

Monday Night Raw – February 22, 1999: A Mortician Gives A Bear To A Billionaire

Monday Night Raw

Date: February 22, 1999

Location: UTC Arena, Chattanooga, Tennessee

Attendance: 7,900

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

We're about five weeks from Wrestlemania and it's been awhile since I've looked at Raw from this year. The main story going on right now is that Rock is the world champion again and Big Show is now around as Vince's latest heavy. The main event tonight is Kane vs. Undertaker in an inferno match, which is a pretty big deal for Raw. Let's get to it.

We open with clips from last week with Big Show costing Mankind the world title last week in the ladder match.

Here's Vince to open things up. He tells us that tonight is not a night for the squeamish because tonight we're roasting human flesh. This is payback against Undertaker for his threats against Vince. Presumably they're talking about the envelope from last week but the contents weren't explained yet. Now let's talk about Wrestlemania and what might be the most electrifying WWF Title match in history. A guy in the crowd has a sign made up like a street corner with Know Your Role Boulevard and Jabroni Drive.

Vince brings out Paul Wight, who would become known as Big Show and will be refereeing the Rock vs. Austin match in five weeks. Show says he's walked out of a nightmare and promises that the WWF will never be the same again. In two days, Austin went flying through a steel cage (and beat your boss at the same time Big Show) and then Mankind lost the WWF Title.

Now here's Rock to a pretty big face pop. Vince gives him an intro like

only a wrestling promoter can. Now we get the ROCKY SUCKS chants to make things all better. Rock isn't pleased with Big Show taking credit for Rock being WWF Champion. Show says he said it and he's surprised Rock heard it through that thick skull of his. Rock wants to know who Big Show thinks he is because he should know his role and shut his mouth. Show tells the Pebble to close his mouth before Show closes it with his fist. Rock's ready to go and they get nose to nose, but here's Mankind.

He wants to be the guest referee for the main event and to prove what he's capable of, he wants to referee Rock vs. Big Show tonight. Even Socko has a referee shirt painted on. Big Show likes the idea of a title match tonight and the fans seems interested as well. Rock says let's to it and I guess we have a second main event.

Post break the Corporation has to keep Rock and Big Show apart in the back.

Brood vs. Public Enemy

Yeah ECW's Public Enemy had a cup of coffee in the WWF. The Brood is Gangrel and Edge here and they're part of the Ministry. They jump Public Enemy as they come in and send the two ECW guys together to take over. Edge dives on Rocco in the corner but Grunge trips them up and takes both Brood members out with a double bulldog. A hiptoss into a double kind of powerbomb puts Gangrel down but not for a cover. Instead they hit the Quebecers' old Cannonball move onto Gangrel but Christian runs in for the DQ. This was barely 90 seconds long.

Public Enemy leaves but gets a blood bath for their efforts.

During the break the Ministry beat up the Brood for losing the match.

Ken Shamrock vs. Billy Gunn

The winner gets an Intercontinental Title shot at Wrestlemania. Val Venis, the champion, is on commentary. Billy can't quite do the Outlaws entrance like Roadie can. It's a brawl on the floor to start before we head inside. Billy misses a splash in the corner as Val makes a lot of sex jokes. The belly to belly gets two for Shamrock but Gunn comes back

with a Fameasser. Shamrock looks....how would you put it.....he looks like a confused Sylvester Stallone.

Anyway Ken comes back up with a hard clothesline as Val makes erection jokes. The leg lariat sets up a standing rana on Billy, sending him to the floor. Val throws him back in but Shamrock jumps Val as a result. Gunn goes to the floor as well and the big brawl causes the match to be thrown out.

Rating: D+. Shamrock was good but the jokes on commentary sounded like they were from a 12 year old. The three way feud was interesting, but Billy wouldn't wrestle either guy at Wrestlemania for reasons of Russo stupidity. This solved nothing but there are still several weeks until Wrestlemania.

Vince tries to talk Rock down but Rock will have none of it.

Here's Women's Champion Sable as her heel turns continues. Sable talks about how the fans aren't taken aback by her recent actions, but rather they're just in awe. She brags about being on Regis and Kathy Lee before stopping to talk to her obsessed fan Tori. This time Tori gets to come into the ring and introduce herself. Tori talks about all the things she admires about Sable but Sable calls her pathetic and says Tori needs to get a life.

As Tori is about to cry, here's Luna to speak very humbly. She says that everyone can't be as beautiful as Sable. Everyone has to play the cards they're dealt but they don't use people like Sable does. The only reason Sable is Women's Champion is because of her looks. Well that and the willingness to take off her clothes for Playboy but that isn't mentioned. Sable says she only cares about the men and Luna needs to reshuffle the deck if she doesn't like her cards. As the champion is about to leave she lays out Luna and Tori with the belt.

Now Vince tries to talk Show down but he wants the shot tonight. He makes a good point by saying whoever wins, the belt will still be in the Corporation.

Owen Hart/Jeff Jarrett vs. D'Lo Brown

Owen and Jeff are tag champions and took out Brown's partner Mark Henry recently. The champions jump Brown to start until we get down to just Jeff in the ring. A quick Sky High gets two on Jarrett but Owen comes in with a surprise bulldog to take over. Owen comes in legally and gets two off the enziguri before it's back to Jeff for a middle rope ax handle to the face. Brown fights out of the corner and takes both champions down, but here are Terri and Jacqueline with the latter dropkicking Brown into a spinwheel kick from Owen for the pin.

Rating: D. Have I ever mentioned how much I can't stand Jacqueline? Her mere presence brings a match downhill as she's so ridiculously annoying that I hate the match that much more. The PMS vs. Brown feud would go on for far longer than anyone cared and would stop Brown's momentum. The tag division was in such a mess at this point and it would take the Dudleys to save it.

Post match the champions beat down D'Lo.

Mankind practices being a referee in the back.

WWF Title: The Rock vs. Paul Wight

Vince comes out to try to calm them down again and Mankind is guest referee. Rock tells Vince to go do commentary because he doesn't want to be in the middle of this fight. The bell rings....and it's a setup as they both jump Mankind. Vince: "THIS IS FUN!"

Mankind gets beaten down by all three guys.

The Corporation celebrates post match.

Steve Blackman vs. Droz

Droz, who is just back from a two week suspension for attacking Kevin Kelly, jumps Blackman to start. A quick sunset flip gets two for Steve but a jumping elbow drop gets the same for Droz. Steve is sent to the floor as this match is hardly keeping people's attention. Droz misses a middle rope elbow and Steve comes back with basic strikes. An elbow drop gets two for Blackman as does a powerslam for Droz. The bicycle kick gets the pin for Blackman.

Rating: D. Does this need an explanation? I didn't think so.

Post match Droz lays out Blackman with Steve's martial arts sticks.

Vince tells Kane to make Undertaker burn.

Undertaker gives one of those evil promos where he talks about serving his master. He isn't afraid of the inferno match at all. There's a surprise for Vince tonight.

Goldust vs. Val Venis

Non-title here. Goldust takes him down to start and pounds away in the corner, only to be run over by a Venis clothesline out of the corner. An elbow drop misses and Goldie goes after the knee with some kicks and a shinbreaker. Val comes back with some running knees into the ribs and a Russian legsweep for no cover. We get the bump and grind from Venis and a spinebuster gets no cover on Goldie. Val tries a leapfrog but crotches himself in the process, sending him out to the floor. Venis pulls him out as well as the Blue Meanie is here. With Goldust thrown back inside, Meanie lays Val out with a DDT, giving Goldust the pin.

Rating: D+. Again not much to see here but this would lead to the bizarre but perfectly appropriate for the time period feud between Goldust and Meanie, leading to Blue Dust. I don't quite get the need for the champion to lose by (dirty) pin but it's not like the title meant anything in 1999 anyway.

Shane models his new European Title for Chyna.

Hardcore Title: Hardcore Holly vs. Bart Gunn

THE NEW MIDNIGHT EXPRESS BUBBLES A BIT! Yeah there's no way this team could ever explode. Bob is defending coming in. Gunn starts with some left hands as we head to the outside. Bob cracks a glass or a jar over Bart's head and grabs a chair. A hard shot to the head puts Bart down for no cover followed by a shot to the back. Bart comes back with a water pitcher of his own to Hardcore's head followed by I think the bell.

They head into the crowd with Holly being rammed head first into a piece

of the exposed barricade. Back to ringside and Holly blasts him with a spray from a fire extinguisher. Bart gets sent shoulder first into the steps but comes back with a suplex onto the ramp for two. Now Holly is sent into the steps and sprayed with the extinguisher for good measure. They head up the ramp with Bart being sent into the set under the Titantron.

Bart finds a watermelon for no apparent reason and breaks it open over Holly's head. A piece of metal gets cracked over Holly's back for no cover but he comes back with a low blow and, I kid you not, a crate of bananas to the head. Now Holly stops for a potassium fix and a trashcan shot to Bart's head. They slug it out and Bart hits him in the head with a sack of flour. Now here's a guy in kabuki attire to throw Bart off the stage and through a table, giving Holly the easy pin.

Rating: B-. This was one of the rare hardcore matches where the whole thing is a mixture of brutal and fun at the same time, making for a good match. Bart wasn't around long other than to get DESTROYED by Butterbean at Wrestlemania while Holly would do the same bit for years on end.

X-Pac vs. Chyna

If Pac wins he gets a title shot at Shane at Mania. HHH is with Pac to counter Shane but Chyna hits X-Pac low almost immediately. Trips chases Shane around ringside as Chyna misses a Bronco Buster. Now X-Pac chases Shane, allowing HHH to come in and hit Chyna with a Pedigree, giving Pac the easy pin. Angle, not a match.

Austin will be on Nash Bridges on Friday. His character on there was so popular they considered giving him his own spinoff.

Here's Vince again with what looks to be a rolled up paper in his hand. He says that if anyone doesn't like the smell of burning flesh, leave now. He's holding the envelope that Undertaker gave him last week and shouts about how no one goes after Vince outside the WWF.

Kane vs. Undertaker

As mentioned, this is an inferno match, meaning the ring is surrounded by

fire and you have to light your opponent up to win. Vince sits in on commentary and refuses to talk about what's in the envelope. Kane jumps Taker to start and the flames go up. Taker hits Old School and the flames go up every time something hits the mat. Kane fights off an attempt to put him in the fire and kicks Taker in the face. A powerslam puts Taker down again and Kane chokes away a bit.

Kane fires off some uppercuts as Taker is next to the ropes. The camera shots are mainly from ground level so it's really hard to see through the fire. Paul Bearer shows up at ringside with a box for Vince. Taker is sent hard into the corner as Vince won't open his present. Vince finally opens the box ("We can put Undertaker's ashes in here.") and finds...a teddy bear.

McMahon gets up from the table and looks up at Undertaker while walking at Paul. He asks Paul what he's doing with the bear as Taker is thrown over the flames and out to the floor. Kane misses a dive off the top and hits the announce table as Vince stares at the bear. Vince looks broken as Taker is sent into the steps. Kane tries a big boot but Taker grabs the foot and puts it in the fire for the win.

Rating: D. This was barely a wrestling match as the majority of it was spent on a bear that was delivered to a billionaire by a former mortician. Did I mention this is the height of Russo's influence? At the same time though, it's also near the height of the show's ratings, which really shouldn't surprise anyone. The match barely existed.

Post match Taker takes the bear and burns it, bringing Vince to his knees to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. This is a hard one to grade. They're starting the build up for Wrestlemania, but all the insane drama with the Undertaker and Vince lead to such a ridiculous conclusion that it's hard to take this seriously. That being said, when this was first happening, I was glued to the TV set every Monday watching this and being very grateful that Nitro had a replay just after Raw ended. The show wasn't terrible but it was all drama and little action, making it a typical 1999 Raw.

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