

Monday Nitro – September 25, 2000: Robbing the Grave

Monday Nitro #259

Date: September 25, 2000

Location: Nassau Coliseum, Uniondale, New York

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Scott Hudson, Mark Madden

We have arrived. If you've read this far, you probably know what's coming and you know there's no way around it. Tonight we're in Vince Russo's hometown and he's in a cage match for the WCW World Title. This is a show I've been dreading for a long time, even though it was pretty obviously coming months ago. Let's get to it.

We open with a video designed like an inspirational sports story on Vince Russo, who has climbed the ladder to earn his destiny here in his hometown. Ignore the lines about him "growing up and wanting to be WCW Champion" as he would have gotten the WWF and the WCW World Title didn't exist until he was nearly thirty years old.

Opening sequence.

Earlier today Russo and Jeremy Borash arrived with JB now acting as Russo's biggest fan. Russo: "WILL YOU PLEASE SHUT UP???"

Big Vito vs. Johnny the Bull

The announcers swoon over Vito's sister Maria, who is sitting in the front row. This is a stick ball bat vs. a kendo stick match because those are different things (as well as extra phallic objects along with the pipe and baseball bat). Vito slugs away in the corner but gets taken down by a stick shot to the ribs.

The fans chant for Vito (also from New York of course) as he's down in the corner, followed by a spinwheel kick from Johnny. Naturally the announcers preview the swimsuit contest later as they're not even hiding the cheap ratings ploy. Vito comes back with some stick shots of his own

and kicks Johnny into the ropes, setting up even more stick shots.

That would be the kendo stick of course because Vito is just that versatile. Cue Reno with a kendo stick of his own to lay out Vito before tying him in the Tree of Woe for sticks to the ribs. Maria jumps the barricade to shield Vito...and THAT'S the DQ instead of Reno pounding on him for a minute and a half.

Rating: D. The only good thing here was the very pretty Maria but I have a feeling where this is going. You know she's related to one of them and there's some backstory here, which to be fair is a much more interesting and coherent story (in theory at least) than most of the goofy stuff we get around here.

According to the announcers, that was an I Quit match and Maria did the submitting for him. I'm so glad they got around to that after plugging MAJOR GUNNS IS GOING TO BE IN A BIKINI LATER!

The announcers preview the main event.

Earlier this week, David Flair hijacked a pay phone and it's attached phone book to find the baby father's address. Thank goodness they showed him finding the address at THIS phone booth because there's no other phone booth on the planet.

Here are Jarrett/Steiner/Midajah with something to say. Jarrett promises us a new champion tonight because the hometown boy is going to bring home the gold. Steiner can't believe that people boo him when they cheer for the New York sports teams. We get an insult to a New York Jet and some shots at Goldberg before Steiner introduces Russo for some sucking up to the fans.

Russo lists off some great names in New York sports and says his name is going up in the rafters next to theirs. However, now he lives in Atlanta, where they have NASCAR, the Georgia Bulldogs (having a bad year at this point), cousins breeding with cousins and John Rocker. Russo doesn't care much for Rocker, who went on some big rant about how much he hates New York City around this time. Cue Sting and Booker on the screen because we're still not done talking about Russo. Sting says he has Booker's back

tonight but for now, Russo needs to turn around. Russo does just that and Goldberg is in the crowd.

Mike Sanders comes in to see Kronik, who are out of the tag team battle royal as per Russo's orders. So the Thrillers are officially errand boys?

Tag Team Titles: Battle Royal

Rey Mysterio/Juventud Guerrera, Mark Jindrak/Sean O'Haire, 3 Count (all three members), Harris Brothers, Corporal Cajun/Lieutenant Loco, Jung Dragons (Jamie-San/Kaz Hayashi)

Last team standing wins the vacant titles and both members have to be eliminated. It's a brawl to start of course as Konnan sits in on commentary, promising vengeance on Disqo and the Duck. Hayashi takes an H Bomb and is eliminated a few seconds later, leaving Jamie-San on his own. Shane is sent over the top and through a table (of course) and here's Kronik, who may or may not actually be in the match.

The Harris Brothers are put out in seconds and it's time for Kronik to clean house. Adams dumps Jamie-San and Shannon, meaning all of 3 Count is eliminated because we missed Evan somewhere. There go the Misfits until security comes in to mace Kronik. We're down to just the Thrillers vs. the Animals with Juvy fighting back as the Animals take over.

Rey gets crotched though (Hudson: "He got his bronco busted.") and a Seanton Bomb makes it even worse. Cue Disqo to hit Juvy with the Duck (no effect of course), allowing Jindrak and O'Haire to dump him. The bell rings but Rey is still in, which we'll call a referee screwup. O'Haire crotches Rey on top and Jindrak clotheslines him out for the titles.

Rating: D. More overbooked nonsense here as they could have just as easily done O'Haire/Jindrak vs. the Animals with the same finish or had the Animals defend in the battle royal. Instead they vacate the titles and have Kronik taken out for no explained reason (likely for not destroying Stevie well enough on Thunder), only to have Kronik make the entire division look like a joke. Well done indeed, as usual.

Pamela Paulshock is in the back with Howard Stern's Wack Pack. Guess what

they have to say. Of note, Paulshock is in a fur coat, which will come into play later. Nash and the Thrillers come in to interrupt them with Nash getting the only good line as he refers to Beetlejuice (a dwarf) as Elix.

Insane Clown Posse vs. Mike Awesome

This is over the bus and seems to be hardcore. Before the match, Violent J says Vampiro is out due to a broken spleen or something. We hear about some JCW wrestlers being hardcore but Mike is dead, just like the 70s. J actually isn't a bad talker. Awesome drives the bus into the arena (thank goodness he was behind the wheel and right outside) and comes out swinging a fire extinguisher.

Shaggy hits him in the head with a trashcan and they pull Awesome on top of the bus. J is knocked off the engine and through a table, followed by an Awesome Bomb onto the top of the bus to Shaggy, who falls down to the concrete for the pin. This was a segment disguised as a match and really didn't need to do that big spot.

David Flair, now with a camera in his car, goes to Chuck E. Cheese for directions. Since there's already a camera set up inside, David is seen yelling at a worker and then searching through the ball pit for the father.

Here are Cat and Ms. Jones with the former calling out Russo. Cat is going to have Booker's back tonight and promises to fire anyone who tries to interfere tonight. This brings out Mike Sanders with a ball bat. Mike: "Did somebody say Natural Born Thrillers?" Cat: "No. I said natural born ratings killers." Egads man even the roster knows your show sucks at this point. The crowd swears at Sanders so the audio cuts out for a few moments before Sanders tells Cat to reverse that threat of a firing. The fight is on so here are Nash and the Thrillers for the big beatdown. Mark: "SPAY THE CAT!"

It's time for the bikini contest with Gene and Pamela (still in fur coat) as emcees and the Wack Pack as judges. By the way: this is opening the second hour against Raw. The contestants (Chae, Chiquita, Torrie Wilson, Tygress, Paisley, Leia Meow and Major Gunns) come out and kind of

disrobe, as some of them take their robes off while some open them but don't take them off. Gunns goes last and has an American swimsuit, drawing out Jim Duggan to take her to the back.

The judges aren't sure who wins so Pamela decides it's time to take off her coat, naturally revealing a barely there top. She wins, so the actual contestants fight until Midajah comes out for one of the worst slams I've ever seen on Meow. The women looked good but when I can be watching Trish and Lita actually starting to develop as characters and having matches, this stops doing anything for me. Oh and over on Raw: Austin was recently back from injury and opening the show before Rock and Benoit had a World Title match later on. Guess how the ratings went.

Steiner is in the back for an interview when Goldberg attacks him.

Here are Disqo and his Duck, the former of whom doesn't think much of the Animals. He wants to introduce his new partner but gets beaten down by Steiner. Scott calls out Goldberg, who immediately accepts but wants it in a cage with no referee.

Goldberg vs. Scott Steiner

Inside Caged Heat with ten seconds' build. They brawl on the floor with Goldberg choking away as the cage is lowered. Goldberg throws him inside as the bell rings and my head shakes at how stupid this company really is. Steiner gets beaten down for the first minute or so until Scott comes back with a spinning belly to belly. A top rope clothesline puts Goldberg down, only to have him come back with a butterfly suplex.

There's a low blow to put Goldberg down as Midajah comes out and just walks in to hand the pipe to Steiner. However, the New York Jet that Steiner insulted earlier jumps the barricade and keeps Steiner from leaving. Goldberg comes back with a spear (right into the pipe for no effect because the script doesn't call for it) before walking out to win.

Rating: D-. Whenever you hear people praise Steiner vs. Goldberg, the automatic question is why didn't they do it again at Starrcade. Well apparently that's because they did it here, eight days later, inside the Cell in a match that didn't even make five minutes and was more about a

member of the New York Jets than any kind of revenge. Oh and again: THEY ANNOUNCD THIS SIX MINUTES BEFORE THE BELL.

You might think that the rematch of one of the most physical matches ever inside a cage would be a good way to open against this week's Raw, but that spot was reserved for women in swimsuits, High Pitch Eric and Crackhead Bob. It's the same short term thinking and the hope that people just happened to change the channel during the commercials for Raw and tune in to see whatever the latest thing WCW was rushing through at this point. I mean, it's not like anyone was going to buy a pay per view to see these two fight so why not just throw it out here?

Goldberg says Russo is next.

Jeff Jarrett hits Beetlejuice with the guitar.

Booker promises backup for the main event. Thankfully he also has some devastating catchphrases to do some early damage to the boss.

General Rection vs. Jeff Jarrett

Rection shrugs off Jarrett's early attack in the corner but misses a top rope elbow. Madden accuses the General of being a draft dodger as a sitout powerbomb gets two on Jeff. Cue Team Canada for a distraction, allowing Duggan to hit Rection with the board, setting up the Stroke to give Jeff the pin. Nothing match.

Jarrett puts Rection in the Figure Four until the Misfits come out for the save. That fails of course because the Misfits suck so it's Sting coming out for the real save. The Canadians run but Storm wants Sting in a non-title match right now.

Sting vs. Lance Storm

This could be interesting. Joined in progress after a break with Storm in control and hitting that great dropkick for two. Three straight clotheslines have Storm in trouble but he crotches Sting on top. An elbow sends Storm to the floor where the Stinger Splash that always hits the barricade hits the barricade again. Back in and Storm gets two off a powerbomb but Sting starts his usual comeback. Storm however is CANADIAN

and counters the Deathlock attempt into the Maple Leaf. After the rope is reached, Sting suplexes him down and puts on the Death Drop for the pin.

Rating: C. Fine little match here, even though it was a clean pin on the US Champion. To be fair though, it was Sting instead of some goon to set up a title shot. I can actually live with that a lot more easily as Sting is one of the biggest names ever in WCW and a loss doesn't do him that much damage. On a related side note: Lance Storm lost and regained the US Title from Terry Funk on the house show circuit over the weekend. As you might guess, this wasn't mentioned on TV.

David Flair goes inside and demands that the father come out. Then it turns out he has the wrong house so he goes next door but no one is home. Apparently the guy is out of town, whoever he is. How the person who tells David that the father isn't home knows who the father is isn't clear as they somehow never said the guy's name.

Russo, in football pads and carrying a helmet, promises to win tonight.

The cage is lowered.

WCW World Title: Vince Russo vs. Booker T.

You can win by pin or escape and JB is on commentary. Russo jumps him with the bat to start as a bunch of people are guarding the door to keep Russo inside. Back up and Russo blasts him in the chest with the bat and throws in a ladder. There's a third bat shot so Russo can go up and tear the roof open, only to have the wrestlers waiting on him. Sting repels down from the ceiling to stop Russo as well, allowing Booker to slam him for the champ's first offense.

Russo loses the helmet and gets punched in the face, followed by a superkick. They head outside for some slow brawling but LEX LUGER of all people returns to give Russo a lead pipe through the cage. Therefore, Russo gets to beat the champ down even more before shoving the referee down. The EMTs get beaten down...save for one who is Ric Flair. Ric beats Russo down until the Thrillers come out to brawl with everyone at ringside, leaving Booker to ax and side kick Russo.

Like any schnook though, Booker grabs the mic for his catchphrase instead of leaving. Cue Goldberg to slowly come down the ramp, which freezes Booker at the door for absolutely no reason. Even Scott Hudson screams at Booker to leave. Instead he lets Goldberg in as Scott Steiner comes out to guard the door. Goldberg spears Russo through the cage wall to make him the champ, but Booker high fives Goldberg anyway to end the show.

Rating: Vince Russo. I wrote most of this on Monday but I had to wait a few days to be able to start talking about it. This is something that I knew was coming but I actually had to take a break and process what I just sat through. The match itself is of course inconsequential but the big thing here is of course, Russo, as always.

I'm actually struggling to come up with a way to rip on this match. It's one of those things that you know is horrible on all counts but it's hard to go into why. Above all else, and this is a spoiler (for a show fifteen and a half years old), the problem is that this show meant nothing. Booker would get the title back a week later by beating Jeff Jarrett, making this whole thing a big waste of time.

This was Russo's last match in WCW as his injuries (the real ones, not the ones that caused him to have brain surgery like two weeks ago) kept him out of the ring. I know I'm supposed to feel sorry for him about that but I've sat through six months of Russo putting himself over Flair, Goldberg, and now Booker for the title. Now I'm supposed to care about his injuries and feel bad that he had to vacate the belt and not wrestle anymore?

The whole thing was nothing more than a vanity project for Russo as he's actually turned the promotion and the company's World Title into a trophy for himself. I mean, I know we talk about Hogan and his friends turning the company into a huge vanity project that was all a playground for themselves, but that's exactly what Russo has managed to do here. This whole company is now about Russo and whatever makes him look good.

Why would ANYONE want to watch this company again? It's not about the wrestling or the title anymore. They have now decided that Russo getting to win a title that he "wanted since he was a kid" was more important

than Booker, Goldberg (the two of whom looked like morons to end the show) or anything else that could possibly be going on here.

Oh and on top of that: Russo dominated WAY too much of the match. Remember St. Valentine's Day Massacre when Austin fought McMahon, and by fought I mean absolutely destroyed for most of the match until a low blow slowed Austin down for like thirty seconds? This was Russo beating on Booker with a bat until a bunch of interference changed things around and set up the finish.

Finally, and speaking of McMahon, no this isn't the same thing as when McMahon won the title a year earlier. For one thing, McMahon winning the title was a nice surprise as he was a face at the time and gave the fans something they wanted to see, unlike Russo who gave himself something he wanted to see. It also helped that McMahon had taken a loss or two here and there. Like him or not, you can't deny that McMahon will get beaten whenever the story calls for him to.

Third, look at where the promotions were at the time. The WWF was on fire and absolutely crushing WCW in the ratings. Russo's title win came when WCW hadn't won a night in the Monday Night Wars in nearly two years. The solution is to give the heel writer (as in the person who isn't the owner or the official boss) the title to make himself feel better in his hometown while taking it off Booker. In other words, everything was about Russo instead of something that might have helped advance a storyline. But hey, people still talk about this so Russo is totally justified in all of this right?

Overall Rating: F. In addition to the disaster that was the main event, we also have the rest of the show to make WCW look ridiculous. I can't emphasize this enough: they gave away Steiner vs. Goldberg II in a nothing five minute match inside the Cell. That gets no time, but Russo's cage match is given a week's build because he's a draw and a star?

In addition to that you have the usual way too high amount of gimmick matches for no logical reason other than "PEOPLE LOVE GIMMICK MATCHES", wrestling that either has no time or is such a mess because they have nowhere to go without doing some stupid story. Oh and there's the

swimsuit contest, which made the women look like even bigger wastes of time than Russo thinks they are.

Overall, you can't say this was the death of WCW because the company had clearly gone under way earlier than this though. Instead, this was taking WCW's casket out of the tomb and robbing whatever Russo could get out of it for the sake of making himself look good. It's one of those shows where you know what's coming and it's so depressing because there's nothing that can be done about it. They made it clear a long time ago that this place is all about Russo and now they've only confirmed it. Normally I would say something like "enjoy your title Russo because you've killed it" but that would probably just make him laugh.

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