

Monday Night Raw – January 11, 1999: This Actually Happened On Live Television

Since I'm done with 1998 and 2001, the most logical step would be to fill in the gap with 1999 and 2000. Since I don't want to take over two years to get through these years, I'll be doing four episodes at a time instead of two, starting with January 1999. In other words, it won't be two episodes from 99 and then two from 2000 like I did before. This is the year where WWF put its boot on WCW's neck and crushed them and it should be interesting to see how they did it. Let's get to it.

Since it's one of the most famous episodes of Raw ever, I've already done the first show of the year. Here's the review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/04/24/monday-night-raw-january-4-1999-foley-wins/>

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 11, 1999

Location: Compaq Center, Houston, Texas

Attendance: 12,585

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole

We're two weeks away from the Rumble and we have a new WWF Champion in the form of Mankind. The main stories going on are Vince is the #2 entrant in the Rumble to Austin's #1, as well as Rock wanting his title match and revenge on Mankind. This is the start of one of the least wrestling heavy years in company history so let's get to it.

Here's DX to open the show. After playing to the crowd a bit here's the NEW WWF World Champion Mankind, complete with his debuting signature song. The McMahons are in the back and getting all ticket off. Foley talks about always wanting to get here and now wants JR to call a match of his as world champion (JR was having health issues at this point mind you).

The champ thanks DX for helping him out last week and Austin for, you know, knocking Rock out cold and all that. Mankind throws the fans a big bone, saying that as long as he's world champion, Austin will always have a shot at the title and he'd love for it to be at Wrestlemania.

Cue Rock and the McMahons with Rock of course as they can't stand anymore. Shane doesn't get the fascination with Mankind, but tonight he'll do something about DX, meaning they all have matches tonight. Also tonight is the Corporate Rumble, where the winner will be #30 in the Rumble. Rock grabs the mic and says that Mankind didn't beat him because he needed Austin to help. Ignore the fact that it was technically a clean win because it was anything goes I guess. As for Austin, Rock will take care of him later. Yep, at Wrestlemania.

As for tonight, Rock wants his rematch right here and now. The champ says that he's already beaten Rock twice, so clearly he's not championship material. Points for a funny line to Mankind for that one. Rock offers another No DQ match but Mankind won't bite. Rock offers No Countout but Mankind isn't persuaded. They trade catchphrases for a bit until Mankind finally says he'll do it in an I Quit match. Rock seems scared but has to take what he can get. Vince makes Mankind vs. Kane for tonight.

Somehow that took over twenty minutes to get through. Thank you Vince Russo for making this a trend in wrestling.

Austin is here.

The Outlaws think Debra is distracting.

New Age Outlaws vs. Jeff Jarrett/Owen Hart

Winners get a title shot, presumably at the Rumble. It's Gunn vs. Owen to start and there's a gorilla press to Owen and one for Jeff as well. Gunn cranks on the arm of Owen and brings in Roadie for the shaky knee drop and the running crotch attack to Owen's back as Owen is draped over the middle rope. SOMEONE NAME THAT FREAKING MOVE ALREADY! Off to Jarrett who immediately gets caught in an atomic drop but comes back with a bulldog.

After some heel double teaming, Owen's Sharpshooter attempt is easily

countered and it's off to Jarrett. In a reunion of the country music act that went on WAY too long, Roadie and Jarrett collide, setting up the double hot tag to Owen and Gunn. With Billy cleaning house, here's Debra to distract with the yet to be named Puppies. That goes nowhere for Billy (he's saving himself for Chuck of course) but Chyna goes after her for some reason. That distraction is enough for Owen to roll up Billy for the pin and the title shot.

Rating: C-. This was one of the better Outlaws match from a wrestling perspective, which I'm sure had something to do with the fact that it only lasted about four minutes. Owen and Bulldog would win the titles soon after this and hold them until after Wrestlemania. Nothing to see here but it wasn't the worst match ever.

The Outlaws yell at Chyna for costing them the match.

And now, it is time.....for Gillberg. In one of the funniest parodies of all time, the new Light Heavyweight Champion Duane Gill has become Gillberg, complete with the LONG walk from the back, the heavily (and intentionally fake) piped in chants, Gillberg going insane like Goldberg, and the police escort. This is still funny even to this day. We've even got the JOB Squad holding up sparklers for the pyro but Gillberg chokes on the smoke. Gillberg wants to know who's first, and now we get to the real joke.

Gillberg vs. Luna Vachon

Gillberg misses a spear, gets his eyes raked across the top rope, has his Jackhammer countered into a cross body, and is pinned by Luna in about thirty seconds.

Some guy is in a dungeon. This would be revealed as Mideon.

Here's Val Venis for a match but first he sees a good looking woman in the front row to hit on. Cue Ken Shamrock to destroy Val, shouting to stay away from his sister. This brings out Billy Gunn who says he's going to moon Ken's sister. Billy gets a beating as well but Val comes in to beat up Shamrock. Boss Man comes out to save his partner and the ring is cleared. Shamrock gives Billy a shot at the IC Title at the Rumble,

because that's what you do when someone moons your sister.

Mankind and Austin are talking about something.

European Title: Al Snow vs. X-Pac

Pac is defending if you've forgotten. Snow takes over to start and pounds away in the corner with headbutts. The champ gets his boot up in the corner but walks into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker to put him right back down. A powerslam puts Pac down again but the moonsault misses. Pac spinwheel kicks Snow into the corner and hits the Bronco Buster...and here's Goldust. He blasts Snow in the head with Head, allowing Pac to retain the title. Why Goldie was here and what help Snow needed is beyond me but it's 1999 so what are you going to do?

Al gets hit by Head again by Goldust.

Kane is sure he can win the title on his own. He doesn't talk but you get the point.

WWF Title: Mankind vs. Kane

Kane charges right at him and we immediately head to the floor. The champ is sent into the steps before he sends Kane into them as well. Mankind dives off the apron to send Kane back first into the steps to slow the Big Fried Freak down. Back in and Kane pounds away, only to run into an elbow in the corner. As has been the case with this match, Kane isn't that interested in selling so he slams the champ down and kicks him in the face. It's not going to last long but the idea of two monsters slugging it out until one can't get up anymore is always fun.

There's a piledriver to put Kane down and we head back to the floor. That doesn't last long as Kane rams him into the barricade and heads back inside for two. Top rope clothesline gets two, as does the Double Arm DDT. Mankind gets after kicking Kane low. The champ puts on Socko but gets rammed into the corner (again). He jumps on Kane's back to try to get the Claw on again but Kane counters into a tombstone for no cover. As Kane crawls over, Rock runs in with a chair for the DQ.

Rating: C-. Not much to see here but the crowd was NUTS for Mankind. The

guy was on fire at this point and he more than deserved the title. While I'm not at all wild on the new champion getting destroyed here, the ending makes sense as Rock wants to get his revenge on Mankind rather than Kane. Not bad here, but it was short as expected.

Post match Austin comes out to save Mankind but winds up Stunning both masked dudes.

Vince yells at Rock but Rock says he wants to beat Mankind for the title.

HHH vs. Edge

Now here's a match that would be VERY different in a few years. HHH takes him down to start and pounds away but a charge in the corner hits buckle. A spinwheel kick puts HHH down and we take a break. Back with Edge hitting a clothesline and a kind of bulldog for two. HHH makes his comeback with punches and the flying knee, followed by a boot to the face of a charging Edge in the corner. After a quick comeback by Edge, the Pedigree ends this. Nothing to see here, but man alive it's weird to see these two in this spot.

Immediately post match the lights go out and Roadie gets a blood bath.

Cue the druids and we've got an Undertaker symbol. The Acolytes bring out Dennis Knight on a board. Then a tall dark man in a robe comes out to Undertaker's music. Cole: "I THINK THAT'S THE UNDERTAKER!" Taker sits on a throne in front of the symbol and talks about how people have tried to put him down but he's come back with a vengeance. The Ministry of Darkness is going to destroy the heroes and the plague of darkness is coming. He talks about how he'll have few followers but it won't matter.

Bearer pulls out a knife of some kind and Taker walks over to Knight. Knife in hand, Taker speaks in tongues over Knight...and slices his own wrist open. He pours the blood into a goblet and pours it down Knight's throat. You want to talk about something that makes me embarrassed to be a wrestling fan, this would be a good place to start. Taker dubs him Mideon and starts carving symbols into his chest. A blot of lightning hits the symbol and it lights on fire. Mideon starts LEVITATING to end the segment. This actually happened on a wrestling show, I kid you not.

Somehow, this would actually get worse.

D'Lo says he'll do whatever Terri asks but this is too much. This is because Terri lost her baby or whatever.

D'Lo Brown vs. Mark Henry

No match, as Terri immediately hits Mark low. Chyna and Sammi make the save. If you don't know who Sammi is.....oh you will very soon.

Vince is in the snow running to a bad Rocky imitation. Shane has a bullhorn and is coaching Vince along. Now Vince has to chase a chicken. Vince: "I'M THE CEO OF A FORTUNE 500 COMPANY!" After the training they go to a steakhouse, but instead of eating, Vince gets to beat on the meat in the back. More funny stuff here.

Corporate Rumble

This is a mini-Rumble where the winner gets to be #30. We open with Shamrock vs. Billy Gunn (not in the Corporation so I guess this is an open field for some reason?) and after a break we're ready to go. Oh apparently this is DX vs. the Corporation. Why would Vince agree to that? Shamrock kicks Gunn off the apron before Gunn gets in and DIVES ONTO THE FLOOR, eliminating himself in the process.

Shamrock pounds away on Billy as Shane cheers him on. The Boss Man is #3 and Billy is in big trouble already. Gunn comes back with a forearm but Boss Man chokes him down. Test is #4 (I think the intervals are about once a minute) to make it two on one. A big boot put Gunn down but they can't eliminate him. Thankfully X-Pac is #5 but after only a few seconds, Test hiptosses Billy out.

The layout powerbomb puts Pac down but Road Dogg is #6. He's still got the blood all over him and nothing happens until Kane is #7. A clothesline puts Roadie out and Pac is stuck 3-1. HHH is #8 and things speed up. Test accidentally hits Kane and gets knocked out as a result. HHH and Pac take out Kane but Pac is eliminated in the process. That leaves HHH vs. Boss Man....until Vince is a surprise entrant at #9.

Shane of course erupts as Vince sneaks in and eliminates both guys to

seemingly win the thing. He tears his shirt off ala Hogan, but Chyna is another surprise entrant at #10. The place goes nuts but the Stooges won't let her get in. Chyna decks both of them and here comes Austin. The distraction is enough to let Chyna throw Vince out (apparently knocking him out cold in the process) and get the #30 spot. Shane freaks to end the show.

Rating: D+. This is a hard one to grade because the wrestling barely existed, but the fan reaction was incredible, as Vince got a ton of heat but Chyna's pop was even better. Good surprise here but as usual, it's all about the payoff and nothing about the buildup to that payoff. Such is life in the Attitude Era.

Overall Rating: D. As usual, as goes the main event so goes the rest of the show. The problem here is that there's nothing really good from a wrestling perspective, but it did a great job at building up the Rumble, as well as giving us two hilarious bits with Gillberg and Vince's training. The problem is you have the Ministry starting, which is just completely terrible and drags things WAY down.

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