

Thunder – April 26, 2000: The David Arquette Show

Thunder

Date: April 26, 2000

Location: War Memorial, Syracuse, New York

Attendance: 1,269

Commentators: Bobby Heenan, Mike Tenay, Tony Schiavone

Before we get to perhaps the most humiliating moment in wrestling history, I need to know how you only get 1,200 people to a TV taping in 2000. Less than two weeks earlier, ECW drew 1,700 at the house show where Taz returned and won the World Title. The company is on the brink of a free fall and tonight it goes over the edge. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Monday. I wouldn't bring up that show under most circumstances but tonight it's not the worst idea in the world.

Eric Bischoff, Kimberly and Jeff Jarrett drag David Arquette into the building. They drag Arquette into the arena and Jarrett slaps on a choke while ranting about how this is Jeff's world. Cue Page and Kanyon but Jarrett stops them with the threat of even more violence to Arquette. Well who in the world would want to see that? Tonight it's about the revenge of the New Blood and here are the magic words: Jarrett wants a tag match for the World Title with Page/Arquette vs. Jarrett/Bischoff where the man who gets the fall is the champion.

We see Buff Bagwell and Shane Douglas standing at the entrance to keep Page and Kanyon from doing anything but Team Package comes in to take them out. Kanyon chases the male villains off and Page almost gives Kimberly the Diamond Cutter but lets her go instead. That earns him a low blow because Kimberly is smarter than Page is. So why does Jarrett want a tag match instead of like a 15-1 handicap match where only he can get the pin? Or why not have Arquette defend the title in Page's place? As usual, the script wanting one thing and ignoring plot holes or stupid thinking to get there.

The Cat is ready for Bam Bam Bigelow.

Arquette and company are in the boiler room. Again I ask: does no one watch the show and know where this is happening? Or can't they find where the camera cable is going to make the save?

Recap of Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Cat.

Bam Bam Bigelow vs. The Cat

Before we get going, Cat asks Bigelow for some mercy for what he did. After Bigelow attacked him at Spring Stampede, Cat had to do something. Bigelow thinks about it but Cat goes on too long (shocking I know) and insults Bigelow's mama. Bigelow destroys him for a few moments and here's Miss Hancock to scout. It's chair time but the referee takes it away, allowing Cat to hit a Feliner for the pin in just over a minute.

Bigelow beats up Cat after the match because that kick was just enough to put him down for three. Keep in mind that it was literally the only offense Cat had.

Kidman and Torrie arrive. Thanks for showing up fifteen minutes into a two hour show.

Page keeps looking for Arquette.

The New Blood keeps yelling at Arquette. I was twelve years old when this show took place and I have the same question now that I had back then: why should I care about David Arquette? I hadn't seen any of the Scream movies at this point and the only movie he's been in other than that by 2000 that I've heard of is Buffy the Vampire Slayer in a supporting role. Unless I'm missing something big, he seems like a middle of the road comedy actor who they're treating like Tom Cruise.

Chris Kanyon vs. Shawn Stasiak

Curt Hennig is out to do commentary as Shawn takes over early on. Kanyon comes back with his own basic stuff but gets caught in a fireman's carry slam (almost an AA). Shawn takes too long posing though and gets rolled up for two, with Hennig getting in some lines about Stasiak not being

very perfect. Kanyon gets two off a neckbreaker but Stasiak pounds him down in the corner. Instead of following up though it's time to go outside and yell at Hennig for a bit. Back in and Curt sneaks up to the apron for a shot to the head, setting up That's A Wrap to give Kanyon the pin.

Hennig chases Stasiak off as Mike Awesome comes to the ring to fight Kanyon. Mike gets the better of it and powerbombs Kanyon onto the announcers' table before going after Hennig in the ring. Stasiak gets back up but Page runs in to give him a Diamond Cutter. Jarrett's challenge for tonight is accepted.

Here's Kidman with his ribs heavily taped and something to say. We see some clips (in black and white for some reason) of Kidman putting Hulk through a table on Monday. Marc Mero is at ringside in front of a bunch of empty seats. Kidman takes full credit for putting Hogan in the hospital on Monday and FINALLY explains the flea market comment. It only took them two and a half weeks. Kidman issues an open challenge and Torrie promises a kiss of death to the loser.

Kidman vs. Horace Hogan

Hogan comes out to American Made to tease the fans even more. Kidman gets crotched to start and drops him throat first across the barricade. Back in and a boot to the face drops Kidman again but he goes after Horace's injured knee to take over. A hurricanrana puts Horace down as Heenan is thrilled about Hulk being in the hospital. Some things will never get old and Heenan hating Hulk is one of them.

Kidman goes up top but takes too long putting his hands to his ears, allowing Horace to avoid the top rope splash. A powerslam keeps the ribs in trouble but here's Bischoff to ringside. Horace powerbombs Kidman clean and gets a chair but opts for a chokebomb instead. Now it's table time but Torrie grabs Horace between the legs, allowing Bischoff to hit Hogan with a chair. Kidman bulldogs Horace off the apron and through the table, leaving Bischoff to count the pin on the floor.

Rating: C-. This was way better than it had any right to be but the stupid ending holds it back. Kidman is on fire right now but you know as

well as I do that there's almost no chance of Hulk putting him over on pay per view, making this whole thing almost totally worthless. At least Torrie looked great here.

Here's Tank Abbott for his now twice a week call out of Goldberg. Well Ghostberg according to him. Abbott teases going after the announcers but stops at Marc Mero. Mero's trainer gets in the ring and Mero comes in for the save, leading to a brawl with security making the save. That's about it for Mero in WCW.

Page finds Arquette. That's kind of a worthless story then.

Sting vs. The Wall

Tables match and Sting hasn't washed the blood off himself yet. Sting hammers away, knocks Wall to the apron, escapes a powerslam, tries and botches a sunset bomb and then tries it again to put Wall through the table in less than a minute and a half.

Post match here's the New Blood but Sting fights them off and gives Vampiro a Stinger Splash. Again, the New Blood looks completely inept.

Here are Russo/Bagwell/Douglas with something to say. Russo rips on the Rochester crowd because he's not bright enough to remember that they're in Syracuse. Buff says the same stuff he's said about Luger for years and Shane says the same stuff he's said about Flair for years, but at least Shane says this is a shoot. I'm sure the 24 people in the audience who know what that word means are WAY more into this now.

Cue Team Package and Flair has the microphone. Russo has some Power Plant guys guard the ring but Flair says he's just here to talk. Hogan is the white collar champion (oh here we go) and Russo is disrespecting the legends. Flair, Sting and Luger have been going since 1985 (more like 1988 for Sting) and Russo is a mark for them. As for Douglas, the only franchise around here is Sting. Until Shane wrestles the list of men that Flair has wrestled over the years, he'll never be Ric Flair.

If any of the three of them want to come at Team Package, they better have some, ahem, fortitude. On top of that, Flair wants a deal at

Slamboree: if Russo interferes, Flair gets five minutes alone with him. Awesome speech. Now watch how Russo wastes the whole thing. Russo: "This is the part where I'm supposed to be a chicken heel."

Russo guarantees Flair that he has big apples but Luger cuts him off and says he has Bagwell at Slamboree. Because THAT match hasn't been done enough yet. Russo rips on the Lex Express for another reference that has nothing to do with this show. Apparently WCW owns Liz's contract so she is going to be with Russo from now on. Security goes after her and gets beaten down, allowing Russo to kidnap Liz.

So, again, Flair does something great but Russo insists on making it all about him and how much of a MAN he is while he gets to leave with the girl because he's such a MAN that he deserves the woman in the story. What's the point in Flair or anybody for that matter doing something around Russo and Bischoff if the bosses are going to immediately turn it into their favor and no sell the whole thing? Hogan did it a few years back and now Bischoff and Russo are doing the exact thing. This is the kind of stuff that makes it hard to watch WCW because there's no reason to hope it's going to go anywhere.

Liz is put in the backseat of a car and taken away.

Paisley vs. Tammy

After Tammy takes forever to disrobe, Tony flat out says this is going to be a catfight. They slowly do bad "moves" to each other and it turns into a catfight until Tammy goes to the eyes. Tammy chokes with something and Candido chokes on the middle rope. A Stunner puts Paisley down but Tammy stops to dive on Candido, Artist and the referee at ringside. Back in and Paisley gets two off a handspring elbow. Tammy tries a northern lights suplex but gets countered into what was supposed to be a DDT for the pin.

Rating: F. These two should go learn something from the Bellas. The twins are roughly a thousand times better than these two and it's probably a lot bigger gap than that. Total disaster here and neither of the two of them belong anywhere near the inside of a wrestling ring. This was horrible.

Candido and Tammy clean house post match.

Booker is in the back with Gene when one of Scott Steiner's women comes in to ask what Booker plans to do against that guy from the indy circuit Mike Awesome.

Arquette wants to fight in the tag match.

Mike Awesome vs. Booker T.

Steiner comes out with his women to do commentary. Booker grabs a headlock to start but Awesome muscles him over into a belly to belly. Steiner talks about Hogan clinging to a spot, which has to mean a bald spot. There's a spinwheel kick to put Mike down again and they head outside with Booker staying in control. Awesome comes back by sending him hard into the steps and hitting a top rope clothesline for two. He makes that look WAY too easy.

We hit the chinlock on Booker as Heenan starts sucking up to Steiner like only Heenan can do. Tony starts fearing for his life and begs anyone to talk about the match with him. Booker comes back with the kicks and a Spinarooni before going up top, only to have Steiner nail him in the back with the US Title. The Awesome Bomb is enough to give Mike the pin.

Rating: C. Awesome continues to look great and Booker is Booker, making this one of the better matches Thunder has produced in several weeks. Steiner at ringside was fine and the interference made sense for a change so I really don't have many complaints here. I'm not sure how to react to something like that.

Steiner puts Booker in the Recliner but Chavo Guerrero, Hugh Morrus, Lash Leroux and Van Hammer make the save. The four of them plus Booker easily clean house and stand tall.

Scott Hudson has a sitdown interview with Bret Hart. Hudson asks about Bret attacking Hogan on Monday and Bret accuses Hulk of ducking him. That's the only reason they've never fought. I know their match back in 1998 on Nitro was nothing great but that's no excuse to forget about it. Hogan was willing to accept the torch from Andre but he never was willing

to hand it off to Bret back in the WWF. What's with all the references to 1993 tonight?

Hart may not be in WCW much longer due to his injuries, including a concussion. After a clip of the Goldberg kick, Hart promises to do more to make Hogan pay, but promises to put him in the Sharpshooter. This was really just a way of reminding us that Bret Hart is still alive.

WCW World Title: Diamond Dallas Page/David Arquette vs. Eric Bischoff/Jeff Jarrett

Let's get this over with. Page is defending and whoever gets the fall is the champion. We're not overbooked enough yet so here's Kimberly to be guest referee. It's a big brawl to start with the non-wrestlers fighting in the aisle. Page gets a neckbreaker so Kimberly counts one but stops due to a broken nail. A Batista Bomb gets a similar result before Kimberly counts very fast for Jeff's rollup.

Here comes Bischoff, who says that Arquette is all done. Bischoff gets the tag as they're actually trying to make this a match. The canned DDP chants come up as Jeff hammers on the champ in the corner. Page fights back and takes down both guys as Arquette comes back. Everything breaks down and Page kisses Kimberly for no apparent reason. Arquette spears Bischoff down as Jarrett hits Page with the title. We get a double cover and another referee comes in to count the pin on Bischoff, making Arquette the World Champion. Page is totally cool with losing the title.

Rating: N/A. I'm not going to give this a rating because the rating for this doesn't exist. I know there are other options out there and some people disagree, but this is the lowest of the low points for WCW and perhaps wrestling as a whole. This takes away the entire illusion of wrestling and screams as loud as possible that wrestling is a huge fake story.

I understand that this is a massive publicity stunt (which failed). There are all kinds of celebrity appearances in wrestling that are often used as a cheap excuse to pop a rating (which only works in certain circumstances) but most of the time, wrestling companies know where to stop. Mr. T. was in the main event of Wrestlemania, but at least Mr. T.

is a tough guy who looked like he could hold his own physically. Mike Tyson got physical because he was one of the most successful boxers of all time. Neither of those is a huge stretch.

This however was clearly just saying that it's a big work because they didn't even try to hide how they were setting Arquette up to win. The fact that they would rather go this route instead of trying to set something up tells you most of what you need to know about Russo and Bischoff: they keep trying shortcuts to get somewhere and once they get there, it usually leads to a horrible idea.

Why should I care about any title match going forward? Why should I care if Page and Jarrett have a fifteen minute war for the belt? David Arquette can win the title in a five minute match (which they set up earlier in the night, completely defeating the point of getting people to tune in for the moment) so why should I want to sit around for a long title match?

The example I always use for how to properly use a celebrity is Drew Carey at the 2001 Royal Rumble. Carey came in, was given a spot in the Rumble (which the show made sure to point out was going to go to D'Lo Brown or Chaz otherwise, ensuring that the fans weren't going to wonder who else could have gotten this spot, did nothing important, left without causing any damage and gave the fans a fun little moment. No one was hurt, everybody gets what they want, and it's looked back on pretty fondly.

This on the other hand was taking a low level actor (at least the Drew Carey Show was a pretty solid ratings winner) WINNING THE WORLD TITLE. As usual, Russo thinks that the title is just a prop with no meaning behind it and if the fans disagree, that's on them because Russo is too busy doing MANLY things to listen to their complaints. There's no excuse for this and it's a shame that WCW had to sink this low.

Finally, it should be noted that Arquette thought this was a horrible idea and donated his pay to the families of Owen Hart, Brian Pillman and Darren Drozdov. He seems like a nice guy who knew his place. WCW on the other hand never understood anything and managed to take the title and

the business to a never before imaginable low.

Overall Rating: D. Completely destroying the World Title's importance aside, this wasn't the worst show in the world. The Booker vs. Awesome match worked and the Flair promo, meaning the part without Russo, was good stuff too. We've reached the point where a watchable five minute match between Mike Awesome and Booker T. is the high point of the week for WCW. That's how far we've sunk and I'm terrified to see where this is going to wind up.

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