

Thunder – January 17, 2001: I Can Get Through This

Thunder

Date: January 17, 2001

Location: Allen County Coliseum, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Attendance: 4,836

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Mike Tenay

We're coming off an interesting show Monday where things have changed a bit yet still feel very much the same. In this case Ric Flair is now all evil for reasons that aren't clear (and will remain that way because this is WCW) and the remaining faces are fighting against the latest NWO. It's certainly better than what we've been having but I don't see much of a shelf life for this one. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Sunday and Monday. You know, the early part of Monday before they did this show in front of a dead crowd.

There's a new opening.

Here are Cat and Miss Jones to get things going. Cat gets straight to the point: he wants to clean up WCW and Flair isn't going to keep Goldberg gone forever. Well to be fair no one really believed his career was completely over anyway. Cat wants Totally Buff out here right now so here are Luger and Buff with the latter making fun of the shape of Cat's mouth.

Luger one ups him by botching Ric Flair's job title, referring to him as the President of WCW. I know it's not that complicated but it's three letters long and Luger can't remember? Cat makes fun of Buff's hat so they come to the ring, only to have Kronik come out for the save, prompting Cat to set up a match between them tonight. Dance time!

Here's Kwee Wee, or Angry Alan more than likely, to issue an open challenge to anyone because he's not happy with being left out of Flair's group (which needs a name). Unfortunately it's quickly answered.

Kwee Wee vs. Rick Steiner

This would be Kwee Wee's reward for all the effort into making this stupid character work. Steiner takes him down with a suplex right at the bell and it's time to go outside for a whip into the barricade. A wicked Steiner Line is followed by a bunch of right hands to the face as Rick asks if this is what Kwee Wee really wants. Kwee Wee doesn't think too much of Steiner barking at Paisley but his objection is stopped cold with a German suplex, followed by the Steiner Bulldog to complete the destruction in a hurry.

Steiner says that's it for the audition and Flair can come get him (Steiner) if he wants him.

Hardcore Title: Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Meng

Meng is defending. Bigelow jumps him to start and makes the mistake of hitting him in the head. That's fine with Meng so Bigelow hits him in the back with a few chair shots for maybe 14% more effect. They stay on the floor with Meng going over the announcers' table and Bigelow going into the steps. In other words, it's the exact same thing that happens in almost every hardcore match.

Back in and Bigelow actually works on the leg because this is the match where you expect psychology. Meng shrugs it off (of course) and no sells a DDT, setting up the Death Grip. For some reason that's not enough for a pin though and Meng goes up for a top rope splash to retain.

Rating: D. What were you expecting here? Meng wasn't exactly someone worth seeing on his best days so having him be an even more unstoppable monster wasn't exactly the right way to go. It doesn't help that Bigelow had been wrestling the exact same match for at least a year and it wasn't getting any better.

On top of that, this was it for the Hardcore Title as the WWF would sign Meng away and put him in the Royal Rumble just for the fun of it. Now some people might think WCW would put their champions under contract to make sure no one steals them away like this but they had more important things to worry about, such as finding a justification for Lex Luger

being a top heel in 2001.

Glacier video.

Norman Smiley gets a fan letter back from Glacier, who says he'll have Norman's back. Giddiness ensues.

Team Canada arrives.

Lash Leroux and The Wall apologize to Hugh (yes they call him Hugh) about having Chavo's back too often lately.

Don Harris now has a neck brace and will never be able to wrestle again, leaving Ron to wrestle as a singles guy. Norman comes in and challenges him to a match later. I won't even bother making fun of this.

Ric Flair, Scott Steiner, Midajah and some women arrive. WCW does know that they tell people this is being taped on the same night right? As in the fans should know there's no reason for Flair and Steiner to leave and come back for the second show.

Norman Smiley vs. Ron Harris

The announcers actually treat Don's "injury" as a big serious thing because Bischoff is in charge again and announcers have to be this stupid. We hit a LONG stall session to start before Norman armdrags him down a few times. A dropkick lets Norman start dancing and it's time to stall again.

Tony starts listing off the reasons why the Twins can't switch again as Ron comes back in with a kick to the face. A side slam gets two so Ron throws him outside and into the barricade. That goes nowhere so Norman makes his comeback with clotheslines and a little spanking. The referee yells at Norman for attacking in the ropes and the Twins switch, allowing Don to give Norman a big side slam for the pin.

Rating: F. Norman jobs, the Harris Twins win, and it's time for the announcers to start treating us like idiots while acting like idiots themselves. This is indeed life in WCW because Bischoff really does believe he's smarter than everyone else and that they would actually fall

for the most obvious trick in the history of wrestling.

Totally Buff vs. Kronik

Just like last week. Adams slowly powers Luger around to start but Lex has that veteran smirk on his face. I'd smirk too if I got paid this much money to do so little. A gorilla press drops Luger and a piledriver gets two with Bagwell coming in for the save. We get a double tag so Clark can powerslam Bagwell, followed by a belly to back suplex. Adams DDT's the heels down at the same time but Luger pops up with a clothesline so the old guys (as in the bad ones) can take over. Everything breaks down and it's Jarrett coming in with the guitar to knock Clark out for the pin.

Rating: D-. How in the world do you have a new creative team and fresh stories (well as fresh as the NWO can be) and still have the same ending from last week? This was horribly dull stuff as Luger might as well have been holding up a sign saying "I'm not trying and I get paid for it" and Bagwell was Bagwell.

Page comes out for the save but Flair and company come out to beat him down. Flair makes Page vs. Jarrett for the main event and calls the team The Elite. That might be the most overused name I've heard of in wrestling history.

Billy Kidman vs. Mike Awesome

Before the match, Lance Storm says the war between the Filthy Animals and Team Canada is far from over but they will have the last laugh. Kidman has bad ribs coming in but shrugs off an early beating to dropkick Awesome out to the floor. A crossbody off the apron only hurts the ribs even worse but he's still able to hit a slingshot legdrop for two.

Awesome gets smart and throws Kidman in the air for a crash down onto the ribs, followed by a splash for a near fall. A powerslam looks to set up the Awesome Splash but it only hits mat to keep things going. Awesome hits a top rope clothesline for two but the Awesome Bomb is countered with a Bodog for two. For reasons of general stupidity, Kidman goes up for the shooting star, only to get crotched back down. Now the Awesome Bomb connects for the pin.

Rating: C+. I liked the idea of this match when it was mentioned on Nitro and it was about what I expected. These two worked a nice power vs. speed match though the ribs didn't really cost Kidman in the end. The latest stable war isn't the most interesting thing in the world but that's what you get in a Bischoff run company.

The Canadians go to cut Kidman's hair but the Animals run in for the save.

Chavo Guerrero says he was auditioning for Flair when he attacked Morrus on Monday.

Video recap of Nitro.

Chavo Guerrero Jr. vs. Hugh Morrus

Morrus (PICK A NAME ALREADY) runs him over to start and throws him up for a gorilla press. That means it's time for the choking before Morrus puts him on the top, only to eat a tornado DDT for two. It's time to start in on Hugh's leg because this show hasn't died enough already. After that eats up some time, Morrus (called Rection by the announcers) comes back with chops, only to get taken down into another leg lock. A sitout powerbomb plants Chavo but cue the Wall to chokeslam Morrus off the top to give Chavo the pin. The announcers are shocked and call Morrus the heart and soul of WCW.

Rating: D+. Somehow that's one of the better matches of the night so far despite Chavo laying on the mat for a long stretch and working on the leg, which of course went nowhere. Now we get the implosion of the Misfits, which I'm sure you were all looking forward to. It's another bad match on a LONG show full of them.

Post break, Chavo says he tried to preach to the other Misfits but couldn't get through to them.

Jeff Jarrett vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Before the match, Jarrett addresses the Hoosiernuts. Tenay: "Hoosiernuts? Oh we're in Indiana." Basically he's smart and Page is dumb so come get yours you string bean slapnut. Page starts fast with a clothesline out to

the floor but they head back inside before the announcers have to run away. Jeff gets in a few stomps but Page slugs away and gets two off a Batista Bomb. That earns Page a low blow and things slow right back down. Page blocks a kick to the ribs but eats an enziguri which puts Jarrett down as well for absolutely no reason.

Jeff breaks up a sunset flip with a right hand but kneels down so Page can pull him down for two. It's time for the required Jarrett sleeper hold which has never won a match. Two arm drops bring Page back to life and a sleeper drop (which Tony calls a version of a Diamond Cutter because Tony isn't that bright) puts both guys down again. A spinning Rock Bottom gets two for Page but the Diamond Cutter is countered, only to have the heels come in for the DQ.

Rating: C. Typical fine match between these two with nothing all that interesting but nothing too bad. You knew the ending was coming as we've flashed back to 1998 when a few basic moves were enough to bring out the troops for the DQ because things might get too interesting otherwise.

The good guys come out for the brawl with Tony saying they won't stop until someone dies to end the show.

Overall Rating: D-. Oh yeah this show has died again. This was another episode with zero effort and almost no storyline development. We have another big storyline with the heel group vs. the face group and they brawled a lot to end the show. It's pretty clear that they're not trying at this point, but the question is (assuming you don't know they have two months left) what are they waiting for? A pay per view just ended and now they're just waiting around again? For what? Another horrible show here as Thunder gets more and more worthless every week.

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