

Thunder – March 22, 2000: Oh Heaven Forbid

Thunder

Date: March 22, 2000

Location: TD Waterhouse Center, Orlando, Florida

Attendance: 2,443

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Bobby Heenan

Now stop me if you've heard this one before, but Hulk Hogan's buddy (and by buddy I mean someone he's talked to twice) has turned on him and laid him out to end a show. Other than that we've still got Sting vs. Team Package because those three are joined at the hip for all eternity, doomed to wrestle each other forever, much like those fans stuck in the airport asking commentators and Kevin Nash about the goings on in WCW. Let's get to it.

Quick montage of Nitro, focusing on Sid's turn. Since this is Wrestlemania VIII all over again, I feel we should finally see Liz's pictures as an apology.

Tank Abbott comes out and demands competition.

Tank Abbott vs. Fit Finlay

If this lasts two minutes I'll be stunned. Abbott elbows Finlay in the corner to start before it heads to the mat with Fit in control. Some right hands and forearms have Tank in trouble and we hit the chinlock. Back up and Tank hits the big right hand to knock Finlay silly but here's Meng. As luck would have it, Tank was looking at the entrance for a good five seconds before Meng's music hit. Meng and Abbott get in a brawl for the DQ, even though Finlay is basically out.

We cut to the back where Hogan is punching Sid and slams him onto a table.

Gene is with Finlay in the ring and says he's ready to fight Tank again

because Abbott is as green as a frog. Before he can get much further, here are Hogan and Sid fighting down the aisle. Sid gets in the ring with Finlay and OH PLEASE let this wind up as a tag match with one of them having to team up with Abbott. Hogan vs./teaming with Tank could be the most amazing thing I've ever seen. Sid chokeslams Finlay and threatens Gene unless Hogan gets in here.

That goes nowhere so Sid wants a video played, which shows Hogan talking to Sid at Uncensored. Sid accuses Hogan of getting in his business, including helping him in the match against Jarrett and then at the press conference. He has a point, but this would be better had it not been over the course of 24 hours. Sid says Hogan was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Hogan says any place, any time so Sid says bring it, but Hogan leaves because he's a hypocrite.

Buff Bagwell doesn't like Sid. The NWO is shown watching and doesn't like Bagwell. I'm watching too and don't like either, but the Harris Brothers are going to be around for a long time I'm sure because we're just that lucky.

Here's the Hogan vs. Sid brawl in case you forgot it in the last five minutes.

Sid hires some WCW security guards to work for him alone.

Dustin Rhodes is ready for Hulk Hogan later tonight. That could be.....something.

Hogan can't believe Dustin wants to fight him. As usual, Hogan thinks punching a guy in the face means nothing. Hogan being all delusional and thinking he never does anything wrong is one of my favorite things in wrestling. I mean, he hit Rock in the head with a hammer and crushed him with a semi truck but then gave him a thumbs up and posed with him so it was all cool. Jimmy Hart makes things even worse by saying Dustin just wants to fight him because he's Hulk Hogan.

Jung Dragons vs. 3 Count

Please be as good as their Nitro match. Jamie-san and Shane get things

going with Jamie shouldering Helms down in a surprising power display. Shannon sneaks in with a spinwheel kick after Shane gets sent to the floor and everything breaks down. Oh dear this is going to be hard to keep up with. The Dragons take over with a triple dive (that looked great) and Jamie ducks a moonsault from Shannon.

It's off to Kaz who eats a knee to the ribs and gets tripled teamed in the corner as things have settled back down. A nice press slam drops Kaz again but he counters Evan's cradle into a nice suplex. Yang comes in to clean house and fails at throwing Evan to the floor as Karagias can't get through the ropes. It's a good thing he moved on to something simpler like acting. Kaz and Jamie get tripped to the floor, leaving Shannon to hurricanrana Yang into a frog splash from Shane for the quick pin.

Rating: C+. As usual it was over too fast because we need to get to the eight other matches on this show. Oh and to Tank Abbott because he's a star and therefore interesting or whatever. Unfortunately these six will be feuding for the rest of forever because, again, that's how WCW works.

The Dragons, ever the sore losers, dropkick 3 Count out of the ring and steal the dancing circles. You can hear the young girls crying from here.

Chris Candido is from the school of Hard Knox don't you know.

Chris Candido vs. Chavo Guerrero Jr.

The fans like Chavo. Artist and Paisley are shown watching in the back. They grapple to the mat until Chavo takes over with a headlock and here are Artist and Paisley to watch in person. Chavo sends him to the floor and follows with a nice dive as the fans are actually getting into this. Imagine that: getting into a match between talented guys.

Back in and Chavo dives into a Rock Bottom (becoming way too popular), followed by a delayed vertical for two. Candido slugs away in the corner but walks into a spinebuster. You don't see Chavo go with the power that often. A Paisley distraction lets Candido powerslam Chavo down and head up top, only to be shoved off by Artist. The jumping DDT from Artist is enough to give Chavo the pin, though he didn't see what Artist did.

Rating: C. As usual this didn't have the time to go anywhere but at least Chavo got a pin and didn't look like an idiot. The faster they get that title off Artist the better though, as these two can have better matches in their sleep than Artist could have if his career depended on it.

Post match Candido slams Chavo down and hits a pair of top rope headbutts. Forget what I said about Chavo looking good.

In the back we see a closeup of Miss Hancock's legs. Well I'm sold. She sees something that drives her wild so the hair comes down.

Scott Steiner bench presses with help from the NWO girls.

XS vs. Los Fabulosos

That would be Lane/Rave vs. Silver King/El Dandy, now in matching costumes (in different colors. They look like Power Rangers minus the helmets) and with Hancock in their corner. Hancock promises they'll make the women squirm, squeal and do things they never thought of doing before. XS attacks at the bell as you would expect them to do as Hancock jumps in on commentary.

The camera stays on Hancock (smart move) and comes back to see Los Fabulosos doing a nice sequence of a double drop toehold into stereo kicks. Lane takes Dandy down with a wheelbarrow slam but King's helicopter slam (James Storm's Eye of the Storm) to Lane sets up a majestic fall from Dandy for the pin. Decent enough debut but this is just a vehicle to get Hancock to the next level.

Disco tries to order a pizza under Big Vito's name but gets caught. That earns him a match tonight while the Mamalukes go to Disneyworld. If there's a point here, I'm not smart enough to get it.

Scott Steiner vs. Chuck Palumbo

This is Palumbo's debut on the big shows. Steiner takes him down with ease and slaps on a.....squeeze I guess you'd call it. Chuck swings away to no avail before nailing the yet to be named Jungle Kick (superkick. I don't know why he called it that either but I like the name). A belly to belly drops Palumbo and Steiner just unloads on him in the corner.

Steiner scores with a backbreaker, t-bones Palumbo down and slaps on the Recliner for the win.

Rating: D. Palumbo was game but this was just a squash. Steiner is starting to get over as a monster, but with nothing for him to win there's only so far he can go. It would be nice for some young guy to do something, but that isn't the case with people like Booker or Kidman so why should Palumbo get to jump the line?

Curt Hennig says Sid shouldn't have done what he did on Monday.

Disco Inferno vs. Vampiro

During the entrances, Tenay says tickets go on sale for Spring Stampede this weekend. The show is in less than a month and they're just now selling tickets? No wonder they didn't come close to selling the place out. Before the match Disco says he isn't a wrestler so there's no match. Cue Vampiro of course because no one listens to Disco Inferno. Tenay tries to play up Vampiro as getting a huge reaction and he's borderline right for a change.

Disco tries to talk his way out of the match but pulls Vampiro to the floor, only to be sent over and then into the announcers' table. Inside and Vampiro goes kung fu as we get commentary back. A running clothesline drops Vampiro but the fans say Disco sucks. Hey now the Bee Gees were awesome. Disco gets two off a Russian legsweep before they trade some hard shots, capped off by a Vampiro Rock Bottom for two. A top rope spinwheel kick and the Nail in the Coffin are enough to put Disco away.

Rating: C-. That might be high due to how lame the matches are on this show but at least this was entertaining while it lasted. Vampiro can at least do some good stuff in the ring and Disco is an underrated worker. Also, it's nice for Vampiro to get a win instead of constantly jobbing to the veterans.

Speaking of the veterans, Flair and Luger come out for the beatdown but Sting makes the save.

Ernest "the Cat" Miller (in case you're not up on your WCW nicknames)

debuts Mike Jones as his shoe guarder. I love how Jones has basically played one character for thirteen years. It worked for Mr. Hughes so why not him?

Jeff Jarrett is ready for one of his biggest US Title defenses ever tonight. That's accurate as it's one of his only ever.

The Cat vs. The Dog

Please....kill me now. It would be an act of mercy. I'll pay you. Miller has Jones with him to guard the slippers. Dog charges at Miller when the Cat makes jokes and takes over with punches and a powerslam. Some forearm sets up some barking because this character is really, really literal. Even Cat thinks this is stupid so he hits Dog low and drops the dancing elbow. Cat kicks (of course) a lot but charges into a spinebuster. It's shoe time but the referee kicks them away, leaving Dog to whip Cat into Brian Knobbs' chain for two. Back up and a superkick ends Dog and of course it's long enough to rate.

Rating: F. Somehow, this would have been better with more lame Heenan jokes. Miller is fine and at least has a character that has some details to it. Dog, on the other hand, IS A HUMANOID DOG. Like, he barks and comes out on a leash. I'd love to hear the production pitch for this and see the looks on everyone's faces. Or the look on Vince McMahon's face while he had Benoit vs. Angle vs. Jericho for his midcard at this point.

Knobbs whips Dog, meaning PETA probably protested because PETA is a bunch of nutjobs. Not their idea mind you, but their methods.

This Week in WCW Motorsports. With all of their problems, they can still field a team?

Knobbs finds the Dog chewing clothes. This is going to be a running gag isn't it?

Norman Smiley needs someone to watch his back. Indeed, and that someone should beat him up for letting this hardcore stuff keep going.

Demon vs. Hugh Morrus

Morrus thinks Demon is funny, because laughing is his deal. It's like the Joker you see, and that went over so well. Morrus takes over quickly with a back elbow and clothesline, only to miss an elbow drop by a few feet. Back up and Demon's clothesline doesn't work so it's an enziguri to put Morrus down instead. Well at least he'll sell something. A back elbow staggers Morrus again but he plants Demon with a spinebuster, setting up No Laughing Matter for the pin. So we're at the point where pushing Hugh Morrus is the best they can do. Oh happy freaking day.

Knobbs puts Dog in his car and drives away. Dog puts his head out the window because WCW thinks this is entertaining.

We get some KidCam footage of Bagwell calling out Sid earlier. Then he hits on a backstage worker and gets nowhere.

Sid's dressing room is empty.

Video on the Wall. Points for trying anything new I guess.

Hogan (called great by Gene) praises Dusty Rhodes but says Dustin isn't his daddy.

Knobbs abandons Dog on the side of the road, triggering some moon howling.

US Title: Jeff Jarrett vs. Buff Bagwell

Jarrett is defending for the first time on TV (well other than Saturday Night) since the first Thunder of the year. Bagwell hammers away to start and hits his running neckbreaker. A Vader Bomb gets two so cue the Harris Brothers to pull Buff to the floor for a beating. Buff misses a cross body and gets double teamed again, so here's Curt Hennig for the save. Buff's double arm DDT gets no count as one of the Twins offers a distraction, so Buff is smart enough to lay Jarrett out with the Blockbuster, only to have Steiner come in for the DQ. It was energetic while it lasted but as always, the NWO kills anything interesting.

The NWO goes after Hennig's arm as the bell rings for about a minute straight.

Hogan tells Jimmy Hart to get Bill Busch to make the match with Sid no matter what it takes.

Dustin Rhodes vs. Hulk Hogan

Dustin stomps Hogan down as he comes into the ring and chokes with a t-shirt. You know, because that's worked so well over the years. Rhodes pounds away even more and uppercuts Hogan to cut off a comeback. They head outside with Hogan being thrown onto the announcers' table, knocking out commentary. Back in and Dustin hits a chinlock as this is already dying. The hold stays on for nearly two minutes before Hogan's arm stays up. A clothesline gets two on Hogan and it's Hulk Up time. The big boot misses though and Dustin scores with another clothesline, followed by a cowbell shot to the head for the DQ.

Rating: F. The match ran six minutes and the chinlock was a third of that time. And for what? To build up Dustin Rhodes as a threat? I mean, well done on building up someone new, but Dustin Rhodes as the evil cowboy is the best idea you have? This company deserves to go under if this is their top idea.

Dustin leaves but Nick Patrick says we're not done yet. Rhodes called Hogan out so he has a ten count to get back in or it's \$10,000 and a potential suspension. He gets back in, clubs Hogan twice....and then eats the big boot and legdrop for the pin to end the show.

Oh screw you WCW. You go out of your way with that bad of a match to set up Dustin as some kind of a threat and THIRTY SECONDS later he's jobbing to the big boot and legdrop. That's the big reason WCW is in the place it's in at this point: because they can't just let someone look bad for a minute before they get their heat back because it might ruin whatever. Good grief it's not going to kill Hogan to wait until Monday, when he'll be in ANOTHER World Title program to get his win back, where he might even be able to make some money with Dustin in a rematch.

Overall Rating: D. This one had some promise to it and then came crashing down in the last hour and a half. That doesn't sound horrible but keep in mind that this is just a two hour show. The stupid matches that no one wanted to see and Hogan making sure that no one got over for more than

thirty seconds because Hogan must look strong. That reboot is looking better by the second as maybe SOMEONE under can come in and get some significant airtime. Except Jarrett of course.

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