

Monday Night Raw – October 28, 1996: The Fire In His Eyes

Monday Night Raw

Date: October 28, 1996

Location: War Memorial Coliseum, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jerry Lawler

Things picked up last week and it couldn't have come at a better point. The company basically has to restart after years of putting on horrible shows with uninteresting characters and it just happens to be up against one of the hottest angles of all time over in WCW. They have their work cut out for them but they also have Bret Hart and Steve Austin. Let's get to it.

We open with clips of Austin destroying Brian Pillman's ankle to write him out of the ring due to his horrible car wreck that basically ended his in ring career.

Jesse Jammes vs. Salvatore Sincere

Jammes is the REAL Double J despite the original Double J being nowhere to be seen. Well save for on Nitro that is. Jesse starts fast with a few right hands and clotheslines to send Salvatore to the floor. Back in and Sincere gets in a few shots, only to be slammed off the top to put him on defense again. A full nelson slam puts Sincere away a few seconds later.

Rating: D-. It's always amazing to see what stupid gimmick could evolve into a moneymaker like the Road Dogg. This is one of those ideas that is so stupid and they had to know it was dead in the water but that's what you have to work with. Jammes wound up turning it into something special because he has talent and because the company eventually realized the gimmick sucked. Why that isn't the case today isn't clear but I'm sure it's NOT the company's fault because that just can't happen.

Dok Hendrix is ready to talk about the Hall of Fame but Austin cuts him off because no one cares about old people. Instead Dok runs down the Survivor Series card (including the debut of one Rocky Maivia, which is completely glossed over) and mentions that Bret is in Calgary tonight. Austin is NOT happy with that one and lets Dok have it as a result.

Crush vs. Aldo Montoya

JR comes out for commentary and keeps up his stupid heel run which went nowhere and no one wanted to hear because heel commentators get annoying in a hurry. Crush throws Aldo around to start but stops to yell at fans for calling him Jailbird. JR asks if the jockstrap on Aldo's face was Vince's idea as Crush ends it with the Heart Punch. JR: "That wouldn't work on you Vince." Just a squash.

Crush beats up a fan for calling him Jailbird.

We look back at Mr. Perfect swerving Marc Mero out of the Intercontinental Title last week. Perfect has been suspended, meaning he's gone and off to WCW.

Speaking of Mr. Perfect, he wins his first round match in the Karate Fighters tournament.

We're told that we'll hear from Bret at his home tonight and Pillman from his home next week so Austin starts yelling again about how he had to go all the way to Connecticut instead of having the cameras come to Texas. Fair point actually. We'll stick with Austin for now though and look at the attack on Pillman's leg again. Austin wouldn't even let Pillman be taken away in an ambulance. He'll be at Pillman's house next week and OH MAN IT'S THAT SHOW! Austin doesn't want to hear about Vince caring about Bret because he's just a greedy promoter.

We go to Bret's house but freaking SUNNY'S music cuts it off as the audio screws up. She comes out to sit on Lawler's lap and it's time for guest commentary.

Billy Gunn vs. Freddie Joe Floyd

Yeah this instead of Bret's response to Austin. Thanks WWF. The Gunns

have basically split at this point without officially doing so. Freddie works on an armbar to start as Sunny talks about liking Billy's smile. Billy sends him outside and here's Bart to yell at his brother. That goes nowhere so Freddie hammers away and gets in an elbow to the jaw. A hotshot drops Freddie Joe and Billy's top rope legdrop gives him the pin. Of note at the end: Vince says Sunny is just like Hillary Clinton who Sunny says will be the next President.

Rating: F. This was all about Billy getting a singles push, which just happened to be on the same night as the beginning of Jesse Jammes' singles push. I love that kind of coincidence and it's not something you're going to see that often. You will however see a match like this again and the fact that it cut off the great Austin vs. Bret stuff makes it even worse.

Back to the debate with Bret giving his normal calm response which Austin interprets as Bret being scared. Bret doesn't know if Austin has what it takes to beat him and the look on Austin's face is downright scary. Vince asks Bret why Austin issued the challenge but Austin says it's not over no matter what happens in the match. If Bret wants to get rid of him he'll have to kill him.

Bret tries to get in his catchphrase but Austin cuts him off again before telling Bret to say something. Austin goes off on a production guy for counting him down to commercial and beats him up as a result. The fire in Austin gave me chills here and you can see the future right in front of your eyes.

British Bulldog vs. Shawn Michaels

Non-title again and Owen Hart is out for commentary. Bulldog runs him down with a shoulder to start and they have some miscommunication on a Bulldog leapfrog, resulting in an armdrag sending Smith out to the floor. Shawn tells him to bring it and lays on the top rope as Bulldog takes a long break. Of course there's no counting or anything but that's not the storyline so of course it doesn't happen. Back in and Shawn grabs a headlock as we hear about the production guy calling the cops on Austin.

We take a break (and sit through a commercial for WWF Full Metal) and

come back with Shawn fighting out of a chinlock but getting slammed down by the hair. That always makes me cringe. There's the delayed vertical suplex from Bulldog and it's back to the chinlocking. Shawn fights back again and gets two off a sunset flip before Bulldog runs him over again. We take a second break and come back with Bulldog running into the flying forearm. The powerslam doesn't work and Shawn drops the top rope elbow, only to have Owen come in for the DQ.

Rating: B. These two always had some awesome chemistry together and they almost never had a bad match over several years. Shawn was clearly looking tired and it was time for a change but who else could they swap in that could come even close to his level of quality? He was going to have a good to excellent match against anyone he was in there against and that's all that mattered at this point.

Sid comes in for the save so Owen issues a challenge for a tag match next week.

Austin is being arrested but he's not worried because Vince will take care of his meal ticket at Survivor Series.

Overall Rating: D+. Steve Austin is a star and there's no way anything is going to stop him. You can't take your eyes off of him any time he's on screen with the fire in those eyes staring holes through anything in front of him. The match with Bret can't get here soon enough but there's something very important to get through next week. The main event helps this out a lot but there are still a lot of bad things hanging around and they're holding the rest of the show down. However, every time you see Austin you forget about all that stuff because he's just that great right now.

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