

Thought of the Day: They Never Learn

WWE is horrible about this and you can see it in their TV schedule for the end of the year. December 24: 3 hour Raw

December 31: 3 hour Raw

Who in the world (besides me of course) is going to sit through three hours of Cena and AJ segments ON CHRISTMAS EVE and the night before the new year? This is the kind of a night a "Best Of" show is for. If nothing else, why would you do this when most of your alleged target audience will be going to bed so Santa can deliver them presents? Oh well, I'm sure it'll be Ryback's fault when they get a 1.7 or so, because clearly airing a three hour show ON CHRISTMAS EVE is a perfectly logical idea.

Monday Night Raw – January 25, 1999: Talk About Gimmick Overkill

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 25, 1999

Location: America West Arena, Phoenix, Arizona

Attendance: 15,538

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole

It was a good night for the Corporation last night as Vince won the Rumble and Rock won the title back from Mankind in one of the most brutal

matches you'll ever see. This is kind of like a go home show in an odd way as we have Halftime Heat on Sunday. Anyway tonight we have Rock defending his newly won title against HHH in another I Quit match. I've also already done the next week's show and the link is below as usual. Let's get to it.

We open with stills and audio from last night where Rock cost Austin the Rumble and gave the win to Vince.

Cole's voice is gone as he shouted a lot last night.

Shane brings out Vince to start the show. The Corporation comes out with the boss and carries him on their shoulders. Oh and Vince finally has his signature theme music now. Vince: "I'M GOING TO WRESTLEMANIA!!!" Well I'd hope so. Things usually fell apart when he wasn't around. Vince talks about how Rock also won last night and says that since Rock was at ringside (distracting Austin), he gets the \$100,000 bounty.

Apparently Rock didn't get much sleep last night. He was out partying all night, but once he got home he broke into a cold sweat because he's facing Vince at Wrestlemania. However, that's not a problem because Vince has filed paperwork to say that he's no longer the #1 contender. He gets to pick the challenger though. Vince says that Austin will never get another title shot, nor will he get another match with Vince.

This brings Austin to the Titantron, live from Texas (remember that we're in Arizona). Austin says that he's going to Wrestlemania, which Vince says is because Austin is buying a ticket. You know, because Austin couldn't get any match on the card. Austin says he'll be in the main event, and the Commissioner says so. We go to a wider shot to show Shawn Michaels next to Austin. Did I forget to mention that we were in San Antonio, Texas?

Shawn says that he's giving Austin protection from himself. If Austin was in the arena tonight, he would destroy Vince and that's not good.

Apparently Shawn has taken a look at the WWF Rule Book (oh I'd LOVE to get my hands on a copy of that) and it says that if the winner of the Rumble steps aside, the person that comes in second gets the title shot. Vince looks like he's about to be sick.

Austin says he'd love to have the title back but he'd rather beat up Vince more. Therefore on Valentine's Day, he'll put up the title shot if Vince will face him in a match. If Vince wins, Austin loses the title shot. However, Austin doesn't want Vince to be able to run, so let's make it a cage match. Austin sweetens the offer, saying he'll NEVER get another title shot. That's enough for Vince, so Austin guarantees victory. This came off as really serious, which is why Shawn smiling in the background was so annoying. Good stuff though.

An armored truck, presumably with Rock's money, arrives.

Billy Gunn vs. Goldust

Gunn's ankle is still messed up from last night. HHH says no catchphrase tonight, because he wants Rocky right here. He doesn't think Rock made Mankind say I Quit and he knows Rock can't make him say I Quit. HHH remembers the last time they fought for a title when HHH took the IC Title off Rock, but for once, be a man and accept the challenge.

Oh yeah we have a match here. Goldust jumps Billy from behind and tries for Shattered Dreams about a minute in. Billy counters by mooning Goldie, making him miss a cross body. Now Goldust's music and pyro go off, and the Blue Freaking Meanie comes out dressed as Blue Dust. Billy gets two off a rollup and three off a piledriver after Blue Dust hit Goldie with the Head. Angle advancement here.

Mankind is here.

Here are the Oddities for a match but Rock interrupts. Rock tells them to

get out of the ring and accepts HHH's challenge for later tonight. Rock is done, but we cut to Mankind in the back as he hijacks the armored truck. He takes a bag of money out of it and heads to the arena. Mankind comes to the arena and says that Rock has his title, but Mankind has Rock's money. He starts throwing the money away and tells Rock to stay back.

Mankind says he remembers getting hit in the head by a chair a bunch of times, but he does not remember saying that he quit. Instead he remembers being unconscious. However, with the help of the production team, he thinks he's solved the mystery. We get a clip from Heat of Mankind screaming at Shane that he'll never say the words I Quit. He says them in a very specific way, and interestingly enough, the time when he said the words in the match were in the exact same tone and speech pattern. Also, he doesn't appear to move when he gave up, which makes Rock angry. Cole: "I KNEW IT!"

Therefore, Rock has no legitimate claim to that title. Mankind wants his rematch, and he wants it during Halftime Heat, in an empty arena match. This was actually a very clever way to make sure very few spoilers got out. As for the money, Socko is going on a shopping spree. Rock says deal, so Mankind says Have A Nice Day!

Droz vs. George Steele

Wait, because here's Mideon to ask Lawler and Cole if they can see it. Whatever it is, it's going to cover the place. For no apparent reason, George is in sunglasses. He immediately bites Droz's arm and hits Drozdov in the arm with some kind of spike. The turnbuckle is bitten open, but Droz rams him into the buckle for the pin.

The Oddities save Steele from the beating.

The Stooges give the tag champs advice and also some salt peter to drink. For those of you unfamiliar, it's stuff used in the military to tone down

male sex drives.

Debra says no one can resist her. Mark Henry comes up to hit on her and Debra seems interested.

Tag Titles: Owen Hart/Jeff Jarrett vs. Big Boss Man/Ken Shamrock

Boss Man vs. Jarrett to start with Boss Man cleaning house. The baseball slide into the right hand has Jeff in trouble (he and Owen are challenging) but he avoids a charging Boss Man in the corner. Owen comes in and stomps away, drawing a nugget chant. A big clothesline from Shamrock puts Owen down as Debra tries to blow kisses at Shamrock. An enziguri puts Ken down as does a powerslam, which gets two.

There's the spinwheel kick to Shamrock's jaw but a top rope dropkick misses. Debra gets on the apron and opens her jacket to reveal her bra, but Shamrock suplexes Owen anyway. Debra takes off her top entirely and there's the ankle lock to Owen. Everything breaks down and cue the Blue Blazer with a guitar shot to Shamrock, giving Owen and Jeff the titles.

Rating: C-. Most of that is for Debra, which says a lot about this match. Nothing to see here for the most part as Owen and Jarrett weren't that interesting as champions, but they would hold the belts until after Wrestlemania. Tag team wrestling was getting desperate for a new team to take the division by storm, but it would be another seven months before that happened.

Owen says he's vindicated because he's not the Blazer.

Here are Shane with the Stooges and some REALLY bad music. Shane has an issue with Kane, as he's screwed Vince over lately. Last night after the Rumble, Kane came up to the McMahon suite and apologized. Shane invites Kane down to the ring and here's the Big Fried Freak. Shane asks Kane to repeat the apology, but in public. Kane uses the voicebox to talk but

Shane wants Kane on his knees. Surprisingly enough Kane does it, but that's STILL not good enough, because Kane was only on one knee.

This brings out X-Pac who says that the Corporation needs to back off. Kane is too big and tough to take this kind of nonsense. He offers Kane a spot in DX and challenges Shane to a fight right now. This earns him a chokeslam from Kane, who apparently wants to stay in the Corporation because they have good dental. Shane gives Pac a Bronco Buster.

Earlier today, PMS took D'Lo Brown shopping. They want him to get them feminine hygiene products. Egads Terri acting is not a pretty sight. Nothing about Jackie is a pretty sight. He has to get a price check and the clerk recognizes him.

Here's Val Venis' latest video: Saving Ryan's Privates/Sister Act. Naturally it's focused on him and Shamrock's siter Ryan, setting up Shamrock's next title defense. It's Val getting into the shower with Ryan, likely much to Shamrock's chagrin.

Val Venis vs. Test

Nothing of note happens until Ken comes out and blasts Billy with a chair, sending him into the pumphandle slam for the pin.

Billy Gunn comes out for the save but Val thinks Billy hit him with the chair. Val takes out the bad ankle and we've got a threeway feud.

Road Dogg/Al Snow vs. Gangrel/Edge

This is a hardcore tag match and the non-vampires jump the fang dudes as they come up through their ring of fire. They brawl up on the stage before going down onto the concrete. Make that into the back as we can barely keep track of what's going on. Gangrel crushes both of the opponents with a dumpster before Edge beats on Dogg some more. They fight

into the back as Gangrel has silverware thrown at him.

Roadie gets hit in the back by a chair and put on the catering table. Snow and Edge slam chairs together before they fight into the women's room. The Ho's are chased out of there and Snow walks out with a toilet seat around his neck. All four guys go on top of something too dark to see before crashing through a table. Blue Dust was involved in there somewhere, giving Snow Head back. Dogg pins Gangrel.

Rating: D+. The problem here was that you couldn't see a thing for the most part. It was one of those "let's walk around and find whatever we can to throw each other into" matches which aren't the easiest things in the world to talk about. The Brood would be switched up to give us Edge and Christian soon after this.

Taker says the evil begins tonight.

Snow wants another shot at the Hardcore Title, but wants 2/3 falls. Dogg says it's a deal, but here's the Ministry to beat all of them down. Mabel was brought into the team last night.

Taker is watching from his throne and says this will be a holy war.

Buy the PPV replay even though we've told you all the results!

WWF World Title: HHH vs. The Rock

I Quit match. HHH takes over to start with a bunch of punches both in the middle of the ring as well as in the corner. Just in case one of the areas got lonely I'm assuming. Rock gets sent to the floor and there's a baseball slide. The champ starts to walk away so they fight up to the stage. HHH is rammed into the set but he comes back with a clothesline to take over. Rock won't say it so HHH rams his head into the stage.

Back to ringside where HHH is sent into the timekeeper's table. It's time for some Rock commentary with Rock saying HHH is half gay anyway. There's a line you wouldn't hear ever after the 90s. That fires HHH up enough to take it back into the crowd where he chokes Rock with a cord. Back into the ring we go but HHH gets the bell and hammer. Rock comes back with a spinebuster and drops the Elbow onto HHH with the bell. All that gets is HHH telling Rock what he can suck.

HHH pops up and hits a Pedigree out of nowhere but it doesn't do much good here. We head back to the floor where HHH hits a second Pedigree. He loads up a third on the announce table but here's the Corporation with Kane holding Chyna by the hair. Either HHH quits or Chyna gets drilled. HHH quits to end the match when Rock was dead to rites.

Rating: C+. It's Rock vs. HHH, meaning it's automatically worth a look. The ending kept HHH looking strong which is good as he was about to get pushed further up the card. Rock looked good here as well and the ending was ambiguous because he might not have given up. Things would be changing very soon for HHH and for the better.

Here are the beginning of those changes, as Chyna hits HHH low and joins the Corporation. A big HHH beatdown ends the show.

Overall Rating: C. You can see the screwiness coming already. The good thing about these shows is they go by so fast that you can't really tell if they're bad or not. Austin vs. Vince would of course be huge but it would be overtaken by Undertaker's insanity for the next few months. The main problem continues to be the midcard, which ranges from just ok to horrible. Not a bad show here, but 1999 just isn't a good year from a quality standpoint.

Here's Halftime Heat if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2012/12/16/halftime-heat-the-stupidest-came-ra-angle-of-all-time/>

Here's the February 1st if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2012/02/15/monday-night-raw-february-1-1999-300th-episode/>

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Tables Ladder and Chairs 2012: The Shield Has Arrived And They Picked A Great Show To Do It At

Tables Ladders and Chairs 2012

Date: December 16, 2012

Location: Barclays Center, Brooklyn, New York

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield

This is the final stop before we get to the Rumble where Rock can finally get his title shot, meaning we can stop having everything lead up to that instead of having stuff that matters. The main event is a six man tag because Punk is injured. Other than that we've got Cena vs. Ziggler for the MITB case and Sheamus vs. Show in a chairs match for the Smackdown Title. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Divas Battle Royal

Layla, Kaitlyn, Alicia Fox, Natalya, Tamina Snuka, Aksana, Rosa Mendes, Cameron, Naomi

The winner gets the title shot presumably later tonight. They're all in

Santa outfits here and Eve is on commentary. Rosa is put out quickly and the Funkadactyls do some splits on I think Alicia. I think Cameron is put out and Aksana lays on the ropes like an idiot. She deserves the elimination she gets. Striker says that there might be a dancing basketball rivalry because Layla and Eve danced for different NBA teams.

Tamina eliminates Layla and Kaitlyn dropkicks Nattie out. We've got Kaitlyn, Naomi and Tamina left as Alicia was put out off camera earlier I guess. Naomi actually puts out Tamina and we get a rematch of NXT Season 3. Kaitlyn spears her down but misses a dropkick. Naomi puts her on the apron and Layla adds a slap, allowing Naomi to dropkick Kaitlyn out for the win at 5:26.

Rating: D. Yes, one of the Funkadactyls, the dancers of Brodus Clay who hasn't been on TV in weeks, is the #1 contender to the Divas Title. Has she ever spoken a word on television or been seen on her own? Wait why am I even trying to figure this out? It's the freaking Divas division so what difference does it make?

The regular show opens with a twenty six bell salute to those who died in the shooting in Connecticut.

There are ladders EVERYWHERE, including hanging from the rafters over the stage.

Rhodes Scholars vs. Rey Mysterio/Sin Cara

Tables match where only one member has to go through for a win. The winners get a title shot at some point in the future. Sandow wants to know if there's anyone lower in life than the Brooklyn hipster. They're literally the unwashed masses. Cody makes fun of facial hair and we're ready to go. Thankfully we don't have tags and Rey sends Cody to the floor very quickly. Sandow is sent out as well and there are stereo dives by the masked men.

Rey and Cara pull out a table and ram both Scholars with it. Rhodes has to save Sandow from being slammed through the table and Rey is sent out to the floor. Mysterio saves Cara from going through the table, allowing Sin to hit the armdrag out of the corner on Rhodes. There's the Disaster

Kick to Cara though and everyone in a mask is down. The Scholars slam Cara into the steps and Rey goes into the barricade. The Mustache gets another chant as the Scholars set up a pair of tables.

After walking around forever, Rey trips up Sandow and hits the seated senton. Cody's powerbomb is countered into a rana to send him to the floor. Cara takes out Sandow with a springboard cross body and a rana that slips a bit. A corkscrew plancha to the floor takes Damien out again and Rey hits the 619 on Cody. Sandow breaks up the top rope splash through the table though as Cole lists off some Tweets. Cara kicks Sandow in the head and kicks Cody to the apron. After firing off about eight kicks to the head from the apron, Cody knocks Cara off the top rope and through a table for the win at 9:36.

Rating: D+. Not the best opener in the world here as they spent a lot of time walking around looking for a spot to do. The Scholars were the obvious winners here and there's nothing wrong with that, but it doesn't make for the most entertaining match in the world. It was probably a good idea to get this out of the way though.

We get another Joker Shield promo, saying about what you would expect them to say: they're going to take out Ryback and HELL NO one by one tonight and that's about it. The main reason they want to beat those three up though: they just don't like them. How simple yet effective.

US Title: Antonio Cesaro vs. R-Truth

Cesaro is defending in what should be a layup for him. We start with a clean break in the corner and Truth does his pelvic thrusting. Cesaro throws Truth around before getting rolled up for a few two counts. Antonio works on the ribs as the fans chant for the USA. Off to a modified cobra clutch by the champion which goes on for a good while.

Truth fights up and hits the spinning forearm followed by the ax kick for two. A side kick puts Cesaro down for two more and the fans start a Little Jimmy chant. Cesaro escapes the suplex into a stunner before hitting the European uppercut to the back of the head. Neutralizer (BIG pop for that) retains the title at 6:44.

Rating: C. This was better than I was expecting, which isn't saying much as I was expecting a basic TV level match. Truth is just filling in a spot here and there's nothing wrong with that, but we're just waiting for a big time AMERICAN to come in and save the title for the country. Decent enough match here though.

Post match Cesaro says that when the fans boo him, they're booing themselves.

Some people from Tribute to the Troops don't have much to say.

Ziggler says Cena is going to try to steal the case from him tonight. Cena already lost his own case earlier this year, so why should Ziggler have to earn it a second time? Ziggler says Cena's career should be over if John loses tonight.

Here's 3MB on MizTV to waste some time. Apparently they're going to finally perform tomorrow night on Raw. Mahal makes fun of the Spanish announce team, telling them to speak AMERICAN. The bullying goes on until Ricardo Rodriguez of all people makes the save. 3MB beats on him too until Del Rio makes the save. Is that a face turn? Miz and Del Rio wind up cleaning house. A six man is proposed to fill in some time later. The fans want Ryder to be Miz and Del Rio's partner.

Rock will indeed be at the Rumble.

HELL NO fires themselves up and talk about how hard it is to talk to Ryback. Tonight, they'll feed all of the Shield to him.

Wade Barrett says he's going to take out Kofi tonight.

Intercontinental Title: Wade Barrett vs. Kofi Kingston

Kofi is defending. Barrett takes it into the corner to start and pounds away for two. There's the bouncing elbow by Kofi for two but Wade clotheslines him out to the floor. Kofi slides back in and hits a suicide dive to take Wade right back out. Back in and momentum shifts again, this time with Barrett kicking Kofi in the ribs.

A backbreaker gets two for Wade and it's off to a bow and arrow with a

knee in Kofi's back. That doesn't last long so Wade settles for two off a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. Back to the chinlock for a bit, followed by Kofi fighting up and hitting another clothesline to take Wade down. There's the Boom Drop but Trouble in Paradise misses. The Boss Man Slam is countered into the SOS for two for Kofi.

A spinning full nelson slam gets the same for Barrett but Wade is getting frustrated. I love Wade moveset as he constantly mixes in new things. Kofi's top rope cross body is rolled through for two, followed by a Boss Man Slam for the same result. In another sudden ending tonight, the Bull Hammer is countered into Trouble in Paradise to retain at 8:19.

Rating: C+. Nice back and forth match here with a surprising ending. This could have been on Smackdown but it wasn't out of place on PPV. Kofi winning is the surprise though as he would seem to be set up to be fed to Barrett. Odds are there will be a rematch though, because clearly a clean win isn't enough to warrant the end of a program right?

Punk and Heyman are in a sky box and Punk says the status of his knee is none of their business. Punk talks about how he would have destroyed Ryback tonight and how he'll be champion for as long as he likes. Oh and he's not associated with the Shield.

Ryback/HELL NO vs. The Shield

It's a TLC match but you can win by pin/submission because there's nothing to hang above the ring. Shield comes through the crowd of course. The brawl starts on the floor of course with Bryan vs. Rollins, Kane vs. Reigns and Ambrose vs. Ryback. Ryback and Ambrose get in the ring and the smart aleck fans just have to chant Goldberg. Shield gets Ryback 3-1 but he shrugs them off. Kane tries to bring in a ladder but Rollins dropkicks it into the monster's ribs.

Bryan takes a ladder to the face as well but here's Ryback to beat them all up. Reigns takes Kane down with a chair but Kane makes the save. I think Ryback is busted a bit. Bryan kicks Reigns in the corner and the fans are WAY into Danny boy. Reigns is thrown into a ladder which gets two for Kane. Bryan saves Ryback and the fans want tables. Rollins jumps into a Kane uppercut for two before getting put inside a ladder. Kane

beats on the ladder with a chair for a bit but Ambrose takes Kane out with a DDT onto the chair.

Ryback rams Rollins and Ambrose into the corner and there's another Goldberg chant. The fans still want tables. Ryback blocks a beat into the ladder in the corner and pounds Ambrose and Rollins down again. A splash crushes both of them against the ladder, followed by a suplex from Ryback to put both of them on the ladder. Reigns breaks up the double Shell Shock and it's another three on one beating. Where did HELL NO go?

Shield loads up the triple powerbomb...and it actually works. Seriously, no save from the champions until a few seconds later. Bryan goes off on everyone but gets caught in the numbers game. Kane finally comes back but gets beaten down as well. Back into the ring and it's time for the chairs portion of the match. Bryan gets beaten down before being double superplexed off a table on the top. Kane barely makes a save but he gets beaten down by the chair as well.

Ambrose and Rollins try the double superplex on Kane as well but he shoves Rollins to the floor and clotheslines Ambrose down. The side slam puts Reigns down but Dean makes the save. Instead of I think a DDT on Kane though, it's a chokeslam for Dean through the chair for two. Back to the floor and Reigns spears Kane through the barricade to a BIG reaction. Kane gets buried under a bunch of stuff, but in the chaos, Bryan grabs the NO Lock on Ambrose. He eventually gets it on all three guys but the numbers catch up to him.

Bryan fights back AGAIN with a bunch of kicks but eventually he falls prey to the Blackout (running curb stomp) onto the EDGE OF THE CHAIR from Rollins. FREAKING OW MAN!!! Ryback is up though and house is cleaned. Rollins is thrown onto Ambrose and it's chair time for Reigns. Ambrose comes back AGAIN but gets speared down. There's a Meat Hook for Dean followed by Shell Shock for two as Rollins saves. Ryback goes to the floor but gets caught by some chair shots. Ryback charges at Reigns to tackle into whatever is in his path in a cool visual.

The Shield and Ryback are all up by the entrance and Ambrose chairs him in the back to take him down again. They shove a ladder onto Ryback and

destroy him with some chair shots and put him on a table. There's a HUGE, as in bigger than the usual HUGE ladders, and Rollins climbs up. Ryback fights up though and Rollins is in trouble. Ryback throws Seth through a big stack of tables, but Ambrose and Reigns are double teaming Bryan in the ring. Reigns superbombs Bryan through the table for the pin at 22:55.

Rating: A. AWESOME brawl here with a great story being told throughout. Ryback gets two do the big spot to look strong and the Shield's pack mentality worked very well too. Great match here and definitely better than I was expecting. Shield looked like they could more than hang in there, and that was the main thing they had to worry about. Great stuff.

Carnage is removed for a bit. Rollins took a NASTY bump into the table on that fall, slamming his head onto the edge.

Divas Title: Naomi vs. Eve Torres

Naomi does her flashy stuff to start and Eve hides on the floor. The reaction to taking the champ out? DANCE TIME! Naomi fakes her out a lot, botches a jump to the top, and misses a spinning cross body. Eve's neckbreaker ends this at 3:08.

Rating: D. Eve is hot and Naomi can shake her hips so I can't call this a failure. The division is such a joke anymore and AJ isn't going to fix anything immediately. They need to get this Kaitlyn title reign over already though because it's already past the point where it should have happened. Nothing to see but Eve's legs here as usual.

Eve does her posing thing post match which is pretty awesome.

Big Show says Sheamus has no chance to get the title back tonight.

We recap Sheamus vs. Show. Show won the title at TLC and retained it at Survivor Series, but after the second match, Sheamus hit Show 31 times with a chair. The chairs match stipulation tonight was obvious.

Smackdown World Title: Sheamus vs. Big Show

Note that with the Raw Champion off the show, this was never once mentioned as a possible replacement main event. This is a chairs match,

which means chair shots are legal. Sheamus pounds him down to start and goes for the knee. The first chair is brought in but Sheamus is knocked to the floor. Show superkicks the chair into Sheamus' face and there's the LOUD chop. Sheamus comes back with the shoulder off the apron and we head inside again.

Show pounds him down again but Sheamus slams him down for two. Why is it a surprise that he kicked out of that? It's just a slam. A top rope chair shot puts Show down but a second attempt is countered with a spear out of the air to take him down. Back in and Sheamus pounds away but charges into a chokeslam for two. Show goes under the ring and pulls out a bunch of chairs.

A Vader Bomb onto a chair onto Sheamus gets two so Show loads up two chairs in the middle of the ring. Sheamus fights back and hits White Noise onto both chairs but it only gets two. Sheamus gets all fired up but the Brogue Kick hits the rope instead. The WMD lays Sheamus out but it only gets two. In a pretty dumb ending, Show pulls out a GIANT chair and clocks Sheamus in the head with it to retain at 14:40.

Rating: B-. Good match here but it was several steps below what they've done before. I really didn't know who was winning here and with Show winning, I doubt we're going to have a cash in tonight, which is probably the right call. Decent but not great match here, which surprisingly enough is a downgrade for this feud. Hopefully this is the end for these two here.

AJ comes up to Cena in a cutoff Cena shirt. Good look on her. Basically he says she can thank him after he wins.

3MB vs. Alberto Del Rio/The Miz/Brooklyn Brawler

You know what? Why not? He's in a Brooklyn Nets jersey as apparently he's abandoned the Yankees (Bronx, not Brooklyn) shirt. Ignore those RYDER chants of course. Del Rio and Slater start things off with Alberto in control. Off to Brawler who beats up Mahal a bit before getting punched down by Heath. Brawler avoids a middle rope knee drop as we hear about 3MB having their tattoos messed up. Not hot tag brings in Miz who gets two on Jinder off a DDT. Del Rio drives Drew into the remnants of the

announce table. The Finale takes down Mahal and the Brawler gets the win off a Boston Crab at 3:37.

Rating: D. It should have been Ryder. Seriously, what else do you want me to say here?

We recap Ziggler vs. Cena, which is more about AJ and Vickie than anything else. Eventually Dolph and Cena got dragged into it and Ziggy's MITB case was put up for grabs in a ladder match.

Dolph Ziggler vs. John Cena

Ladder match for the case here. Cena runs him over with a shoulder to start and they stare at each other for a bit. The fans are almost universally behind Dolph here. Cena takes him down with a headlock, probably for the first time in the history of ladder matches. He works on Dolph's arm and hits a fisherman's suplex. There's a monkey flip out of the corner and Ziggler is sent to the floor.

Ziggler gets a chair to take Cena down and wedges it between the top and middle rope. We get the first ladder brought in but Cena rams it into Dolph's face. Cena might be cut over the eye. The dueling Cena chants begin as he crushes Ziggler's head with the steps. It's table time but Dolph knocks Cena down and goes for a climb. They slug it out and it's boo/yay time. Dolph hooks the sleeper and Cena turns red, but he climbs the ladder anyway with Ziggler on his back.

This of course goes badly and they crash backwards through a table in the ring. In a very cool spot, Ziggler goes up the ladder, so Cena PICKS UP THE LADDER FOR THE AA. Ziggler escapes what would have likely resulted in death and hits the Fameasser to put both guys down. Cena puts on a quick STF but Ziggler escapes the AA and hits the Zig Zag. Ziggler seems to be a big ginger on his leg as he gets another table.

The table is placed in the corner but Cena hits four of the five moves of doom. Dolph counters the AA and hits the jumping DDT to put Cena down again. Ziggler goes for the big ladder but Cena stops him at the top. They slug it out up there with Cena shoving Ziggler off. There's no one to stop Cena...except himself as Cena does the stupid VERY slow climb,

allowing Ziggler to take him down. Ziggler rams the bad eye into the ladder but Cena BUSTS OUT A FREAKING HURRICANRANA to send Ziggy through the table in the corner.

John pounds Ziggler into the corner and puts him on the top rope. Ziggler shoves him away and tries a top rope cross body, but Cena rolls through into the AA. That gets countered too and a chair shot puts Cena down. Ziggler misses a kick and there's an AA. There's nothing in the ring at the moment though so here's Vickie with a chair. Cue AJ to take Guerrero down with the Five Moves of Doom. Well close enough I guess. Cena climbs the ladder and AJ shoves it down, turning heel. Ziggler has no idea what's going on but AJ goes all happy psycho again. Ziggler retains the case at 23:38.

Rating: B+. I'd like this a lot more if it wasn't about AJ. At the end of the day, I get that she's nuts but she's gotten WAY too much focus and it means this story must continue. I get what they're going for here, but man alive they've run this story into the ground for so long that I don't care anymore. The match was very good though as the ladders were props in the match, which is what makes the best ladder matches.

Ziggler celebrates a ton to end the show.

Overall Rating: A-. Once we got by the obvious matches to open the show, this turned into the usual excellent show that TLC is. It's not so much about the quality of it, but it's FUN, which is a good idea to end the year with. Things get serious now as the Road to Wrestlemania begins. Very fun show here with a serious match of the year candidate included. Check this one out.

Results

Rhodes Scholars b. Rey Mysterio/Sin Cara – Rhodes shoved Cara through a table

Antonio Cesaro b. R-Truth – Neutralizer

Kofi Kingston b. Wade Barrett – Trouble in Paradise

The Shield b. Ryback/HELL NO – Superbomb to Bryan

Eve Torres b. Naomi – Spinning Neckbreaker

Big Show b. Sheamus – Chair to the back

Albeto Del Rio/The Miz/Brooklyn Brawler b. 3MB – Boston Crab to Mahal

Dolph Ziggler b. John Cena – Ziggler pulled down the case

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That Six Man TLC Match

Might make my match of the year list. And yes that's coming within this coming week. Check this match out as soon as you get a chance. It's well worth it.

Pretty Big Turn At TLC

It's.... Del Rio, who saved Ricardo from an attack by 3MB. He's going to need a VERY different character to make a face run work but it's not impossible.

Thoughts?

Halftime Heat: The Stupidest Camera Angle Of All Time

Halftime Heat

Date: January 31, 1999

Location: Tucson Convention Center, Tucson, Arizona

Attendance: 0

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Shane McMahon, Vince McMahon

This is another special request and that's fitting because it's a special show. This was a one time thing that WWF tried. They aired a special show during halftime of the Super Bowl. It got the highest rating in the history of Sunday Night Heat, drawing a 6.6. Not bad on Super Bowl Sunday eh? This is literally a one match show but it's a heck of a match. This was good from what I remember. Let's get to it.

WWF Title: The Rock vs. Mankind

The catch here? This is an empty arena match. Literally there are thousands of empty seats and zero fans in attendance. I don't think there's a reason for this but there were a total of five shows taped that night (Raw, Super Astros (A Spanish WWF show), regular Sunday Night Heat, Shotgun and this) so it's not like they didn't get their money's worth.

They do the full intros including Fink doing the introductions and the theme music with Titantron videos. You can never say Vince underdid anything. He's accompanying Rock here. There's nothing but the match here and the whole thing is less than twenty minutes long. It's WEIRD hearing them being able to talk smack. Vince joins us on commentary.

Basic stuff to start and before I forget this is falls count anywhere. Foley gets the sock as no one but Vince can get a word in. Baseball slide sends Rock to the floor and gets two. Rock's head is rammed into the bell. Foley talks smack as he

beats up Rock. Ok no wonder only Vince can get a word in: the other two have left. Well ok then.

Rock takes over and throws Mankind through the barricade wall and takes over. Foley gets thrown into some chairs as this is just weird to see. This is the rematch from the Rumble when Mankind had the title stolen from him. He took \$100,000 of Rock's money to force him into this I guess. We get a clock saying the second half of the game begins in 15:00.

In one of my favorite of his bits, Rock jumps on headset to talk some trash but Mankind pops up and grabs the Claw as we head back into the stands. 14 minutes left. I'm assuming the match ends when halftime is over? They fight up the steps with Foley slamming his face into the metal.

13 minutes to go as Vince talks about what you're watching. He says it's action adventure, it's soap opera, it's Hollywood and Broadway and all point in between. Vince is an amazing salesman as he makes it sound far more awesome than it really is but he gets you interested in it. He clearly loves what he does and what he's created which I think has a lot to do with why it's still around.

Rock gets a solid shot in with a trash can and Mankind falls back down the stairs. He's in control now and now Kelly and Shane are watching in a full arena. Methinks there are some camera tricks afoot here. We go back to "live" action and we're in the kitchen. Foley is thrown into a cotton candy stand and let the comedy begin.

He steals the sock and throws it in an oven then burns Foley in one. Foley goes into the pots and pans and is in big trouble. He hits Foley in the head with a package of hamburger buns for two. 9 minutes left. Rock stops to get some Jack Daniels but gets knocked back into some plates. BAG OF POPCORN TO THE HEAD!

Vince calling this seriously is rather funny. They go through

a door and are near catering now. 8 minutes. Rock stops and eats some popcorn but spits it out due to too much salt. Trash can to Mankind who has apparently lost a shoe. Catering is doing destroyed and Foley has been burned by some barbecue sauce to the eye. Rock is ticked that it's mild.

Piledriver on the floor is blocked and Foley goes into some wings. It's been all Rock for about 6 minutes now but he hits a low blow for two. I love hearing Vince saying ALMOST a count of three! We head through another door into the office areas. Foley is knocked into a chair as we have five minutes left.

Hey we have a phone call! Rock answers, saying it's the Smackdown Hotel. I wonder if that was legit. We have another call. "Hello, Smackdown Hotel, corner of Know Your Role Boulevard and Jabroni Drive!" And now Rock stops to hit on some secretary then calls her a big fat piece of trash. Foley gets an opening and takes over again though and we fight back into the hallway.

Back to "the arena" where Heat is being shown I guess. We're at a loading dock now and it's dark. Foley gets the Claw on and knocks Rock out underneath a forklift. He commandeers the forklift and lowers the load it's carrying onto Rock and in the DUMBEST thing I can remember in WWF history, THERE IS A CAMERA LOOKING DOWN FROM THE FORKLIFT. Foley asks the referee if his shoulders are down and puts his foot on the stuff it's carrying to win the title.

Overall Rating: B+. Might as well just go with that for the match rating too since it's literally one thing for the whole show. To put it mildly this was entertaining. These two had great chemistry together and everything clicked very well out there for them. The aspect was very different and this was a great way to grab people's attention if they didn't want to watch Gloria Estefan sing at halftime.

The timing was great too as this ended about 90 seconds before

kickoff so it's not like you missed any of the game. Very fun match and definitely a very unique thing to see. Well worth checking out as it's less than 20 minutes from Rock's entrance to the pinfall. Very good idea here and it worked, drawing a huge number.

Monday Night Raw – January 18, 1999: I've Heard Of Combining Match Builds But This Is Nuts

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 18, 1999

Location: Montagne Center, Beaumont, Texas

Attendance: 7,454

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

We're back and it's the go home show for the Rumble. The main stories going on here are Rock vs. Mankind along with Austin vs. Vince (of course), as we continue to get closer to Mania season. The main event tonight is Rock vs. Kane, who I don't remember getting together that often other than for Rock to make fun of him. Let's get to it.

We get the Martin Luther King video to open things up. Vince has always done this which is cool.

Here's Austin to open things up. He goes through the usual stuff: He's is #1 in the Rumble, there's a bounty on his head, all that jazz. Austin says exactly what you would expect him to say in this case before talking about Mankind. He'll be ready for the Rumble but he's looking forward to facing Mankind for the title at Mania. The fans want him to beat up Vince

tonight and win the Rumble on Sunday. This is one of the lamest Austin promos I can ever remember. Just nothing to it at all but the fans eat it up. Austin has a beer on the announce table and that's about it.

Hardcore Title: Road Dogg vs. Gangrel

Dogg is champion and he says that even though his name isn't Buffy, tonight he's a vampire slayer. They start fast and the brawl heads to the floor with Gangrel in control. Dogg sends him into the barricade and then the steps before we go into the crowd. They slug it out out there before heading back to ringside for table time. The champ sets up said table but Gangrel hits him low and sends Dogg through the table via a powerbomb. That only gets two for Gangrel and Dogg comes back with a DDT onto the pieces of wood.

Another table is loaded up but Gangrel blasts Roadie with a piece of the broken one to take over. Some trashcan shots to the back slow Dogg down but he puts Gangrel on the second table. A shaky elbow off the apron doesn't break the table and neither does a seated senton off the apron. A middle rope elbow mostly breaks it but Gangrel gets up first. Dogg whips Gangrel onto the broken table and follows it up with a suplex. A chair shot to the head from the apron finally ends Gangrel to retain the title.

Rating: C. This was a stiffer hardcore match than you're likely used to as the title hasn't turned into full on self-parody yet. It wasn't good or anything like that but it was still fun at this point. Gangrel never did anything in the WWF so a match like this was a very strange thing to see from him. Decent match but nothing great at all.

Austin is still here.

Video on the Rumble.

Test vs. Billy Gunn

BIG reaction for Gunn here. Test's shirt has a picture of a gun on it and says "Guns don't kill people. I kill people." Sign of the times man. Another sign of the times: America Online is sponsoring the show. They jockey for position around the ropes until Test elbows him down to take

over. Billy comes back with a suplex and a middle rope elbow for two.

We head to the floor where Test takes over with the power stuff. As they come back in, Gunn guillotines him on the top rope a clothesline puts Gunn down but he counters the pumphandle slam. Billy's piledriver is countered but he comes back with a Fameasser. Not that it matters though as here's Shamrock to take Billy's head off for the DQ.

Rating: D. This was just a backdrop for the ending to take place in front of. That's the right move probably as the match on Sunday is about revenge for Shamrock, so having a crazy man like him snap before Sunday is the right idea. On top of that, would anyone be interested in seeing Gunn vs. Test go on any longer?

Post match Shamrock destroys Gunn and beats him up on the announce table. The ankle lock goes on and a bunch of referees get beaten up. Shamrock pulls out a hammer but doesn't get to use it.

Halftime Heat is coming.

Billy gets his ankle looked at and screams very loudly.

Jarrett and Hart say they've beaten everyone and that they're the next tag champions. Boss Man and Shamrock, the tag champions, come in and beat up the blonde guys.

Vince training video, this time showing him sparring in a ring. He Stuns a bunch of training partners and throws them out. These are still pretty funny. Shane: "AUSTIN IS GOING DOWN! WELL OVER ACTUALLY!"

Boss Man is beating on Mankind in the back. Mankind fights back but we lose the camera feed.

Dan Severn vs. Steve Blackman

Dan might have faked his neck injury and attacked Blackman on Heat last night to set this up. Blackman jumps him immediately and it turns into one of those annoying shoot style matches. Severn tries to ground and pound but Blackman takes his knees out. Dan comes back with a suplex but misses an elbow. Blackman gets fired up but Severn hits him low for the

DQ. This was Severn's last Raw match.

Blackman gets put in a dragon sleeper post match.

Mankind and Boss Man are still fighting.

Video on Rock vs. Mankind with both guys talking about how they'll be awesome in the match. The theme seems to be that Rock will beat on Mankind but Mankind won't quit. Nothing is mentioned of Mankind's offense.

Mankind vs. Big Boss Man

They brawl into the arena and this is hardcore. The fight starts on the floor with Mankind going into the steps. Once they get in the ring we actually get a bell with Boss Man in control. Mankind comes back and drops a leg for two before pounding away a bit more. The champion elbows Boss Man to the floor but Mankind gets sent face first into a chair.

Several shots into the steps have Foley's head in trouble before we head back inside. After Boss Man beats on him even more, Mankind comes back with a clothesline to slow down the punishment. There's the double arm DDT and it's Socko time. The Claw goes on but here's rock with a chair shot to the back of Mankind head for the DQ. In a hardcore match.

Rating: C-. The very stupid ending aside, this was a pretty solid and brutal fight which did its intended job. Having Boss Man work over Mankind made sense as no one was expecting him to win, but he got to beat on Mankind for awhile and hurt the champion's head, which would be chillingly revisited on Sunday.

Rock goes after Mankind's head a bit more post match.

Henry begs Chyna for mercy because his mama is out there tonight.

Rock is worried about facing Kane tonight but Vince tries to play peacemaker. Kane is to lay down apparently. Rock calls Kane stupid and Vince demands that Kane do as he's supposed to.

Here's Chyna to force Mark Henry (numb nuts as she calls him) to make a

decision about something. Henry's mom is in the crowd. Henry comes out and says that nothing happened and can he please have the tape. Chyna says roll the footage. We see Chyna's friend Sammi locking Henry in a room and kissing him. She goes down on him for a bit, Henry pulls up her dress, and Mark finds....yeah. Ladies and gentlemen, we've got a transvestite. Chyna yells at Henry and says his mom had this coming. Henry gets a low blow and his mama yells at him.

Patterson and Brisco talk strategy for their handicap match against Chyna tonight. They argue over who should get the pin.

Al Snow vs. Goldust

The winner of this gets to keep Head. Goldie stole it and we got Al Snow in drag because...seriously why was that a good idea? Goldust pounds away to start but walks into a suplex. They head to the floor almost immediately with Snow being dropped onto the steps. Apparently Gunn's ankle is ok and he'll be in the match on Sunday. Snow hits a rana back inside but gets caught by an uppercut and what would be named the Edge-0-Matic. A kind of forward belly to back suplex gets two on Al but Snow gets the same off a cross body. Out of nowhere an Oklahoma Roll gets the pin for Snow.

Rating: D. This didn't do anything for me at all. Snow was a fine worker, but this story basically came and went in less than ten days. Just not much to see here, especially with how little time they had to work with. Goldust was just kind of there and that would be the case until he left for WCW in a few months/a year or so.

Post match Goldust steals Head again and hits Snow with Shattered Dreams. Goldie leaves with Head. This would result in Snow going insane.

Austin is still here.

Patterson tells Brisco to get the pin. Apparently Vince has said that Brisco should pin Chyna, which ticks Patterson off. These two are hilarious together.

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Mideon pops up and asks if Lawler and Cole feel it. He's insane here as well and promises another sacrifice in six days at the Rumble.

Cue the Ministry with the torches and the throne. Taker talks about how Mideon is a once lost soul who has now been found. There will be another sacrifice at the PPV but we can't comprehend who it'll be. Ok then.

Chyna vs. Pat Patterson/Gerald Brisco

After a recap of the Corporate Rumble last week we're read to go. There was an arm wrestling match last night on Heat with Chyna beating Vince (I think) as well. Brisco takes Chyna down to start but Chyna quickly takes over and shoots the half to take over. I don't think the Stooges have to tag here. Patterson gets a shot now and he talks some trash. Chyna bends his fingers back so Pat puts her in an airplane spin.

Naturally it makes him dizzy so Brisco shoves him to the floor. Chyna beats them both up and we get the comedy groin shot. Patterson hits her low and Chyna is like dude, really? Chyna grabs them both by the balls and lets them argue. She sits on the top rope and stupidly allows Patterson to shove her down. Cue Sable of all people but Luna jumps her from behind. Apparently they're fighting for the Women's Title on Sunday in a strap match. Since freaking when?

Brisco does something like a People's Elbow but the Stooges argue over who should cover. Now they slug it out a bit so Chyna rams their heads together. Brisco throws powder in Chyna's eyes and they spank her around a bit. The Stooges grab her chest (Lawler: "WHAT'S PATTERSON DOING THERE?") and Chyna clears her eyes out and beats them up easily. Both guys get DDT'd and she pins both of them.

Rating: D. I get the idea of comedy matches, but did we need molestation involved? On top of that, I've heard of hyping two matches at once, but what in the world was Sable coming out there for? Nothing to see here and the Stooges wouldn't really be funny until they had their handicap match against the Mean Street Posse which is just awesome.

Austin is still here.

Rock and Vince make fun of Kane when he's not around.

We recap Rock costing Kane the world title last week.

The Rock vs. Kane

Rock is in street clothes and seems to be limping a bit. All of the Corporation is with him here. The Corporation tries to calm Kane down and get him to take a dive with references to the Fingerpoke of Doom. Kane shoves Vince away and the big beatdown is on. Rock wants him all to himself and we get a bell. Dang and I had "no match" all ready to type. Some right hands stagger Kane but he throws Rock into the corner by the throat. A clothesline puts Kane on the floor and Rock pounds away a bit more.

Rock does his always funny commentary while wrestling thing but gets caught by the monster in the process. A low blow staggers Kane and we head back in. Rock hits some punches but the no selling by the monster begins. Another low blow puts Kane down and there's the Elbow. Kane pops up and chokeslams Rock down but the Corporation runs in to throw the match out.

Rating: D+. It's hard to get into these matches when you're just waiting for the big ending and you know there's no way someone is going to get a pin. Kane and Rock are a pairing that you didn't see all that often which is kind of surprising given how they were both getting big at the same time. Nothing to see here as expected.

Post match the Corporation beats on Kane until Mankind makes the save. Rock bails and gets caught between Mankind and Austin to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This is going to be one of those years where it depends on your taste in wrestling for the most part. The main feuds here are really well defined and they're definitely going to be worth seeing on Sunday. The problem is the rest of the card, as there is NOTHING else worth seeing and almost nothing at all with any development at all. I guess you could say Shamrock vs. Gunn has been built decently, but that doesn't exactly scream must see match to be. Anyway, watchable show here and it got me ready for the Rumble, which is the right idea.

Here's the Rumble if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/18/royal-rumble-count-up-1999-please-make-it-stop/>

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Tables Ladders and Chairs 2012 Preview

The show is tomorrow and the Rumble I'm watching is really boring so let's get to it. Let's get the obvious ones out of the way:

Cesaro retains and the Scholars get the title shot. Those are about as obvious as you can get.

As for the other four matches, all of them could really go either way.

I'll take Barrett to win the title, as Kofi really has nothing left to do with it. He's the king of the transitional champions, so losing to Barrett is what he's designed for here.

The TLC match is a very tricky one as you can't imagine the Shield can hang with these three guys in a match with no advantage, but at the same time you don't want the Shield to go down in their first match. I'll go with Shield to add more members and win.

Now the next two matches are connected, as it's going to depend on which order they go in and who wins which one. I'll go with Sheamus to win the title, but for Big Show to lay him

out afterwards, allowing Ziggler, the winner of the ladder match, to cash in and win. That's a BIG stretch and if I'm wrong I won't be surprised in the slightest.

Overall this show is usually pretty fun and this one should be as well, but the booking is very hard to predict. Also as usual, everything is capped off by Rock next month anyway, making this show really just a pit stop on the way.

Thoughts/predictions?

Monday Night Raw – January 11, 1999: This Actually Happened On Live Television

Since I'm done with 1998 and 2001, the most logical step would be to fill in the gap with 1999 and 2000. Since I don't want to take over two years to get through these years, I'll be doing four episodes at a time instead of two, starting with January 1999. In other words, it won't be two episodes from 99 and then two from 2000 like I did before. This is the year where WWF put its boot on WCW's neck and crushed them and it should be interesting to see how they did it. Let's get to it.

Since it's one of the most famous episodes of Raw ever, I've already done the first show of the year. Here's the review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/04/24/monday-night-raw-january-4-1999-foley-wins/>

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 11, 1999

Location: Compaq Center, Houston, Texas

Attendance: 12,585

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole

We're two weeks away from the Rumble and we have a new WWF Champion in the form of Mankind. The main stories going on are Vince is the #2 entrant in the Rumble to Austin's #1, as well as Rock wanting his title match and revenge on Mankind. This is the start of one of the least wrestling heavy years in company history so let's get to it.

Here's DX to open the show. After playing to the crowd a bit here's the NEW WWF World Champion Mankind, complete with his debuting signature song. The McMahons are in the back and getting all ticket off. Foley talks about always wanting to get here and now wants JR to call a match of his as world champion (JR was having health issues at this point mind you).

The champ thanks DX for helping him out last week and Austin for, you know, knocking Rock out cold and all that. Mankind throws the fans a big bone, saying that as long as he's world champion, Austin will always have a shot at the title and he'd love for it to be at Wrestlemania.

Cue Rock and the McMahons with Rock of course as they can't stand anymore. Shane doesn't get the fascination with Mankind, but tonight he'll do something about DX, meaning they all have matches tonight. Also tonight is the Corporate Rumble, where the winner will be #30 in the Rumble. Rock grabs the mic and says that Mankind didn't beat him because he needed Austin to help. Ignore the fact that it was technically a clean win because it was anything goes I guess. As for Austin, Rock will take care of him later. Yep, at Wrestlemania.

As for tonight, Rock wants his rematch right here and now. The champ says that he's already beaten Rock twice, so clearly he's not championship material. Points for a funny line to Mankind for that one. Rock offers another No DQ match but Mankind won't bite. Rock offers No Countout but Mankind isn't persuaded. They trade catchphrases for a bit until Mankind

finally says he'll do it in an I Quit match. Rock seems scared but has to take what he can get. Vince makes Mankind vs. Kane for tonight.

Somehow that took over twenty minutes to get through. Thank you Vince Russo for making this a trend in wrestling.

Austin is here.

The Outlaws think Debra is distracting.

New Age Outlaws vs. Jeff Jarrett/Owen Hart

Winners get a title shot, presumably at the Rumble. It's Gunn vs. Owen to start and there's a gorilla press to Owen and one for Jeff as well. Gunn cranks on the arm of Owen and brings in Roadie for the shaky knee drop and the running crotch attack to Owen's back as Owen is draped over the middle rope. SOMEONE NAME THAT FREAKING MOVE ALREADY! Off to Jarrett who immediately gets caught in an atomic drop but comes back with a bulldog.

After some heel double teaming, Owen's Sharpshooter attempt is easily countered and it's off to Jarrett. In a reunion of the country music act that went on WAY too long, Roadie and Jarrett collide, setting up the double hot tag to Owen and Gunn. With Billy cleaning house, here's Debra to distract with the yet to be named Puppies. That goes nowhere for Billy (he's saving himself for Chuck of course) but Chyna goes after her for some reason. That distraction is enough for Owen to roll up Billy for the pin and the title shot.

Rating: C-. This was one of the better Outlaws match from a wrestling perspective, which I'm sure had something to do with the fact that it only lasted about four minutes. Owen and Bulldog would win the titles soon after this and hold them until after Wrestlemania. Nothing to see here but it wasn't the worst match ever.

The Outlaws yell at Chyna for costing them the match.

And now, it is time.....for Gillberg. In one of the funniest parodies of all time, the new Light Heavyweight Champion Duane Gill has become Gillberg, complete with the LONG walk from the back, the heavily (and intentionally fake) piped in chants, Gillberg going insane like Goldberg, and the

police escort. This is still funny even to this day. We've even got the JOB Squad holding up sparklers for the pyro but Gillberg chokes on the smoke. Gillberg wants to know who's first, and now we get to the real joke.

Gillberg vs. Luna Vachon

Gillberg misses a spear, gets his eyes raked across the top rope, has his Jackhammer countered into a cross body, and is pinned by Luna in about thirty seconds.

Some guy is in a dungeon. This would be revealed as Mideon.

Here's Val Venis for a match but first he sees a good looking woman in the front row to hit on. Cue Ken Shamrock to destroy Val, shouting to stay away from his sister. This brings out Billy Gunn who says he's going to moon Ken's sister. Billy gets a beating as well but Val comes in to beat up Shamrock. Boss Man comes out to save his partner and the ring is cleared. Shamrock gives Billy a shot at the IC Title at the Rumble, because that's what you do when someone moons your sister.

Mankind and Austin are talking about something.

European Title: Al Snow vs. X-Pac

Pac is defending if you've forgotten. Snow takes over to start and pounds away in the corner with headbutts. The champ gets his boot up in the corner but walks into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker to put him right back down. A powerslam puts Pac down again but the moonsault misses. Pac spinwheel kicks Snow into the corner and hits the Bronco Buster...and here's Goldust. He blasts Snow in the head with Head, allowing Pac to retain the title. Why Goldie was here and what help Snow needed is beyond me but it's 1999 so what are you going to do?

Al gets hit by Head again by Goldust.

Kane is sure he can win the title on his own. He doesn't talk but you get the point.

WWF Title: Mankind vs. Kane

Kane charges right at him and we immediately head to the floor. The champ is sent into the steps before he sends Kane into them as well. Mankind dives off the apron to send Kane back first into the steps to slow the Big Fried Freak down. Back in and Kane pounds away, only to run into an elbow in the corner. As has been the case with this match, Kane isn't that interested in selling so he slams the champ down and kicks him in the face. It's not going to last long but the idea of two monsters slugging it out until one can't get up anymore is always fun.

There's a piledriver to put Kane down and we head back to the floor. That doesn't last long as Kane rams him into the barricade and heads back inside for two. Top rope clothesline gets two, as does the Double Arm DDT. Mankind gets after kicking Kane low. The champ puts on Socko but gets rammed into the corner (again). He jumps on Kane's back to try to get the Claw on again but Kane counters into a tombstone for no cover. As Kane crawls over, Rock runs in with a chair for the DQ.

Rating: C-. Not much to see here but the crowd was NUTS for Mankind. The guy was on fire at this point and he more than deserved the title. While I'm not at all wild on the new champion getting destroyed here, the ending makes sense as Rock wants to get his revenge on Mankind rather than Kane. Not bad here, but it was short as expected.

Post match Austin comes out to save Mankind but winds up Stunning both masked dudes.

Vince yells at Rock but Rock says he wants to beat Mankind for the title.

HHH vs. Edge

Now here's a match that would be VERY different in a few years. HHH takes him down to start and pounds away but a charge in the corner hits buckle. A spinwheel kick puts HHH down and we take a break. Back with Edge hitting a clothesline and a kind of bulldog for two. HHH makes his comeback with punches and the flying knee, followed by a boot to the face of a charging Edge in the corner. After a quick comeback by Edge, the Pedigree ends this. Nothing to see here, but man alive it's weird to see these two in this spot.

Immediately post match the lights go out and Roadie gets a blood bath.

Cue the druids and we've got an Undertaker symbol. The Acolytes bring out Dennis Knight on a board. Then a tall dark man in a robe comes out to Undertaker's music. Cole: "I THINK THAT'S THE UNDERTAKER!" Taker sits on a throne in front of the symbol and talks about how people have tried to put him down but he's come back with a vengeance. The Ministry of Darkness is going to destroy the heroes and the plague of darkness is coming. He talks about how he'll have few followers but it won't matter.

Bearer pulls out a knife of some kind and Taker walks over to Knight. Knife in hand, Taker speaks in tongues over Knight...and slices his own wrist open. He pours the blood into a goblet and pours it down Knight's throat. You want to talk about something that makes me embarrassed to be a wrestling fan, this would be a good place to start. Taker dubs him Mideon and starts carving symbols into his chest. A bolt of lightning hits the symbol and it lights on fire. Mideon starts LEVITATING to end the segment. This actually happened on a wrestling show, I kid you not. Somehow, this would actually get worse.

D'Lo says he'll do whatever Terri asks but this is too much. This is because Terri lost her baby or whatever.

D'Lo Brown vs. Mark Henry

No match, as Terri immediately hits Mark low. Chyna and Sammi make the save. If you don't know who Sammi is.....oh you will very soon.

Vince is in the snow running to a bad Rocky imitation. Shane has a bullhorn and is coaching Vince along. Now Vince has to chase a chicken. Vince: "I'M THE CEO OF A FORTUNE 500 COMPANY!" After the training they go to a steakhouse, but instead of eating, Vince gets to beat on the meat in the back. More funny stuff here.

Corporate Rumble

This is a mini-Rumble where the winner gets to be #30. We open with Shamrock vs. Billy Gunn (not in the Corporation so I guess this is an open field for some reason?) and after a break we're ready to go. Oh

apparently this is DX vs. the Corporation. Why would Vince agree to that? Shamrock kicks Gunn off the apron before Gunn gets in and DIVES ONTO THE FLOOR, eliminating himself in the process.

Shamrock pounds away on Billy as Shane cheers him on. The Boss Man is #3 and Billy is in big trouble already. Gunn comes back with a forearm but Boss Man chokes him down. Test is #4 (I think the intervals are about once a minute) to make it two on one. A big boot put Gunn down but they can't eliminate him. Thankfully X-Pac is #5 but after only a few seconds, Test hiptosses Billy out.

The layout powerbomb puts Pac down but Road Dogg is #6. He's still got the blood all over him and nothing happens until Kane is #7. A clothesline puts Roadie out and Pac is stuck 3-1. HHH is #8 and things speed up. Test accidentally hits Kane and gets knocked out as a result. HHH and Pac take out Kane but Pac is eliminated in the process. That leaves HHH vs. Boss Man...until Vince is a surprise entrant at #9.

Shane of course erupts as Vince sneaks in and eliminates both guys to seemingly win the thing. He tears his shirt off ala Hogan, but Chyna is another surprise entrant at #10. The place goes nuts but the Stooges won't let her get in. Chyna decks both of them and here comes Austin. The distraction is enough to let Chyna throw Vince out (apparently knocking him out cold in the process) and get the #30 spot. Shane freaks to end the show.

Rating: D+. This is a hard one to grade because the wrestling barely existed, but the fan reaction was incredible, as Vince got a ton of heat but Chyna's pop was even better. Good surprise here but as usual, it's all about the payoff and nothing about the buildup to that payoff. Such is life in the Attitude Era.

Overall Rating: D. As usual, as goes the main event so goes the rest of the show. The problem here is that there's nothing really good from a wrestling perspective, but it did a great job at building up the Rumble, as well as giving us two hilarious bits with Gillberg and Vince's training. The problem is you have the Ministry starting, which is just completely terrible and drags things WAY down.

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KB Contest: Someone Name This Freaking Move Already!

I've seen this move used for years and I have no idea what to call it. This is driving me crazy because simple things like this make me insane. It's the one where a guy is in position for a 619 and the other guy hits a running crotch attack to the back of the guy in 619 position. Big Bossman, Jeff Jarrett and Road Dogg regularly used this. Whatever the best one I get by....let's say the time TLC goes on the air will be the official name of the move until either eternity or until I get bored with it and want something new.

Go.