

# Austin's Podcast With Heyman

Checked it out today and while I won't go through it step by step, there was one thing that caught my attention. Near the end where Austin and Heyman teased a match against Lesnar next year at Wrestlemania (no I don't think it's happening but there's always a chance), Austin turned into the Rattlesnake in the blink of an eye. That sort of thing always amazes me as they just morph into a character like it's nothing. Foley is great at this sort of thing too and it goes along with what you hear old timers talk about: you're not playing a character. You ARE that character. It's a very different way of portraying someone and the old way is almost always the most effective.

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## Monday Night Raw – June 1, 2015: Stop And Think For A Second

### Monday Night Raw

Date: June 1, 2015

Location: AT&T Center, San Antonio, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Booker T.

We had some interesting developments last night at Elimination Chamber with Kevin Owens pinning John Cena completely clean in the middle of the ring and Dean Ambrose winning the match by DQ but leaving with Seth Rollins' World Title anyway. There are now two weeks left before Money in the Bank, and we already know six of the competitors in the ladder match. Let's get to it.

The opening recap only focuses on the World Title match.

Here's the full Authority to open things up. Stephanie asks the fans how they should punish Dean Ambrose for what he did last night. Maybe it should be a fine or a suspension, but maybe they should just get rid of him altogether. HHH calls Ambrose out to the ring but gets Roman Reigns instead. Roman says Dean isn't here tonight and he might not be back again unless he gets one more match against Rollins. He wants one more match for the title and he wants it to be a ladder match.

Reigns lists off all the people that have beaten Rollins and says he might be the worst WWE Champion of all time. That's too far for Seth and the rematch is on for Monday in the Bank. He'll do it all by himself too because he doesn't need the Authority. Rollins storms off and Stephanie goes beast mode on Reigns (hide your balls!) until HHH calls her off. HHH brings up Reigns being in the Money in the Bank ladder match and says Roman has to earn his spot in the match right now.

#### Money in the Bank Qualifying Match: King Barrett vs. Roman Reigns

They want to take the spot away from Reigns and this is the best they can do? Wait, wouldn't the Authority have selected the people in the match in the first place? Reigns is already in the match but the spot is on the line. Barrett tries a rollup to start but Roman takes him down with a headlock. The King escapes a Samoan drop and throws Reigns to the apron, only to get kicked in the chest a few times. Back in and a clothesline puts Barrett on the floor but Barrett jumps over the steps and whips Reigns into them as we take a break.

We come back with Barrett holding a chinlock before he avoids a charge in the corner and kicks Reigns in the ribs. Barrett cranks on both arms with a knee in Roman's back before switching back to the regular chinlock. Roman fights up again and Reigns nails a Samoan drop before winning a slugout. Against a former bare knuckle fighter of course. Winds of Change gets two for the King but the Bull Hammer is countered into a rollup into a sitout powerbomb for two. The second attempt at a Bull Hammer misses and Reigns nails the spear for the pin at 14:10.

**Rating:** C. Well at least it wasn't Big Show. This is another example of

having a match with a stipulation that is there for no reason other than to fill in time before the obvious ending. I'm not a fan of this kind of TV show more often than not (and yes there are exceptions) and seeing Barrett lose didn't help things. The match wasn't bad though as Barrett can wrestle a good one, even though there's no reason to believe his push is going to last.

Post break Roman Reigns runs into the Authority and is told he has to win another qualifying match against Mark Henry. So it's the Chris Jericho Intercontinental Title story from 2000, also involving Stephanie.

Nikki Bella is honored to be the longest reigning champion in WWE today when Paige comes in and asks for a one on one match for some point in the future. Nikki says let's do it tonight and Paige is game.

Here's the new Intercontinental Champion Ryback with something to say. No one likes an emotional Big Guy, (I did. The speech he gave about his injury was the best stuff he's ever done) but he's honored to be the new Intercontinental Champion. That's enough talking though so it's time for his first title defense.

#### Intercontinental Title: Ryback vs. Miz

We even get big match intros. The bell is about to ring....and Big Show is back. Well at least it's in the midcard. He KO's Miz and says if anyone is beating Ryback for that title, it's going to be him. Ryback calls himself the Big Guy but he has nothing on the Big Show.

Here's Kevin Owens for his victory speech. An interesting note here: Owens has complained about Cena having so many shirts and is now in his third different shirt in three appearances on the main roster. That's a very nice touch. Owens brags about doing everything he ever says he's going to do, whether it's winning the NXT Title, taking out Sami Zayn, or beating John Cena in the middle of the ring.

Last night he talked to his wife who was proud of him but his son is still a big John Cena fan. Cena is portrayed as a living superhero and while Owens was traveling the world for ten years, Cena became the hero to his son that Owens should have been. He became Super Cena. Well last

night, he beat Super Cena and now the words hustle, loyalty and respect are being uttered by a shell of a man. Owens is going to beat him again in two weeks and he's going to make sure that his son watches every minute of it. A real role model is the kind of person who promises something and then delivers, just like he does.

Cue Cena for the big showdown. Cena gets right to the point: he got beat last night. Until Owens ran his mouth, Cena was about to come down here and hand Owens the US Title because he earned it last night. But now, Owens doesn't deserve either the US or NXT Title. Owens is so worried about being a role model that he doesn't even realize he's not a real man.

According to Owens, his son is a Cena fan because of the WWE machine. If that's the case, Owens' son would be wearing a Funkasaurus shirt and want to grow up to play in the XFL. We hit Serious Cena mode as he talks about how the fans believe in him because he's for real, including the kid in the crowd holding up a sign saying "I'm beating cancer" and wearing a John Cena t-shirt. Cena: "You keep fighting man. And that's from me."

The three words that define Owens shouldn't be Fight Owens Fight, but Never Give Up. Cena wants to give Owens a bit of advice from a man to a non-man. In two weeks, Owens is going to have to explain why a really good wrestler got beaten up by a man. Owens teases a fight but walks away. That's one of the best promos I've seen in years. Go find this and watch it in full.

New Day comes out to brag about their win. Xavier Woods says this city now has champions they should be proud of, because the Spurs are old and Tim Duncan needs to retire. The New Day is on fire and in two weeks, Kofi is going to become Mr. Money in the Bank. CHA-CHING! Kofi: "That's a cash register!" Big E. says it would mean they're all Mr. Money in the Bank because NEW DAY ROCKS!

### Kofi Kingston vs. Dolph Ziggler

No exaggeration: these two have fought close to thirty times on TV alone. Lana is out with Dolph and that's exactly who the fans want. They grapple to start until Kofi does his double leapfrog and stops Dolph with a kick

to the face. We hit the chinlock on Dolph but he fights up and hits a quick neckbreaker. Dolph misses the superkick but grabs the running DDT for two, followed by a quick rollup for the pin on Kofi at 3:16.

**Rating:** C. What can I say? These two have fought each other such a ridiculous amount of times (I can't imagine any pairing has fought more times, and yes that includes Cena vs. Edge) that there's almost nothing left for them to do out there. They kept this short enough though and it was fine enough to help build to the ladder match.

New Day comes in but the Prime Time Players make the save.

#### Prime Time Players/Dolph Ziggler vs. New Day

Joined in progress after a break with Young hitting a seated senton on Kofi but getting tripped by Woods, allowing Big E. to hit a belly to belly. Off to Kofi who is sent into the corner for a seated dropkick before it's off to the chinlock. The actual trio triple teams Darren and Big E. knocks Dolph off the apron for good measure.

E. takes too long running the ropes though and splashes Young's knees, setting up the hot tag to Titus. A powerslam gets two on Woods with Big E. making the save as everything breaks down. Titus boots Woods in the face and Dolph adds a superkick to Kofi, setting up a pumphandle powerslam to pin Woods at 5:36.

**Rating:** C+. Just a six man here to set up the Players as the next challengers and there's nothing wrong with that. We've covered Tyson/Cesaro as the challengers so it's time to advance on to someone else, as the tag division...well there actually is one at the moment. This did what it was supposed to and that's all you can ask it to do.

#### Money in the Bank Qualifying Match: Mark Henry vs. Roman Reigns

Wasn't Henry a face last night? These turns are getting slower. Again, Reigns is already in but has to defend his spot here. Roman pounds away to start but Henry takes him over to the ropes for some choking. Reigns seems to be having issues with his left eye after Henry gave him a big right hand. That's fine with Roman as he comes back with some

clotheslines in the corner and a shoulder to put Henry down. A Samoan drop sends Mark outside and Roman nails a Superman Punch for good measure, giving him the countout win at 3:46.

**Rating:** D+. Power brawl here with Reigns' story being very clear tonight. Henry is one of those guys that is only there for one purpose and it doesn't mean he's the most interesting guy in the world to watch. At least they aren't hiding the fact that Reigns isn't done tonight and that's a fine story.

Post match Henry gives him the World's Strongest Slam and a big splash.

After a break, Reigns, Authority, Bray Wyatt is next.

Various wrestlers audition to be the face of Sonic Shakes. Hilarity ensues.

#### Divas Title: Paige vs. Nikki Bella

Nikki is defending and they cut away during her entrance because WWE doesn't get why she's out there. Paige gets shoved into the ropes to start and Nikki does some jumping jacks. Off to some pushups before Nikki drives Paige into the corner. Nikki cranks on both arms before hooking a leg lock of all things.

Paige gets to the ropes and kicks Nikki to the floor, allowing her to do some situps. The PTO is countered and Nikki gets two off the Alabama Slam. The Rack Attack is countered and Nikki goes to the middle rope, only to get pulled down with a Rampaige. Nikki rolls outside and they actually bust out Twin Magic with Brie coming out from under the ring for a small package to retain at 5:48 because WWE referees are stupid.

**Rating:** C-. Well they turned face with no explanation so why not turn heel again with no explanation? I love how they did a whole Total Divas episode about how they don't look the same and now the Bella with lighter skin, less plastic enhancement and difference hair is still a dead ringer for her sister. Only in WWE because the script says so. Nikki doing exercises isn't a bad gimmick though.

#### Sheamus vs. Randy Orton

So yeah Orton is back after not being mentioned for two weeks. Orton grabs a headlock to start and rolls Sheamus up for two, sending the pale one out to the floor. Back in and they slug it out before both guys go outside with Orton dropping him back first on the announcers' table.

We take a break and come back with Sheamus in control and dropping a middle rope knee for two. A chinlock doesn't get him very far though as Orton belly to backs him down to escape. The ten forearms are countered and Orton nails the powerslam, followed by the elevated DDT. An RKO attempt is countered and Sheamus knees him out to the floor. Orton throws him into the timekeeper's area but Sheamus nails him with a chair for the DQ at 12:16.

**Rating:** D+. Gah I hate these matches where they just pair up people who are in a big match down the line. It's the same stuff that got annoying last week with the Elimination Chamber people and it doesn't help that Sheamus and Orton do not have good matches together. They're not horrible but I've never seen these two do anything interesting.

Sheamus Brogue Kicks Orton and throws him over the announcers' table post match.

Rusev says he is a broken man with a broken spirit but he'll get it all back. Yo Rusev! Get in here so we can keep ruining you because we want monsters to be three dimensional characters or some garbage like that!

Kevin Owens will have an NXT Open Challenge this Thursday on Smackdown.

Here's Bo Dallas to say he tried to help Neville but now he just wants to hurt him.

### Bo Dallas vs. Neville

Rematch from last night where Neville won. Bo hammers him in the corner to start and throws him out to the floor. Back in and we hit the cravate with Bo yelling at Neville and then quieting down to call some spots. Neville fights up with some forearms, a kick to the head and the Red Arrow for the pin at 3:09.

**Rating:** C-. Yeah whatever man. Just get on to the next match so we can

finally end this show. This was a shortened version of the match we saw last night and Dallas is ready to move on to something else. At least it wasn't Neville against someone in the ladder match to freshen things up a bit.

Tough Enough videos.

### Money in the Bank Qualifying Match: Roman Reigns vs. Bray Wyatt

For the third time, Reigns is already in. Roman slugs away to start but Bray runs him down and slows the pace. The Authority comes out to watch as Bray stops a comeback with the running cross body. Roman bails for a minute but Bray takes his head off with a clothesline as we take a break. Back with Bray still in control until Reigns explodes out of the corner with a clothesline.

After a quick trip to the floor with Reigns sending him into the barricade, Bray comes back with a big clothesline of his own for two. They trade slaps until the Samoan drop puts Bray down. The Superman Punch connects and here come Kane and the Stooges. Kane gets up on the apron but the distraction into Sister Abigail doesn't work as Bray is sent into Kane, setting up the spear for the pin at 13:14.

**Rating:** C. Nice power brawl again but did they really need to have Bray take the loss here? I hate to say it, but this was the perfect spot for Kane. Wyatt won at Payback, then lost to Ambrose last week and now to Reigns here and for what? To advance a main event feud when the Authority has minions? As usual, this company refuses to think anything through.

Post match the Authority surrounds the ring but Ambrose comes out (to a MONSTER pop). He actually gives Rollins the title back, only to hit him with Dirty Deeds before leaving with Reigns to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. The show was far better than last week but this was one of those episodes where the show felt like it was going on for nine hours. It just kept going and going and you could see they had nothing to go on so they were just throwing stuff out there. This is a show that would have been really entertaining if you cut out an hour. Stuff like Ziggler vs. Kofi, the Divas Title (with that STUPID ending), Neville vs.



Dallas and maybe even Orton vs. Sheamus could have easily been cut to get us down to a much shorter and better paced show, but such are the perils of three hours every Monday. Not horrible, but insufferable.

## Results

Roman Reigns b. King Barrett – Spear

Dolph Ziggler b. Kofi Kingston – Rollup

Dolph Ziggler/Prime Time Players b. New Day – Pumphandle powerslam to Woods

Roman b. Mark Henry via countout

Nikki Bella b. Paige – Brie Bella switched with Nikki and pinned Paige with a small package

Randy Orton b. Sheamus via DQ – Sheamus hit Orton with a chair

Neville b. Bo Dallas – Red Arrow

Roman Reigns b. Bray Wyatt – Spear

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# Tommy Rogers of the Fantastics Passes Away

[Tommy Rogers of The Fantastics Passes Away](#)

At age 54 due to unknown causes. The Fantastics were my favorite NWA tag team (aside from the Road Warriors of course) and Tommy is the first person I've ever heard of using the move that would become the Killswitch/Unprettier (Tomikaze).

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## Wrestling Wars Podcast Episode 10

Come enjoy us breaking down Elimination Chamber as well as discussing a topic that might get some people talking: has Cena surpassed Austin?

<http://mightynorcal.podbean.com/e/wwp-episode-10-we-close-out-the-kb-loop-with-a-review-on-ec-congratulating-roh-and-of-course-mocking-tna/>

KB

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# Elimination Chamber 2015: The Future Is Here

## Elimination Chamber 2015

Date: May 29, 2015

Location: American Bank Center, Corpus Christi, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T., Jerry Lawler

It's another pay per view just two weeks after Payback but the card has been put together fairly well this time. The main event this time is WWE World Champion Seth Rollins defending against Dean Ambrose, plus the Tag Team Titles and Intercontinental Title being decided inside the Chamber, both for the first time ever. Let's get to it.

### Pre-Show: Zack Ryder vs. Stardust

Bonus match. Ryder had a decent match against Cena on Monday so it's nice to see him get a PPV spot, even if it's something like this. Stardust hits some shoulders to start but Zack punches him to the floor for a quick baseball slide. Back in and the announcers talk about the World Title match as Stardust cranks on the arm. That goes nowhere so let's talk about Love Boat.

Ryder fights back up as the announcers transition into a discussion of Arrow's Stephen Amell wanting to fight Stardust at some point. JBL promises us a new move from Stardust called the Queen's Crossbow (Arrow reference), which winds up being Cross Rhodes and it puts Ryder out at 5:53.

**Rating:** D. Well so much for Ryder. He had a nice little comeback and the fans liked him, but we need to keep Stardust strong for a match with a celebrity which is probably coming at Summerslam. Nothing match here and that's the problem with pre-show matches. Ryder could be very good in a midcard role but this is what we're stuck with instead. Joy indeed.

It's time for MizTV with special guest Daniel Bryan. We look at Bryan vacating the title and Miz said that was hard even for him. In his time

away, Bryan has written a book but his career isn't over. Miz thinks he can help Bryan with marketing and merchandising and it's only going to cost him 10% of the profit.

Bryan passes but promises he'll be back. Miz wants to slap him in the face but knows he can't so he has some advice for Bryan....which we don't hear as Bryan thinks it's going to be boring. Therefore, he's brought someone who also thinks Miz is boring: Axelmania and Macho Mandow. House is quickly cleaned and the good guys celebrate. Nothing to see here as it was just a big commercial for Bryan's book.

The opening video sets up both Chamber matches with a focus on the structure itself. Owens vs. Cena gets some hype as well.

Tag Team Titles: Lucha Dragons vs. Ascension vs. Los Matadores vs. Prime Time Players vs. Cesaro/Tyson Kidd vs. New Day

Inside the Elimination Chamber, no tags required, New Day is defending, all three champions will be allowed in and we have four minute intervals. Two teams start and one more enters every minute. As the name suggests, it's elimination rules and the last team standing wins the titles. Lucha Dragons and Ascension get things going (these teams can never escape each other) with the Dragons hammering on the power guys as fast as they can but Ascension starts slugging Cara down in the corner.

Sin escapes and throws Kalisto up onto the New Day pod but they try to pull him down inside. Cara gets slammed down but Kalisto kicks both Ascension members down, allowing Sin Cara to get up and hit a HUGE Swanton off a pod to crush Viktor. Kalisto loads up a dive of his own but New Day pulls him down to break it up, giving us New Day doing the LUCHA dance. Cesaro and Kidd are in next and Cesaro starts busting out the European uppercuts, including Tyson launching Konnor into Swiss Death for two.

Kalisto is still on top of the pod until Cesaro superplexes him down and Kidd adds a springboard elbow drop for two with Cara having to dive in for a save. Only Kidd and Cesaro are on their feet and Kidd slaps the Sharpshooter on Viktor but Konnor breaks it up. The La Mistica mat slam plants Konnor as Lawler calls JBL JR by mistake. Cara powerbombs Kidd as

Kalisto is on top of the Prime Time Players' pod.

Los Matadores, with Torito on top of their pod, are in third with the bull hitting a good looking hurricanrana on Konnor. During the entrance, Kalisto has climbed to the top of the Chamber itself and drops down onto everyone for one of the biggest crashes (or at least the highest) I've ever seen.

Torito gets thrown into Fernando, setting up the Fall of Man on Diego for the first elimination. Did anyone buy Los Matadores as a real threat anyway? Kalisto, thankfully able to walk, climbs the corner but gets pulled down as well for another Fall of Man to get rid of the Dragons. There goes my pick of course. So we have Ascension vs. Kidd/Cesaro at the moment but the Prime Time Players are added...with Ascension nailing them as soon as their pod opens.

Titus fights back and throws both guys into the ring so Young can hit his gutbuster on Viktor for a quick elimination. Things settle down a bit with Titus suplexing Young onto both guys for two, but Cesaro pops up and drills O'Neal with a clothesline. Cesaro loads Young up for a gutwrench superplex but Titus adds a powerbomb to make it a Tower of Doom for two. New Day comes in to complete the field but Cesaro and Kidd are all over them with a triple suplex.

Things get smart in a hurry as Cesaro and Kidd throw Woods into the pod and shut the door to even things up. The Swing into the dropkick knocks Kofi silly but Young sneaks in to roll Cesaro up for the elimination. It's the Prime Time Players vs. New Day for the titles and Big E. gets Woods out of the pod to make it 3-2. New Day stomps Titus against the chamber wall and get his head through the chain.

Young fights back and sends Big E shoulder first into the pod with his head hitting the pod for good measure. Everyone is down but Titus frees himself and starts throwing Big E. into the wall. Xavier gets the same treatment and the gutbuster takes out Kofi for two. Big E. is back up and suplexes Darren on the cage floor, only to walk into a powerslam from Titus. Not that it matters though as Trouble in Paradise sets up a triple pin to retain the titles at 19:34.

**Rating:** B. This was a lot of fun and the best choice they had on the card for an opener. New Day winning will be worth it for the victory promo alone and the more I think about it, the more I like the booking. Any team can say they haven't gotten a fair shot at them since it was 3-2 so this doesn't close all the doors for challengers. I love this protecting the losers booking they've had lately and it helps so much in places like this.

Rusev is out of the Chamber with a broken foot. No replacement has been announced yet.

Ziggler is getting ready when Lana comes up. Tonight isn't about showing Rusev up but about getting the title around Ziggler's waist. Dolph says that after he wins the title, maybe it can be about them.

#### Divas Title: Nikki Bella vs. Naomi vs. Paige

No one is allowed at ringside. Nikki is defending after Paige won a battle royal a few months back but was laid out by Naomi. The champ is quickly taken to the floor and thrown into the announcers' table, leaving Paige to hit her clotheslines on Naomi. Nikki is quickly back in with a facebuster for two on Paige. The Alabama Slam plants Paige again but Naomi rolls Nikki up for two.

Naomi starts cleaning house and loads Paige up for a belly to back superplex, only to have Nikki come in for a Tower of Doom. The Rack Attack to Paige is broken up with a Rear View for a near fall with Paige making the save. Naomi heads to the corner but gets caught in an electric chair from Paige, only to be countered into a reverse hurricanrana. It didn't go smoothly but it could have been a lot worse. Not that it matters as Nikki Rack Attacks Naomi to retain at 6:05.

**Rating:** C. What was I thinking to question Nikki's title reign of awesomeness that is TOTALLY better than Trish and Lita's reigns combined? The match was fairly good but again, there's only so much you can do other than cram in spots with just six minutes. I have no idea where they can go next with Nikki aside from another Brie feud or facing an NXT callup.

We recap Kevin Owens vs. John Cena. Owens answered a Cena open challenge a few weeks back but said he already had the prize he wanted in the NXT Title. He got in a surprise powerbomb on Cena and stepped on the US Title to show how big of a jerk he was. This set up a showdown tonight in a champion vs. champion match.

### Kevin Owens vs. John Cena

Alright WWE. This is your chance. You can elevate someone or go with the same old stuff. Owens is very fired up to be in there and actually doesn't drop to the floor at the bell as is his custom in NXT. A quick shoulder puts Owens down but he takes Cena into the corner and puts a boot in his face. Cena gets punched to the apron so Kevin can rip at his face like a villain should.

The fans chant for NXT and we hit the chinlock. Cena powers up into an AA attempt but Owens calmly escapes and hits a DDT for two. Owens opts to just punch Cena in the face (I love it when people do that) for a bit before a backsplash connects for two more. Back up and Kevin tries a swinging Rock Bottom but Cena counters into a crucifix, only to have Owens slam him down in a kind of Samoan drop for another near fall. The Cannonball gets the same and Owens says it's time for Johnny boy to give up.

The pop up powerbomb is countered with a leapfrog and Cena initiates his finishing sequence. Cena loads up the AA but gets countered into the pop up powerbomb for a close two, stunning Owens. Kevin gets crotches on top but headbutts Cena down, only to miss a moonsault of all things. The AA gets two (take a shot!) and both guys are down. Owens nails a superkick and tries his own Five Knuckle Shuffle (because he's that awesome) but Cena pulls him down into the STF.

Cena tries to pull him back to the middle but Owens kicks him away and hits an AA of his own (good one too) for another near fall. Both guys are down again and it's Cena up first for the two off the top rope Fameasser. Cole calls that patented, but I'm not sure Cena ever filed that paperwork. Back up again and Owens loads up the package piledriver (his pre-WWE finisher) but slams Cena to the side instead of dropping him on

his head.

Kevin starts talking more trash before winning a slugout, only to get caught in the springboard Stunner for two. Frustration is setting in so Cena takes him up top for a superplex, only to have Owens counter into a spinning superplex of his own for two. Owens runs to the top for a Swanton for two more and now Kevin is frustrated. Cena nails that big running clothesline and Owens is rocked. John goes for another but walks into the pop up powerbomb for the completely clean pin at 20:03.

**Rating:** A. My jaw dropped on the pin. This is EXACTLY the way they should have gone as Cena hit him with the best and Owens pinned him in the middle of the ring. The key thing here is Cena isn't going to lose a thing out of this as he'll be fine in about two minutes. Owens on the other hand looks like the biggest new deal in years and couldn't get a bigger rub if they tried. Great, great stuff here and I loved the booking so much.

Owens says he debuted on Raw a few weeks back and started a fight, but tonight he finished it. He has some veteran advice for Cena: it's time for him to go because his time is way up and THE CHAMP IS HERE!

Pre-show panel chat.

### Bo Dallas vs. Neville

Neville has a bad knee coming in, partially thanks to Dallas. The knee is fine enough for Neville to do his flips out of the corner before sending Bo to the floor to avoid a Red Arrow attempt. That's fine with Neville as he hits a huge moonsault to the floor. Back in and Neville puts on a chinlock (rare sight for a good guy) but Bo gets to the ropes ("LET ME GO!"). He offers peace but starts elbowing Neville in the face and gets two off a running forearm.

Off to a cravate on Neville to slow things way down as the announcers talk about football from the 1960s. Back up and Bo elbows him in the head, only to be sent out to the floor. Bo's stunned look is great. Neville comes back with kicks to the head and a running forearm, followed by a standing shooting star for two. The Bodog is countered and the Red



Arrow connects for the pin at 9:07.

**Rating:** C-. Nothing great here as it was basically a long TV match. Neville winning was the right call as Bo can be back off another cheesy promo, but Neville gets a nice push with a win he should have gotten. The knee didn't go anywhere, but at least there was a story coming into the match.

Reigns and Ambrose are in the back when HHH comes in and bans Reigns from ringside. If Reigns interferes, Ambrose will be disqualified. You mean like in any match?

The Chamber is lowered.

Intercontinental Title: Sheamus vs. Ryback vs. Dolph Ziggler vs. King Barrett vs. R-Truth vs. ???

The title is vacant coming in due to Daniel Bryan vacating it due to injury. There are four minute intervals again and Rusev's replacement is.....Mark Henry. Bray Wyatt had been rumored but I like this better as Wyatt isn't likely winning so why give him another loss? Ziggler and Barrett get things going. They trade rollups to start but Barrett shrugs him down and puts Dolph on the top rope for a kick to the ribs.

We hit a chinlock on Dolph for a bit before he realizes this is the freaking Elimination Chamber and fights back with his dropkick and neckbreaker for two. Barrett sends him into the cage and talks a lot of trash until R-Truth is in third. The King is smart enough to jump Truth before he can get out of the pod and stomps him down. He kicks Truth and Ziggler in the face to keep control but Truth gets back up for the spinning forearm and ax kick.

Barrett rolls away from the cover but Ziggler is back up with a kick to the face for two. Back up and Barrett drives Ziggler through a pod wall, freeing Mark Henry to come in before his entrance. There's nothing the referee can do because it's no disqualification, and likely because the show is threatening to run long and they need to save some time. Ryback comes in a few seconds later and runs Henry over for two. Henry stands around as Barrett plants Ziggler with Wasteland, only to break it up at

two like the schmuck that he is.

Back up and the parade of finishers eliminates Barrett first because OF COURSE IT DOES! The four in the ring pair off with Ryback stomping Ziggler into the corner and Henry doing the same to Truth. Sheamus is supposed to be in last but the door won't open. Ryback, Truth and Ziggler trade rollups as they try to fix the door before Henry gets triple teamed. Shell Shock gets rid of Truth and a very delayed suplex plants Ziggler.

Ryback's Meat Hook is countered by a superkick and all three are down. With all three down, Sheamus takes out the Celtic cross that he had put in the door to keep the door stuck shut. Well that was smart. A Brogue Kick gets rid of Henry in a hurry and we're down to three. Ziggler counters a suplex into a small package for two but Sheamus counters the running DDT. The second attempt gets two but a quick Brogue Kick gets us down to Sheamus vs. Ryback.

They trade powerslams with Ryback getting the better of it and driving shoulders to the ribs in the corner. The Meat Hook doesn't work and Sheamus tries to get back in his pod. Ryback picks him up before he can get in, only to have Sheamus counter into White Noise on the cage floor for two. The ten forearms are countered but Sheamus hits the Regal Roll on the cage again. A Brogue Kick is countered into a powerbomb into the ring and Shell Shock gives Ryback his first title at 25:06.

**Rating:** C+. Well that was a surprise. I didn't like the action as well as I liked the first one but it was still a fun match. They've set up Ryback as never having won a title so this was a good way to pay that story off. Ryback has been pushed pretty strong since returning (ignore the loss at Payback) and this was the right call for a step up.

Daniel Bryan congratulates Ryback and presents him with his new title.

We look at Owens pinning Cena earlier tonight. The rematch is official for Money in the Bank.

Dolph Ziggler, Neville, Roman Reigns, Randy Orton, Kofi Kingston and Sheamus are official for the Money in the Bank ladder match. More will be

announced later.

We recap Ambrose vs. Rollins. The theme is that Ambrose made a bad decision by trusting Rollins in the Shield but tonight no one can help him, including his mommy and daddy.

#### WWE World Title: Seth Rollins vs. Dean Ambrose

Dean is challenging but has to deal with Kane and the Stooges at ringside. Rollins grabs a headlock to start but Dean counters into an armbar. Back up and the champ stomps away in the corner until Dean goes back to the arm to take over again. Dean drapes him over the middle rope for a Fameasser but the Stooges offer a distraction so Seth can crotch him into the Tree of Woe.

A huge top rope double stomps gets two on the challenger and Rollins takes over. We hit the chinlock for a bit followed by a clothesline to put Dean back down. Dean comes back with a sitout Tesshocker (belly to back suplex but he slams Rollins face first instead of dropping him back) for two. The Stooges pull Rollins to the floor but Dean dives through the ropes to take everyone out. Back in and Rollins tries to counter a superplex into a sunset bomb, only to have Dean nail a Cactus Clothesline to put both guys outside again.

More Stooges interference lets Rollins take over again and the top rope knee (really a shin) to the head gets two. Dean finally comes back with a tornado DDT (second person tonight to use that) and the running dropkick against the ropes. A clothesline turns Rollins inside out for two more and the flying standing elbow gets the same.

The Rebound clothesline is countered by a clothesline from the champ and a suicide dive puts Dean down again. Back in and the buckle bomb is countered with a clothesline (we get it) out of the corner but Dean opts to dive on Kane and the Stooges. The referee gets bumped and Dean nails Dirty Deeds, drawing in another official for the pin at 21:48. Lawler: "This may start a new Attitude Era." Oh shut up.

**Rating:** C. I don't buy for a second that this is going to stand so I'm not going to bother treating this very seriously. This felt like a long

Raw match instead of something worth watching, and the ending is clearly there to set up a rematch at Money in the Bank. The match was decent but it had the recurring problem of all WWE pay per views: you don't bother caring about the meat of the match because you're just waiting on the wacky finish.

And of course it doesn't count because the first referee says the Stooges pulled him to the floor for a DQ. Dean gets beaten down but Reigns comes down the ramp for a surprise and beats everyone up. Dean and Roman leave with the belt to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. I liked the show for the most part but this could have been put in a different order to make things flow better. Swapping the Chamber matches would have helped a lot and having Owens vs. Cena later in the card would have been a good move. Still though, for a throw together show to get people to watch for free and then hope they forget to cancel in the next hour so you get some bonus buys is a decent enough idea. Owens vs. Cena II doesn't need to happen but you know it's going to and will likely set up a big showdown at Battleground. Good enough show but mostly nothing worth seeing again.

### Results

New Day b. Prime Time Players, Ascension, Los Matadores, Lucha Dragons and Tyson Kidd/Cesaro – Trouble in Paradise to O'Neal

Nikki Bella b. Paige and Naomi – Rack Attack to Naomi

Kevin Owens b. John Cena – Pop up powerbomb

Neville b. Bo Dallas – Red Arrow

Ryback b. Mark Henry, King Barrett, Dolph Ziggler, R-Truth and Sheamus – Shell Shock to Sheamus

Dean Ambrose b. Seth Rollins via DQ when Jamie Noble and Joey Mercury interfered

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## **My Jaw Dropped**

Elimination Chamber spoiler. Kevin Owens pinned John Cena 100% clean in a match of the year candidate. The future is here.

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## **Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: May 25, 2015**

Oh boy it's this show. I've been putting this off for as long as I can because this show drove me up the walls, down the walls, to the grocery store and then halfway to Oklahoma. It's very rare to find a show with two different parts that get under my skin this badly but this show managed to pull it off. Let's get to it.

I'm going to do this one a little bit differently as there are two major pieces I'll be spending far more of my time on. Therefore, I'll get those out of the way and then cover the rest of the show. You can probably

guess what these two major segments were (hint: I wrote a column about one of them) so we'll start with the one that went on longer: the Dean Ambrose arrest story.

The basic idea is simple: Ambrose has until the end of the show to sign the contract for the match with Rollins on Sunday (why the Authority didn't say "you have four seconds to get out here and sign this starting now" isn't clear) so the Authority ran some trickierations and had Dean arrested for punching an innocent cameraman. Later in the show, it was revealed that Rollins shoved the cameraman into Dean so he wouldn't make it back to the show in time. Naturally, with the Authority celebrating at the end of the show, Dean came back (in a police van) and signed the contract just as the show ended (complete with overrun of course).

Now let's stop for a minute and think about this. Monday Night Raw is a wrestling show. We have to accept that a lot of really, really questionable things happen, but WWE has built a universe where it's plausible that these things could happen. In other words, fans are willing to suspend their disbelief to accept that we're watching crazy people do crazy things because the show has made it possible for that to happen.

Look at it from a comic book perspective. I can believe that Superman can fly because he's an alien under a yellow sun. Those are the rules that DC comics have established and as long as they play by those rules, I can go along with them. However, if one day Superman can suddenly turn people into chickens and the justification is "well he's an alien and has powers", it's unacceptable because this comes out of left field and doesn't gel with the story of the character.

This past Monday with Dean just happening to make it out of jail on time and just happening to be there at the very end of the show to sign the contract was WWE suddenly being able to turn people into chickens. There were WAY too many coincidences and perfect timing for me to accept that this was going to be the case. It didn't help that they were basically saying "yeah you know he's getting back and signing" and it was just a matter of time before the big evidence showed up to save Dean.

I said this in the review but it felt like the end of any given sitcom episode. Our hero is in big trouble for doing whatever and he can't prove his innocence, but here's some deus ex machina to save him and give us all a happy ending while the villains are left kicking and screaming and promising to get Ambrose next time Gadget, NEXT TIME!

The word to sum it up was staged. This felt like it was designed to be completely fake and set up the whole way through instead of trying to be realistic. Look at Lucha Underground for a counter example. They have some completely over the top stories (including a man who was the spirit of a dragon and a monster killing a wrestler) but they play it totally seriously and it never fails to work. This story felt like WWE was winking at the camera the entire time and making it as clear as they could that Ambrose was going to be there at the last second to save the day, making the entire three hour story a big waste of time.

That's the other big deal for me: what did this whole thing change? Ambrose came into the show with a title shot and left with a title shot. All that happened in between was the Authority looks bad and Rollins doesn't really do anything else. Instead of a serious promo exchange or making me want to see the match more, the show was a big stand alone story that changed nothing and got on my nerves. It's bad writing and bad booking and something that really didn't need to happen.

Now on to the other stupid idea of the night: Rusev turning into a big, emotional goon instead of the brute that he's been for over a year now. I understand the idea that he would be upset over Lana leaving him for an American, but the reaction was all wrong. Rusev should have been stomping and raving and FIGHTING ZIGGLER but instead he was asking to hold Lana's hand and talking about all the dreams they had in Bulgaria.

As I ranted about in the column I wrote (which I know you've all read of course), this was missing the point of the character. Rusev is a monster and they're trying to give him emotions. It's all wrong for him and doesn't fit anything that they've set up over the past year plus for him. It goes back to the Superman example earlier: you can't just throw in a polar opposite set of characteristics for someone without any sort of foundation for them. Rusev getting all emotional has no background, Lana

or no Lana.

Oh and now Rusev is injured and could be out for more than a month, so the last thing people are going to remember from him is the big change scene with the song from the trailer from every bad romantic comedy ever. What a great followup to the four pay per view series with Cena. But hey, at least Rusev is a more three dimensional character, because a guy named the Bulgarian Brute was just dying for a soft side right?

As for the rest of the show, Ambrose pinned Rollins in a tag match, which should have ended the show and been the main focal point of their feud that night. I'll stop myself there.

Rusev squashed R-Truth in 59 seconds. Again, I'll stop myself there.

The other major story of the night was a trio of matches between the six participants in the Elimination Chamber match for the Intercontinental Title. In addition to Truth vs. Rusev, we had Ryback beating Barrett (shocking!) and Sheamus Brogue Kicking Ziggler. This is another example of tired booking ideas that need to be replaced. Only Sheamus vs. Ziggler broke four minutes, making these matches, which really change nothing for Sunday's match, more like a waste of time than anything else. Consolidate these into a long six man instead of three singles or have a tag match or two three ways or ANYTHING but this boring idea.

The cast of Entourage was here to fill in time, including a segment where they mentioned Ronda Rousey in front of Stephanie. That's something of note was well: notice that a lot of the bad writing and bad structuring take place when Stephanie is back full time. We had a bunch of bad filler segments and more of her talking with proper nouns (you don't have to say the exact name of the title, wrestlers or pay per view every ten seconds Stephanie. We're not going to care more or start Tweeting about it because WE'RE ALREADY WATCHING THE SHOW).

Neville beat Stardust (who had a pre match staredown with Stephen Amell of Arrow, allegedly setting up a showdown at Summerslam. Seriously. To his credit though, Amell is in great shape so it could be passable) and was beaten down by Bo Dallas post match. They're still playing up the knee injury which is fine for a quick story.



Cena's Open Challenge speech was talking about the fans who boo him and want someone to knock him down for good. Kevin Owens has his chance on Sunday but it's not going to happen. As usual, this was Cena owning the fans as only he can and chuckling as they think they own him.

Zack Ryder answered the challenge and had a very fun four minute match (complete with Ryder missing a 450 of all things) before Cena pinned him. This was the right call as Ryder is a Long Island guy and this was the last show in Nassau Coliseum on Long Island, which was played up a lot during the match. As usual, this was the best part of the show as Cena continues to be amazing when they just let him go out there and do his thing. Post match Owens, now in more proper gear, laid Cena out again. They better not screw this up on Sunday, but I'm sure they will.

Tamina, the bodyguard for one of the challengers for the Divas Title on Sunday, pinned the other challenger for the Divas Title on Sunday. The stupidity was flowing through this entire show.

To cap it off, let's throw all psychology out the window and have Kane (for no apparent reason) book New Day in a 3 on 1 handicap match, because the way to get heels booed is to put them against impossible odds. This lasted less than a minute before the big brawl.

Do I need to sum this one up for you?

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# Lucha Underground – May 27, 2015: He Is Risen

## Lucha Underground

Date: May 27, 2015

Location: Lucha Underground Arena, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

The big story this week is the return of Mil Muertes, who is looking like a demonic Brock Lesnar. Unfortunately Fenix is going to be the first victim on the path of rage, which is going to be made even worse as Fenix is the one that too Muertes out in the first place. Other than that we have Prince Puma defending the title against Hernandez. Let's get to it.

We open with Catrina raising Muertes out of the casket in what looks like a trailer for a horror movie. Puma vs. Hernandez gets a bit of time as well but it's definitely the secondary story tonight. The last clip is Mundo turning heel on El Patron.

Black Lotus arrives at the temple (in a rare daylight sequence) but Chavo stops him. His grandfather was there when Dario's brother killed Lotus' parents so the Guerreros hate the Cuetos too. This story is still over the top and ridiculous and I'm starting to love it.

## Aerostar vs. Johnny Mundo

Star is sent down ten seconds in and Johnny goes for a chinlock with Star's arm pinned back for some elbows to the chest. Mundo kicks him to the floor as this is a far more aggressive Johnny to start. Back up and Star spins around Johnny into a nice looking headscissors before a kick to the face and slingshot splash get two. A dropkick to the leg sends Mundo outside, setting up a big flip dive to the floor.

Mundo goes right back to slugging the masked man in the head and putting

on an Anaconda Vice. After ropes are reached, Mundo kicks him in the face again for two more but Mundo plants him with a backbreaker. The End of the World is broken up so Johnny just suplexes him into the corner, setting up the End of the World for the pin.

**Rating:** C. This worked well enough with Mundo's new heel persona working. However, Star got in way too much offense for Johnny's first opponent after a heel turn. Thankfully it was just token offense with Mundo never in any real danger, but this should have been a squash instead as even as it was.

Vampiro's sitdown interview this week is with Sexy Star, who isn't worried about her upcoming submission match with Pentagon Jr. because she already beat him once. Super Fly is still healing and she's ending Pentagon Jr. for him.

#### Lucha Underground Title: Hernandez vs. Prince Puma

Puma is defending. Hernandez easily blocks an early hurricanrana attempt and throws Puma down but he comes back by kicking Hernandez in the head. The big guy bails to the floor and Puma teases a dive to tick him off even more. Back in and Hernandez slingshots into a Codebreaker for a nice counter. It's almost all Puma so far and a springboard cross body gets two.

Hernandez gets tired of being on defense and just nails Puma with a clothesline. It's simple but Hernandez using such basic offense compared to Puma's high flying is a nice touch. A running splash gets two but Hernandez poses a bit too much and gets kicked in the head. That just annoys him though and a choke suplex sends him flying. Puma's cross body is countered into an Alpha Bomb (slam into a sitout powerbomb) and the knockout surprises the big man.

A big shove sends Puma to the floor (nice and simple again) so Konnan comes up on the apron for a distraction, allowing Puma to grab a chair to knock Hernandez out of the air. That goes nowhere so Hernandez plants him with a powerbomb onto the apron, which should completely destroy him. Instead Puma is countering a Border Toss into the barricade and landing on the rail for a big corkscrew dive to take Hernandez down.

Another slingshot splash gets another two but the 630 misses and Hernandez plants him with a powerslam. Hernandez's splash hits knees and for once that actually hurts someone's knee. It doesn't hurt enough to stop him from kicking Hernandez in the head a few times for two. Even more kicks to the head set up the 630 to retain the title.

**Rating:** B-. I liked it but I didn't love it. As usual, the selling here didn't last more than about ten seconds at a time, which makes for some very quick turnarounds. That being said, the sped up matches are the norm here and almost no one selling that long makes it a lot easier to sit through. Good match and a good win for Puma, though nothing all that remarkable.

### Fenix vs. Mil Muertes

Death match, which means pin or submission only and the fall has to take place in the ring, which means it was nice knowing you Fenix. Muertes, now all in black, stares a hole through Fenix and has three men in skull masks to take off his cape. Fenix tries a dive over the top during the entrances but he literally just bounces off of Muertes. Oh this is going to hurt. Muertes throws him inside and powerslams Fenix down for some right hands. He's moving around like a zombie with superpowers, which is one heck of a B movie concept.

Fenix's kicks are swatted away and a swinging chokeslam plants him down. He finally manages to crotch Mil on top and run down the ropes to kick Muertes to the floor. A big multiple jump moonsault drops Mil again but he pops up and nails a hard clothesline. To make things even worse for Fenix, Mil grabs a chair and caves his head in. Fenix of course shrugs it off and nails a superkick, setting up a huge double stomp off the barricade to crush Muertes' chest.

Back in and Fenix scores with some kicks, only to get hiptossed out to the floor. More chair shots have Fenix in big trouble so Muertes throws him onto his shoulders and sprints up the steps. Fenix's kicks have no effect and Muertes powerbombs him THROUGH THE ROOF OF THE STORAGE ROOM. We actually take a break (for I think only the third time in this series) and come back with the skull guys carrying Fenix (with the required Jesus

pose) to the ring for the Flatliner and the pin.

**Rating:** C+. Oh yeah this worked. The wrestling obviously wasn't the point here as Muertes is suddenly the top evil in this company. The powerbomb destroyed Fenix and made the debut of the new character work so well. Really good debut here with Muertes looking exactly like the monster he should. Muertes killing Puma and taking the title needs to be academic at this point.

Catrina, Muertes and the skull guys pose as the credits roll.

We're not done yet as Lucha Underground channels its inner Marvel with a pose credits sequence. Cueto meets with the Crew and says El Jefe (the boss) will not be embarrassed. Someone has to pay for this and the other two throw Bael into Cueto's brother's cage. Blood splatters everywhere and Cueto rubs some onto his face. Did we just see a death sequence to end the show?

**Overall Rating:** B. This was a solid effort as they're clearly building up a lot of stuff for the end of the season. It's so strange to be building towards a season finale instead of a big pay per view but this is actually working for me. Muertes is awesome as a monster, Cueto is awesome as an evil boss and the heroes are all solid as well to top it off. Cool show here as they're setting the stage for the big stuff to wrap things up, including Black Lotus as a wildcard. Good stuff.

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# Thunder – January 6, 2000: It's Creeping Closer

## Thunder

Date: January 6, 2000

Location: Civic Center, Florence, South Carolina

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Scott Hudson, Mike Tenay

It's a new year and please, for the love of all things good and not made of Russo, make it be a new Thunder. Almost the only stories coming out of Nitro are new Tag Team Champions....who had to run away so we could get to the NWO stuff, and the new commissioner....who was beaten up by the NWO to end the show. Heaven forbid WCW let anyone new (as new as Commissioner Terry Funk could be) get over. Let's get to it.

Clips from Nitro of the major stories.

The NWO drags Arn Anderson into the arena. Have they just had him held hostage for three days now? Why am I still surprised by these things?

## Cruiserweight Title: Asya vs. Madusa

Well at least it's not more man vs. woman. Madusa is defending and has Spice in her corner as part of a pairing that has never actually been explained. The interference (and the stupid) start before the match as Oklahoma comes out to do commentary because we need a four man booth.

Madusa grabs the ropes to block a dropkick as Oklahoma is ripping on Madusa for holding a man's title when she should be at home cooking for her husband. So apparently Oklahoma will be portraying Jeff Jarrett in a feud that is nowhere near as interesting as Jarrett vs. Chyna. The Revolution distracts the referee so Saturn can jump Asya, allowing Madusa to hit the German suplex (Oklahoma: "A move originated by a man!") to retain.

Madusa yells at Oklahoma and the Powers That Be and gets a barbecue sauce bottle broken over her head. Well at least that's what the other announcers say happen because we have to see the Filthy Animals run in to save Asya. Why they're saving Asya isn't clear as their teams were feuding, but it makes as much sense as anything else.

The announcers run down the card.

Juventud Guerrera and Psychosis come out with the former doing his Rock imitation and throwing Schiavone out of the commentary booth.

Here's Terry Funk to beat up the luchadors and give Tony his seat back. I'm so glad they wasted that minute on an angle (if that qualified as an angle) that was over as soon as it started. Funk says the NWO can do this the easy way by bringing Arn Anderson out here right now, or the hard way by making him deal with it himself. Jarrett comes out, swears a bit, and says they'll be out here in an hour.

Saturn tells the Filthy Animals to be, and I quote, "like a midget at a urinal: on their toes." Before they get much further, Juventud runs in and takes over the interview from Gene. So is Juvy just there to make Russo and Ferrara chuckle at this point?

The NWO beats up Arn Anderson. This angle would work so much better with Flair than Funk, but can you blame Flair for not wanting to get destroyed in the Carolinas all over again for the sake of putting over the NWO?

Gene brings out Booker T for a chat about Stevie Ray's actions. Booker brings up Stevie's injury and how he needed someone to watch his back. The only person that would was Midnight, and Stevie needs to accept that Midnight is going to be around. Stevie comes out and says Midnight isn't ready because she's cost him four matches. He wants a match with Midnight tonight, and if Stevie wins, Midnight is gone. If Midnight wins though, Harlem Heat is back together with Midnight as a member. You can see the other booking hands getting in on these stories as this, while not very interesting, is completely logical.

David Flair, Crowbar and Daffney are watching on a monitor as the NWO pours hot coffee on Anderson. At what point are these guys arrested?

Flair looks concerned.

### PG-13/Chavo Guerrero Jr. vs. 3 Count

That's quite the odd pairing. We're promised a 3 Count concert after the match. Well I'm sold. Shannon can't hit a Fameasser on Chavo to start so it's off to Shane and JC. Evan gets bored on the apron and springboards in with a dropkick before decking Chavo and diving onto Wolfie.

Everything breaks down and Chavo hits Shannon's tornado DDT, only to have Shane hit him with the green circle for the win. Nothing match, but what are you expecting from a minute and a half long six man tag?

We get the concert, making this by far and away the most entertaining show of the year so far.

David walks away from his partners.

Funk beats up security for not finding Arn. He's kind of got a point actually.

### The Wall vs. Jerry Flynn

This is a shoot fight because that's what wrestling fans tune in to see: boring wrestlers pretending to shoot on each other. Tank Abbott comes out and to watch because he's still employed for reasons I don't understand. Wall dominates to start but Flynn comes back with his limited assortment of kicks. Jerry takes it outside and whips him into the barricade before slugging away back inside. Back in and Jerry strikes even more but stops to yell at Abbott, earning him a shot to the back of the head, giving Wall the pin. More worthless stuff as people with no business on TV get pushed.

Abbott beats up Wall and Doug Dillinger post match.

David finds Funk.

### US Title: Jeff Jarrett vs. Norman Smiley

Bunkhouse Brawl with Jeff defending. Smiley's Hardcore Title is off to the side for reasons unclear but it might have something to do with the



shoulder pads he's wearing. He bails to the floor to start so Jeff throws a trashcan at his head to take over. Smiley is sent into a chair and screams a lot but finally fights back with a trashcan lid and a kendo stick shot. Norman doesn't want to cover due to fear and a guitar shot sets up the Stroke to retain. Another two and a half minute gimmick match.

Post match David and Terry come out and choke Jarrett with the crowbar as Terry demands the NWO get out here. After a break, the NWO brings out Anderson and Nash has a challenge: a match with Funk at Souled Out with the Commissioner's job on the line. Funk agrees if it's a one on one hardcore match with the NWO banned from ringside.

On top of that, he wants a hardcore match against Bret for the title tonight, even though he cares more about hurting Bret than winning the belt. Notice how he worded that: he doesn't say the title is worthless like Goldberg did to Rick Steiner with the TV Title, but that there's something he wants more. Bret agrees and threatens to kill Funk tonight. That's so far outside something Bret would normally say and it doesn't work coming from him. Hart suggests a swap of Jarrett for Anderson, but Arn can't help but get in a shot at Jarrett, earning him a ball bat shot from Bret.

Disco sells his Rolex to pay off some of his debt to the Mafia.

Stevie Ray yells at Funk for no apparent reason.

### Midnight vs. Stevie Ray

No Booker at ringside. After appearing in the ring, Midnight dropkicks Stevie into the corner and slugs away, only to eat a clothesline and some right hands. A slam and elbow get two on Midnight with Stevie pulling up off the cover. He does the same thing after a back elbow but stops to stare at the camera in an unintentionally (I think?) funny spot. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Stevie forearms Midnight down again.

There's a side slam and Stevie loads up the slapjack, but Booker runs out to say this has to be a fair match. Stevie actually agrees and powerslams Midnight for no cover as he checks her arm instead. That's the mating

call of a wacky finish though as Midnight rolls him up for the surprise pin.

**Rating:** D. The match had a goofy finish but at least it wasn't the most illogical thing in the world. Russo's booking gets annoying when you have stuff come out of nowhere and doesn't have any kind of foundation. Stevie letting her up time after time and then getting caught in his arrogance was set up over the course of the match and was paid off at the end. That's far better storytelling than almost anything else Russo does, which makes me think he isn't in charge of this story.

Kidman and Konnan introduce Okerlund to a good looking blonde, who I believe is Pamela Paulshock. She immediately gets on my nerves by calling Gene sexy. Gene Okerlund has never been sexy in his life. Stop these lies.

Back from a break with Gene calling out Page for a chat. Page denies Kimberly cheating with Buff but says Bagwell did hit on her. He'd like Bagwell out here right now but only gets him to the stage. We get sex jokes, gay jokes, and low testicular fortitude jokes, triggering a big brawl.

The Artist still won't record. This isn't going anywhere is it?

Juvy does the interview with Bam Bam Bigelow as Gene is talking to Paulshock. Before they get anywhere, Kanyon blasts Bigelow with a champagne bottle.

#### Kevin Nash vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

And never mind as Bigelow is down on the stage where Steiner and Jarrett get him into a wheelbarrow. Nash hits Bigelow with a ball bat and the match (yes this was a match) is over in 22 seconds. I guess the multiple matches on Monday were enough for Nash this week.

#### Tag Team Titles: Konnan/Kidman vs. Crowbar/David Flair

David/Crowbar won the titles on Monday in the ridiculous tournament. David comes out with his belt on backwards because he's crazy you see. Crowbar hammers on Kidman to start, meaning they're already wising up by

keeping Flair on the apron. A back elbow to the jaw puts Kidman down but YOU STILL CAN'T POWERBOMB CROWBAR EVEN THOUGH PEOPLE HAVE DONE IT AND THIS JOKE IS OLD. Off to David for a suplex as we get the old standard Schiavone hype for basic moves.

Crowbar comes in with a springboard missile dropkick and a guillotine legdrop for two with Konnan making the save. I had forgotten who Kidman's partner was until then. Kidman counters another powerbomb (oh come on now Crowbar. Even you aren't that crazy) but David breaks up the shooting star. Crowbar tries a top rope hurricanrana but Rey grabs Kidman's leg to make the save. Cue a limping Arn Anderson as Konnan comes in to clean house. In the melee, Anderson hits Konnan with the crowbar to give Flair the pin.

**Rating:** D+. Totally watchable match while Kidman and Crowbar were in there but it's clear that Flair just isn't all that good. The Anderson stuff is getting annoying as they're beating this story into our heads, but unfortunately they're wasting the Tag Team Titles on this. Maybe the Revolution and Filthy Animals could be fighting over the belts, but we need them on another team that doesn't deserve them so we can see David Flair in the ring.

The Revolution comes out and beats down the Animals again.

### Terry Funk vs. Bret Hart

Non-title hardcore match. Bret is in shorts instead of ring gear and hammers Funk to the floor early on. Terry starts throwing in the chairs as is his customs but Bret throws him face first into one of them and nails Funk with the bat. They both head outside with Terry taking a chair to the head. All Bret so far. Back in and Funk gets in a few left hands and takes it right back outside for a chair to Bret's shoulder.

Terry sends him into the cart of weapons but misses the moonsault onto a trashcan onto Bret, allowing the champ to blast him in the head with another chair. Hart Pillmanizes the leg and knocks the referee down (why?), so let's cut to Arn Anderson putting on a referee's shirt. David Flair comes in and asks to take the spot instead, which Arn reluctantly allows. Cue the NWO with the bats to Funk and Nash decks David. Nash

Jackknifes Funk through the stage to end the show.

**Rating:** F+. A match? You think this was a match? I'll skip complaining about how horrible this was as you took Bret Hart and Terry Funk and put them in a street fight instead of anything resembling a wrestling match because ratings are going to plummet if you don't have some kind of violence right? Also, this is twice since Funk has debuted as commissioner that he's been beaten down to end the show. Flair had this one right all the way.

**Overall Rating:** F+. The wrestling still sucks, but they're moving tiny steps in the right direction. Look at the Harlem Heat story for example: there's finally some logic to it and you can tell what's going on without needing to take notes. The main event makes sense too, as poor as the wrestling has been. We're transitioning into the boring period instead of the crazy stuff, which makes me sigh and wonder what else is on instead of wanting to steal plutonium to go back in time and bash Russo's head in with a pipe wrench. They're moving in the right direction, but it's WAY too late to make things right at this point.

That's it for Thunder on Thursdays as it only took four months for Smackdown to run them out of their time slot.

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# Impact Wrestling – May 29, 2015: Does It Really Matter Anymore?

## Impact Wrestling

Date: May 29, 2015

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Josh Matthews, Al Snow

After all the insanity that's been going on behind the scenes in this company, they're really in need for a good show to calm things down a bit. This show is being billed as May Mayhem, which is their version of a pay per view this month. The main event is Eric Young challenging Kurt Angle in an I Quit match. Let's get to it.

Eric Young pulls up to the arena where Kurt Angle is waiting on him. They slug it out in the parking lot until security breaks it up.

## Knockouts Title: Gail Kim vs. Taryn Terrell

Inside a cage with Taryn defending. Gail goes right after her in the aisle and takes over before the bell. They finally get inside with Kim still dominating until Marti Belle reaches through the cage to pull Gail down, allowing Taryn to ram the ring finger into the cage to take over. Gail fights back again with ease until she tries to climb out, allowing the Dollhouse to interfere again, allowing Taryn to hit a quick Cutter for the pin at 5:20.

**Rating:** D. Well aside from how great Taryn looked, this was borderline worthless. At the end of the day, you need more than five minutes for a cage match. This is supposed to be some big blowoff to the feud and instead the whole thing can't even make it to six minutes? The Dollhouse is awesome, but they played it pretty straight here, which defeats the purpose.

Post match the Dollhouse goes after Gail until Awesome Kong comes out.

They manage to lock the door though, setting up the big beatdown. Taryn takes Gail's ring off and stomps on Gail's ring finger, apparently breaking it so the ring can't go back on. Josh: "I know Taryn has issues we're not supposed to talk about on air but this is going too far."

So, unless they're actually going to say what happened in Taryn's marriage, this is going to be another big tease that never goes anywhere. Also, this would be more effective if they didn't keep name dropping Gail's celebrity chef husband, who is so famous that I've already forgotten his name.

Quick recap of James Storm being creepy and getting Mickie James to come back for one more match. Her husband Magnus isn't pleased with this but that's exactly what Storm wanted. Josh: "This isn't PG."

Here's Mickie (in a very, very revealing dress) to talk about things. She can't wait for the one more match but tonight she needs to talk about family and the heart. Magnus is her fiance, but James Storm has been a friend for years now. This brings out Storm, prompting Mickie to apologize for Magnus bashing him in the head with a guitar. James doesn't need to hear that but Mickie insists on apologizing, even though Magnus is just trying to protect his family.

Storm insists he's not a bad guy (has any good guy ever had to say that?) because if holding a door open for a woman or keeping her from getting attacked by Bram makes you a bad man, then yeah he's a bad man. We hear about all the gifts James bought the family but Mickie didn't think some of them were that funny.

James redeems himself by surprising Mickie by saying he's set up some meetings with big names (like Billy Corgan) who want to meet Mickie and advance her career. Whatever Mickie picks, he'll have her back. Storm leaves and Mickie tells the Cowboy (her word) she'll see them in Nashville. There was a very subtle addition here as Storm kept inching closer to Mickie, making her back up a half step every little bit.

Kenny King isn't worried about defending the X-Division Title in a gauntlet match.

Eric Young shows us a Tweet that we can't see and headbutts through a window.

### X-Division Title: Gauntlet Match

Why do we always need a gauntlet match or an elimination match or something other than a scheduled one on one match? There are seven people in this and another enters every 90 seconds. The first five will be eliminated over the top but when there are only two left, it's a regular match for the win. Manik is in first and Rockstar Spud is in second and Champion Kenny King will be in seventh. Both guys go for eliminations until Manik sends him into the corner and DJZ, now with a blue/purple mohawk, is in third.

Manik gets double teamed until Mandrews is in fourth after a low less than ninety seconds. Spud and Mandrews team up on Manik but Spud can't quite get him out, even as he bites Manik's fingers. No one is eliminated yet and Argos is in fifth to speed things up for all of five seconds. Mandrews misses a shooting star and gets sent to the apron, setting up a kick to the face and a ram into the post for the first elimination. Crazy Steve is in sixth as we take a break.

Back with Tigre Uno, who entered sixth during the break, being eliminated. Kenny King comes in seventh and the final group is everyone other than Tigre Uno. A big kick to the head drops Manik and another kick does the same to Young. Steve gets in a few shots and chokes over the ropes, only to get superkicked out to put us at five. Argos gets kicked to the floor for an elimination, followed by Spud jumping on King's back. He manages to avoid elimination but eats the Royal Flush.

DJZ gets back up with a belly to back suplex into a facebuster on King, only to get backdropped out by Manik a few seconds later. Down to Manik, Spud and King with Manik offering an alliance with the champ. Spud is tossed to the apron but Manik jumps King from behind, only to be thrown out with an assist from Spud to get us down to the singles match. King chops Spud down and rips at his face but the Royal Flush is countered into a small package to give Spud the title at 16:48.

**Rating:** D+. So here's one of TNA's major troubles explained in one match.

This was a major title match and had no build, no hype, and nothing interesting. There was no drama to anything here as the people came in and were eliminated before we got down to the final two for a very quick match with Spud winning. There was no reason to care about this and it a lot of that is due to how the match was booked instead of the action. The wrestlers didn't have time to do anything and it caught up with them quickly.

### Dirty Heels vs. Wolves

This is match #2 in a best of five series with the Wolves up 1-0. Roode throws Aries through the ropes for a suicide dive to start but Davey runs inside for a dive of his own on Aries. The Wolves double team Roode inside until Austin gets back in and things settle down a bit. Edwards chops away at Aries but Austin punches him in the face, setting up a tag to Roode for chops of his own.

The Heels (who aren't heels) load up what looked like a Sharpshooter but Aries gets kicked into his partner, allowing the Wolves to double team even more. Davey puts Rode into a reverse figure four (with Roode facing the mat and Davey facing up) for a unique looking submission. The German suplex into the jackknife rollup gets two as the announcers are overhyped the heck out of this. Eddie puts Roode in a chinlock for a bit until Bobby fights up and makes the hot tag to Aries.

Austin speeds things up and snaps both Wolves' throats across the top, setting up a missile dropkick to Edwards. There's the Last Chancery on Davey and a Crossface to Eddie but both Wolves make the ropes. Something like Chasing the Dragon but with a Michinoku Driver instead of a brainbuster gets two on Aries but he pops right back up for the running dropkick in the corner, followed by the 450 to Eddie with Davey making the save. Another Last Chancery has Edwards in trouble but Richards comes in off the top with a double stomp for the save, setting up the powerbomb into a Backstabber to pin Austin at 11:09.

**Rating:** B. This was straight out of the indy playbook with the entire match being action from bell to bell. That sounds cool on paper, but between everything going all over the place and Josh telling us about two



minutes in that this was a classic and something we were going to remember forever, the match kind of dulled on me very quickly. It's definitely fun, but I prefer building up to the insane finish instead of just having it run the entire match.

Kenny King can't get hold of MVP and wants him to call back.

Here's Angelina Love to deal with Velvet Sky, who is sitting in the audience. Love brings out her own personal security to deal with Velvet if she tries anything. She screams at Velvet (with a voice that Vickie Guerrero would find annoying) and tells her to try something, of course drawing Velvet over the barricade for a quick beating until security pulls her off. Sky beats up security and goes after Love again until she's handcuffed and taken away.

Mr. Anderson is very happy to not have Tyrus around for his match with Ethan Carter III tonight.

#### Ethan Carter III vs. Mr. Anderson

Anderson has a one man cage to lock Tyrus inside, guaranteeing that it's one on one. Amazingly enough, Tyrus doesn't want to go in so Anderson goes after him, allowing Carter to ram him face first into the cage. Back in and a quick suplex gets two for Carter as Snow challenges Dixie Carter to a street fight. A running clothesline gets two more on Anderson but he throws Carter through the ropes and into Tyrus, who still isn't in the cage. Anderson nails Tyrus with a chair a few times to FINALLY get him in the stupid cage.

They slug it out back inside with Anderson taking over with the usual. A powerslam and backdrop get two each but Mr. gets crotched on top, setting up a TKO for two. Carter hits a Stinger Splash (complete with shout) but the 1%er is countered into a Regal Roll and Swanton for the same. The Mic Check connects for two and Anderson is stunned. He loads up another but Carter counters into a 1%er for the clean pin at 8:00.

**Rating:** C-. That's a pretty clear ending to the feud, but my goodness TNA needs to slow down. This match started with a flurry with the Tyrus stuff then was just trading big moves for a few minutes until Carter won. They

have to speed through everything on every show because they need to get so much stuff in. Calm down a bit and spread some stuff out so that stuff like this can have time to breathe.

Anderson offers a handshake but Carter shoves the hand away. Tyrus is left in the cage.

Rockstar Spud is very, very happy to be a two time champion. He hasn't even had time to think about Destination X and Option C yet but maybe he needs a new goal.

### TNA World Title: Eric Young vs. Kurt Angle

Angle is defending and this is an I Quit match. Both guys come out with security after being separated all night in another idea that didn't go anywhere. Angle goes right at him to start and they're slugging it out a minute in. Eric tries to jump over him in the corner but gets caught in rolling Germans to knock him even sillier. He won't quit though so Kurt rolls even more Germans, only to be sent to the floor as we take a break. Back with Young slapping on a Figure Four for a bit until Angle turns it over, sending Young to the ropes.

Eric can't get an Angle Slam so he puts Kurt in an ankle lock with a grapevine, only to have Kurt reverse into something resembling a Figure Four. More ropes are grabbed so Young goes up, only to dive into the real ankle lock. Young taps so Angle lets go, but Young never said I Quit. The distraction lets Young hit a low blow and piledriver. Still no quitting so Young loads up another piledriver, only to be countered into the ankle lock with the grapevine to retain Angle's title at 13:10.

**Rating:** C-. Raise your hand if you expected ANYTHING but that as the ending. That's where this match and feud died with me: no one in their right mind thought Young was winning the title at any point in this feud and that makes for some very dull matches. The match was watchable, but my goodness don't let this feud keep going any longer and get Young down the card where he belongs.

**Overall Rating:** D+. This one didn't do it for me. They were flying through every possible thing they could get through tonight and it made

the show a lot weaker than it should have been. The matches were good while they lasted, but none of them had time to set up any kind of story or psychology, which really kills the show.

We've got a few weeks before Slammiversary and then just a few weeks before Destination X and then a few months before the show is probably getting kicked off the air because not enough people watch it. Could it be because they rush through hastily announced gimmick matches like these and don't let anything have a proper build because they have to get through everything they can when they have two pay per views a year and seemingly could do things at whatever pace they want? This was an action heavy show but the lack of a foundation takes away anything good they had set up.

### Results

Taryn Terrell b. Gail Kim – Cutter

Rockstar Spud won a gauntlet match, last eliminating Kenny King – Small package

Wolves b. Dirty Heels – Powerbomb into a backstabber to Aries

Ethan Carter III b. Mr. Anderson – 1%er

Kurt Angle b. Eric Young – Ankle lock

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