

Monday Nitro – December 27, 1999: The Fingerpoke of Doom Doesn't Look Bad

Monday Nitro #220

Date: December 27, 1999

Location: Houston Astrodome, Houston, Texas

Attendance: 16,640

Commentators: Bobby Heenan, Mike Tenay, Tony Schiavone

We're finally done with this year and it's not a moment too soon. While Thunder was better, last week's Nitro may have been the worst show I've ever seen. The NWO is on top again but, due to Goldberg punching a limo, they don't have a top opponent to deal with so things are a big complicated. Let's get to it.

We open with a clip from Thunder of Goldberg clearing out the NWO.

The NWO walks through the back until the director tells them it's clear.

Opening sequence.

Tenay tells us about Goldberg shredding a tendon in his arm and already undergoing surgery.

If that's not enough, here's a major update: WCW Senior Executive Vince President Bill Busch is sick Ferrara and Russo's direction (Tony uses their real names here) and if Scott Hall doesn't show up by 7pm tonight, the Tag Team Titles are vacated. That time has come and gone, so the Powers That Be have booked (his word) a Lethal Lottery Tag Team Title tournament to start this week and end next week. So the big boss is sick of the booking but is letting the bookers keep going. Makes as much sense as anything else around here.

Apparently Scott Steiner has had another back surgery and his career is probably over. That sounds like a swerve.

Brian Knobbs vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

Kanyon is at ringside and has a wireless mic on. Bigelow goes after him to start but Knobbs gets in a trashcan shot to take over. The announcers ask Kanyon about a title belt he had with him on Thursday as Bigelow and Knobbs fight into the crowd and we hit the ECW production style. Kanyon tells the marks in the crowd to move as he follows them, which is in no way, shape or form like the time Road Dogg did this for Al Snow vs. Big Boss Man in a hardcore match in the WWF. You can't see a thing going on but apparently Knobbs pins Bigelow. Seriously you could see their arms and that's about it.

Sid arrives with Benoit.

There's a monster truck in the back.

The NWO has JJ Dillon in a chair and Nash throws the Tag Team Title on a table. Bret knees JJ in the ribs and that's it.

The NWO looks at the monster truck, which has an NWO logo on the side. They walk a few feet away and find Sid's still running car.

Here's Sid to yell about the NWO. Sid knows that he, Goldberg and Benoit have to watch each others' backs with the NWO around stabbing everyone in the back. I can barely understand what Sid is saying but I think he wants to beat up all four members of the NWO. What happened to Goldberg is unfortunate, but it's time for Sid to step up to the plate and go after the World Title. Sid promises to powerbomb Bret through the ring at Souled Out so I guess that's the main event.

Benoit comes out to join Sid (with a much clearer voice) and talks about wanting to get his hands on the Chosen One Jeff Jarrett. The last few weeks have made Benoit lose all respect for Jeff Jarrett and at Souled Out, Benoit will let out some of the frustration. He wants something called Triple Threat Theater, which means a 2/3 falls match with different rules for each fall.

Up first is a Dungeon Rules match, meaning pinfall or submission only with no rope breaks and if you leave the ring, you lose the match. Second

would be a Bunkhouse Brawl, or street fight. Finally, it's Caged Heat, which means the Cell. Jarrett is the Chosen One to be lead to the slaughter. Cool idea actually.

We cut to the back where the NWO has spray painted Sid's car, complete with Bret's caricature of Sid on the hood. He's not a bad artist.

ZZ Top is here.

Sid and Benoit find the car and aren't happy.

Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: Buzzkill/Mike Rotundo vs. Dean Malenko/Konnan

Buzzkill is now a full on Road Dogg knockoff, complete with the same hook to open his song. "It's me, it's me, it's that B-U-Double Z." Also, WE'VE GOT WACKY TAG PARTNERS!!! Dean and Mike get things going and hit the mat for what could be an entertaining exchange. It's quickly off to Konnan vs. Buzzkill with Konnan taking over, only to have Dean deck his partner. Everyone gets in a fight as Jim Duggan comes in to lay out Dean with the 2x4 to give Buzzkill the pin to advance.

Jarrett and Hart pull the power to the production truck and the feed cuts out. Ok then.

Back with the picture a bit snowy and a white limo arriving, containing Scott Steiner who is met by Rick Steiner with a wheelchair.

The NWO destroys catering. Is there a point to this coming anytime soon?

Tank Abbott vs. Shane

Shane is in dress clothes and gets knocked out in less than a minute. He must have tried to get \$20 out of Tank for a posed picture.

Career retrospective on Scott Steiner.

Rick wheels Scott out to the ring to the old Steiner Brothers theme. Can we just get to the swerve that WE NEVER SAW COMING already? A tearful Scott tells a story of his doctor telling him that his back will never heal and he's going to have to retire. Scott cries about never being able

to wrestle his brother again and asks for the fans to say a prayer for him.

Before the Steiners can leave, here's the NWO. Bret wants a washed up nobody like Scott out of the ring, but to be honest, Scott was never that good anyway. You would think Rick would come out to protect his brother here. There are things more important than Scott Steiner, like the fact that Bret still has his belt. Jeff pretends to cry over Steiner's announcement so Nash takes over the talking. A tech guy tries to send them to a commercial so Jarrett blasts him with a guitar.

Back with the NWO still in the ring because that's what this show is about anymore. Nash isn't cool with someone taking their bats. On top of that, they're not cool with Bill Busch trying to interfere, so stay in your office and let them handle the wrestling stuff. He promises that Nash will be here tonight to wrestle in Houston. As for Goldberg, the game is about to become deadly. Bret thinks it's 4-0 Hitman over Goldberg so Goldberg can consider himself stopped.

That brings Bret to Sid, who will be destroyed even worse than his car. Jarrett rips on the town a bit as this segment just keeps going. Benoit is on for his Triple Threat Theater at Souled Out...and here are Sid and Benoit in the car with ball bats. This brings in Curt Hennig of all people to get beaten down by Benoit and Sid as the sacrificial lamb. Sid throws him onto the hood of the car.

Hennig is put in an ambulance after a break.

Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: Harlem Heat vs. Midnight/Lash Leroux

What are the odds??? Booker and Lash get things going with Leroux getting two off a victory roll but walking into a Rock Bottom for the same. Stevie comes in and hammers Lash with a vengeance before slamming him down. Off to Midnight and it's time for something resembling a showdown. Stevie runs Midnight over with a clothesline and looks away, leaving Midnight to nip up.

A snap suplex to Stevie is treated like Hogan slamming Andre and Booker

tags himself in. Booker can't bring himself to kick Midnight in the face and they do a very light sequence with Booker not wanting to hurt her. Midnight takes a backbreaker and Stevie is livid. He pulls out the slapjack and nails all three people in the match with Lash falling on Booker for the pin. That would be two matches with a weapon shot and brawling partners.

Rating: D-. Another storyline disguised as a match. I'm not sure why we needed to see yet another Harlem Heat split. More importantly than that though, this was a clear indication that we're going to be sitting through wacky tag partners and screwy finishes for all eight matches tonight because that's all Russo knows how to book. These sort of things can be done well with Starrcade 1991 as proof, but Russo isn't good enough to figure out something as simple as "let them wrestle."

The Scream mask guy attacks Chavo.

The Revolution is at the Washington Monument and Shane wants to ask an average American a history quiz. Shane rips on the guy for not knowing that it's the anniversary of the Monument going up. I'm not sure what the point of this was supposed to be.

Some Power Plant students are in the front row. Chuck Palumbo, Elix Skipper, Mike Sanders and Reno among others are visible.

WCW World Title: Bret Hart vs. Jerry Flynn

Flynn is in street clothes because it's more realistic or something. No announcement or teasing a World Title match and it's given the treatment that a TV Title match might receive. Tony announces Bill Busch deciding that the title can change hands on a DQ at Souled Out. Bret hammers him into the corner to start and runs the eyes across the top rope.

They head outside with Jerry whipping the champ into the barricade, drawing out Jarrett and Nash. Back in and Jerry fires off kicks in the corner but eats a DDT. Another spinning kick drops Bret but Nash distracts the referee, allowing Jarrett to come in with a ball bat to set up the Sharpshooter to retain the title.

Rating: F. Jerry Flynn in street clothes just gave Bret Hart a run for his money in a bad match with the NWO having to save the title in an unannounced match in the middle of the second hour of the show. This company really doesn't have any idea what they're doing do they?

Flynn gets the NWO treatment. He might have worn the street clothes so he doesn't have any paint on his skin. The NWO leaves but Tank Abbott comes out and knocks Flynn out again. You would be WCW World Champion a month from now people.

The Revolution is at the Library of Congress and Saturn pulls out his copy of How the Grinch Stole Christmas.

Nash is on the phone with Hall but theme music muffles the chat.

Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: PG-13 vs. Rick Steiner/Berlyn

PG-13 is wearing Houston Oilers jerseys (team that recently left town) and rap about how they don't care if people don't like them. Rick shakes his head to start as Berlyn spinwheel kicks Wolfie. Tony reads out the most beautiful announcement I've ever heard: Nitro returns to two hours next week. PG-13 double teams Berlyn and stomps him in the middle of the ring as I'm just waiting on the WACKY way someone will advance. Rick gets the hot tag and cleans house with Steiner Lines before planting both of them upside down on the buckles. Berlyn walks out and a belly to belly is enough to pin Wolfie.

Rick keeps beating them up and the decision is reversed. In other words, the newcomers are left laying but advance on a technicality. As stupid as WCW has become, it's good to know that some things never change.

Saturn comes up to Duggan and says they're teaming together tonight against Norman Smiley and Asya. Apparently it's mutually beneficial if they win. Well yeah that's normally how a tag match works. I can't do this line justice, so here's Saturn's statement verbatim: "Besides, brother, as optically challenged as we are, there's no way that jacked up hootchie or that sissy in a football uniform can blindsides us if we stand side by side." Again, Saturn is the best part of this show and fits in perfectly because he makes just as little sense as the booking.

The Revolution rants about the White House and Bill Clinton and kidnap a guy in a Clinton mask. Somehow this is more effective than their last few weeks of material.

Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: Asya/Norman Smiley vs. Perry Saturn/Jim Duggan

Duggan's family is at ringside as he beats up Saturn before the match starts. Norman gets in some easy shots, including the swinging slam. The spanking dance connects but Saturn breaks up the Big Wiggle with a suplex. Saturn slams him down and drops the top rope elbow onto the chest protector to hurt his own arm. Asya is tagged in and shoves Saturn from behind, followed by a low blow and clothesline. A superplex drops Saturn and Duggan drops a knee on his partner (complete with counting his own pin for reasons of dumb), allowing Norman to get the pin to advance.

Rating: D-. Can we go back to the part where the Powers That Be literally had the fourth wall broken and screw up everything in sight? I'm starting to think it might be easier to sit through than the night of the wacky tag team partners. This was another bad match with a screwy finish because that's all we have here.

Duggan, the loser, brings his family in to celebrate.

US Title: Kidman vs. Jeff Jarrett

Kidman is challenging and gets jumped from behind to start. A hotshot stops Kidman's comeback and the announcers ignore the match to talk about Triple Threat Theater. Jeff turns around and eats a Bodog and dropkick, only to catapult Kidman out to the floor to stop him again. Cue Nash and Hart because you think we can go a full half hour without the NWO? Kidman rolls through a high cross body for two but gets caught in a quick sleeper. Say it with me: Kidman reverses into one of his own for a few arm drops, followed by the BK Bomb for two.

That's about it for the NWO not being the focus of the match though as Nash low bridges Kidman to the floor, only to have the Filthy Animals run in to lay out Jarrett with a crutch. It's only good for two, but it draws one of the loudest reactions of the night. Jeff tries a powerbomb and

gets the standard counter. Heenan: "I've never seen anything like that!" Kidman goes up top but takes a ball bat to the ankle, setting up the Stroke for the pin.

Rating: D+. This was one of the better matches of the night, but my goodness it's ok to let a champion look strong instead of needing help all the time. It's nowhere near as bad as the Jerry Flynn mess but at least let Jeff do his own cheating to win. Watchable match, partially due to getting some time, but it was too bogged down as usual.

Gene brings out Luger and Liz for a chat but Luger is dressed as Sting and comes out to Sting's music. Luger imitates Sting and talks about how awesome Luger really is and how severe the beating Luger gave him was. The lights go out and come back on to show black roses in the ring. So yeah, this feud is CONTINUING.

Nash gives Hall directions over the phone.

Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: Ron Harris/Don Harris vs. Meng/Finlay

I'm not even going to bother calling this stupid. Finlay and Meng fight so the Twins, ever so brilliant, attack them both. Just let them beat each other up then pin the scraps. Why is that so complicated? A double big boot puts the hardcore guys on the floor and they fight until it's a countout to advance the Twins. This was, again, a waste of time.

David Flair and Daffney call themselves Natural Born Killers. That was a disturbing movie.

Here's 3 Count to pick things up. They do their dance but Vampiro comes in and cleans house. As luck would have it, he and Evan are up next.

Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: Evan Karagias/Vampiro vs. David Flair/Maestro

Scratch that last team as Crowbar, who debuted last week, attacks Maestro in the aisle and takes his place. Sure why not. Ignore the fact that he worked at a gas station and has no wrestling license or training as far as WCW knows. Anyway he starts with a German suplex on Vampiro (good

looking one too) before it's off to David for a suplex (not so good looking one) of his own.

It's so lame that Vampiro pops up and plants both psychos (yeah Vampiro is the sane one here) with a double DDT. A Rock Bottom to Crowbar allows Vampiro to make the hot tag to Evan, who is promptly knocked off the top and down onto Crowbar. Back inside with Vampiro "hitting" a top rope clothesline for two on David but the other 3 Count members get in to go after Vampiro. The partners implode but Vampiro fights both of them off with ease, setting up the Nail in the Coffin on David. No referee though as Crowbar nails Vampiro with a crowbar, giving David the pin.

Rating: F. This was the sixth match of eight tournament matches tonight and they're now six for six in having at least one team implode. I know I say Russo only has a few ideas in different forms, but he's done the same idea six times in less than three hours. Suddenly Oklahoma makes so much more sense.

3 Count loads up the song post match but Flair and Crowbar clean house. This brings out Lenny and Lodi as Standards and Practices, complete with the yet to be named Miss Hancock (Stacy Keibler) in a skirt shorter than your local vanilla midget. They promise to take Flair and Crowbar off TV if this violence keeps up. This of course earns them more violence.

Jarrett is told not to worry about Hall not being here yet.

Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: Disco Inferno/Big Vito vs. Buff Bagwell/Chris Canyon

The Italians have Johnny the Bull and Tony Marinara with them. Everyone but Disco head to the floor to start before Canyon slides back in, earning him some knees to the back. A Russian legsweep drops Disco but Canyon heads back outside to get the Italians away from the girls. Canyon leaves with the girls to split up ANOTHER tag team. Buff fights back but Vito nails him with a great looking superkick to take over again. Disco gets caught in a neckbreaker but there's no partner (Tony: "Chris Champion Canyon") to tag. Disco accidentally hits Vito with a chain, setting up the Blockbuster for the pin.

Rating: D-. They're seven for seven in teams splitting and almost half have had a weapon spot. I would ask if this was the best they could do, but yes, this really is the best they can do: the same match over and over and over. In a weird way, I'm actually hoping they manage to do it again one more time in the last match because it would be one of the most amazing things ever to see them do the exact same plot point eight times in one night.

Buff gets laid out post match.

Here's the NWO to say Hall isn't here yet but his arrival is imminent. Nash asks for a brief delay to let him get here.

Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: The Wall/Sid Vicious vs. Outsiders

Remember that Sid and Wall seemed to form a friendship last week. Nash gets in on his own and does a Hogan shirt rip to start against Wall. Kevin slugs away but Wall punches him down and scores with a belly to back suplex. Wall hits a big boot but Bret nails him in the back with a bat to let Nash take over. Sid chases Bret and Wall is suddenly putting Nash in a chinlock. He no sold a ball bat shot from the World Champion? Sid comes in and shoves the referee down before cleaning house, only to have Bret nail Wall with the bat for the pin to advance Nash.

Rating: F. He no sold a baseball bat shot. A shot from Liz put Sting out for months but Wall is back on offense fifteen seconds later? How can anyone actually think that's acceptable? This was more NWO interference dominating the entire match with no one having a chance against the heel stable. And now I'm disappointed with the lack of the partners fighting. I was looking forward to that.

Benoit comes in to save Sid from a powerbomb but here comes a limping Scott Steiner (presumably the Scott that Nash has been meaning all night. I was hoping for Riggs) with a ball bat of his own...and of course he's NWO because what else would he be? As usual, there's no value to a scam that was set up and paid off in the span of two hours. NWO propaganda falls from the ceiling and an NWO banner is lowered. Sid car is brought out and Sid is put in the back. They drive him to the back where the monster truck crushes the car to end the show.

Overall Rating: F. Somehow, this is miles better than last week's show. The wrestling was nothing special (Kidman vs. Jarrett was decent before it fell apart), the booking has been covered already, the ending was stupid, and this whole show was a mess. You can tell Russo has lost some authority though and that's the best thing that could possibly happen to this company.

That's it for WCW in 1999 and I don't think there's a need to explain all of the disasters in this company over the year. Here's the most telling part though: the Fingerpoke of Doom is looking more and more like a high point every day. I'll leave you with this: I'm fairly certain I'm right when I say this was the worst calendar year in the history of any wrestling promotion ever.

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