

I Want To Talk A Little Bit About Mixing Up Stories (WWE Needs More Shampoo)

In wrestling, the stories are moved forward by whatever the writers come up with for that particular feud. The stories are enhanced by the matches and it's a combination of the two that form what is called a program. However, it's becoming more and more common in wrestling to see the same stories over and over again. This is something that causes wrestling to be dull and therefore needs to be changed. Today we'll look at how easily this can be done. Let's get to it.

A few months ago, the main feud over on Smackdown was for the world title between Sheamus and Del Rio. During the course of this insufferable three month feud, one of the plot points was that Sheamus stole Del Rio's car and drove around San Antonio with it. Del Rio pressed charges against him for it. Now that's one way to push a storyline forward and is perfectly fine. Then a few weeks later, more legal charges were brought against Sheamus because of him using the Brogue Kick.

Think about that for a minute: in the span of the same story that stretched over three months, the same plot advancement device was used twice. Is WWE really that creatively bankrupt that they can't come up with something new or at least something they haven't done in awhile every few months? Let's think about this concept a little bit more but on a wider scale.

The majority (note that I said majority so don't mention ones I didn't bring up) of storylines in the company are as follows: corrupt authority figure/GM under review, legal issues, a romance, someone wanting respect,

or someone winning a #1 contenders match to earn a shot at the title. How many storylines can you come up with that aren't either those or something incredibly similar to those?

This brings me to the title of this piece. Back in 2002, Booker T started talking about being up for a starring role in a (fictitious) Japanese shampoo commercial. After taking too long to seal the deal on it, Edge wound up getting the job instead. This led to a match at Wrestlemania between the two of them.

Now the match was nothing special, but this story is remembered because of how unusual it was. That's the key change that I think needs to be done today in wrestling. Well one of them anyway. You don't need to reinvent the wheel with these things, but you need to come up with a fresh way of looking at things. Just off the top of my head, here are some stories that haven't been done in years that have been used to set up a match or a feud. These are all real stories that have been used before in major(ish) companies:

Attempted vehicular manslaughter

Blinding another man using hair cream (or cologne)

The crushing of a snake (tell me Santino couldn't have a feud over this)

Racism (Direct quote: "That man isn't a caucasian!")

Using voodoo to harm an opponent

Fear of an object or creature (snakes and coffins have been used)

The theft and cooking of a pet

Refusing to accept help from someone

A bet

Attacking a family member

Breaking an action figure

Stalking

Taking someone else's property

I could go on and on but I think you get the point. In short, you can make a story out of anything. It's so easy to throw out something that hasn't been done in a good while and make a story out of it. From the list, look at the Freebirds vs. Von Erichs feud. The feud started on Christmas Day in 1982 when Kerry Von Erich was facing Ric Flair in a cage for the world title in Dallas. Michael PS Hayes was refereeing and tried to help his friend Kerry win the title. Kerry didn't want it that way, so Hayes' stablemate in the Freebirds Terry Gordy slammed the cage door on Von Erich's head. Kerry's brothers evened the odds against the Freebirds and the groups feuded for most of the 1980s.

I could give you examples of others, but it would just be overkill. It's so easy to make a feud happen over something that hasn't been done in awhile but it never happens anymore. As Jim Cornette said, you can redo anything seven years later and it'll seem fresh. That makes perfect sense, as a lot of the audience isn't going to be the same as it was seven years earlier.

For example, back in 1992 Undertaker feuded with Kamala, who was managed by Harvey Whippleman. Undertaker destroyed Kamala and Whippleman vowed revenge. Harvey brought in the 7'7 Giant Gonzalez to avenge Kamala. The point of the feud was that Gonzalez towered above Undertaker and Undertaker couldn't use his normal offense against him. Undertaker eventually won the final match of the feud in a gimmick match.

In 2005, Undertaker feuded with Muhammad Hassan, who was managed by Daivari. Undertaker destroyed Hassan and Daivari vowed revenge. Daivari brought in Mark Henry to avenge Hassan. Undertaker destroyed Henry and Daivari vowed revenge. Daivari brought in 7'5 Great Khali to avenge Henry and Hassan. The point of the feud was that Khali towered above Undertaker and Undertaker couldn't use his normal offense against him. Undertaker eventually won the final match of the feud in a gimmick match.

Obvious it's the same story, but they're about thirteen years apart. There will be some fans that are going to notice the story being repeated and complain about it, but how many fans do you think have no idea of the Gonzalez match or more importantly, how many do you think care thirteen years later? Repeating a storyline a long time apart is fine, but doing it multiple times every year doesn't keep it interesting. It waters the story down and makes it less effective. You can only have a GM brought before the Board of Directors so many times before it gets predictable.

Quick sidebar: GM's need to be eliminated, or at least cut WAY down. By having general managers around to make matches all the time, it takes away a lot of the ability for feuds to form naturally. If you want to have some invisible matchmaker then fine, but you don't have to go to the back, have AJ on the phone, have one of the participants come into her office, and have her explain the match to him. For one thing, it's a waste of time. I know 90 seconds doesn't sound like long, but when you do that three times a show, you're looking at almost five minutes wasted. How many matches can you think of that don't last five minutes? I'll give you a hint: most TV matches would fall into this category. End sidebar.

In short, WWE needs to mix up the ways they set up and advance feuds. There are A TON of possible ways to do it without using one of the same stories over and over again. Let the guys in the feud have some input

once in awhile. Let them play to their strengths. Not everyone can be placed into the same stories and get the same results out of them. Mix things up a bit and the badly stale product can be made very fresh all over again. Who knows, you might even be able to find something that people care about and want to pay to see. I know it's a stretch but it could happen.