

Monday Night Raw – September 8, 1997: I Don't Ever Remember A Main Event Hurting A Show This Badly

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 8, 1997

Location: Cincinnati Gardens, Cincinnati, Ohio

Attendance: 6,627

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Vince McMahon

It's the night after Ground Zero where Undertaker beat up Shawn in one of the best fights you'll ever see. Shawn ran, which means we need to find a place to put them so Shawn can't run anymore. The solution: a huge cage that surrounds the ring. Shawn will be trapped in there, like he's in a nightmare. Get where I'm going with this? Let's get to it.

We open with stills from the show last night which also show Bret retaining the title against the Patriot.

Theme song.

Here's Vince to open the show and bring in Sgt. Slaughter, the commissioner. Slaughter promises to maintain order in the WWF because that's what Gorilla Monsoon (president of the company) ordered him to do. As for Austin, he's suspended until Slaughter gets medical clearance for him. There's going to be a tournament for Austin's IC Title with the finals at Bad Blood. Austin will be there to forfeit the title and hand the belt to the new champion.

This brings out Austin to make fun of Slaughter's ample gut. He says he won't deliver the title to anyone and gives Slaughter a Stunner. Vince gets in Austin's face but referees pull them apart. I don't think Vince had been revealed as the owner of the company yet so Austin looks like he's bullying an announcer. Austin jumps in on commentary because he

feels like it. Then he jumps off commentary.

Post break Vince and JR complain about Austin. We get a clip of Austin stunning JR last night and what happened a few minutes ago.

Austin is being thrown out of the building.

We recap Bret vs. Vader from a few weeks ago when Vader snapped and the Hart Foundation had to save Bret, resulting in Vader being attacked by five guys. Then Vader went after Bret during Bret's match with the Patriot, leading to this.

Bret Hart vs. Vader

No holds barred and this is non-title with Bret as world champion. Bret runs down Cincinnati for naming a street after Pete Rose. What did Rose ever do to the WWF to deserve all the stuff he gets from them? Bret nails Vader with the belt as he gets in and pounds away in the corner to start. The place erupts when Vader comes back and he gets the belt for a shot to Bret's back.

Vader breaks the Canadian flag and Bret tries to run. They head to the floor and Vader gets sent into the steps which are then dropped on his back. Vader shrugs that off and here comes the Bulldog as we take a break. Back with Vader punching Bret in the face back inside. Bulldog is still on the ramp. Bret kicks Vader low and drops some forearms to the face. Some headbutts stagger Vader and there's a snap suplex.

Bret undoes the pad on a buckle but doesn't get it off. Vader splashes Bret in the corner and sends him chest first into the buckle. The powerbomb lays Bret out but Bulldog breaks up the Vader Bomb. The Foundation pounds Vader in the corner until the Patriot comes out for the save. Owen comes out and Bret gets a chair to knock out both Americans. The Harts load up a piledriver on a chair for Patriot but Austin runs in for the save. He chases the Harts off with the chair and the match is thrown out.

Rating: B-. There's a reason 1997 is remembered so fondly: the wrestling was great in the main event scene and this was a good example. This was a

very good brawl with both guys pounding away on each other and neither guy backing down at all. Austin coming in at the end was fine but the match being thrown out was a bit annoying. Fun opener though.

We recap the Headbangers winning the tag titles last night.

We come back to the arena to see the Godwinns destroying some jobbers. They want to face the Headbangers right now.

Headbangers vs. Godwinns

This is non-title. The non-champions jump the champions as they come in and we start with Phineas and Thrasher. The Godwinn takes over and it's quickly off to Henry who runs Thrasher over as well. Phineas comes in and charges into a boot, allowing Thrasher to tag in Mosh. Everything breaks down and the Godwinns' new manager comes in, blasts Mosh in the back of the head, and gives Phineas the pin. This was short and stupid considering the Bangers are the new champions.

Henry introduces the guy as Uncle Cleetus, played by former wrestler TL Hopper/The Dirty White Boy.

House show ads.

We recap Goldust losing to Pillman last night, resulting in Goldust losing Marlena to Pillman for 30 days. This was supposed to result in Marlena leaving Goldie for Pillman but Pillman died before this could happen.

Here's Sunny who still looks great here. Apparently she's going to be interviewing people outside of the showers tonight. First though, she's ring announcing.

Intercontinental Title Tournament: Dude Love vs. Brian Pillman

Dude and Austin had been tag champions until last night when they had to forfeit due to Austin's neck injury. Dude says he's not in the groove tonight so he brings out Goldust for moral support. Goldie has half of his face painted and half with the usual skin. Pillman is the hometown boy....but he's not here. His voice comes in over the phone saying that

he's not going to be here until the company guarantees him and Pillman a safe environment. Plus he's exhausted from last night. Pillman does however have a tape called Brian Pillman's X-Files.

It's Pillman in a hotel room in a towel with a camera set up like he's going to shoot a sex video. He's smoking a cigar but there's no Marlina in sight. Pillman holds up her underwear and drops the towel to reveal his underwear. Ok then. Part 2 is coming later. Presumably dude advances.

Hour #2 starts.

Piratita Morgan vs. Max Mini

Great. It's a midget match. Morgan is a pirate and Mini is a very small guy who can fly all over the place. Last night Max jumped in Jerry's lap and put the crown on which was amusing. They head to the floor almost immediately and Mini hits an Asai Moonsault. He follows that up with a suicide somersault plancha. Back inside and Max hooks a crucifix for the pin. This was pure filler.

We recap Shawn vs. Undertaker. Shawn was a hero for a long time but he was the guest referee at Summerslam and cost Undertaker the title with a missed chair shot. Then he turned full on heel with another chair shot later on Raw.

There go the lights and here he comes. Taker talks about how last night he and Shawn opened the gates of Hell and now they're going to be locked inside of it at Bad Blood. Shawn pops up on screen and says he'll survive no matter what happens in the Cell. He's not going down alone though because if he goes into the coffin, Taker is going with him. Taker says nothing of note to end the segment.

Owen says he isn't concerned with Austin lurking around.

Here are the tournament brackets:

Dude Love

Brian Pillman

Goldust

Owen Hart

Ken Shamrock

Farooq

Ahmed Johnson

Rocky Maivia

So Dude doesn't advance. I guess he'll have to (a)bide his time until the match happens for real.

Intercontinental Title Tournament: Owen Hart vs. Goldust

Goldust charges in and pounds away on Owen, clotheslining him to the floor. Goldie drops him throat first on the barricade and hits a bulldog. Owen finally low blows him to get a breather and then take over. Owen still has his jacket on. A middle rope elbow hits Goldust so Goldust hits Owen low twice for the DQ to advance Owen.

The Harts come in for the post match beatdown but Austin comes in through the crowd with a broom to clean (hehe) house.

Austin leaves through the crowd and it's time for part 2 of the Pillman X-Files. Pillman says this segment can't go on long because Terri needs a shower, which she's apparently in now. Pillman says to get a good night's sleep because he certainly won't be.

The Hart Foundation isn't pleased with what just happened. Smith is ready for Shawn at One Night Only, a British PPV.

Here's Savio Vega for commentary for the main event for some reason. He won a triple threat match last night and the main event is a triple threat so his expertise is needed here.

Patriot vs. Hunter Hearst Helmsley vs. British Bulldog

Shawn and HHH jump the Bulldog on his way to the ring. They ram his knee

into the ramp and crush it with a chair to set up the match at One Night Only. Back from a break and Savio has jumped into the match and is replacing Bulldog I guess. This is back when the match wasn't a total cliché that was required at least once a month. HHH gets double teamed and elbowed down but the alliance ends quickly with Patriot clotheslining HHH down and getting kicked in the face for his efforts.

Savio gets knocked to the floor and HHH drops a knee on Patriot for two. HHH pounds away on Patriot's head but Savio comes gets jealous and pounds away on Patriot instead. I've never understood the logic behind that: why not let HHH expend energy and then jump him later on? Shawn comes out for commentary as we take a break.

Back with Savio hitting a spinwheel kick in the corner on HHH, followed by a DDT from Patriot on the future Game for two. Patriot and Savio take turns beating on HHH but neither guy can get more than a one. Patriot suplexes Savio down but HHH breaks it up before there's even a cover. Savio tries a sunset flip on HHH and after Patriot breaks up HHH's hold on the ropes, it gets two.

The fans are booing something here and to be fair, it's probably the match as it's not working at all for the most part. Shawn is ripping Vince apart on commentary because of how stupid Vince sounds. Savio kicks HHH's head off, making Shawn speak Spanish. Savio puts a headscissors on HHH and Patriot puts a headscissors on Savio at the same time as we take a break.

Back with Patriot chopping away on Savio and vice versa. HHH breaks up a cover on Savio and the booing gets louder. Patriot and HHH literally stand still and choke each other as a LOUD boring chant breaks out. Vince complains about Shawn's change of attitude. Shawn: "Well it was you that told me to change."

The Pedigree is countered and Savio lands on the referee. HHH throws Patriot to the floor and loads up a Pedigree on Savio, only to be catapulted into Patriot, crotching the guy that comes out to Kurt Angle's music (Patriot if you're kind of slow). Savio kicks HHH's head off but Shawn distracts him before the cover. HHH rams Savio into the Patriot and

rolls up Vega for the pin.

Rating: D-. WHO THOUGHT THIS WAS A GOOD IDEA??? They should be made to sit and watch this match over and over again until they scream for mercy. I mean DANG this didn't work at all. Someone thought giving this SEVENTEEN MINUTES was a good idea. Savio comes completely out of nowhere (he had been feuding with the original Nation of Domination) and jumps in the match, which makes absolutely no sense. Taking Bulldog out was a problem as at least he would have given us three distinct groups (Harts, Anti-Harts, future DX) in the match, but instead it was a total mess and VERY dull. Terrible main event.

DX (not yet named that) all get chairs as Vader, Patriot and Savio surround the ring. The Harts come out to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. The main event cripples this show something fierce. Usually one match isn't going to hurt a show this badly, but when it's this dull and goes on for nearly TWENTY MINUTES, it's going to bring things down. Other than that this was pretty good stuff with the Harts still looking awesome and the Cell on the horizon, which means the introduction of Kane. 1997 was an awesome year for the company from a quality standpoint and it was clear that once they got the fans' attention, WCW was going to be in real trouble. Well, as long as you keep Savio and the Patriot away from each other.

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