

Buddy Landel Passes Away At Age 53

Landel was an interesting case as he was a self proclaimed Ric Flair tribute wrestler, down to the same look (plus about 50lbs), style, robes and finishing move. However, he had a lot of drug issues over the years which stopped his pushes several times. He was talented enough to be a solid midcard guy though and had some solid matches and runs back in the 80s.

Early word says that it was a car accident which Landel came home from, but was later found unresponsive.

Reviewing the Review: Money in the Bank 2015

Money in the Bank was always going to be a different kind of show as they had to fly through the build do to the lack of time. However, it was also helpful as we didn't have to sit through a month of people just fighting each other for no reason other than they would be in a contest determined by completely different means of winning. Let's get to it.

We'll get the biggest deal out of the way first: this show took place just a few days after the passing of the American Dream Dusty Rhodes. The show opened with a touching tribute as the roster came on stage to have the bell rung ten times, followed by Dusty's famous theme music being played one last time. This is one of the few wrestling deaths that actually got to me, which is surprising as I never cared much for Rhodes over the years. However, it's always good to see WWE give their heroes the kind of treatment they deserve.

However, there's also some really stupid stuff to get through, starting with the pre-show match. R-Truth beat King Barrett because that's what almost everyone does to Barrett. In theory this leads to Truth as the self professed King and Barrett running around saying "NO! I'M THE REAL KING!", because he hasn't been embarrassed enough yet. I'm not sure when we reach that point, but I'm scared to think of how bad it could get for him.

They started the regular matches off fast with the Money in the Bank ladder match, consisting of Sheamus, Randy Orton, Dolph Ziggler, Kofi Kingston, Roman Reigns, Neville and Kane. Sheamus won in what was actually a pretty big surprise, meaning it was time for people to criticize it. However, let's take a quick look at why Sheamus was at worst the second best option to win.

Neville – Not ready

Kane – Will you be serious?

Kofi Kingston – The longest of long shots but never a real contender

Dolph Ziggler – Dead in the water for months if not years now and potentially leaving in the near future. This would have been the weakest choice imaginable as Ziggler isn't a main event guy anymore.

That leaves us with three options.

Randy Orton is always a possibility, but we've seen Orton vs. Rollins how many times now? He would have been a good fall back option, but it feels like something we've seen so many times now that there's nothing to rehash.

Roman Reigns was definitely the heavy favorite but let's imagine the reaction if he wins. "Man, WWE never mixes things up anymore." "Reigns wins, just like everyone knew he would." "Can we get a surprise for once?" Well that's what we got, as Bray Wyatt remembered he had a reason to be mad at Reigns and interfered to cost him the match.

That leaves Sheamus, nearly through process of elimination. He may not be the most exciting option, but at least he's a former World Champion and

has been doing well enough in the new heel role. If this leads to him taking over the Authority enforcer role from Big Show/Kane, it's certainly a plus. If Sheamus wins he'll be little more than a transitional champion, but he gets a recharge out of it. I see little problem here, but I'm sure I'll be told why he's so boring and all that, meaning I'll point out why doing the obvious Reigns win wouldn't have been much more interesting.

The match itself was the expected good Money in the Bank match, but as usual there were too many people in there. It lead to a bunch of sitting around for people, with Ziggler especially taking long rests outside on the floor instead of going for the briefcase. I could go for taking this down to five people or so and letting there be some drama instead of just piling the same spots we see every time. It's still entertaining though.

Nikki Bella beat Paige to retain the title with that big forearm after the referee caught the Bellas cheating because that's how the match was scheduled to end instead of having the ending that actually follows the rules of wrestling. The match was actually good stuff as they had the longest title match since 2006 and the match worked accordingly. That's a telling sign going forward, but that being said, how many Divas would be able to survive a five minute match, let alone over eleven? Nikki is getting better but this Bellas storyline is long past its expiration date.

Ryback and Big Show did an average power match until Miz ran in to make it a three way feud, which is clearly what they've wanted to do the entire time. Why they didn't just MAKE IT THAT IN THE FIRST PLACE is anyone's guess, but I'd assume it has something to do with wanting to stretch feuds out for the sake of stretching them out because they think just waiting means building a story.

Cena vs. Owens II was outstanding, just as you would expect it to be. I liked it better than the first match but I won't put up much of an argument if you liked the first one better. The key here though was Owens' post match attack on Cena, as he continues to be the best heel in the company by just being a jerk that thinks he's better than everyone else. Yeah he'll run when it's not his time, but when the bell rings,

he'll go toe to toe with anyone.

That's what makes all the chicken heels annoying: it's clear WWE knows how to book another style but they just don't. Owens could be in the title picture tomorrow if they wanted him to be, but I'm sure it's time for a gimmick match with Cena because that's what they do.

The Prime Time Players took the Tag Team Titles from the New Day in a surprising upset. However, the more you think about it, the more you think about it, the more it makes sense. This was the first time New Day was in a standard tag match (due to Kofi's injuries in the ladder match) and they lost the belts. It makes sense, which is why it's so surprising that WWE actually went with it.

The main event saw WWE World Champion Seth Rollins beat Dean Ambrose in a very, very long ladder match. This was a very solid option for a main event, but I'm hoping they take a break from Ambrose vs. Rollins for a while. It was a long, brutal match but the comebacks got a bit too much to handle near the end. They could have cut five minutes out of the match to make it a bit better, though it was still an excellent match with some great drama. When you can make me believe that something I know won't happen might happen, you're having a good match.

Overall, Money in the Bank was exactly what I was expecting it to be, which made for an entertaining show. The ladder matches were always going to be fun, meaning they were more than carrying the show. That leaves you with anything else as a bonus, which consisted of a fun Divas match and an outstanding rematch between Owens and Cena. For a show thrown together in two weeks and the third in seven or so weeks, that's quite impressive.

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Some Quick Wrestling Book Recaps

So I was at the Half Price Bookstore (praise be its name) and found a nice selection of reasonably priced wrestling books earlier in the week. Five days later and I've read them all so it's time for some quick recaps.

The first three are all by my, for lack of a better word, mentor Scott Keith, who has been doing what I do for about 20 years now. He wrote a bunch of books back in the day and here are a handful of them.

First up we have *The Buzz On Professional Wrestling* from 2001, which is more like a textbook for newcomers. It maps out the basic ideas of the major wrestling companies and professional wrestling in general. This was about 99.9% recaps for me and would be for most people reading this, but it's designed to be mainly the basics, which is an interesting concept.

Second was *Wrestling's One Ring Circus* from 2004, which is much more focused on a single period. In this case, the focus is on the time period from the Invasion up through *Wrestlemania XIX*, breaking down each time period and all major points in between. This was a quick read and is meant as more of a mockery of HHH and Stephanie during this period, but there are definitely some valid criticisms of a time period that not a lot of people are fans of. It's also interesting to see John Cena mentioned as a young potential star without the tongue planted firmly in cheek.

Finally from Mr. Keith we have 2006's *Wrestling's Made Men*, which is the same concept as *One Ring Circus* but focusing on post *Wrestlemania XIX* up through mid 2005. In this case it's a collection of pay per view recaps

with extra details filled in. This isn't as interesting of a time but there is definitely a lot of stuff worth checking out in it.

Finally overall we have a more traditional wrestling book with Bill Watts' *The Cowboy and the Cross*. Watts is one of the more controversial figures in wrestling history as he's a very old school guy who pushed Mid-South to a very impressive place in wrestling. He's one of the few bookers who was destroyed by a force completely outside his control (the collapse of the Texas oil industry), but that style didn't exactly work well in WCW.

The problem with Watts is he comes off as someone who has almost never been wrong in his entire life and seemed to have every great idea in the history of the business. If someone disagreed with him as a talent, it was time to throw hands and no one ever beat Watts. Like ever, including Verne Gagne, who would rather back down than fight him.

He also loved Danny Hodge at a level that is probably unhealthy. Don't get me wrong: Danny Hodge is one of the toughest men to ever live and probably the only wrestler who could defeat Kurt Angle in a shoot (note that I said could, not would), but you would think he cured cancer, invented pizza and single handedly got the Kardashians off TV and Justin Bieber deported to Mars.

Overall though, Watts is definitely someone whose story is worth reading, though you should take some of it with a grain of salt. He comes off as one of those guys who was successful, but I have some issues with a few of his stories. Also, there are some moments where he doesn't do himself any favors shaking the stereotypes of being a bit of a chauvinist and racist, but it's not the worst in the world.

One final note: a lot of his book is dedicated to talking about his Christianity. I have zero issue with that and always enjoy hearing someone talk about it, but there comes a point where even I was thinking "good grief man, we get it already." The book is worth checking out for some of the details on stuff, but like I said, some of the stuff he takes full or even majority credit for sound a bit shaky.

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book of Complete Monday Nitro Reviews Volume III at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

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Ring of Honor – June 17, 2015: I'm Starting To Get It

Ring of Honor

Date: June 17, 2015

Location: Ted Reeve Arena, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Attendance: 1,500

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, King Corino

It's week three of Global Wars and this show will feature the debuts of some major New Japan stars. The big story continues to be the battle of the Jays as Lethal and Briscoe get ready for their showdown at Best in the World 2015. There's only one more week after this before we get to something fresh so let's get to it.

We open with.....the opening sequence. Makes sense.

Decade vs. War Machine

War Machine is Hanson/Ray Rowe, a pair of monsters who look like vikings with foot long beards. Decade is BJ Whitmer/Adam Page here. The fans tell Whitmer to shut up but he reminds them that the microphone is a lot louder than they are. Whitmer doesn't think King Corino learned his

lesson a few weeks back, so Colby Corino, who remember is 18 years old and might weigh 180lbs, is his replacement.

Rowe starts with Page, who immediately tags in Colby. Corino gets right in Rowe's face and slaps him, setting up a tag to Hanson. Rowe tags out and a big side slam plants Colby down. Back to Rowe for a nice backbreaker into a gutbuster into a powerbomb on Colby. Rowe throws Colby over to Page but Page won't tag. A belly to back suplex/guillotine legdrop finally ends Corino at 2:12. This was an angle instead of a match and I'm starting to get into this, even though I'm not entirely familiar with Corino vs. the Decade's backstory.

Here's Cedric Alexander, who has been on a losing streak lately after being billed as a breakout star last year. He has to start getting some wins, and he wants to start with the undefeated Moose. Here's his chance.

Moose vs. Cedric Alexander

Moose has Stokely Hathaway and the very lovely Veda Scott. Cedric's dropkick has little effect as the huge Moose slams him down but misses a splash. They head outside with Cedric escaping a slam and sending Moose into the post. Back in and Moose hits a nice dropkick of his own to put Alexander on the floor and us on a break. We come back with Cedric hitting a big dive to the floor, followed by a nice springboard tornado DDT for two.

That's not cool with Moose who takes his head off with a hard clothesline, followed by some hard chops. Cedric comes right back with a bunch of dropkicks in the corner but Moose spears him down. Both guys are in trouble and Veda slips Moose a wrench. He isn't interested in using it, so Cedric takes it away and blasts Moose in the head for the pin, giving Moose his first loss at 9:05.

Rating: D+. The match was back and forth but what in the world are they thinking with the booking? Moose is less than a week away from a #1 contenders three way on pay per view and you give him his first loss on the go home show? This is a very bad choice in booking and they really need to think these things out. I do not get this, but I'm assuming it leads to Veda leaving Moose.

Matt Sydal/ACH vs. Tetsuya Naito/Hiroshi Tanahashi

Sydal is formerly known as Evan Bourne, ACH is a high flier and Tanahashi is basically the John Cena of Japan. The Japanese guys won't shake hands to start, in theory making them heels here, even though an ROH crowd isn't going to boo a star like Tanahashi. Sydal and Tanahashi trade go behinds to start until Matt takes him down for a standing moonsault. A double tag brings in Naito and ACH with the fans being split. They take their time to start until Naito slugs him down in the corner to take over.

ACH avoids a clothesline and does some unnecessary flips before dropkicking Naito in the face. Tanahashi knees ACH in the back and throws him into the barricade as we take a break. Back with Tanahashi missing a middle rope swanton but still preventing a hot tag. We hit the chinlock from Naito as I'm struggling to find things to say here. There's no real story here other than company vs. company and the announcers aren't giving me any information about any of the four guys.

Naito sends him into the corner for a basement dropkick. ACH finally counters a hurricanrana and makes the hot tag to Sydal, who comes in to clean house. In a nice counter, Sydal loads up the standing moonsault but Tanahashi is waiting on him with a German suplex. ACH fires off a bunch of kicks to Tanahashi and a clothesline for two. A German suplex from ACH gets the same and he mocks Tanahashi's air guitar. Tanahashi puts on his Texas cloverleaf but Naito tagged himself in. Granted the referee didn't seem to notice, leaving ACH to have to grab a rope.

The New Japan guys break up Sydal's Asai moonsault but ACH hits a big dive to take both of them down. Back in and ACH hits a kind of springboard downward spiral to Tanahashi, followed by Sydal's shooting star for two. Now it's ACH going up top for a 450 but Tanahashi seemingly got the knees up. A sling blade sets up the High Fly Flow (frog splash) to give Hiroshi the pin at 11:12.

Rating: C+. Fun match but it got a bit messy near the end. I still don't get why they're trying to make all the Japanese guys heels when they're naturally faces for the most part, especially with fans like the ROH

crowd. Still though, good enough match here and it got the crowd going like it was supposed to.

It's time for the contract signing, as run by ROH match maker Nigel McGuinness. TV Champion Jay Lethal is up first with World Champion Jay Briscoe following him up. Briscoe is flanked by his brother Mark and for a pair of rednecks, I'm really not feeling shirts with Twitter handles on the front. Both guys sign up and McGuinness talks about how this is the biggest match in ROH history.

Lethal would love to flip the table and beat Briscoe down right now, but he'd rather have Briscoe at his best. Notice that Lethal repeats the date of the show instead of just saying "at Best in the World". Briscoe promises to beat Lethal so bad that Lethal has to become Black Machismo again and those are fighting words. The belts are held up for a big jawing session to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. I'm looking forward to getting through this Global Wars stuff as it's really taking away from the ongoing stories. Instead of a bunch of Ring of Honor stuff, we're getting a meaningless series of matches which don't make either promotion look better than the other. They did a good go home build to the title vs. title match though, which I liked a lot better than anything else on the series so far. Good episode, but I'm looking forward to the first regular ROH show.

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Did A Guest Shot On A Podcast

Two buddies of mine run it and I got to be the first guest. There's a lot of talk about current wrestling, but a good chunk is dedicated to the WrestleZone Forums E-Fed, where you create your own character, write up a promo for him, and then a panel of judges decides whose promo was better (yours or your opponent's) and writes up a match between your characters. In this episode, I critique the e-fed a bit and talk about various things going on in wrestling today, ranging from the Bullet Club to Lucha Underground to WWE to the required ripping on TNA. Check these guys out as one of them is well read and the other.....well he tries.

[Pro Wrestling Unbound Episode #1](#)

Thunder – January 26, 2000: Seven In Nine

Thunder

Date: January 26, 2000

Location: MGM Grand Garden Arena, Las Vegas, Nevada

Attendance: 6,323

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Scott Hudson, Mike Tenay

We have a new World Champion in Sid Vicious but something tells me we're in for some shenanigans. In other news tonight, Terry Funk has promised

to bring in reinforcements against Kevin Nash. I'm sure this has nothing to do with Arn Anderson talking to some guy named Champ who needed to be told to put on his pants. Let's get to it.

In case you were wondering, of the 6,323 in attendance, 2,510 were paid.

Quick recap of Nitro's World Title situation.

Gene calls out Sid for a chat to start. Sid must be on top of the world and talks about standing up for WCW on Monday. Well no one did for almost all of the NWO civil war (including Schiavone) so better late than never I guess. The NWO tried to block the powerbomb and he was still able to win anyway because it wasn't meant for the NWO to win every single match. That kind of thinking would get you fired back in 1997.

Cue Nash and the NWO with the boss saying this is one of the things he hates about being commissioner. As commissioner, he has to abide by the stipulations and the one from Monday was that Sid had to beat Ron Harris. He shows us a clip of Sid using the powerbomb, which hadn't been banned at that point in the show, and pinning the wrong Harris brother. Now we get to the stupid part: the clip continues to show Sid being counted out of the ring because the match against Ron never actually ended because Sid didn't pin him. Therefore, Sid didn't win.

So on Monday, the referee counted Sid out and had the decision announced, and THE SAME ANNOUNCE TEAM DIDN'T SEE THE NEED TO BRING THIS UP??? I get that some things have to be done differently in wrestling and you have to suspend some disbelief, but this goes into "there is no way someone could possibly be this stupid" territory. Anyway, since Sid didn't win on Monday, the World Champion is....Kevin Nash.

However, tonight Sid will have a chance to get the title back inside Caged Heat against Ron Harris and Nash himself. However, the powerbomb is still banned and Sid has to pin Nash. Why Nash would do that isn't clear, but then again this is two title changes, Hell in a Cell and another World Title match in two days so I really shouldn't be surprised.

Gene reminds Maestro that he has never performed here at the MGM Grand. Maestro is offended and Symphony actually says "how rude". Ok then.

The NWO has slot machines delivered to their locker room.

Maestro vs. Norman Smiley

Maestro comes out with his usual piano....and Norman brings out a team of Las Vegas showgirls. The girls dance to the ring with Norman, who of course is wearing a white tuxedo and top hat because he's awesome like that, and do the spanking dance. Maestro jumps him from behind because he's a cultural swine. Smiley gets in a chair shot and it's already time for a ladder, which fits so well here for some reason.

The whip is reversed though and Maestro sends Norman face first into the ladder and it's time to go backstage. I'm going on a limb and assuming this is hardcore. Just thinking out loud of course. Norman is whipped into a bunch of things and then through a table as they find a sarcophagus. Well of course they do. Inside is....the Kiss Demon, because demons live in coffins right? Norman is terrified and passes out so the Maestro covers him for the pin. It's not long enough to rate, but that may have been the most insane match I've seen this year and it didn't even run two minutes. That says a lot.

The NWO gambles a lot.

Liz and Luger have Sting memorabilia

Cruiserweight Title Tournament First Round: The Artist Formerly Known As Prince Iaukea vs. Kid Romeo

Just like on Nitro, Romeo starts fast and hits a quick Thesz press and sends Prince over the corner and out to the floor for a meeting with Paisley. They slug it out on the floor as Standards and Practices, in street clothes this week, are here with Ms. Hancock, who certainly isn't in street clothes. Well maybe on certain streets but not the most common ones.

Back inside and they slug it out as Hancock sits on the announcers' table. Romeo hits a spinwheel kick followed by an enziguri and a missile dropkick for two with Paisley offering a distraction. Romeo goes after her and gets nailed in the back, setting up a reverse suplex to send

Prince to the second round. Can we see a bracket to this thing?

Jeff Jarrett hits on 18 and gets a 3 for 21.

Terry Funk vs. Kiss Demon

Yes, this is a thing that is happening. They slug it out to start (did you expect anything less?) and Funk takes over with some very lame headbutts. Some boot choking in the corner leads to Funk being thrown outside but he whips Demon into the barricade, because Terry Funk is the second biggest face in this company after Sid Vicious. Back in and Funk gets annoyed that his neckbreaker only gets two, so he takes a swing at the yellow bellied varmint Nick Patrick. Again, your hero in this match.

A low blow and butterfly suplex get two for Demon, because when you think of a demon, you think of butterflies and suplexes. Funk ducks a right hand and busts out the Tumbleweed, which you may know as Kiwi Roll. Basically it's a rolling sunset flip with Funk literally rolling him around in a circle before stopping for the pin.

Rating: D. Terry Funk, the second biggest face in this company, just had a match with the Kiss Demon. I want to hate this idea, but at least he's interacting with the younger guys. For some reason I can't imagine Nash actually knowing that the Demon wrestles for this company or that he's a character that actually exists. Points to Funk for that at least. And I do mean least.

Kidman vs. Vampiro

Rematch from Nitro where Kidman won a good match. Vampiro starts fast with a headlock and shoulder, followed by a pair of suplexes. This would seem to be your fast paced wrestling match of the night. I'm as shocked as you are that Kidman is in this role yet again. Kidman's right hands in the corner don't work that well and Vampiro sends him outside and then into the barricade. So Vampiro is a face but acting heelish here. Got it.

Back in and Vampiro's top rope spinwheel kick (a face move) gets two, followed by Kidman's hurricanrana for the same. More kicks from Vampiro look to set up an electric chair but Kidman victory rolls him for not a

victory. YOU CAN'T POWERBOMB KIDMAN but he can bulldog you, only to have Vampiro crotch him on top for a super Nail in the Coffin for the pin.

Rating: C+. This has been another show where Kidman has the match of the night and I'm sure it's going to continue to get him nowhere. Well other than with Torrie but that's a different story. He's still fun to watch but you can add him to the list of people in WCW whose talents are being wasted while we get more Sid vs. Nash.

Some cops investigate gambling allegations against the NWO and there's a Wayne Newton look a like. This goes nowhere.

Total Package vs. Buff Bagwell

My levels of apathy towards Bagwell continue to reach new bounds. Buff takes over with a slam to start and we're already on the posing. I'm surprised they even bothered with a move to start. Luger knees him in the ribs but eats right hands in the corner, only to come back with an atomic drop.

Two Lex clotheslines lead to more posing and it's time to choke a lot. An elbow gets two and an elbow gets two and then Luger charges into an elbow. I've heard of someone being all elbows but a match being one? A low blow stops Buff's comeback but Buff is up first and does his usual generic offense. The Blockbuster connects but Liz comes in with the ball bat for the DQ.

Rating: D-. Good grief fire both of them. Luger somehow has even less of an offense than when he wasn't trying and Bagwell is getting even less entertaining than he already was. I guess it's time for Luger to start breaking everyone's arm in an attempt to make him an interesting killer but for some reason I don't see it working. These two fought WAY too many times over the years.

Post match Luger gets in more bat shots and goes to Pillmanize the arm but referees make the save.

3 Count had an autograph signing at the Nitro Grill when the Mamalukes came up and started a fight. Music haters.

3 Count vs. Mamalukes/Disco Inferno

We start with a performance but the band has to dropkick the Mamalukes off the apron. Some big dives take the Italians out again and Shane covers Vito for two to start. Shane hammers away in the corner but gets powerbombed out and kicked in the face for his efforts. Off to Johnny for several lifts on a military press, followed by Disco coming in to stomp away in the corner.

The middle rope elbow misses though and it's off to Evan. I'm not sure what to think about four dancers being in the same match. Fandango must have been watching this show. Evan speeds things up and cleans the bottom half of the house before it's off to Shannon as everything breaks down. The double hiptoss into a powerbomb plants Moore though, setting up the Last Dance from Disco for the pin.

Rating: D+. Nothing to see here and it's nice to see the champions get another win, even if it's at the expense of 3 Count. Yes they're stupid but they were so goofily entertaining that I can't help but like them. Disco is starting to find his groove as the manager/occasional partner too, which is good for him as he deserves a little something.

Post match Vito sings some Sinatra as the other two dance. This brings out David Flair, Crowbar and Daffney to clean house, allowing Crowbar to play air guitar as the others.....dance?

Funk and Anderson are looking for Sid. I really hope this isn't revenge for London back in 1993.

This Week in WCW Motorsports.

Nash gives the roster a pep talk. Quote: "Let's go out there and put the old guys over!"

Booker T. vs. Jerry Flynn

Booker has to be able to win this right? Like, he has to. Jerry jumps him from behind to start and knocks Booker over the barricade. Please don't make Booker a hardcore guy. Jerry fires off a bunch of kicks inside but misses another one in the corner. Booker hits his signature kicks and the

forearm, followed by the 110th Street Slam (whipping spinebuster) for the quick pin. Thank goodness.

Anderson and Funk have a meeting with Sid.

Ernest Miller reminds us that he's here and talks about loving Vegas to get the fans on his side...but then says he hates the people here. After some old school calling out a fat boy fan, it's time to dance. Disco, 3 Count, Ernest Miller. The money in this company is a dance team gimmick.

Kimberly says she's still friends with Buff even though she counted him down last week.

Nash has a meeting with the Harris Brothers in the back.

Finlay and Knobbs hug for some reason, allowing Knobbs to steal a wrench from Finlay's pocket. You would think Finlay would notice it missing.

Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Fit Finlay

Winner gets a shot at Knobbs for the Hardcore Title, which shows Knobbs to be a coward by stealing the wrench. My goodness why does the Hardcore Title have a better story than the US Title? Finlay grabs a headlock to start but his shoulder block has no effect. Back up and Bigelow splashes him in the corner as we see Knobbs watching from the back. Finlay gets tired of selling and rolls outside to set up a table.

An attempt at a suplex over the ropes and through the table is easily countered, allowing Bigelow to go up, only to miss the headbutt. It should be wrench times but Knobbs is a thief (maybe he can get a job in the criminal field once the wrestling thing stops working for him), Bigelow hits Greetings From Asbury Park (pretend Finlay's head hit the mat) for the pin.

The cage is lowered.

WCW World Title: Sid Vicious vs. Ron Harris vs. Kevin Nash

Inside Caged Heat, meaning the Cell and anyone can win but Sid must beat Nash. Also the powerbomb is banned. Nash is defending and Ron is in a

suit. We again see the clip from Nitro which no one bothered to reference because WCW announcers are off having ham sandwiches and finger painting during commercials. The cage is chained shut as Harris and Nash double team Sid like you would expect them to do.

They head to the floor with Sid being knocked around the ring and Nash driving him into the cage wall. It works so well that Nash does it again twice in a row as this is total domination, as you would expect. For no apparent reason, Nash and Harris go inside for a few seconds before coming back outside to choke with a TV cable. They go inside again and, as in every triple threat ever, the two in control argue over who gets to cover.

Sid fights back for a bit until Nash gets in a shot to the ribs to take over. They head outside again with Sid going into the cage for I think the fifth time. We get some blood from the arm but Sid finally blocks a ram into the steel and takes over again. Harris is thrown inside for a chokeslam (with Ron landing on his arm) and Sid pulls Nash down into a Crossface of all things for the win and his second World Title in three days and the seventh World Title change in nine days.

Rating: D-. I don't know if that's meant as a knock on Benoit or just WCW trying to be cute, but I can't help but shake the idea that Nash would have never tapped to Benoit in a million years. This was just a step ahead of Kidman vs. the Wall inside the Cell, though it still ranks as probably the second worst Cell match of all time. There was no need for this to be in the cage, especially not two days after the first match. Also, odds on the submission not counting because Nash said Sid had to pin him?

Ric Flair of all people comes out to applaud Sid, which is called a passing of the torch.

Overall Rating: D. This company has gone from slow as molasses one week to WOULD YOU PLEASE SLOW DOWN the next week. Things are going way too fast in the World Title scene and it's getting harder and harder to keep up and/or care at this point. Flair is a welcome sight as you know he'll be at least solid if not very good. There's good stuff on the show but

the gap between the main event and midcard isn't going anywhere. Welcome back to 1998.

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Lucha Underground – June 17, 2015: Yo That's Different

Lucha Underground

Date: June 17, 2015

Location: Lucha Underground Arena, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Matt Striker, Vampiro

This is a special show as the entire episode is one match. Tonight Prince Puma is defending the title against Johnny Mundo in an all night long Iron Man match as ordered by Dario Cueto as we come closer and closer to Ultima Lucha. The last time there was a one match card things went very well so let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Mundo's heel turn, which earned him a spot in tonight's title match.

Lucha Underground Title: Prince Puma vs. Johnny Mundo

Prince Puma is defending and this is an Iron Man match with TV time remaining. However, it's only pins or submissions. Both guys are in the ring to save time which is always appreciated. No Konnan here either, at least to start. Striker does a good job of running down their history as they circle each other to start. You don't want to burn yourselves out in something like this.

Mundo takes the champ to the mat to start but Puma gets to the apron for a breather. That's not something you often see from a face. Back in and they lock up again with Johnny grabbing a headlock but getting rolled up for a few near falls. They start the flipping and Puma backflips into a headscissors, only to get kicked in the head to put him on the floor. Mundo misses a dive and lands on his feet, allowing Puma to slide back in and hit a big corkscrew dive of his own.

We take a break (I believe the third time ever during a match) and come back with a clock saying 33:45 remaining. That's a nice touch as I can't stand it when a match going until the end of the show suddenly ends with five minutes left. Puma grabs a rollup out of nowhere for the first fall and Johnny is looking frustrated. A neckbreaker gets some near falls for Johnny and it's off to an armbar.

Puma comes back with a shot to the head and a standing moonsault for two as they're still not going full speed. The champ gets dropkicked out of the air for two and it's back to the arm. The fans chant JOHNNY ZERO, which isn't quite on the NXT crowds' level but it's a nice try. A quick cutter stops Johnny cold, though he's still able to avoid a high cross body.

The End of the World is broken up but Puma lays back on him for a quick pin to tie things up, of course with a grab of the ropes like a villain should be using. Back from another break with Mundo chilling on the floor 28:20 to go. Vampiro: "I am so happy that he cheated." Back in and Mundo hits a big knee to the face for two but his superplex attempt turns into a slugout on the top rope.

That's fine with Puma who jumps from one side of the apron to the other for a hurricanrana down to the floor. It's time to pull out a tool box

(meaning we get a Hornswoggle reference from Striker) and Puma is the first to get violent with a Mickinoku Driver through the crate. That's fine with Mundo who comes up with a crowbar to the head (remember No DQ) for a pin to make it 2-1. A quick Moonlight Drive makes it 3-1 and the Flying Chuck followed by the End of the World makes it 4-1 in Mundo's favor. Now we're getting somewhere.

Mundo stops for a water as Puma can barely move. Puma pulls himself into the corner and rolls into a DDT but can't cover. Johnny is smart enough to put his foot on the ropes just in case in a very nice show of intelligence. Back up again and Johnny hits a neckbreaker onto the apron to knock Puma silly again as we go to a third break.

We come back and Mundo blasts Puma in the face with a big metal ladder. Mundo puts the ladder next to the balcony and takes his sweet time setting up two tables. With Johnny on the balcony, Puma pulls himself off the tables and slugs Mundo into the crowd before jumping down to set up a third table on top of the other two. Vampiro is starting to have fun here, despite over twenty minutes of good stuff so far. We make it four tables as I'm guessing we're at about fifteen minutes to go in the show (put the clock up more often people).

Mundo blocks a superplex through the tables and superkicks Puma off the balcony for a crash which isn't treated as that big of a deal. Then again he got hit in the head with a crowbar earlier in the night and isn't dead so you have to give it some slack. Johnny climbs up to the bandstand and cuts a promo about the score about the moment, demanding that we get a song. The band plays and we're at 13 minutes to go.

Ever the cocky heel, Johnny turns his back, allowing Puma to climb the ladder. Johnny's swing of a 2x4 is blocked and Puma gets to the bandstand. A BIG guitar shot knocks Johnny silly and they go crashing through the four tables as we go to a break, thankfully skipping over the three minutes of laying around on broken wood.

Back again with 11:20 to go, meaning we're not missing much if anything between the breaks. Puma drags Mundo back to the ring and gets the easy pin to make it 4-2. Striker: "Prince Puma has cut the lead in half." No

Matt, he hasn't. They slug it out until Mundo misses a spinning forearm, allowing Puma to nail an enziguri and a tombstone to make it 4-3.

Now we get some extra psychology as Johnny bails to the floor and runs into the crowd to kill some clock. Mundo has some blood on his nose as the chase goes over to the announcers' desk. Puma finally catches up with him for a kick to the head but he misses the Phoenix Splash. Mundo runs to the entrance but here's Alberto to blast him in the back of the head and kick Johnny down the steps. Alberto is all ticked off and looks like a killer for one of the only times in his career. I'm digging what I'm seeing there, but then again I've always thought he was better as a face. Johnny is thrown back in and a 450 ties things up.

With 4:00 to go, Alberto throws out a challenge to Mundo, whether it's for the title or not. He'll take a title shot at Puma too, but of course you already knew that. It's tied up with about 3:00 to go as Johnny drives him into the corner and hammers away but has to elbow out of a fireman's carry. A quick C4 gives Mundo two with under 2:00 to go. Mundo misses a top rope hurricanrana as Puma slides away, leaving Mundo to just crash onto the ropes and then the mat. Puma kicks him into the corner and nails the 630 for the 5-4 lead to retain as time expires.

Rating: A-. Well that worked. It dragged a little bit in the middle and the comebacks were a bit of a stretch (crowbar to the head!) but the key here was the logical flow. This felt like one long match instead of a bunch of different acts thrown together. That makes a long match so much easier to watch and the lack of any extended resting (which would have been understandable) helped a lot too. I had a good time here and while it was a bit of a stretch to have Puma pin Mundo four times in about twelve minutes, at least it made sense in context. Really good stuff.

Overall Rating: A. This is a great example of what Lucha Underground does so well. This show was completely out of the ordinary for normal wrestling promotions and that makes Lucha Underground feel like an actual alternative. You hear that term thrown around for TNA and ROH all the time, but there really isn't much different between those shows and WWE. Dedicating an entire hour to one match IS different and makes me want to come back instead of just say "yeah that was different but I've seen

better." I'm not saying this is better than WWE or anything, but they're excelling at what they do and that's a very good sign.

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New WWE DVD Survey

It's another of those surveys that WWE sends out to gauge interest in potential DVD projects. These can offer some compelling ideas so let's take a look at what might be on WWE's schedule.

ECW's Top 50 Craziest Moments

Yeah sure. As you probably know, ECW isn't my thing and they certainly had some insane moments, but I'm really over hearing about how great they were. There's definitely a market for it, but as a full on DVD? I'm not sure, but like I said, I'm not the target demographic.

Dudley Boyz Bio

I'd watch it. The Dudleys are one of the most successful tag teams of all time and giving them a full on three hour documentary and a quality match selection would definitely be worth the time. Just limit the Hardys/Edge and Christian matches to like two each. There are other teams out there.

The Best of 1996: 20 Years Later

This could be interesting as it's not quite the Attitude Era and there really is some great stuff in there. However, I'll turn it off (ok now I won't) if it turns into another "the NWO was awesome but we were going to have DX and we were never worried about it" show. Focus on something new instead.

Wrestlemania III

Sold. The behind the scenes stuff is always interesting and it's the biggest show of all time, meaning there have to be a ton of stories. Hearing WWE talking about the attendance question could be interesting. In case you're wondering, I say it's 93,173 for a few reasons.

1. The 80,000 limit or whatever you hear IS FOR FOOTBALL. A football field is 360 feet by about 160 feet. A WWF ring was at most 20ft by 20ft. Why this is never brought up isn't clear.

2. It's the official number. Just like the official line is that Undertaker and Kane are brothers, that Hulk Hogan is 6'8 and that Andre was 525lbs. Wrestling lies. Why this is supposed to be different isn't clear either.

3. What difference does it make? It's a lot of people.

Rivalries: Taz vs. Sabu

Again, this would be fine and hasn't been touched on enough, but it's not for me.

New Generation

Haven't there been enough Bret and Shawn DVDs already?

True Story of the Royal Rumble

Yep. I don't think this really needs any more explanation.

Rivalries: Eric Bischoff vs. Vince McMahon

We did a 20 part documentary on the Network about this already and I really, really do not need to hear about it ever again. The interviews could be entertaining but I'm totally over this entire subject. It was almost 20 years ago and it's over. Let it die already.

Hardcore

This would be a look back at the Hardcore Title years. This could be incredibly entertaining if they kept it short and went completely over the top serious with it. Get Foley and Road Dogg to do commentary and break down the psychology behind hitting someone with a cookie sheet or just rip on Al Snow for a full match. That could be hysterical.

Countdown

As in a collection of the Network series. I think you can figure this one out for yourself. Bring this series back to as it's a very easy way to kill an hour.

Unreleased Match Compilation

The names listed are Michaels, Austin, Undertaker and Rock. I'd be all over those four as there are some really fun matches in there, as long as it's not just a bunch of PPV matches that I've seen a bunch of times before.

Rivalries

Again, it's a Network series.

Podcasts

On DVD? Why?

Wrestlemania Rewind

You might be noticing a pattern here. However, why haven't we gotten Summerslam/Royal Rumble/Survivor Series Rewind? There's a ton of stuff in there for different series.

Shane McMahon

This would be short and entertaining, but at the same time it would get repetitive since most of the matches are street fight style.

Best of NXT

Oh yeah. There's a ton of great stuff in the old days of NXT (the Full Sail years that is) that people have forgotten about. However, it might be better to put that kind of thing in a different for. Like an e-book. In July.

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Smackdown – June 18, 2015: They're Getting A Handle On Things

Smackdown

Date: June 18, 2015

Location: First Niagara Center, Buffalo, New York

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton, Jerry Lawler

The ending of Monday's show saw the return of Brock Lesnar as the

Authority's big surprise to deal with Rollins, ignoring the history of Lesnar hurting HHH and then Stephanie freaking out on him the night after Wrestlemania when Lesnar destroyed everything and injured Cole, which hasn't been mentioned on TV yet. Let's get to it.

In memory of Dusty Rhodes.

Opening sequence.

Here's Sheamus to get things going. Sheamus holds up the briefcase and laughs at the fans for saying he looked stupid. He feels like a million dollars and promises to be the next WWE Champion. I know it's not a popular opinion but I wouldn't be opposed to that. Sheamus has been making plans to get around Seth Rollins and Brock Lesnar, which would leave everyone out of his way to make him champion.

This brings out Dean Ambrose to remind Sheamus that he pinned him on Monday. Why should that matter? Money in the Bank is a shortcut around silly things like wins and losses and just lets the company put whomever they want in the title scene without putting in the effort. Anyway, Ambrose says the briefcase belongs to Reigns and Dean would have no problem getting it back to its rightful owner. Sheamus wants to fight right now but Kane comes out to uneven the odds. The match is on.

Kane/Sheamus vs. Dean Ambrose

Dean is smart enough to drop to the floor at the bell before he runs back in to low bridge Kane outside. The top rope elbow is broken up though and the double teaming begins. Reigns sneaks in from behind, because somehow he knew Sheamus would be waiting in the normal spot, for the DQ at 1:29.

After a break, the tag team main event is announced.

Roman wants Bray to know he never runs.

Brie Bella vs. Paige

Paige gets a jobber entrance but we're lucky enough to get BRIE MODE. No Nikki here for a change. Brie goes after her to start but Paige drops down as you do when someone is running the ropes, only to have Brie trip

over her. Paige's superplex is countered into a sunset bomb (good looking one too) for two as we take a break. Back with Brie putting on a chinlock with her knees in Paige's back before Paige takes her into the corner for some elbows to the jaw. Paige goes up top but Alicia Fox runs out to shove her down, setting up the Bella Buster for the pin and another BRIE MODE at 7:28.

Rating: C. Considering Brie was in there and can't seem to handle running the ropes, this was better than I was expecting. There's something interesting about the Divas going after Paige and her needing reinforcements (say from NXT?) and at least Alicia is 14% more competent than most of the other Divas.

The Bellas pose on the stage and Alicia is given Bella gear.

Stills of Cena vs. Owens II and then Owens attacking Machine Gun Kelly on Monday.

Owens mocks Renee Young for possibly being a Machine Gun Kelly fan but blames Kelly for putting his hands on Owens first and on Cena for not being there to save him. Kevin doesn't need to pander to the crowd and likes it when people earn title shots, meaning there will be no open challenge. This brings in Cesaro, with headphones around his neck, who would love to get in the ring with Owens tonight. He even puts his hands on Owens' shoulder to make sure Owens gets the point.

Dolph Ziggler vs. Bo Dallas

Before the match, Dallas calls Lana a rebound girl. She's broken Rusev's heart and is now with Ziggler, who definitely should have made her swipe left (online dating thing I guess). Ziggler dropkicks him at the bell but Bo grabs a cravate. Rusev is watching in the back as Ziggler ducks a right hand and hits the Zig Zag for the pin at 1:12.

Rusev freaks out over a post match kiss.

Tough Enough stuff.

Xavier Woods vs. Neville

Woods takes over fast and stomps Neville about 20 times in a row. We're already in the cobra clutch for a bit before New Day tries to get involved, drawing out the Prime Time Players to even the odds. Back in and a kick to the head looks to set up the Red Arrow but Kofi offers a distraction to break it up. Everyone on the floor gets into it and a dropkick sets up the Red Arrow to give Neville the pin at 2:57. I'm getting into this six man feud.

Here's Seth Rollins with something to say. After looking at a clip of the end of Raw, Rollins brags about being the biggest star in WWE. However, he's under constant scrutiny and always being disrespected by these fans. That's what happened this Monday on Raw, as people are instantly thinking Lesnar will be the next WWE Champion. Rollins was shocked when he saw Brock but at Battleground, he's going to get to prove that he really is the diamond and he can't wait.

We recap Bray's promo on Reigns from Raw.

Ambrose asks Reigns how long it takes Sheamus to do his hair but Reigns is focused on Wyatt. Dean asks about Bray but Reigns doesn't want to talk about it. Just handle business tonight so he can get home to his family.

Kevin Owens vs. Cesaro

Non-title and Owens pops Cesaro in the jaw to start. Cesaro does just the same to knock Kevin outside for a suicide dive. Back in and Cesaro can't get him up for a suplex so Owens sends him face first into the post as we take an early break from a promising power brawl. We come back to a chinlock of course because how else do you expect to come back from a break? Owens finds it boring as well as he jumps to the middle rope and spins into a tornado DDT for two.

Cesaro comes back with his reverse Angle Slam for two of his own. That earns him snake eyes (a move that hasn't been seen in a while) and the Cannonball for two, shocking Owens, because he's a good heel who can't believe that someone could kick out of any of his offense. A dropkick knocks Owens off the top and both guys are down again. Is there anything Cesaro can't do? I'd bet he's a world class knitter. Owens crotches him to break up the apron superplex and the Pop Up Powerbomb is good for the

pin at 10:38.

Rating: B. Owens continues to master the power brawling style and hopefully this leads to a singles push for Cesaro. The guy is incredibly talented and the multiple languages should get WWE some international help if they let him go to some other countries for publicity. This was a fun, hard hitting match though as both guys got to throw each other around, which is always entertaining.

Time for Miz at the Movies where he talks about all the movies starring wrestlers this year. Tonight's movie: Vendetta, starring Dean Cain and Big Show. Apparently Big Show was a jerk and Miz should have had the role, as well as the Intercontinental Title. Miz rants about his resume and wants to know why he isn't being treated like a superstar.

Dusty Rhodes tribute video.

Sheamus/Kane vs. Dean Ambrose/Roman Reigns

Ambrose and Sheamus get things going with the latter stomping away in the corner. Dean comes back with chops and punches as they've forgotten the whole wrestling thing so far. Everything breaks down for a bit and the Shield brethren clean house to take us to the early break. Back with Dean hitting the dropkick against the ropes on Kane but Sheamus pulls him outside to take over.

Some knees get two for Sheamus back inside and it's off to Kane to work on the knee that was destroyed in the ladder match. Smart man that old giant. Sheamus slaps on a Brock Lock for a bit before it's back to Kane, who gently lifts Dean throat first into the bottom rope. It's called a catapult but that's being more generous than it is to call Kane interesting. Dean gets in some right hands and the top rope elbow, finally allowing for the hot tag despite the bad knee.

Reigns comes in off the hot tag and cleans house with a series of clotheslines to Kane and a Samoan drop to Sheamus. The Superman Punch is broken up by Kane grabbing both Shield guys by the throat but the rebound lariat breaks it up. Dean dives on Sheamus but here's Wyatt with the picture of Reigns and his daughter as he sings I'm A Little Teapot. The

distraction lets a Brogue Kick connect for the pin on Reigns at 12:57.

Rating: C. This was fine for a long way to build up the Reigns vs. Wyatt story. There was little chance that Wyatt wasn't going to get involved somewhere in here and that wasn't the worst way in the world. I could go for a more sinister Wyatt who gets inside your head instead of just saying he's scary of whatever he meant in the last few months.

Bray says Happy Father's Day and the picture is next to Reigns to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. I liked this better than I was expecting to as they gave us a good match with Owens vs. Cesaro (no real surprise there) and nothing bad. That's a major key to a good show these days, especially with so much stuff packed in: nothing on here was really bad. Some stuff was better than others, but everything was either quick enough to not be bad or good enough to be acceptable. Solid show this week and it went by fast.

Results

Kane/Sheamus b. Dean Ambrose via DQ when Roman Reigns interfered

Brie Bella b. Paige – Bella Buster

Dolph Ziggler b. Bo Dallas – Zig Zag

Neville b. Xavier Woods – Red Arrow

Kevin Owens b. Cesaro – Pop Up Powerbomb

Kane/Sheamus b. Roman Reigns/Dean Ambrose – Brogue Kick to Reigns

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Wrestling Wars Podcast Episode 15

NorCal on Dusty Rhodes passing. This is a rare solo show.

<http://mightynorcal.podbean.com/e/wwp-15-a-retrospective-on-the-one-and-only-american-dream-dusty-rhodes/>