2017 Awards: Promo of the Year

This might be my favorite one.

Something a lot of people forget about wrestling is the importance of the talking aspect. If there's no story to build things up, the match is just two people doing moves to each other. I need a reason to care about what I'm seeing and that's where the promos come in. This year had some excellent promos, meany of which were only a few words line. Still though, they did their job and that's what matters most.

First of all, I'm leaving the Festival of Friendship off because that's more of a segment than a promo.

Since this is probably the hardest award of the entire year, I'm going to knock off one of the only ones which isn't bouncing around my head as a possible winner. Samoa Joe was already the #1 contender to Brock Lesnar's Universal Title but he wasn't done yet. Instead, on the June 5 Raw, Joe went after Paul Heyman, telling him that he wanted Brock Lesnar before choking Heyman out. Joe is often described as one of the few wrestlers who feels real and that's what he did here. It was a great moment and made Joe look like a real threat to Lesnar, which is exactly the point.

Next up we go down NXT for one of those short form promos that also capped off a story. For some reason, Velveteen Dream was obsessed with getting Aleister Black to say his name. This led to a downright bizarre feud with Dream seemingly being attracted to Black, who refused to say his name. They had a rocking match at Takeover: WarGames with Black kicking Dream's head off. After the match, with Dream waking up, Black said "enjoy infamy….Velveteen Dream." It was a great moment and capped off a great story with Black both giving Dream what he

wanted but not in the same way. This was a really strong candidate.

Back to the main roster now with the one I enjoyed the most, albeit maybe not the best. Due to reasons that I really don't agree with, one of the big matches at Wrestlemania saw Nikki Bella/John Cena vs. Miz/Maryse. This was a great way to give Miz exposure (and to give us a plot device for Total Divas) and Miz took advantage of it, leading to a series of "lost" Total Bellas episodes featuring Miz and Maryse as Cena and Nikki. These were some of the funniest things I've ever seen with the two of them perfectly mocking the ridiculous nature of the show. Throw in Maryse being a hotter Nikki than Nikki and these were GREAT.

It took me awhile but I finally managed to decide between the top two. In what might be the most to the point yet stretched out sentence that I've ever heard, Roman Reigns took the crowd to new levels of hatred. The night after Wrestlemania, Raw opened with nearly four minutes of fans chanting for Undertaker, who Reigns seemed to retire the night before. Reigns came to the ring and after standing for nearly five minutes with the fans not letting him get a word in because they were not having it, Reigns merely said "This is my yard now" before leaving.

If this had been followed by by Reigns being edgier or even turning heel, it's the promo of the year easily. As it is though, it's one of the most amazing displays of the fans being led exactly where WWE wanted them to go. Reigns looked like the biggest heel in the world here and it worked to pure perfection with the fans absolutely HATING HIM the entire time. This worked, but it wasn't the best thing Reigns was involved in all year.

We're going to August and back to one of the best talkers of all time. On August 28, John Cena and Roman Reigns signed the contract for a match at No Mercy. At the signing though, Cena

tore into Reigns like few people have ever torn into anyone else, talking about how Reigns was supposed to be this next big thing but couldn’t do it because he was a corporate made John Cena bootleg. When Reigns fumbled his lines, Cena said it was called cutting a promo and if Reigns wanted to be the big dog, he better learn how to do this. Cena burned him several more times as it was as one sided as you could have gotten.

The big reason this worked though was it felt real. Just like with Rock vs. Cena from a few years ago, this felt like two people who had real animosity towards one another, leading to the two of them going off with the insults. Reigns tried his best but when you get personal with Cena, he just hits another level with the shots and promo work. It made Cena look like one of the biggest stars ever while Reigns was just left in the dust. Reigns won the match, but he lost this one handily.