

Thunder – May 31, 2000: Now They're Beating Children

Thunder

Date: May 31, 2000

Location: Idaho Center, Boise, Idaho

Attendance: 5,438

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan

This is the third straight TV show where we're coming in with a new World Champion, which isn't even counting the mid-show title change from this past Monday. Maybe tonight we can start slowing things down a bit for a change. If we're lucky, we might even get in some more Vince Russo stories! Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the multiple World Title changes from Monday. That really shouldn't be a thing.

Opening sequence.

The ramp is on the left hand side. I don't remember the last time that's happened in WCW.

Hardcore Title: Terry Funk vs. Chris Candido

Funk is defending and Candido comes in dressed like Terry for no apparent reason. Before the match, Candido praises Bischoff for giving him the chance to become champion. Well you have to get that praise in there or else he might start feeling bad. Funk comes out and chairs him in the head to start and they're already in the back, drawing boos because A, the live fans are getting ripped off again and B, they don't have a camera ready back there. Was it so hard to say "hey we're going backstage early so have a camera ready."? Or better yet, and more likely "hey, they're going backstage early so have that pretape ready."

Funk dumps trash over both of them before hitting Candido in the head with a chair again. Terry throws him on the back of a flatbed truck and

drives it away (car thief). It's back to the announcers because they have no idea what else to do now. A camera crew finally catches up to them and they're near a stable. Well of course they are.

Candido has had time to recover and he sends Funk into a bail of hay, the water trough and then some manure. They go into a horse stall and Funk grabs a piledriver but they have to leave before the horse almost kicks Candido in the head. Tony calls that the high spot of the night. And now, because we're in a Vince Russo booked company and nothing has to make sense, there's a table next to the stall. Terry slams him through it...and hits the referee with a trashcan. Then Funk wakes him up and counts the pin to retain.

Rating: D. Ok, first and foremost, this is a big upgrade over a lot of the hardcore matches because it was something different. Instead of the usual "I hit you, you hit me, we do a finish" formula, they actually mixed this up a bit and went outside the walls a little bit. That being said, they still did a table spot at a stable. That felt so stupid and out of place that it crippled whatever they had going. Was there nothing else you could do, like piledrive Candido on....I don't know.....THE GROUND?

Russo puts Cat in charge for the night. I think I could live with this.

The Flair Family arrives. How Ric got them back isn't made clear of course.

Kimberly arrives and gets the paparazzi treatment.

Here are the Flairs with something to say. After some WOOing, Ric talks about how it took Russo and a ball bat to get the title off of him this past Monday. This is the first time his family has been in the ring with him but there's no David. Instead, David is in the back somewhere with Russo despite having the chance to be someone in this business. Not because of his abilities or anything, but because of his last name.

Ric is going to have his chance to give David the beating he deserves soon enough, but tonight he wants Russo in this ring for a match. Cue Russo, David and security with Vince in sunglasses because he didn't want his New York friends to know he's in Boise. Eh good line. He had to have

one in all the time he jabbers. Russo talks about returning the champ (meaning Reid) and the witch to Ric. He has a cold tonight but he's still here, unlike Flair who took a week off with a headache.

Ric swears a lot and calls David even worse than Russo. Vince ignores him and talks to Beth, bringing up the John Lennon song Imagine, because Beth needs to imagine what it's going to be like when David retires Ric at the Great American Bash. Ric beats up security guards and asks if Russo wants a fight tonight. Russo offers a father/son vs. father/son match instead and Reid agrees. The guards hold the Flairs back and David gets in a cheap shot with the bat and Russo adds a slap because Russo is cool like that. WAY too long here to get to the point but they had to get in Russo's funny lines.

Kimberly yells at Cat over not having her needs met tonight. Cat stares at her chest and eventually gives her Mike Awesome to manage tonight for some TV time. For some reason Awesome is excited when Kimberly asks if he's good at massaging her feet.

Back from a break and Cat comes into his office, only to find Kidman in his chair. They argue over Horace because we're still not clear if Horace and Kidman are friends or not. Cat makes Kidman vs. Horace vs. Sting tonight and Torrie doesn't seem happy for some reason.

Here are Awesome and Kimberly with something to say. Awesome promises to hurt Page even worse than he hurt Canyon and that means being worse than a broken back. Kimberly suggests that the people applaud her and get annoyed when it's not loud enough. She runs her mouth even more until a plant runs in and gets beaten up. Was there a point to any of this and I'm just missing it?

Cat gives Shane Douglas a World Title match as a thank you for all of his hard work lately. Ok, the title change streak has to end here right? I know the company is crazy but they're not going to put it on Shane freaking Douglas.

Horace Hogan vs. Sting vs. Kidman

Wait is this a handicap or a three way? I know Cat said it was a three

way but it's never clear if the people making the matches know what they're talking about. Sting charges down the ring and dives over the top to take out both guys. They head outside with Sting getting double teamed, allowing Kidman to do the Hogan hand to the ear. There's a legdrop for two as Horace seemed fine with potentially losing the match.

Sting fights up and sends Horace to the floor but can't get the Deathlock. Horace adds a Death Valley Driver but Kidman is smart enough to break it up at two. It's table time but Horace hits Kidman by mistake. Sting comes back with Splashes and throws Kidman through the table, followed by a long run down the ramp to drive them both through the table again. Kidman is out so the Scorpion makes quick work of him to give Sting the win.

Rating: D. This was one of the more coherent matches I've seen from WCW in a long time and it was still a mess. Kidman vs. Horace is such a lame feud and I'm still not clear why they're fighting. I mean, I know it's because Torrie went with Horace that time, but has that ever been explained or addressed since? Not that it matters as Sting and the other Millionaires keep beating both guys and making them look like even bigger losers than they already are.

Kidman and Horace argue until Mike Awesome comes down to break it up.

Tank Abbott and Rick Steiner are ready for Nash and Scott tonight. Abbott hypes up his showdown with Goldberg on Monday. That's the translated version at least as neither can talk to save their life.

Jarrett doesn't like having to defend against Shane tonight and rants to Russo about it. Russo says don't worry about it.

Ralphus and Norman still can't find a job after their lawn mowing and babysitting endeavors have both failed. However, they see a sign for a backyard wrestling federation and the lightbulbs go off again.

WCW World Title: Jeff Jarrett vs. Shane Douglas

Jarrett is defending but it's not clear which title, as his graphic says he's the US Champion. Even technology can't keep up with Russo's booking.

Tenay and Schiavone talk about how they don't recommend backyard wrestling. Heenan is more worried that Ralphus is loose in a neighborhood. Jeff cuts Shane off from talking and I'm suddenly a bigger fan. Shane stomps away in the corner and catches him in an atomic drop for no cover.

Cue the Cat to applaud Shane but Jeff steals his scarf and chokes Shane out. A powerslam and backslide get two each for Shane but the referee and Cat get in a fight. Shane hits the Pittsburgh Plunge but Cat throws a chair at the referee. With the ref down, Cat kicks the chair into Shane's face, setting up the Stroke to retain the title. So Cat just fixed a problem he caused in the first place. You know what? I'll take it. It makes more sense than most stuff they do around here.

Page sits down with Tenay and talks about his history with Bischoff, but he doesn't know how they split so far apart. He never saw this coming with Kimberly but not the person she's become now. After talking about his book a bit (didn't that come out like a year or more ago?), Page promises revenge against Awesome. Tenay suggests that maybe Page has caused all these problems and Page leaves. Well to be fair Hogan caused most of his own problems and is supposed to be worshiped in WCW so why can't Page get the same treatment?

Cat gives Stasiak and Palumbo a Tag Team Title shot tonight and just for fun, the titles can change hands on a DQ. Shane runs in to yell at Cat, who says the devil made him do it.

Nash and Scott are on exercise bikes as the Freaks watch.

Tag Team Titles: Kronik vs. Shawn Stasiak/Chuck Palumbo

Kronik is defending and remember that the titles can change hands on a DQ. Adams and Stasiak start as Heenan talks about being on the radio where everyone was talking about Goldberg. I know it's stupid and I know no one buys it, but points to Heenan for trying to make WCW sound important. We've spent months hearing WCW announcers rip on the company and basically treat the fans like idiots, but at least Heenan is trying to do SOMETHING positive.

Stasiak gets beaten down and it's off to Clark vs. Palumbo. Tony calls him Palumbi as Chuck kicks Clark in the chest for two. As the announcers talk about Columbo (as in the cop show from the 70s), Clark's tilt-a-whirl backbreaker winds up being a tilt-a-whirl back of the head breaker which thankfully didn't break Chuck's neck. Palumbo clotheslines Adams and brings in Stasiak who mostly misses a jumping back elbow. The not hot tag brings in Adams to clean house and there's High Times to Stasiak but Adams hits Palumbo with the exercise bar like an idiot and we have new champions.

Rating: F. Other than Heenan, this was one of the worst matches I've seen WCW have in at least a week. For once though it's more because of the blown spots and poor execution rather than the terrible booking. This was one of the only realistic ways to get the belts off Kronik and I like that they're giving it to a new team....but Stasiak is still really boring and I don't see that getting any better.

Kronik chokeslams the referee to blow off some steam.

This Week in WCW Motorsports. I think this is one of those things WCW has forgotten they're paying for and it just keeps going because no one watches Thunder.

Back to the backyard wrestling where Norman is mistake for Booker T. Norman asks the champion champion (probably 14 years old) if he knows anything about amateur wrestling. That would be no of course so Norman offers to share some of his amateur background. After some basic technique, Norman demonstrates a three quarter nelson...and demands that Ralphus count a pin, making Norman the new champion. Norman and Ralphus run off with the title as the kids chase after them. These two continue to be hilarious and continue to go nowhere. Well other than up the street with the paper belt of course.

We get another sitdown interview with Eric Bischoff over whatever made he and Russo miss Thunder two weeks ago. Bischoff talks about making news and says we'll find out at Great American Bash and McMahon can't stop it. I'd love to see McMahon watching this show and chuckling while his pay per view for this month had Rock vs. HHH for an hour with Undertaker

making his return with a new gimmick, Jericho vs. Benoit in a submission match and a triple threat with the other Radicalz. You have all that but WCW has another GAME CHANGING idea.

Vince Russo/David Flair vs. Reid Flair/Ric Flair

This is going to be ugly. Ric and David start (thank goodness) with the dad chopping away in the corner. He rips David's shirt off for more chops (what a horrible father. I know Russo has ruined this company but I almost want to cheer for him over Ric.) but stops to yell at Russo. Since we're in the middle of a match and Ric is a horrible father, he offers to let Reid have a three minute match with Russo. If Reid can't pin him, Ric will leave the business.

The freakshow continues as Reid takes Russo down. There goes Russo's jacket as Reid takes him down two more times in a row. After about two minutes, Ric comes in and beats on Russo, only to have David come in with more chops and a suplex. Ric and David fight to the floor, allowing Russo to smash a Statue of Liberty over Ric's face. Back inside and some quick double teaming sets up the Figure Four on Reid, allowing Russo to cover him for the pin.

Rating: F. For the second time tonight, a grown man has pinned an adolescent. Not only is Russo coming up with nonsensical ideas but he's repeating them in the same hour. For some reason though, I'm liking this better than having women being stupid and getting kidnapped over and over.

Ric wants Russo in a cage on Monday and threatens to call Ted Turner to get the match made.

Kevin Nash/Scott Steiner vs. Rick Steiner/Tank Abbott

The Cat is out for commentary as the good guys clean house to start. Scott suplexes Tank to the floor but that's too much time without an announcement: whoever gets the fall here is #1 contender to the World Title. Rick kicks his brother low for two but we cut to the back to Jarrett, who says there's going to be a DQ here. So this match has DQ's as well? Rick's cobra clutch is as lame as you would expect a Rick

Steiner cobra clutch to be but his belly to belly is a little bit better.

Tank comes in for some punches (yes punches) before Rick comes back in to continue that cobra clutch. Scott finally grabs a side slam for two and makes the tag off to Nash for some house cleaning. A big boot gets two on Tank but Rick hits him low, setting up the third cobra clutch in five minutes. Cue Jarrett with the guitar to break up the Recliner on Rick but Cat makes it No DQ. A belt shot only gets two on Nash (of course) and he kicks a chair into Rick's face, setting up the Jackknife for the pin and the title shot.

Rating: D-. Another horrible match and another way for Nash to look like a world beater, even though I have no reason to believe he'll hold the title if he wins it at the pay per view. Also, Nash vs. Jarrett is really the best idea they can go with? As much as I hate to admit it, yeah it probably is.

Overall Rating: D-. Somehow that's one of the better shows they've had in a long time. They toned down some of the insanity in the first hour, but after Ralphus and Norman invaded a backyard wrestling federation (that was awesome), Vince Russo got to pin a twelve year old and treated it like a major win. The Great American Bash now has a BIG SURPRISE planned, thereby guaranteeing that it's going to be underwhelming. Anyway, as usual here, the more Russo a show has, the worse it gets.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of Complete 1997 Monday Night Raw Reviews at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/product/B015IN12I2>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>