

Checked Out The Ruthless Aggression Series



IMG Credit: WWE

The things you can do when you sit down to do a big jigsaw puzzle.

I know I'm a bit late on this but it wouldn't be me if I actually did something on time for a change. The series has not exactly been well received and I can't imagine I'm going to be all that different from the masses as this thing was, for the most part at least, the series was WWE showing off their unique brand of history again.

Episode One: It's Time To Shake Things Up

So after WCW and ECW went under, WWE needed someone to give them competition. Since WWE was SO awesome, they decided it needed to be themselves. They also decided that they should just be called WWE, because there was no lawsuit or anything forcing them to do so. That second part is about all you need to show you that this is going to be WWE's history and little more.

The gist of this one is that things needed to be changed so we had the Brand Split and a bunch of new wrestlers, most of whom

were trying hard and being all great and awesome, but they needed one thing. That would be Ruthless Aggression, which is where we get to John Cena, who of course gets (and deserves) his own episode.

Episode Two: Enter John Cena!

If you ever needed a short and not all that great John Cena biography, you have it right here. The whole thing is little more than talking about how great Cena is, how he was ready to fail until the rapper gimmick saved his career (which it did) and then everything was awesome because Cena is that amazing.

Really, that's about it on this one. We hear about one of Cena's great matches, part of his character's rather limited evolution, then he wins another big match, then he's a bigger star, then it's Wrestlemania XXIII and we're done. There's very little in the way of criticism or anything that made Cena such a big deal. It comes off as "he wasn't good, then he was a rapper, then he was the face of the company". Now stretch that out to fifty minutes, with a section about how dumb the spinner belt was.

Episode Three: Evolution

Then there's this, and it's by far and away the best show of the series. Believe it or not, HHH's team gets the longest show out of five and this time around it's actually earned. This is a full history of the team as we hear about how/why it was formed and the thought process of putting the whole thing together. I know it sounds as simple as HHH's Four Horsemen but it's a little more than that and makes for some interesting television.

This is where the extensive video library comes in and helps things out so much as there are so many little clips of things that help tell the story. You get things like Mark Jindrak being part of the team, a ton of backstage stuff, and some great clips of Ric Flair that show you how out of it he really

was when the team was put together. I liked this one far better than anything else and it's worth a look on its own if you're a fan of the team.

Episode Four: The Next Big Thing

Did you know that Brock Lesnar is a freak of nature and one of the best athletes that wrestling has ever seen? If not, you can watch any given thirty second stretch of this and hear the same narrative over and over again. This one is straight out of the Cena style, with almost no substance and "Lesnar is awesome and could do anything he wanted because he's that great."

In other words, there's nothing to this one and it comes off like the highlights of a Wikipedia article. It's Lesnar running over someone, becoming a big star, and then hearing about how great he was at any sport he tried. There's nothing about the more interesting stuff and nothing from Lesnar. It felt like they needed an episode on Lesnar and threw together whatever they could with this. Big waste of time here and something anyone who has ever seen Lesnar could put together in a hurry.

Episode Five: Civil War: Raw vs. Smackdown

Now we get to the big finale and the narrative that WWE remembers every November: the battle of the shows. There are two ways of looking at this and only one of them is interesting. You hear a good bit about the backstage rivalry between the shows with Smackdown being viewed as the far less important show but putting on WAY better shows. That was certainly the case for the wrestlers, but I have yet to see a fan who cared that much about which show they watched. Fans still saw it as WWE all over the place (because it was) and it made the rivalry pretty forced.

They veer off of the idea a good bit though and include a look at the rise of Eddie Guerrero and Randy Orton, which makes you

feel like it could have been a LONG series with several episodes, as it's not like those two couldn't have been individual episodes of their own. Other people get some attention as well, as everyone knew they were all working to fix up WWE. In an episode about the Civil War.

Overall

This whole thing comes off as something that could be interesting if they put in the effort, but there was almost no effort to be seen. Instead, it's "here's the concept, here are three people/groups who were major players, and here's a big catch all for the rest of the people". You could EASILY make this a 10-12 part series with looks at all kinds of other concepts (and they did mention more coming later this year) but the big narrative was "and everyone was so happy because WWE is incredible".

Other than a little here and there in the Evolution episode, there is nothing controversial, overly interesting, new for the most part, or anything that even hints at the idea of WWE being less than perfect. There could be an interesting look at this if you consider how bad some of the stuff in this era was, but you're not getting that here. If you're an Evolution fan check out that episode, but skip the rest of this as it's as fluffy of a series as you're going to see.

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