

Thunder – October 21, 1999: Save Us Rus... . Save Us Russ.....We're In Big Trouble

Thunder

Date: October 14, 1999

Location: Riverside Centroplex, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Attendance: 4,941

Commentators: Scott Hudson, Larry Zbyszko

Unfortunately this is the second half of a taping and they've taken Nash off commentary to make this far less entertaining than last week's show. It's also the go home show for Halloween Havoc but this was taped before Russo turned the promotion upside down this past Monday. Let's get to it.

Apparently Nash scared Tenay off this week.

Norman Smiley vs. The Maestro

We delay the start so Maestro can pose a bit before getting to some amateur stuff. Maestro is a somewhat bigger guy but still moves well. His movement isn't quite as good as Norman's wiggling, though unfortunately there isn't much here about Norman's screaming gimmick. A European uppercut staggers Maestro but he takes Smiley down by the legs.

The grappling doesn't work so Maestro hits a side slam and cranks on a chinlock. This is the match that's supposed to make me stick around for the rest of the show. More right hands have Smiley in some trouble but he blocks two sunset flip attempts. Back up and Smiley goes to the arm before hitting the swinging slam, setting up the dance. A brawl on the floor goes nowhere so Maestro tries and fails at an implant DDT, allowing Norman to slip on Norman's Conquest for the win.

Rating: D. I like Norman but maybe the screaming thing was good for him. The problem is that he's just a guy in trunks doing moves to someone and that's really not a good way to get people to notice you. The dancing and

accent are only going to get you so far, as is good amateur skill. Maestro has potential to be a low level comedy character but I'm terrified of what's coming when Russo gets hold of him.

Lash Leroux vs. Disco Inferno video.

Horace vs. MVP

That would be Dale Torborg. Horace powers him into the corner to start and drives some shoulders into the ribs. MVP gets run over a few times so he opts for dropkicks, despite being a pretty tall guy who wouldn't usually throw dropkicks. They head outside with MVP hammering away and whipping Horace into the barricade.

Back in and Horace knees him right back to the floor as this is already going nowhere. An elbow drop gets two for Horace and he sends Horace into the steps to keep this moving at such a high rate of speed. A suplex and backbreaker get two each for Horace but he misses a charge into the corner. MVP comes back with a suplex and punches followed by a clothesline for two. Horace shrugs it off and hits a Samoan drop for the pin.

Rating: D-. This show is basically a collection of dark matches. There's nothing to most of these matches and there's no reason for me to want to see the majority of them, but we're stuck sitting through them week after week. It's clear that this show is nothing more than a dumping ground for the people that WCW doesn't want to put on Nitro. The fact that this is going head to head with Smackdown is yet another reason why it was clear WCW had no chance against the WWF.

Video on Page vs. Flair on Sunday.

Curly Bill vs. Lash Leroux

Hudson refers to the NWO as defunct. Sweet goodness it took long enough. Curly starts fast by just kicking him in the face, once regularly and a second time to stop a charge in the corner. They head outside with Bill sending him into the steps for a move far too common around here these days. A Stunner across the top rope and a swinging neckbreaker have Lash

in trouble.

They trade chops with Lash getting the worse of it, followed by a running knee from Curly. Slam, chinlock, slam, fans sit up smoking in the supernatural darkness of cold-water flats floating across the tops of cities contemplating jazz out of their boredom from this match. Lash fights up with his usual stuff but can't hit Whiplash. Curly comes back with a Fujiwara armbar but Lash is next to the ropes. In a bookend to the match, Curly charges into raised boots just like Lash did and Whiplash is good for the pin.

Rating: D. Virgil is getting six minutes on TV and is dominating about two thirds of the match and is up against a guy who will be getting a title shot on Sunday. Lash is nothing great in the ring but he's good enough to survive being the challenger of the month to Disco Inferno. I'll stay away from a rant about Disco being Cruiserweight Champion at this point because Lash has this odd likability about him and I find it hard to complain about his matches. Also was there any reason to have him not beat a cruiserweight here?

Road Report. Whoever this schmuck is has nothing on Lee Marshall.

The First Family wants a title shot at Halloween Havoc. Don't they already have one?

Harlem Heat vs. Steve Regal/Dave Taylor

No entrance for Harlem Heat as they lost the titles on Monday in a non-built match, so I'm assuming this is non-title.. Regal and Booker trade arm work to start until a forearm staggers the Englishman. Off to Ray for another elbow, which freaks Regal out, sending him over to the corner for a tag. It seems that we're in a comedy match.

Taylor comes in and gets hit in the face a lot but he uppercuts Booker to the floor for some European uppercuts from

Finlay. Regal has settled down enough to work over Booker in the corner, only to miss a charge and get caught in a Rock Bottom. They stretch things out a bit by having Finlay pull Stevie off the apron, only to have the tag made just a few seconds later. Stevie comes in and cleans house, only to have the First Family come in for the DQ.

Rating: D+. Regal tried but even his magic can't save a match that ends with Knobbs and Morrus running in for a DQ. Hopefully Russo gets rid of these two schmucks but for some reason I don't think even he can overcome the powers of nepotism or the urge to give someone a juvenile name.

The Heat cleans house post match.

Video on Sid.

Video on Goldberg vs. Sid.

Video on Goldberg. My goodness cancel this show already.

Video on Berlyn vs. Armstrong.

Kendall Windham vs. Brad Armstrong

Windham hammers away to start like the big goon that he is but Brad comes back with some armdrags and right hands in the corner. They trade arm work because we haven't seen that enough lately. Curly offers a cheap shot from the floor and rakes Brad's back to validate his paycheck. Back in and Kendall mixes it up with a chinlock, slam and second chinlock to kill off ninety seconds.

Brad fights up with a variety of shots to the face, followed by a powerslam for two. Curly offers a distraction so Kendall can hit Brad low. That doesn't seem to do much so Kendall shoves Brad into the referee. For the love of all things good and holy this match needed a ref bump??? A boot shot goes bad and Brad's Russian legsweep is good for the pin.

Rating: F. Good grief just let them wrestle. Or actually wait don't let them wrestle as I can't handle two Redneck matches in one night. This is

another bad match on a bad show which is a lame duck episode anyway and the last dying breath of the old regime before Russo and pal come in to destroy the house. That being said, END THIS SHOW ALREADY.

Halloween Havoc card.

Juventud Guerrera/Silver King vs. Blitzkrieg/Kaz Hayashi

When you need a filler, call Silver King. Juvy and Blitzkrieg start things off with some posing before Blitzkrieg nails some kicks to send Juvy over for a tag. For some reason the teams switch corners on the apron. Somehow that's the least illogical thing on this show so far. King misses a running dropkick in the corner and gets cradled for two.

Silver gets right back into things by launching Blitzkrieg into the air for a crash before stopping to do a dance. He's no Norman Smiley. Juvy and Kaz come in with Guerrera mocking a bow to Hayashi before kicking him down. They trade strikes until Juvy DDTs him down and hammers away in the corner. There's the crotch chop and it's back to Silver King who gets caught in a spinebuster from Blitzkrieg. This is an incredibly fast paced match so far.

Kaz dropkicks his partner by mistake and Silver King adds an enziguri but still can't make the hot tag. An airplane spin into a faceplant finally allows the hot tag to Juvy, who comes in with a springboard double crossbody as everything breaks down. Blitzkrieg avoids a dive and hooks a chinlock for a well earned breather.

We take a break and come back with Juvy in a Hart Attack with Kaz playing Bret and nailing a missile dropkick. The tribute to 80s tag teams continues with Blitzkrieg playing Ax to Kaz's Smash, if Ax could hit a springboard legdrop that is. A standing corkscrew splash gets two on Guerrera but he comes back with a running kick to the face. Silver King kicks Blitzkrieg in the back but it's still not enough for the hot tag.

After some double teaming has him in trouble, Juvy bulldogs both heels (I think?) down and makes the hot tag. It's off to Silver King with a double missile dropkick but Blitzkrieg sunset flips him for two. Juvy springboards in again to cross body Blitzkrieg down and the referee just

counts the cover anyway. Hayashi moonsaults down onto Juvy as Silver King electric chairs Blitzkrieg for good measure. King adds a double jump moonsault but Kaz makes a diving save. Kaz dropkicks Silver King and Blitzkrieg to the floor, only to walk into the Juvy Driver for the pin.

Rating: B. This match was WAY too good for this show. It's nothing they haven't done before a million times but my goodness they were moving around in there. It helps that it's on one of the worst shows I've seen in years so the expectations were really low coming in. Fun stuff here though and the only thing worth seeing on the show.

Rick Steiner vs. La Parka

Steiner babbles to start before taking La Parka's head off with a Steinerline. La Parka gets in a single hiptoss before Steiner suplexes him down and whips him into the barricade. Rick's reward for "wrestling" this way? A TV Title shot this Sunday. A release German suplex gets two back inside, followed by another belly to belly and the Steiner Bulldog for the pin. I'm so glad they had La Parka win on Monday so this could happen on Thursday.

Clips of Benoit winning the TV Title for some reason.

Hogan vs. Sting video.

Highlight video from Nitro. This was like three minutes long but the show still didn't make sense.

Video on Luger vs. Hart.

Total Package vs. Buff Bagwell

No entrance for Buff, but to be fair he lost to La Parka on Monday. Hudson talks up that loss though, meaning the commentary was recorded later, likely due to the threat of Nash. In another casualty of the taped schedule, Bagwell is his normal self here instead of being uninterested like he was on Nitro. Luger hammers on his back to start but gets dropkicked out to the floor as things settle down. The announcers try to play it up as Bagwell getting a wakeup call on Monday, even though I'd assume he's back to not caring on Monday.

Luger tries to get back in but gets sent right back to the floor for another beating from Bagwell. Elizabeth offers a distraction so Luger can nail Buff in the back of the head before sending him into the steps for good measure. Now it's into the barricade before Luger slowly stomps away. Back in and Luger stomps in the corner, where you can see some of the mat coming up. Bagwell comes back by ramming him into the buckle pad over and over, only to get run over by a clothesline. Viva el chinlock for a bit before Buff makes his clothesline based comeback. Liz crotches him on top though and the Rack ends this.

Rating: D. So Bagwell's rebound from the loss on Monday is to lose in a glorified squash here as the continuity gets all screwed up. Luger looked better here than he has in a long time, but to be fair that really isn't saying much. I saw these two wrestle enough in 1997/1998 that I never thought I'd want to see them again, and it turns out I'm right. Oh and no mention whatsoever of Liz being guitared on Monday. Because, you know, it hadn't happened yet.

Overall Rating: F+. I wonder if I can get watching this show covered under my insurance plan. It has to be worthy of some hospitalization. I wanted to give it the lowest passing grade possible due to that tag match but my goodness this was horrible. It's literally the last TV show (aside from Saturday Night which meant jack by this point) from this booking era and it shows horribly. As bad as Thunder has been over the years, this is one of the worst episodes they've ever put on and that's saying quite a bit.

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