

Monday Night Raw – July 5, 2004: They're Taking It Too Far



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Monday Night Raw

Date: July 5, 2004

Location: Winnipeg Arena, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Eugene is in charge tonight and I think you know what that means. The chaos should be in full swing and Eugene is the kind of guy who can make something like that work well. He plays the character so well and actually comes off as the idiot savant that he's supposed to be. Let's get to it.

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

Eugene's face has replaced Bischoff's after the opening for a positive reception.

Opening sequence.

Here's Ric Flair to join a bunch of other people, with a bunch of chairs, in the ring. We have Flair, Jerry Lawler, Coach, Tajiri, Tyson Tomko and Stacy Keibler and Chris Jericho, the hometown boy, comes out to join them. Eugene comes out to the stage in a blazer and jumps up and down a lot. He's in charge tonight and wants everyone to have fun. Even Coach! For a special treat tonight, Eugene thought we should have a title match tonight. Jericho gets a loud cheer before Eugene announces that we're playing Musical Chairs for the title shot.

Stacy is the only one walking at first so of course Lawler follows. The music stops and Tajiri is left out...so he mists Coach before leaving.

Coach is blind of the next round and eliminated pretty easily. We're down to five and Flair takes the jacket off so he can glare at people in Flair fashion. Lawler is out next, even after sitting on Stacy's lap and then switching places with her.

Flair struts after Stacy and then shoves her down to steal her seat like any villain should do. That leaves us with Tomko, Jericho and Flair, but Ric does a bit too much strutting and is out as well. As the music stops, Jericho pulls the chair away and hits Tomko in the back before having a seat to win the Intercontinental Title shot tonight. This was the kind of fun, wacky thing that they need with Eugene in charge. It just freshens things up a bit, which is something Raw is dying for a lot of the time.

La Resistance vs. Rhyno/Val Venis

Non-title, which at least they're getting right as of late. The non-champions charge the ring to start and the fight is on in a hurry. Conway gets sent outside and a double shoulder drops Grenier early on. Things settle down with Rhyno getting caught in the corner and choked a lot. The chinlock goes on for a bit until Rhyno scores with a flying shoulder. The hold was broken in there if that wasn't clear. It's off to Venis and everything breaks down in a hurry. Rhyno's Gore is broken up by Grenier with a hard crotching against the post and Au Revoir finishes Venis.

Rating: D. As nothing as Rhyno and Venis were, this is the kind of match that La Resistance can use. They win a quick match and it's not like they were in any real danger for most of the time. Venis and Rhyno weren't going to be a threat to the titles and odds are they won't team again after this, so it's not like they have anything to lose.

Randy Orton isn't happy with having to face Jericho tonight but Flair is more upset about playing Ring Around the Rosey. Uh, totally different game there Naitch. Come on. Eugene on the other hand is in his office: a bounce house. He asks Orton about that one time when Kane said he was Eugene's friend and punched him before bringing up HHH. Batista is worried that Eugene is going to have HHH beat up Kane, but it's going to be Batista vs. Kane instead.

Eugene: "You remember that one time when La Resistance beat Val Venis and

Rhyno?" After Orton explains that it just happened, Eugene makes La Resistance vs. Flair and...we pause while Eugene plays with action figures. Flair demands to know his partner and of course it's Eugene. Flair lunges so Eugene retreats into the safety of the bounce house. Wacky fun.

Here's HHH for a chat. He talks about Chris Benoit winning the title in a miracle at Wrestlemania and the divine intervention that has helped him retain the title since then. Well this Sunday, HHH is going to answer the question of God or evolution and Charles Darwin was right: you can't stop evolution. No god can stop HHH...and here's Edge to interrupt. Edge talks about Evolution dominating Raw for over a year and not a lot has changed since he's been back.

It's time for a change though, and this Sunday Edge is taking the Intercontinental Title. After that, Edge is taking the team out one by one. Someone has to take a stand and Edge is that man. HHH says that he's heard it before but he's still right here on top of the world. HHH: "Nothing changes." The fight is on with Edge getting the better of it until Evolution chases him off. That's one of the smarter face moves of the year, because even he's not dumb enough to fight all four of them at once.

Kane vs. Batista

The power lockup starts us off until Batista hits a running clothesline in the corner. That just earns him a whip into the corner and a side slam for no cover. The spinebuster is no sold and Kane kicks him to the floor, drawing in Matt Hardy for the DQ. Just a means to an angle at the end.

Post match Matt wrecks Kane, sending him into the steps over and over.

Post break Matt says he's happy with the idea of a No DQ match with Kane on Sunday because he can do even more than he did tonight. Lita is mentioned but Matt won't talk about her. Instead he awkwardly stares at Todd Grisham for a long time.

Divas Search Los Angeles edition, with Christy Hemme appearing and having more charisma than anyone. Coach seems enamored with most of them in the

swimsuit section and...well yeah.

Earlier today, Jericho was named a member of the Order of the Buffalo Hunt, the highest honor in Manitoba. Jericho with long hair in a suit is a weird visual.

Intercontinental Title: Randy Orton vs. Chris Jericho

Hometown boy Jericho is challenging. Orton gets taken down off an armdrag to start and Jericho throws in a little dance. A battle over a top wristlock doesn't get Orton very far as he's thrown into the corner to keep the pro-Jericho chants going. Jericho suplexes him down and gets two off the arrogant cover. Something out of the corner gets dropkicked out of the air though and we're off to the neck crank as the fans think Orton sucks.

Not being happy with the chants, Orton sends Jericho to the apron but takes too long posing, allowing Jericho to come off the top with a back elbow to the jaw for two. The running enziguri gets the same with Orton getting his foot on the ropes. With that not working, Jericho backdrops him over the top and out to the floor. Cue Batista for a distraction and we take a break.

Back with Jericho hammering away in the corner until Batista low bridges him out to the floor. Jericho goes arm first into the post and the fans are all over Batista in a hurry. Back in and Orton starts kicking away before the light bulb goes off and he wraps the arm around the ropes. The armbar goes on for a bit with Orton pulling him back down by the air. Some knees to the arm keep Jericho in trouble and it's right back to the armbar, though a different kind. It's nice to see things get mixed up a bit as there's no reason to have the same stuff over and over.

Back up and a double clothesline gives us a double knockdown and the fans have some hope. Jericho scores with a flying forearm but Orton cuts him off with the backbreaker. The swinging sleeper drop gives Jericho a near fall of his own but the shoulder gets sent hard into the post again. Orton's high crossbody gets two and the fans are right back into it after the kickout. The bulldog drops Orton but Jericho has to dropkick Batista. He's fine enough to counter the RKO into the Walls and the fans are going

NUTS. Another Batista distraction breaks the hold though and Orton rolls him up with feet on the ropes to retain.

Rating: B-. The fans helped carry this one a little further than it would have gone otherwise and that's not the worst thing in the world. Jericho winning the title was pretty much out of the question here but at least he didn't lose clean, which can set up a rematch down the line. Orton still can't make a full match like this work, but he's getting the important parts, such as the strong finish, down.

HHH joins Eugene in the bounce house and they make an unspecified deal. That's enough for HHH to leave with Flair helping him up. Apparently HHH was in there for twenty minutes and didn't get around to breaking up the Eugene/Flair team. Flair: "We could lose! Or worse yet, we could win!" HHH's plan is more about the World Title though, because tonight it's Flair/HHH/Eugene vs. Edge/Benoit. Everyone will see his plan after tonight.

Smackdown Rebound.

Victoria vs. Nidia vs. Molly Holly

Envelope on a pole match with the winner getting a shot at Trish Stratus at some point in the future. Therefore, Trish is out on commentary along with Tyson Tomko. Nidia goes straight for the pole and gets pulled down just as fast. Molly knocks Victoria outside but gets elbowed off the top. The delay is enough for Victoria to get back up and kick Molly in the head to put all three down again. Molly knocks both of them to the floor and hits a slingshot dive on Victoria to keep her in trouble. Back in and Molly plants Victoria with a superplex but Nidia climbs up and gets the contract.

Rating: D-. This was just a step above the Vince Russo era with no particular reason for it to be a pole match, other than Nidia not being the best in the ring in the first place. I'm not sure why I'd want to see her get a title shot, but to be fair they need something fresh in the women's division after the same matches over and over.

Post match Trish, with a broken wrist, comes out and says Nidia can have

a shot when Trish is ready. Trish knocks her cold with the cast and says she's ready.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Nidia

Pin in three seconds to retain. Thank goodness they booked a match that they could blow off two minutes later. That's just what the show needed.

Divas Search: Los Angeles, with unnamed women being worried about moving on to the next round. Candice Michelle and Christy Hemme both made the cut.

Vengeance rundown.

Trish and Tomko come up to Lita in the back and ask about morning sickness. Lita doesn't say anything back so they leave, but not before this from Trish: "And they call me a sl**."

HHH praises Eugene for his job tonight but brings up Edge wanting to tear Evolution down. Eugene doesn't like that so HHH tells him about how Edge and Benoit represent everyone who has ever been mean to him. Tonight, Eugene needs to be mean to them. Hugging ensues and they agree to be best friends tonight.

HHH/Ric Flair/Eugene vs. Chris Benoit/Edge

Benoit wants to start with HHH but gets Eugene instead in a smart move from the villains. An early high five to Flair doesn't constitute a tag so Benoit and Eugene try some technical work instead. Eugene is more than capable of hanging with Benoit though and drives him into the corner as JR goes into one of his trademark anti-HHH rants. Benoit reverses though and decks HHH and Flair, which isn't something you do with Eugene around.

Now we get the HHH vs. Benoit showdown with a facebuster looking to set up an early Pedigree. It's too early of course though and Benoit reverses into a Crossface with Eugene making the save. Benoit gets sent into the steps and we take a break. Back with Benoit still in trouble, including HHH putting on the sleeper. A belly to back suplex gets Benoit out of trouble though and the hot tag brings in Edge for some backdrops and a top rope double clothesline. The spear cuts Flair down and a forearm hits

Eugene...by mistake? Even though it's Edge's opponent?

Eugene tries to come in but HHH holds him back so Flair can take over on Edge. It's time to start working on the arm, with HHH telling Eugene to break the arm, which seems a step too far for him. The fans think Eugene sucks as HHH and Flair come in for a distraction as Edge tags Benoit. Therefore it's Edge being dragged back into the corner so the beating can continue, including a Flair strut this time.

One WOO too many allows Edge to get in an enziguri and Benoit gets to come in and unload. The rolling German suplexes have HHH in trouble and the Swan Dive connects, with Flair breaking up the count in a hurry. Edge takes Flair to the floor but misses a charge to send him over the barricade.

Benoit knocks down both Eugene and the referee at the same time but is still able to knock a chair out of HHH's hand. Eugene grabs the chair and pulls it back at Benoit, who manages to talk him out of it. HHH tries to Pedigree Benoit but gets reversed into the Sharpshooter for the unseen tap. At HHH's urging, Eugene hits Benoit with the chair to break it up. The booing ensues as HHH pins Benoit.

Rating: C+. Another match focused on storytelling instead of the wrestling for the most part but the talent involved was more than enough to make it watchable. The Eugene push is starting to blow up in their faces though as there's only so much that can be done before the fans just get tired of him. Eugene was a very fun character, but having him as the focal point of the show and involved in the top story is a bit much for someone like him.

Overall Rating: C+. This show was back and forth all night. It started off strong and had a pair of good matches, but stuff like the Divas Search eating up time and the Eugene story being hammered into our heads didn't do it any favors. There is still good stuff going on around here, but very simply put, we need a break from HHH. Unfortunately, I can't imagine that's the case anytime soon.

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