

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XXI (2016 Redo): Got Any Change?

Wrestlemania XXI

Date: April 3, 2005

Location: Staples Center, Los Angeles, California

Attendance: 20,193

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Tazz

If last year's show was about change, this one is ten times stronger. This year is about introducing the newest generation of mega stars into the top of the card and it couldn't happen sooner. JBL and HHH had been very boring champions with HHH cutting the wings off nearly everyone (including Orton, who turned face after taking the title from Benoit, only to drop it back to HHH a month later). With no one left, it's time for someone new. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Battle Royal

Raw: William Regal, Tajiri, Rhyno, Hurricane, Rosey, Simon Dean, Snitsky, Chris Masters, Val Venis, Maven, Sylvan Grenier, Rob Conway, Tyson Tomko, Viscera

Smackdown: Hardcore Holly, Charlie Haas, Luther Reigns, Scotty 2 Hotty, Funaki, Spike Dudley, Billy Kidman, Doug Basham, Danny Basham, Orlando Jordan, Paul London, Heidenreich, Mark Jindrak, Booker T., Nunzio, Akio

This would become a tradition and a way to get a lot more people on the show and therefore a Wrestlemania payday. This is also interpromotional so everyone is in a red Raw shirt or a blue Smackdown shirt. Regal and Tajiri are Raw Tag Team Champions, Dean is a fitness guru, Snitsky is a freaky guy, Masters is strong, Tomko is Christian's enforcer, Reigns is another big power guy, Jordan is a JBL lackey and US Champion, London is Cruiserweight Champion and Heidenreich is just weird. I'm not sure why Smackdown has one more name than Raw but it doesn't really matter.

General managers Eric Bischoff and Teddy Long are at ringside.

The rosters stare each other down to start and Hurricane gives Heidenreich a mask. Ever the nice guy, Heidenreich hits him in the face to start the fighting. Spike hides on the apron and we're firmly in the part of the battle royal where you can't tell anything that's going on. Reigns pulls Hurricane off the top and dumps him out but a bunch of guys get rid of Reigns just as quickly.

A bunch of people go after Viscera and knock him down because they're not that bright. Four guys hold him down and Scotty adds the Worm, only to have Masters throw out Scotty, Funaki, Spike and Kidman in a row. Well at least the ring is a little bit clearer. Haas is eliminated and a quick Regal chant goes nowhere. Nunzio is thrown under the bottom rope as the match slows a bit. Maven was eliminated somewhere in there.

Heidenreich, still in the Hurricane mask, rips the turnbuckle pad off for no apparent reason. I told you he was strange. Venis is clotheslined out by Heidenreich and Simon is out a few seconds later. Grenier follows and so does Rosey. Rhyno Gores Snitsky but Holly puts Rhyno out shortly thereafter. There goes Conway followed by both Bashams as the match is now a lot easier to keep track of. Raw and Smackdown square off again and it's Holly planting Regal with the Alabama Slam.

Jordan eliminates Tomko and Viscera sends Akio over the top and face first onto the steps. Masters eliminates Holly who is followed by Regal. Tajiri sprays the mist into Heidenreich's face and he eliminates London by mistake. By mistake because they're both on Smackdown and the idea here is brand vs. brand, even though it's every man for themselves. Tajiri and Heidenreich go to the apron and both guys are out a few seconds later. We're down to Masters, Viscera, Snitsky, Jindrak and Booker.

Jindrak catapults Snitsky out and absolutely levels Viscera with a left hand. Masters dumps Jindrak from behind and we're down to three but Nunzio comes back in because he was never eliminated. He actually makes it a full ten seconds before being eliminated for real and it's Viscera, Masters and Booker to go. Booker fights out of the double team but the

side kick lands on the ropes. Viscera misses a charge and gets low bridged out, leaving Booker to superkick Masters out for the win at 11:36.

Rating: D+. Not the worst battle royal here as they had a bunch of people in there but it was clearly just a way to get them on the DVD for the royalty payment. Still though, Booker winning was a good idea and it's hard to complain about a bonus match that doesn't hurt anything and wasn't part of the main show.

Lillian Garcia sings America the Beautiful.

We get one of my favorite parts of this show: the trailers. The theme of this show was Wrestlemania Goes Hollywood, meaning there were several parody movie scenes with wrestlers in place of the actors. We have Eugene as Forrest Gump, Booker T. as Samuel L. Jackson from Pulp Fiction, HHH as Braveheart, John Cena and JBL as Tom Cruise and Jack Nicholson from A Few Good Men, Undertaker as Dirty Harry, Christy Hemme as Meg Ryan from When Harry Met Sally, Christian, Chris Benoit and Stacy Keibler in the interrogation scene from Basic Instinct and most of the roster as Robert De Niro from Taxi Driver.

Now we get the debut of the final trailer from Gladiator. The emperor comes down to congratulate the gladiator whose face we can't see. The voice sounds very familiar though and he takes off the helmet to reveal Steve Austin, who describes himself as a beer drinker among beer drinkers and the master of the middle finger. He promises to create havoc at Wrestlemania tonight because that's what he does. Good stuff here, as were all of these.

The aisle has a red carpet and there's a movie marquee that advertises Wrestlemania XXI. It's one of their better sets ever actually.

Eddie Guerrero vs. Rey Mysterio

This is face vs. face as they're the reigning Smackdown Tag Team Champions. Eddie however is a bit frustrated because he thinks Rey has been showing him up a bit lately. No superhero gear this time as Rey is in a combination Mexican/USA flag costume instead. The bell rings and Rey

is already adjusting his mask. Rey flips out of a fireman's carry and shoulders Eddie down until Guerrero armdrags him down.

A headscissors puts Eddie on the floor and it's time to adjust the mask again. It has a Velcro hook instead of the usual buttons and that's not going to work very well. Back in and Eddie takes him down with a wristlock until a monkey flip sends Eddie flying. A right hand knocks Rey off the apron though as the aggression is starting. Back in and Eddie gets two off a belly to back before slapping on a surfboard (which takes a good while to finally apply). Eddie has to let go and Rey fixes the mask again.

We hit an STF on Rey but Eddie doesn't pull back on it very well. Mysterio armdrags out of an armbar and Eddie is looking frustrated. More mask adjustment sets up a flip dive from Rey, followed by more time spent fixing the thing. Mysterio tries to speed things up but Eddie drops him with an elbow to the jaw. Three Amigos are broken up but Rey gets caught in a backbreaker. Two more Amigos connect but Rey counters (adjusting the mask in the process) into the 619, only to have that countered into another backbreaker.

The Three Amigos finally work but the frog splash misses. 619 connects and Rey is bleeding from the mouth. The West Coast Pop is countered into a sweet powerbomb for two as the fans are behind Eddie. Back up and a quick hurricanrana gives Rey the pin (with one final mask fix) at 12:36.

Rating: B. Good stuff here but I think they were expecting something even better. This is what happens when you have a masterpiece like these two had at Halloween Havoc 1997: it sets a virtually unbreakable precedent and puts way too much pressure on them to top it every time they square off again. This kicked off a four month long feud between the two which produced some excellent matches, which was tragically followed up by Eddie's death in November.

Eddie shakes Rey's hand.

JBL and company run into HHH and Flair. They compare legacies and HHH laughs at the idea of anyone believing JBL is as good as he thinks. A future showdown is teased but thankfully this never went anywhere. Flair

gets in a WOO just because.

Adam Sandler and Rob Schneider are here.

Chris Jericho vs. Chris Benoit vs. Christian vs. Edge vs. Shelton Benjamin vs. Kane

Money in the Bank, which means a ladder match for a briefcase which guarantees them a World Title shot at any time in the next year. Jericho came up with this one night on Raw and others signed up over the next few weeks. This and the battle royal were a much better idea than the multi-team tag matches we sat through last year. Christian has Tomko with him. Shelton is the Intercontinental Champion and has become one heck of a singles star in recent months. Kane's entrance is again cool as the set has flames all over it, including the ladders set up near the entrance.

Kane starts fighting in the aisle and beats up all four Canadians plus Shelton. Benjamin and Benoit suplex him at ringside but Jericho smacks Edge in the face with a ladder as the bell rings. Jericho beats Shelton up to start but stops to dive on Benoit. Christian dives on all three of his fellow Canadians but Benjamin dives onto all of them plus Tomko. Kane takes out all five of them with a clothesline from the top before hitting Edge with a fresh ladder.

Jericho dropkicks the ladder into Kane but comes up holding his leg. Shelton and Edge take ladders to the face and Edge gets a second dose. Benoit comes back in to German Jericho and the ladder at the same time but Kane breaks up the first climb. That's fine with Benoit as he grabs the Crossface on Kane. Edge gets the same treatment until Kane hits Benoit in the face with the ladder for the save. Kane isn't done with him as he crushes Benoit's arm between the ladder, only to turn into a spear from Edge.

We get a quick Edge and Christian reunion as they crush Kane with ladders, much to the delight of the crowd. Shelton gets back in and kicks a ladder into Christian's face and flapjacks Edge into the ladder for good measure. Jericho and Benjamin fight on top of the ladder but Christian sets up his own and joins them. Benoit climbs up with one arm but here's Edge on a third ladder. Lawler: "It's like open house at Home

Depot!”

Christian takes Benoit down by the arm, Jericho gets shoved off and Shelton hits his t-bone exploder suplex to take Edge down. The ladder falls on the two of them to make it even worse. Christian bridges a ladder up against another one to make a ramp but Jericho puts him down and climbs, only to have Shelton run up the ramp and clothesline him down. Kane comes back in and cleans house until Tomko kicks him in the face. Tomko lifts Christian up ala Rhyno at Wrestlemania XVII but Kane makes a save.

Kane sends the ladder over to send Christian crashing to the floor and onto Tomko. Well it's better than those insane crashes Christian used to take. Jericho and Kane both fall off the ladder with Kane crashing in the middle of the ring. Benoit drops a Swan Dive off the ladder to bust himself open. The bloody Canadian climbs up but Kane does the Undertaker situp, only to get headbutted back down to the mat. Benoit is alone up there but Edge BLASTS him in the bad arm with a chair, allowing him to climb up (JR: “Somebody stop him! Anyone! Even Christian!”) and win at 15:20.

Rating: A-. It's amazing how much better these things are when you have a more reasonable number of people. Six seems to be the magic number but the later versions would have seven or eight and the whole thing would get too crowded and watered down. This was awesome fun though with some great spots that would be built on in future years. Edge getting the win is the biggest moment of his career and it felt like a huge moment. Really good way to introduce the concept.

Here's Eugene (Eric Bischoff's, shall we say, slow nephew) with something to say. This is his second favorite Wrestlemania moment after King Kong Bundy squashed one of the midgets at Wrestlemania III and the rest of the midgets got together like an army. This brings out Muhammad Hassan and manager Daivari, a pair of Arab American wrestlers who claimed racism was the only thing holding them back.

Hassan: “Do you know why I'm angry?” Eugene: “You don't like midgets?” Hassan rants about all the fake people here in Hollywood and the

prejudice and bigotry in the city's history. In his way over the top voice, Hassan goes off about taking a backseat to a loser like Eugene. He could not, would not and will not stand for this so he's going to create a Wrestlemania moment of his own. Hassan decks the injured Eugene and puts him in the camel clutch....which brings out Hulk Hogan in the red and yellow.

Hulk cleans house with ease and the fans eat this up with a fork and spoon. Daivari's chair shot goes very badly for him and it's time to pose. This set up a tag match at Backlash with Hogan teaming up with Shawn Michaels. It's a great moment and a great surprise with Hogan bringing the crowd to his feet doing as he can do better than almost anyone else. The American flag drops, just in case you didn't know who you were supposed to cheer for. Keep in mind though: Hassan is from New York and Daivari is from Minnesota.

We recap Randy Orton vs. Undertaker. Orton had lost the Raw World Title to HHH and then lost a long feud to him, meaning it was time to give him something fresh. To get back on track, Orton turned heel again (he pretty much had to after the face turn was ruined so badly) and decided to end the Streak. Even Randy's dad Cowboy Bob thought Randy is crazy for trying this until the RKO put Undertaker down one night on Smackdown.

Undertaker vs. Randy Orton

The druids and torches are back this year. Undertaker, with his hair past his shoulders again, glides to the ring without taking a single step. No Cowboy Bob with Orton here. Orton starts with a slap and nails a nice dropkick for one. That earns him a stiff right hand to the jaw and the RKO is easily countered as Undertaker throws him to the floor.

Old School actually connects but Orton hits another dropkick and punches him in the face. Undertaker comes right back with a side slam for two. Snake Eyes looks to set up a big boot but Orton elbows him in the face to take over. The fans are all over Orton as he pounds away with forearms and right hands. A dragon sleeper (a hold Undertaker used for a bit until it became clear that it didn't fit him) has Orton in trouble spins around and counters with a DDT.

We hit the chinlock but Undertaker would rather not bore the fans so he suplexes Orton down instead. A powerslam gets two on Undertaker and Orton is stunned. I'm not sure why as he never won anything major with that move but that's a young heel for you. He follows that up by being a young stupid heel as he pounds down right hands in the corner, only to get caught in the Last Ride. Orton slips out and tries an RKO but gets sent into the referee for a horrible ref bump. I mean Orton's forearm grazed the referee's chest and it looked like he died.

After Undertaker falls down trying another Last Ride, here's Cowboy Bob (who might have missed his cue to force the second failed powerbomb) to knock Undertaker out with the cast (He had a very slow healing arm injury. Going on twenty years at this point.) but there's still no referee. Undertaker gets up and tries a chokeslam, only to have Orton counter into an RKO in midair. That's one of my all time favorite spots. Orton is stupid enough to try a Tombstone but Undertaker reverses into the real thing to put Orton away at 14:16.

Rating: B-. This show is on fire to start with the third straight good match, which is somehow a step down after a pair of really good matches. Orton looked like a star out there and began the tradition of someone wanting to break the Streak instead of someone having a personal issue with Undertaker. This would become something like another World Title match over the years as the matches would (eventually) become bigger and bigger over time.

We recap evil Trish vs. Christy Hemme. Christy was in Playboy and Trish didn't like not being in the spotlight, setting up a title defense for Trish here. Lita tore her ACL in January to prevent another showdown with Trish and is training Christy to make us think she has a chance. The problem is Hemme is just a model and is making her debut against the best female wrestler of the generation.

Women's Title: Christy Hemme vs. Trish Stratus

Trish is defending of course and easily kicks Christy to the floor to start. Christy is sent into the steps and this is already looking one sided. Back in and the Chick Kick is blocked, followed by Christy kicking

Trish low to take over. It's clear that she has NO idea what she's doing though and Lawler keeps the focus on her very short skirt. Christy sunset flips her out of the corner for two and makes her comeback with some lame kicks, followed by a reverse Twist of Fate. That's it though as the Chick Kick puts Christy out of her misery at 4:11.

Rating: D. This was about Christy looking good and Lita being there for a completely token appearance. At the end of the day, this was going to be the future of the Divas division no matter how many people were disappointed. Your wrestling ability stopped mattering because the only important thing was how good you looked in skin tight shorts. Bad match but they kept it short as they should have.

We recap Kurt Angle vs. Shawn Michaels. Angle was dominating the Royal Rumble when Shawn came in and eliminated him with a quick superkick. This wasn't cool with Kurt and he wanted a one on one match with Shawn at Wrestlemania. You don't have to ask Shawn twice about a chance to show off at the biggest show of the year.

Shawn Michaels vs. Kurt Angle

If this is anything less than a classic, it's going to be a disappointment. They stare each other down to start until Shawn slaps her in the face. That earns him a takedown but Shawn makes it to the ropes. A headlock slows Kurt down and the fans seem to be on Angle's side. Back up and Shawn takes him right back down into a headlock. A hiptoss takes Angle down again and we hit a short arm scissors.

Angle comes up with the customary lifting counter but Shawn rolls into a sunset flip. Back to the headlock as they're doing a nice job of recreating the Bret vs. Shawn story of Shawn wrestling technical when his opponents wouldn't have expected him to go that route. A quick ankle lock attempt is countered and the Cactus Clothesline puts both guys outside.

Shawn is ticked off for some reason and loads up the announcers' table, rolls inside to break the count (a forgotten move) and gets caught in an Angle Slam into the post. Well not really the Slam itself I don't know how else you would call that. Kurt starts in on the back and puts on a body scissors. The fans are split as it's time to trade some chops.

Enough of that though as Kurt grabs a belly to belly and it's time for a reverse chinlock with a knee in the back. Shawn fights up but slaps Angle for some reason, earning himself a big clothesline for two.

Kurt loads up a belly to belly superplex but gets shoved down instead. The top rope elbow misses though and Shawn crashes back first onto the mat. There go the straps but Kurt gets backdropped out to the floor and Shawn, always the crazy one, follows him out with a high cross body. Back up and the German suplex to the floor is teased again but as always, Kurt can't quite pull it off. Mainly because of the whole death thing. Shawn kicks him low for the save instead and puts Angle on the table for a spinning splash from the apron, which DOESN'T break the table in a sick landing.

Both guys are very slow to get back in as you would expect but it's Shawn with the forearm into the nippup to get the fans right back on his side. The elbow connects this time around but the superkick is countered into the ankle lock again. Shawn can't roll out of it but he finally makes the rope. The Angle Slam is countered so Kurt grabs the ankle as a consolation prize. That counter is countered into a cradle for two but now the Slam connects for two.

In another awesome moment, Kurt puts the straps back up so he can pull them right back down, only to miss the moonsault. Might be time for a new strategy Kurt. Shawn loads up another elbow but this time Angle runs the ropes for a super Angle Slam. It still only gets two so Kurt yells at him, allowing Shawn to shove him away and nail Sweet Chin Music for another near fall. Both guys are very slow to get up and Shawn leaves his foot too close to Kurt, setting up the ankle lock with the grapevine for the (very) eventual tap at 27:27.

Rating: A. Outstanding match here with the athletic slugfest at its best. There's something so great about two masters out there showing everything they could do. Shawn is at his best when he gives it everything he has but just isn't good enough, though he would win the rematch later in the year. Great stuff here and I really don't see anything else topping this tonight.

The guys get a well deserved standing ovation.

We get the full Basic Instinct trailer again with Stacy implying there's something between herself and Trish.

Mae Young and Fabulous Moolah are here.

It's time for Piper's Pit with special guest Steve Austin. Piper thanks us for the Hall of Fame induction but wants to make some history. He's been told that Austin is the toughest man in the WWE and he calls that bull. This brings out Austin, who Piper says is supposed to be some rebel. Piper slaps him in the face so Austin swears at him and slaps him right back. Piper: "I kind of like you!"

The WHAT chants get on Piper's nerves quick but he learns how to talk at the right cadence. There's a point Piper wants to differ on but the WHAT chants cut him off again. Piper says he was here when Wrestlemania didn't have a number and was ticking Vince off when Austin was in diapers. For some reason JR thinks that's quite the insult. Austin and James Dean have nothing on Piper when it comes to being a rebel.

It's Austin's turn now and he rips on Piper a bit, in time with the WHAT chants. Piper says this is failure to communicate and here's Carlito if all people to interrupt. Carlito thinks these arguments are stupid because neither of them are cool enough for him (that's and spitting apples at people are pretty much his entire gimmick). Austin invites him into the ring but Piper has no idea who Carlito is.

Carlito wants them both to leave and can we just get to the Stunners already? Piper steals the apple and spits some of it at Carlito. That earns him some left hands to the head as Austin just watches. Austin finally beats Carlito up, throws him to Piper for a thumb to the eye and gives him the Stunner. It's time to drink for a good while until Austin finally Stuns Piper too. This went on WAY too long and I have no idea what they were going for but it completely missed. None of them looked like they wanted to be there and Carlito didn't get anything out of it.

Backlash ad.

Here's the full Taxi Driver trailer which was voted the best by the fans. The highlight is Batista turning it into a Who's On First routine.

Akebono vs. Big Show

Why not have some sumo wrestling on the show? You win by pushing your opponent outside the circle or by knocking him off his feet. Akebono is a sumo champion and would become a full time professional wrestler in Japan soon after this. Cole and Tazz treat this as something serious but the fans clearly don't care. After they go through all the rituals, Akebono wins with relative ease in 1:02. This really, really didn't need to be here and was lost on the fans, which really isn't surprising as it wasn't exactly what they signed up for.

We recap John Cena vs. JBL which is entirely built around a culture clash. Cena won a #1 contenders tournament to earn this shot by beating Angle at No Way Out 2004. JBL is old school and rich while Cena is a brash, in your face rapper who wears throwback jerseys and hats. He had turned the US Title into a spinner belt so JBL helped his lackey Orlando Jordan take the title and then burned it (ok so JBL wasn't all bad).

JBL got in Cena's face and said the only way Cena's family could pay the bills was to have his mama on her back all the time. Since they weren't allowed to touch each other, Cena ruined JBL's car, clothes and limousine to try to get JBL to punch him. Naturally this got Cena arrested and JBL hit him while he was defenseless. The build was good, but there's no question that this is the second biggest match on the show.

Smackdown World Title: John Bradshaw Layfield vs. John Cena

JBL is defending and comes to the ring in a limo with a police escort. To make it even better, JBL dollars fall from the ceiling. I always liked the way JBL held the belt (clasped together but in his hand instead of around his waist). He even sends the Cabinet to the back so this is one on one. Feeling out process to start with Cena getting the better of it until he runs into a boot to the jaw to stagger him.

They trade shoulders with JBL getting the better of it by running Cena over. A big chop staggers Cena again and the champ chokes him on the

middle rope. Cena's comeback is stopped with a spinebuster and punching him in the head. A short arm clothesline (ala Jake Roberts) sets up a sleeper but Cena finally escapes with a belly to back suplex.

There's a double clothesline to put both guys down again and it's JBL up first. Cena takes a neckbreaker on the floor and a superplex keeps him in trouble but JBL can't follow up. JBL eventually gets two and goes to the middle rope, diving right into a powerslam (not a scoop slam Cole) to give Cena an opening. The running shoulders and a hiptoss draw some trash talk and the fans are trying to wake up. The Shuffle connects and Cena ducks the Clothesline, setting up the FU for the pin and the title at 11:27.

Rating: D+. For what was supposed to be a changing of the guard, this was really boring stuff. JBL just could not do it in the ring again at this point and it was clear for months now. Cena winning the first title at Wrestlemania is a big deal and he did what he could but you need a better opponent. JBL had a long run and this was a pretty weak way to end it. Not that I expected anything else though. Their really violent rematch was MILES better and what this match should have been.

Cena celebrates in the crowd.

We look at last night's Hall of Fame inductions, headlined by Piper and Hogan. They had to go in together.

Gene Okerlund introduces the Class of 2005: Nikolai Volkoff, Iron Sheik, Paul Orndorff (who points to Miss Jackie as she escorts him), Bob Orton, Jimmy Hart, Roddy Piper and Hulk Hogan. In other words: pretty much Wrestlemania I as a whole.

Wrestlemania XXII is in Chicago.

We recap the main event. Batista had been Evolution's animal but he was slowly getting better and smarter. This scared HHH, who thought the whole thing was about him. He and Flair put together a plan to manipulate Batista into fighting JBL at Wrestlemania but Batista overheard them, leading to him beating HHH up. Now HHH has to fight the monster on his own and no one, including Cena, is hotter than Batista.

Raw World Title: Batista vs. HHH

Motorhead plays HHH to the ring and seem to forget the words as it's a horrible rendition. HHH is also coming out first and rises up through the stage because his entrance needs to be much cooler than Batista's. They circle each other to start and we get the big power lockup. HHH's headlock doesn't get him anywhere and Batista takes over with something like a powerslam.

The champ gets thrown into the corner for some right hands but HHH finally sends him out to the floor for a breather. Flair gets caught trying to sneak in a shot, which isn't enough for an ejection but whatever. Back in and it's time for choking and stomping, including some extra from Flair. HHH starts in on the back as this is kind of an awkward way to start. An elbow to the back clearly doesn't make contact so HHH drops some knees instead. A backbreaker keeps up the focus and Flair gets in even more choking.

Some right hands stagger HHH but it's a spinebuster (because that doesn't weaken Batista's spinebuster whatsoever) for a few two counts in a row. The Pedigree is broken up with a backdrop but HHH cuts him off AGAIN with a facebuster. HHH goes up top and dives into a clothesline followed by a side slam for two. That's enough offense for now as Batista charges into a raised boot in the corner.

Batista comes right back with a hard whip to send HHH out to the floor but the champ sends him hard into the steps to regain control. The Pedigree onto the steps is countered into a slingshot into the post, drawing blood from HHH's head. Back in and Batista goes after the cut with some big forearms before driving the shoulders in the corner.

The fans are trying to get behind Batista again but that HHH dominance killed a lot of the match. Flair tries a distraction so HHH can get a chair but the referee takes it away. Ric takes out the referee and tries a belt shot, only to walk into a spinebuster instead. HHH gets in the belt shot for two. Now the Batista spinebuster connects but a low blow stops the fans AGAIN. The Pedigree is blocked and Sheamus' White Noise sets up the Batista Bomb to give us a new champion at 21:40.

Rating: C-. Screw off with HHH and his ridiculous ego. Batista won in the end but this was ALL about HHH and making sure he looked as strong as possible in defeat. The fans wanted to cheer here but it felt like every other HHH match in this era but with Batista finally surviving to win the title. The fifteen minutes of dominance here really hurt the match and that's mainly because of HHH not letting Batista get in enough offense until the end. Couple that with HHH's awesome entrance and this felt more like a farewell to HHH than the coronation of a new star.

Batista holds up the title to HHH and poses to take us to the highlight package.

Overall Rating: B. This is a very lopsided show as the last hour and a half is a BIG drop from the first two hours and fifteen minutes. The World Title matches just aren't very good (much more boring than bad though) and some of the other stuff like Piper's Pit and the sumo match was just plain awful. I'm really not sure what the point of the Pit was unless they were going for a rub for Carlito, but you would think that him beating Cena in his debut match in the fall would have accomplished that just fine.

On the other hand though, four of the five first matches range from good to excellent with only Trish vs. Christy (a four minute match with three gorgeous women) falling short. If you could cut out a good chunk of the last third, this is a MUCH stronger show and one of the better ones of all time. Considering that's similar to what I said last year, it's pretty easy to see that pushing four hours (or five last year) is too long for a wrestling show. Obviously you can't expect everything to be great, but cut some of it down or improve it a lot. Still though, the really good more than outweighs the bad here and that's always a positive.

Ratings Comparison

Rey Mysterio vs. Eddie Guerrero

Original: B-

2013 Redo: C+

2016 Redo: B

Money in the Bank

Original: A

2013 Redo: B+

2016 Redo: A-

Undertaker vs. Randy Orton

Original: B-

2013 Redo: C+

2016 Redo: B-

Christy Hemme vs. Trish Stratus

Original: F+

2013 Redo: F

2016 Redo: D

Kurt Angle vs. Shawn Michaels

Original: A+

2013 Redo: A+

2016 Redo: A

Big Show vs. Akebono

Original: F

2013 Redo: N/A

2016 Redo: N/A

John Cena vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

Original: D

2013 Redo: D

2016 Redo: D+

Batista vs. HHH

Original: C-

2013 Redo: C-

2016 Redo: C-

Overall Rating

Original: C+

2013 Redo: B-

2016 Redo: B

This show continues to be something that is better than all of its individual parts.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/03/29/history-of-wrestlemania-wrestlemania-21-best-ad-campaign-ever/>

Here's the 2013 Redo if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/03/30/wrestlemania-count-up-wrestlemania-xxi-another-new-generation/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of the Intercontinental Title at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01D4D3EGQ>

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

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