

Monday Night Raw – July 19, 2004: In Search Of An Animal



IMG Credit: WWE

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 19, 2004

Location: MCI Center, Washington DC

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're still on the road to Summerslam and the big story coming out of last week saw Evolution beat down pretty much everyone in sight, including Eugene. I'm not sure how this is going to go anywhere other than more HHH time, but why mess with what has worked so well? For HHH that is of course. Let's get to it.

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

We open with a recap of Chris Benoit successfully defending the World Title against Eugene last week, leading to Evolution destroying the two of them plus William Regal. At least they finally got to the logical part of this rather over complicated story.

Say it with me: here's HHH to open things up. HHH says he's not too proud of what he did last week and it was probably even below him. It made him feel rotten but once he thought about it, of course he felt better because it's just Eugene. He knows Eugene isn't here tonight so get close

to the TV and understand this: HHH hates him and so does Evolution. Everyone here hates Eugene and is embarrassed by him, even his mom.

Eugene has no business being here because he isn't normal. Just in case Eugene still doesn't get it, here's a clip from after Raw with Regal and Benoit checking on Eugene and crying as he was taken out on a stretcher. HHH: "There's no crying in wrestling!" This brings out Eric Bischoff, who is so proud of HHH that he's giving him another World Title shot next week. As I sigh heavily, Bischoff makes it even worse by making it a sixty minute Iron Man match.

HHH has a busy night next week so he can have tonight off while Benoit faces Batista. After HHH promises some violence, here's Regal to interrupt. He doesn't like what HHH and Bischoff have done so the fight is on with Regal beating the heck out of HHH and sending him into the steps. Security takes him away and Regal's bugging out eyes are a great visual, as tends to be the case for him.

Sylvan Grenier vs. Tajiri

Robert Conway and Rhyno are the seconds. Tajiri comes out to interrupt the French National Anthem and starts a USA chant so we can get going. A cartwheel kick...I think misses but Grenier goes down anyway, meaning it's time for some more kicking until Conway offers a distraction. Grenier gets in a suplex to take over and it's off to the corner for some shoulders to the ribs.

A slam sets up the chinlock, which of course brings Tajiri right back to life. The handspring elbow sets up a superkick for two on Grenier and the Tarantula makes things even worse. The referee goes after Rhyno for some reason, allowing Conway to get in a flag shot. Grenier hits a faceplant and grabs the tights for the pin.

Rating: C. This was shockingly watchable and the best Grenier match I've ever seen (ok so there have been like two) with a decent little story and some nice action. That's about as good as you can ask for from these two and the eventual title match should be fine. For an opening match, this was a rather nice little surprise.

Video on the weekend's house shows. Attendance must be down again.

It's time for the Highlight Reel and the guests are the ten finalists in the Diva Search. Jericho plugs the voting opening tonight where you can pick your favorite but the one with the fewest votes is gone. The women get to introduce themselves and we have Michelle (McCool), Christy (Hemme), Julie (from Kentucky, as people should be), Camille, Maria (Kanellis), Tracie, Carmella (DeCesare), Chandra (the twin of the other one from Kentucky), Amy (Weber) and Joy (Giovanni), all of whom are booted out of the building.

Jericho gets to the point of tonight: there's an immunity envelope in Eric Bischoff's office and they're all going to destroy the place to find it. Jericho marches them through the building to the office (Jericho: "I'm the Pied Piper but they're not rats!") and they eventually wreck the whole place, including going through Bischoff's briefcase. This goes on way too long of course and I'm sure the fans who paid for tickets to the show are thrilled to watch a bad reality show segment on a video screen. King has a good question: "What does the immunity envelope look like?"

That's not actually answered, but here's Bischoff to yell at all of them for wrecking the office. As it turns out, there is no envelope because Bischoff is in charge of the whole contest and came up with the whole idea. They admit that Jericho put them up to it while doing their model stances and smirking through the entire thing. This is up there on the list of all time worst ideas in Raw history and it's only going to get worse.

Tyson Tomko vs. Hurricane

Tomko has Trish with him so Hurricane debuts Stacy Keibler as his new manager. Stacy offers an early distraction but Tomko is fine enough to slam Hurricane off the top. The Blockbuster gets Hurricane out of trouble for a bit and a running dropkick sends Tomko into the corner. Trish goes after Hurricane so he grabs her hair, allowing Tomko to kick Hurricane in the face for the pin. Why debut the new manager if he's going to lose in less than two minutes?

Post match Trish hits Stacy with the cast but here's Rosey, now with an

actual superhero costume, for the save. You could have done the same thing without Hurricane losing that way.

HHH talks to Batista about his upcoming match.

King reads some excerpts from Ric Flair's book where he buries Bret Hart and Mick Foley. Probably just jealous that their books are better.

Chris Benoit vs. Batista

Non-title. The early chops just annoy Batista so Benoit goes with the rolling German suplexes instead. Batista is up too fast for the Swan Dive so Benoit goes with a basement dropkick. That doesn't work either so Batista grabs a backbreaker to take him down. Benoit takes him down and tries a Sharpshooter but gets kicked away. The big German suplex sends Batista outside so Benoit tries the Crossface out there.

Since that would be a big waste of time, Batista shrugs him off and into the post to really take over. Back in and Batista chokes away before raining down right hands to the head. The fans get behind Benoit so Batista crushes his head with a knee. With Benoit's comebacks getting on his nerves, Batista ties his foot on the rope and kicks Benoit in the head....for a DQ.

Rating: C+. That's how you make Batista look like a monster as Benoit, even at his best, couldn't do anything to stop him. Batista looked awesome here with some of the best stuff he's done so far. His improvements over the last year, or even six months, have been nothing short of remarkable as he's turned into one of the better monsters I've seen in a long time. Very entertaining match here, with Batista getting a lot out of it.

Post match Batista beats on Benoit even more, drawing some cheers (hometown boy might have something to do with it). JR points out that Batista never tried to pin him, because that wasn't the point of the match.

During the break, Benoit could barely stand.

Lita talks to Matt Hardy in the back but he doesn't have time for this

whole thing. He doesn't know how to handle the situation, which Lita can understand. One way or another, with or without him though, she's having the baby. Has no one gotten a blood test yet?

Randy Orton isn't happy with hearing about his loss because Edge is a fluke. Edge's first Intercontinental Title reign lasted one day and Orton's lasted seven months. Edge comes in and talks about Orton having self esteem issues. Edge: "I'd have self esteem issues too if my dad made his career being Roddy Piper's personal b****." The rematch is set for tonight.

How to vote in the Diva Search. This is edited out of the Network version.

Chris Jericho vs. Kane

Jericho goes straight at him to start and Kane charges into a raised boot in the corner. That just annoys Kane, who drops some elbows for two. Kane misses a charge in the corner though and Jericho nails a top rope back elbow for two of his own. The Lionsault hurts Jericho's knee though and they head outside where Jericho posts him a few times. An enziguri is enough to get Kane counted out in a bit of a surprising finish.

It's so surprising that Bischoff says we'll redo it as a falls count anywhere match with no countouts or DQ. Back from a break with Kane in control but getting low bridged to the floor. That means a big dive off the top for two on the floor so Kane drops him face first onto the barricade for the same. They fight into the crowd with Kane sending him into a barricade for two. A drop toehold sends Kane face first into a hockey board and a camera crane to the face makes it a lot worse. Cue Batista to blast Jericho with the clothesline and Kane gets the pin.

Rating: D+. Not too bad here with Batista again getting a nice rub. Jericho could go toe to toe with Kane for a good while but Batista takes him out with a single clothesline? Speaking of which, it's a clothesline, but they're getting it over by having it be devastating. That's the case with any move: let it win matches and the move will be over because wins and losses still matter to fans.

We go to some highlights from the Diva Search Casting Special, where all ten were chosen. In other words, it's an excuse to have them all in swimsuits. That's all well and good for one of these specials but keep it far off Raw, especially with the long segments.

Here they are again, this time in bikinis. In case you haven't established that they look great yet.

Smackdown Rebound.

Intercontinental Title: Randy Orton vs. Edge

Edge is defending after winning the title last week. Orton takes him down in very short order and it's already a staredown. This time it's Edge wrestling him down and it's an exchange of waistlocks. They both try dropkicks for another stalemate until Orton sends Edge to the apron where he snaps Randy's arm over the rope. Orton takes him to the floor and drops Edge back first onto the barricade to send Edge into the crowd. That allows Orton to pose a bit (a specialty) before we take a break.

Back with Orton twisting Edge's neck and dropping a knee for two. The chinlock goes on so Orton can rip at Edge's face until the comeback is on. They hit stereo crossbodies for a double knockdown but Edge scores with a big boot. An Oklahoma roll gives Edge two and he spears Orton out to the floor for a crash into the barricade. Back in and Edge scores with the missile dropkick for two more.

The regular spear misses so Edge settles for a neckbreaker for another near fall. The referee gets bumped and that means it's time to grab a chair. Edge cuts him down with the spear but there's still no referee. Orton's low blow into an RKO gets the very slow two and Edge is right back with another spear for another near fall. Another RKO is countered into a backslide and Edge throws his feet onto the ropes for the pin (cheating again).

Rating: B. I liked it better than the Vengeance match because it cut out the long and boring sequence at the start to get us straight to the awesome stuff that these two can do against each other. Edge cheating is still weird to see in his current run, but hopefully it's leading

somewhere. Good, solid, back and forth match here as both guys continue to look great.

Edge points to his head and the announcers plug the Iron Man match to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. The Diva Search stuff killed the show but Batista got a nice push and the main event was very good. Other than that though, it's a pretty forgettable show without much of interest going on. HHH going after the World Title again was expected but it was nice to have Eugene gone for a week. He's already overstayed his welcome (at least this version of him has) so cutting down on him for a week or two is a good idea. Not a very good show, but it had good parts when you ignore all the bad ideas.

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