

Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: March 31, 2014

Last night's show was something very special and a great example of how to do a go home show. It wasn't supposed to be about the wrestling and that was to be expected. Let's get to it.

First up was Undertaker showing down with Brock Lesnar and Brock finally getting in some offense on Undertaker. The main complaint that I saw people making was that it took too long to get to the brawling last night, to which all I can say is wrestling fans are impatient nowadays. Heaven forbid you have to wait maybe ninety seconds to see the guys fight. This is one of those moments that was built up for a few weeks and did what it was supposed to do. Every single time Brock has been leading up to a match he's looked weak in advance, then he goes into Beast Mode in the actual match. Why does this continue to fool people?

Del Rio vs. Big E. was actually a solid match but I'm getting annoyed at the booking. Alberto has now beaten Big E. twice this month but there has been no significant mention of a title match coming up. Big E. never defends the thing anyway and while he beats up everyone except for Del Rio (nothing wrong with having a guy you can't beat), Alberto seems to have no interest in the title. You don't have to have him win it (though that would be fine), but at least have him look like he wants it. In other words, make a title look valuable and it will become valuable.

The Wyatts had another awesome promo. The thing that makes them work is how different they look when they're talking. Notice that Bray is constantly moving around, changing the pitch of his voice, moving closer to the camera, and switching from serious to comedic. It's unique and that makes people pay attention to him. The fact that he's totally into

his character and is so out there that it makes people want to see more makes it even better.

The Total Divas had a recap and a Summer vs. Natalya match. The match was bad but Summer looks great in her outfits so I can't complain at all.

This brought us to the highlight of the night as the Authority came out to announce the end of the YES Movement. While the HHH and Stephanie bits mocking the pose were a bit annoying, the rest was perfect. HHH basically brought up every common insult against him and laughed them off, because showing an AWESOME video, narrated by Stephanie in a brilliant touch, listing off all of the flavors of the month that he's destroyed over the years.

This is what HHH has been needing to do for a long time now. Don't talk about his power or his authority, but talk about how he's one of the best in ring performer of all time (which he is). People often forget how good he is and that's a shame coming into what's going to be an awesome match. Yeah HHH can get annoying on camera, but the guy can flat out go in the ring and will do exactly that on Sunday. The video was exactly what he needed to do and it worked like a charm. The fact that Stephanie looked great last night helped too.

Orton and Batista came out as well but they didn't add too much. Batista pointing out that HHH has never beaten him continues to be all he needs to say, but HHH wanting Orton to be the Viper again is a very questionable move. It doesn't make sense as he's basically given up on Randy being the face of the company (thank goodness), but he still wants Orton at his peak? That's not very logical for a heel.

The two tag matches didn't do anything for me. The eight man tag was fine but it just didn't interest me at all. Los Matadores are nothing interesting and the lack of El Torito made it even worse.

Bray Wyatt had a long squash over R-Truth, but the important part was after the match. John Cena wore Wyatt gear and snuck up on them in his first mind game of the feud. The interesting thing here was the pop from the crowd. They went NUTS for Cena in one of the loudest pops I can remember him getting in months. This brings us back to Wrestling 101.

John Cena vs. Bray Wyatt boils down to a very simple concept: good vs. evil. John Cena is the bright and colorful hero and Bray Wyatt is the dark and sinister monster. At the end of the day, people want to see John Cena, their hero even though they get tired of him once in awhile, rise up and kill the monster hiding in the fans' closet. Cena has been afraid but is standing up to face his fears and using his mind and strength to fight for what he believes in.

That's wrestling at its core: seeing larger than life characters doing things that fans wish they could do. It worked for Hogan standing up for America and it worked for Austin beating up his boss. Cena showing weakness and then rising above it (not necessarily winning mind you) is something interesting and the reaction from the crowd the last few weeks proves it.

The lumberjill match was nothing special. At the end of the day I wish they went with just a one on one match at Wrestlemania instead of some 14 Diva mess. There are girls out there capable of putting on an entertaining match, but for some reason they're throwing Vickie, who apparently we're now supposed to sympathize with, into the mix. I have a bad feeling AJ either wins on Sunday, or somehow Vickie walks out as

champion. Neither interests me at all unless Paige debuts the next night on Raw.

Then we got one heck of a Cena promo. The guy can just turn on the goods whenever he needs to and that's what we got last night. Telling people to run down to Wrestlemania or watch on the WWE Network was both a nice plug for the show (I miss those things) as well as a great way to make the event feel like it needed to be seen. You don't get those anymore and Cena is the kind of guy who demands attention when he's in serious mode. It just works and it did last night.

Kane vs. Reigns wasn't the point of the Shield segment. The important part was Roman winning 80% of the fans' votes. If those numbers are legit, the fans are buying into him as the star of the team and that's exactly what WWE wants. The down side of it though was the Outlaws appearing. Just look at them walking down the ramp and then look at Shield. It just doesn't work for me and I'm afraid Shield is going to have to tone things way down so the Outlaws can keep up with them. I still don't get how anyone but the Outlaws benefit from this.

Piper's Pit and the big brawl existed and that's about all there is to say about it. Big Show is being pushed really hard as the winner of the battle royal, which gives me hope for a swerve. Him winning just isn't interesting and he doesn't need it. Sheamus is needing a big win and this would be perfect for him. Oh and Piper losing his mind over the people interrupting him was hilarious.

The main event was exactly what it should have been. I think WWE knew the fans would get restless if they had a regular match so they went with the wild brawl instead. Again this was about the moment rather than the match and that's fine. You couldn't have the go home show without Bryan making

one last run in and that's exactly what we got. It was a white hot way to end the show and take us into Wrestlemania on Sunday.

Overall last night was the exactly right formula for a go home show. The wrestling wasn't great but it was just good enough to get us through to the important stuff. Every match got time and I'm more fired up to see the show than I was before. Excellent stuff last night with HHH and Cena stealing yet another show.

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