turns into a brawl. Missile dropkick gets two for Tajiri. There's the Tarantula and the Buzzsaw kick ends this.

Rating: C. Tajiri was fun to watch with all those kicks but Raven was a shell of whatever he was in WCW and ECW. The match was little more than a brawl, but Tajiri was pretty awesome at this point so watching him kick the heads off everyone in sight is never a bad thing. Fun little match which I liked more than I should have I think.

Heyman tells Rhyno how awesome the Alliance is and says all he has to do is beat the Undertaker tonight.

The APA presents Angle with a beer for his attack on Austin earlier. They give him a beer which he says he's never had before. He sips at it so the APA teaches him to chug. Angle likes it.

Undertaker vs. Rhyno

Taker beats him down and even hits a drop toehold to set up some elbows for two. Old School and a legdrop get two. Taker no sells some kicks but the chokeslam is broken up. Rhyno loads up the Gore but Taker kicks him down. Chokeslam ends this squash.

DDP came out during the chokeslam to go after Sara but Taker gets to him first. They fight into the crowd and back to the ring. Sara gets in some kicks as Taker gets a chair. Sara stomps some more and Page pulls her into the way of the chair shot and Taker is distraught.

Post break Taker won't let Sara get medical attention. Page leaves in a car after talking about how much seeing her in pain turned him on.

Chris Jericho vs. Kanyon

Jericho makes fun of Who Better Than Kanyon pre match. The

brawl starts on the floor and Jericho is sent into the ring ribs/back first. Once in the ring Jericho takes over with chops in the corner. Three Amigos get two for Chris. Kanyon grabs a sitout Alabama Slam for two. Off to a chinlock which Jericho quickly breaks. A middle rope Fameasser gets two. Kanyon loads up a superplex but Jericho knocks him down and hits a missile dropkick to put them both down. Bulldog sets up the Lionsault but it eats knees. Flatliner gets two. Kanyon tries an enziguri but Chris ducks and holds the leg for the Walls and the tap.

Rating: B-. Pretty good match here as again it works well when you give talented guys time. Funny how that works isn't it? Still though, Kanyon was usually smooth in the ring and he was here, making for a good guy to compliment Jericho's high flying stuff. This was one of the better Raw matches in awhile.

Here's Vince for some chatting. He congratulates the Alliance for their win last night. He thinks the WWF will win the war without Austin. Losing Austin was an atomic bomb but Vince has a bomb of his own: he's reinstating The Rock. That doesn't mean he'll come back though, so Vince says some catchphrases and begs Rock.

Angle asks Vince to be leader again and gets about the same response as last week. Vince does say actions speak louder than words. Angle shoves Vince against the wall and says you'll get action.

Big Show and Billy Gunn are at WWF New York. They list their accomplishments and then make fun of each other.

Torrie hits of Jeff and offers to spank him when Trish comes up and they brawl onto the table.

Torrie Wilson vs. Trish Stratus

Spanking match, meaning paddle on a pole. You win by spanking

the other blonde. Neither girl has any clue what they're doing in a ring so this is about what you would expect it to be. They do some really bad wrestling and Trish gets the paddle. Torrie runs from the paddle, dropkicks Trish, and spansks her to win. NEXT.

Shane fires up the Dudleys/Booker.

Dudley Boys/Booker T vs. Edge/Christian/Kurt Angle

Elimination tables match. For reasons that elude me, they have to tag. Angle vs. D-Von gets us going with Kurt running him over. Off to Christian who does about the same. Edge is sent to the floor and the Dudleys take over on him. Booker comes in and works over Edge but it's back to Bubba quickly. Double flapjack plants Edge and there's a table at ringside. It hasn't been touched yet but it's set up.

The middle rope backsplash misses for Bubba and Edge brings in Christian. Everything breaks down and the Canadians double suplex Bubba. Here's a table set up by Edge/Christian but a low blow sets up the 3D to Christian through the table to get it down to 3-2. Edge takes the Dudleys down with a double flying clothesline. Booker and Edge are in the ring now and it gets back to a normal tag structure.

Edge-0-Matic takes Booker down but Bubba comes in with a hot shot to take Edge right back down. Angle picks Bubba off and they head to the floor. Back in the ring, Booker slams Edge through the table to make it Angle vs. all three. Angle gets caught in the 3-1 beating and it looks bleak for him. What's Up to Angle and Bubba wants a table. Booker sets up the table and tries to suplex Kurt through it but Kurt hooks one of his own.

The Dudleys come in and Bubba is thrown outside. D-Von goes out as well and Kurt follows. D-Von charges at Kurt but gets suplexed onto a table which doesn't break. Angle puts up a fresh one and suplexes D-Von through that one. That's just not

nice. Back in Booker hits the ax kick and spins up. Kurt grabs an Angle Slam out of nowhere onto the table but that one doesn't break either. Man they're using the good ones tonight.

The table is set in the corner and Booker is whipped through it. Bubba takes him down and there goes the referee. Nick Patrick comes out and moves a table that Angle was about to Angle Slam Bubba through. Kurt destroys him and puts the ankle lock on Patrick on the table but here's Austin. He Stuns Angle and Bubba powerbombs him through the table to end this.

Rating: C. What's the right word for this? Oh I know: stupid. There were two bad ideas in this match. First and foremost, Bubba Ray Dudley gets the win? Second, the idea here should have been to set up Angle vs. Booker because Booker couldn't beat Angle on his own, resulting in Angle getting a title shot. How do I know that? BECAUSE THAT'S WHAT THEY DID! On Smackdown Angle wins the title, which makes this a really stupid ending. Also, better make sure Angle doesn't get too popular. He's a second tier guy remember, and we wouldn't want a second tier guy becoming a star. Man kind of a crazy idea isn't it?

The WWF guys chase Austin off.

Overall Rating: B-. This show was good but it could never put together a long streak of greatness that it was capable of. The ending again is pretty stupid, but other than that there's little that was bad. The Invasion is getting a lot better lately and with Rock coming back, things would be looking up. Naturally, that's not how things went but that's WWF for you.

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