

Required Viewing #16: Here Comes The Cavalry

They don't happen often, but they're some of the most exciting things in wrestling.

I'm talking about the surprise challenger. This usually happens when all hope is lost and you're left wondering who can save us now. I'm sure there are more of them, but here are four of the best I've ever seen and moments that I still smile at no matter how many times I watch them.

We'll start at Uncensored 1997. After winning one of the most unique matches of all time (a three way, twelve man battle royal/elimination match), the NWO stood tall again. Hogan and company had cleaned house and there was no one left to fight for WCW. The show was about to go off the air, and then this happened (it's after the match is over but check out the whole thing if you have time).

Notice the crowd just coming unglued as Sting shows which side he's on. He was the hero WCW had been waiting for and the one man that could stop the NWO. The other thing to notice: Heenan's last line. The show is going off the air and Sting is standing tall, but Heenan gets in one more thing: "HE CAN BEAT HOGAN! HE CAN BEAT HOGAN!" For the first time in a long time, there was hope.

Speaking of hope, in 2001, there wasn't much for the WWF. With Vince McMahon in their corner, the Two Man Power Trip of Steve Austin and HHH had both major singles titles and had just gotten done destroying the Hardy Boyz. Lita was all alone, and we needed some saviors. This includes the end of the match where HHH won the Intercontinental Title back from Jeff Hardy.

Austin and HHH's heads snapping back when the fire went off is good stuff. The match sucked but this was the challenge they needed.

In September 2012, John Cena hurt his shoulder (or something related to his arm) and was in jeopardy of not making it into the Hell in a Cell main event against CM Punk. Punk was also feuding with Mick Foley (kind of) at the time. Here's the promo with Punk ripping into the injured Cena and going backstage, where he ran into someone. Yeah this is a stretch, but I still really love the character.

Yeah I liked it.

Now we get to the moment that changed an entire promotion. On January 2, 2013, NXT Champion Seth Rollins successfully defended his title against Corey Graves. This led to the locker room coming out to try and fight off the Shield, but the three men beat up about fifteen guys with ease. With nothing left, NXT Commissioner Dusty Rhodes looked defeated. I said out loud "in a good wrestling promotion, the unstoppable monster would come out for a big showdown with these guys." Then this happened (best video I could find).

That's when I knew NXT was something special, and it hasn't let me down yet.

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