

Wrestler of the Day – April 28: Kofi Kingston

Today we go to Jamaica. Er Ghana. But he's named after a city in Jamaica. Either way it's Kofi Kingston.

Kofi did some indy stuff in the northeast before being signed to a developmental deal. He was sent to Deep South Wrestling in Georgia and would face TJ Wilson (Tyson Kidd) at some point in 2007. I believe it's in March but I'm not quite sure.

Kofi Kingston vs. TJ Wilson

Interestingly enough, Nattie Neidhart is the backstage interviewer and says she's VERY familiar with Wilson's work. Well they had been living together and dating for years at this point so that's no shock. Kofi cranks on the arm to start but gets cradled for two. Wilson grabs some headlock takeovers but Kofi keeps nipping up and we have a standoff. Another standoff gets us nowhere until Wilson grabs a quick suplex for one.

Some more covers get two each for TJ as this is really basic stuff so far. We hit a chinlock on Kofi until TJ sends him into the corner. Kofi grabs a sunset flip for two and a bad looking dropkick puts Wilson down. TJ comes out of the corner and walks into Trouble in Paradise (Cool Runnings here) for the pin.

Rating: D. Kofi clearly couldn't do much at this point and the match suffered as a result. To be fair though, Deep South Wrestling really doesn't have the best track record when it comes to training so their TV wasn't the best stuff either. Wilson would get better once he started flying around a bit more.

Kofi would be called up to ECW in January 2008. This was preceded by some REALLY cheesy videos of Kofi on the beach, talking about how there's trouble in paradise. They're really not very good but they set up his debut on January 22, 2008.

David Owen vs. Kofi Kingston

Owen is a bald guy in good shape. Kofi fights out of a top wristlock and a not great looking legsweep. They head into the corner for the jump into ten punches followed by a bad monkey flip to send David flying. Back up and Kofi does the reverse leapfrog followed by a cross body. Pay no attention to Owen falling down before Kofi touched him. Some forearms to the face put Owen down and there's the yet to be named Boom Drop. Trouble in Paradise ends Owen without much trouble. This is still one of the worst debuts I've ever seen as Kofi was sloppy and did NOTHING for me when I first saw him.

After being on ECW for awhile, Kofi would get a shot at the Intercontinental Title at Night of Champions 2008.

Intercontinental Title: Chris Jericho vs. ???

Jericho is still a face here but that wouldn't last long. Ah he's in the middle of his turn here. That makes sense. The mystery opponent is not HBK according to Jericho due to him injuring Shawn more than once already. Jericho in long tights just doesn't look right for some reason. I was at a house show about a week later and his eye seemed fine to me. Jericho says he's an honest man. Oh dang it's he's Alberto Del Rio now. Some Jamaican music cuts Jericho off and the opponent is Kofi.

Intercontinental Title: Chris Jericho vs. Kofi Kingston

Kofi has been on Raw for six days at this point, having come over from ECW in the Draft. People knew he had something but the universal response was that this was too soon for him. This is more or less his big debut. Kofi starts busting out stuff that is normal for him now but back in the day was brand

new stuff. Kofi hits that Frog Splash cross body for two.

The problem is that since not a lot of people watch ECW, not a lot of people know much about Kofi. You get a feeling here that they're just kind of meandering along waiting on the big finish, which should be pretty clear if you're paying attention. The fans chant boring for no apparent reason. The match is slow but not boring. Kofi starts busting out the insane dropkicks to kill the chants and hits the Boom Drop which has no name yet.

The Walls are blocked and another Boom Drop gets a long two. Jericho busts out the Liontamer and Shawn finally makes the required run in to distract Jericho so Kofi can kick him right in the forearm for the pin and his first title. This was what the IC Title was supposed to be about: a young guy that needs some credibility getting a title to give him some. Post match Shawn is helped out and Jericho punches him in his bad eye.

Rating: C+. Kofi wasn't anywhere near what he would become but he was still pretty good. Jericho put him over here and the ending was solid. Kingston wasn't ready to beat Jericho yet and he didn't. Has Jericho ever beaten Kofi clean? I think he has but I'm not sure. Anyway, this was more about furthering the Shawn/Jericho feud without making Shawn go for the IC Title and on that front it did very well.

Kofi would hold the belt until the fall. He wouldn't be away from gold long though as he would get the US Title in June 2009. Kofi would have to defend it six days later at Extreme Rules 2009.

US Title: Kofi Kingston vs. MVP vs. William Regal vs. Matt Hardy

Well this is random. Kofi won the title 6 days ago from MVP. He beat Hardy and Regal for the title shot in the first place. This is an extreme gimmick? Sure why not. MVP is a face here...I think. Yeah he is. Regal has been hitting on Vickie to get

into this. Matt gets a rather solid pop. He's heel here which is just odd to type.

Oh and Matt still has a broken hand from Mania. MVP is the same thing that he is today. That's all you need to know about him: he hasn't changed a bit in a year. Regal hasn't either but he's more or less a jobber now so it's not like it matters that much. Kofi hits a dive to take out every American in this match.

Then he takes out the British guy as well. It's your usual insanity for one of these matches as we get rotating one on one matches. That works fine I think as it's really the only way you can do these without insane choreography before it starts. Regal gets solid heel heat. He's just so easy to hate.

Everybody but Matt gets in a Tower of Doom spot so Matt dives on them all but of course it doesn't work. Also his hand seems to be just fine all of a sudden. For some reason I love that leg drop that Matt does from the middle rope. It's not like there's anything really special about it or anything.

Kofi hits a Boom Drop on Regal who is on top of Matt in a decent spot. Kofi hits that pendulum kick that seemingly every midcard face hits now. I was wrong about MVP not changing anything in a year. Now he is even worse at his belly to belly overhead suplexes. Ballin hits on Matt as we're very close to the end. You can feel it.

Regal beats up everyone but Kofi bounces off the top rope and hits a kick to the head which is called Trouble in Paradise for the pin to retain. It looked like a one footed dropkick but whatever.

Rating: D+. Not bad I guess, but WAY too short. This wasn't even seven minutes long and it was just kind of a mess. It's certainly not a bad match or anything like that, but it just felt thrown together and like it was there to kill time. That's never a good sign. Kofi's reign is about as forgettable

as you could ask one to be also.

Kofi's first major feud would be against Randy Orton, over Kofi saving Roddy Piper from a punt to the head. Their showdown was at TLC 2009.

Kofi Kingston vs. Randy Orton

Randy is getting some slight pops at this point. I think I like Kofi's weird starting stance. This feud got a decent build to it and I think this is their first full on match one on one. When I say full on I mean they had a short one on Raw that ended in a DQ which was just a few minutes long. I guess Orton has been around long enough to have a vintage. I love that snap powerslam he does if nothing else. Gah Scott Armstrong is the referee here.

I'm glad he's gone if nothing else. In a SWEET sequence, Kofi catwalks up the steps to the apron up the buckles and then comes off the ropes with a dive to the floor but Orton hits a perfect dropkick to the ribs to block it. That was SWEET. I said SWEET twice. You could even say that was just...two...SWEET! Wow that was a bad pun. Back to the match I think. Orton kicks Kingston in the ribs a lot. Orton is getting more and more pops here and it's odd to hear.

The pace of this match needs to pick up a bit and as I say that it begins to. Wow I have good timing. Boom Drop hits. The spin kick hits but Orton gets the ropes to a BIG reaction, so the crowd is into this at least. Out of nowhere Orton hits the elevated DDT. Wouldn't Kofi's hair block some of that? The Punt is blocked. Dive on the ball you idiots! Another Trouble In Paradise misses to set up the RK0 for the ending.

Rating: B-. Good here but not great. Kingston looked good in losing as the whole story leading up to this was about him shedding his goofy image and it worked very well. Kingston wasn't ready to beat Orton clean so that's good I think. I liked it but it felt a bit flat. I think it was because this

was added 6 days prior to the show so it kind of felt like filler. Still good though.

Kofi was hot enough at this point that he made the Elimination Chamber at its namesake show in 2010.

Raw World Title: Sheamus vs. Ted DiBiase vs. HHH vs. John Cena vs. Kofi Kingston vs. Randy Orton

Cena gets a VERY mixed reaction but I think it's leaning towards more cheers than boos which is a good sign I guess. I'm digging those white ropes. DiBiase gets an ok at best reaction. I do like them giving the young guys a chance if nothing else. They get main event experience even if there's no chance any of them win it. Ok Striker needs to drop the metaphors already.

Orton gets a POP. Just turn him already Vince. He needs it. HHH gets a pop but nothing compared to Orton or even Cena for that matter. No one has ever won more than one Chamber match. Except HHH. He's won four. Nothing wrong with that is there? Apparently Sheamus has to get all the eliminations. Kofi and he will be starting us out. Kofi looking over his shoulder just in case is rather amusing. Kofi is rocking red tonight which is working for him.

Can someone get Armstrong a weight in his arm? EPIC RK0 chant. They touch on the Orton/Kingston feud. Sweet goodness that was awesome. This three man commentary team is working really well for me. The clock runs down and it's HHH. There's not a ton to talk about at this point as everything here means very little. Sheamus needs a name for his Razor's Edge as Cole just calls it that finishing maneuver.

That high knee always works for some reason. They clarify that you have to get the pin in the ring. Good to know as that's always a question I think about in these matches. Kofi sits on the outside here and lets them fight which is very smart. Scratch that as he hits a cross body on Sheamus.

Kofi hits a sweet Boom Drop over the top rope onto HHH. That looked great. Clock starts up again and it's Orton to a nice pop. He's beating the heck out of everyone. This guy is dying to be a face already Vince. Can you not see that? He's beating the tar out of Sheamus and HHH which is awesome. SHUT UP STRIKER. It's not a metal thing with fangs. It's a cage blast it.

The fans want blood. Kofi takes everyone out with a huge dive. He's getting a lot of big spots in this. He goes for another but Orton catches him with a dropkick. Nice indeed. Everyone goes for their finisher and no one gets it. Orton's head slams into the post. That looked SICK. In at 5 is DiBiase.

I love that falling punch. Orton and DiBiase team up and beat down just about everyone. They shove Kofi's head through the Chamber wall and DiBiase puts a Boston Crab on him. Orton gives HHH the elevated DDT onto the cage. That would hurt indeed. He and DiBiase wait on Cena outside his pod so of course he plows through them. He cleans house and hits an FU over the top rope on DiBiase.

DiBiase is in the STF and his leg isn't supposed to bend like that! Rhodes is here with a pipe. DiBiase hits Orton with it as he's in the FU and then takes Cena down with it. Ted pins Orton so we're at five. Kofi puts him out with Trouble in Paradise and Sheamus hits his two move combination to take Kofi out so it's Sheamus, HHH and Cena left. The pale one takes over and for NO apparent reason, HHH saves Cena.

And of course HHH gets to pin Sheamus first. So at the moment is the title vacant or is Sheamus technically champion as the match he's defending in isn't over yet? I'm not sure. A few seconds later Cena gets the STF and HHH taps. I've read some posts saying HHH might not have been tapping. What show were you watching? Yeah he was tapping.

Rating: B+. Solid stuff here. It's missing that little

something extra to make it a classic but this is certainly more than good stuff. The timing here was solid as we had enough to keep it from being too short but not enough to get boring. Half an hour is just about perfect I think. Also there was the fact that all of the guys in here were given a chance to showcase themselves, especially Kofi. He stole the show out there and it worked very well. Very good stuff here.

Another day, another midcard title. This time it's the Intercontinental again at Over the Limit 2010.

Intercontinental Title: Kofi Kingston vs. Drew McIntyre

Could Drew's music be sweeter? So remember the idea here is that Drew got stripped of the belt and Kofi won a tournament for it. Drew got it put back on him because Vince likes him. This is the big showdown for it I guess. Drew jumps him early as Striker thinks we need to know that it's been eleven years since the title has changed hands in Detroit. Ok then. The fans are all over Drew who is dominating early.

Apparently most people don't like working with him which is odd. I guess you can tell more when you're in the ring though. That makes more sense at least. Smackdown has definitely been having the better in ring stuff lately and this shouldn't be an exception. Drew does one of those idiotic spots where he jumps into Kofi's feet when he puts them up. What the heck was that supposed to be? The set might look cool but I can't tell.

There's this weird kind of spotlight thing going on from the end of the arena behind the announcers. It's rather odd and looks like 6 lights coming off of it. Boom Drop in the corner of all places hits. Ok then. Trouble in Paradise misses and the SOS gets a clean pin. Wow did not see that one coming.

Post match Drew gets on the mic and says the show doesn't keep going until he's declared champion by Teddy Long. Instead we get Matt Hardy to an ERUPTION. Seriously it's been like two weeks not 4 months. Twist of Fate puts Drew down.

Rating: B-. Not bad for an opener I guess. Kofi winning is kind of a surprise but I'd bet on Drew being pushed higher up on the card or into something against Christian or someone like that. Anyway, Kofi doesn't need the title really, but then again neither does McIntyre. This worked well enough I guess and wasn't bad at all. Not up to their TV stuff but not bad at all.

Kofi would lose the belt to Dolph Ziggler in July. Here's one of their MANY rematches from Smackdown on January 7, 2011.

Intercontinental Title: Dolph Ziggler vs. Kofi Kingston

They're certainly pushing this as a huge show with the title matches and all that jazz. Striker calls Vickie the female version of Rosie O'Donnell. Why are so many people obsessed with Rosie? What has she ever done? Nice reaction for Kofi here. We get a quick video of last week's match where Dolph more or less stole the win from Kofi which is true only to a degree.

Kofi hammers away to start as Cole says that Kofi needs to move on instead of trying to get the title back time and time again. Neckbreaker by Dolph gets two. Off to a clear choke that they're going to call a chinlock because they want to I guess. Splash in the corner misses though and here comes Kofi. These two have some solid chemistry together to be sure.

A rollup by Ziggler with some tights gets two. They're moving very fast out there. Trouble in Paradise misses and it's off to the Sleeper! Kofi simply grabs the hands and rips the hold off and gets the SOS for an incredibly close two. Middle rope suplex is blocked by Dolph. I know it seems like I'm flying through this but there is almost nothing between these fast moves. After Kofi knocks Dolph off the ropes to block the suplex, the HUGE crossbody ends this perfectly clean at 5:31. That came out of nowhere!

Rating: B. Ok, this grade is going to require some explanation as to how it can be equal to the first match and I think it might clear up a bit about my grading system in general in case some people think I'm a bit inconsistent. While I'm giving this match the same grade, it's certainly not as good as the first one. There are two key differences though.

The first is that the opener was meant to be a long brawl, as evidenced by giving it nearly four times as long to work with. That match had time to work out spots and to be a brutal fight, whereas this was supposed to be fast paced and exciting. Different styles of match, but both well done.

Second, which ties into the first, was the ending. Dolph literally turned around to get hit by the cross body. Kofi is already horizontal when Dolph sees him. I love matches that end very quickly and with moves that aren't finishers. To the fans it looked like another big move that Kofi would hit to get a two count. Instead it's over and the fans are surprised. That's an excellent touch and it keeps the matches interesting.

As for the match itself, one important thing to make clear is that this was NOT a squash. Dolph was definitely in this the whole time and Kofi got a big shot in to get the win. That's very important as it keeps Dolph looking strong while still switching the title. This was a very fun and fast paced match which is what you come to expect from these guys. Good stuff.

Dolph, ever the villain, destroys Kofi post match. Vickie gets on the mic and says that since Teddy isn't here tonight, Dolph gets a rematch RIGHT NOW!

Intercontinental Title: Kofi Kingston vs. Dolph Ziggler

LOUD Kofi chant but he's more or less d.....and screw that as he hits Trouble in Paradise and it's over in 43 seconds! That kick looked great.

Rating: B-. Well the opening 13 seconds were very weak but they picked it WAY up in the next 19. The final 21 were completely awesome though and it definitely was good enough to make this a passable match. Dang man those final 21 seconds with Kofi rolling Dolph over for the cover were more exciting than the entire Flair vs. Steamboat trilogy.

After losing that title, Kofi would just go after the US Title, at Extreme Rules 2011.

US Title: Sheamus vs. Kofi Kingston

Booker continues to imply Kofi should turn heel as we hit the floor early. First table is brought out by the pale one and set up on the floor. Back to the ring and Sheamus gets caught on the apron, only to hit a slingshot shoulder block to take Kofi down. Table #2 comes in and lands on top of Kofi. We hear about how Sheamus beat Cena in one of these to win the title which still blows my mind.

Table gets set up in the corner but Kofi fights out of it. Sheamus moves to avoid Kofi's dive but Kofi is like screw it and does the splits in midair to land on the ropes with the table between his legs. Big boot sends Kofi flying over the table on the floor as Sheamus takes over again. The corner table is set up in front of the corner and Sheamus hammers away. Sheamus can't suplex him onto a table on the floor and gets caught by Trouble in Paradise but it doesn't put him through the table. The Boom Drop as Sheamus turns around does however to give Kofi the title.

Rating: C+. Not bad here and considering it was just a way to get a midcard title on Raw this was fine. Kofi of course is his usually solid self and Sheamus loses the title without getting pinned. This was perfectly fine and the ending plus some cool spots by Kofi were enough to push it over the top.

Believe it or not, Kofi would do something other than win midcard titles. Sometimes, he tried to win TAG titles. From

Raw, August 22, 2011.

Tag Titles: David Otunga/Michael McGillicutty vs. Kofi Kingston/Evan Bourne

This is a rematch from last week. Lawler points out that the champions haven't done anything with the belts. We get a Bushwhackers reference as Lawler says they had better charisma. That's true at least. Bourne beats on McGillicutty to start but that doesn't last long with Kofi coming in. After some more attacking he goes outside after both champions and gets caught easily.

Otunga comes in to work over Kofi, hitting a corner clothesline for a very delayed two. Off to a chinlock for a few seconds and here's McGillicutty who hits a double team dropkick/atomic drop for two. JR says that was an almost perfect dropkick. Off to another chinlock and McGillicutty yells at Lawler, asking if that was impressive. In a cool move Kofi nips up into a headscissors and brings in Bourne. He cleans house with jumping knees and a spin kick for two. Kofi sends Michael to the floor and hits Trouble in Paradise to Otunga. Shooting Star Press gives us new champions at 5:00.

Rating: C. Eh just a quick match here. Otunga and McGillicutty aren't horrible but they were boring as champions. Either way this wasn't too bad but hopefully this starts a new thing in the division as JR and the announcers make it seem like it's kind of a big deal. This wasn't bad and them winning that fast was probably a good thing.

After losing the belts, Kofi was back in the Elimination Chamber in 2012.

Raw World Title: CM Punk vs. Dolph Ziggler vs. Chris Jericho vs. R-Truth vs. The Miz vs. Kofi Kingston

Jericho enters last due to winning a match on Raw two weeks ago. Punk and Kofi start us off. Naturally the two faces

wrestle as faces. Also they're not going to use a lot of energy this early in the match. Kofi goes to the ropes but might have slipped a bit. It was nothing bad though. They trade pinfall reversals and Kofi avoids the GTS. Punk avoids the Boom Drop and they go to the outside. Well as to the outside as you can go.

Punk blocks a kick and slingshots Kofi into the pod which has a great thud sound effect. Back into the ring but Punk has hurt his hip. It was probably due to that time when he got slammed out on the chain and landed on his hip, but that's just speculation. Here's the first pod opening and it's....a guy in pink trunks. The new idea they want to push is that it can go from a one on one match to a triple threat and so on. Great, another thing to have drilled into our heads.

Ziggler goes after Punk and does pullups on the Chamber wall. He splashes Kofi back in the ring and we're told that pins have to take place in there. Good thing to clarify. A splash attempt on Punk misses and everyone is in some trouble. Punk and Kofi double team Dolph and go to the outside for a double springboard. In a cool looking visual, they both dive at Dolph but collide in the air off the springboards due to Dolph ducking.

Dolph can't cover though so we open pod #2 after about three minutes. It's R-Truth who works on the pink one. He's no Bret Hart. Truth knocks Ziggler over the ropes to send Dolph leg first into the cage. Truth dives on top of him because he's not that smart all the time. Scissors kick gets two in the ring. Punk does his usual ramming his head into the other guy's ear to call a spot before superplexing Truth for two.

Trouble in Paradise misses Punk and Kofi gets thrown to the outside. Macho Elbow eliminates Truth but Ziggler grabs a rollup. Punk rolls through it and Kofi hits the kick on Punk (looked SICK). Ziggler goes after Kofi of course but Kofi fights him off. He can only get two on the champ though due to

the delay. Kofi does the springboard into the Spider-Man cage grab then hits a tornado DDT Dolph onto the cage, basically knocking him silly.

Here's Miz in fifth to clean house. Everyone is down now so Miz covers Dolph, getting two. Kofi gets up on the ropes and kicks Miz in the face but is knocked off and crashes into the cage. GTS and Finale are both blocked so Miz hits the short DDT for two. They head to the mat and Punk grabs the Vice on Miz, but wouldn't you know it, Jericho comes in to break it up before the tap.

Jericho and Punk square off with Jericho in control. Walls and GTS are both blocked but the Lionsault hits for two. Ziggler comes back in and walks into the Codebreaker to get us down to four (Punk, Jericho, Miz, Kofi). Punk catches a Jericho dropkick and catapults Chris out to the cage again. Jericho gets rammed into the pods so he gets a finger into Punk's eye and hides in the pod. That works for about two seconds as Punk follows him in.

Punk's arm gets caught in the door and Jericho pulls on it to ram Punk into the pod door. Kofi remembers that he's alive and tries the SOS on the cage, driving his own head into the cage. Miz and Kofi are the only ones up now but Miz misses the running clothesline and Kingston goes up. A superplex is countered as Punk powerbombs Miz for two. Kofi climbs to the top of the pod and dives onto both of them but can't pin Miz.

Jericho comes in and Lionesme Kofi for the elimination to get us down to three. He beats on Kofi after the elimination and throws him out of the Chamber. Punk kicks Jericho out of the Chamber and he's unconscious. The referees say he's done and say he's not responsive. I'm REALLY not liking them doing this a week after what happened to Sorensen. The cameraman is down too but sits up a few seconds later.

Back in the ring Miz tries the Reality Check but Punk counters

with a high kick for two. The running knee and bulldog get two but Punk springboards into the Finale for two. Miz freaks out and talks a lot of trash in the corner but misses a charge, hitting his head on the pod. GTS puts him out at 32:39 and I guess Jericho isn't running in as a surprise since it's over.

Rating: C+. The Chamber is one of those matches that gets an automatic higher grade to start. This was one of the weaker ones I can remember. For me the problem is that the main feud in this, Jericho and Punk, has no heat on it and there's zero reason for this to be in the Chamber. They were the only two that had a chance in this but their feud has just begun with nothing but a run-in by Jericho, a promo and some staring. That's the problem that these calendar based PPVs present and that looks like how the future will be.

With Evan Bourne on the shelf, Kofi would find a new partner and go after the belts again on Raw, April 30, 2012.

Tag Titles: Primo/Epico vs. R-Truth/Kofi Kingston

Before the match we're told that the Bellas have been fired. Epico kicks Little Jimmy so Truth goes off on him. Truth cleans out the ring as we take a break. Back and it's official that HHH's arm is broken. The champs are in control and it's time to ignore the match. Truth takes them both down and makes the hot tag to Kofi. Everything breaks down and after some Rosa interference, Trouble in Paradise pins Epico and we have new champions.

Rating: D. The match probably wasn't that bad but this was the definition of paint by numbers. How many times have you seen the exact same match that I just described? On top of that, Kofi is still spinning his wheels with a title that means nothing at all. What in the world is the point of this?

After losing the belts in the fall, Kofi would pick up the Intercontinental Title and defend it at Hell in a Cell 2012.

Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Kofi Kingston

The inflatable AWESOME from the Mania match with Cena is back. Kofi is defending and this is a rematch from a few weeks ago on Main Event. Both guys try and miss their finishers less than thirty seconds in, sending Miz to the floor to regroup. How much regrouping do you need after half a minute? Kofi jumps over the steps on the floor but Miz kicks his head off to take over. That gets two back in the ring and things slow down a bit.

Off to a chinlock for awhile followed by a clothesline to put Kofi down. There's a top rope double ax for two and Miz punts him in the ribs. Miz's corner clothesline is blocked by a hard clothesline from the champ and both guys are down. Kofi chops Miz down and hits the Boom Drop for two. Miz runs from Trouble in Paradise but gets caught by the spinning top rope cross body for two.

The SOS is countered into half of the Reality Check but they seem to miss on something before the neckbreaker. SOS gets two and Miz hits a kind of Stunner to the leg. Miz bends the leg around the ropes and takes off the leg pad and boot from Kofi's left leg. Kofi gets to the second rope but Miz slams him off and puts on a half crab.

Kofi crawls to the ropes but Miz pulls it right back to the center. The champ counters into a cradle for two but Miz gets the same off a short DDT. Miz loads up the Finale but Kofi counters into a kind of victory roll for two. The kick misses for Kofi but the Finale can't hit again. Miz gets kicked to the floor and as he comes back in, Kofi kicks him into oblivion for the pin to retain at 10:44.

Rating: C+. Another good and lengthy match here as this show is already better than anything WWE has thrown at us in weeks. This gets Miz out of the title picture and hopefully pushes him back up the card. Kofi is fine in this role and can be put

with almost anyone to get a good match. Solid stuff here and a fine match.

Antonio Cesaro would be US Champion for a very long time. So long that we needed someone new to take it from him. You can fill in the blanks on this match from Raw on April 15, 2013.

US Title: Antonio Cesaro vs. Kofi Kingston

Cesaro gets a mic and yodels all the way to the ring. Kofi gets a quick rollup and backslide for two each but misses a splash into the corner. A hard clothesline puts Kofi down and there's the gutwrench suplex for two. Cesaro hooks a quick chinlock but Kofi comes back with some strikes of his own. The Boom Drop hits but Trouble in Paradise is ducked, allowing Cesaro to hit the big European uppercut for two. We take a break and come back with Cesaro pounding away with headbutts and punches in the corner.

Kofi comes back with the SOS for two and Trouble in Paradise sends Antonio to the floor. Back inside and Kofi gets two before going up top. His cross body is caught in a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for a VERY close two but Cesaro charges into a boot in the corner. Kofi tries a springboard cross body but gets caught in the Neutralizer position. They trade some VERY fast near falls until Kofi hits Trouble in Paradise for the pin and the title at 9:25.

Rating: B-. The early part was dull stuff but that pinfall reversal sequence was awesome. The problem here is simple though: we've seen this like five times now from Kofi. Kingston is good in the ring and will give you a solid performance every night, but he's not going to do anything special with the belt, primarily because he's not going to be given the opportunity to do so. Either way, decent match here.

Intercontinental Champion Curtis Axel would hold an open challenge for the Intercontinental Title at Night of Champions 2013. Guess who accepted.

Intercontinental Title: Curtis Axel vs. Kofi Kingston

Well this is a letdown. Kofi takes him down by the wrist and sends Axel to the floor. Back in and Curtis avoids the double leapfrog and bails to the floor again because the seventeen minutes of stalling to open the show weren't enough. Kofi kicks him on the way back in and Axel is on the floor for the third time in three minutes. Back in again and a dropkick gets two on the champion so Axel goes outside AGAIN. Kingston gets tired of waiting and goes outside but gets sent into the steps. Kofi stops himself and jumps to the apron and then the top for a spinning cross body to the floor.

Back inside again and Axel gets in a cheap shot to take over. Kofi is tied up in the Tree of Woe for a spear to the ribs and the snap Saito Suplex is good for two. We hit the neck crank followed by a clothesline for two for the champion. A quick slam gets two on Kofi as this boring match continues. Back to the chinlock for a bit before Kofi tries to spin around a clothesline but can't quite pull it off as crisply as he wanted to. A DDT gets two on Axel and Kofi's spinning cross body off the top gets the same.

There's the Boom Drop but Trouble in Paradise misses. Axel drives Kofi into the corner but walks into a pendulum kick. Kofi goes up, only to dive into a dropkick to the chest for two. Kingston escapes another Saito Suplex and a side roll gets two. The SOS is countered and Trouble in Paradise is ducked but Kofi counters Curtis' neckbreaker into the SOS for....something as the camera is on Heyman at what could have been the three count. It's only two so Kofi goes to the corner, only to wind up on Axel's shoulders and dropped on the top rope. The neckbreaker into the cutter are good enough to retain Curtis' title at 14:05.

Rating: C. When civilization has come to an end and the human race is gone, Kofi Kingston will still be in the Intercontinental Title hunt. The match wasn't terrible and it

got WAY better at the end, but the first five minutes of this match were way too boring. Also what's the idea of having Axel in a nearly fifteen minute match before he was a big underdog in the match later? Methinks something is up.

We'll wrap it up with this Raw from January 13, 2014.

Randy Orton vs. Kofi Kingston

Non-title. Orton is especially ticked off tonight and sends Kofi to the floor. A whip into the barricade gets two for the champ and he clotheslines Kofi down for no cover. Kofi is sent to the floor again but he manages to send Randy into the announce table a few times to get a breather. Back inside and Orton sends him face first into the middle buckle before superplexing Kingston down for two. Orton drops a knee to the face but Kofi comes back with strikes to the head to knock Orton outside. Kofi follows him to the floor and sends Orton face first into the barricade as we take a break.

Back with Orton ramming Kofi into the announce table before taking him back inside for a chinlock. Kofi fights up but gets sent to the floor and into the steps for the third time tonight. Make it four as Orton is all insane again. A hard stomp to the side of the head gets two and we hit the chinlock again.

Orton shrugs off a comeback and walks around a lot more. Kofi gets a quick two off a backslide so Orton uppercuts him down for another chinlock. The hold is broken and Kofi avoids a knee drop. A dropkick sets up the Boom Drop but Orton rolls away and loads up the Elevated DDT...but Kofi counters into the SOS for the completely clean pin at 16:51.

Rating: D+. This was mind warping. First and foremost, WAY too long with the chinlocks and walking around. I get the idea of Orton letting Kofi hang in there and getting pinned, but there are far better ways to go about it than that. Then there's the booking which is crazy enough if you think about it for more

than three seconds. Orton is the new world champion, meaning he should not be getting pinned on Raw. It's stuff like that which crippled the World Heavyweight Title and they don't need to do it with the one title.

Kofi is a guy that you can put into almost any midcard spot and he'll be fine. He doesn't need to do anything special because his in ring work speaks for itself. He hasn't really been around that long by comparison to some of the other people you see on the shows every week and I even left out some of the titles he's won. The key thing to him is that some people just aren't supposed to be in the main event and there's nothing wrong with that.

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