

Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: March 2, 2015

It's been a week since the last episode of Monday Night Raw and I'm still somewhat annoyed at what I sat through last week. I try to do these a bit sooner but I needed some extra time to let this one get out of my mind before I rant on it all over again. I'm going to try to focus on the good things this time and give the show a fairer look as the show made me so mad last week that I wasn't able to focus on things like I should have. Let's get to it.

Before we get started, let's establish something. With four episodes to go before Wrestlemania, every single episode of this show should be designed to make me want to watch Wrestlemania and little else. The show hasn't had a great build to this point and

Rollins and the Stooges opened the show with the former calling out Jon Stewart, who is on his way to the arena. This brought out Reigns, but Rollins mentioned a bunch of internet reports and referenced people like Wiz Khalifa (performing next week), Michael Jordan (became a billionaire last week) and Mark Henry (rumored to return last week but didn't). I'm really not sure what the point of this was but it really didn't do much.

Seth implied he was going to cash in at Wrestlemania or the night after on Raw but got punched in the mouth instead. Like most other things on this show, there really wasn't much to it and it really didn't make me care about anyone involved. Basically it set up the Stewart appearance and established that Reigns was in the building. Not much here.

Post break Orton yelled at the Stooges for letting that happen to Rollins and suggested Rollins vs. Reigns tonight. Again, this is holding the viewers' hand and walking them through every single thing instead of just throwing up a graphic and saving five minutes.

Dean Ambrose beat Bad News Barrett with Dirty Deeds. This involved more shenanigans with the Intercontinental Title and helped set up the ladder match. This is another big deal at the moment and I seem to be on the

opposite side of most people. Here's the thing: yes it's doing something with the Intercontinental Title, but I still don't like it. The same title match could be set up so easily without having the champion lose all the time. Instead, he keeps losing every match he's in and the title is literally handed around as a prize.

You know what really brought this angle down for me? The quick promo Ambrose gave on the snowed out Raw where he talked about wanting to make the title mean something. This has done the opposite of that and turned the title into a comedy prop. It's true that this is an upgrade over what the title has been for years now, but it could so easily be done better that it drives me crazy.

Miz debuted the commercial he stole from Mizdow. Of course it was a comedy bit with Miz implying he had erectile dysfunction and included quotes from Miz completely out of context. We'll ignore the company filming Miz's parts before he agreed to be in them for the sake of comedy. Of course everyone laughed and Miz blamed Mizdow, but the big eruption didn't happen yet. I'm still not sure what happens at Wrestlemania though as Mizdow throwing out Miz and then getting thrown out kind of defeats the purpose.

Bray Wyatt lit a casket on fire. If Undertaker isn't going to show up until Wrestlemania, Bray has to do more than just talk so this is the smartest thing he can do.

Cesaro/Kidd/Natalya b. Naomi/the Usos to continue this feud. I'm hoping we get some fresh challengers for the champs soon.

Now we get to the segment that ruined this show for me. John Cena came out and said he wanted to face Rusev for the title again at Wrestlemania. He wants to bring it back to America, but if Rusev won't accept the challenge, maybe he'll enter the Andre the Giant battle royal. This part was fine. Far fetched, but fine.

Then Stephanie came out and right away I saw a red flag. Here's the problem: she has nothing to do with this story. Nothing. Why was she out here? No one mentioned her name and she hasn't had any direct connection with Cena or Rusev in weeks if not months, but here she was anyway.

So anyway she said that Cena isn't allowed to just decide what match he's in (Cena: "That's what people do in a battle royal."), didn't understand a Murder's Row reference, and started talking about being Andre the Giant's friend. She pulled up a picture of her sitting on Andre's knee at the first Wrestlemania and said Cena wasn't going to disrespect his memory like this. This is about Wrestlemania, which is far bigger than John Cena. John needs to think about what he'll do without WWE, not the other way around.

This brings up the obvious question: WHAT IS SHE TALKING ABOUT? How did we go from Cena wanting to fight Rusev for the US Title to Stephanie and Andre the Giant in the span of five minutes? This segment felt like nothing more than a way to get Stephanie on the show and let her rip Cena's balls off because that's what her character does anymore.

It didn't have anything to do with Wrestlemania because no one believes Cena isn't going to fight Rusev again, and as Cena said, EVERYONE JUST ENTERS THE BATTLE ROYAL. Stephanie said something about Cena not respecting Andre's legacy, which implies that Cena isn't important. Isn't this the same Cena that the Authority sucked up to for weeks on end a while back? The whole speech made no sense and was even worse live than recapping it here.

But then, something happened to make it feel a lot better. Curtis Axel, now a full on Hogan tribute character, to say he might be the next John Cena and could win the battle royal. Stephanie makes Cena vs. Axel so Cena can prove himself or something, but the Rusev stuff is so far gone by now that it doesn't matter. Cena squashed him in two minutes. Axel was great, but there was no saving this segment. Rusev came out and said no so Cole implied Cena won't be at Wrestlemania.

"Yes you too can see Wrestlemania for just \$10 on the WWE Network! John Cena! Daniel Bryan! These are just some of the people who might not be on the show!" I'm sure so many people are going to stick around to see if their favorites might be on the show to give you your money. Or maybe Stephanie will tell us what she did in fourth grade! That's a crowd for sure.

HHH came out and talked about how Sting was given a chance to leave without pain but he chose to fight instead. Booker T. was called into the ring, said no one could control Sting including HHH, and got fired. He went to leave but HHH hired him back because he wanted to show off his control. I'm still not 100% clear on what this feud is about, but Sting better win at Wrestlemania or the entire arena is going to go flat quick.

Paige vs. Nikki Bella got big match intros and lasted all of seven minutes. Of course half of that was in a commercial and the match ended with a DQ, but that's more of a chance than they usually get. The big deal here was AJ returned to save Paige, setting up a tag match at Wrestlemania.

The other big bit of the night was Jon Stewart coming out to face off with Seth Rollins. They knocked this out of the park with Stewart giving one of, if not the best celebrity appearance ever. You can tell he's a big WWE fan and knew what he was talking about as he ripped into Rollins. The big line here though, and one that seemed to be planting seeds for later, was Stewart asking why the Authority isn't putting Rollins in the main event of Wrestlemania if they're all behind him. The brawl broke out and Orton offered a distraction so Stewart could kick Rollins low and leave. This was exactly what it needed to be and the highlight of the show.

Daniel Bryan beat Luke Harper in a quick match. More belt shenanigans followed and ended with Ziggler taking the belt.

Alundra Blayze is going to the Hall of Fame. That's another name on the list of WOW returns.

Orton promised to have Rollins' back tonight but Big Show and Kane told him to stay out. I still have no idea what they're waiting on with this story.

Heyman came out and said Lesnar was tough and Reigns couldn't beat him. There are only so many ways Heyman can say the exact same thing before it stops working. Lesnar needs to show up already so we can mix the story up a bit.

The main event was a big standard show closing fight with Rollins pinning Reigns. Yeah this happened, for reasons that I still do not understand. Yeah apparently the idea to have Reigns look like he can beat the unbeatable Lesnar is to have him lose to someone who doesn't have a Wrestlemania match right now. Orton tripped Reigns up for the loss, but it's still a stupid idea.

BUT WAIT, the masses say, because Reigns hit a great looking dive onto the Authority and then speared Rollins out of the air to end the show. This felt like a big fireworks show at a baseball stadium after the home team loses a close game. Yeah it may look cool, but it comes right after your soul gets ripped out. Tell me: why did Reigns need to lose this match? What good does that do anyone? Just saying "he didn't need to win it" isn't a good enough answer, because winning doesn't mean much for him, but losing it makes him look weak going into the title match. These are the little things that are just done that drive me crazy.

Overall Raw felt like it had no idea what its goal was. The problem with that is there should be no doubt as to what the goal is right now. The goal should be Wrestlemania and making the fans want to see it. Instead, it feels like the goal is to cram in every single thing they can and hope that someone cares about some of it.

As good as Stewart's appearance was, it really was just a good version of the usual guest stars schtick. I get why they did it because he's the biggest name they've had on here in years, but it still doesn't make me care about Wrestlemania any more than I already did. This company needs to tighten things up by about fourteen notches, because this Wrestlemania build has been a misguided disaster.

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