

Lucha Underground – June 3, 2015: Someone Explain This Thinking To Me

Lucha Underground

Date: June 3, 2015

Location: Lucha Underground Arena, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

The big story this week is the resurrection of Mil Muertes, who returned after being sent to the grave by Fenix. The rematch saw Muertes flanked by an army of skull men, meaning the demonic force is about to take over the entire company. Oh and Bael was murdered by Cueto's monster brother. Let's get to it.

We open with a trip to Recapville, population 2,294.

Chavo Guerrero is in Dario Cueto's office and tells him of Black Lotus' plan to kill Cueto's brother. Apparently Chavo was supposed to take care of her but Dragon Azteca got to her first. Azteca must know someone inside the temple to have gotten inside Lotus' head. The trainer has volunteered to erase Chavo's debt in Mexico if Lotus is protected, but Chavo is willing to be hired away. Cueto pulls out money but he wants protection from Mexico instead.

Argenis vs. Jack Evans

Argenis has been out due to Pentagon Jr. breaking his arm. Before we get going, here's Cueto to say no one cares about Argenis and Evans has never won a match here. Therefore, whoever wins here gets one of the seven Aztec medallions. Argenis throws him down to start but Jack charges at him with a clothesline to take over.

Evans' hurricanrana is countered into a powerbomb followed by a low blow, which the referee doesn't seem to mind. Evans: "MY TESTICLES!" It doesn't seem to be the worst injury in the world as Jack kicks him down and hits

a standing corkscrew moonsault for two. Something like a Kimura has Argenis in trouble but it also has him in the ropes. Back up and Argenis grabs a German suplex to send Jack outside, followed by a huge flip dive to wake the crowd up.

Jack tries to moonsault off the apron into a hurricanrana but Argenis slams him into the barricade to take over again. Back in and Argenis slams him out of the corner for two as the announcers say this is also a way to get closer to the Lucha Underground Title. Neither guy is getting there anytime soon but it's nice to get the lip service. Evans grabs a quick backslide and bridges forward for a cool looking pin.

Rating: C+. Nice fun match here though Argenis isn't the most polished of the faces on the roster. Evans knows how to pull off that Shelton Benjamin style where he can do all the athletic stuff but still look like a jerk at the same time. That's difficult to pull off as so much of the high flying stuff will get you cheered.

Daivari tells Big Ryck that Cueto has given them a Trios Title shot tonight if they can find a partner. Ryck suggests The Mack but Cage comes up and beats Mack up to take the spot instead. It's pretty surreal to see someone get beaten up with wrestling moves in a realistic locker room.

Chavo comes up to Black Lotus and says Cueto has allowed her to compete in the temple. On top of that, Chavo is going to get the key to free Matanza (Cueto's brother) so she can kill him in front of the world. Lotus is skeptical and beats the tar out of Chavo with her martial arts. The Crew comes in to go after her as well (why? Matanza killed Bael and Lotus wants to kill Matanza so shouldn't they be on the same page?) and Chavo nails her with a pipe and handcuffs her.

Trios Titles: Big Ryck/Delavar Daivari/Cage vs. Son of Havoc/Ivelisse/Angelico

Ryck/Daivari/Cage are challenging and Ivelisse still has a bad leg. Angelico ducks some clotheslines from Cage to start but gets hiptossed into a backbreaker for a nice counter. That's fine with Angelico who comes back with a kick to the head and the jumping knee to the face but Son of Havoc (the BIG crowd favorite here. Must be the beard) tags

himself in. Cue the argument, allowing Daivari to sneak in and get in a cheap shot. Havoc comes back with a handspring elbow in the corner and a leg trip for two. He tries to speed things up but Angelico tags himself in this time, allowing Cage to get a tag of his own.

Angelico makes the mistake of going after the guys on the apron and gets gorilla pressed into a powerslam. Off to Ryck for a big elbow as Ivelisse takes a seat in the front row. So much for the apron looking good. Daivari comes in and pulls Angelico off the apron as Ivelisse rants about never getting tagged in. Cage does the delayed vertical suplex with squats but Angelico nails the knee strikes to get a breather.

Not that it matters as a powerbomb plants him down again for two. A big knee finally puts Cage down but Ryck knocks Havoc down to break up the hot tag. Cue Texano to distract Daivari though, allowing Angelico to hit another running knee. Havoc tags himself in for the shooting star and the pin as Angelico dives on Ryck and Cage.

Rating: C. Ok, I get it: they don't work well together and they're constantly bickering. Is there ANY other story you can tell about this team? You can only go so far with their challengers looking inept or having someone come out for a distraction before it gets ridiculous. Nothing to see here other than Ivelisse, at least when she's not screaming.

Chavo and the Crew bring Lotus to Cueto. Since he's pure evil, he threatens to put her in a cage with Matanza.

Pentagon Jr. vs. Sexy Star

Submission match. Star jumps him from behind during Pentagon's dedication to his master. Pentagon kicks her down to start and hits a big chop in the ropes, which Vampiro takes exception to. Back up and Pentagon goes for the arm but Star counters into some knees to the face. A front facelock has Pentagon in some trouble but he rolls out and drops an elbow to take over.

Star is able to send him to the floor for a dive and Pentagon comes up holding his elbow. Thankfully Star is smart enough to go after it and

sends Pentagon face first into the post. This is more violent than you would expect from her. Back in and a superkick sets up a leg lock on Pentagon as the elbow is forgotten. For a very unique submission, Pentagon loads up a tombstone but ties up her legs while she's still in the air. Star rolls into a horrible looking Fujiwara armbar attempt (even the announcers call her out on it), allowing Pentagon to escape and nail a kick to the head.

Pentagon puts on a leg lock of his own (kind of a cross between an ankle lock and a Sharpshooter) but Star makes the ropes. Not that it matters as Pentagon kicks her to the floor again, only to have Star climb the barricade for a high cross body. Back in and Star slaps on a half crab but here's Super Fly (injured by Pentagon) to attack Star for taking his mask a few weeks back. That earns Star a package piledriver and a surfboard makes her quit.

Rating: C-. Here's the thing: as the announcers pointed out more than once, Star really isn't good with submissions. What kind of psychology is that? Having the face fight the heel in the heel's specialty? That's not exactly the best idea. Either way, not a very good match here but Star was doing what she could.

Post match Pentagon goes for the arm but Vampiro makes the save. No blows are reached though as Vampiro leaves (Striker: "Before he makes a sacrifice to the black church of the poisoned mind.").

We cut to the back where Vampiro hears voices in his head about going to dark places. He headbutts a mirror to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. This wasn't their best show, though it had some stuff I liked. The problem here is they were either redoing stuff they've already covered or something that isn't very interesting. Basically they need to get the bigger names back on the show, as this stuff really isn't working very well. The Vampiro stuff is interesting though, especially if the master is Konnan, as those two have always hated each other.

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Thought of the Day: I Wish I Hadn't Called This

I was looking back at an old NXT review from December 11, 2013. Here's my take on Ascension back then.

There's really no one left for Ascension to beat in NXT but they would die on the main roster. The skills are there, but can you imagine Cole trying to talk about these guys? They would be buried by the commentary so badly that they'd be lucky to get a win over Los Matadores.

Have they even beaten Los Matadores? I don't believe so.

New Column: An Old School

Reality Star Climbs A Ladder To Fight A Mutant Japanese Barbershop Quintet. And Kofi Kingston

Some might call this a mixed bag. Others might call it an overly long title that isn't as funny as I was hoping.

<http://www.wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-old-school-reality-star-climbs-ladder-fight-mutant-japanese-barbershop-quintet-kofi-kingston/36204/>

Monday Nitro – January 17, 2000: WCW Is Dead

Monday Nitro #223

Date: January 17, 2000

Location: Value City Arena, Columbus, Ohio

Attendance: 10,646

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan, Mike Tenay

I have to say this way too often around here, but everything has changed again. Benoit won the World Title last night and that's the last you're going to see of him in WCW. Unfortunately that's also the case for Malenko, Guerrero and Saturn, who all quit when Kevin Sullivan was announced as the fired Vince Russo's replacement. The Filthy tried to get out as well but didn't have such an easy escape. Now we get to see how everything falls out so let's get to it.

The NWO arrives and Nash leaves Jeff's hand hanging in a funny bit.

Kidman vs. Psychosis

We immediately start with a match and Kidman gets an early advantage off a headscissors and stops a charge by raising a boot. A high cross body gets two but Psychosis low bridges him to the floor and hits a big dive over the top. Thankfully the whole landing on Kidman's head part didn't cripple him. Back in and a nice top rope spinwheel kick gets two as the announcers promise to address all the major changes after last night's show.

They head outside again with Kidman being sent into the barricade but he's still able to dropkick Psychosis out of the air back inside. Psychosis counters a superplex into a super sitout gordbuster for two, only to walk into a wheelbarrow suplex. That earns Kidman a DDT and the guillotine legdrop for a very close two. YOU CAN'T POWERBOMB KIDMAN though and the faceplant gets the pin. This would be four Kidman matches in two days without a Shooting Star.

Rating: B. Off the top of my head, the best match WCW has had since the main event of Mayhem back in November. You can immediately see the cruiserweights being brought back to a respectable place as they were allowed to just go out and have a good match instead of being used as target practice for the heavyweights. They're already off to a good start.

Now we get the big fallout from last night in the form of a statement from Arn Anderson. Terry Funk got beaten up last night for doing what he believed in and that's what a real man does. Anderson has always tried to do what he said and last night he promised to call the match down the middle. Then he started watching the match instead of refereeing and he didn't notice Sid's foot under the ropes when Benoit made him tap out. Therefore the title is vacant.

To recap our title holders, we have David Flair, Crowbar (both of whom lost last night), Brian Knobbs and Ed Ferrara.

The Harris Brothers are in suits again and now guarding the NWO's locker room. I'm so glad we had them turn a few weeks ago just to turn back already.

Booker says he hasn't forgotten where he came from and apparently he and Stevie knew Big T. back in the day. They decided he was all wrong for them and Booker didn't know he was out of jail. That's already more backstory than we get for most new characters.

Here's the new Harlem Heat, with Stevie saying he and Big T. are willing to give Booker another chance. Booker and Midnight come out but Stevie wants Midnight to leave. Stevie mentions Booker borrowing his bike to go get candy as a kid but the brawl is on. The team takes Booker down and Stevie wants a referee in here right now.

Booker T. vs. Big T.

Both guys are in street clothes. A quick Pearl River Plunge drops Booker and a World's Strongest Slam does the same. Booker comes back with a forearm and ax kick followed by the Book End but Stevie throws in a slap jack to knock Booker silly for the pin. This was nothing.

Vampiro vs. Disco Inferno

The Mamalukes are out with Disco and tell him there will be no dancing. During the entrances, Tony basically begs the fans to come to the Thunder taping tomorrow night. Vampiro nails a spinwheel kick to start and another spin kick to the chest. Disco's monkey flip doesn't get him anywhere and Vampiro plants him with a release Rock Bottom, only to miss a corkscrew moonsault.

The Mamalukes validate their paycheck by attacking Disco as this is actually a faster pace than you would expect. It's like they're actually being allowed to try for a change. A swinging neckbreaker gets two for Disco but Vampiro avoids an elbow and hits another top rope spinwheel kick, followed by the Nail in the Coffin for the pin.

Rating: C. Nothing great here but like I said, they were trying for a change. It's such a different atmosphere already with Russo gone for one show and you can see the quality and effort going up. Vampiro looked decent here and I can see why they wanted to push him, but they need to do something with him already.

Scott Steiner presents Nash with some women for secretary interviews, including the yet to be named Major Gunns, Shakira and Midajah. Steiner wants to play Twister.

Tag Team Titles: 3 Count vs. David Flair/Crowbar

We get a 3 Count performance before the match to really make this show feel better. Evan is the odd man out here. 3 Count dives onto the champs to start and here are Standards and Practices to scout the match. We settle down with David suplexing Moore and dropping him with a belly to back for two. Daffney hisses at Evan on the floor so David runs over for the save. Helms superkicks Crowbar down and Shannon adds a top rope spinning splash for two. David low bridges Shannon to the floor, allowing Crowbar to hit a reverse DDT for the pin.

Rating: D+. I loved 3 Count and there's nothing bad about looking at Stacy Keibler but this really didn't work. At the end of the day, David Flair just isn't ready for this spot. He's trying, but it's very similar to Erik Watts in the early 90s: he needed a lot more seasoning before being thrown into this spot.

We get an encore!

Nash asks the ladies to leave so they can have some NWO business. Bret is nowhere to be seen. They need to get rid of the Old Age Outlaws but Arn can stick around for some reason.

Maestro vs. Tank Abbott

No piano, 13 seconds, one right hand for the knockout. This was a shoot fight, because the Brawl For All didn't teach WCW anything.

Norman Smiley comes out to stare down Abbott but Meng shows up to give Abbott someone a real challenge.

Most of the midcard is coming to the arena. Since this is WCW, it takes far longer than it should have. They couldn't have had them come out during the break? Nash and the Harris Brothers come out for the first official address of the roster. Nash praises himself but says he has goals for everyone out there. Tenay needs a personality, Knobbs needs a

brain, Abbott needs a heart and Smiley needs courage. Nash: "I sound like Oz up here."

The fans cut him off with a Goldberg chant so Nash threatens to fire him. This brings Nash to his first real act: Jeff Jarrett is officially the US Champion again. Jeff: "HOLY SLAPNUTS!" Next up is health, which is why there will be mandatory rectal exams before every match with Dr. Jellyfinger. Also, everyone is going to be in the same locker room no matter what level they're on and no one can look at Nash but they all must call him Lord Master.

Nash will decide what happens with the World Title at a later date. He's rapid firing through these ideas. There will be no illegal substances in the locker room, including Viagra. Nash: "Sorry Lex!" He praises Bagwell and Page for their match last night. Nash: "Buff, you doing Kim or what?" As for the first main event tonight, it's Bagwell vs. Page in a rematch from last night with Kimberly as guest referee. They're the NWO, they're in charge, and they are gods.

Kimberly comes in to see the NWO and is given her referee outfit and asks if Page or Bagwell was better.

Team 2000 vs. Varsity Club

Team 2000 is Masahiro Chono and Super J (From what I can find it's Jeff Farmer, better known as NWO Sting). There's actually a story here: Rotundo was part of NWO Japan but left to reform the Varsity Club. Yeah this match is actually getting a story over a Japanese faction that most people didn't know existed.

It's a brawl to start until Chono starts driving knees into Mike's ribs to take over. Off to Steiner but Chono wants Rotundo back in, which the fans find boring. I can't say I blame them as there's no reason to care about this story. Steiner suplexes Chono down and easily takes J to the mat. Steiner whips him into the barricade and Rotundo has a lame slugout as this just keeps going.

Rotundo chinlocks J as Steiner and Chono brawl in the aisle. Back in and Rick gets double teamed for a bit but they're quickly back on the floor

to keep up the brawling. A big boot to the face out of the corner blasts Rick again but Chono dives into a belly to belly. Everything breaks down again and the referee misses a small package from Rotundo to Chono. J comes in and rolls it over to FINALLY give Chono the pin.

Rating: D. This is one of the first major cases of the show having to throw in ANYTHING else besides Benoit/Guerrero/Malenko/Saturn. There was no reason for this to be a nine minute match and the fans might have been on to something with the boring chant. It wasn't the worst match in the world, but like I said, there's no reason to care about these teams fighting. The match wasn't good enough to overcome that problem and it dragged on and on as a result.

Sid Vicious vs. The Wall

Sid runs him over to start and Wall bails to the floor for a breather. Wall is thrown over the announcers' table as this is full squash mode so far. That's it for the play by play right now as we cut to Disco and the Mamalukes coming in to say they'll get the NWO anything they need. Nash asks if they've ever heard of Vinnie Vegas. Their assignment: go beat up Sid. Then get some grinders. We cut back to the ring to see Sid chokeslamming Wall for the pin.

The Mamalukes come out but eat powerbombs.

Scott Steiner, in a Michigan jersey and flanked by Midajah and a girl in a Michigan cheerleader uniform, comes out and beats up the Ohio State (Michigan's big rival) mascot. Steiner does his usual stuff about how all the women want him and tells them to take a number and wait in the back. Michigan beating Ohio State was easy, just like the women in Ohio. An Ohio State fan argues with him from ringside and gets beaten down. Security quickly takes the bloody fan away as we're firmly in the Scott is nuts phase.

Total Package vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

Luger is finally out of the Sting attire. Bigelow elbows him out to the floor and pounds in some big forearms to the back. Back in and Bigelow slugs away, eats the metal forearm, and continues slugging away. The top

rope headbutt connects but Liz distracts Bigelow to break up the Greetings From Asbury Park. Cue Kanyon but Bigelow nails him, only to take a champagne bottle to the head from Luger for the pin.

Rating: D-. Is there a point coming to this Bigelow vs. Kanyon feud anytime soon? They've been feuding, with Bigelow consistently coming out on the losing end, for weeks now and there's no real progression to the story. This was another match that didn't do anything for anyone and was just there to fill in time.

Diamond Dallas Page vs. Buff Bagwell

Kimberly's referee outfit is exactly what you would expect it to be. Page starts fast with a shoulder and spinning Rock Bottom but Kimberly takes her sweet time counting. Buff comes back with a clothesline and they fight to the floor then into the crowd. Time for the ECW phase of the show it seems. A trash can shot knocks Page back to the barricade and they head back inside.

Bagwell nails a hot shot onto the turnbuckle but he stops to hit on Kimberly. Page gets back up and crotches Bagwell against the post. The Diamond Cutter is blocked by grabbing a rope (and it actually works unlike last night) and both guys are down again. The double arm DDT from Buff (well maybe an arm and a quarter) gets another very slow two count.

Back up and they fight over a backslide before the Diamond Cutter connects but Page can't cover. Instead Buff gets up and loads up the Blockbuster, only to get crotched down. Page's superplex attempt is countered with a low blow and now the Blockbuster connects. Kimberly "accidentally" collides with Buff and knocks herself down, allowing Page to get up and hit the Diamond Cutter for a slow pin.

Rating: D+. This is another feud that is just meandering along with little development in sight. It's no longer about whether Kimberly slept with Bagwell but rather if she's going to leave her husband for him. That's about all there is as far as advancement goes, but it's not enough to validate the boring matches that come with the feud.

Kimberly bolts from the ring and Page follows to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. Suddenly Russo is out of power and this feels like a wrestling program again. It's certainly nothing great but we had storyline progression that you could follow, some watching wrestling getting time (three matches broke six minutes and with ten more seconds on the opener they all would have broken seven) and nothing horrible/insulting to my intelligence. In other words, it's a middle of the road wrestling show.

That's the key though: this show still isn't really good. A lot of the wrestling was uninspired at best and the stories were only ok. Nash as the power mad yet entertaining boss has potential and the lack of the focus on the mostly retired crew helped a lot. Unfortunately, I have a feeling the bottom is going to fall out very soon because they're going to have to find something to fill in the void left by all the people leaving, and it's not NWO Japan.

This is where the problems are going to crop up and there isn't much WCW can do about it. The Radicalz leaving at once was like taking the walls out from a building. No matter what was going on, you could count on those four guys to put on a decent wrestling match if you gave them the chance. Now that they're gone, there isn't much left to take their places.

What's supposed to make up for those guys missing? Page and Bagwell having lame matches? More Varsity Club? Ahmed Johnson? Jeff Jarrett cutting the same promo with the same slap nuts line every single week? WCW has lost the meat of their company and there isn't much they can throw in there to fill in the gaps. That brings me to the big point here: the Radicalz leaving was the point of no return for WCW.

Now here's the thing: WCW was going to die no matter what. In the long run, there was too much money being burned and too much of a mess to possibly fix the place. Somewhere along the line it was going to go under and Vince would be left smiling. However, as long as you had those four guys (or at least a young core group of wrestlers who could one day take over), there was always a hope. It may have been just a glimmer, but it was there.

However, all that went away when they left. Those four leaving took the hope away from WCW fans. Any chance they had to see something fresh come in and take the company back from the Good Old Boys network at the top was gone and the hope was destroyed. Now there's just the old guys hanging around at the top, collecting their paychecks and putting on the same pitiful matches that no one wants to see except for the diehard fans.

Benoit finally got to the top last night and it felt like yet another Dusty Finish. Yeah he got there, but never mind because we need to take the title away from him and just let it sit around until we find some other old guy to put it on so he can talk about having some big match but never be able to live up to those promises. The fans have no reason to believe it's possible now and once that happens, the faint chance that WCW could turn it around was gone.

WCW was already a very wounded animal before those four left, but there was always the chance that they could tape themselves up, get on their feet and nail one big right hook to knock the WWF back and have one more chance in this fight. Instead, and no one knew how bad it was going to get in just a few weeks when they showed up on Nitro, WWF just cut off WCW's arms and punched them with their own fists. WCW may appear to still be alive and trying to come back, but at this point, without the core talent that they built up being around anymore, there is no more hope. WCW is dead.

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Thought of the Day: The Second Best Rookie Class

Or newcomers class. We talk about the 2002 rookie class as the best ever in WWE and with good reason. You had:

John Cena

Randy Orton

Brock Lesnar

Batista

Rey Mysterio

If there has ever been a better group of talent coming into the company in one year, I've never heard of it.

However, there's another group that beats anyone out for second place that doesn't get as much attention. From February 14, 1999 to January 31, 2000, the following debuted:

Chris Benoit

Eddie Guerrero

Big Show

Chris Jericho

Kurt Angle

That's not a bad group for second, and the fact that four of them left WCW to come over makes them even more valuable. Not as valuable as 2002's group of course, but it's not too shabby.

Monday Night Raw – June 8, 2015: Half A Billion Ways To Get On My Nerves

Monday Night Raw

Date: June 8, 2015

Location: Smoothie King Center, New Orleans, Louisiana

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Byron Saxton

It's the go home show for Money in the Bank and the ladder match is set with all seven of its competitors. As announced on WWE.com, six of the participants will be in singles matches tonight, including a rematch from last week with Orton vs. Sheamus. Hopefully we get more solid mic work from Ambrose and Rollins as well. Let's get to it.

Before we get started, on a completely unrelated note: thanks for everything Unc. I'll always remember you.

Here's Cena, with a broken nose, to open things up. Cena talks about some of the biggest events in WWE: Hogan vs. Rock, the Streak and the Money in the Bank ladder match. That's uh, quite the collection. Those in the ladder match are fighting for an opportunity on the same night two people will be fighting in the same ring with one getting an opportunity of his own.

Kevin Owens thinks Cena's time is up and his time is now but this Sunday Cena will be fighting for everyone that believes in him as well as those

people who think he sucks. This Sunday he proves that he is still the face that runs this place because he is John Cena. Cue Owens who says that Cena is just proving his point. Cena is delusional if he thinks he's winning on Sunday or if the fans are interested in seeing an open challenge for the US Title.

People have been watching Cena come out to open Raw for ten years now and some people must be sick of it. Instead, let's have an NXT Title Open Challenge instead. Cena loves the idea and says he accepts. Owens says no because Cena is already facing him on Sunday so no match tonight. They accuse each other of being delusional and Cena issues his own Open Challenge and looks right at Owens as he says come get some.

Owens has another idea: whoever comes down the ramp next gets to pick which title they want to fight for. Cue Neville, who says he would love to fight John Cena...one day. Owens is a prize fighter, but Neville knows what it takes to hold that prize. Therefore, Neville will take that NXT Title shot right now.

NXT Title: Kevin Owens vs. Neville

Owens is defending of course and John Cena is making a rare appearance on commentary. The champ goes right to the floor but Neville follows him out for some kicks to the ribs. Back in and a nice running hurricanrana sends Owens back to the floor for the big moonsault dive. They get back in again and Owens just slugs Neville down and hits a wicked Cannonball for two.

We hit the chinlock and Cena gets in a great line by saying no one talks about the minor league home run champion because they'd rather talk about Babe Ruth. A backsplash gets two for Kevin and a belly to back gets the same as Cena is coming off as one of the most polished commentators I've ever heard. Back with Neville countering an AA into a DDT to get a breather.

The big Asai moonsault barely grazes Kevin's arm (it wasn't clear who screwed up) so Neville has to settle for a middle rope dropkick for two. Back up and Owens ducks a kick and grabs the arm, lifting Neville up into something like a brainbuster onto the knee. Owens doesn't use that one

often but it looked great. Neville comes back with the delayed German but Owens crotches him to break up the Red Arrow. The Pop Up Powerbomb retains the title at 14:00.

Rating: B. This was as good as you would have expected and I'm looking forward to seeing Cena and Owens tear the house down again on Sunday. Owens plays a great power brawler and we've been lacking a good powerbomb for a long time now. Fun match here and it's awesome to see the NXT guys getting their shot on the main roster.

Video on Rollins vs. Neville at Elimination Chamber and the resulting aftermath that set up Sunday's ladder match.

WWE praises itself for having a half billion social media followers because that means they're awesome and TOTALLY EQUAL TO EVERY OTHER MAJOR ENTERTAINMENT COMPANY EVER.

Rollins comes up to the Authority and implies they're all in trouble on Sunday but Stephanie brings up what Rollins said last week about not needing the two of them. They'll be there on Sunday but not at ringside. However, tonight Seth can pick his own opponent.

We recap Paige getting screwed by Twin Magic last week and her ensuing promo ripping into the Bellas dominating the Divas division for way too long. She's promised to change the division forever.

Nikki Bella says Paige is projecting her frustration onto the twins and is sure the Bellas have never held anyone back. Maybe this is Paige's house, but it's the Bellas' world.

Summer Rae vs. Nikki Bella

Non-title. A quick rollup gets two for Nikki but it's time for some pushups. Summer comes back with a cobra clutch for a bit before Nikki fights up and hits the Rack Attack for the pin at 2:19.

We recap Reigns having to win three times last week to retain his Money in the Bank spot.

Here's Reigns with something to say. He talks about hating that briefcase

for so long because of who it was attached to. Now it doesn't sound so bad though because he's going to pull it down and cash in against Dean Ambrose some day down the line. Cue Kane who says he's in the ladder match on Sunday to protect the Authority's interests. Reigns offers Kane a chance to come in right now for a demonstration in breaking jaws but here's Dolph Ziggler to interrupt.

Kane isn't getting in the ring right now because the Authority hasn't pulled his strings. After taking forever to call Kane a tool, Ziggler says he's going to win on Sunday. Kane reminds Dolph about the dangers of certain tools and reminds him that everyone is in singles matches against each other tonight. Well minus Neville of course. This brings out R-Truth for some reason but a confused Kane tells him that he isn't in the match. R-Truth: "Are you sure?" Kane: "Yeah." Truth: "My bad." And he's gone.

Kane tries to continue but gets cut off by New Day. They promise that Kofi will pull the briefcase down using the power of positivity, making all of them Mr. Money in the Bank because NEW DAY ROCKS! This brings out Sheamus, who laughs at the idea of anyone else winning this Sunday. He'll be one Brogue Kick away from becoming champion all over again. Kane finally gets to introduce Orton, who comes out as scheduled. This was basically just a way to remind us of who is in on Sunday.

Randy Orton vs. Sheamus

Rematch from last week where Sheamus was disqualified. Orton quickly takes it to the floor for some shots tot he ribs before hitting the Stomp back inside. Sheamus bails outside again and is whipped hard into the barricade for his efforts. Back in and a neck snap across the top rope gives Sheamus control so he slaps on an armbar. Quite the power brawler indeed. Orton fights back but gets knocked to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Sheamus driving a knee into the ribs and slapping on a chinlock to slow things down again. Sheamus slowly walks around so Orton slugs away and hits the t-bone suplex. The elevated DDT connects but both guys miss finishers. Instead it's a clothesline to send Sheamus outside, only to have Sheamus throw him over the table. Just like last week, Sheamus

busts out a chair but eats a right hand to the ribs. Orton throws the chair at Sheamus' ribs and that's a DQ at 13:13.

Rating: C-. Bleh. I still cannot find a way to care about these two having a match. They're two of my favorites but they're just not a pairing I want to see. It didn't help that the ending was the same thing they did last week to cap off doing almost the entire same match from last week. Was there no one else you could put in there? Like, Ziggler vs. Orton perhaps?

Post match Orton stomps Sheamus' head on the steps (insert your own Curb Stomp joke here) and hits an RKO.

The Stooges annoy Rollins as they ask to be in his corner on Sunday. They're huge morons and he doesn't need them on Sunday, so Jamie says screw you. They're Shield 2.0 with Mercury as an upgrade over Reigns and Noble being better than Ambrose. Rollins is a son of a gun and would be nothing without the Authority. That's enough to earn the Stooges a match against the champ tonight. Jamie and Rollins slap each other and Mercury has to break it up before threatening Rollins for later.

Kane vs. Dolph Ziggler

Neither guy gets an entrance and it's Ziggler starting fast, only to be uppercut out of the air. With Lana looking on we hit the chinlock to slow the match down again. Kane slugs him down in the corner as the crowd gets even quieter with every Kane right hand. A side slam gets two and we stop to look at Lana again. Kane boots Dolph's head off for two and we take a break. Back with Ziggler fighting out of a bearhug and nailing a superkick to put both guys down. Lana applauds and here's Rusev to distract her, causing Lana to fall off the ramp and hurt her ankle. The distraction lets Kane nail a chokeslam for the pin at 9:46.

Rating: D. I had forgotten how much I hated these singles matches leading up to a big multi-man match, even though it was driving me crazy just a few weeks back. It doesn't help that it's more of Rusev getting on my nerves with the whole broken man thing. At least he didn't seem upset when he hurt Lana.

Lana gets her ankle checked and is prescribed ice.

It's time for MizTV, starting with a clip of Ryback and Big Show getting into it last week. Naturally Ryback and Big Show are the guests tonight, starting with Ryback who interrupts Miz's introduction. Miz lists off his resume and Ryback cuts him off again because he's sick of hearing all these lines over and over again. They argue a bit until Big Show cuts them off as only he can.

Show talks about how he can take everything he wants anytime he wants so Ryback says come get this title. They stare each other down and Big Show yells at Miz, who jumps the giant. Miz is thrown down so Ryback Shell Shocks Show. Why they didn't SAVE THAT FOR THE FREAKING MATCH is beyond me but then again Big Show and Kane are featured in big matches in 2015 so I shouldn't be that surprised.

We recap the makings of the handicap match.

Luke Harper/Erick Rowan vs. Los Matadores

Rowan throws Diego around to start and brings in Harper to run over Fernando. Back to Rowan to knock Torito off the apron, meaning there's no one for Fernando to tag. A 3D (The Way) ends Fernando at 2:15.

Harper gets a mic and says tick tock tick tock because the time to pay for your sins is coming. The judgment is waiting at your door. Rowan says it's ok to be afraid because you should be.

Kane comes in to see Rollins and laughs about the Instagram photos Ambrose has been posting of himself with the title all around New Orleans. Yeah I've ignored these stupid things all night but they're little more than WWE saying HEY! DID YOU KNOW WE HAVE A LOT OF FOLLOWES ON SOCIAL MEDIA??? BECAUSE WE TOTALLY DO! Kane threatens to cash in on Sunday and they bicker. Again.

More social media stats and another Ambrose picture. These are now being used to announce that Dean will be here tonight. Ignore that the ticket in the picture clearly says COMP.

Trailer for Ted 2.

Big E. vs. Titus O'Neil

Woods calls Big E. the Minister of Mass. E. gets a quick two off a belly to belly and hammers away at the bald head. An abdominal stretch lets Big E. slap Titus' stomach for the NEW DAY ROCKS clap. Titus fights back with some chops in the corner and an old Pounce ala Monty Brown, only to have the partners get in a fight on the floor. That distraction lets Big E. hit the Big Ending for the pin at 3:13.

Rating: D. This show has drained me of any interest in any more mini versions of matches I'm going to see on Sunday. Also, nice job of having the challenger lose to make sure I buy into his team having a chance going into their title match on Sunday. It's already not a great match in the first place and this didn't help.

Roman Reigns vs. Kofi Kingston

Kofi's wristlock doesn't work very well and Reigns wristlocks him to the floor. The other New Day members offer a distraction to let Kofi take over but Reigns fights back again and sends Kofi outside one more time. The apron kick looks to set up Reigns' big dive but he has to settle for a running clothesline off the steps to take out Woods. Kofi slides back in for a nice baseball slide and we take a break.

Back with Reigns fighting out of a chinlock so it's right back to another chinlock. Kofi goes up for a nice top rope ax handle as Woods will not shut up (in a good way). Reigns makes his comeback with a bunch of clotheslines and a tilt-a-whirl slam for two. The SOS is countered into a sitout powerbomb for two more but he has to take out Woods and Big E. A rollup gets two for Kofi but he dives into the Superman Punch for the pin at 12:07.

Rating: C+. I liked this more than I thought I would as Kofi is more than capable of making a match like this look good. Reigns fighting off the trio works fine as they're not losing in a tag match so it's no real loss. Fun match here, even though the ending wasn't ever really in any doubt.

Reigns grabs a chair and Ambrose comes to sit down, carrying popcorn and

a Pepsi.

Jamie Noble/Joey Mercury vs. Seth Rollins

Kane is out with the Stooges. Mercury spins out of a wristlock to start but Seth does the same thing and sends Joey into the mat. The Stooges take a breather on the floor but Kane offers a distraction to let them get in some double teaming. Ambrose pours popcorn on Seth's head, allowing Joey to nail a nice dropkick for one, followed by an armdrag into an armbar. Seth throws him outside and laughs at Dean a bit before putting on a chinlock at 11:08pm.

Rollins misses a charge in the corner and the hot tag brings in Noble to clean house, completel with his little dance. The swinging neckbreaker gets two and the Stooges try the Rick Rude Wrestlemania V pin for a VERY close two, but Jamie eats a low superkick to change control again. Mercury gets buckle bombed into his partner and Seth loads up the Pedigree, only for Dean to get up and throw the title in. The distraction lets Joey get a rollup for the pin at 9:00. Yes, this match that started in the overrun got NINE MINUTES.

Rating: D+. Yeah the match was entertaining enough and I get the point but maybe they could have been done with this earlier if they hadn't had to spend half an hour patting themselves on the back for their win. Not a bad match here but it just kept going when it could have been done in about half the time.

Dean hits Dirty Deeds to take the title back and climbs a ladder to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. This show wasn't great but unlike the disaster of two weeks ago, there isn't one (or two) major problems bringing it down. Instead this was like death by 1000 stab wounds as so much of the show was about the stupid Instagram/social media stats and most of the people in Money in the Bank having singles matches that mean nothing. That's the big problem with matches like these: there's nothing important and you know the ladder match is down to at most two people. Cut the thing down and make it more interesting instead of having this big of a mess. Not a good show this week but it did have some fun parts.

Results

Kevin Owens b. Neville – Pop Up Powerbomb

Nikki Bella b. Summer Rae – Rack Attack

Sheamus b. Randy Orton via DQ when Orton threw a chair

Kane b. Dolph Ziggler – Chokeslam

Luke Harper/Erick Rowan b. Los Matadores – The Way to Fernando

Big E. b. Titus O'Neil – Big Ending

Roman Reigns b. Kofi Kingston – Superman Punch

Jamie Noble/Joey Mercury b. Seth Rollins – Rollup

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Wrestling Wars Podcast Episode 11

Featuring the return of Ty Burna, Money in the Bank and a preview of the AFC North division.

<http://mightynorcal.podbean.com/e/wwp-episode-11-the-return-of-ty-burna-as-we-cover-money-in-the-bank-and-our-preview-of-the-afc-north/>

Thought of the Day: It's Spreading

I know it's annoying but....

So I was at Wal-Mart today and I saw the Brawling Buddies (new version of Wrestling Buddies, which were in fact the coolest things ever), the WWE toy sections, and a towel with Orton/Cena/other WWE guys on it. I know we talk a lot about how family friendly can be annoying, but this is why it's happened. WWE is right there with stuff like Marvel and Disney and they would be crazy to go edgier again (at least long term) and throw away this sort of opening. Yeah it gets annoying to the older fans, but it's far better for the company as a whole.

Souled Out 2000 (2015 Redo): A Different Kind Of Bad

Souled Out 2000

Date: January 16, 2000

Location: Firstar Center, Cincinnati, Ohio

Attendance: 14,132

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Mike Tenay, Bobby Heenan

And then everything changed. The big matches for this show were scheduled to be Chris Benoit vs. Jeff Jarrett in a 2/3 falls match for the US Title and Bret Hart defending his WCW World Title against Goldberg. Then Goldberg, Hart and Jarrett all got hurt so we're going to get Sid Vicious vs. Benoit for the World Title, which is being announced the night of the show. Other than that, Russo is GONE (pause for the parade) due to his solutions to the gaping holes caused by these injuries, which I'll get to later. Let's get to it.

The announcers immediately talk about the changes to the World Title match and show us clips of the injuries occurring, including the Goldberg superkick to Hart and Benoit's Swan Dive off the top of the cage this past week on Nitro to knock Jarrett out. It's interesting that the headbutt hit the arm but still rattled Jeff that much.

We look at the Revolution attacking Konnan during the pre-game show, which somehow leads to the new Triple Threat Theater. Instead of Jarrett vs. Benoit in a 2/3 falls match, Kidman of all people will be running a Revolution gauntlet in the three gimmick matches, including against Revolution's mystery partner.

We run down the card to fill in even more time. Apparently Page vs. Bagwell is last man standing.

Also earlier tonight, David Flair and Crowbar have attacked Vampiro, meaning it's no longer Flair vs. Vampiro but instead it's a three way dance with Crowbar added.

After six and a half minutes of recaps and explaining the card, we're ready to go.

Kidman vs. Dean Malenko

This is Catch As Catch Can, which was originally the Dungeon Match and means you win by pin, submission or your opponent leaving the ring. You know, because Kidman vs. Malenko needs a wacky stipulation. Dean takes him into the corner to start but Kidman drives him in just as quickly.

That goes nowhere as Malenko takes him down into a headscissors, only to bail into the corner when Kidman comes up swinging. A jackknife cover gets two for Dean but Kidman rolls away and fires off right hands, sending Dean rolling to the floor....to give Kidman the win. Either Dean screwed up on a pretty unique rule or he wanted out as fast as he could. That's it for Dean in WCW.

Clip of Vampiro powerbombing Crowbar for a pin on Thunder. The post match stuff that set up the match tonight isn't included but why bother with something like that?

We recap Daffney being all psycho and hooking up with David Flair, who then joined forces with Crowbar. This somehow tied into David's godfather Arn Anderson, who helped them win the Tag Team Titles. Vampiro and the Misfits hit on Daffney so she kneed them in the groin, setting up tonight's match. In theory this was going to be Vampiro and someone against the champs, but it was changed to a three way on the pre-show for no logical reason.

Vampiro is about to address what's going on but Masahiro Chono of all people interrupts and yells in Japanese.

David, Crowbar and Daffney promise to break Vampiro's bones and rip off his flesh.

Vampiro vs. David Flair vs. Crowbar

It's a big brawl to start but Vampiro faceplants both of them to take over early on. There's no reason for Flair and Crowbar to fight each other aside from general insanity so this should be a tag match like it was supposed to be. Vampiro's suplex is countered into a northern lights suplex for two but a spinning kick puts Crowbar down as well. There's a suicide dive for Crowbar as Daffney bounces up and down on the bottom rope.

David's chops have no effect as the announcers talk about Ric Flair being on some house shows but not appearing on TV. Vampiro chops David a few times and throws him onto Crowbar. The Rock Bottom on the floor is broken up by Crowbar's flip dive for a huge crash. A big splash from the apron

crushes Vampiro again as the Tag Team Champions are only kind of working together.

Back in and Crowbar plants him with a German suplex, continuing to make me wonder why he's stuck in this story. Vampiro one ups him with a release superplex, prompting about forty seconds of replays of the match's big spots. David remembers he's in the match and gets two off a vertical suplex as this becomes the handicap match it was supposed to be. That goes nowhere as Vampiro superkicks both of them down and plants Crowbar with a Rock Bottom for two.

More double teaming gives the champs control and a top rope splash gets two for Crowbar. David slaps on a figure four that makes Dusty Rhodes look like Ric himself but Crowbar goes for a cover, starting a brawl between the champs. Back up again and Vampiro cleans house, sidesteps a charging David to send him into Daffney and the Nail in the Coffin gives Vampiro the pin.

Rating: D+. Total mess here but it was fun at times. Like I said though, the booking was all over the place and it was just a spotfest, but the bigger problem is the Tag Team Champions just lost a glorified handicap match in ten minutes. Why this wasn't a tag match isn't clear, especially when you have all those people on the roster not doing a thing. David continues to be completely worthless.

Buff Bagwell arrives.

The Mamalukes are ready for the Harris Brothers in a bonus match.

Harris Brothers vs. Mamalukes

Ron shoves Johnny the Bull into the corner to start but eats a spinning kick to the face which sounded like it made some solid contact. Back in and Ron runs over Vito (in his sleeveless, shiny neon green shirt) but Johnny comes in with some right hands to the ribs to take over. Vito drops an elbow low, only to have Ron take Johnny out to the floor and whip him into the barricade.

A big side slam plants Johnny back inside and it's off to Don for a lame

chinlock. The Twins maintain control and hit Johnny low as I'm trying to figure out who to cheer for in this match. Vito gets goaded into the ring so Ron can choke in the corner before throwing the Bull to the floor. This match just keeps going and the fans chant DOA. Vito breaks up a cover off a DDT and crotches Don, only to have Disco shove him off by mistake, helping Vito with a top rope clothesline to Ron for the pin.

Rating: D-. This is one of those matches that just kept going for no reason other than they needed to fill in some more time. On top of that it's a bonus match so there isn't even a story going on until the ending where Disco didn't mean to help the Mafia guys win. Really dull stuff here but either team would be an upgrade for the Tag Team Titles.

Madusa rants to Spice about Oklahoma.

Cruiserweight Title: Madusa vs. Oklahoma

Madusa is defending but Oklahoma has the Cruiserweight Title belt because this story is stupid. Oklahoma vows to prove that men are the dominant sex and runs down all the horrible housewives here in Cincinnati. "Madusa, get those silicone balls out here so I can bounce them back to the kitchen." Madusa comes out in a bikini with a loincloth as she fires off kicks to start.

Some hair drags put Madusa down but Oklahoma (wearing a singlet with his name on it in the WWF Attitude logo style) avoids a charge, only to have Madusa fall onto his crotch. A pair of middle rope missile dropkicks drop Oklahoma but he comes right back with a DDT because he's somehow better than the best American female wrestler of this era. Spice takes the barbecue sauce away from Oklahoma and here's Asya to help out.

Not that it matters as Oklahoma pulls the loincloth down and rolls Madusa up for the pin and the Cruiserweight (Ferrara weighed about 300lbs) Title. Too short to rate, but the man that said he was better than all women just pinned the female champion despite her having two people to help her. Somehow, this is supposed to be entertaining rather than, you know, horrible and disgusting.

The girls pour the sauce down his singlet post match. That's an

appropriate response after being cheated out of a title by a chauvinist announcer whose entire character was originally built around mocking an announcer. All hail the Powers That Be!

Hardcore Champion Brian Knobbs credits Fit Finlay for giving him back the Eye of the Tiger. He'll beat up Meng and Smiley tonight and then take out Finlay to become the new master.

Hardcore Title: Brian Knobbs vs. Fit Finlay vs. Meng vs. Norman Smiley

Knobbs is defending. This is called Four The Hard Way and I'm sure it's going to be the hard way as opposed to something easy like gum surgery. Norman comes out in riot gear. Brian takes over with a bunch of trashcan lid shots before double teaming Meng with Finlay's help. Meng shrugs it off and knocks Norman down (Heenan: "RUN!") before everyone goes to the floor. Norman does a kind of leg sweep to put Brian down but Finlay blasts him in the head with a trashcan.

A headbutt with the riot helmet puts Norman down again and it's table time. Knobbs and Finlay hit Meng with the trashcan and it's time to split up because this match needs to be doubled. Thankfully it doesn't last long as Norman and Finlay come back to ringside with Smiley being dropped face first onto a chair. Meng's cover on Brian is broken up and Norman is left alone with the champ. Instead of covering though he stops to dance, allowing Knobbs to hit him with the riot shield to retain. Tenay says Knobbs is a force to be reckoned with a mere four days after winning the title.

Rating: D-. You can see the problem with this division in this match alone: they're not doing anything. This is just the weapons title with people who have nothing else to do filling in the spots. At least with the WWF version, the hardcore guys were entertaining and had enough charisma to carry the division. This is everyone but Norman treating it seriously and making it a very dull sit every time they're out there.

Meng cleans house post match.

Kidman vs. Perry Saturn

Bunkhouse Brawl, which means hardcore (that sounds familiar), even though I don't think either of these two have ever been in a bunkhouse in their entire lives because most people aren't cowboys. Saturn headbutts him down to start and plants Kidman with a gorilla press for two. He crotches Kidman on top and hits a springboard clothesline (kind of at least) to drive Kidman to the floor for a big crash right on his side.

Thankfully with Kidman's hip still in one piece, Saturn knocks his head off with a clothesline and gets two off a legdrop. Saturn rips the shirt apart and starts cranking on the arm. A beal with the torn shirt sends Kidman down again before Saturn remember this is a hardcore match and pulls out a table. Kidman finally scores with a dive as Tony and Heenan plan starting a table business. There's a comedy gimmick in there somewhere.

Back in and Saturn takes over again with a top rope elbow getting two. Saturn busts out a layout powerbomb (yes he can!) for two but misses a moonsault. The BK Bomb gets two but Saturn launches him over the top and out through the table for two on the floor. They head up top with Saturn loading up a superbomb, only to get backdropped down. It's time to go back to the drawing board with another powerbomb but Kidman faceplants him down (maybe he can't) for the pin. That's it for Saturn in WCW.

Rating: D+. This was a glorified Saturn squash until the ending came out of nowhere. Kidman took a good beating and it came off like the Jeff Hardy formula, which isn't the worst idea, but Saturn destroying him for ten minutes with the hardcore rules barely meaning anything.

And now, Stevie Ray goes back to the hood. Heenan's words. Stevie talks to some old friends and says this is where he and Booker come from. He says a pile of cardboard boxes is home to someone and this is where they're from. Some people Stevie knows asks where Booker has been but Stevie says they just forgot about this place. I can't believe I'm saying this, but this was actually really well done.

Stevie says it's done tonight.

Booker T. vs. Stevie Ray

Before the match Booker, wearing a red vest with sleeves so skinny they look like suspenders, says he's going to give Stevie the whipping he deserves for saying Booker has forgotten where he came from. Stevie tries to get in a cheap shot but Booker ducks underneath and nails a spinning kick to the face. A big clothesline drops Booker and the match slows way down.

They head outside with Stevie slowly walking around the ring until Booker fires off some right hands. Back in and Stevie gets in a thumb to the eyes and hooks on a chinlock. A backdrop puts Booker down and we cut to the crowd for no apparent reason. Booker escapes the Slapjack and scores with the Book End, but Ahmed Johnson runs in for the DQ.

Rating: D. Booker is good, but carrying Stevie Ray is almost impossible. There's only so much you can do when you're in a story this lame and we passed that point as soon as the bell rang. Really dull match but I was a huge fan of Ahmed Johnson so somehow I can live with this.

Stevie names him Big T. Unfortunately, I remember where this is leading and it's going to get even worse.

Sid is ready to fight his friend for the World Title.

Tank Abbott vs. Jerry Flynn

Here's Tenay's recap: "This past Monday, they were put inside the same jail cell and even that couldn't keep them apart." Abbott punches, Flynn kicks, they trade some lame submission holds and Tank punches him out for the pin in less than 100 seconds.

We recap Page vs. Bagwell, which is over accusations that Bagwell slept with Page's wife Kimberly and Buff implying that Kimberly has been with the entire locker room. In other words, it's over whether or not Kimberly is a sl**.

Diamond Dallas Page vs. Buff Bagwell

Last man standing. Buff punches him out to the floor and they're quickly in the crowd with Buff punching him over what appear to be hockey boards. Back to ringside with Bagwell still in control but Page comes back with a

neckbreaker. The Diamond Cutter is broken up and Bagwell goes outside for a dive from Page. They both go down off a single right hand and fight near the WCW.com station.

Both guys throw a monitor and Tony thinks it's hilarious. A keyboard shot to the head puts Bagwell down but Buff comes back with an elbow off the set through the table. It's Page's turn to no sell and they head back to the ring as there hasn't been a count yet. Page, bleeding from the side, crotches Bagwell against the post. Even more no selling ensues as Bagwell shrugs off a Diamond Cutter and hits a Vader Bomb for eight.

Buff DDT's Page for seven and it's Blockbuster time. The fans react, so is Buff supposed to be the good guy here? Page eats Blockbuster but gets up at nine. Bagwell pulls a police baton out to beat on Page for nine, only to walk into a Diamond Cutter. It's actually Bagwell up first with Page not being able to answer the count. So yeah, Page lost by hitting his finisher. That's certainly different.

Rating: D+. That ending is really confusing stuff as you would think Buff could have just hit the Blockbuster for the win. They were trying to play up the idea that Buff blocked the move but he went down like anyone else would have. Really weird ending to a boring but not horrible match.

Kimberly comes out and watches as Page beats Buff down.

Kidman vs. ???

This is in Caged Heat, which means Hell in a Cell. Shane Douglas comes out to introduce the mystery opponent: the Wall. Yeah it's Kidman vs. the Wall in an unannounced match inside Hell in a Cell. They fight over a chair on the floor to start with Wall getting the better of it. Kidman is tossed into the cage a few times as the crowd is just gone. They head inside with Wall getting two off a clothesline. A sunset bomb out of the corner gets the same for Kidman and he counters a suplex into a DDT for the same. Kidman goes up top and dives right into a chokeslam for the pin.

Rating: F. This is another instance where I can sum up the problem in one sentence: a Hell in a Cell match that lasted five minutes That's ignoring

the fact that these two have no personal issues and Wall is just there because Shane is still injured and you can't put Asya out there.

Kevin Nash vs. Terry Funk

Hardcore. Again. If Nash wins he's the Commissioner but if Funk wins, the NWO is gone. Nash jumps him in the aisle and throws in some big right hands, followed by a chair to the back. There's the Jackknife through the table but Nash goes inside to talk trash instead of covering. He tells Funk that he can keep his job as Commissioner if he can get back in, but as soon as Terry gets back in, Nash says he's a liar.

Another clothesline puts Funk on the floor and he crashes on his head to make it look even more effective. Terry nails him with a chair a few times to limited avail so Nash chairs him down again. A DDT plants Nash and Funk slowly slugs away before setting up some more chairs. That earns Funk a low blow and a powerbomb through the opened chairs to give Nash the power.

Rating: D. So Nash is the Commissioner after spending weeks beating up the lame duck Commissioner. I'm so glad we got to sit through this, though at least Nash is somewhat relevant to the product and has been around longer than a few weeks. I can also see why Flair wasn't interested in coming back for something like that.

Nash officially takes over at midnight.

Arn Anderson, guest referee for the main event, basically says none of this matters as it's all about getting Nash out of power. He stumbles over his lines here which is something you never see from him.

WCW World Title: Chris Benoit vs. Sid Vicious

Feeling out process to start with Sid shoving Benoit into the corner but being nice enough to help him up. Some of the roster comes out to watch at the arena entrance. Sid shoves Benoit to the floor by the throat and it's time to regroup. Back in and Benoit gets smart by going after the knee by dropkicking the leg our bringing Sid down.

With almost the entire locker room watching (and looking like they're at

a funeral), Benoit takes it to the floor and crushing the leg between the post and the steps. A Figure Four has Sid in even more trouble but he turns it over, sending Benoit to the ropes for a break. Sid is wrestling as the face here but Benoit is only the heel by default.

Benoit snap suplexes him for one and then puts on the bridging Indian Deathlock to make Sid scream. The hold has to be broken because of the pressure it puts on Benoit's neck so Sid can try a quick comeback, only to eat another dropkick to the knee. The rolling Germans are countered with a powerslam for two and the fans actually show some signs of life.

A long leg lock has Sid in even more trouble and a release German sets up the Swan Dive but Sid powers out at one. The chokeslam gets two due to Benoit's foot being under the rope. There's the Crossface for an immediate tap to give Benoit the title. Anderson wasn't a factor in the entire match.

Rating: C. Watchable match here with Sid getting in almost nothing. That's the big key here: Benoit took him apart and then made Sid submit (unlike Goldberg in an interesting bit). Unfortunately there was almost no emotion or drama here as it was just about who was going to win and there was no reason to be upset with either guy as champion.

Replays show that Sid's foot was under the rope, which was their out to take the title off Benoit once he quit.

Benoit praises Sid for a great fight and talks about seeing the Dynamite Kid when he was eleven years old. Anderson comes in and shakes Benoit's hand. Cue Nash to say he's going to make Benoit's life a nightmare starting at midnight.

Overall Rating: D. Let's get the important part out of the way first: this was a big, big improvement over the Russo shows. It may not have been good or even decent, but there's a huge difference between a show making me scream at the screen fifteen years later and just being pretty lame. There's only one decent match on the show and only one moment that matters, but at least it's a nice feel good moment.

The interesting thing here is that you might like the show better without

seeing the build. It's a totally different show than they set up due to the injuries and changes to the card, but that doesn't mean it's anything good. The new version of WCW starting tomorrow night is going to be....I guess the word is interesting, but the roster being depleted all at once is one of the final nails in the coffin, which we'll get to on Monday. Bad show, but a boring bad instead of infuriating.

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Thunder – January 12, 2000: It's Killed My Ability To Speak

Thunder

Date: January 12, 2000

Location: Civic Center, Erie, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 3,947

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Scott Hudson, Mike Tenay

We're officially on Wednesdays now as Thunder goes running away from Smackdown as fast as it can. It's the final show before Souled Out, which isn't going to wind up meaning anything as the top half of the card is going to be thrown out the window due to a bunch of injuries. Let's get

to it.

We open with clips from Nitro this week. The old guys are prominently featured.

Bret Hart arrives separately from the NWO.

Vampiro vs. Crowbar

To set the tone for this show, Tony brings up the Old Age Outlaws and Scott's immediate response is "Oh you didn't know." Vampiro jumps David Flair during the entrances and goes after Crowbar early on. David gets planted with a Rock Bottom on the floor but Crowbar pops back up with a moonsault to the floor to take both of them down.

Crowbar hits a slingshot splash for two but Vampiro plants him with another Rock Bottom. Some kicks set up a pose but Crowbar plants him with a German suplex followed by a slingshot legdrop. Back up and Vampiro gets crotched on top, only to counter a hurricanrana into a superbomb for the pin. Short but entertaining while it lasted.

Vampiro gets beaten down post match until Arn Anderson comes out to talk to David. Crowbar goes after Arn and gets laid out.

Time to run down the card.

Here's Bret Hart with something to say. The crowd has a right to boo him right now because he's let them all down. He doesn't like the way the NWO takes all those shortcuts so the NWO is out and the pink and black attack is back. Bret tells the NWO where they can stick it and here they come to the stage. Nash says Bret hasn't learned a thing "since New York" because he's still too stupid for his own good.

The crowd may want heroes, but Bret could have become a god in the NWO. Bret needs to forget about this Canadian hero bull because hard work doesn't pay. That would be one of those shoot comments that isn't meant to be a shoot comment. Nash offers Bret a chance to come back to the team right now, but Bret swears a bit more. He'll go through the NWO one by one starting tonight so Nash promises to end Hart's career. It's a nice idea, even though I'm not entirely sure why Bret has had a change of

attitude.

After a break, Bret is sitting in a room with a ball bat.

The Old Age Outlaws are watching on a monitor. I guess that passes for interesting now.

Hardcore Title: Brian Knobbs vs. Norman Smiley

Norman is defending and this is taking place outside, but Norman it's too cold. He's finally forced outside and gets jumped by Knobbs, who nails him with a bunch of weapons. Norman comes back by throwing him into a wall and they hit each other with trashcans and a metal sheet. Cue a car to run Norman down, allowing Knobbs to hit him with a shovel, because RUNNING HIM OVER WITH A CAR isn't enough, for the pin and the title, because Brian Knobbs is a better choice to be a champion than the entertaining Smiley, and doing this four days before a four way title match makes total sense.

The NWO kicks Bret's door down.

Here's the Revolution with something to say. They're ready for the big showdown with the Filthy Animals on Sunday and Shane might even get in the match himself. Malenko promises to raise the Revolution flag on Sunday over the bodies of the Filthy Animals. Saturn talks about spinning wheels and nearly gets into it with Asya until Shane calms them down and tells Asya not to screw this up.

The NWO has Bret and carry him through the back. The Old Age Outlaws are STILL watching all this. I'm still trying to figure out why this is supposed to be interesting.

Jerry Flynn and Tank Abbott get arrested for fighting.

Madusa vs. Oklahoma

Non-title, but this is an evening gown match. Oklahoma comes out in a dress and carrying the Cruiserweight Title, so here's Miss Hancock to shake her head at him. Madusa comes up from behind and kicks Oklahoma down before they whip each other into the steps. He can't get the

barbecue sauce taped to his leg so he slams Madusa and tries to get it out again. With that taking way too long, Madusa suplexes him down and strips his dress off for the win.

As if that's not enough, Oklahoma gets the bottle loose and nails Madusa, rips off the top of her dress and pours the sauce over her. This is in no way symbolic of anything whatsoever.

The NWO burns Bret's gear.

Madusa yells a lot, the producer yells clear, the segment ends.

Midnight vs. Booker T. vs. Stevie Ray

It's an elimination match. Why you ask? I don't know, but I'm assuming Oklahoma in a dress pouring barbecue sauce over Madusa's chest will explain it. Midnight comes out first but we see Stevie jumping Booker backstage. Stevie comes out and beats Midnight into the corner for a knee to the ribs and right hands to the face. A clothesline and ax kick set up a powerslam as Midnight has had no offense.

Cue Booker who punches Stevie to the floor but Stevie wants a mic. He's going to leave now and since this is an elimination match, Booker now has to beat up Midnight. So after we had the regular man on woman violence, we now get man on woman violence against the man's will. Can we please get rid of Russo so we don't have to watch his weird fetish stuff anymore?

Booker grabs a headlock before putting Midnight down with a few shoulders. He doesn't want to follow up though so they stumble around until Midnight scores with a dropkick. Booker hits the ax kick but Stevie low bridges him to the floor and blasts him with a slap jack. He throws Booker inside and tells Midnight to pin him, but Midnight pulls Booker on top of her to give him the win.

Rating: F. So we had a man beating up a woman, a man reluctantly fighting a woman, and then a woman laying down and pulling a man on top of her. I'm sure Russo and Ferrara loved it because they seem to hate women in any form and good for them for getting to enjoy themselves for a few

minutes while everyone continues to watch anything else.

Midnight dropkicks Stevie post match, but since that might mean a lowly woman got one up on a MAN, Stevie slap jacks her to put her back in her place.

Jerry Flynn is put in his cell and Tank Abbott jumps him. Because they're cell mates. It's WACKY!

Kanyon is ready for his champagne on a pole match. Well of course he is.

Nash is going to cut Bret's hair.

Funk sends Zbyszko to find out if Bret has had his head shaved, because he doesn't care enough to go find out himself. And that's the boss people.

Chris Kanyon vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

Champagne bottle on a pole. Kanyon slugs him down as Bigelow gets inside but Bam Bam nails an elbow to the face. An early climb is countered with a powerbomb from Kanyon (looked better than you would think) but Bigelow crotches him to break up a bottle attempt. Bigelow nails a belly to back and falling headbutt as they're trying this wrestling thing for a change. This time it's Bigelow getting crotched as he goes up, allowing Kanyon to Russian legsweep him down from the ropes to put both guys down.

It's Bigelow up first but Kanyon's girls get on the apron to break up Greetings From Asbury Park. Your good guy tries to kiss the girl but Kanyon gets up for a save. Kanyon pulls down the bottle and dives into a right hand to the head. Bigelow grabs the bottle, throws it down, and headbutts Kanyon between the legs. Greetings From Asbury Park ends this.

Rating: D+. Somehow this is probably the match of the night, even though they ignored the gimmick of the match. You can almost cringe in advance whenever a woman is on screen these days though and it has nothing to do with their performances. Somehow we've reached the point where Vince having Trish bark like a dog is a lot easier to sit through than what's going on here.

Post match Luger, still dressed as Sting, comes out and nails Bigelow with a ball bat. Luger loads up a Scorpion Deathlock (oh I'd pay to see him try that move) but a crow appears at ringside to screw off Luger and Liz. Bigelow gets up and yells at Luger, earning him a champagne bottle shot to the head.

Zbyszko and Orndorff look for Bret.

Package on Page vs. Bagwell, which makes sense, even though they never actually showed what started the thing.

Kimberly comes out to talk about various challenges before Gene gets to the point: why are she and Page having issues? Apparently Page doesn't like Kimberly getting too involved with all the people at work but this isn't about Bagwell. Gene: "How are things in the bedroom at home?" I'm wrapping this up quickly: Kimberly says this is private and doesn't refute anything Bagwell has said other than she's taller than he says.

MY GOODNESS stop treating the women on these shows like this. Madusa is stripped and covered in sauce, Midnight is beaten up and blamed for splitting up a team and now Kimberly is basically called a sl** who has been with every member of the locker room as Gene asks her about her sex life. This gets more and more ridiculous every day and it's getting sickening.

Sid and Benoit are ready for tonight as well as Sunday.

Sid Vicious/Chris Benoit vs. Jeff Jarrett/Kevin Nash

Jeff promises to take Benoit apart on Sunday but gets cut off by Sid. It's a big brawl to start with Benoit taking Nash to the floor as Sid hammers on Jeff in the corner. Well it's not like Jeff can look any worse at this point. A big boot sets up a chokeslam but Nash comes in off the apron to break it up. Nash and Sid pair off as Jeff and Benoit fight to the back of the arena. This is firmly in the "it's technically a match" category. Benoit comes back for a save but gets double teamed as the referee tries to keep this straight.

Jeff puts on the sleeper and of course gets reversed. He does however mix

things up by jawbreaking his way out instead of using a suplex. Benoit grabs the ropes to avoid a dropkick and catapults Jeff into the corner. Nash breaks up the Crossface and everything breaks down again. They send Benoit to the floor and Nash blasts Sid with the US Title. Jeff tries the same thing on Benoit but eats a suplex. The Swan Dive is broken up and Nash shoves Benoit onto the belt, setting up the Stroke for the pin.

Rating: D. Total Attitude Era style main event here with neither team looking particularly good. I'm still not sure why I'm supposed to care about Sid vs. Hart on Sunday when they've barely interacted or why Nash being commissioner is going to be interesting (you know he's going over Funk) but the wrestling isn't helping anything.

Scott Steiner is out cold under a table and Bret is gone.

Bret, covered in bruises, walks outside but says he isn't leaving like that. Ignore his hair clearly under the back of his hat.

It's time for our big closing segment with Bret coming to the ring with a pipe. He wants the NWO out here right now so here are Nash and Jarrett with ball bats. Remember when people fought with their fists instead of metal objects? Bret gets beaten down so Anderson (with a bucket. A bucket?) and Funk (branding iron) come out. Didn't Funk say he didn't care? The old guys clean house but Funk thinks something is up.

Anderson throws the bucket of water on Bret, cleaning the bruises off his face. As you should have seen coming, Bret takes off his shirt and reveals an NWO shirt (because OF COURSE). Cue the New Age Outlaws (as Tenay calls them) but they're quickly taken down. Sid and Benoit come out and take beatings as well, only to have Funk hit Nash low (because Sid and Benoit are worthless when compared to a legend like Funk) and go for the branding iron to end the show.

Overall Rating:

SLRAMYBIBAWRPFBYAAWHNWHTAOGWCAYOPPBYATETGAJAEACDJWMAARATSTCFYHMPDAWSISGYO
OAJAWFTDWRSIAYRHMDYRHDTTSOF.

For so long Russo and may you be impaled by a wild rhinoceros, preferably female, because you are a woman hating neanderthal who has treated a once

great wrestling company as your own personal playground because you aren't talented enough to get a job anywhere else and couldn't do jack without McMahon, Austin and Rock around to save the company from your horrible movie plots disguised as wrestling stories. I'm so glad you're out of a job and wait for the day when reality sets in and you realize how much damage you really have done to the sport of wrestling.

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