

No Mercy 2002 (2017 Redo) : Bloody Heck

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Date: October 20, 2002

Location: Alltel Arena, North Little Rock, Arkansas

Attendance: 9,074

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

This is one of those rare shows where the Brand Split really changes everything. On the Smackdown side we have what could be an incredible bloodbath inside the Cell between Brock Lesnar and Undertaker, plus a potential match of the year candidate as Rey Mysterio and Edge face Kurt Angle and Chris Benoit for the inaugural Smackdown Tag Team Titles. On the Raw side: Kane being accused of a murderer and necrophiliac and something about unifying titles. Wrestling is weird sometimes no? Let's get to it.

Undertaker is in the locker room when Kane sits down next to him.
Kane: "So how was your week?"

The opening video focuses on the two main events with Heyman implying that Undertaker will die inside the Cell and never get to see his soon to be born baby.

Raw Tag Team Titles: Christian/Chris Jericho vs. Goldust/Booker T.

Christian and Jericho are defending after winning the titles on Monday though this is mostly about Jericho vs. Booker. In a bad sign for the future of their title reign, the champs come out separately. Then again so do the challengers so not only do the entrances take forever but tag team wrestling seems to be dying.

Booker clotheslines Christian down to start but goes after Jericho instead of following up. Not that it really matters as he sidekicks Christian and brings Goldust in to keep the champs in trouble. Jericho gets catapulted over the top onto Christian but a quick necksnap across the top rope finally puts the champs in control.

Christian is intelligent enough to knock Booker off the apron so there's no one for Goldust to tag. I love the simple but smart ideas like that as they always work. Goldust's powerslam has Christian writhing in pain and Booker looking at his own hand. The hot tag brings in Booker to clean house but he misses the ax kick. Instead it's a spinebuster for two on Jericho, only to have Christian pull Chris out of the way of the side kick.

A blind tag allows Goldust to hit Shattered Dreams on Christian but Jericho grabs the Walls. Booker makes the save and gets in the Spinarooni so here's Christian with a title belt. The big shot misses so Jericho tries the springboard dropkick, only to have the rope break. Jericho bulldogs Goldust onto the title instead and drops a top rope moonsault to retain.

Rating: C. The rope break hurt things a bit but Jericho was more than good enough to keep things safe. That being said, the match wasn't all that great in the first place but it did its job. The problem though is how much fire Goldust and especially Booker T. lose every day they don't win the titles. I really don't get why Jericho and Christian need the titles and Booker is really needing to win something other than a nothing match against Big Show soon.

Funaki interviews Al Wilson, which is little more than a way to recap the Dawn Marie vs. Torrie feud. The big question: why was Al in his clothes in the shower? Al says he did not have sexual relations with that woman (remember this is Arkansas) so Funaki concludes that Al can't speak English. Odds are this was a way to fill in time to repair the ring, which is totally understandable.

Dawn Marie vs. Torrie Wilson

Torrie gets in some bad clotheslines and sunset flips Dawn to really show the anger and hatred. Dawn snaps her throat first across the top rope and the slow stomping ensues. We hit a chinlock as these two are actually way better than anything Stacy and Terri have done. They may not be good but at least they're trying to have a match instead of all the nonsense we normally get. Torrie comes back with the catfight and the referee gets crushed. He doesn't let go when

it's over though and Dawn has to yell at him. Torrie catapults her into the corner and gets a neckbreaker (nearly a Diamond Cutter) for the pin.

Rating: F+. Yeah what else were you expecting here? This feud is over a bikini contest, a lingerie contest and Dawn Marie being in the shower with a guy in his 50s or 60s. Were you expecting a classic match here? I'll give them some minor points for trying but there's only so much you can do when the women belong in a beginners' class instead of live pay per view.

Torrie yells at Dawn and says that was for her dad. Uh, Torrie, your dad was in the shower with her. I don't think he really wants revenge at the moment.

Rob Van Dam doesn't think much of Ric Flair's standard catchphrases because he's a chair smashing, frog splash, risk taking yinny and yanging Van Daminating dude. Between each item on that list, Van Dam threw in a little strut which looked more like dancing. It's not exactly funny but Van Dam isn't known for nailing the promos.

Heyman and Lesnar walk through the back and Tracy (the woman who accused Undertaker of cheating on his wife) says the same stuff she has every day.

Ric Flair vs. Rob Van Dam

Fallout from last month where Flair helped HHH to beat Van Dam and retain the title. Van Dam jumps him before the bell and hits the spinning leg to Flair's back. The top rope kick to the chest gives us the opening bell, even though the referee was counting them on the floor. Some right hands to the face and another kick to the chest give Van Dam two until a low blow cuts him off.

It's already time to go for the knee with a chop block, stomps and a wrap around the ropes. Another chop block sets up more stomping so let's talk about Tracy being attractive. There's the Figure Four for a bit until Rob rolls over to the ropes. Back up and Van Dam misses a dropkick but blocks another Figure Four with a small package. Flair gets slammed off the top, hit with Rolling Thunder and pinned

with the Five Star.

Rating: D. I know that sounded like it was just going through the motions and it's exactly what the match felt like. This was all about keeping things as basic as they could and you could connect the dots for what was going to happen about a minute into the match. I guess this is Van Dam's consolation prize for getting crushed last month so he must feel better now. Really boring stuff here as neither guy seemed to be trying.

Big Show complains about something to Stephanie when Bischoff comes in to say Raw talent shouldn't be talking to the Smackdown boss. That goes badly as Show rants about how he hasn't been on pay per view since July and hasn't main evented in forever. Bischoff yells at him and gets grabbed by the jacket for some sneering threats.

Here's the history of the Intercontinental Title video from Monday. It's a good video but this screams filler.

Cruiserweight Title: Tajiri vs. Jamie Noble

Jamie is defending and has Nidia with him. For the third time in four matches, someone is attacked before the bell. That really is hard to defend and shouldn't be happening. Tajiri's moonsault to the floor gets two at the bell and a kneedrop is good for the same. Jamie's sunset flip doesn't work as Tajiri rolls forward through the ropes (nice counter) but a running electric chair gives the champ two. A tilt-a-whirl slam sets up a bow and arrow as the back work continues.

Tajiri can't fight up yet and Jamie drops an elbow to the back to keep him down. The announcers make sex jokes about Nidia as Tajiri avoids a charge and grabs a wicked tornado DDT. Tajiri's kick and strike rush set up a spinwheel kick for two. A bridging German suplex gets the same and there's the Tarantula. Tajiri gets in the Buzzsaw Kick but Nidia kisses the referee, allowing Noble to come back with the Tiger Bomb for a close two. Another Tiger Bomb is countered and Tajiri tries a victory roll, only to have Nidia trip Jamie up (and reset his balance), allowing him to get a rollup to retain.

Rating: B-. I dug this a lot more than I was expecting to as the psychology was working fine and the ending makes sense. The problem here though is how far the cruiserweight division has sunk. There's just nothing to the thing right now but that's been the case for a long time. Noble is a talented guy but a redneck champion isn't the most thrilling character in the world.

Tajiri kisses Nidia and kicks Noble post match.

Chris Benoit finds Eddie Guerrero and tells him that Chavo is getting beaten up in a locker room. Eddie hears him screaming but thinks it's the same trick he and Chavo pulled on Benoit a few weeks back. He says that's a little girl screaming (That's better?) instead of Chavo but the door opens and Chavo stumbles out. Angle follows him with a big smile and security holds Uncle Eddie back. Funny stuff to go with the great wrestling. Is there any doubt as to why Smackdown is better?

We recap Kane vs. HHH, which is based off Kane being on the biggest roll he's had in years. Then HHH accused him of murdering a woman named Katie Vick (and possibly violating her corpse). Both of the Raw singles titles are on the line with the winner getting the World Title while the Intercontinental Title will be retired no matter what.

Raw World Title/Intercontinental Title: HHH vs. Kane

Technically they're both defending but I'll only call HHH champion because Kane's title doesn't mean anything. A hard right hand knocks HHH into the corner and even more of them have the champ rocked. Kane kicks him under the ropes and into the barricade but gets caught in a neckbreaker back inside.

HHH posts him to really slow Kane down and it's time to stomp away. A spinebuster gets two and it's time to choke as this is in the slow HHH style you would expect. Since the match hasn't been uninteresting enough yet, we hit the sleeper. Thankfully the day of the sleeper has passed though and Kane powers out for the side slam. Cue Flair and the ref gets bumped as Kane beats HHH up even more.

Flair slips HHH the title for two as Hurricane comes out to cancel out Ric. And never mind as HHH Pedigrees him on the floor, likely for getting a nice pop. The chokeslam is broken up and the ref is bumped again, followed by the chokeslam through the table.

Flair brings in the sledgehammer to no avail as JR says NOTHING is going to stop Kane tonight. NOTHING you see. The Tombstone is countered with a hammer shot but Kane pops back up for the chokeslam. Somehow the referee is STILL down though so here's a replacement...who Flair pulls to the floor. That earns Flair a chokeslam but the Pedigree retains the title.

Rating: D. This reminds me of the volleyball game in Scooby-Doo and the Ghoul School: one shenanigan after another with what's supposed to be the main focus going on in the background. This was a boring wrestling match with about six minutes of insanity at the end, which doesn't make for a good use of the time. You can add Kane to the list of people whose life was destroyed by HHH and then he gets to lose the title match. Oh and now there's no midcard title because no one needs one of those around.

Stephanie is in her office when Tracy comes in. They talk about relationships and Tracy says she doesn't care what happens as long as she gets Undertaker back. Confidentially though, she's been lying about almost everything. Yes she actually says confidentially and we're again supposed to ignore the camera. Undertaker comes in after having heard everything (How?) and Tracy is thrown out.

We recap the Tag Team Title tournament with the main focus being on Angle and Benoit not being allowed to fight each other, even though they can't stand one another.

Smackdown Tag Team Titles: Kurt Angle/Chris Benoit vs. Edge/Rey Mysterio

This should be amazing. Again, four separate entrances. Angle and Mysterio start things off with Kurt sending him into the corner for some slaps to the back of the head. Get in the embarrassment stuff while you can I guess. Angle wants Edge but Rey isn't ready to tag out and stomps on Angle's foot. The ensuing charge is countered into

a drop toehold so Rey can smack Kurt in the back of the head.

NOW he'll tag Edge in and for some reason he tries to get technical with Angle which goes as well as you would expect. Benoit comes in and grinds away on a headlock as Cole describes the upcoming Cell match as a "treat". Thankfully Tazz is right there to say a treat is something like a lollipop, not a violent match. Edge gets two off a flapjack and spears Angle off the apron but Benoit gets in a clothesline to take over.

Off to a rear naked choke from Angle with Tazz pointing out that Kurt made sure that Edge could see Rey, making him feel helpless because he couldn't get there. Tazz didn't get analytical often but he was good when he did. It's back to Benoit for the rolling German suplexes but he takes too long going up and gets superplexed right back down. The hot tag brings in Mysterio so house can be cleaned, including a top rope legdrop as Benoit is draped across the ropes.

Not that it matters as Benoit grabs the Crossface with Edge having to make a save. The 619 is countered but Edge missile dropkicks Rey in the back to knock him onto Benoit for a near fall. Rey goes up but Angle runs the ropes for the belly to belly superplex. Things settle back down with Angle working on Rey's back before grabbing a front facelock. Some clotheslines drop Rey but he bulldogs Benoit and makes the hot tag off to Edge for the house cleaning.

Everything breaks down and Benoit gets his bronco busted, followed by the toss into the top rope hurricanrana for Angle. Benoit headbutts his partner by mistake but Angle gets back up for the rolling German suplexes. Rey charges at Edge who suplexes his partner into something like a Cannonball on Angle. Benoit comes back in and Crossfaces Benoit until Rey gets in a 619 for the save.

There's the Angle Slam to Mysterio but Edge reverses the ankle lock into a small package for an INCREDIBLE near fall. Back up and Edge throws Rey over the top for a moonsault onto Benoit but Kurt ankle locks Edge, which is reversed into an ankle lock on Kurt. You know Angle isn't having that though as he reverses into another ankle lock to make Edge tap for the titles.

Rating: A+. I don't think this one needs much of an explanation.

Those last five to seven minutes were outstanding with some great near falls and some of the best action you'll see. This is the kind of stuff that you only get when everyone is making each other better and it makes for some outstanding action. Check this match out if you haven't before and you'll see why it's so revered.

Undertaker gets an injection to numb his hand for the main event.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Victoria

Trish is defending after Victoria accused her of sleeping her way into the company. They get aggressive to start with Trish knocking her to the floor and sending Victoria into the post. Victoria comes back by dropping her face first off the barricade before not getting the best elevation off a monkey flip. Lawler talks about the girls' chests as Victoria grabs an over the shoulder backbreaker. An electric chair brings Victoria out of the corner and they slug it out again with Trish scoring with the Chick Kick for two (and getting up before the kickout). Stratusfaction is broken up but an O'Connor Roll retains the title.

Rating: C+. This was one of the better women's matches in a long time as, commentary aside, this was a match where the gender wasn't the focus for a change. Instead it was all about the action, which is a big reason today's women's wrestling is so much better than its predecessors. It's still not a great era for the division but at least they had two women who were ready to fight here. Good match here and a very nice surprise.

Rikishi is at the World and hopes the Cell isn't as bad for Lesnar as it was for him back in 2000. He picks Undertaker.

We recap Undertaker vs. Brock Lesnar, which is a rematch from last month. Last time they went to a double DQ so this time it's inside the Cell because they keep fighting. Undertaker has a broken hand but is allowed to use the cast. This was treated as a major deal because Stephanie doesn't understand how the Cell works.

Smackdown World Title: Undertaker vs. Brock Lesnar

Lesnar is defending inside the Cell. I love all the little tears in the Cell walls from the years of use. Undertaker misses some cast shots to start and gets caught in a great looking powerslam. Not that it matters as the first cast shot has Lesnar in trouble and it's time for a breather on the floor. Brock finally goes after THE BIG CAST ON UNDERTAKER'S HAND and shockingly enough, it works quite well. A second cast to the head busts Lesnar open and has Paul screaming NO over and over in a nice touch.

Undertaker sends him into various metal objects and the blood is just flowing down Lesnar's chest and shoulders. A ram into the cage wall gets two on the floor, which I don't believe you could do before. Lesnar is launched hard into the wall and a hard cast shot makes things even worse. Undertaker goes to the top and drops an awkward looking knee as Brock is on the apron for two more on the outside. That didn't get much of a reaction and it's not the biggest surprise given how awkward it looked.

Undertaker kicks Heyman through the cage to bust him open as well. One heck of a whip sends Lesnar hard into the steps but he finally posts Undertaker for a breather. Now it's time to get creative as Brock steals Undertaker's belt to tie him to the Cell by the hand. A series of chair shots to the cast should completely shatter the hand but Undertaker punches away instead.

Lesnar gets the cast off and for some reason it's odd to see Undertaker's bare hand. Instead of stomping on the hand or grabbing it (like common sense would suggest), Brock sits Undertaker on top and grabs the top of the cage for some jumping kicks. Undertaker kicks him down in a hurry and drops a top rope elbow for two. In an even bigger surprise, Undertaker busts out a suicide dive of all things (and it didn't look bad either).

Lesnar gets back up and BLASTS Undertaker with the steps, busting him open so badly that you can see the blood falling off his head and onto the floor. With his face completely covered in blood, Undertaker slugs away with the broken hand as there is blood on the camera lens.

Old School is broken up so Undertaker escapes the F5 and gets two off a chokeslam. Lesnar's Last Ride is countered and the real thing gets two (with Undertaker's blood DRIPPING INTO LESNAR'S MOUTH) as Brock grabs the ropes. Shouldn't that not count in a falls count anywhere match? Not that it matters as Undertaker loads up the Tombstone but Brock counters and gets the F5 to retain.

Rating: B. This is a tricky one as the story of the match (Undertaker's broken hand) was almost completely forgotten about halfway through. That being said, all the blood was more than enough to make up for it as this was one of the most violent matches I've seen in a long time. Given how the PG era works today, it really does make for a sharp change of pace and that's a good thing at times. There might be too much blood here for some tastes but the action and violence is very entertaining if it's your style.

Brock climbs the Cell to pose with the title to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. I liked this one a lot more than I was expecting to, which is saying a lot how weak the card gets after the top two matches. The lineups are still pretty weak at the moment and as usual, the Smackdown half more than outshined the other half. There good stuff here but there's also quite a bit of bad and unfortunately there seems to be more of the latter, at least in total matches.

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