

Smackdown – September 11, 2003: When Stephanie Dropped Brock

Smackdown

Date: September 11, 2003

Location: Jefferson Civic Center, Birmingham, Alabama

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

We're building towards a big match here as Brock Lesnar vs. Kurt Angle in an Iron Man Match goes down next week. That means a lot of buildup on this week's show, which could go in several ways. Of course it could also mean a lot of missing the point, which would certainly make sense around here. Let's get to it.

This episode only runs ninety minutes instead of the full two hours. The reason: UPN wanted to air the Mulletts, because that was the kind of show WWE fans would flock towards.

As you might expect, we open with a tribute to those who lost their lives on September 11. Nothing wrong with that.

Opening sequence.

Cars are being pulled into a circle in the parking lot for the Eddie Guerrero vs. John Cena fight.

Rey Mysterio/Billy Kidman vs. Tajiri/Nunzio

The canned pop is strong for Kidman here. I almost never notice those things so it's especially bad. Nunzio jumps Rey from behind to start but Kidman slingshots in for a rollup. A giant swing into a dropkick (so that's where Cesaro and Tyson Kidd got it from) gets two on Nunzio. Tajiri comes in and kicks Kidman in the head though as the hard hitting begins. The fans chant ROLL TIDE because they don't seem to get how wrestling works. Maybe they should watch the Mulletts.

Nunzio comes back in for a chinlock until Kidman fights up and scores with a dropkick. Tajiri's tornado DDT is countered into a BK Bomb (sweet counter actually) and it's the hot tag to Mysterio. Everything breaks down and Rey ducks the handspring elbow, setting up a 619 to Tajiri's back. The regular version misses though and Tajiri kicks Rey in the head for the pin.

Rating: B-. The match was only about four minutes but it was the perfect choice for an opener. The cruiserweights opening the show worked wonders in WCW and there's no reason to switch up a formula with such a history of working. Kidman and Mysterio are still a great team, but their time of going after the titles seems to have passed. Kind of a shame, but then we might not get to see more of the Bashams or whatever other lame team they have at the moment.

Post match, Tajiri hits Rey with the belt.

Vince and Sable agree on sending flowers to Zach Gowen as Big Show, in a suit, stands in the background. Stephanie comes in to recap last week's events in that really annoying manner of hers. She yells about how it was all Vince's idea and that Vince doesn't care about Gowen (I have no idea why we're supposed to either). Brock is a criminal who should be in jail...and of course he's right behind her.

Since it's Stephanie though, she gets scared for a second but brings up Brock tapping out to Angle. Stephanie doesn't sweat Lesnar. Brock wants a warmup match tonight with Undertaker, Kurt Angle and Gowen all at once. None of them are here tonight though, so Brock can fight Stephanie (Since she's the only one in the room he hasn't fought yet. Ignore the cameraman. And Sable.). Vince says that's money in the bank and Stephanie can either face him or quit as GM. This segment was longer than the opening match, which gives them even less time to find a way to not deliver the match.

Torrie Wilson and Nidia are in the back when they run into Dawn Marie. They're worried about her getting beaten up by Shaniqua tonight but Dawn has to stand up to her. If this is your big army to fight her, just quit now.

Dawn Marie vs. Shaniqua

Dawn wastes no time in trying to jump out of the corner, only to have Shaniqua mistime a chop out of the air. Instead they head outside with Dawn being sent into the barricade as this is complete dominance. Shaniqua grabs a chair but Torrie and Nidia run in for the DQ.

Torrie hits Shaniqua with the chair (with two camera cuts in short order) before bailing.

Stephanie is thinking about her decision when Sable comes in to recap everything that we already know. If Stephanie quits, Sable is more than ready to be General Manager. I'd be curious to see how long this show would be if you took out all the exposition and recaps of things we hear ten minutes ago.

Chris Benoit vs. Rhyno

Rhyno says some very un-PG things as we wait for the opening bell. They waste no time in hitting the power game with Rhyno kneeing him in the ribs and clubbing Benoit over the back. That just means an early Crossface attempt, sending Rhyno bailing to the ropes. Rhyno pulls him throat first into the ropes to send Benoit outside, allowing A-Train to run in and post Benoit for good measure. That's only good for two back inside and we take a break with Cole in mid rant.

Back with Rhyno scoring with a superplex for two before tying Benoit in the Tree of Woe for some kicks to the ribs. We hit a Sharpshooter on Benoit (not a bad one either) but a rope is grabbed in a hurry. Benoit is right back up with a Sharpshooter of his own so Rhyno grabs the rope as well. What's good for the wolverine is good for the Rhyno.

With the holds not working, Benoit snaps off a release German suplex and heads up but gets caught as well. A sunset bomb breaks up a superplex attempt for two, only to have Rhyno come back with a spinebuster. Benoit is dazed but not enough for the Gore, which he pulls down into the Crossface for the win.

Rating: B. They beat each other up quite well here and that ending with

Benoit snapping on the Crossface was great. When he pulls that thing on out of nowhere, it's one of the coolest looking things in wrestling and this was one of the best he's done yet. Hopefully this wraps up their feud and Benoit can move on to something bigger, though this was a good blowoff.

The APA is having a poker game in the office with Matt Hardy yelling at the APA for treating an underling like a servant. He then rants about Shannon Moore getting the wrong kind of orange juice and tells the APA to join AA. Faarooq turns it into a racial thing and a match is made tonight. Everyone else leaves and the APA toasts the people who died on 9/11. Of note: Bradshaw said they were playing Texas Hold Em and dealt them all five cards. The moral: Bradshaw doesn't know how to play poker.

At this point, outside of the USA, you would have seen Brock Lesnar vs. Kurt Angle from Summerslam to stretch the show to two hours.

Cena is thrilled with the circle of cars and hits a bunch of them with his chain.

John Cena vs. Eddie Guerrero

Non-title and in a ring of cars in the parking lot. Cena's rap is of course a bunch of gay jokes about Eddie, which really was a common theme of his. Eddie's car completes the circle and we're ready to go with wrestlers sitting on the cars. They're both in street clothes and take turns sending each other face first into the hoods. Cena muscles him up for a suplex onto the top of a Mitsubishi before grabbing a lawnmower out of the back of a van.

Eddie avoids a bad cut but gets thrown onto another hood. Some shovel shots only hit a car but a flapjack puts Cena onto the car again. Eddie's shovel shot knocks out a headlight and he uses a door as a weapon. Tazz says Eddie is a veteran, making me wonder how many times Eddie has hit someone in the head with a car door. They fight outside the wheel as someone who looks like Al Snow is strolling along in the background.

Eddie gets thrown into the trunk of the car but pops out, knocking the hood into Cena's face. Cena tosses him through a windshield for two and

slams a door onto his arm for the same. Back up and Eddie sends him face first through a window but Cena does the same to him. Cena jumps behind the wheel of a car but Eddie gets in the passenger seat and rams his head into the wheel for some rhythmic beeping.

The cigarette lighter to the chest burns Cena and Eddie washes the windshield on Cena's face. The much cleaner Cena backdrops Eddie onto the hood for two but the FU onto the car is broken up. Instead it's a hiptoss onto a car and the returning Chavo Guerrero hits Cena in the head with what looked like a hubcap. The frog splash from one car to another is good for the pin.

Rating: B+. I remember people talking about this match very fondly and it's easy to see why. They found the right combination of violence and fun (the windshield wipers thing was good) while Chavo was a great way to wrap things up. I'm not sure if this finishes their feud but a singles match would hardly be a bad thing as they have chemistry together.

Post match Chavo takes the title and says the Guerreros have it before leaving with Eddie.

Matt Hardy/Shannon Moore vs. APA

Matt, who rarely uses turn signals (The APA better DESTROY him then as that drives me crazy. Excuse me person driving your several thousand pound machine that may be going upwards of 70 miles an hour, but could you please LET ME KNOW WHEN YOU'RE GOING TO CHANGE LANES OR TURN THE THING??? That would be nice, not to mention quite a bit safer, if you can manage to flick your hand all of the three inches that it takes to use your signal.) and whose entertainment system requires five remotes, and Shannon are in wrestling gear while the APA is in street clothes.

As you might expect, Cole explains Matt's hypocrisy over Shannon, thankfully with Tazz calling him out for the obvious statement. Faarooq and Shannon start things off with Moore hitting him from behind for some reason. Some forearms and elbows drop Moore for two and it's off to Matt. Things don't go well for him either as it's a powerslam from Faarooq and a suplex from Bradshaw for two. Bradshaw starts cleaning house but Matt's top rope clothesline knocks him into a jackknife cover for two. Not that

it matters as the Clothesline ends Shannon a few seconds later.

Rating: D+. Pretty much a squash here and at least they pinned Shannon. The tag team isn't doing Matt any favors but the ship has pretty much sailed for him anyway, at least with Version 1. If they're going to build up the APA with wins like this and then feed them to bigger teams, it's not the worst idea in the world.

The butler brings the APA a tray of beer.

Video on Lesnar vs. Angle, including Brock pushing Gowen down the steps last week.

Next week: Shaniqua vs. Torrie Wilson/Nidia. Uh, yeah.

Brock Lesnar vs. Stephanie McMahon

Vince handles the intros and plays up the drama about Stephanie fighting or quitting. Naturally Stephanie comes out to fight (Cole cites her being in wrestling gear as proof) and Vince isn't sure what to think. Vince laughs off the idea that Stephanie is here to fight, basically daring her to keep defying him.

She slaps Vince and drops Brock with a low blow, because of course she does. Vince takes a low blow of his own but Brock catches her while she tries to escape. Brock throws Stephanie into the barricade and throws the steps at her, but Stephanie's cat like reflexes get her to safety. Instead Brock loads up the F5 into the post until Kurt Angle runs in for the save. You know, the guy not on the show tonight. A quick brawl sends Lesnar and Vince running to end the show. No match as the bell never rang.

What is this Vince vs. Stephanie feud even about anymore? It's to the point where they're fighting because they've been fighting for months and I'm struggling to remember why it's happening in the first place. Something about Vince being a horrible father and her not wanting him to abuse Gowen the same way? That's not a feud that needs to still be going three or four months later but it's still the driving force on these shows. Trying to make Stephanie into a hero or this sympathetic role

model isn't working and it's not getting any better. Find someone else to do this with already, or at least do it better.

Overall Rating: B. Stephanie mess aside, this was a heck of a show with the missing half hour helping a lot. You got a nice mixture of styles with the brawl in the parking lot, the hard hitting Benoit vs. Rhyno match and the fast paced opener. That's a good balance of stuff and makes the show a lot more entertaining to watch.

The main event stuff though...not so much. If you want to do something like this, have Stephanie vs. Linda Miles, which still makes her look like a big underdog but not so much of an underdog that it's ridiculous. No one realistically thought Brock was going to beat the heck out of Stephanie, but they might believe Miles could do it. Have that match and Brock and Angle as seconds. You can do a quick "match" with the same story (Vince chairs Angle down, Brock goes after Stephanie, same finish to the show). Was anyone going to miss Linda vs. Dawn from earlier? Other than that mess, good show here with the time helping a lot.

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