

Monday Night Raw – January 27, 2003 (2017 Redo): The Steiner Shadow

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 27, 2003

Location: Allstate Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Eric Bischoff's time to fix Raw continues to count down but he has a secret weapon: magazine interviews! Yeah that was his big announcement last week: Steve Austin can tell his side of the story in Raw Magazine. I'm going to assume that it leads to an on-screen return but at least it gives us something to talk about other than HHH vs. Scott Steiner, which is still going for some reason as well. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the end of last week's show with Scott Steiner getting the first group beatdown at the hands of HHH, Ric Flair, Randy Orton and Batista. I'm sure a name will be coming soon.

Opening sequence.

Booker T. vs. Jeff Hardy

Jeff has been, shall we say, more aggressive and angry lately but he hasn't pulled the trigger just yet. Feeling out process to start with Booker missing the side kick but scoring with some big chops. Jeff knees him down though and grabs a chinlock as the announcers talk about Bischoff's potential firing.

I've been watching some old 80s stuff lately and this makes me miss the old commentary so much more. Back then the announcers would talk about the match going on like it was the only thing that mattered at the moment while here, it could be anything else other than the match going on in front of them. Booker gets back up and avoids the Whisper in the Wind. The ax kick misses and Jeff drops the legs between Booker's legs. Now the

Whisper connects but Booker grabs the spinning sunset flip out of the corner for the quick pin.

Rating: C-. Not a bad little match here as Booker/Goldust doesn't seem to be getting the most focus at this point. As much as I wanted to see them get a better push with the Tag Team Titles, HHH is desperately in need of a challenger who can have a competent match and Booker would fill that role very well. It's also nice to open the show with a match instead of some segment, which isn't the best way to get a show going on a good note.

Jeff attacks Booker but gets beaten down. That's quite the heel turn.

Nathan Jones video.

Here's Steiner for a chat. He thinks HHH orchestrated that whole thing last week so get out here right now. This brings out the champ, with the long blond hair, sunglasses and suit for a look that says "I don't know how to be Ric Flair". HHH brags about how awesome he is and agrees to come to the ring...but here are the reinforcements. The team comes after him but Steiner pulls out a pipe and chases them off. Simple idea, but I'm not sure you want to have your new heel stable being chased off in their second appearance together.

Terri interviews D'Lo Brown before his match with Hurricane. Terri: "Now you've never been in the ring with a superhero before have you?" Teddy Long goes on a rant about the lack of black superheroes. The only one he knows of is Black Lightning, suggesting that Long doesn't know much about superheroes.

Hurricane vs. D'Lo Brown

Going back to the complaints about commentary, the announcers talk about black superheroes, which turns into a discussion about Shaft. Brown starts fast with the leg lariat (Is that a super power?) and follows with an abdominal stretch (I'm assuming rest holds are like his yellow sun?). Hurricane grabs a hurricanrana and something like an Edge-o-Matic for two before sending Brown outside. A flip dive seems to hurt Hurricane's back though and he can't get a suplex back inside. The Sky High is enough to

put Hurricane away.

Rating: D+. The ending with the bad back was a nice touch but the commentary hurt things a lot. Brown and Hurricane are fine enough for a low level heel act but I don't know how far they're going to go with the thing. You can also add Hurricane to the list of people who were given titles last year and seemingly gained nothing as a result.

Chief Morely is watching a tape of the end of last week's Smackdown where Hulk Hogan returned and punched Vince out. Morely thinks that's going to get Bischoff an extension on the thirty days, which Bischoff calls stupid, as he should be doing. Eric has an idea.

Chris Jericho, who will be facing Steiner next week in a #1 contenders match, is disturbed by hurting that ring post in front of Stacy Keibler last week. Somehow Stacy has a grade 2 concussion and Jericho needs to go address the situation.

Here's Jericho, in black and white checker pants, to address said situation after a break. He's concerned about what's going to happen: he has to face Scott Steiner! While that's a big deal, he does apologize to Stacy, only to be cut off by Christian. He doesn't think much of what happened to Stacy because this is a wrestling ring and it was all her fault. JR is at his most offended here as Jericho says the blame should be on Test. If Test was a real man, he would have taken the shot himself. JR: "WHAT???"

Test deserved it after throwing Jericho out of the Royal Rumble but here's Shawn Michaels to disagree. After making fun of Jericho's pants, he says a real man would come down and fight Jericho face to face, which is exactly what he's going to do. Christian helps with the beatdown but Shawn cleans house without too much effort.

Victoria beats on a trashcan with Trish Stratus' picture on it to get ready for the street fight.

Women's Title: Victoria vs. Trish Stratus

Victoria (looking especially good here in pink) is defending in a street

fight and jumps Trish from behind with a pool cue. Trish is sent into the steps and Victoria stops to pose in the ring. A Chick Kick drops the champ and a clothesline gets two on the floor (street fights and hardcore matches aren't the same thing but you can't expect WWE to keep up with something like rules).

Back in and Victoria misses a charge into the post and gets two trashcan lids cracked around her head. Victoria is right back with a catapult into a trashcan in the corner but a Stratusphere gives Trish two. Steven Richards tries a fire extinguisher but hits Victoria by mistake. Richards comes in for the save so Trish kendo sticks him away. Stratusfaction is broken up and Trish is sent into the barricade...for the pin? What a lame ending.

Rating: C+. That ending really hurt things here as they were beating the heck out of each other and looking more polished as almost any hardcore match you would see from this company. It felt like they were actually trying to hurt each other, which is far more than you can say about these matches most of the time. Just find a new challenger though as the feud is really starting to look stale.

Victoria and Richards beat on Trish some more until Jazz returns to get in her own shots. A DDT and STF have Trish screaming and I'm sure we'll be having a match at No Way Out as a result.

Tag Team Titles: Dudley Boyz vs. William Regal/Lance Storm

Regal and Storm are defending in a tables match (ladder match according to JR). Bubba and D-Von jump the champs to start and get in some shots with flag poles. Storm gets speared down and send outside in a heap as JR lists off the Dudleys' record in table matches with the titles on the line since 2000. Well how can you argue with general statistics like that?

The reverse 3D drops Regal and the regular version does the same to Storm but, instead of going for a table, here's a What's Up to Regal. It's table time...but there are no tables present. You can find a small hardware store under there most of the time but we can't find a single table? Also, ANNNOUNCER'S TABLE anyone?. Morely comes out with a table

and says he's not that stupid. The Dudleys go after him and here are Rico and 3 Minute Warning to lay them out. The beatdown is on and even Spike Dudley's interference can't stop D-Von from being powerbombed through the table to retain the titles.

Rating: D. This was a squash until the second half was all about the interference. The problem with the whole evil regime thing is you basically have Val Venis, two Samoans, the most boring Tag Team Champions ever and Rico vs. the Dudleys. Why in the world is that supposed to be interesting? I say supposed to because it certainly isn't, but WWE is likely going to keep it out there as long as they can.

Video on the recent tour of Asia.

HHH and company come in to see Bischoff about the #1 contenders match but then changes his mind because he's not worried.

Matt Cappotelli and John Hennigan (looking WEIRD with much shorter hair) are ready for an exhibition. Al Snow comes up to give them a pep talk but EVIL Christopher Nowinski is behind them with an evil smile.

Rob Van Dam is cool with Kane throwing him out of the Rumble. They're ready to fight HHH and Batista tonight. Rob thinks the chokeslam is cool and then lists off all of his own moves. Kane does Rob's thumb pose while calling himself the Big Red Machine. These two are a good choice for an upper midcard team, which tends to be the case with Kane more often than not. Not the worst role in the world to have actually.

We recap the Tough Enough 3 finale.

Matt Cappotelli vs. John Hennigan

They both look nervous, not to mention small. Matt headlocks him to the mat to start as Snow watches from ringside. John flips out of a hiptoss and hits a dropkick with a backflip for two. Cue Nowinski to post Snow and stop the match for a speech instead.

Nowinski rants about not winning Tough Enough but here's Dreamer to chase him off, only to cane the rookies down for not earning the right to be here. I always liked Matt more than John and given that this is being

written the day he announced that his brain cancer had returned, this was very bittersweet.

Sean O'Haire tells us not to worry about having a drink or a smoke.

Here's Eric Bischoff to talk about Austin. We see a clip from Confidential back in June with everyone burying Austin for walking out on the company. There are two sides to every story though and Austin will be telling his side in Raw Magazine. This will include talking about JR, Debra (recently divorced) and a host of various wrestlers, entirely uncensored. For now though, here's the Austin Desire video.

Rob Van Dam/Kane vs. HHH/Batista

Kane and Batista start things off with JR already talking about the Austin article. Batista stops a charge with an elbow but eats a jumping clothesline. It's off to Van Dam for the shoulders in the corner but the backflip lets Batista run him over. HHH comes in and gets kicked in the face as JR and King talk about horses in Oklahoma.

Batista takes Van Dam's head off with a hard clothesline but Van Dam kicks HHH in the face (again), allowing the hot tag off to Kane. Side slams abound and the top rope clothesline drops Batista. The Five Star doesn't quite work though, leaving Orton to post Kane. Batista rips the mask off (giving us a pretty clear shot of most of his face), sending Kane up the ramp in shame. The spinebuster and Batista Bomb end Van Dam.

Rating: D. Boring for the most part here with the mask stuff being the only thing of much note. Van Dam and Kane are good options for the jobbers here, though at the end of the day they need to build up SOMEONE other than Steiner for the future. I know Kane and Van Dam aren't the most interesting people but having them lose in seven minutes isn't the best way to give us people to fight against the heel faction.

Post match Van Dam gets beaten down until Steiner comes in. That earns him a beatdown from an invading Jericho and then the whole group, with Scott getting some color. HHH and company leave so Jericho slaps on the Walls to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. They kept this show moving for the most part but the shadow of HHH vs. Steiner and Austin returning for Bischoff's sake isn't the best stuff to put on top of the card. Couple that with stuff like D'Lo Brown: Black Superhero and the never ending Tough Enough nonsense and it can make for a tedious show. They managed to make the best of some bad situations though and the show was as watchable as it's going to get around this time.

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