

# NXT – August 21, 2013: The Best NXT Match Ever

## NXT

Date: August 21, 2013

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Alex Riley

Tonight is a show I've been looking forward to for a long time. The main event tonight is a 2/3 falls match between Antonio Cesaro and Sami Zayn to settle their score. This match has gotten rave reviews since it aired and I've been wondering if it lives up to its reputation. Other than that we might find out who is Dallas' next challenger for the title. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Zayn vs. Cesaro. They're making this feel like a huge match.

Divas Title: Bayley vs. AJ Lee

Bayley wants a hug to start but AJ slams her head first into the mat instead. AJ sends her into the corner and puts on a cravate to control Bayley. A hard elbow to the jaw gets two for the champ and AJ does the crazy eyes. Bayley comes back with a big hug to ram AJ into the corner a few times for two each. A knee drop gets two on AJ and the fans are split here. Bayley drops a top rope elbow for two more but she's concerned about how much she's hurt AJ. The champion takes advantage with a shot to the ribs and a Shining Wizard to retain the belt at 4:25.

**Rating:** D+. This didn't work too well for me. It felt like both girls were just doing their schtick instead of having a good match. We don't know too much about Bayley other than she gets really star struck so it's hard to care about her. Actually Bayley reminded me of Joseph Park here:

someone who was just so excited to be here and didn't care about winning.

Tyler Breeze is in the back with some good looking blonde and asks if she'd like a picture. She gets in the picture with him and he glares at her before having her take a solo picture. That same guy (CJ Parker I believe) photo bombs Breeze again but Breeze sees the picture this time and freaks out.

#### Ron Hicks/Michael Zacki vs. Ascension

O'Brian starts with Zacki and hits a string of headlock takeovers. Victor comes in for shots to the ribs and European uppercuts in the corner. The double hiptoss into the double powerbomb crushes Zacki and a modified High/Low (with a jumping back elbow instead of a spinwheel kick) gives Victor the pin at 1:38. Total squash.

#### Baron Corbin vs. CJ Parker

Parker's Titantron is a tye dye ying yang and he's from a commune. He takes Corbin into the corner and kind of dances out, only to be taken down by a hard shoulder block. Parker comes back with a running clothesline and two knees to the chest followed by a falling DDT (think Christian's reverse DDT but from the front) for the pin on Corbin at 1:42.

Post match Parker says he's found what he's looking for. You might call him a hippie but he's just living. He calls the photo bombing "video loving", bringing out Tyler Breeze. Breeze yells at Parker but CJ says it's just having a good time. Parker rubs Breeze's face to send him running. I'm not really feeling Parker.

#### Alexander Rusev vs. Dolph Ziggler

Rusev is a very big man from Bulgaria who breaks a piece of wood with

Ziggler's name on it over his knee. Ziggler is WAY over with the crowd. Both guys are slow to start with Rusev trying basic power stuff and Ziggler easily countering everything thrown at him so he can strut a bit. Alexander throws him into the corner and Ziggler gets serious. He staggers Rusev with a dropkick but his cross body is caught in mid air. Alexander rams knees into Ziggler's back and drops him on the floor for a breather.

Back in and a running shoulder to the ribs gets two on Dolph. Rusev puts on a quick body vice but misses a second running charge into the corner. Dolph hits a good looking dropkick for two but walks into a running knee to the ribs for the same result. Back up and Ziggler hits a quick Fameasser for two but Rusev comes back with a nice spinwheel kick (for a guy weighing over 300lbs) for another near fall. He misses a top rope splash though, allowing Ziggler to hit the Zig Zag for the pin at 6:14.

**Rating:** C+. I liked this more than I thought I would. Rusev has potential to him as he's got a good look and moved very well for a guy his size. Ziggler did his job perfectly out there by making Rusev look far better than he would have otherwise. This was a very nice surprise as you would have expected a squash but got a solid match instead.

Next week we'll get a special look at the NXT stars at Summerslam Axxess.

### Sami Zayn vs. Antonio Cesaro

They have a lot of time to work with here and it's 2/3 falls. Zayn debuted a few months ago and beat Cesaro in Sami's second match of the night. Cesaro won the rematch so tonight's the rubber match. Zayn dives over the top to take out Cesaro during his entrance before the bell. Back inside and Sami hits a spinwheel kick for the first fall six seconds after the bell. Cesaro is clotheslined to the floor and sent into the steps as we're not even a minute into the match.

They slug it out on the floor before Zayn gets two off another spinwheel

kick. Zayn pounds away in the corner but can't get a sunset flip. Cesaro can't hit a double stomp so Sami goes to the middle rope and jumps from there to the top for a high cross body for two. Cesaro throws him into the air to drop Sami face first on the buckle for two before pounding away at Sami's head. We hit the standing chinlock for a bit before Cesaro blocks a kick to the ribs and pulls Sami up into a powerbomb for two.

Back to the chinlock but Zayn jawbreaks his way out. A hard clothesline and the running stomp to the chest gets two for Cesaro. Back up and Zayn fires off forearms to the chest but gets caught in a backdrop, allowing Cesaro to rain down right hands. Another double stomp sets up the gutwrench suplex but Sami counters into a sunset flip for two. A running hurricanrana gets the same but Cesaro comes back with a bridging capture suplex for two.

Back from a break with with Cesaro putting on the standing chinlock for the third time. Zayn gets two off a rollup and hits a quick dropkick to put Antonio down. He charges right back into the chinlock though and Cesaro spins him around before taking it to the mat. Zayn actually taps out at about 9:00 shown, making it one fall apiece.

Sami rolls to the apron but Antonio pulls him back in with a superplex from the apron. That's SCARY strength but it's only good for two. Zayn grabs a quick rollup for two but gets caught in the chinlock again. That's rolled up for two followed by Cesaro charging into a boot in the corner. The fans think this is awesome and I can't say I disagree. Sami gets a VERY close two off a sunset flip after crawling up Cesaro's body.

Cesaro bails to the floor so Sami heads outside as well before getting a running charge and diving between the ropes into a tornado DDT on the floor. Cesaro dives back in at nine and Sami gets two. Zayn tries to climb the corner for another tornado DDT but Cesaro catches him in midair, lifts him into a gorilla press and drops him down into Swiss Death. Antonio immediately picks up Sami and puts him down with the Neutralizer for the pin and the third fall at 15:38 shown of 18:38.

**Rating:** A-. Yeah it's great. The third fall picked WAY up after a solid second fall. I'm not sure I get the idea of having Zayn win the first fall in a few seconds but it was definitely a face way to start the match. Either way, both guys looked great here and the match worked incredibly well with Cesaro looking like a beast at the end. Why he's in a jobber tag team and not being pushed as a top heel in WWE is beyond me. Check this match out if you have the chance.

**Overall Rating:** A-. Great show here with a solid match in Ziggler vs. Rusev and a great main event. The other matches were good enough and we got some solid storyline advancement here. It continues to amaze me how much better NXT works than Raw or Smackdown. Imagine that: wrestlers running a wrestling show makes it better than a show run by low rent Hollywood writers.

### Results

AJ Lee b. Bayley – Shining Wizard

Ascension b. Ron Hicks/Michael Zacki – High/Low to Zacki

CJ Parker b. Baron Corbin – Falling DDT

Dolph Ziggler b. Alexander Rusev – Zig Zag

Antonio Cesaro b. Sami Zayn – Neutralizer

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# Thought of the Day: One Of A Kind

In something that won't be said either before or again, this is going to be about a Dirty White Boy, Bismark, North Dakota and Big E. Langston. Back in the mid 1990s, the WWF had a stupid idea for a lot of one note characters, such as a wrestling monk, a rock guitarist, a magician (I think that one had potential but that's for another time), cowboys, a garbageman and a tag team called Well Dunne. All of these were really basic characters with only the cowboys (Smoking Gunns) going anywhere. In addition to all these guys, there was one in particular I want to focus on: T.L. Hopper, as played by Tony Anthony (who wrestled as Dirty White Boy in SMW).

T.L. Hopper was a wrestling plumber. End of gimmick. Seriously, that's it. He was a wrestling plumber and nothing more. We didn't know whether to cheer him, boo him, or anything about him other than his job. Why was he a wrestler? Why not stay a plumber? Was he the WWF plumber? Was it a side job? Why are we thinking of all these questions? In short, there was nothing to this character and it didn't shock anyone when he was gone in less than a year.

At the end of the day there was one major issue above all others with Hopper: there was nothing special about him. Open your phone book and see how many plumbers you find in the yellow pages. There are probably dozens if you live in a decent sized city. In other words, there's nothing special about a plumber. This one happens to wrestle and that's the end of the differences between him and any other plumber you can name.

Flash forward to about 2011. Down in Florida Championship Wrestling, a power lifter turned wrestler joined the WWE

developmental system. His name was Big E. Langston and all we knew about him was that he was strong. He needed a nickname so he was christened Florida's Strongest Man. Uh....ok?

That's kind of impressive but is he stronger than everyone in Oregon? On the street I live on? Can he out lift everyone in Bismark, North, Dakota? Tell you what: I'll go to Oregon and if the strongest man there sucks, I'll come buy a ticket to see Langston, providing there isn't a flight to Bismark later in the day. It also didn't help that there was a guy on the main WWE roster known as the World's Strongest Man. It really makes Langston look like a low rent imitation, so why would I want to pay for someone who might be one of the strongest men in the country, let alone the rest of the world?

The lesson here should be obvious: make the gimmick something you can't find elsewhere. Look at Kurt Angle when he debuted. The emphasis was on the fact that he was the ONLY Olympic Gold Medalist in WWF History, as in no one else has ever done this. Randy Orton is the APEX Predator, as in the top of the food chain. Most titles are the WORLD Heavyweight Championship, not the Louisiana and Missouri Champion.

In short, make a gimmick something that will draw a crowd, not something that makes people look at what better options there are. Make them say "I want to see THAT!"

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**On This Day: August 21, 1997  
– Clash of the Champions #35:**

# Not Exactly Sting vs. Flair

## Clash of the Champions 35

Date: August 21, 1997

Location: Nashville Municipal Auditorium, Nashville, Tennessee

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan, Dusty Rhodes

Clash of the Champions more or less was WCW's Saturday Night's Main Event. They started it up to go head to head with Wrestlemania 4 and actually put a solid dent in it. The show went on for 9 years but by the end no one cared at all. The show was just worthless as there was already two hours of television a week so in essence we were just getting an extra Nitro two weeks a year, which is why this is the final one.

As for current storylines, this is at the height of the NWO's power but Sting is looming. I think you know the story there. The main event is Luger and DDP vs. Savage and Hall. See what I mean about how this just isn't that interesting of a show? Let's get to it.

The opening video just runs down the card. Other than the stupid tag team main event this sounds pretty decent.

We get a clip of Dillon saying that Sting has until Thursday to make his demands as Sting had ripped up two contracts with match offers in them. Sting came through the crowd and got in the ring and the fans chanted Hogan. Sting pointed to the fans who were chanting it. This angle was freaking sweet too. And then Hogan and his ego just had to kill it dead.

## US Title: Jeff Jarrett vs. Steve McMichael

Jarrett used to be a Horsemen and stole McMichael's wife Debra so Mongo wants to get the title to get some revenge or something. This was the epitome of a feud that no one wanted to see but would never die. Mongo is a Horsemen here meaning we get to hear the sweetest theme music of all time. Jarrett



was neither interesting nor good at this time whereas Mongo never was either of those things so we'll give it to...dang who do we give this one to?

Actually let's just hope this ends fast. We take a break and come back with Jarrett throwing Mongo into the steps (His name was Steve Mongo McMichael in case you were wondering). Debra chokes him and I still couldn't care less. The WCW midcard just completely sucked and while we were having Owen vs. Austin followed by Rock vs. Austin in WWF at this point for the IC belt, this just doesn't hold up. Jarrett puts on a sleeper as a great visual representation for this match.

Mongo gets his own and Debra gets up on the apron. For no apparent reason Eddie Guerrero runs out with a belt and goes up top but hits Jarrett by mistake. Mongo covers for the title with ease. Debra tries to get him back and fails at it.

**Rating:** D+. At least it was short. These two feuded forever and no one cared ever. It just wasn't interesting at all but they thought they could just slap the Horsemen name on it and get a good reaction from it through the south. There wasn't much here though so the time was good if nothing else. Mongo held it for less than a month before Hennig turned heel and took it.

Alex Wright comes out and speaks in English and Gene warns him to speak in English which was very stupid. It's as simple of a promo as you could ask for. He has Ultimo Dragon tonight.

Gene is with the guys from a show called Dinner and a Movie. In essence they showed a movie and made food with a play on words of the movie title. It was an ok idea but why are these guys on a wrestling show? There's your problem with WCW right there: too much corporate interference.

### Stevie Richards vs. Raven

Raven "didn't have a contract" at this point and insisted on

wrestling only in No DQ matches. This is a grudge match or something as Richards was tired of Raven pushing him around. Richards had allegedly had a career ending neck injury but miraculously healed and showed up in WCW a few weeks later. They point out Raven's ankle issue as he has a thing on his shoe to balance out the fact that his right leg is shorter than his left.

The Raven drop toehold hits to the chair as this is just a squash match so far. He throws in a bulldog onto the chair for good measure. Richards comes back with some decent stuff but at the end of the day he remembers he's Steven Richards and the other guy is Raven and the best DDT other than Jake Roberts (who trained Raven) ends it.

**Rating:** C+. It was a squash and a quick one at that so we'll just call it a bit above average for the DDT, which is the coolest move in history. Richards would be gone in like two weeks or so.

We get a cool video about Ultimo Dragon, explaining a bit of his history and his name. WCW hit the ball so far out of the park with this division that it's insane. The name was called Ultimate Dragon but that was incorrect, as it was supposed to be Ultimo Dragon: Final Dragon, as in the final student of Bruce Lee, who he emulated in the ring. That's the kind of thing that you just never get in WWE and it's why the cruiserweights worked so well.

That and they never took them seriously. The shot of the J-Crown (8 titles from around the world which were defended on WCW television and included a WWF light heavyweight title that was active for 20 years but only in Japan, meaning that a WWF Title was defended on WCW television multiple times in 1996 and 1997) titles being piled up is just awesome.

TV Title: Ultimo Dragon vs. Alex Wright

When Dragon won the title a few weeks prior, it was the match

where no one talked about the match whatsoever other than the final three count as the whole match was nothing but talking about the NWO. At the end they more or less said hey we have a new champion! Now back to what we were talking about. It was just ridiculous how that was all they talked about.

Wright was a guy that they tried so hard to push but it just never played out like they wanted it to. He was this young hotshot that was somewhat over as a face so of course they turned him heel and no one cared after that. Dragon really was underrated in the ring. In WWE they just threw him into the cruiserweight division and let him die off because that division sucked so hard it was pathetic. These two feuded for the better part of a year and I don't think anyone ever cared.

There was no focus at all on the title or anything as it was always about the NWO. Dragon gets the Asai moonsault that he invented and does better than anyone else. The commentary is all about them as well which is NICE. We hit a very nice ending sequence as they fight over pins but Wright hits a SWEET German suplex for the pin and the title.

**Rating:** B-. This was a good match but pretty boring at times. The problem was that while these two had good matches, it's Ultimo Dragon vs. Alex Wright. There's just no heat at all and it's not a great matchup while being a good match if that makes sense.

#### Cruiserweight Title: Eddie Guerrero vs. Chris Jericho

Eddie is challenging here and is freshly full heel. Eddie's cowardly heel stuff of running on his knees always made me chuckle. How much commentary do you really need on a Guerrero vs. Jericho cruiserweight match? The Canadian goes for that running springboard dropkick to the guy on the apron that he uses a lot but slips and botches it badly.

I guess once a year is understandable. In a quick ending, they hit another fast series of pinfalls but Jericho actually keeps

Eddie down and gets the pin. Eddie jumps him after the match.

**Rating:** C-. WAY too short here but we just had to have Mongo and Jarrett earlier instead of on Nitro right? The ending sequence was fun as always and these two just flowed together pretty well. They needed more time though and that's why the grade is low.

Silver King/Villano 4/Villano 5/Psicosis vs. Super Calo/Juventud Guerrera/Hector Garza/Lismark Jr.

More or less the idea here is go out there and do a bunch of flips like you do every night without ever getting pushed more than a tiny bit against each other. This is Lucha rules, meaning if someone goes to the floor then they don't have to make a tag for someone else to come in. I used to hate Mike Tenay but he's worth his weight in gold here.

There's no real point to saying who is in as they move in and out so fast that it's hard to keep up with them. We hit the big pile on with everyone hitting their big over the top rope until Psicosis hits the guillotine legdrop off the top onto Super Calo for the pin.

**Rating:** B-. It was just over the top and ridiculous which is what these guys did best. This was very fun and it worked well as it always did. These guys were well paid to go out there and just get the crowd going and that's what they always did.

The cooking guys join the NW0. Tonight is their one year anniversary but Hogan isn't here tonight because he's in Canada doing a Hollywood movie. That's WCW for you. We go to a commercial and come back to DDP Diamond Cutting one of the movie guys.

Konnan/Syxx vs. Ric Flair/Curt Hennig

Hennig was kind of an associate Horseman at the time but soon he would join the NW0 and injure Flair. If there was ever a

guy tailor made to be in the Horsemen, it's Hennig. Syxx (X-Pac) more or less beats up Flair but we'll ignore the pop he's getting for doing it. That doesn't exist. Flair gets his knee knocked out as Hennig hits the Fisherman's Suplex on Konnan to get the win. This was a five minute train wreck.

**Rating:** C-. This was just insane and it felt like it was about two minutes long instead of the five that it actually was. Hennig denies being a Horsemen but also denies not being a Horsemen while only saying one thing. He actually does this which is impressive.

He would go heel soon enough in another dumb move because he was perfect for the Horsemen. He had the look, he could talk, he was over, he had the attitude and he was great in the ring. Naturally he was thrown into the NWO and forgotten about.

WCW Tag Titles: Lex Luger/DDP vs. Randy Savage/Scott Hall

About ten guys come out for the NWO and they have their party for it being their birthday. Apparently Nash is letting Savage defend his half of the tag titles for no apparent reason. Yeah of course we just throw two guys together that have never teamed together before (according to the ring announcer) and give them a tag title shot.

In WWF they would have won the titles. People keep popping the balloons that the NWO dropped so it sounds like people keep shooting guns or something and it's really annoying. And for no apparent reason everyone other than Nash leaves. It's exactly what you would expect from a match where the titles simply weren't going to change hands.

The faces dominate early on but then the heels take over to set up the hot tag. Luger gets Hall in the rack but takes an accidental Diamond Cutter and gets pinned. What else is there to say here?

**Rating:** C+. It's ok and that's about it. What more do you want

here? They had an ok match that no one cared about on a show that not a lot of people actually watched. Are you looking for something huge here?

We come back and Bischoff talks forever and then the lights begin to flicker. They go off and we see Sting in the rafters with a vulture. The famous speech in a child's voice follows and the lights go out again and the bird is on the top rope. The NWO is terrified and Nash pulls the belt back to swing it at him as we go off the air. Think about how stupid this was for the live audience for a minute.

**Overall Rating:** C-. You could see that this was about the name of the show and nothing more. Yeah there were four title matches but that happened at almost every Nitro. Yes two titles changed hands but who cares? It's just not an interesting show as Nitro was lighting the world on fire on Mondays on a weekly basis. Ten years earlier this was an awesome idea but here it just didn't hold up at all. Not bad, but only watch if you like this time in WCW. Otherwise it's nothing of note at all.

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# Monday Nitro – March 30, 1998: 1004 Ways To Bore An Audience

## Monday Nitro #133

Date: March 30, 1998

Location: United Center, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Larry Zbyszko, Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan

The NWO continues to dominate the stories in this company as we're rolling towards Spring Stampede. On Thunder the NWO got into another argument with Hogan and Nash yelling at each other this time. There isn't much else going on in WCW at the moment other than the title feuds. WCW needs to step things up as last night, Steve Austin won the WWF Title, meaning the heat is on. Let's get to it.

The Nitro Girls open us up. I've heard of worse ideas.

We look at the brawl at the end of Thunder.

## Wayne Bloom/Mike Enos vs. High Voltage

Enos starts with Rage but High Voltage is quickly double teaming to take over. Mike is beaten down but Bloom comes in off the top to take over. Bloom comes in legally and suplexes Rage down for two before it's back to Enos. Something like a fallaway slam off the middle rope gets two on Rage and here's the Giant with chokeslams all around for the DQ.

**Rating:** D. This was long enough to rate but there's nothing to talk about here. Neither team was anything of note and the fans didn't care about them due to how low they were on the card. At least the fans popped when the Giant came out there as they were almost silent for the match.

Everyone is laid out so Giant grabs the mic and says if Piper wants mean, that's what he's getting.

Here are Piper and Giant with something to say. Piper is in a Cubs hat for an odd visual. He talks about having Giant dating Sweaty Betty and eating villagers. Piper says that Hogan and Nash are lovers but tonight they can't team together. It's going to be Nash/a partner of his choice vs. Sting/Luger but the partner can't be Hogan. Now it's time to focus on Hogan and Disciple. Piper says Disciple used to be Brutus Beefcake and the fans sound surprised. He says Disciple's real name is E. Harrison Leslie and tonight it's Piper vs. Hogan in the main event. Oh yeah they're feeling the pressure from Raw all right.

#### Perry Saturn vs. Fit Finlay

This could be interesting. Saturn is flanked by the entire Flock. Saturn chops him in the chest to start but Finlay takes him straight to the mat and puts on a hard chinlock. Back up and Saturn fires off kicks in the corner but charges into a boot. This is more hard hitting than any match in months already.

Finlay drives in knees in the corner and works on Saturn's knee on the mat. Back up and Saturn grabs a quick suplex for two but Finlay hits another hard clothesline to take over. I'm saying hard a lot because it's the only way to describe most of these shots. A rolling senton gets two for Finlay but he gets caught in a head and arms suplex and the Rings of Saturn are good for the submission.

**Rating:** C. This was short but they beat the tar out of each other out there. Finlay is the kind of guy that can work well with almost anyone which makes him an interesting guy to watch. It's rare to see heels going at it but it made for a good match. That's something WWE should do more often: mix things up a bit instead of doing the same stuff over and over again.



CALL THE HOTLINE!

Here's the NWO led by Hogan and Bischoff. Hogan talks about being 4 Life and if Piper wants a fight he can come get one right now. The fans say he sucks but Hogan says that just means they worship him. He calls the Disciple up and names him as the leader of his worshippers. That brings him to the family business and the only thing people remember right now is Nash's big foot going into Hogan's face.

If Nash wants to get a partner tonight, the NWO wants to see what he's made of because none of this is allowed to team up with him. Cue Nash to a face pop. He quotes Savage by saying there could be more than one person ready to stab him in the back. Hogan says at Spring Stampede they can watch each others' backs and then deal with their own issues. Nash says he has a partner but won't say who it is.....brother. To clarify, the story of this show is who will be the partner of one half of the World Tag Team Champions.

More Nitro Girls.

There is no Thunder this weekend as there's going to be an internet Pay Per Listen called Malice in the Palace.

Cruiserweight Title: Chris Jericho vs. Marty Jannetty

Jericho dedicates the match to the memory of Dean Malenko who has quit because he can't handle the heat. He quotes Hanson to say that in an MMBop, Dean's career is gone. Only Jericho could make that line work. Marty gets a quick clothesline to take over and a powerslam is good for two. A faceplant puts Jericho down but the Rocker Dropper is countered into a belly to back suplex and the Liontamer retains the title.

Post match Jericho grabs a cup of water and a bunch of papers. See, Dean claims to be the man of 1000 holds but Jericho has only counted about 60.

Jericho however knows 1004 and is going to list them off for us.

1. Armdrag
2. Armbar
3. Moss Covered Three Handled Gradunzel (Jericho's pronunciation)
4. Armbar
5. Saskatchewan Spinning Nerve Hold
6. Armbar

9. Shooting Star Staple Press

10. Right handed punch

We take a break.

712. Armbar

713. Gibberish

714. Canadian....something

Hour #2 begins.

723. Jericho Screwdriver

As Jericho talks about a Whizzer, Prince Iaukea cuts him off. Dean's dad trained the Prince as well and he's not going to stand for this disrespect. This holds up incredibly well and Jericho is still hilarious to this day.

Prince Iaukea vs. Glacier

Glacier runs him over to start and hits a quick belly to back suplex. He poses on the ropes instead of following up though and Prince comes back with a fallaway slam. A pair of dropkicks sets up a Samoan Drop for two but Glacier comes back with a powerslam. Glacier goes up but jumps into a northern lights suplex for the pin. Nothing to see here.

Some high school students win the Nitro Party Pack. Good to know.

### Juventud Guerrera vs. El Dandy

Dandy hits a hard knee to the chest to start but gets caught in a hurricanrana to take him down. Juvy tries a baseball slide to the floor but Dandy slides back in at the same time. Dandy drops him on the top rope but Juvy comes right back with a rollup for two. Juvy is slammed down but slips out of an attempt at a second slam before hooking a Juvy Driver for a quick pin.

We get a clip of the new movie Lost In Space.

### Chavo Guerrero Jr. vs. Kaz Hayashi

Heenan has joined commentary. Chavo is in a professionally made Eddie Guerrero is My Favorite Wrestler shirt. Feeling out process to start with Guerrero charging into an armdrag and armbar. I guess Hayashi is a Chris Jericho fan. Back up and Chavo gets two off a quick dropkick before stomping on Kaz.

A belly to back suplex sets up a chinlock from Guerrero as a guy with a huge backpack walks through the front row. They botch a spot where Chavo tries to powerbomb out of a hurricanrana but falls down, basically turning it into a running seated senton. A missile dropkick puts Chavo down and a German suplex gets two, but Chavo pops up and hits the tornado DDT for the pin.

**Rating:** C-. This was short but it was decent while it lasted. Kaz never really did much in WCW though they did say Ultimo Dragon had taken him under his wing so maybe he's in for a small push. Botch aside, Chavo continues to look smooth in the ring most of the time and the story is what he's been missing to get things going.

Post match Chavo helps Kaz up.

Before his match Raven says he'll dumb this down for us. He talks about hating his father and being unpopular in high school. It was Page who picked Raven up from the hospital when he got out of rehab. Four years ago when Page was released it was Raven who gave him a shoulder to cry on. Now Page is the US Champion and Raven had to spend three years in Barbed Wire City. Why didn't Page call in a favor and get him a job years ago? The Snake told him that Page wasn't a true friend and he was right. Quoth the US Champion forevermore.

### Buff Bagwell vs. Raven

The announcers hope they beat each other into the hospital. Why would WCW announcers not like the Flock? Bagwell laughs at Raven to start before hiptossing him down. Raven charges into a boot in the corner and Bagwell runs him down. Posing ensues but here's DDP so Raven grabs the US Title and bails for the countout.

Page comes up to commentary and says he wants to put this in context. Yes he and Raven knew each other before, but Raven has selective memory. Poor little Scotty. Poor little us as he now joins Norton, Hall, Steiner and Riggs as Scottys in this company. Page talks about Raven being born with a silver spoon in his mouth and having a very privileged childhood.

On the other hand there's Page who came from a broken home but turned out just fine. It wasn't Page who caused all of Raven's hardships because Raven doesn't know what hardships are. Page goes into something resembling Hard Times before saying Raven has nothing to complain about.

The announcers recap the NWO events. This is in addition to constantly talking about them during the matches.

### Disco Inferno vs. Billy Kidman

Disco throws him into the air and gets two off a clothesline to start. He stomps a mudhole in Kidman in the corner and throws him out tot he floor. Kidman comes back in with a slingshot headscissors and the announcers finally stop talking about how awesome Randy Savage is and wondering who Nash's partner will be.

A slingshot legdrop gets two for Kidman and Disco gets a near fall of his own off a sunset flip. Kidman dropkicks him down and hits a quick backbreaker, only to miss a top rope splash. Disco gets two off an elbow drop and a neckbreaker but charges into a sitout spinebuster for two. Kidman makes the mistake of lowering his head though and Disco hits a great piledriver for the pin.

**Rating:** C+. Much better match than I was expecting here with Disco actually going move for move with Kidman. I don't remember him using the piledriver that often but it's a good finishing move for him, especially if the Chartbuster is being taken by Disciple. Really nice match here with both guys looking good.

Hour #3 begins.

### Curt Hennig vs. Jim Neidhart

Can this feud just end already? Rude jumps in on commentary and dodges a question about being Nash's partner tonight. Neidhart quickly pulls him to the floor and sends Hennig into the barricade before going back inside. Jim keeps asking Rude to come down to the ring for a beating but pounds Hennig down with ease. Hennig gets in some shots but Neidhart rakes him in the eyes to put him down. Off to a bearhug on Curt and Rude

runs in for the DQ, only to get caught in a quick bearhug as well.

Neidhart gets beaten down and handcuffed to the rope. Bulldog comes in for the save but Bryan Adams hits the ring for a piledriver on Davey. Rude takes off his belt and chokes Neidhart, making Anvil's eyes bug out in an unintentionally funny bit. Bret comes out for the real save, again calling the no association rule into question. Hart says this isn't happening anymore and he's tearing the NWO down brick by brick until he gets to Hogan.

#### TV Title: Chris Benoit vs. Booker T

Booker is defending in this rematch of a draw from last week. During the entrances we're told Iaukea vs. Jericho for the Cruiserweight Title is set for the PPV. They fight over a lockup to start with neither guy able to gain an advantage. Benoit pulls him down to the mat but Booker does half a Spinarooni to get up before anything else can be done. Booker gets spun over into a sunset flip for two and we have a standoff. A HARD chop sends Booker into the ropes as we're told it's Bulldog vs. Hennig at Spring Stampede. Dang how will the cable company handle all the people wanting to buy the show now?

Benoit stomps him down in the corner but gets caught in a spinebuster for a close two. A hard elbow to the face puts Benoit down again and the champion stomps away a bit. Benoit is quickly back up and snaps off a release German suplex to put both guys down. The Canadian gets two off a snap suplex as we get news that Nash has switched dressing rooms. So much for talking about the title match. Booker gets a boot up in the corner but walks into a drop toehold for two.

A backbreaker gets two for Benoit and it's off to surfboard hold with a knee in Booker's back. Chris suplexes him down for two and it's time to roll some Germans. Booker fights out of the third and hits the ropes but both guys try cross bodies to put them both down. Booker spins up and hits the side kick but gets crotched on top. Benoit is knocked away but

still sidesteps the missile dropkick. The Crossface is quickly broken up as Booker grabs the rope. Back up and they slug it out as the bell rings for the time limit.

**Rating:** B-. Another good match here with both guys looking great. The idea of having Benoit hang with Booker is a good idea but it would help if he'd actually win the title. It's the same thing that happened to him in the US Title feud: the good matches are getting Benoit more noticed, but a title win would mean so much more.

More Nitro Girls.

### Psychosis vs. Ultimo Dragon

Dragon has the awesome red white and green attire on tonight. Psychosis takes him down before catching the handspring elbow in a takedown. A quick rollup gets two on Dragon and Psychosis goes up, only to have to block the spinning hurricanrana. Dragon is sent to the floor by a spinwheel kick and Psychosis hits a big dive over the top to take him down. While on the floor the Flock attacks Psychosis for recently injuring Lodi.

Dragon helps Psychosis fight off the Flock. Luchadores vs. Flock could be an interesting story.

### Goldberg vs. Ray Traylor

The fans go NUTS for Goldberg and Traylor is taken aback by them. Goldberg runs him over and they slug it out with no one getting an advantage. They ram shoulders and no one moves so Traylor offers to let Goldberg hit the ropes for another try. Goldberg heads towards the ropes but snaps back with a clothesline to take Traylor down in a nice move. A leg trip puts Ray down again but Goldberg walks into a big spinebuster. He's on his feet before Traylor though and it's spear/Jackhammer to make

him 67-0.

Saturn jumps the barricade but the Flock holds him back.

### Kevin Nash/??? vs. Lex Luger/Sting

To the shock of no one with a brain, Randy Savage is the mystery partner as he jumps Sting from behind during the entrances. A piledriver (popular move tonight) lays Sting out on the floor and we start with Savage vs. Luger. Savage kicks Sting to the floor as Nash comes in to beat up Luger. Sting is laid out in the aisle as Savage comes back in to choke Luger. Nash is back in again as Savage goes out to beat on the champion again. Sting finally gets his coat off but Savage posts him. Now it's a chair to Sting's ribs.

This has been going almost five minutes and we've seen about 20 seconds of the in ring portion. Nash goes to the floor to beat on Sting as Luger misses a charge into the corner. Sting finally makes a comeback as whatever part of this was a match breaks down. Sting backdrops Savage to the floor and Luger clotheslines Nash down. Hogan hits the floor to go after Sting but gets posted as well. Luger Racks Nash but Disciple comes in behind the referee's back to Stun Luger, giving Nash the pin.

**Rating:** C. This is a hard one to grade as it wasn't supposed to be a normal wrestling match. It was designed to get us to the main event and continue the chaos of the NWO which it did, but at the same time it was just a wild brawl. That being said, it was entertaining and did its job so I'll go right in the middle instead of taking a side on it.

Post match Piper comes out to drag Hogan back to the ring but Disciple gets in a cheap shot to start the double teaming. They fight to the back and we go to a break before the match actually started.

### Hollywood Hogan vs. Roddy Piper



Back from a break and Hogan's music plays for a bit but there's no one in sight. Piper and Hogan show up at the entrance with Piper punching him down the aisle. Disciple follows them out but gets beaten up as well. They get in the ring and slug it out though I never heard a bell. Piper pounds away and pokes him in the eyes before they head outside again so Hogan can be sent into Disciple.

Back in and Piper pounds away in the corner with his 1984 offense. Hogan gets in a low blow but Piper hits one of his own. They slug it out from their knees with Hogan choking away. Back up and they slug it out again until Disciple pulls Piper to the floor. Piper gets back in and ducks a clothesline to put on a sleeper but Disciple comes in for the DQ. After everything else that happened, that's the DQ?

**Rating:** D. Unlike the previous brawl disguised as a match, this one didn't have nearly the action or fun involved included. This was the usual dull stuff when these two get in the ring but they're the draws so it's ok or something. You know you're in trouble when the best thing you can say about a match is it's short.

Post match Nash comes out and holds up Piper but Hogan hits Nash by mistake. This brings out Giant to clear the ring. Hogan tells Nash to be ready for the PPV but Disciple holds him back to end the show.

Remember no Thunder this week.

**Overall Rating:** D+. They were trying here but the NWO stuff dragged it down. It's becoming more and more like the Alliance every day: meaningless matches with no real end goal in sight. Savage has his first world title shot in over a year and it's a subplot in the three way battle for control of the NWO. The rest of the show had its moments but there's too much dullness on here dragging it down. Make sure you check out Jericho's 1004 holds bit though in case you've somehow never seen it.

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## **John Cena Tops 2013 PWI List**

The best is ranked #1. I'm as shocked as you are. Here's the rest of the top 10. 1. John Cena

2. CM Punk
3. Hiroshi Tanahashi
4. Bully Ray
5. Kazuchika Okada
6. Sheamus
7. Jeff Hardy
8. Alberto Del Rio
9. Dolph Ziggler
10. Kevin Steen

The awards cover the period from I believe July of 2012 to June of 2013 or something close to that.

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## **On This Day: August 20, 2001**

# – Monday Night Raw: Raven Does Bette Midler

## Monday Night Raw

Date: August 13, 2001

Location: ARCO Arena, Sacramento, California

Attendance: 9,182

Commentators: Paul Heyman, Jim Ross

We're past Summerslam now and the Alliance war continues. Rock got the WCW Title last night and Austin cheated to keep the WWF Title. Other than that not a lot happened last night. Still though, they had a well hyped show last night and the show worked very well. It was probably the high point of the Alliance Era PPVs. Tonight we start on the road to Unforgiven. Let's get to it.

Austin is greeted by a big celebration from the Alliance. This is Steve Austin Appreciation Night. He says he'll lead by example and has more of last night for him if need be.

## Stacy Keibler/Torrie Wilson/Ivory vs. Jacqueline/Molly Holly/Lita

The Alliance beat up Lita last night so there's your story. Ivory and Molly start with a nice little gymnastics routine. Off to Jackie vs. Torrie and guess who wins that one. Jackie takes down both blondes and here's Lita to a big reaction. She beats on Ivory for a bit and then brings Jackie back in. A tornado DDT gets a quick pin on Ivory. It's as out of nowhere as it sounds.

**Rating:** D. What exactly are you looking for here? The match was nothing and a few of the girls looked good. In short, it was a Divas match and no one cared. These feuds went nowhere until Trish FINALLY started getting better and feuded with Lita to make anyone care in the slightest about the Divas.

The Dudleys are in the back with Test when Stephanie comes in. She says they've had issues in the past but now they're both more mature. Last night she didn't get what she wants so tonight she wants Test to take Jericho out for good. Test calls Stephanie a bad name and says he'll do it.

Here's Rock, the new WCW Champion. Booker had talked about taking Rock to school but last night, Booker got taken to People's Elbow 101, Advanced Rock Bottoms and Getting Whipped All Over The Building 407. Rock requests the appearance of Booker and it's midget time. He ends every sentence with sucka and is convinced to do a Spinarooni. Now it's a Moonwalk, the Running Man and the Deion Sanders dance.

Rock wants to know if Booker wants to keep dancing until Lance Storm comes out. Hijinks will end tonight and there's a WCW Title match with Storm challenging later. Rock doesn't know who Storm is. Storm superkicks the midget which isn't quite as good as Shawn superkicking the girl a few years back. Somehow this took over twelve minutes.

We recap the APA chasing Shane off during the WCW Title match last night, resulting in Bradshaw taking Shane down with the Clothesline.

APA/Scotty 2 Hotty/Big Show/Spike Dudley/Billy Gunn vs. Dudley Boys/Chuck Palumbo/Sean O'Haire/Hugh Morrus/Tommy Dreamer

There are twelve in this if you don't feel like counting. Farroq vs. Palumbo to start things off. Quickly off to Sean and Scotty. I wouldn't expect any long segments in this match. Morrus and Dreamer try to double team Hotty but get taken down by a double clothesline. Here's Gunn who gets caught in What's Up but the APA saves. Bradshaw pounds on Tommy and Spike adds a double stomp off the top.

Dreamer catches Spike in a half crab but it's off to Bubba for some power. A HUGH double flapjack gets two for D-Von. Morrus comes in and walks into a Dudley Dog. Show comes in and

everything breaks down. It's finishers all around for the next minute or so, ending with Show killing Dreamer with the chokeslam for the win.

**Rating:** C-. This was a big mess but the parade of finishers is always fun to see. It makes no sense as why wouldn't they use those all the time, but it's always cool to see. This was really the only way to get most of the people on the roster onto the shows, especially before the Brand Split, which really was a good thing.

Hurricane gives his testimonial about why he loves Steve Austin, which turns into why Green Lantern is awesome. Austin is his new favorite though.

### Chris Jericho vs. Test

Jericho is all banged up from the Rhino match last night. He says nothing of note pre match. Jericho hits a quick forearm to start but walks into a full nelson slam for no cover. Test hammers away but a powerbomb is countered and Jericho takes him down with a spinwheel kick. A neckbreaker sets up the bulldog but Stephanie breaks up the Lionsault. The big boot misses and Jericho knocks him to the floor. Chris goes after Stephanie but here's Rhino. Jericho sends him into the steps but walks into the big boot for the pin. Short match and not much to it.

Last night Christian accidentally speared Edge but Edge won the IC Title anyway. Christian comes up to Edge and talks about how they won the King of the Ring and the IC Title last night. Edge raises his glasses at this but lets Christian take the trophy for his match tonight.

Austin inspires Stasiak so much that Stasiak can't say it right so we get well over 40 takes of it.

Mick Foley is at WWF New York and is inspired by Angle almost winning but getting screwed last night.

## WCW Title: Lance Storm vs. The Rock

Storm jumps the champ to start and Rock is in some trouble. Rock comes back with a clothesline and punches away. Storm hits that perfect superkick of his to knock Rock to the floor. Back in Rock charges into an elbow and Storm gets two off a clothesline. Storm punches him down but walks into a spinebuster to put both guys down. The champ gets two off a DDT. Rock Bottom ends this clean.

**Rating:** D+. The match wasn't bad I guess but what was the point? Rock was never in any real jeopardy (as expected) but there wasn't even a hurdle for him to get over. This went nowhere though and seemed kind of stupid to do to a guy that lost the IC Title last night. Couldn't they swap in like Hugh Morrus or someone like that here?

Little Booker comes in for a People's Elbow and two Spinaroonis.

We recap last Thursday where Saturn beat Moppy and then had Moppy stolen. He put her face on a milk carton. I think Raven wound up doing it.

## European Title: Christian vs. Matt Hardy

Christian makes fun of the Sacramento Kings before the match because he's turning heel soon. Lita still has a bad leg. Christian jumps the champ to start which doesn't work that well. Matt is sent to the floor but is back in quickly for more punching. Matt hits a clothesline and escapes the Unprettier. Twist is countered and Christian gets a rollup with his feet on the ropes for two. Reverse DDT gets two. Unprettier is countered into the Twist for Matt to retain. This was nothing again.

Package of stills from Austin vs. Angle last night.

Booker arrives over an hour into the show and gets laughed at.

Page thinks Sara wants to sleep with him. He's not worried about Undertaker.

Taz says Austin has toughened him up.

Booker demands a rematch with Rock tonight. Since Shane owns WCW, couldn't he make the title match anytime he wanted to? Regal makes midget jokes and explains the midget to Booker. Tajiri laughs so tonight it's Booker vs. Tajiri.

### Booker T vs. Tajiri

Booker is in street clothes. Booker welcomes Tajiri to the fire so Tajiri fires (see what I did there?) off kicks. Tajiri gets caught by a beating and we go to the floor. Booker beats on him for about two minutes until the referee disqualifies him. Yeah keep making those young and popular guys look like jobbers WWF. Keep it up and see what's going to happen with it.

Taker makes sure Sara wants to fight DDP tonight.

### Diamond Dallas Page vs. Sara

Sara is allowed a free slap. Page shoves her down so Undertaker pulls him to the floor, chokeslams him on the concrete, the bell rings and Sara gets the pin in four seconds. And AGAIN, a WCW guy is made to look like a joke, meaning there's no point in caring about him at all. Stuff like this is probably one of the biggest reasons the Invasion failed (along with the McMahons and it lasting five months).

Here's the whole Alliance for Steve Austin Appreciation Night. Some of them have gifts for Austin. Heyman is the master of ceremonies here. Hurricane says that Green Lantern has been his hero but now Austin is his hero. Didn't he say this earlier? He's going to wear an Austin shirt instead of the Green Lantern one. Kanyon gives him a Who Better Than Austin shirt. Debra gives him a plate of the famous Debra Cookies.

Heyman saves him from having to eat one by airing a video package of Austin's time in the Alliance. All five weeks of it.

Stephanie gets in and calls the rest of the Alliance in as well. And now, a song. Yes a song. It's the high point of the camp value of this, minus the good aspect of it. Lillian is brought in to sing, and I couldn't possibly make this up, Wind Beneath Our Ring. It's a version of a Bette Middler song and the words are on the screen with a bouncing Austin head. Stephanie makes her start again for a lack of heart and soul.

Now Stephanie is going to lead it. JR: "Oh God not that." It makes Vickie Guerrero sound like Shakira if you're interested. Chavo sings some of it for some reason as does Terri. Even Raven sings as does Justin Credible. I'm in awe of this. Not because it's good or anything, but because THIS IS AIRING ON MONDAY NIGHT RAW.

Austin thanks everyone for it and yells at Tazz for wearing a Tazz shirt. FINALLY Angle arrives in the milk truck to spray everyone down/ Stasiak takes a header into the truck which gets the only laugh of the show out of me. JR says the Billion Dollar Princess has just become the Dairy Queen to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** F. There's nothing redeeming about this show at all. Nothing. The longest match is the twelve man tag at just over five minutes. Everything else is a squash with the Alliance guys being decimated AGAIN. Then to top it off, they sang a Bette Middler song until a guy came out and sprayed everyone down with milk. Even TNA would say that was stupid. Horrible HORRIBLE show and one of the worst I can remember in a long time.

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# On This Day: August 19, 1996 – Monday Nitro: Why Is The Denver Post In Italy?

## Monday Nitro #49

Date: August 19, 1996

Location: Von Braun Center, Huntsville, Alabama

Attendance: 5,850

Commentators: Larry Zbyszko, Bobby Heenan, Eric Bischoff, Tony Schiavone

We're a week away from #4 being revealed in the NWO. We're also closing in on Fall Brawl and the beginning of the biggest and most lucrative storyline that WCW ever came up with. The time getting there is a bit slow but it'll pick up in a hurry. The main event here is Giant vs. Savage which isn't for the title anymore. Other than that there isn't much here but it doesn't look bad. Let's get to it.

## Jim Duggan vs. VK Wallstreet

This is a rematch from the Clash. Why we would want to see it again is beyond me but I doubt they've thought it that far through. Duggan tried for the tape but got rolled up for the upset (I guess) pin. They go to the floor almost immediately and Duggan takes over in the brawling environment. Back in for an atomic drop and now it's back over again.

Time to talk about the NWO! Ok to be fair I'd rather talk about that than this match.

Larry brings up the possibility that those guys might not be trustworthy and Tony says he thinks there's one person more trustworthy than anyone else. I'll leave the identity of this person a secret because he would join the NWO in two weeks. Off to a chinlock by Wallstreet as Tony talks about how intelligent Duggan is. Larry: "Are you ribbing me?" I'm with Larry Z here.

More chinlockery ensues as we hear about Duggan's track record. That would include beating Steve Austin clean in 45 seconds for you non-history geeks. They collide and I'd bet on Duggan's comeback starting now. Yep his head becomes impossible to hurt now and Duggan pounds away. There's the tape and it's declared foreign. But Duggan would never use something foreign! The referee takes it away from him so Duggan pulls out some more and the referee says it's totally cool when it goes upside Wallstreet's head for the pin.

**Rating:** D. I really am wondering why this match was taking place. I get that it's a rematch but why did the original one take place at all? I mean, was there some clamor for these two to have a two match feud? The match was garbage too with Wallstreet being about five years past being interesting in the ring. Also the Vince parody (VK. Get it?) was only funny if you were really inside things and most fans weren't, making it, say it with me, POINTLESS.

Duggan goes serious and talks to "Terry", saying he turned his back on everyone. Here comes Savage for some reason. He says he's going to beat up Hogan and now it's a Savage interview. We look at some video of Hogan beating Savage with a chair last week. As for Giant, he's got a problem

with him which I think is they're fighting. Can't say Savage is looking ahead to Hogan entirely.

We talk about Giant being unstoppable lately and get some clips of him mauling Benoit in like 8 seconds at the last Clash.

### Chris Benoit vs. Bobby Eaton

Eaton is a hometown boy but he's in the Blue Blood period here. He's on his own though as the Blue Bloods are having issues. As Benoit is making his entrance, this old lady has the biggest grin on her face and gives him two thumbs down. That's awesome. This should be good as Eaton is a fine technical guy. Benoit beats him down and grabs a brief abdominal stretch.

Eaton takes it to the mat and can keep up with Chris out there for a bit. Benoit isn't playing tonight though (when is he ever?) and sends Eaton into the post and hip tosses him on the floor. Back in and Eaton tags him with a right. We talk about WarGames which is a big deal every year. Benoit chokes away and Eaton does the same. I'm not used to him brawling like this. A swinging neckbreaker puts Benoit down but the Alabama Jam misses. Swan Dive and we're done.

**Rating:** C+. Pretty good match here and Benoit gets to look dominant. This is what Eaton or guys like him are good at: making young guys look good. Jobbers to the stars are missing so badly anymore as they're so rapidly rotated and then new ones have to be pushed to give them some credibility and it takes forever to get one into that role.

We get some clips from the triangle tag match last Thursday where the Outsiders interfered and we got a DQ in a triple threat thanks to Nick Patrick. We also see the main event where Hogan might have said he gave up but he took out the referee before it could be recorded and the match was thrown out.

Sting/Luger talk about their match with Flair/Anderson later which wouldn't happen. They have a plan tonight and a possible surprise. Sting can't stand either of them and promises a surprise also but doesn't say what it is.

#### Disco Inferno vs. Scott Norton

Disco fires away and turns his back on Norton and I think you know where this goes. Disco tries to run but Norton, just like any villain, walks really slowly and manages to catch him. How does that work anyway? We've been at this for about two minutes now and Norton has barely done anything. Disco goes for the eyes which works for about a second. Shoulderbreaker and a Fujiwara Armbar end this.

**Rating:** C. It's a squash so I'll call it right in the middle. Norton looked awesome but would be in the NWO before a few months passed. This was supposed to set up more Norton vs. Ice Train which was a feud that went on too long. I don't know if it ever got a rematch from Hog Wild and I really don't care to. Hog Wild's match wasn't horrible though.

Teddy Long talks for Ice Train and accuses Patrick of costing Train the match. We get a clip of Norton beating up Ice Train. Oh my goodness Ice Train cannot talk. I mean he REALLY can't talk.

## Dean Malenko vs. Steven Regal

This should be good. We go to the mat immediately which is usually good for Dean but here he's actually outmatched. We take a break and come back with the guys again exchanging nice moves with no one getting a solid advantage. Regal cartwheels away and takes Malenko down with a shot to the head for two. Off to a modified chinlock which only lasts for a few seconds.

Malenko gets a hip toss for two. A hip toss? Really? European Uppercut gets two for Regal. Now we talk about Patrick being corrupt which Larry dismisses as paranoia. Regal grabs a full nelson as Larry offers some actual analysis. Why can't more veterans do that? Dean goes aerial and hits a springboard dropkick to the back of the head and the American hits a German to the Englishman and there's a second for two. Regal grabs a butterfly suplex for two. He can't pin Malenko and it's making him mad. After a very nice back and forth pinning reversal sequence Malenko grabs a rollup for the pin.

**Rating:** B. If you want fast paced technical stuff, this was the match you should have gone after. Good stuff here from two masters on the mat with a great ending sequence. They only rested when they had gone a good pace before it so I can more than live with that. It's a rare instance where I wanted to see what happened during the break. Good match as expected with good talent in the ring.

The Horsemen rant and rave about how awesome they are and how great the Horsemen life is.

Hour #2 begins.

### Nasty Boys vs. Public Enemy

Eric talks about how there's a lawsuit from the WWF. A total of no one cares but hey, it's real so that means everyone wants to hear it in Bischoff's mind. The same old woman from the Benoit match boos the Public Enemy. It's a brawl to start and probably will be for most of the match. We go split screen quickly and Bobby points out this isn't really a tag match. Knobbs drops an elbow on Grunge for two. Grunge misses one of his own off the apron. There's nothing to talk about here as it's been a big brawl the entire time. A table is set up but Sags moves, putting both Enemies through it. The pin on Rock is academic.

**Rating:** C+. As a match it was awful. As a total brawl, which was the point of this, it was pretty decent. The ending was a big spot for the time and it looked good at the same time. The tables then were a bit thicker so it sounded a lot better. The Public Enemy would get the tag titles for like two weeks later in the year.

The Nasties are neutral in the NWO vs. WCW war and just want the tag titles.

We get another clip from the Clash with Eddie beating DDP for the Battlebowl Ring but Page pulled him into a pair of Diamond Cutters. Chavo came out for the save on his uncle which failed, resulting in a middle rope Diamond Cutter on Eddie.

### Chavo Guerrero vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Chavo is only known as Eddie's nephew here and doesn't have much of a resume of his own. He sends Page to the floor and hits a huge dive to open us up. Page is sent into the corner a few times but Chavo misses a charge, hitting the post shoulder first. He hit the buckle on the way in so the impact was slowed down. Page uses his size which is often forgotten about. He's 6'5 or 6'6 so it really is an advantage.

We talk about Savage vs. Giant which is happening because Savage blames Giant for losing the title. WHEN DID HE SAY THAT??? This is the kind of thing we need to be told by Savage, not Bischoff. Page is dominating here and hits that sweet gutwrench powerbomb but lets it up at two. Spinning Rock Bottom gets two as Page lets him up again. Out of NOWHERE Chavo grabs a backslide for the quick pin.

**Rating:** C+. Chavo was a lot better when he was young and he got to show off a bit here. Page was getting better every day at this point and looked good here. The push was coming soon and it was clear at this point that he was earning it. The Page vs. Guerreros feud would culminate at the end of the year but it was fun getting there.

Page knocks Chavo loopy with a Diamond Cutter and steals Patrick's belt to whip Chavo. Patrick doesn't do anything until Randy Anderson comes out and takes it from Page. In the aisle Patrick blames Gene for the issues around him. Gene implies that Patrick bought a house he can't afford.

We flash back a year ago with the American Males winning the tag titles in a shocker over Harlem Heat. Eric says this is the rematch. I guess the Males losing the belts back a few days later didn't count?

## Tag Titles: Harlem Heat vs. American Males

The Males (the team, not the gender even though that could apply to either team) get jumped to start and the champs have the early advantage. Both of the Males (Bagwell and Riggs) are beaten down quickly as I'm not expecting much competition in this one. Ray hits a suplex on Riggs and it's off to Booker. Riggs fires off a dropkick to give himself a breather and down goes Booker.

There's a double tag and Bagwell kicks Booker in the head as he jumps in. That looked good. He escapes a pumphandle slam into a cover but Booker saves. A rollup gets two and they go outside to brawl. Riggs hits a dropkick for two and Bagwell goes up. Booker shoves him off into a powerslam by Ray though and that's good for three.

**Rating:** C+. Another fast paced match here with Eric losing his mind over this for some reason. I think it's probably a stretch for the eleven month rematch idea but they needed something I guess to keep the match from being a squash so this was a pretty good idea if they had to go with this match. Much better than I expected here.

## Arn Anderson/Ric Flair vs. Sting/Lex Luger

Sting has a mic immediately and wants to have the other Horsemen come into the ring. Mongo and Benoit come out and we take a break. So is Sting just going to wait around for five minutes? Gene comes out sans jacket and Sting's surprise from earlier is he wants Anderson and Flair to join him and Luger against the NWO in WarGames. That takes a few minutes to ask. Arn warns Luger and Sting that this is something serious and that jiggling pecs have nothing to do with WarGames. Weren't they on the same



WarGames team at one point?

The match isn't happening as we're going to talk a little while longer. You can't argue that this is a big move though. Everyone talks to everyone and it really is getting close to an awesome moment. Flair says it's up to Mongo and Benoit. If they're cool with it, Flair is cool with it. Benoit says he'll stand behind Anderson and Flair's decision. Nice touch there for the young Horsemen to stand behind the veterans. Mongo (loudly booed) says he's willing to sacrifice but if Sting and Luger screw over the Horsemen, he'll be coming for them. The deal is made. This really was a cool moment.

The NWO talk about being in "Italy" and film themselves filming each other. Nash: "Why is the Denver Post in Italy?" Funny stuff.

### The Giant vs. Randy Savage

Savage jumps Giant in the aisle with a chair. Giant easily beats him down on the floor and Team WCW vs. Team NWO is official for Fall Brawl. After Giant throws him over the top rope the bell actually rings. Savage escapes the chokeslam and grabs the chair but has to fight off the invading Dungeon of Doom as this match is thrown out. Savage runs from the numbers but Giant jumps over the top to the floor. Giant is Big Show. Imagine Big Show jumping over the top rope to the floor.

**Overall Rating:** A-. I can't believe what I'm saying but this was a very good and borderline excellent show. Everybody had energy, there was a point to almost everything, we got a big moment in the Horsemen teaming with Sting/Luger, the matches were good and there were some cool spots. THIS is what made Nitro look so much better than Raw: everything was fast

paced and exciting and the wrestling got better and better, especially when they got some of their new faces in there like Jericho and Raven. Very good show and one of the best ever of the first 50.

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## **X-Division Drops Three Way Rule**

Back to singles matches.

THANK GOODNESS. The three way match rules were getting really annoying as there's nothing gained by having everything as a triple threat. Good choice here.

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## **On This Day: August 18, 2007**

# – Saturday Night's Main Event #35: How Did The Show Last This Long?

## Saturday Night's Main Event 35

Date: August 18, 2007

Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City, New York

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jim Ross

Again we're setting up for Summerslam here which was a pretty decent show at the end of the day. Again though there's very little effort put into this one seemingly although we do have an hour and a half here instead of an hour like last time so this should be a bit better in theory.

We're looking for Vince's son here which could have been great but Kennedy screwed it up and since WWE had zero patience they messed it up. Also Evander Holyfield is fighting Matt Hardy in a boxing match here. Let's get to it so I can get to the next show quickly.

We open Coach and Vince setting up the story of the illegitimate son and saying tonight they'll be going through most of the roster. See how that one thing tying the whole show together could help the whole show get a bit better? Coach implies he could be the son and Vince says it's going to be a long night. You can feel like this is at least a decent show on paper as we're in the world's most famous arena and Vince is here. That just makes the show feel bigger.

## Batista/Kane vs. Great Khali/Finlay

Khali is champion here and Finlay is about to turn face in a few months. Batista would get the his shot at Summerslam while Kane and Finlay would have a fight there too that sucked. The faces beat the tar out of Finlay before we go to commercial

and come back to have Khali beating up Kane. Khali puts the claw on the injured ribs. My head hurts. He's just squeezing his side. Could he be any lazier? I mean come on now.

If you ever want a reason to know what Khali is said to be unable to wrestle, HERE IT IS! GOOD NIGHT that was a poorly worded sentence. Batista comes in and beats up Finlay. And here's Horny who is a heel here so Batista just throws him into Kane. They get Khali tied up in the ropes and just ram Horny into him like a battering ram. That was funny actually. A double chokeslam on Khali leads to Finlay being ended with Batista's usual stuff.

**Rating:** C. This could have main evented any given Smackdown if you added three minutes to it. It was fine for what it was and it came off pretty well I guess. It's certainly not a great match but it works for an 8 minute long show on a completely thrown away show I guess.

Vince is looking in a mirror and it turns into a picture of him from the 80s. Simmons shows up to say his one line. That made NO sense.

HHH is coming back at Summerslam.

Holyfield talks to MVP about nothing in particular.

Coach and Vince are in the ring and it's time for another of the illegitimate son angles. These were funny at first but at the same time they more or less didn't know who they were going with once Kennedy got suspended and it just got stupid. Coach talks about Vince's sex life and Vince snaps at him. That made me chuckle for some reason. Coach thinks that the child could be from Kentucky. WOOT!

And it's Eugene, which would mean that Vince screwed Bischoff's sister. That seems a bit too stupid to believe. Vince says he slept with a woman, not his cousin. They mention Uncle Eric and apparently Eric got into wrestling for Vince

nailing his sister. That's creative if nothing else.

Good night they messed up that character to the moon and back. Coach asks Vince if he remembers the Mania 2 after party in LA (even though Vince was in the New York portion of the show but whatever) and Melina is brought out. Both seem very nervous and it's implied they slept together. Can I get a Mackenzie Phillips joke? Coach says he has one more and Vince insists they come out.

Cue glass shattering and an eruption from the crowd. Austin wearing sneakers just doesn't look right for some reason. They had to go here eventually and I can't blame them. These two simply belong together. Austin looks like he's in great shape as compared to when he was in the ring.

He says that Vince could have been a good dad and lists off some things that Vince might have been able to do with him, including talking about the birds and the bees. This is amusing if nothing else for the look on the face of Vince, and Austin is always good for a one off appearance.

The fans pop at the idea of a Stunner. Coach gets it after Vince takes two low blows "to calm down his grapefruits". Beer is consumed and is poured on Vince's balls. Of course Vince gets a Stunner as well. Apparently Balls Mahoney was in this segment as well but was edited out for time I guess.

Holyfield is still warming up.

### John Cena vs. Carlito

These two always wind up together for some reason. They had split two matches thanks to Orton and this is match #3. Well it's quick if nothing else. This is exactly what you would expect from these guys as they have a decent little match but there's nothing at all to get excited about. Carlito starts in control and the comeback hits for the STFU tap out. Orton comes in and gets a belt shot in and an RKO on a chair. Wow

they actually did storyline advancement. I'm in shock.

**Rating:** D+. This was ok at best and bad at worst. It's also about 5 minutes long so there was just no meat here at all. This was pretty weak though. It did however close an angle and builds on Orton vs. Cena so that was a major perk. Still though, not very entertaining.

And now we replay half the match for no apparent reason.

Orton says he's coming for Cena at Summerslam.

A bunch of the Divas are here to watch the boxing. I can't believe they're going through with this.

### Matt Hardy vs. Evander Holyfield

Again, this is boxing. They call Holyfield the best ever. He wasn't even the best of the 90s. This was about contest #298 between MVP and Hardy as Hardy was supposed to fight MVP but since both guys kept getting hurt and he couldn't beat MVP for the US Title like he was supposed to. Michael Buffer is here. Come on man you have a career man!

Oh Holyfield has a title fight for one of about 4 world titles floating around at this time. The idiocy of this astounds me. In case you don't get why, Holyfield is one of the best boxers in the last 40 years, but apparently a guy that has never boxed in his life is supposed to stand chance against him.

There is no reason this should go past 30 seconds in any sort of reality. Holyfield has no headgear on while Hardy does. That helps a tiny bit I guess. After a video package on Hardy we're back. The rounds are two minutes long. And Hardy is in trouble 20 seconds in. That's better than nothing I guess.

He's down again after a minute. He's down again after a minute and a half. This needs to end like now. Hardy is either a heck of an actor or he got the tar knocked out of him. Oh the Divas are the ring girls. I got it. Holyfield refuses to punch him

anymore. Ok that's better than nothing if nothing else. MVP tells him to attack so he gets punched.

**Rating:** N/A. This was very odd but of course they gave it more time than anything else tonight. At least Holyfield completely dominated so that's better than nothing.

Tazz comes out for commentary.

### CM Punk/Boogeyman vs. John Morrison/Big Daddy V

These two both had matches at Summerslam I think. Scratch that, only the two with talent had a match. This is about as boring of a tag match as I could imagine. There's nothing of note happening as it's Morrison for about 90% of this as BDV is so freaking fat that he can't move much let alone have a good match.

This is more or less all Punk and Morrison which makes sense if nothing else. It was really short if nothing else and they actually had a commercial in here. This was very boring though and nothing of note is happening. And Punk gets a small package for the pin.

**Rating:** D. I just wanted this to end at this point. There was nothing at all of note going on and they were just out there to fill in time. The match did I guess give Punk momentum going into Summerslam so I'll give them that. Still a very poor match though.

A video highlight reel of the show ends us.

**Overall Rating:** D. Well there was some ok stuff here I guess. Nothing great happened here though and more or less you could have skipped this show and been fine. That's what I did and I was fine on the next shows. Not a good show at all but it could have been far worse, like the next one. The show and concept were dead at this point though and it showed badly.

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## **On This Day: August 17, 1997 – Hardcore Heaven 1997: One of ECW's Better Shows**

### **Hardcore Heaven 1997**

Date: August 17, 1997

Location: War Memorial Auditorium, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Attendance: 1,950

Commentator: Joey Styles

So unlike in the major companies, we've had 4 months since the last PPV. Since then, Raven is gone and Dreamer is either the top face or the second biggest face in the company. He's facing Jerry Lawler tonight in a match that's more or less based off a mini invasion that the WWF was doing.

Other than that we've got a rematch from the Night the Line Was Crossed as it's a three way dance with Funk, Douglas and Sabu, the current champion, having beaten Funk for the title from Funk about a week before. Why they bothered with that is beyond me but then again it's ECW so there we are. Other than that, it's a random assortment of matches that I'm sure aren't likely to be explained, which isn't Joey's fault per se. Let's get to it.



We of course start in the ring with Joey and the lighting is AWFUL. I mean you can barely see the crowd other than the first maybe 10 rows. What's that they're chanting? I can't quite make it out. This should be interesting as they're out of their comfort zone in New England. He runs down the card, which makes little sense as anyone that's bought the show already likely knows the card already, but then again what do I know?

Only Funk gets anything close to a pop when mentioned. Lawler gets MAD heat. Joey is about to talk about Dreamer when he's cut off by the music of Rick Rude. He clearly says son of a female dog when it starts. Rude sold out apparently. OH I remember this. It's the time where he showed up on Raw and ECW and soon on Nitro as he jumped from WWF and appeared on both shows in one night as Raw was taped.

He had been on Hardcore TV the night before, so in 24 hours he appeared on all three shows. That's pretty freaking cool. Rude had recently helped WWF guys beat ECW guys at Heatwave so no one likes him at all. Rude introduces Candido for the TV Title match. Yeah that was really useful Rick.

#### TV Title: Chris Candido vs. Taz

Something tells me I know the ending this already. Todd Gordon, the ECW Commissioner comes down and says Rude has to leave because he's not a licensed manager. So let me get this straight. You can throw people through burning tables. You can have your arm split open and tape it back together. You can get tied together in barbed wire. You can have a lesbian angle on nationally syndicated television. All of that's ok.

However, if you want to stand by the ring and cheer someone on, you need to have permission. I love making fun of wrestling. We go to the intro with the theme song, which I've never gotten why they do this after the show actually starts. It's just very odd. We get a wide shot of the arena and you

can't see ANYTHING. Apparently this is a main event. Well ok then. The big match introductions never get old if nothing else. I have to give Taz this: he was perfect at what he did.

It's so odd to see him being goofy like he is now and then here see him be more or less a killing machine. We get a nice TAZ IS GONNA KILL YOU chant. I thought TNA and ROH were supposed to be an alternative. They stole stuff from ECW too apparently so there we are. They mention Taz is 29 here.

That's just weird to hear for some reason. He seems older than that but the same age now if that makes sense. They do a great mat wrestling sequence and submission exchange that I'm into. You can see the shadows on the mat. That's just pitiful. An issue I have with referees in ECW: SLOW DOWN THE COUNTS. Watch an ECW match and they count as fast as they possibly can. It's insane.

Candido works the neck which makes sense here if nothing else as this is where Taz broke his neck a few years ago. That's rather smart and some nice continuity which you hardly ever get from the big two today. We hit the floor for a bit but the only weapons use would be a few slams into the railing which I'd hardly classify as weapons use. I like that.

A nice looking diving headbutt gets two as Candido is in control here. He sends Taz into the corner to set up the top rope powerbomb which was his finisher at this time. I like the set up for it also as he whips him in and Taz stays there. That's not entirely contrived.

Actually yeah it is as any wrestler usually lands back first there and why would Taz do it differently, knowing what Candido finishes with? Eh, either way he counters with a nice suplex (shocking). After Taz goes suplex insane, he sits on the second rope with Candido in control somehow, but as Chris poses, the champ gives the throat slit and locks on the Tazmission for the tap out.

**Rating:** A-. NOW THAT'S MORE LIKE IT! If this was what ECW was like most of the time, I'd be a huge fan. This was hard hitting, fast paced, exciting stuff. Above all else though: THEY WRESTLED. This wasn't about weapons and chairs and insanity. This was about two guys out there using their own talents and abilities to get something good doing and it worked to perfection. It would have been a higher grade with fewer powerbombs and more time, but still this was great.

Joey plugs their next PPV, and says you should come see it live, as a lot of the time stuff happens before they go on the air. Like tonight for example, the Insane Clown Posse showed up to perform, but the then heel RVD and Sabu showed up and beat the tar out of them. I always liked Van Dam.

### Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Spike Dudley

This is a revenge match apparently. Spike is a bit different than the one that you see most of the time, as he's Little Spike Dudley. He sees "colors" and wears tie dye. I think you get the joke. He was made into the Giant Killer after beating Bigelow on TV a week prior to this. The 80s explode here as Bigelow comes out to Welcome to the Jungle and Spike comes out to Highway to Hell.

Either way they're both great bands and songs so there we are. Bigelow really was a big coup for ECW as he was a freaking machine that was quite good when he was on his game. He was the guy that threw Spike into the crowd and they body surfed him around the arena in one of ECW's signature moments. After a splash maybe a minute into the match, Bigelow does a little dance which amuses me.

The fans keep chanting over here, as in where they want him to throw Spike. I have to give the fans this: they are very loyal. After hitting some decent little offense (like anything he could do is big) Spike takes one of the best powerbombs I've ever seen. That looked AWESOME.

In another great spot, Spike is thrown from the ring into about the 3rd row. That's just impressive. This is a flat out crushing. It's beyond a squash. Another great looking piledriver leads to the moonsault for the academic pin. That ring is really small. Spike bled a lot in there.

**Rating:** N/A. It was a really long squash. What can I give it as a legit grade? There were some painful looking spots in there and Bigelow looked awesome so all is right I guess.

We go back to the thing from before the show with the ICP where we see Sandman who was injured by RVD and Sabu and couldn't wrestle. He beat on them a bit and then they beat him down. That's traditional ECW if I've ever heard of it. I have no idea if the fans can see this as they have no video screens that I know of.

#### Rob Van Dam vs. Al Snow

This is Monday Night Rules, meaning it's a traditional wrestling match. Snow wasn't quite over yet though as he was little more than a former tag jobber as far as the mainstream goes. He would find Head soon enough though, which would be more than enough to get him over, which is putting it mildly. He gets almost no reaction here though.

RVD is one of the top heels here as he had been showing up on Raw and calling himself Mr. Monday Night. He was using what would become known as Starship Pain as his finisher there for no apparent reason. He gets mild heat as he's just so popular for his in ring ability. Snow gets some boos but more or less it's indifference. Head was the best thing that ever happened to him.

This starts off fast like the other match did and I'm perfectly fine with that. Joey makes an unintended joke as he points out that there are no mats. That's true, but only WCW, the company they wanted to be completely different from, did that as a national company. They go to the floor and stay

there longer in the Monday Night Rules match than they did in the traditional ECW rules match.

That makes perfect sense right? Still though, that's fine as they keep it between themselves with the only weapons being used being the guard rail. Like I said, I'd hardly even call that a weapon. Snow puts Van Dam against the apron on the floor and walks up the entry way before getting a running start for a clothesline. Ok, that's fine.

What's not fine is Joey asking if we saw that. NO YOU DIPSTICK WE DIDN'T BECAUSE THE CAMERA WAS ON VAN DAM. Will you think for like two seconds please? Back in the ring, Snow gets taken down and actually kicks out of the Frog Splash. That's very surprising and gets a just barely over minimal reaction. We hit the floor and break out our first chair of the show, in a match under Monday Night Rules.

I love these absurd rules and the like. Snow does another of the long runs for a clothesline but gets a chair pelted into his face, in clear view of the referee, who does nothing but keep the ten count going. We go back into the ring now after some more chair stuff where RVD gets two. The chair stuff was minimal, but at least it made a bit more sense. We get a LOUD Van Dam chant just before the Van Daminator gets the pin.

**Rating:** B. This was good, although not as good as the first match. The Monday Night Rules thing was just stupid and pointless but whatever. I'm ok with the chair here because the focus of the match was still on the wrestling and in ring action which is the most important part of the show. Both of these guys would get far bigger over the next year or so, but this was pretty solid stuff, at least in theory.

In a WEIRD segment, we go to the EXTREME CHOPPER in the sky, following the Sandman's ambulance. Ok, let me make sure have this straight. BEFORE the show started, so at least an hour ago, Sandman was put into an ambulance and taken away.

He has since taken over the ambulance and is now driving around the city, trying to find the War Memorial. It should be noted that apparently this is news worth following, despite him not wrestling tonight. Also, WHEN DID ECW GET A HELICOPTER??? I think it might actually be legit, but my guess is it's somehow faked. Whatever.

We get a promo from Lawler, who says he was talking to Vince who says that this is a bad day in his career for having to go and do this himself. He says he's not here alone. Apparently Taker is cheering him on. For some reason I don't buy that. Apparently Bret Hart is cheering for him. That doesn't sound right either. Finally, Austin apparently wants to be there too. All of them want him to use their finishers, which strikes me as very odd but whatever.

#### ECW Tag Titles: Dudley Boys vs. Gangstas

The Dudleys get no intro again. They're joined by Big Dick Dudley, Sign Guy Dudley, Joel Gertner, and Jenna Jameson. Joel talks about how tonight...wait a minute. JENNA FREAKING JAMESON??? HOW DID THEY GET HER??? That makes little sense but whatever as she looks epic. Joey knows her before anyone introduces her. That's not going to go over well at all methinks (stolen from X).

Anyway, Joel does the really long intro, including a great line of "One fall, fifteen minute time limit, your referee in charge is bald." That's a lot better than it sounds. Jenna looks like she's having fun, which is far more than Pam Anderson could do. The Gangstas aren't here tonight apparently, so the Dudleys win by forfeit. Instead we get this.

#### ECW Tag Titles: Dudley Boys vs. PG-13

The challengers are more commonly known as the white guys from the Nation of Domination. They were like 15 time tag champion in Memphis so whatever. They're white rappers with the same

amount of talent for wrestling that Vanilla Ice had at rapping. They've been talking all of ten seconds and I already hate them. They're naturally the heels since they're from Lawler's company.

The one that talks is trying to be Jerry Lawler and it's just failing all around. Oh and everyone wants to screw Jenna, and who can blame them? They must want to die from the clap or something like that. So after 8 minutes of intros we start with D-Von against Wolfie D. I wonder if he's related to Desmond Wolf. You can shoot me at the end of the review. His partner is named JC Ice.

That sums them up as well as anything I can say. We get our first sexual assault on Jenna as JC hits the floor to kiss her. Ok correction: PG-13 aren't bad. They're just REALLY annoying. I really want to just smack the tar out of both of them 2 minutes into the match.

In an amusing spot, Bubba has one of the white guys in his evil clutches but as he's handing him to D-Von for some cheating, JC reverses it to give Bubba's arm to D-Von, who keeps ramming it over his shoulder while all of his managers try to get his attention. Once he finally gets the point he's slammed the arm down about 9 times, drawing him a massive YOU F'D UP chant.

Actually, the Dudleys are the heels here, which is a tribute to their heel drawing abilities. The Dudleys are FAR bigger than the other guys. It's really funny looking. Jenna looks incredible. Every time she jumps there's a huge pop. They pick up the pace a lot and it turns into a free for all, which is how most tag matches in any company end so no problems there.

PG13 is something like the Briscos if you're an ROH fan, just minus the flair and the gimmick. 3D on Wolfe and that's it. That came out of nowhere. The announcer says still 3 time tag team champions, which they could have been if they had lost.

Rating: C+. This was slightly better than your average tag match which means it wasn't that bad. It's about ten minutes long and is a run of the mill power vs. high flying match, meaning that it's decent enough. It's no classic, but I've seen far worse matches. Yeah that's all I've got.

Sandman is still trying to get back to the arena and this is still news, despite not having a match tonight. The Chopper is still looking for him. Apparently he stopped and got a carton of cigarettes and a beer. This is pointless. They have a spotlight on him but the guy in the chopper says he can't see him.

### Jerry Lawler vs. Tommy Dreamer

Lawler plugs Ground Zero, which was an ok show at best and crap at worst. He more or less says the same thing that he said in his promo, which to be fair the live crowd hasn't heard. Styles says he won't be impartial. Well at least he won't pretend to be like Ross does. BeulahL is freaking gorgeous.

After pinning Raven, Dreamer is now more or less one of the top faces in the company right there with Taz. They start off fast with weapons and that's fine here. This is supposed to be about showing Lawler what ECW is about and that's what they're doing here. Jerry is bleeding 10 seconds in.

Fans keep giving Dreamer weapons which is an old standard for the company, especially him. They're in the crowd and the lighting is so bad you can't tell who is who other than the outline of a beard. Jerry has had no offense at all. It's chair time but as he tries to come in off the top rope, Lawler manages to crotch him. It's a good thing this wasn't in Philly Lawler would be dead by now.

Styles is being really calm actually which impresses me. In a spot I like, Lawler just holds the chair up and rams Dreamer's head into it. And there goes the impartiality. Lawler chokes



Dreamer. A lot. A whole lot. Oh there's a piledriver and Dreamer becomes the first person to ever kick out of it!\* (Note\*: that means the first person in Ft. Lauderdale named Tommy wearing an ECW shirt in August of 97.)

He rips Dreamer's shirt off and wipes himself with it which makes him jobber up. His chest looks like Hogan's if nothing else. Dreamer poses which allows for a low blow to switch the momentum again. We have our ref bump of the match to really make it a big time match. Lawler adds a DDT to him for no apparent reason. Dreamer is about to crotch Lawler on the post and the lights go out.

They come back on and Rude blasts Dreamer with a trash can to bust him open. Why did they have to go out for that to happen? That only gets two as Lawler kicks the referee again. Dreamer sets for a piledriver and we lose the lights again. They come back on to reveal Jake Roberts for no apparent reason.

He hits a clothesline on Dreamer who convulses like Terry Funk for no apparent reason. He adds a DDT to Dreamer as Lawler has no idea why he's there. Neither do I but whatever. Jake says his God giveth but he doesn't have the balls to do anything else.

Now Roberts hits a clothesline on Lawler who lands on Dreamer for two. Roberts walks out as I wonder who is handling security tonight since Roberts just walked in and out at his own will. Dreamer sets for his own DDT and FOR THE LOVE OF GOODNESS SHOOT THE GUY THAT'S RUNNING THE LIGHTS!!!

Sunny is there this time and sprays hairspray in Dreamer's eyes. Beulah, who hasn't done anything this whole match and I had forgotten about her, starts a catfight. Lawler tries to use her for a human shield so she kicks him low to allow Tommy to hit the DDT for the pin. Not overbooked at ALL.

**Rating:** D+. Before I go into this, let it be known: this is for the wrestling and action itself and not the symbolism or

importance of anything here. That being said, this wasn't that good at all. It was mainly just random weapons and ball shots that led to nothing. Also the three run ins were just overkill.

Rude I get and Sunny would have been ok, but you could have killed it off there. Roberts made no sense at all though. See, earlier in the show when Rude was there for the introduction, that justified his run in here. Since he was there earlier, it validated him being there at the end because it was known he was in the arena to support Candido.

For Roberts and Sunny, they had no business in the arena and it made no sense for them to be there. If Roberts had cut a quick promo or something, it would have been way better. Anyway, this was what it was supposed to be: Lawler getting beaten up by Dream, which was what happened. I didn't like it that much, but I'm sure ECW fans did and that was the point.

Styles gives up the intro for the three way dance as he talks about how this is a big rematch from three and a half years ago. Heyman does the same thing in a video package.

Sandman finds the arena. This isn't going to go well is it?

World Title: Shane Douglas vs. Terry Funk vs. Sabu

Remember this is elimination rules. So we have a guy that I have never seen have a good match aside from with weapons and even then he's so spotty. Funk is old and crazy and still ok but not great. Finally you have Shane who is about as overrated as a wrestler not named Elijah can be.

Funk is at least smart and stays on the floor to start which really is intelligent. The other match should have been the main event. It really should have been as it was the focus of the show. Joey talks about how this is a changing of the guard. That's why it's a rematch of three and a half years ago right? This is a pretty decent triple threat but nothing

great.

To be fair though, I hate three way matches so that makes no difference. They go at it for about twenty minutes which includes weapons since Sabu can't last longer than 10 without them. Of course we get the triple sleeper which just looks stupid but whatever.

Anyway, Sandman finally gets here despite arriving at the building about 30 minutes ago and nails Sabu with a ladder so both others can pin him. We get a big brawl as they fight to the back which means they'll fight at November to Remember. The fans are way behind Funk now, even though there was zero point at all to having Sabu get the belt a week before this match.

The locker room comes out to watch this "epic showdown." Either way, after another bit including a kickout of the belly to belly (HOW COULD FUNK DO THAT???) a low blow and rollup gives Douglas the title again because that's how things roll in ECW.

After the match ends, the Dudleys and Joel come out to say that Douglas should join them and become the Triple Crown instead of the Triple Threat. Bigelow and Candido come out to challenge them leading to a massive brawl to end the show. That was rather pointless but whatever.

**Rating:** C+. Again, I don't like these kinds of matches which has a lot to do with the grade here. The timing here of about 25 minutes was FAR better than the original's hour which I like. I still don't get the point of having Sabu take the title 8 days earlier but whatever. The match was what it was which was a bunch of spots but there was some flow going out there which made it work. Not bad, but it's not my cup of tea.

**Overall Rating:** B-. OH MY GOODNESS this was a huge turnaround from last time. For one thing, it felt like a PPV. Ok so having 2000 people there made the show feel minor league, but

this felt like a big time show. I don't like the match order especially at the end, but the big thing here: they toned down the weapons.

That balance is what makes this much more bearable for me as instead of having just random violence everything had a nice flow to it. Also, stories were addressed instead of just a bunch of random matches. This could have been better, but it was good for what it was.

This felt like a major show instead of a celebration of them getting on PPV, so that makes this a better show in my eyes than Barely Legal. Check it out if you have two and a half hours to kill I guess, especially the opener as that was a lot of good stuff. It goes downhill after that, but not a ton.

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