

Monday Night Raw – June 28, 2004: It's Either Brilliant Or Stupid



IMG Credit: WWE

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 28, 2004

Location: Richmond Coliseum, Richmond, Virginia

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

With less than two weeks to go, it's time to get focused on Vengeance. As it turns out, last week's main event had no bearing on the pay per view as HHH is getting his World Title shot (I'm stunned too.) despite not beating Eugene. Other than that we have the continuing issues of Kane fathering Lita's baby, which isn't likely to get much attention tonight because Kane is getting a World Title shot against Chris Benoit. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Last week, WWE won some awards. Good for them.

We open with a recap of HHH vs. Eugene, featuring HHH snapping and beating him down, drawing in Benoit for the save. Benoit accidentally chaired Eugene though and got laid out by HHH to end the show. That'll show Eugene for getting over without being named HHH.

Opening sequence.

Here's Evolution to get things going. HHH says tonight's main event doesn't matter because he's facing the winner at Vengeance no matter what. For tonight though, he'd like Eugene to come out here because they're still friends. A nervous Eugene comes out, complete with a bandage with a drawn on smiley face. HHH talks about how there are mean people around here, like Chris Benoit. All HHH was doing was trying to prepare him last week because if HHH really wanted to hurt him, Eugene wouldn't be here.

The reality is that Benoit can't stand Eugene and wants to hurt him. HHH doesn't usually talk like this, but Benoit is nothing but a jerk. HHH: "I said the J word!" Orton looks very confused as HHH tells Eugene that they're still friends. Tonight, Eugene gets to be an honorary member of Evolution. That means a round of hugs but here's William Regal to say it's a trap. HHH brings up Regal to work for Bischoff to get rid of Regal in exchange for his job. HHH: "YOU MAKE ME SICK!" This brings out Bischoff, to make HHH vs. Regal with Eugene as guest referee.

Again, this story is fascinating in a way. The character work and manipulation of Eugene is very entertaining as you can see the character changes throughout and that's making for some entertaining TV. That being said, there is the issue of why HHH is doing this in the first place. He has the title shot and he has Evolution. Is there really a reason why he doesn't just have them beat the heck out of Eugene and make them leave? Sure Bischoff is going to be happy to see Eugene get crushed, but this seems to be taking the very long way around when there's an easier path to get what everyone wants.

Chris Jericho/Edge vs. Randy Orton/Batista

Well it was good last week. Orton tags out instead of fighting Jericho so it's a right hand to Batista's face to no avail. Batista takes him down and hammers away with right hands to the head as the fire alarm seems to be going off. Evolution takes turns hammering on Jericho's head as the alarm keeps going. Someone might want to look into that sooner or later. The alarm is finally cut off, drawing a round of applause from the crowd.

Batista gets two off a big side slam but Jericho dropkicks him into the ropes for a breather. It's still way too early for the hot tag, which is fine as Edge did more than enough work in the first version. Orton's dropkick gets two but he walks into the sleeper drop, setting up the hot tag to Edge. That means some house cleaning but you know this one is getting some time so it's only the preliminary house cleaning. They're not to full dusting yet you see.

The Edgecator has Orton in trouble until Batista saves, only to get double dropkicked to the floor. Edge hits a baseball slide and Jericho adds a sweet dive to drop Batista as we take a break. Back with Edge taking Orton into the corner but Batista comes in again for a running powerslam. Orton stomps away and drops some legs for two before handing it back to Batista for a seated full nelson.

That's finally reversed with a ram into the corner but Orton is fine enough to slap on a bodyscissors. Edge finally fights up again and makes the hot tag off to Jericho so the pace can pick up. The bulldog sets up the Lionsault but Batista moves, leaving Jericho to stick the landing. Batista's spinebuster is countered into a sunset flip with Edge dropkicking him down for the two. Back up and Batista blasts Orton with the clothesline but manages to kick out of the Walls. Edge spears Batista, setting up the Lionsault for the pin.

Rating: B. Are these people capable of having a bad match at this point? You could mix and match these guys for months for good matches, which is exactly what they've done to some great results. Jericho vs. Batista and Edge vs. Orton (the latter of which is already set) for Vengeance sound fine for me.

Post match the announcers talk about how impressive was that Jericho

overcame a concussion to win here. If he had one, he certainly didn't act like it.

Video on Kane announcing that Lita's baby is his, wrecking Matt Hardy's marriage proposal in the process. That's such a horrible move and I love it. Lita's crying line of "but the baby might be yours" makes it even better.

Flair comes up to HHH and asks about Eugene being an honorary member of Evolution. Flair: "It'll kill our gimmick brother!" HHH explains the whole idea by saying that his deal with Bischoff is simple: get rid of Eugene and get a title shot at Vengeance. Flair brings up the obvious: why not just beat Eugene up right now and be done with it? Apparently HHH is going to use Eugene's talents to get the title back. Then he'll give Eugene what he deserves.

Now that's more like it. The scheme is making things more complicated than they need to be and HHH is looking like a maniacal villain. Imagine that: actually explaining a crazy idea and not leaving your audience scratching your heads and hoping they just don't ask a bunch of questions that point out all the holes in your story. HHH's plan is pretty stupid, but it makes sense to him and that's all that matters.

Divas Search video, this time from New York. Again, almost none of them are named, though Michelle McCool is seen.

A crying Lita can't get in touch with Matt. Stacy Keibler comes in and asks what's wrong. My goodness this woman gets dumber every week. Lita was trying to do what was right and explains that Kane was going to keep hurting Matt until Lita did what he wanted. She's not sure who the father is.

JR is in the ring to interview Kane, though this time the ring is at least surrounded by cops. You know, those guys with such great track records in wrestling. Kane gets right to the point: there's no one that is going to stop him if he decides to go after JR again. JR shrugs that off and asks about Kane attacking Shawn Michaels last week. Shawn robbed him of the World Title and since Shawn got in his way, it was time to make him suffer.

As for Lita, Kane just wanted something that he never had. He wants an offspring that he can mold to continue his legacy. Kane took every precaution to make sure Lita would get pregnant. This way Kane gets everything that he wants, including the World Title tonight. Oh yeah that's another thing Kane has going on right now. Then in eight months, he gets to be a father.

JR brings up the chance that Lita's baby is Matt so violence is imminent, only to have Matt run in for the save. Bischoff has to tell security to break it up. Matt gets dragged away and Bischoff says the main event isn't being ruined. Since it's so unfair to Kane, we'll change the rules a bit. Tonight, Benoit has to win by submission only but Kane can win by pinfall, submission, countout or DQ. Kane has another evil smile.

William Regal vs. HHH

This is Regal's first match in over a year and Eugene is guest referee. HHH drives him into the corner to start so Regal takes over with a hammerlock. Regal kicks away on the mat like a true villain should but Eugene asking for a clean break allows HHH to get in a right hand. Back up and Regal slugs away with HHH doing a faceplant. An exploder suplex gets two but Flair throws in some brass knuckles. Regal clocks HHH and takes them away but Eugene disqualifies him before he can actually use the knuckles. Eugene: "You weren't supposed to do that!"

Rating: D. The wrestling wasn't the point here as it was more about the angle advancement, which is starting to make me wonder. Eugene is already starting to feel like he's in over his head here and if this all ends with HHH getting a definitive pin over Eugene, it's going to be a bad idea at the end of the day.

Post match HHH shoves Regal into Eugene, sending him into a rage with a beatdown on Regal. HHH and Flair calm things down and Regal is left laying.

Sgt. Slaughter/Rhyno vs. La Resistance

Non-title. This is the last show before the 4th of July so it's as good as we can get. Slaughter is looking very lean here compared to some of

his recent appearances. Rhyno is ready to fight early on and shrugs off some Conway chops. A hard shoulder puts Conway down but Grenier gets in a cheap shot from behind.

Slaughter is drawn in so the double teaming can continue, which you would think he would see coming. A neckbreaker gets two on Rhyno and we hit the chinlock. Rhyno fights up and hits a belly to belly, allowing the how tag off to Slaughter for the house cleaning. The Cobra Clutch is broken up but Conway makes the save with a DDT. Rhyno gets shoved off the top and it's Au Revoir to finish Slaughter.

Rating: D+. All things considered, this was just a step beneath a miracle. Slaughter's annual appearances are rarely anything to see but this was a watchable match. Having it be non-title helped a bit too as hearing that the titles are on the line makes me roll my eyes and go "this again?" more often than not. This didn't feel as annoying and the match being a bit better helped too.

HHH tries to calm Eugene down but then brings up Benoit hitting him in the head with a chair last week. Then Regal shoved him down, even though Eugene didn't do anything wrong. Kane chokeslammed him too. They hurt him, but Evolution will never hurt him. As much as the plan is convoluted, HHH has been nailing the acting part and comes off as totally evil.

Diva Search. Some made it, some didn't, one was Michelle McCool.

Vengeance rundown. Jericho vs. Batista is confirmed.

Coach and Bischoff are in the office for some exposition. Bischoff will be off next week and therefore we need a boss. Since, you know, WE MUST HAVE A BOSS! Coach won't be in charge though because Eugene will be running the show. That actually has a lot of potential.

We look back at Benoit having to pin Kane instead of winning with the Crossface.

Smackdown Rebound featuring the Great American Bash. Haven't we suffered enough?

Raw World Title: Kane vs. Chris Benoit

Benoit is defending and can only win by submission while Kane can win by any means. The referee holds the title upside down, which is a lot more annoying than it should be. Kane loses an early slugout so it's time to start in on the knee. The Sharpshooter is kicked away of course but Kane misses the big elbow. Benoit can't get the Crossface so Kane throws him over the top.

Back from a break with Benoit chopping away in the corner but getting hit in the face. They head outside with Kane posting him for a bonus. That gets nine on the floor and two in the ring as I wonder why Kane doesn't just destroy Benoit with a chair. Benoit can't win by DQ so Kane can't get disqualified, so what's stopping him? Benoit sends Kane face first into the steps and JR LOSES IT on Lawler for asking about Kane's kid again. I haven't heard him yell that loudly in a long time.

Back from another break with Kane holding a chinlock before kicking him in the face to cut off a comeback. The chokeslam is countered into the Crossface but Kane gets up and slams him down for the break. A Tombstone attempt is escaped and Benoit rolls the German suplexes. Benoit hits the flying headbutt and covers but the referee reminds him of the rules.

With Kane down, Benoit goes up again but has to counter a chokeslam by snapping the arm across the rope. Kane goes shoulder first into the post and the Crossface goes on again. The roll over doesn't work as Benoit holds on, even with both of them on their backs. That actually looks even more painful than the regular version and Kane taps to retain Benoit's title.

Rating: B-. And that's that for Kane. I'm kind of surprised at the chemistry these two have together and the matches have been a nice showcase for Benoit. The story here was fine and Benoit was in trouble at times, but the Vengeance title match being announced made it rather clear that the title wasn't changing hands. It's ok to have a match with a pretty obvious ending at times though and that was the case here.

Post match Kane chokeslams Benoit but here's a very smiley Lita. She hands the title to Kane and raises his hand before kicking him low. Kane

shrugs it off and loads up a chokeslam but lets her go because of the baby. Benoit hits him with the belt and poses to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. The wrestling was solid this week but I keep going back and forth on the HHH/Eugene thing. It goes against what made Eugene work but the bigger problem is it's turned into a HHH story featuring Eugene than anything else. The performances have been very good though and the positives outweigh the negatives, which is more than you can expect in a lot of stories. It's good for now, but I'm worried about where it might be going. The rest of the show was mostly good and nothing stood out as horrible, so I can definitely go with this after last night's pay per view.

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