

Monday Night Raw – September 17, 2001: How Many Stories Is Stephanie In Anyway?

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 17, 2001

Location: Bridgestone Arena, Nashville, Tennessee

Attendance: 7,641

Commentators: Jim Ross, Paul Heyman

It's the final show before Unforgiven and obviously based on the date, things have changed tremendously in the whole world. Smackdown basically didn't happen because of what happened which is perfectly fine, but it's put them in a bind for building up the show. The good thing is that a lot of things have already been set in stone. The PPV would wind up being solid so let's get to it.

The show opens with the American flag on the screen and a BIG USA chant. Nothing wrong with that at all.

The main events are Test/Stephanie vs. Rock II and Austin/RVD vs. Jericho/Austin.

WWF Tag Titles: Undertaker/Kane vs. Dudley Boys

Why not for both titles? Because this way if they change hands they can have ANOTHER title match that means nothing on PPVs, because that's what they needed to fix things right? EVE MORE TITLES! Kane and D-Von start and Kane's arm is STILL bandaged. Hasn't that thing been hurt since April now? Kane takes him down with ease and no sells his punches. Sidewalk slam puts D-Von down and Kane drills Bubba so he can hit the top rope clothesline for two.

Off to Taker who has an American flag on his singlet now. D-

Von takes him down with a shoulder block and brings in Bubba. Taker knocks down the future Bully almost immediately and hits Old School. Bubba comes back with a belly to back suplex for no cover. Kane comes in and grabs both Dudleys for chokeslams at the same time but D-Von hits him in the arm to break it up. What's Up Kane?

Here comes a table but it doesn't get set up. Kane is in trouble but manages to powerbomb Bubba out of the corner and tags Undertaker. A legdrop gets two on D-Von as Kane and Bubba fight on the floor. There goes the referee and cue Kronik. High Times puts Kane through the table and the 3D gives the Dudleys the titles.

Rating: D+. It was another mess but getting at least half of the titles off of Undertaker and Kane was a good thing because you had to have them get cheated to have them lose. That makes their defenses boring because you know no one is going to be able to get a clean win on them. Unfortunately this set up the Brothers vs. Kronik which was horrible.

Shane arrives and is met by Kronik and Richards. Richards offers Kronik's services to the Alliance which is accepted. Their reward? A WCW Tag Title match on Sunday.

Storm disapproves of the swimsuit photos of Lita in WWF Magazine so he's going to beat up Jeff tonight. Hurricane flies in and says he needs a sidekick. Storm suggests Ivory (complete with an Ivory soap ad) but Hurricane says he has a better idea and flies away.

Austin and Debra arrive and find RVD on their couch. They're cool with each other but it doesn't seem copacetic. RVD implies that he's the second in command in the Alliance and if Austin is ever on vacation or something, he'd give his best to help out. Austin politely throws him out.

Lance Storm vs. Jeff Hardy

This should be good. They get technical to start and Jeff is fast enough to keep up with Storm. An O'Connor Roll is countered and they head to the floor where Jeff runs the railing for a clothesline. Back inside and Lance hiptosses him over the top and out to the floor. Storm works over the back and a backbreaker gets two. A hard Irish Whip into the corner gets the same.

Lita and Ivory are on the floor. I don't think that pairing ever got a blowoff match or anything like that, at least not on PPV. Lance stays on the back but Jeff mule kicks out of the hold he's in. Double legdrop between the legs and a Russian legsweep get two. Whisper in the Wind does as well, and wasn't it nice for Storm to stand there for Jeff to hit it. Ivory's quick distraction lets Storm hit a superkick for two. Lita goes after her and has to slap Lance as well. Jeff dives on Storm but the Swanton hits knees. Jeff tries a middle rope rana but gets caught in the Mapleleaf for the rare Jeff Hardy tap out.

Rating: C+. I liked this about as well as I thought I would. The girls were obviously going to get involved and thankfully they were only involved a little. The ending was clean and tied into the majority of the back work that Storm did earlier in the match which is all you can ask for. Fun match but I'd have liked it getting more than six minutes.

Shane asks Stephanie why she was in the handicap match last week. She says she had a plan which didn't work that well because Booker was late. Tonight she's in it again because...? Shane shows her what almost happened last week and Stephanie says he can't tell her what to do. Taz comes in and wants respect so Shane gives him a match.

Perry Saturn vs. Shawn Stasiak

During Saturn's entrance we get a recap of the Moppy Saga. Saturn runs in a circle to start so Stasiak clotheslines him

down. Tilt-a-whirl slam gets two. A clothesline in the corner hits but Saturn hits something like an armdrag to take over. There's a belly to belly and a spinning springboard dropkick for two. Stasiak comes back with a jumping back elbow for two. Saturn hits a northern lights suplex but Stacy has the referee. Shawn gets her down and kicks out of a superkick. Saturn runs the ropes and Stasiak falls on his face avoiding a leapfrog. Moss Covered Three Handled Family Credenza ends this short match.

Terri and Raven pop up on the screen with Moppy and put it through a wood chipper. You have Raven and Saturn and the feud is over a freaking mop. And people wonder why this whole Invasion story bombed.

HEY LOOK! IT'S STEPHANIE COMPLAINING ABOUT HER BROTHER! AGAIN! This time it's to RVD. It's now RVD vs. Jericho on Sunday for the Hardcore Title.

Hurricane offers his sidekick spot to Molly. Spike comes in to protest. You know where this is going.

Taz comes to see Shane and Booker, only to find out that his match is against the two of them.

Donate to the Red Cross. Nothing wrong with that.

Booker T/Shane McMahon vs. Taz

They double team Taz to start until Booker officially starts. Since Taz is down, Shane comes in for a Hart Attack. Jumping back elbow gets two. Back to Booker and never mind as Shane is in about 15 seconds later. Taz I think tags Booker for some reason before everyone heads to the floor. While Booker has the referee, Shane dives off the barricade with a clothesline.

Back inside Booker drops a knee and hits the Spinarooni. Shane gets in some free shots but slaps him once too often so Taz remembers that he was a killing machine in ECW and runs them

both over. Tazmission is broken up by Shane and Booker "hits" the ax kick (Taz dropped about three seconds before Booker hit him. It was Taz's fault) and the top rope elbow gets the pin.

Rating: D. Uh...ok? A guy that is a much bigger star than Taz and has a partner who is pretty talented in his own part can beat Taz (I'll let you figure out who I mean by each of those descriptions) in a match that could have easily been cut in half. Not a godo match or anything and I'm not really sure what it proved.

Christian doesn't care that Edge hasn't been seen in two weeks. He wants the US Title to go with the IC Title he's winning on Sunday.

European Title: Hurricane vs. Spike Dudley

Hurricane takes him to the mat followed by Spike taking him to the mat. They fight over a top wristlock with Hurricane throwing in a quick pose, thereby making him awesome. Hurricane takes him down and goes up, but Molly takes the cape. Now that's just not nice. Spike goes up but gets shoved down and into the barricade. She throws the cape in and goes up (which the referee ignores) and accidentally dropkicks Spike. Eye of the Hurricane retains the belt after a short and uninteresting match.

We run down the Unforgiven card. Ok maybe just two match.

We get a few shots of some fans at WWF New York. Nice touch.

Torrie is looking GOOD in the back and runs into Shane. He thinks Torrie is manipulating Tajiri and is very proud of her for getting as far as she has.

Angle says he'll win on Sunday when RVD pops up to point out that the fans were cheering for him. Angle says on Sunday, they'll be chanting USA.

US Title: Christian vs. Tajiri

Christian jumps Tajiri while he's kissing Torrie and we're ready to go. They chop it out in the corner but Tajiri gets bored with that and kicks Christian in the head instead. He tries a rana but gets powerbombed down instead. Backbreaker gets two. Christian pounds on him a bit but gets his head kicks off and the champ takes over. The always awesome handspring elbow gets two. There's the Tarantula but Tajiri misses a lot of kicks. Out to the floor and Christian loads up the Conchairto. Tajiri tries the Mist to defend himself but hits the referee instead and that's a DQ.

Rating: C-. How could Christian vs. Tajiri be this boring? Oh, probably because it had four minutes and had no story behind it at all and was there so that Edge could run in at the end to set up the PPV match a little bit better? Not a horrible match or anything but when you had two guys like this out there, you should get a good match. On the other hand, I don't remember Torrie looking this good in a VERY long time.

Edge runs in post match (duh) to break up the Conchairto and chase off Christian. The look on his face was the first time I thought Edge awesome.

During the break Rhyno Gored Tajiri, which set up their match on Sunday.

Shane makes that title match I just mentioned.

Stephanie McMahon/Test vs. The Rock

Stephanie is on the apron here and is knocked off almost immediately. Rock sends Test to the floor and the beating begins. Back inside Rock gets two but Test pounds him into the corner. Rock fires off some rights but walks into a gutwrench powerbomb for two. Test beats him down again and Stephanie comes in, only for Rock to nip up. The Canadian runs him over again and loads up the big boot but instead he walks into a Rock Bottom. Nick Patrick is with Stephanie though and that earns him a Rock Bottom of his own. Rock goes after Steph but

Shane and Booker run in. Everyone hits their finishers and Steph gets the pin.

Rating: D+. I don't particularly get how this is supposed to make me want to see Booker and Shane vs. Rock on Sunday but it got Stephanie on TV and let her pin the Rock so it must be a good idea right? Just have Rock face Shane and then have Booker and everyone else interfere and let Shane get the pin. How is that any different? Oh right: it doesn't let Stephanie get to be on TV. Got it.

Austin won't come out of his dressing room when RVD says their match is next. Austin says he'll see Rob out there. Rob knocks a few more times and gets him to open the door in a bit I don't really get.

Chris Jericho/Kurt Angle vs. Rob Van Dam/Steve Austin

They brawl on the floor to start as the fans chant USA. Wouldn't that chant be more be for the Alliance team since they're both Americans? Austin and Jericho start with the champion in control. He puts Jericho on the top rope but gets caught by a dropkick for two. Off to Van Dam who misses some kicks and gets taken down by an enziguri. Here's Angle who hits a cross body and glares at Austin.

Spinebuster gets two for Kurt. Jericho comes in and has to fight off both guys but walks into a kick from Van Dam to send him to the floor. Austin tries to piledrive him on the floor but Angle makes the save. Van Dam puts Jericho on the barricade and hits the spinning legdrop which gets two back in the ring. Austin comes in and hooks a sleeper which doesn't last long. Jericho and Van Dam knock each other down and it's hot tag to Angle.

Van Dam accidentally kicks Austin and gets suplexed for his troubles. Austin throws Angle into the referee and gets caught in the ankle lock but Van Dam saves. Van Dam gets put in the Walls so Austin gets the bell and clocks Jericho with it but

the referee stops a similar shot to Angle. Rollup gets two for Kurt as does a suplex. Stunner is countered into the Angle Slam which is good for three.

Rating: C+. Standard good main event tag match here and THIS is how you build up Austin vs. Angle. Angle beat Austin (mostly) clean in a non-title match so there's a reason to believe that he can do it again on Sunday, giving us a reason to want to watch the match to see if he can. That's basic booking and no one can seem to get that anymore. This was a good match.

Overall Rating: C+. The show was good again this week but you can still see all of the major problems this show has. It's like a nice painting covering up a huge hole in a wall: the outside looks good but it doesn't change the fact that the hole is there. Stephanie needs to pick a story and stick with it, because her nose is in EVERYTHING right now and it's not helping. Look at Shane: he pops up with different people but he's not the focal point of anything but Rock's feud, which makes him much more effect. Well that and he can actually do stuff. Stephanie is heavily involved in multiple stories and it's not helping.

Also you still have the huge rosters and most of the people have nothing to do other than pop up every now and then. Case in point: Saturn and Raven. You have these two talented guys and the best you can do is throw them together because of a mop? Do they think people are going to care about that? That's another issue with this: we have no reason to care about these guys and like I've been saying for weeks now, the Invasion happened and now...what? There never was an answer to that and it's becoming more and more of a problem.

Here's Unforgiven if you're interested:

[Unforgiven 2001: Angle Does It For America](#)

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Monday Night Raw – September 10, 2001: Can We Just Keep Stephanie In That Outfit Forever?

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 10, 2001

Location: Freeman Coliseum, San Antonio, Texas

Attendance: 8,239

Commentators: Jim Ross, Paul Heyman

We have two shows left before Unforgiven but if you look at the date of this one, you know that the next week's show isn't going to be your usual one. The main event of the show, that being Austin vs. Angle, is now set due to Angle going psycho last week which is completely against his character but he did it anyway. Let's get to it.

We open with a clip of Austin and Angle from last week with Austin being tortured into a frenzy and giving Angle a rematch. On Smackdown Austin pretended that RVD was Angle and destroyed him. Austin had RVD beat but Angle popped up, causing Austin to get rolled up and pinned.

Here's Austin to open the show. Scratch that as he's leading

the entire Alliance to the ring. Austin talks about how the people probably think he's embarrassed, having lost to a member of the Alliance last week and that he cried last week on Raw. He isn't ashamed of himself, but rather of everyone in the arena and the ten million people watching on TV because they'll be cheering for Angle at Unforgiven.

Austin demands that RVD get into the ring. He wants to know who RVD thinks he is, and finger pointing results. Austin doesn't like him and RVD doesn't like him. The latter of those statements drew a huge pop. Austin puts down his belt and asks Rob to put his own down...and we have a hug. He likes RVD because of his confidence and thinks RVD should have enough confidence to challenge Angle to a match tonight. RVD calls Angle a great athlete and says he'd love to face him later.

Stone Cold says that he wants the Alliance to have confidence. That means that Test wants to say something. Test wants the Rock later tonight. He knows Shane and Booker are going to take the title off Rock at Unforgiven, but tonight he just wants to beat Rock up. Oh and nothing good has ever come from Texas. Austin: "He means you people, not me!" Now Kanyon has something to say too. He's issuing an open challenge to any WWF wrestler for a US Title match, and he's throwing that out just like Angle wanted to throw Austin off a bridge last week.

Now Taz wants to say something because this segment isn't long enough yet. He thinks that at Unforgiven, Angle is going to beat Austin up and possibly take his title as well. That earns him a Stunner and a big beatdown from the other three Alliance members in the ring. Test kicks his head off and RVD adds a Five Star. And that's it.

Christian vs. Billy Gunn

Christian jumps him immediately but gets reversed into the corner where Billy takes over. A hip toss gets two as does a Jackhammer. A Stinger Splash misses and Billy hits the post.

Reverse DDT takes Billy down and Christian chokes him on the ropes. Oh yeah he's a heel now. I almost forgot. Billy counters a piledriver and slingshots Christian into the corner. Christian pulls the referee in the way of the Fameasser and rolls Billy up in the corner for the pin with his feet on the ropes.

Rating: D+. Billy is one of those guys that they tried time after time to push and it never quite clicked other than when he was in the Outlaws. At the end of the day he's the same guy that didn't get over on his own but they kept pushing him over and over again. I know some people are fans of his but I've never quite gotten the appeal. Christian would continue his awesome feud with Edge soon after this.

Billy beats him up post match in a vain attempt to get people to care. Christian comes back and hits him with a chair. A One Man Conchairto ends Gunn.

Test and Stephanie are impressed by Christian. Test is going to impress her like that later tonight against Rock. Stephanie makes it a handicap match and Rock can pick Test's partner. Just put the tights on her now.

Storm thinks the Hurricane gimmick is brilliant. Hurricane says he's not pretending. I think he debuts whatsupwitdat here.

Hardy Boyz/Lita vs. Hurricane/Lance Storm/Ivory

Hurricane vs. Matt to get us going and there's a loud Lita chant. The Hardys double team both men and it's off to Storm vs. Jeff. Hurricane sneaks in and hooks a neckbreaker for two and it's back to Lance. The Alliance team double teams Jeff and Ivory gets in a slap as well. Dropkick gets two for Storm.

Hurricane puts the cape on for a second for a clothesline then has Ivory take it back off. Matt gets in but Storm hits an enziguri while Matt is on the middle rope. Jeff knocks him to

the floor and hits a dive to take out Storm. Back in the ring the girls come in and Lita beats up Ivory before snapping off a rana on Hurricane. Matt hits the Twist on Ivory and the Litasault gets the pin.

Rating: C. Not bad here but it was always good to see Lita. Ivory's looks are underrated as well. The guys' feuds didn't go anywhere anytime soon as the Hardys were thrown back into a feud with the Dudleys because we hadn't seen that recently enough. The match was nothing special though.

Cole goes to find out who Rock is going to pick for Test's partner. Apparently Rock just got out of the shower and doesn't have a towel on, so he catches Cole looking at the People's Strudel. He says give him a minute.

The APA are playing cards when Jericho comes in to an ovation so loud that I can't understand what he says. They have a six man up next. Jericho gets in a jab at Stephanie because the APA offers protection and Stephanie doesn't use any.

Tarjiri is sitting on Regal's desk with Torrie and Regal says that tonight, Tajiri is getting the US Title shot.

Rock has his trunks on now and Cole explains the challenge to him. First of all, two important words for Cole: EYE CONTACT. He talks about what the partner needs to have to compliment Test. They need to be fast, easy to manipulate, and have no testicles. Fast, easy and no testicles. Test's partner will be Stephanie. Rock talks about how Test and Stephanie used to be engaged and sings a bit of the Wedding March for us.

Dudley Boys/Rhyno vs. Chris Jericho/Acolytes

Farroq and D-Von start things off. D-Von punches a lot but walks into a clothesline for two. Off to Jericho who has his legs spread by the Dudleys. Rhyno comes in with a spinebuster for two. Off to Bubba for some elbows and a chinlock. He loads up the middle rope backplash but Farroq's distraction allows

Jericho to knock Bubba off the ropes. Hot tag to Bradshaw and D-Von as things pick up. Everything breaks down and Jericho single handedly knocks the Dudleys to the floor. Bradshaw's Clothesline and the Lionsault pins Rhyno.

Rating: C. This was ok but these midcard feuds just kind of keep going and going. That was the problem that the Invasion had for it: none of the midcard stuff or the main event stuff for that matter either, ever went anywhere. Both sides won some stuff and they traded the titles back and forth, but nothing ever went anywhere until November when they just said here's a winner take all match. That's what held things back, among other things.

Stephanie rants about what Rock said to Test. Test doesn't need her and wants it to be a one on one match. Stephanie insists she's in it too because where would we be without the McMahons in the ring?

RVD comes in to see Austin and asks if it should be for the Hardcore Title when he faces Angle. Austin says he'd put it on the line so RVD says it's a title match. Austin thinks RVD could be the next Austin in 5-10 years. RVD is happy being RVD.

Booker T vs. Undertaker

Taker shoves him into the corner and hammers away but runs into an elbow. Never mind as he kicks Booker's head off for two. Out to the floor and Booker rams him into various things. He picks up a chair but Hebner won't let him. That's a good referee for once. Back in the ring Taker pounds away on Booker and hits the jumping clothesline. Booker kicks him in the face which Taker won't sell. The side kick puts him down for a second but he blocks the ax kick and loads up the chokeslam but stops to beat up Steven Richards who runs in. Booker hits the scissors kick out of nowhere for the pin.

Rating: D. This would be one of those matches where just

because Booker won, it doesn't really mean anything. Taker almost kicked out of the kick and it took a run-in to let Booker hit a shot for a fluke win. This is one of the big problems Undertaker had back then: he wouldn't sell for anyone and it kept his losses from meaning anything.

To further hammer in that point, Steven is about to take the Last Ride when Kronik runs in to beat Undertaker up, making Booker's win completely forgotten. They beat Undertaker down and put him through the table. You know, because having Booker beat Taker clean and beat him down, possibly with an injury angle to make Booker look more lethal and as more of a threat against Rock, would have been stupid.

Stephanie (looking GOOD in her workout gear but with stupid looking hair) is outside on the phone with Shane who tries to talk her out of the match. This is the building where she won the Women's Title so she can be dominant here again.

US Title: Tajiri vs. Kanyon

Kanyon takes him into the corner to start but Tajiri gets behind him and fires off the strikes. They go to the corner and the Flatliner gets two for Kanyon. They go to the floor where nothing happens and Tajiri tries a sunset flip coming back in. In a SWEET counter, Kanyon stands up and hooks a northern lights suplex out of the sunset flip attempt for two. Kanyon picks up the belt but Torrie grabs it and swings, hitting Tajiri in the head for two. Kanyon gets a rollup with his feet on the ropes for two. Green Mist and the Buzzsaw Kick give Tajiri the title.

Rating: C-. Not a horrible match I guess and Torrie looked smoking hot as always, but giving them a total of three and a half minutes didn't do them any favors. Both of these guys were good in the ring but their characters weren't going to get them any further than they got here, and that's ok.

Recap of Austin vs. Angle. This is an extended version of the

opening video.

Austin gives RVD a pep talk and RVD says he'll win, which is what Angle couldn't do, "Because I'm Rob..." Austin: "I KNOW WHO YOU ARE!!!!" That made me laugh way more than it should have.

Hardcore Title: Rob Van Dam vs. Kurt Angle

Angle gets technical to start so RVD hits him with a technical elbow to the face. Kurt is cool with that and suplexes RVD to the floor. Back in an enziguri puts Kurt down but he fights out of the corner. Van Dam tries to jump over Angle coming out of the corner but Kurt grabs the foot and puts on the ankle lock. RVD quickly grabs the rope, which is **HARDCORE!** They head outside and Van Dam hits a knee to the face for two, only to get caught in the ankle lock again.

This time he grabs a chair and cracks Kurt in the head with it to put him down. Back inside and they slug it out with Van Dam kicking Kurt's head off. He puts the chair on top of Angle's chest and puts Kurt on the apron for a slingshot legdrop which gets two on the floor. Angle counters a piledriver and drives the chair into Van Dam's throat. Up to the stage and Rob uses the metal part of the set to pull himself up and choke Angle. As Kurt gets back up Rob tries a spin kick but Kurt grabs the ankle and gets the submission and the title.

Rating: C. Pretty decent match here and Angle looks like a better threat against Austin as a result. I'm sure they'll wind up screwing it up because he can't go into a world title match as the Hardcore Champion because that might make the title seem like a big deal (not sarcastic here as that wouldn't make sense) and that shouldn't happen.

Immediately after the fall, Austin comes out and throws BOTH guys off the stage with Van Dam getting the pin a second later to regain the title. Great.

Angle is stretched out so JR and Heyman yell at each other A LOT. It's about would Angle have thrown Austin off a bridge or not. JR says of course not because he didn't do it. The table is gone due to the Undertaker attack earlier so it looks even better.

Test/Stephanie McMahon vs. The Rock

Stephanie looks GREAT in the sports bra and workout pants. JR says that Stephanie left Test standing at the altar to REALLY mess with history and Heyman calls him out on it without saying what happened. Stephanie sits in on commentary instead of getting in the ring. Test jumps him in the corner to start and is quickly sent to the floor. Stephanie gets in a few shots and Test hammers on Rock back in the ring. Sidewalk slam gets two.

Off to a bearhug as Stephanie and Heyman suck up to each other. Rock comes back with the spinning DDT and both guys are down. Rock slugs away and loads up the Rock Bottom but Test escapes. Rock hits the spinebuster instead but Stephanie trips him on the People's Elbow attempt. Test kicks Rock's head off and Stephanie covers him for two. Rock Bottom to Stephanie is broken up so she calls down Booker. Rock counters the pumphandle and shoves Test into Stephanie, setting up the Rock Bottom for the pin.

Rating: C-. Nothing match but DANG Stephanie's new rack looked great out there. Seriously there's nothing else to praise in this match other than those things. This was the same thing they've done with Rock for the last three weeks so it's kind of hard to care about this match at all.

Angle has a bad neck and might be out of Unforgiven. Austin seems....pleased?

Overall Rating: C+. This wasn't a bad show and they built up Unforgiven some more, but the rest of the card really needs to be fleshed out. The title change in there didn't mean anything

but getting the title off Canyon was a good idea. It wasn't a great show, but for a show that needed to build up the PPV more, this was a good one.

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Monday Night Raw – September 14, 1998: The Rock Turns Face

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 14, 1998

Location: San Jose Arena, San Jose, California

Attendance: 13,161

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Finally we're back on Mondays and it's time to get ready for Breakdown. We have this and one more show before then and THANK GOODNESS the big names are back tonight. I couldn't take another week like we had the previous two shows with all of the DQ's and then the B level talent two days before this. The card is interesting looking tonight so let's get to it.

Here's Austin to open the show. Vince, Taker and Kane are already in the ring without having entrances televised. That's something you don't see every day. Vince says cut the music and goes into a rant about how he's tired of seeing that title on Austin's shoulder. On September 27 (notice that Vince keeps saying the date instead of just the name. That's very

important in building a show) there's a triple threat match with Austin defending against both Brothers of Destruction.

Vince says he'll never forget all of the stuff Austin has done to them. He says that he's scratched the monsters' back so now they'll be watching his. If Austin goes after Vince at all, either one or both of them will be all over Austin immediately. Also at the PPV, Undertaker can't pin Kane and Kane can't pin Undertaker.

Vince flat out says it's two on one because Austin won't do things the easy way. Stone Cold screwed Stone Cold. That's enough for Austin and he goes after Vince but the monsters jump him. They finish him with a double chokeslam. While on the ramp, Taker says it's just business. Vince adds that it's Austin defending against Shamrock later tonight.

Austin is mad after a break.

Jeff Jarrett vs. Road Dogg

Billy has braids in his hair in case he didn't look stupid enough already. We actually get clips of the Roadie days. Jarrett jumps him to start but he slides between Roadie's legs and walks into the Shake Rattle and Roll for two. A back elbow puts Jarrett down and the shaky kneedrop gets two. Road Dogg goes to the corner for ten punches, with Jeff's face towards the crowd. That's a new one. Jarrett comes back but crotches himself on the middle rope. Southern Justice pulls Road Dogg to the floor for a beatdown so Billy and Pac come running. The distraction lets Jeff hit the guitar shot for the pin.

Rating: C-. Not much here but it's cool to see some people with history together out there together. I'm not sure what they were going with here by pushing Jarrett over DX but I think it was supposed to wind up with Jarrett getting a main event heel push but Austin put the brakes on that hard and you don't argue with Austin in 1998. Southern Justice only had about two weeks left on Raw.

We get a clip from Heat last night where Shamrock called out Austin and challenged him for a title match anywhere anytime.

Road Dogg is put into an ambulance due to a guitar shot to the throat.

Kane vs. The Rock

In the back Rock is giving the Nation instructions but it turns into an argument so finally Rock says he'll do this himself. They slug it out to start and Rock gets knocked to the floor. He grabs Kane's leg and rams it into the apron and steps but he can't keep Kane down. Kane powerslams him down and the fans are totally behind Rock here. Another slam sets up the top rope clothesline for two.

Rock avoids an elbow drop and hits the spinning DDT to get the fans back into it. Kane sits up but Rock punches Kane down in the corner. Neckbreaker gets two. The referee gets bumped and Rock hits the People's Elbow. Undertaker jumps in and beats up Rocky, throwing him to the floor. Mankind comes in with a sledgehammer and blasts Kane in the back of the head with it, giving Rock the pin.

Rating: C. If he wasn't already, the Rock was just turned face. His match at Summerslam was such a show stealer that the fans couldn't help but cheer him. Thankfully WWF picked up on that and ran with it, unlike today where they seem incapable of listening to their audience the majority of the time. The match was pretty decent too.

Undertaker says this ends tonight with Mankind, and he can bring the sledgehammer.

Mankind says he's been working on some scientific moves so he'd be glad to accept Undertaker's offer to a fair fight.

Here's Dustin Runnels to complain about how horrible this place is anymore. Someone is still coming apparently. Cue Val

Venis for some innuendo. He has a new video for Dustin called The Preacher's Wife, which is him in bed with his wife Terri. Dustin breaks down and falls to his knees. Val: "I guess getting on your knees runs in the family."

We see the REAL MAN'S MAN Steven Regal chopping down a tree. No song unfortunately.

Intercontinental Title: HHH vs. Owen Hart

They fight over wrist control to start with Owen doing his counter to the wristlock with the flip and nipup in it. Clothesline gets two for the champion. HHH runs the ropes a bit but walks into a belly to belly to give Owen control. Small package gets two for the future Game but he gets caught by an enziguri for two. Powerslam gets the same. HHH comes back with a leg sweep and some clotheslines. Facebuster gets two. The spinning heel kick from Owen looks to set up the Sharpshooter but Henry and Chyna get in a fight. The distraction allows HHH to hit the Pedigree to retain.

Rating: C+. Did Owen ever get a fair pin over HHH? If he did I certainly can't remember it. This furthers the idea of the Nation having problems which would result in a breakup soon after this. HHH would get hurt pretty soon and have to forfeit the title if I remember correctly. This was more about the stuff outside though.

Henry challenges Chyna and X-Pac to a handicap match which is accepted.

Mankind loads up weapons into a dumpster while singing It's Off To Work We Go.

Mankind vs. The Undertaker

Mankind brings a dumpster full of weapons which he sets up around the ring. They both have sledgehammers so Mankind grabs the Claw to make Undertaker drop his. They immediately go to

the floor and Taker is slammed into the side of the dumpster. There's a ladder but Taker gets in a shot and works on the hands of Foley. He crushes the left hand between the steps and throws Foley through a table. They finally get back in the ring and Taker punches him down.

Back to the outside and Mankind manages a Stunner onto the top rope, losing his mask in the process. Undertaker kicks him into the side of the dumpster and puts Mankind against the steps. He swings the sledgehammer at Mankind's head but due to wanting to avoid death, Foley moves. Kane chokeslams Mankind through the table and they go back in. Taker has the hammer so Mankind grabs a chair.

Taker kicks the chair into his face and chokeslams Foley. I'm pretty sure the match is thrown out at this point. Tombstone on a chair leaves Foley dead. He grabs the hammer but Rock pops out of the dumpster to save Foley and draw the Brothers away. How did Rock know when to pop out or what was going on outside?

Rating: C. It was a mess but these two are always worth looking at. This would continue the Rock's turn and make Undertaker look like a complete psycho, thereby furthering his heel turn instead of being a tweener. It wasn't really a match and it didn't really have an ending, but it was entertaining enough.

Gangrel vs. Edge

Edge comes off the top rope and pounds on Gangrel to start. Downward Spiral is blocked and Gangrel goes up, only to get caught in a front falling electric chair drop. A German suplex is countered into a modified belly to belly by Gangrel for two. Edge comes out of the corner with a neckbreaker but a swan dive misses. Impaler is countered and they go to the floor. Edge tries a plancha but Gangrel moves, sending Edge crashing down. The Impaler on the floor knocks Edge out and

the match is thrown out.

Rating: C-. Nothing much here but it's always cool to see someone like Edge when they're just getting started. The real explanation of these two was never given but it was clearly something about vampires or whatever. Gangrel never quite clicked in WWF but that's probably because he was hanging out with guys like Edge and eventually Christian, which would make almost anyone look inferior.

X-Pac/Chyna vs. Mark Henry

X-Pac starts but gets shoved to the floor. D-Lo comes out to counteract HHH. Jarrett and Southern Justice come out just after Brown, giving us a total of eight people in the arena for this. HHH grabs a chair as Pac tries to suplex Henry. Chyna comes in to help and they THROW Henry over in a suplex. That looked awesome. Pac gets in some kicks before tagging in Chyna for a spear. A single forearm puts Henry down and it's back to Pac. Another spin kick sets up the Bronco Buster but Brown grabs Chyna's leg. Pac takes him out and Chyna goes up. She jumps into a powerslam and gets pinned. Too short to rate but it was ok.

Sable vs. Jacqueline

Evening gown match. Before the match we get a clip from 1995 with the Fink vs. Harvey Whippelman in a tuxedo match. Sable kicks her in the ribs a few times and rips a strap off the gown. Total squash with Sable pounding on her, powerbombing her and stripping her. This was nothing.

Sable strips her own gown off post match.

Shamrock says Austin will be the next victory for him.

WWF World Title: Ken Shamrock vs. Steve Austin

Austin goes right for him and the fight is on. Shamrock takes him down and they go to the mat. Ken goes for the ankle but

Austin bails to the floor and gets his shirt off. He pulls Shamrock to the mat and wraps it around the post. A suplex sets up a headlock by Austin as the match slows way down. Back to their feet and Shamrock hits a heel kick and a quick suplex for two. Austin powerbombs him out of a rana and adds a middle rope elbow for two.

Back to the chinlock as Austin keeps slowing things down. It's not a bad thing I guess but it's uncharacteristic for Austin. He tries a Boston Crab but Shamrock spins him off. There's a sleeper but it's quickly broken up. They go up to the corner and Shamrock headbutts him down to the mat. He jumps off but Austin punches him out of the air. Back to the chinlock but Shamrock comes back, only to get thrown to the floor.

Austin follows him out and loads up a piledriver, only to get backdropped onto the concrete. Back inside Shamrock pounds him down in the corner and chokes Austin on the mat. There's the Boston Crab but Austin makes a rope. Austin gets the rope and stomps Shamrock down into the corner. They collide in the middle...and here are Undertaker and Kane for the DQ.

Rating: B-. This was a very good idea for a show like this as Austin had to break a sweat here and had a real challenge but was never in any real danger of losing the title. For something like a fifteen minute match, that's a great way to end a Raw. Why they don't do this more often today is beyond me.

Rock and Mankind make the save as Vince is panicking. Austin chases Vince away to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. This was WAY better than the last two weeks as everything had energy to it and a lot of the show was about setting up matches at Breakdown. We're almost to that show now and it's starting to shape up well. After that it's Judgment Day and then on to Survivor Series. Good show here and it's great to be back on track after the horrible Saturday shows.

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Unforgiven 2001: Angle Does It For America

Unforgiven 2001

Date: September 23, 2001

Location: Mellon Arena, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 13,855

Commentators: Jim Ross, Paul Heyman

Boy have things changed in a year. We're in the Alliance Era now, meaning we have two world title matches. First up is a handicap match with Shane/Booker teaming up to fight Rock for the WCW Title and Angle vs. Austin with Angle getting another shot as the hometown boy. This is a very different style also as other than two matches, everything is over ten minutes long. Let's get to it.

This is less than two weeks after 9/11 so let's get patriotic! There's some miscommunication in there somewhere as she starts to sing God Bless America after being announced as singing America the Beautiful. She has one of those voices where the louder she gets the more it sounds like screeching.

The opening video talks about the aforementioned main events.

WWF Tag Titles: Hardy Boys vs. Hurricane/Lance Storm vs. Dudley Boys vs. Big Show/Spike Dudley

Dudleys have the titles and this is elimination rules. Helms is European Champion. Storm/Hurricane and the Dudleys are Alliance. Brawl to start with Show beating up the Dudleys on his own. Matt vs. D-Von gets us going officially but it's off to Hurricane quickly. Hurricane poses a lot so Matt arm drags him and poses too. The hat wearing Jeff comes in to a girl pop.

Spike wants to fight Helms because he tried to steal Molly from Spike so Helms runs. He lets Storm beat Spike down and then comes back in. Helms wanted Molly to be his superhero sidekick. That could never happen right? I mean it's not like she'd...ok so she turns on Spike later in the week and becomes Mighty Molly. Hurricane gets the cape (which was a really disappointing show) and it's gone that fast. Gutbuster gets two on Spike. Off to Lance who gets caught in a Dudley Dog to put both guys down.

Hot tag brings in Show and it breaks down fast. The Hardys dive on a lot of people and Spike climbs onto Show's shoulders to dive on EVERYONE. Show points to the corner and everyone in the arena freaks. Bubba breaks it up so Show beats up everyone in sight, chokeslamming Storm to end him and get us down to three teams. The Dudleys hit a double suplex on Show and Matt is back in, rolling Spike up for two.

Spike counters the Twist of Fate into a neckbreaker for two. The second attempt works a bit better and SHOCK AND AWE SHOCK AND AWE, we get the Hardys vs. the Dudleys. Bubba breaks up Poetry in Motion and they call for 3D. It's Bubba vs. Jeff now and Bubba chops loudly. Jeff jumps really high on a back drop and it looks great. Matt tries to come in and help, letting Jeff get caught in What's Up.

D-Von hooks a chinlock and Jeff is in trouble again. D-Von gets a sloppy powerslam for two. Out to the floor and Bubba sends Jeff into the steps and that looked nasty as Jeff was a bit high so his hip hit the steps straight on. Jeff manages to

fire off a Whisper in the Wind (I don't think Ross knows that name) and brings in Matt. He dives out to the floor with a moonsault to take out both Dudleys. Twist of Fate is countered into 3D but Jeff dives off with a Swanton to break it up. Bubba hits his self-titled Bomb as Jeff is being put out so D-Von can steal the pin to retain.

Rating: B-. Pretty fun opener here and it ate up a lot of time. The Dudleys vs. the Hardys was always entertaining but dude, how many times can they have it before it gets boring? The tag division was totally dead by the time we got to Mania so that should tell you a lot right there. This was good stuff though and the other teams actually made it a bit better which is rare in these matches.

RVD is just getting here. No wonder he was criticized. Stephanie comes up to him and wishes him luck against Jericho. She offers him services and sex might be kind of almost maybe sort of involved. He turns her down but I think she meant managing. He does need help finding a dressing room. Her hair is awful here.

Angle's family is in the front row. Well if that doesn't seal the ending I don't know what does. Kurt isn't medically cleared due to a neck injury. I'll retract my previous statement: THAT seals it more than anything else.

We recap Raven vs. Saturn which is over Moppy. Moppy is just that: a mop. Saturn was in love with it and Raven put it in a woodchipper. Terri left Saturn for Raven during this also.

Raven vs. Perry Saturn

Saturn goes off on him to start as Paul gets in the line of the night: "They're fighting over the memory of a mop." Raven goes to the floor and hits the Russian leg sweep into the barrier and a drop toehold into the steps. JR talks about the Flock and Heyman talks about how JR never watched Nitro. JR: "I was busy!" Back in and Raven grabs a cobra clutch of all

things.

Saturn escapes but Raven hits a HARD knee lift to send him out to the floor. Saturn keeps trying to get back in but Raven keeps knocking him back to the floor. He manages to get back in with a sunset flip but Raven grabs the rope for two. Saturn hits his usual nice superkick and pounds away. Suplex puts Raven down again. Raven counters a top rope rana and a sunset flip gets two. Perry goes way old school with a catapult and the Moss Covered Three Handled Family Credenza gives Saturn the win.

Rating: C. This was a Raw match but it was fine. Saturn bleeding from the eye made him look like a warrior...even though this wasn't a match that needed a warrior. These two always had solid chemistry together and even here with Raven and Saturn both meaning nothing it was a decent match.

To show what the Alliance did to the company, every match after this is a title match.

Christian talks to the gorgeous Lillian about Edge and how he's going to fulfill his dream and prove he's better than his brother. It's worth it too.

We recap Edge vs. Christian which is about Christian being jealous of Edge's success, namely winning the KOTR and IC Title. This led to the awesome "CHRISTIAN! CHRISTIAN! AT LAST YOU ARE ON YOUR 0-0-0-0-0-WN" music. Edge's face visuals were amazing in this feud.

Intercontinental Title: Christian vs. Edge

Edge has the always awesome Rob Zombie entrance here too. Edge hammers away to start and Christian tries to get a breather. They fight up the ramp and it's all Edge here. Edge hits a slingshot to send his brother/friend into the set face first. Back to the ring and Edge is in firm control. He rams Christian's head into the middle buckle ten times and chokes

away a bit.

Christian sends him into the post and let's talk about grandma. Christian is really not quite used to being on offense on his own yet. It took him a few years to really get going with it and even then it took him a few more years to break to the main event level. Edge gets a shot in and heads up top. He shoves his brother/friend off and jumps, landing on his feet. He fakes out Christian and the Canadian hits a German on the Canadian for two.

Edge is bleeding from under his eye. They slug it out and a double cross body puts both of them down. This isn't really gelling but it's not bad. Unprettier is countered into the Edge-0-Matic for two. Edge is tossed to the floor and he crawls under the ring so he can come out the other side and hit a top rope cross body for two. The less successful brother goes to the floor and grabs some chairs for a Conchairto but Edge sweeps the leg, sending a chair into Christian's head. Edge tries the same thing and Christian pops him in the balls with a chair for the title.

Rating: C-. It's not a bad match but the flow was way off. It's like they went from one set of spots to the next with little in between. They would get a lot better but at this point Christian just wasn't ready to do much and Edge wasn't good enough in the ring to be able to carry him there yet either.

We recap the Brothers of Destruction vs. Kronik. Steven Richards blamed Taker for RTC splitting up and then Kronik beat him up, drawing out Kane. Kronik cost the Brothers the WWF Tag Titles but since this is the Alliance Era, they had both titles at once so they were still the WCW champions, because once you lose a title match you're still champions right?

Taker talks about how awesome they are and how they'll beat

Kronik.

WCW Tag Titles: Kronik vs. Undertaker/Kane

Richards is with Kronik here. The brawl starts on the floor and it's Adams vs. Taker to officially get us going. Off to Kane who still has a bad arm. Off to Clark with Kronik in control now. Big boot gets two. There are a lot of kicks and punches in this. Kane kind of falls down on a neckbreaker...and then a shoulderbreaker. Taker comes in and works on the arm, hitting Old School.

An armbar goes on but Adams breaks it up. Clark sells the arm so he's up a few steps already. More punches and kicks from Kronik and they're not clicking at all. Kronik takes over with double teaming and upgrades their offense with a double shoulder block for two. Off to the chinlock with Adams keeping Taker down. Back to Clark but Taker hits a running DDT and there's the tag to Kane.

He cleans house and a big boot puts both guys down. A side slam to Clark does the same and Kane loads up a chokeslam. Adams makes the save and we get the rare triple clothesline to put everyone down. Taker comes back in and it all breaks down. He sets for a chokeslam on Clark but Richards comes in for the save. Double chokeslam to Taker is broken up and Kane hits his clothesline and a chokeslam ends Clark to keep the titles on the Brothers.

Rating: D-. This match was voted worst match of the year...and I'm really not sure why. Sure it's bad but I've seen FAR worse matches than this before. Kronik looked as limited as you can be and they would be fired soon after this for the match. They needed more seasoning and the offer was to send them to the minors but they refused and were fired because of it. I don't get why this was blasted so much because it's not the worst match I've ever seen or really even close to it. I'm sure I could find some worse WCW matches.

Post match Steven gets beaten up.

Shane tries to fire up Booker and Taz comes in to fire both of them up.

Steph goes looking for RVD and talks through his door, saying that since tomorrow is her birthday she wants him to destroy Jericho. She still can't act. I mean really, how hard is it to sound like you're not on a script. More sex is implied. Jericho is behind her and it's time for the great insults. "How old are you going to be?" "25." "No I asked how old you'll be, not how many men you've been with in the past week." Implant jokes are made as Stephanie got some surgery recently and I can't say I'm complaining.

Hardcore Title: Rob Van Dam vs. Chris Jericho

JR and Paul have an argument about RVD's ECW accomplishments. Why would you want to argue with Heyman about that? They fight to a stalemate with both guys trying dropkicks and the fans applaud. They exchange some nice pinfall reversals and RVD is the fan favorite. Jericho slaps him in the face and starts winning through the use of strikes. RVD gets a rollup using just his feet for two.

There have been no weapon shots used yet and we're about 5 minutes into this. Jericho is sent to the floor and Van Dam hits a cross body off the apron for two. There's the spin kick to Jericho's back while he's on the railing but Jericho moves as Van Dam crashes. And now it's time for the ladders. Jericho takes his head off with it and we go back into the ring. Van Dam's shoulder goes into the post twice and Jericho is kind of wrestling heel here.

Both guys are suplexed onto the ladder with Jericho doing it second. Rob escapes a Walls attempt and hits a modified Rolling Thunder (he rolled through once and then just splashed him instead of a backsplash) and then a split legged moonsault for two. Lionsault misses and Van Dam takes his head off with

a spin kick, giving us about our third busted eye of the night.

Five Star misses and Jericho gets two. This has been a really good match so far. Jericho takes a drop toehold to send him into the ladder. Rob grabs a chair and slams Jericho down onto it then climbs the ladder. Jericho counters by throwing the ladder at Rob's head and putting the Walls on him ON THE LADDER, ala Benoit at the 01 Rumble. Van Dam crashes to the floor and Jericho misses a dive onto him.

I'm sorry for all the play by play here but it's one of those matches where there's nothing to make fun of. Jericho finds a chair under the ring and RVD's suicide dive eats chair. That only gets two so Jericho sends the arm into the post again. Back inside Jericho takes a spin kick for two but rolls out of the cover into a Fujiwara armbar but Rob makes the ropes. The fans are starting to get behind Jericho as he uses a chair on the arm and back. Here's Stephanie to grab the chair but Jericho takes a BIG swing at her. She drops to the floor, letting Rob hit a Van Daminator and the Five Star to retain.

Rating: B+. Now this is more like it. This is a fine example of the match being about the guys using the weapons rather than the weapons being used on the guys and that almost always guarantees a better match. These are two guys that could have a good match no matter what the stipulation and that's the formula for a great match. Jericho would turn heel soon after this but wouldn't join the Alliance.

Booker fires himself up and Shane helps him. Shane wouldn't mind winning the title either.

We recap Rock vs. Booker/Shane. Rock beat Booker in the main event of Summerslam for the WCW Title. Since Shane owned WCW he made the next match, which is a handicap match for the title. For some reason this is set to Rey's old WCW music.

WCW World Title: Shane McMahon/Booker T vs. The Rock

If either of the heels get a pin, they win the title. Booker and Shane have to tag and Booker starts us off. Rock gets a quick neckbreaker for two as Shane makes the save. I'd expect that a lot tonight. The fans think Shane is a cat. A belly to back suplex gets two as Shane saves again. Shane tags himself in and runs into a fresh Rock. Rock fakes him out after a chase and the beating is on.

JR tries to talk about the WCW traditionalists hating the idea of Shane as champion. There are so many replies to that I'm not sure where to start. The WCW guys take over and work on Rock's ribs. Rock counters Shane with the release overhead belly to belly and Shane is in trouble. Rock grabs a Sharpshooter and Booker makes the save. Outside we go and Shane hits a clothesline off the railing to put Rock down.

Shane may be annoying at times but for a guy that isn't a regular wrestler he can pull off some good stuff. Booker actually covers after a snapmare which thankfully is good for only one. Outside again and Booker misses a big chair shot. Rock can't get anything going because Shane interferes again. There's a slingshot into the post which Rock can sell like no other.

Back inside IT'S A SPINAROOONI!!! Rock grabs a rollup for two and we're back on the floor again. Booker tries to set up the elbow for Shane but Rock moves and punches away. That doesn't last long as he's right back on the table again after a superkick. Back inside and Rock hits a Samoan Drop for no cover as Shane brings the belt in, accidentally clocking Booker with it.

A belt shot to Rock gets two and we're back to a regular match for a few moments. Shane tries to hit his elbow but Rock rolls away. Rock fights them both off with punches and clotheslines. A DDT gets two on Booker. Shane takes Rock down and nips up, setting up a Shanebow. Rock nips up instead and plants Shane with the Rock Bottom. Spinebuster sets up the People's Elbow

on Booker but here's Test to break that up. Somehow this isn't a DQ because Nick Patrick is corrupt.

Bradshaw comes out and chases Test into the crowd as a WWF referee is here now. Why? It's a WCW Title match. He pulls Patrick out of the ring to break up a pin so Patrick beats up the WWF guy. Booker gets two on Rock so the WWF referee pulls Patrick out, only to get blasted by Booker. Book End is broken up and there's a Rock Bottom but there's no referee. Oh wait yeah there is and it's over.

Rating: C. This was fine at first and then it went all nuts. We had two wrestlers run-in, two referees fighting, two ref bumps, a pair of belt shots and a third ref in a handicap match with a crooked referee. And people wonder why it was claimed the main events were overbooked at this point. I mean dude, how hard is it to have Rock make a superman comeback and beat both guys with Rock Bottoms? Either way this wasn't bad but overbooking killed it.

Tajiri wants to fight tonight even though he has bad ribs. Torrie begs to get to be at ringside to Regal and Regal gives in. Uh...point of this?

Stacy is at WWF New York and we get clips of her shaving her legs in a bath.

US Title: Rhyno vs. Tajiri

Tajiri is champion. JR doesn't get how Tajiri can date an Alliance chick in Torrie. Common sense never was Ross' strong suit. Tajiri fires off some kicks and chops but the fans don't care. To be fair this is a filler match between the Rock match and Austin vs. Angle. Rhyno gets in a shot and we hit the chinlock. Big spinebuster gets two. Rhyno goes after Torrie and loads up a Gore but Tajiri kicks him HARD in the face to break it up. Tornado DDT is countered so there's an Octopus Hold and an attempted Tarantula. Buzzsaw Kick misses and a suplex sets up the Gore to give Rhyno the title.

Rating: D+. This was nothing but it wasn't that awful. It needed to be on Smackdown as far as quality but at the same time it did let them have a buffer between the title matches which is a good idea. Also it's not like there was much to see here so a nacho break was a good idea. Why did Tajiri want to fight here though?

We recap Austin vs. Angle. Austin couldn't beat Angle at Summerslam and Angle kicked out of three Stunners. They kind of stalked each other and Austin stole the medals, throwing them in a river. Angle retaliated by taking a lead pipe and blasting Austin in the back of the head with it in Austin's new truck. Austin was fine because it's just a world class athlete hitting you in the back of the head with a lead pipe on an adrenaline rush. Nothing serious there.

He then blindfolded Austin and threatened to throw him in a river if Austin didn't cry. In a funny bit Angle shoved him into a kid's pool to make him think he was in a river. This resulted in Austin shoving him off a stage and injuring his neck. Angle gave an incredibly cool promo, ripping off his neck brace and saying that Austin knows that Angle can beat him. Check that promo out if you can find it.

WWF World Title: Kurt Angle vs. Steve Austin

Angle gets the hometown boy pop and Fink milks it perfectly. "From PITTSBURGH PENNSYLVANIA!" Angle meets him on the ramp and here we go. Austin is hammered down and Angle is all fired up. The champ is all afraid to try the Stunner because either it won't work or the kick to set it up could result in an ankle lock. Angle hits a Thesz Press and hammers away in the corner.

We head to the floor and Austin is reeling. Austin blocks a superplex but Kurt is like oh yes you are going and hits it on the second attempt. Austin grabs a sleeper but gets countered by a jawbreaker. He tries to leave with the title but Angle

catches up to him and throws Austin off the ramp just like Austin did to him a few weeks ago. Angle puts him against the railing and pounds him down with punches and chops.

Kurt picks Austin up and carries him back to the ring, ramming him into the post. We're seven minutes into this and it's been 95% Angle. He stops to peel back the mats and Austin gets a knee to the back to take over. Piledriver on the floor doesn't work and Austin is cut above the eye. Angle chops away and tries an Olympic piledriver but is backdropped as well.

Angle tries a suplex out there but Austin reverses and drops him onto the table. He does it again and the table is sturdy. Here's a third try and it STILL doesn't break. That's a good table! Austin drives knees to the neck back inside. He talks trash to Kurt's family in the front row which is why he's a great heel: he knows how to get a crowd riled up which so few people today know how to do.

Off to the chinlock and I'm cool with that as they've been going hard for almost 15 minutes. Austin pounds on the back but gets caught in the Germans. It's just three this time but Kurt is holding his neck. Austin tries a super belly to back but Kurt reverses into a bad looking cross body for two.

Release spinebuster puts Angle down and Austin kicks him in the little Olympians. The referee is shoved so Angle kicks Austin low to even things up. A DDT sends Austin to the floor and we're running out of time. This has been pretty good but it's certainly no classic. Back in Angle stuns Austin for two. Austin hits a belly to back suplex called the Angle Slam. I mean he didn't even try to change it. A piledriver gets a close two and Austin is getting mad. He loads up the Stunner but Angle grabs the boot and the ankle lock gives Angle the title.

Rating: B. The match was certainly good but it's not on the level I think they were hoping for. It never quite hit that

level of intensity and violence and Angle's neck injury didn't quite live up to the amount of intensity that I think it was supposed to. Definitely good though, just not a classic.

Angle's family comes in for the huge celebration post match. The WWF comes in too and it's a huge party. He would lose the title in 15 days so this doesn't mean much long term. Still though it's a very cool moment here.

Overall Rating: B. This was a good bit above last year's show and the length of the matches help it. The Alliance Era wasn't kind though and the future of a ton of title matches on every show proves to be a coming problem. Angle winning the title was a cool moment but Rock is a world champion also. It kind of deflates it a bit no? Still though, fun show and one of the better ones of this era.

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Monday Night Raw – September 12, 1998: Save Us Stone Cold!

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 12, 1998

Location: Tsongas Arena, Lowell, Massachusetts

Attendance: 10,000

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're on Saturday again for our first of two Raws in three

days. We're continuing the push to Breakdown on the 28th. We're in the full stretch of Austin vs. Vince now as Vince is trying to have Kane and Undertaker get the title off Austin by manipulating them somehow. Other than that we're kind of transitioning from the Summer to the end of the year which culminates at Survivor Series. Let's get to it.

The arena looks really different here as the aisle is shaped like an L instead of a straight line, so the video screen (not the Titantron) is on the opposite side from the camera instead of on the side if that makes sense.

Jeff Jarrett vs. Edge

Jarrett takes over quickly and rams Edge into the buckle. Edge comes back with an enziguri and here's Southern Justice with a guitar. Jeff hits a powerslam for two. Northern lights suplex gets two for the Canadian. They're going back and forth very quickly here. Out to the floor goes Edge but he comes back with a top rope cross body for two. Jarrett hits what would become the Stroke for no cover. DDT gets two for Jarrett as does a catapult into the buckle for Edge. Edge hits two Amigos and a sitout gordbuster for the third. And there's the guitar shot for the DQ loss for Jarrett.

Rating: C. This was getting good until the end with the lame ending. Edge was a great addition to the roster in a few years but here he was still learning his stuff pretty slowly. Jarrett got MUCH better after getting his haircut and starting the guitar stuff. Also dropping the stupid country music stuff helped a lot.

Austin vs. Kane vs. Undertaker later tonight. Gee that's kind of a quick addition.

Bradshaw vs. Darren Drozdov

Droz has a torn bicep coming into this. Bradshaw runs him down almost immediately and suplexes Droz for two. Droz comes back

with a powerslam but gets backdropped to the floor. Back in the big boot misses and Drozdov hits a big shoulder block to take over. Apparently that triple threat I mentioned earlier is for Breakdown, not tonight. Droz counters the Clothesline and hits a DDT followed by a three point clothesline for two. Bradshaw scoops the feet in the corner and puts his own feet on the ropes for the cheap pin.

Rating: D+. Not a bad match but I never got the appeal of Droz. When you have what he had as a gimmick there's only so far you can go but he tried. Bradshaw was just waiting for the APA to hook up so he'd have anything to do. Until then he was just a ticked off Texan of which there were about a hundred over the years. Not bad, but just a filler.

I think this show was more like a special rather than a full episode of Raw as we get a long recap of Austin/Kane/Undertaker from over the summer.

Mark Mero vs. Miguel Perez

Yeah this is acting a lot more like a special as there aren't any promos or anything but a bunch of quick matches. Also it seems like this show is a little shorter than most usual ones. Feeling out process to start as Perez is using his speed advantage to take over. A dropkick puts Mero on the floor and Marc slows things down a bit. Top wristlock gets no one anywhere but Mero takes over with a clothesline in the corner. Perez comes back with a dropkick and standing moonsault for two. DDT gets the same but Perez walks into the TKO for the pin.

Rating: C-. Not a terrible match here but it was a glorified squash which I'm not a fan of. At the very least we didn't have to hear Jackie talk during this. Perez was never on Raw again so at least he went out losing. Granted I don't think I ever saw him win so this isn't a shock. Is it clear I'm trying to fill in this space yet?

The Oddities aren't worried about the DOA later.

Disciples of Apocalypse vs. Oddities

Golga and Kurrgan here. The ICP play them to the ring again here which was probably a bigger deal back then. Kurrgan and I think Skull start things off before it's time for the jumping Cartman loving Earthquake. King has Golga's Cartman next to him with the crown on it. Golga loads up the Earthquake...and the top rope breaks. It falls off the corner and Golga gets choked with it. The ICP run in for the DQ because the ring is broken.

The clowns get beaten up post match.

Here's Rock with something to say. He wants to talk about the ladder match at Summerslam where he beat up HHH for thirty minutes but then HHH climbed the ladder and stole the Rock's Intercontinental Title. The Rock will always be the People's Champion though. Lately though people have had issues knowing their roles. Those people would be the Undertaker and Kane. Kane isn't going to get away with chokeslamming the Rock and sometime soon Rock will be coming for Kane. This would be something very close to a face turn.

And now for something completely different, here's the Lion's Den match from Summerslam, in its entirety.

Owen Hart vs. Ken Shamrock

This match is taking place in a theater adjacent to MSG. I know that because Ross said that this match is taking place in a theater adjacent to MSG. So this is the WWF version of the UFC cage but they're wrestling a WWF style match in there, which is about what you'd expect I guess, as it's pretty clear Shamrock wouldn't have much trouble in a real MMA fight with Owen.

Hart would hang on for awhile, but it's not likely he would

have much of a chance in the long run. The cage offers some different effects, but it's nothing earth shattering. It's better than a normal match would have been though, as it suits Shamrock very well. Speaking of that, he hits a sweet move as he gets a running start and plants his foot on the cage to jump backwards and catch Owen with I think either a back elbow or a dropkick.

Either way it looks very good and he nailed him with it. The cage isn't really offering a lot of differences, but the main one is on whips. With no ropes, you're just hitting cage, which has to hurt pretty badly. Hart gets the sharpshooter, which Ross says no one does better. Remind me never to leave WWF.

This is likely the coolest spot of the match as Shamrock crawls to the cage and climbs it while in the Sharpshooter, forcing the hold to be broken. The problem is they just brush over it, despite it being brilliant. Owen gets a choke on him but Shamrock runs up the cage to backflip out of it and gets the real ankle lock, not the Angle lock, to get the win.

Rating: B-. This was a weird concept and I guess it worked. It didn't really fail, but it just wasn't the best thing in the world. Overall the in cage stuff was fine, but it just wasn't to my liking and I'm glad it only happened like three times. Shamrock never quite clicked in the WWF until the next year, so that can't get here soon enough.

Too Much vs. Southern Justice

Christopher and Knight start with Lawler playing cheerleader for his son. Off to Taylor who doesn't have the same luck. Knight kicks him in the chest which gets a hug from Christopher. From what I can tell, Too Much was going to be Billy and Chuck in the Attitude Era but it didn't come together. It turns into a power vs. speed match as Brian tries a cross body out of the corner but gets caught in a powerslam

for two. Hot tag brings in Scotty but there's too much power for Too Much and the Slop Drop pins Scotty.

Rating: D. Whatever again here man. It's very clear that this is just a placeholder show until we get to the real stuff again in two days. That gets really annoying though as we have to sit through a show with stuff like we've gotten so far. I watched Summerslam so why would I want to see that match again on Raw?

Promo of the old guys saying they love the new generation.

Dustin Runnels vs. Vader

Dustin is wearing the "He Is Coming Back" shirt. Vader drills him and pounds him down but is too fat to be Vader anymore. The beating goes on for awhile but Dustin gets in a shot to break the momentum. He makes his comeback (get it?) but sees Val in the crowd with a sign saying "I Have Come." Ok that's kind of funny. Vader jumps the distracted Dustin and actually wins the match with a Vader Bomb. This was very short.

Video on Sable, focusing on her match from Summerslam.

Al Snow is here and wants to talk to Vince. He gets Slaughter, Patterson and Brisco instead. It's a comedy segment that ends with Patterson getting a shot between the legs from Head. Get this show over with already!

The Headbangers think it's Saturday.

Headbangers vs. D'Lo Brown/Mark Henry

Brown and Mosh start things off with Mosh in control. Off to Thrasher who hits a flapjack for two. Henry comes in and it takes double teaming to take him down. A double suplex puts Henry down and it's back to Mosh vs. D'Lo, with the latter hitting a running powerbomb for two. The Headbangers throw the Nation together and here's Chyna for the DQ. Too short to mean anything but it was bad.

D-Generation X vs. Kai En Tai

Taka and Roadie start things off. The Outlaws double team Taka so it's time for Funaki. Men's Teioh comes in and the squash continues. HHH comes in and doesn't bother to take his hat off. HHH chops him in the chest and hits the high knee before bringing Dogg back in. The heels take over and quadruple team Road Dogg with elbows and a dropkick from Taka. Top rope splash gets two for Togo. Road Dogg moves from a top rope splash from Taka and it's off to Pac. Things speed up and everything breaks down. A gorilla press from Billy into the X-Factor pins Taka.

Rating: C-. A squash match to end this wretched show. For some reason that doesn't surprise me. There was never any doubt that DX was going to win this and they never broke a sweat. The Nation didn't even come out to try to avenge the earlier DQ loss. In other words, it's a pretty worthless main event, although that finisher was cool.

HHH gets a fan to flash DX to end the show.

Overall Rating: F. For the love of all things good and holy, NEVER LET AUSTIN AND VINCE BE OFF THE SHOW AGAIN! This was one of the least interesting shows I can ever remember with no main event guys showing up and therefore making it almost a lame house show. I don't know if everyone else was on vacation or what but this show came off like it was nothing. The ONLY thing of note here is Rock calling out Kane which could have been done on any other show. Just horrible and totally not needed, especially with regular Raw being back in two days.

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How I Would Book Lesnar Vs. Cena

I know I say I hate this, but for once I got an idea in my head and I liked what I saw. This isn't a fully fleshed out idea, but it's more for the Cena promo that I would have loved to hear him say tonight. The answer, as most answers are, is found in a Rocky movie. Before I start this, I know full well this would never work on WWE TV, I know it has holes in it, I know it isn't going to happen. I get that.

Now the crux of this is based on the Brock interview that they've aired for the last two weeks. The idea here is that Brock has dominated everything (not named professional football) that he's ever competed in. Everything from amateur wrestling to pro wrestling to the UFC, he's gone to the top of it with no one being able to stand in his path. Lesnar is a finely tuned athletic killing machine that has never been stopped no matter what he attempts.

On the other side you have John Cena, who played college football and is the top man in the WWE and has been for about the last 7 years. He started very slowly and worked his way to the top. The idea is that Cena works his way through every problem he faces and even when he fails, he never gives in and never quits. He spent years and years perfecting his craft, unlike Lesnar who has basically come in and within a month or two is the top dog everywhere.

This presents a very strong dichotomy between the two and gives you an angle to play off of. This is where Rocky V comes in. For those of you that haven't seen it, the end of the movie is a confrontation between Rocky and Tommy Gunn.

Rocky is a street fighter who had no high class training and was very raw for the most part of his career. Gunn was trained well and became a polished fighter. Now at the beginning of the movie, Rocky has been told that he can never step foot into a boxing ring again due to fear of head trauma. This is where the connection kicks in.

By the end of the movie the two are about to fight each other but Gunn's manager says that Tommy only fights in the ring. Rocky says "my ring's outside." Now THIS is where the WWE should pick up on things. The idea is that Lesnar has dominated everything he's done, but everything he's done has had rules. Even in the UFC, everything is regulated and under control at all times. Play up Cena's background as more of a street brawler (if you flash WAY back in his career it's there) and how he's not a polished killing machine like Lesnar, but at Extreme Rules, Lesnar doesn't have anything under control. It's on Cena's terms, not Brock's. It's a street fight, not a match with rounds and rules and on Sunday, anything goes.

To cap it off, picture Cena saying something like this: "And Brock, this Sunday in Chicago, if you think the beatings you took in the UFC were bad, you just wait. There ain't gonna be a referee to pull me off you like when you guys like Cain Velazquez and Allastair Overeem beating your face into a cage. That's what happens when you lose control: you get beaten up Brock. I'm not stopping until the job's done and I'm the one left standing. See you on Sunday."

Thoughts?

Monday Night Raw – April 23, 2012: Starring Brock Lesnar

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 23, 2012

Location: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

It's a three hour show in Detroit tonight. In theory this was going to be the Draft but with the Super Show having guys from both shows on it, there's no real need to have one. Del Rio was officially traded to Smackdown so they could probably have things like that instead of wasting a full show on a Draft. That's probably a good idea as you can use time on other stuff. Today is also Cena's birthday if that means anything. Let's get to it.

Let's burn it to the ground.

We open with the Lesnar vs. Cena contract signing, moderated by Teddy Long. Teddy screws up something about the number of titles Cena has won, because CLEARLY which title he's won makes a difference right? Brock gets his entrance but it's Ace instead. Brock isn't here yet so the signing will be later. Also tonight might be Cena's last night on Raw, so get out of his ring.

Ace goes to leave...and here's Edge. He says he's off his contract in a few days after this but he's here to talk to Cena. However this isn't the real Cena standing in front of him. Edge came to talk to the John Cena who is his greatest rival ever in the WWE. The real Cena is the one that beat him at TLC in Toronto and threw him in the Long Island Sound. Maybe it was Rock beating him that changed Cena, because big losses can change people, like Andre losing to Hogan and the Screwjob and such.

Cena has to find what's inside of him because this is all that both Edge and Cena have ever done. This isn't what Lesnar is all about. He doesn't care about these people unless they can line his pockets. Brock was gone for eight years while Cena and Edge were carrying the load. A loss to Lesnar is a slap in the face of guys like Undertaker, Michaels and Edge, so Cena needs to wake up. He isn't asking Cena to beat Lesnar. He's telling him to. This was pretty freaking awesome.

Chris Jericho vs. Kofi Kingston

Kofi quickly knocks him to the floor and has to do the hair bounce off the top rope thing because Jericho moved out of the way. Back in Jericho easily takes over and chops Kofi down before hooking a headlock. A charge into the corner misses and Jericho is knocked to the floor. Kofi hits a HUGE flip dive over the top which looked awesome. Chris is down as we take a break.

Back with Jericho holding a chinlock (duh) due to the springboard dropkick during the break. The bulldog puts Kofi down but the Lionsault misses. Standing rana gets two for Kofi but Chris hits a clothesline to take him down. Kofi pops back up for the top rope cross body and the SOS for two each. Trouble in Paradise is countered into a Walls attempt but Kofi escapes. He tries a springboard something but jumps into the Codebreaker. Liontamer ends this at 12:00.

Rating: B-. This was getting really good by the end. Kofi is great in this spot and I'd have few problems if he stayed here for awhile. He can be given a quick push if need be but he's fitting in very well as a high flying jobber to the stars. There's nothing wrong with being in this place on the card for a long stretch as a lot of people have had fine careers here.

Jericho says he's going to win the title on Sunday and has a present for Punk when his title reign ends.

We get a clip of Lesnar debuting (in the ring) against Jeff

Hardy and winning by KO at Backlash 2002.

Ace is on the phone when Eve comes in. He tells her to call him Johnny and offers her an opening in his administration. The job would be Executive Administrator which she accepts. He wants a hug but gets a handshake instead.

We get some of the sitdown interview from last week with Lesnar.

Punk is in the back and his gift is a big basket of liquor. Punk keeps one bottle which he says he'll give to Jericho at the PPV and gives the rest of the basket to Josh. This could be interesting.

Lord Tensai vs. R-Truth

This is kind of a drop in opponent quality for Tensai. Tensai's inset promo is mostly in Japanese. Tensai no sells a lot of Truth's offense and runs him over. He fires off the headbutts in the corner and Truth is in trouble. Backsplash hits and the Baldo Bomb sets up the Mist Claw for the win at 2:00.

Here's Kane to talk about the match on Sunday with Orton. Orton can't beat Kane with rules as was proven at Wrestlemania so why would he think that he can beat Kane without them? Orton is struggling with humanity and hates that Kane has discovered his one true weakness. Kane has found Orton's shoulders? He calls Randy a scared boy looking for his father. Orton pops up on the screen and says he wants to get into this too. Behind him is Paul Bearer tied up in a chair. Orton throws him inside what looks like a freezer. Kane says he doesn't care because his father is the devil himself.

Kane goes to leave but Orton comes up the aisle for a slugout. Kane gets rammed into the steps and then the post with a good looking shot. Orton finds a pipe from somewhere and beats Kane up with it, sending Kane up through the crowd.

Jericho is in the back and runs into Alex Riley, who says he thinks Punk is drinking from the bottle of alcohol he was given. They go to his locker room and see him on the phone having a drink from a red cup with the bottle next to it, but you can't tell what's in the cup. Jericho looks happily stunned.

Alberto Del Rio/Cody Rhodes vs. Big Show/Great Khali

Cody vs. Show II is announced for the PPV and the stipulation is to be determined. They don't know it by now? That can't be a good sign. Khali is limping from the attack on Friday. He and Cody start and Cody's kick is easily countered. Khali goes after the knee of Cody but when he loads up the chop Cody bails to the floor. Back inside Rhodes immediately tags out and Alberto fires a kick to the knee. That gets him nowhere other than into the corner for some chops.

We take a break and come back with the hot tag to Big show so he can beat on Del Rio. Cody pulls the rope down and sends Show to the floor for some work on the knee. The heels work over the knee with Cody hooking the Figure Four. It's not as bad as the one from Friday but it's still pretty bad. Show comes back and Del Rio walks out, allowing the chokeslam to pin Cody at 10:20.

Rating: D+. Oh good freaking grief this company makes my head HURT. There's a title match on Sunday (one of five total on the show I believe) and they decide to have the champion, who has dominated the challenger for a month now, dominate him again. I mean, heaven forbid that Khali gets pinned or that Big Show takes a fluke fall to make us think that Cody has a chance right?

Santino defends the US Title against Miz on the pre-show on Sunday, because THE UNITED STATES TITLE ISN'T IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO PUT ON A FREAKING PAY PER VIEW!

Jericho is with Ace, Eve and Teddy, saying that Punk needs to

be stripped of the title. Eve says that there's a WWE rule saying that you can't drink alcohol within 12 hours of a WWE show. There's going to be a field sobriety test later. Jericho leaves and Teddy gets yelled at for not following the rules. He gets to administer the test later and possibly strip Punk of the title.

Lesnar is here and shoves Josh against a wall. Brock walks away and Josh says he's just trying to do his job, which earns him a trip through the interview set.

Back from a break and Josh is being put on a stretcher.

Divas Title: Nikki Bella vs. Beth Phoenix

Before the match here's Eve to say that this is now a lumberjack match. Maxine is one of the divas here so I'm sure she'll be complaining about not being off NXT yet this week again. Nikki dropkicks Beth down and monkey flips her down. That results in her getting slammed into the corner and gorilla press dropped. Off to a chinlock followed by a backbreaker. Beth throws her to the floor and injures her knee. Brie goes after Beth and the lumberjacks jump on Beth in a dog pile. I think there was a switch in the pile but I'm not sure. Beth's ankle or leg is messed up, allowing Nikki to roll her up and win the title at 4:11.

Rating: D. The girls looked good, the match was the usual Diva stuff, the whole deal with the Bellas leaving soon is now up in the air, I still don't care about the Divas. Next. Oh and the leg injury appears to be real.

Punk freaks out and breaks stuff because he has to have a sobriety test.

Here's Teddy with two cops for the sobriety test. Jericho comes out to observe this. Punk comes out and is acting shaky because he's drunk you see. He drops the belt as he's standing in the ring. It's not Hawk in 98 bad but I don't see a clear

ending to this. Punk talks about how ridiculous this is, and the whole WWF (yes WWF) Universe says this is ridiculous. First up is he has to recite the alphabet backwards. He can't do it and says it's stupid because no one can do that sober or drunk.

Next up is walking a red line that's in the ring. "I've seen Cops before. This is easy." He does a Karate Kid impression but can't do this either. The second officer says that Punk is obviously intoxicated and the cops are sent away. Teddy asks for the title and Punk doesn't want to do it of course. He hands Teddy the title but before it goes to Jericho Punk wants one more chance. He tries to do the alphabet backwards again and does it very slowly (messing up the S and the T) but does it at the same time as walking a straight line, before moonwalking and strutting through the end. Punk gets it right and destroys Jericho.

Clip of Lesnar destroying Hogan on Smackdown. I really don't get why this is supposed to be a big deal.

Sheamus vs. Mark Henry

Daniel Bryan gets to be guest referee. They trade power to start but Bryan stops him from throwing a punch. Remember that Sheamus is on the referee probation. Henry runs Sheamus over and covers with Bryan counting the pin in less than a second, ending it at 1:36.

Post match Sheamus goes after Bryan but has to kick Henry's head off first. He takes Sheamus' knee out and kicks him in the head before putting on the YES Lock.

Brodus/Horny vs. Ziggler/Swagger later on has its own sponsor: Taco Bell.

Back from a break Sheamu

s thinks Bryan is a coward and a snake in the grass. He's

going to get the same treatment that the snakes in Ireland got, but Sheamus is no saint. I like Sheamus A LOT more (which is saying a lot as he might be my favorite wrestler right now) when he has some adversity instead of just plowing over everyone.

Primo/Epico vs. Zach Ryder/Santino Marella

Ryder and Epico start things off with Zach taking over with an armbar. He sends Epico into the corner and hits the boot but Rosa distracts him from hitting the Rough Ryder. Out to the floor and Ryder gets sent into the post which gets one in the ring. The champs hammer away on him but Primo misses a springboard flip dive, allowing the hot tag to Santino. He loads up the Cobra as Ryder takes out Epico. Primo dropkicks Santino down but Santino backflips to his feet and the Cobra gets the pin at 3:18. It was stupid but I found it funny so that's all that matters.

Rating: C-. I have no idea what to think of this. On one hand I'm glad Ryder isn't getting destroyed by another main event guy, but at the same time the tag titles are about as valuable as the CWF Bahamanian Title right now. Then again, the titles have been dead for a long time now so I think it's excusable.

Kane sneaks into the freezer and gets Paul out. Paul thanks him for saving him, but Kane shoves him back in again. Ok then.

Epico and Primo are arguing when Abraham Washington comes in and wants to know why they're being treated like jokes who can't get on Wrestlemania or can't get an entrance. He gives them his card and they seem interested.

Brodus Clay/Hornswoggle vs. Dolph Ziggler/Jack Swagger

This is presented by Taco Bell. Whatever pays the bills. Horny starts with Swagger before it's off to Dolph. He stands on Horny's head but Horny comes back with a headscissors. Off to

Brodus vs. Swagger and the fat dancing dinosaur from another planet runs over the All American Hitler Youth. Vickie comes in for the DQ at 1:55.

Horny, the dancers and Brodus surround her but she goes to get Brodus' hat and puts it on Clay's head. Horny bites her and that's it.

Lesnar headlined Mania 19. His concussion isn't mentioned or shown.

Here's the rest of the interview with Brock last week.

Ace comes out to run the contract signing. Brock comes out to a decent pop. And there's no Cena. Lesnar calls him out but there's still no Cena. Brock gets in Ace's face a bit but says that he needs to talk about why Brock was late earlier today. He asks Ace to sit down and talk about some changes that Lesnar wants and needs. Since he's been back, he's not happy with how things are going.

Brock has some demands/requests that Ace is going to have to sign off on them. He has a copy of those changes that have to go through before Sunday, preferably right now or he's not signing to face Cena. Brock says he's not a naive farm boy like he was eight years ago. Instead he knows this company needs him. If he's going to be the face of the company, he wants all of Ace's ideas run by him first. He wants Vince's private jet to and from the venues for Raw.

Beating people up makes him happy, so when he got he got here and had to deal with what he hates, that being stupid people, he beat someone up. He'll show up on Raw when and how he wants. Ace can't fine Brock like he did Sheamus and Brock wants more money also. Until those demands are met, there's no match on Sunday. Oh and the show needs to be called Monday Night Raw Starring Brock Lesnar. Ace shakes his hand and says he agrees to those terms. Brock signs and here comes Cena.

Cena has the chain and the lock around his neck. I think this is Serious Cena. He has the chain in his hand now and looks at the contract but doesn't sign it yet. Cena looks at it again but still won't sign. Lesnar taunts him and Cena takes the contract out of the folder. Brock says he likes the feeling he's getting from Cena because it feels like it's real.

He says Cena is scared and that he's the reason Cena lost last week. He keeps saying Cena is scared which makes Cena sign. Cena has the right hand with the chain cocked back and Brock has his hand cocked as well. There goes the table but Brock smiles and shakes his finger no. Cena never said a word. Brock leaves to a ton of booing for the first time since he's been back. And we're done with a 15 minute overrun.

Overall Rating: B. I liked this show as it felt like a go home show. Instead of your usual stuff, we got a lot of solid build to the major matches. Why was it solid? BECAUSE IT WASN'T ALL THE SAME! They mixed stuff up, like with the two world title matches. It's so refreshing to see something different like that instead of the same stuff time after time.

Results

Chris Jericho b. Kofi Kingston – Walls of Jericho

Lord Tensai b. R-Truth – Claw Hold

Big Show/Great Khali b. Cody Rhodes/Alberto Del Rio – Chokeslam to Rhodes

Nikki Bella b. Beth Phoenix – Rollup

Mark Henry b. Sheamus – Clothesline

Zach Ryder/Santino Marella b. Epico/Primo – Cobra to Primo

Brodus Clay/Hornswoggle b. Jack Swagger/Dolph Ziggler via DQ when Vickie Guerrero interfered

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Favorite So Ridiculous That It's Great Moment

On Raw tonight Santino got dropkicked but backflipped to his feet to hit the Cobra for a pin. It was so stupid but at the same time I loved it. What are some moments of yours that are so stupid and/or ridiculous that they're great? For me, it's the Reviving Elbow. This was one of the best thinking outside the box moments I can remember in a LONG time. It's from WCW in I think early 1995. Hogan and Savage are in a tag match against two guys that aren't important enough to remember. They beat Hulk down but get distracted by something or other. Savage can't get Hogan up, so he goes up top and hits the big elbow on him which brings Hogan back to life. That's so crazy and creative that it's GREAT. Youtube it.

Your picks?

PWF Homecoming: If I Ever Start Watching This Company Again, Shoot Me

PWF Homecoming

Date: March 11, 1989

Location: Florida State Fairgrounds, Tampa, Florida

Attendance: 2,500

Commentators: Gordon Solie, Diamond Dallas Page

Now here's one I'd bet 99% of you have never heard of. This is the Professional Wrestling Federation, which is a company that Dusty Rhodes started in Florida once the CWF went out of business. That's about the extent of what I know about this show. Well that and that it takes place in 1989. I have no idea what else to expect here and this is the only show of theirs that I know of. Let's get to it.

Page and Solie welcome us to the show and tell us where the show is taking place at which is nice. The main event is the Steelman vs. Dusty for the inaugural PWF World Title. There's a match going on in the background but we can't see who it is or what's going on. Steelman is apparently about 400lbs.

There are two "reporters" talking about the show.

Dusty is getting ready in the back.

Junior Heavyweight Title: Lou Perez vs. Jim Backlund

Backlund is champion I think. It seems that Perez is the crowd favorite here. Backlund takes him to the mat with a headlock and they get back up quickly. Perez jumps over him a bunch of times and this has something to do with Florida Championship Wrestling as well. No idea what but I don't think it really matters for the most part. Backlund works on the arm and we have five minutes remaining. This was the match that was going on when we started. Nice job guys.

Backlund dropkicks him down with four minutes left in this boring match. Perez comes back with a backdrop for two. Something like a Boss Man Slam puts Backlund down but Perez hurt himself too. Two minutes left and Lou gets a near fall on a sunset flip. They hit heads and go down again to kill more time. Snap suplex by Backlund with a minute left and he goes up top. His splash misses and Perez hits a dropkick for two. Time runs out so Backlund keeps the title.

Rating: D. What a boring match. This was 1980s small people

wrestling in a nutshell: neither guy was particularly good, but you can have a Junior Heavyweight Titles so put it on someone. This resulted in REALLY boring matches like these and about four guys ever getting the title. The problem is that these guys wrestled like heavyweights but at about half the speed for some reason. It never was very good until some Japanese and Mexican guys came in and actually did something interesting. I've never heard of either guy anyway.

Bobby Jagers/Johnny Ace/Black Bart/The Terminator vs. Nasty Boys/Italian Stallion/Bubble Gum Kid

This should be...uh....interesting. And yes it's the same Johnny Ace. Bart and Jagers are the Southern Force. Ace and Terminator, his less famous brother, are tag champions. Stallion and Bart get things going as Page talks about Ace's trunks. Jagers gets slammed as does Bart so it's Bart in officially now. Knobbs comes in and has a bad shoulder apparently. Off to Sags and then Bubble Gum Kid. Seriously, who named him that?

The Nasties help Stallion to cheat on Terminator so here's Ace. The problem with a match with this many people in it is that you can't keep up with who tags in. Also there's not enough time to get anything going so it's kind of a mess. Kid hipblocks everyone so Page complains about him being too flashy. Even Gordon gets on Page for that. Stallion comes in and gets out of the heel corner followed by some dancing.

It's Jagers vs. Stallion at the moment with Jagers looking afraid to charge in at him. Back to ace who has flower power going on with the tights. Page has a habit of putting the word baby at the end of every sentence. Knobbs comes in to face Bart and gets caught in the heel corner where they work over his bad shoulder. We finally have our face in peril. It's off to Ace to work on the arm and then back to Terminator.

Now it's Bart working on the arm and as soon as I finish

typing that it's Jagers. Sags tries to come in which doesn't do any good so it's Terminator in for more punishment. Knobbs manages a clothesline and gets the tag to Bubble Gum Kid. Everything breaks down as you knew it was going to do at some point. Kid goes up but gets hit in the head with a branding iron, allowing Bart to steal the pin.

Rating: D. Another uninteresting match here for the reasons that I gave you earlier on. There were just way too many people in there and because of that it was really hard to get a story going. The shoulder was about what you would expect here and it's amazing how the Nasty Boys were in essence the same guys for so many years. This was nothing but a way to get a bunch of people out there though.

We talk to some suit who is president of the organization. He says the future will mean something and that's about it. We also see the PWF Title for the first time.

Terry Funk vs. Dustin Rhodes

There's some guy with a big sign at ringside which looks like a protest sign. It's a pro-Dustin sign, calling him America's Baby. Terry gets in an argument with some fan in the third row. He breaks the sign too just because he's Terry Funk. The guy tries to get the sign back so Terry beats him up. Dustin comes out and dropkick Funk's manager Oliver Humperdink.

Apparently this is some continuation of the Funk vs. Rhodes war which I don't remember ever starting. I do however remember it continuing for years on end. Terry suplexes him back into the ring and the beating begins. Piledriver hits but Funk won't cover. Dustin is a total rookie at this point so it should be a squash. An eventual cover gets two. Dustin whips him into the corner and Funk goes over the corner and to the floor.

Terry comes back and throws him to the floor as Page talks about Dusty's loins. Dustin comes back with punches and they

head inside. Back elbow gets two. There are two slams and a suplex. It's clear Dustin has very little ring time at this point so his offense is incredibly limited. Funk punches himself in the face to wake himself up and heads to the outside again.

Dustin elbows him in the head as Funk is coming in. It's clear that Funk's selling is designed to make Dustin look much better than he has any right to be at this point. They brawl on the floor a bit before heading back inside for choking from Funk. He's got something in his hands to choke with because he's Terry Funk and therefore evil. Dustin comes up with a backdrop and a Dusty elbow to the head. Humperdink comes in with a rope, only to get beaten up. Funk chokes Dustin with the rope for the DQ.

Rating: D+. This was probably the best match of the night so far and it was Dustin using the same moves over and over, which to be fair isn't his fault. He had only debuted about six months before this so he was lucky he had someone like Funk in there that could walk him through the whole thing. Boring match but it could have been a lot worse. Rhodes had talent but he needed to get out of his dad's shadow and get experience.

Italian Stallion and the Nasties make the save from a worse beating because Papa Rhodes was too busy I guess.

The Commandos vs. The Star Riders

No idea who any of these people are but the Commandos are big fat guys while the Riders are small guys. The fat guys jump the Riders and we start with the white Commando vs. we'll say Rider #1. Off to the black Commando as this is comprised of a lot of clubbing on the back so far.

Back to the white one who misses a corner splash while Page implies Gordon is a cross dresser. Here's Rider #2 and their names are apparently Rock and Blade. The black Commando is

named Ray. Rider #1 is Blade. Ok then. The heels (Commandos) cheat, resulting in a double team clothesline and a splash by the white one gets the pin. This was too short to rate but it's clear that all of these guys are REALLY green.

Terry Funk says he liked being in Hollywood but he's back now. Oh and he won't sleep with the interviewer woman, which is probably going to stop half of her questions. Terry wants to talk about Dusty Rhodes but the interviewer talks about Dustin. Funk wants to take away Dusty's pride. He wants a Texas Chain Match with Dusty.

Florida State Title: Al Perez vs. Mike Graham

Mike is champion and this is No DQ for no apparent reason. Graham takes him to the mat immediately as is his custom. He hooks a leg lock and this is already boring. Perez gets out of it so Graham puts him right back into it. Al rolls to the floor before coming back in for some forearms to the back. Perez is sent to the floor and then into the post. This match is already boring, much like most of Graham's stuff.

Back in and Perez takes over, catapulting Mike into the corner. Time for the chinlock to keep the riveting going. The match isn't bad mind you, but it's REALLY uninteresting. The No DQ rule hasn't meant anything yet either. Al throws his feet on the ropes to establish that he's a heel. Graham gets up and hits a single punch to put both guys down. Right back to the chinlock which has almost no torque on it.

This is one of those matches with nothing to talk about. The No DQ rule is probably here for the ending but it's making the match even less interesting because you're waiting on a brawl to break out but it's just a boring wrestling match. Back to the chinlock for a third time which is broken up after a minute or two. They collide twice to really emphasize that they're both down.

There goes the referee and Perez gets a chair and a shot to

the arm which apparently is injured. Thanks for telling us that 10 minutes into the match guys. Graham comes back with the good arm and knocks Perez to the floor. The arm is sent into the post and Perez goes after it very slowly. Back into the ring for a key lock and they roll around on the mat for a bit with the hold on. Perez turns it into a pin and grabs the rope for the pin and the title.

Rating: F. It was boring, there was no justification for the No DQ ruling, the rule didn't come into play until the referee went down which made no sense and the ending was lame as the cheating could have happened with nothing at all with the arm shot. Graham is a guy that you hear good things about and while he's technically sound, I've yet to see him have a good match.

Scott Hall/Steve Keirn vs. Dick Slater/Bam Bam Bigelow

Keirn has an alligator with him named Wally. Get the reference? Gordon says this is an Australian tag match, whatever that means. Bigelow and Hall start things off. Bigelow is the only one here that looks like he usually looks. Hall works on the arm and brings it's off to Slater who takes over. Back to Bigelow who looks silly working on the arm. Monster heels go after RIBS man. RIBS. Bam Bam misses a headbutt and Hall hits a dropkick.

Off to Keirn who works on the arm as well. Slater is knocked to the floor and Keirn suplexes him back in for one. This is another boring match. Swinging neckbreaker from Slater puts Keirn down but he won't tag. I guess it's supposed to tease tension or something. Slater drops an elbow for a delayed two. Keirn hooks a sleeper so Bigelow makes the save. Hall knocks Slater down and after about a day and a half Keirn tags him in. A quick sunset flip gets the pin. Oh and apparently Slater and Bigelow are part of Page's stable.

Rating: D-. Scott Hall's mustache alone keeps this from

failing. Other than that there's NOTHING here that anyone should want to see. This show continues a complete lack of being able to tell us anything about the stories leading up to the match. Bigelow and Slater are in the Diamond Exchange? Thanks for telling us that with 10 seconds left in the match. It really made the ending epic.

Slater goes after Humperdink post match but Bigelow beats down Slater.

Page is in the ring but let's go to Gordon and whatever that interviewer chick is named. Nothing at all is said so let's go back to the ring. The president presents the title belt to the referee. Page is ring announcing apparently.

PWF World Title: Big Steel Man vs. Dusty Rhodes

Big Steel Man is Tugboat/Typhoon/Shockmaster. Dusty comes out to Old Time Rock And Roll. Well at least he has good taste. Oh apparently Page is the manager of Big Steel Man. That sounds like something a 4 year old would come up with. Steel Man shoves Dusty around a lot to start. Dusty comes back with an elbow. That sequence took over a minute somehow. Dusty jumps (yes, jumps) into a bearhug two minutes into the match. This match is really looking down in a hurry.

Dusty elbows out of it and goes to the floor, only to have his shoulder rammed into the post. Back inside Steel Man works over the arm with a wristlock. The guy is 370lbs and he's using a move that a cruiserweight could use. That's not a compliment in this case. The arm goes into the buckle and Big Steel drops four legdrops in a row followed by a missed top rope splash. Dusty rolls over quickly and gets the pin and the title out of nowhere.

Rating: F. OH COME ON! After this horrible show, the big star's match for the world title isn't even eight minutes long? There was no build at all and the ending didn't do anything for the crowd, as they didn't have a chance to get

ready. Also, Dusty looks like a weak champion as all he did was move out of the way instead of hitting a move of his own. Horrible main event to a terrible show.

The Diamond Exchange comes in to work on Dusty's arm. Keirn comes in and lays on Dusty to protect him instead of, you know, hitting the heels with a chair or something. Dusty gets up because his help sucks and clears the ring.

Overall Rating: F. When the only good thing there is to say about a show is that it's relatively short, that's a pretty sure sign that the show is horrible. The wrestling is bad, there are almost no stories in sight and there's nothing redeeming here at all. It comes off like a really bad indy show with guys that haven't been around for years. From what I can tell these guys were CWF/Florida Championship Wrestling guys, and if that's the case I'm NEVER watching that company again. Horrible show.

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Bash at the Beach 1997: NBA Players And ARMDRAGS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Bash at the Beach 1997

Date: July 13, 1997

Location: Ocean Center, Daytona Beach, Florida

Attendance: 7,851

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan, Dusty Rhodes

I'll be doing the three Bashes in a row and then probably just doing individual shows again for awhile. It's 1997 and the unofficial anniversary of the NWO being formed. This was in that weird period for WCW as everything was setting up for Sting vs. Hogan, but at the same time it took forever to get there because we waited 9 months between Sting's moment of showing he was WCW and the actual match. The main event here is Luger/Giant vs. Hogan/Rodman. As in Dennis Rodman. Let's get to it.

The opening video is Luger ranting about the NWO and how Rodman has been all mean to them and jumped them a few times.

The announcers talk a bit and apparently Page has a mystery partner for later that is either Curt Hennig, Sting or Raven.

Mortis/Wrath vs. Ernest Miller/Glacier

These four seemingly had more matches on PPV than I can count. Glacier is all ticked off to start and spears down Mortis so he can pound on him. He looks at Wrath and freezes him somehow so that Miller can hit a springboard dropkick to take the big man down. Off to Miller vs. Wrath now as we're told Miller played for the Falcons and Patriots. I can't find any evidence of this anywhere else and I've never heard of it otherwise. Why does that not shock me?

Miller fires off some kicks but gets caught in a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker but a middle rope elbow misses. Glacier comes in and hits a double dropkick with Miller to Wrath for two. Glacier goes to the floor where Mortis beats him up a bit. Wrath hits a pretty nice running somersault off the apron to take out the ice enthusiast. He finds a chair to put against Glacier's head so Mortis can kick the chair into Glacier's head into the post.

Back inside now for Glacier vs. Mortis. Heenan says there's something between these two in the past but Glacier doesn't want to go into what it is. Wrath comes back in and they hit Beer Money's DWI for two. ROH fans will like this as Wrath throws on a Billy Goat's Curse and Mortis drops a leg at the same time.

Mortis misses a moonsault and Miller comes in illegally to help Glacier. Feliner (Trouble in Paradise) takes out both heels. Everything breaks down and Glacier gets a DDT to put Mortis down for a delayed too. James Vandenberg, the manager of Mortis/Wrath puts a chain on Mortis' foot so a kick to the chest ends this for Glacier's first loss.

Rating: B-. Better match than you would expect here and I liked it for the most part. Mortis is more commonly known as Canyon and he can do some interesting stuff. Wrath was shockingly good here too and is a guy I've always liked a little so that's a nice perk. Also, notice how much better it is with guys to compliment the martial arts guys. You get a much better match.

Cruiserweight Title: Chris Jericho vs. Ultimo Dragon

Jericho is champion. He's a face and hasn't been champion long. I think Dragon is also but I'm not sure. To the shock of no one they start on the mat. Neither guy can hit a kick so they lock up again. Dragon does his handstand in the corner and of course no one can touch him as he does that. There are the kicks from Dragon and he puts on a nerve hold but just for a few seconds.

Jericho counters Dragon's offense into a double powerbomb and a senton backplash gets two. The fans want Sting. Just another five months for that guys. Jericho works on the back before the speed things up a bit. Moonsault press gets two for the Canadian as does a tiger driver. I'm not sure what happened here but they both go up to the top and Jericho tries

a dropkick which clearly misses by about 8 inches but Dragon drops to the floor anyway. The announcers say he missed it and that Dragon fell to avoid it but it looked like a botch.

Anyway Jericho hits a plancha and they go back in. A rana by Dragon out of the corner doesn't work as he gets shoved to the floor. Jericho dives on him but gets caught by a dropkick in a cool looking shot. Snap suplex on the floor has Jericho in trouble, yet he was back in the ring first. Dragon gets him to the floor and hits the Asai Moonsault to put both guys down.

Back in the ring and both guys try La Magistral but can't get the pin. They speed things way up into some pinfall reversal sequences but Jericho counters a Dragon Sleeper attempt and they both go outside. Back in again and Jericho hits a Lionsault to the back for two. Another Lionsault attempt is countered by a dropkick and Dragon tries both his finisher with no success. Muta style moonsault gets no cover for Dragon and Jericho counters a powerbomb counter into a sunset flip to retain.

Rating: C+. This was actually kind of a mess. Far more of a collection of spots than a coherent match with any form of a story or anything like that throughout it. It's certainly good and the big spots were cool, but I'm not sure if they really had this planned out all that well. They just kind of missed here.

Gene comes to the ring to talk to Raven. He asks Raven about being DDP's mystery partner so Raven recites a poem. Stevie Richards pops up and mentions an announcement Raven has tomorrow on Nitro, earning him a backhand slap from Raven. The announcement might have been the formation of the Flock but I'm not sure.

Steiner Brothers vs. Masahiro Chono/Great Muta

They're NWO Japan and if the Steiners win they're #1 contenders...again. WCW has this really annoying habit of

having teams (usually the Steiners) win title shots “somewhere down the line” but they never actually got them. The Japanese dudes clear the ring rather quickly so the Steiners go up top and hit a pair of clotheslines to send the foreigners to the floor. Chono gets in an argument with some guy at ringside before we get this going.

Scott and Muta get us going. Scott pounds away and Muta is like boy please and kicks away. Steiner finally gets his butterfly powerbomb to take over and hits a gorilla press to send Muta outside again. Off to Chono and Rick, whose eyes look all freaky. Chono gets annoyed with the bug eyes and hits a SICK Mafia kick to put Rick down.

Test of strength results in a kick to Rick’s ribs and they switch off again. Scott likes to pound Muta on the back. Belly to belly superplex to Muta doesn’t work as Chono grabs an electric chair drop and Muta hits the handspring elbow to take over. Chono goes up and he winds up taking the aforementioned belly to belly to put both guys down.

Hot tag Rick who hits belly to bellies on both guys. Steiner bulldog gets two. Scott goes up as the illegal man and gets caught in a rana by Muta. Rick by in and gets caught in a leg whip by Muta but manages a suplex for two. Everything breaks down again and while Chono argues with the referee, a super DDT (Rick puts him on his shoulders so Scott can hit a DDT off the top) ends Muta.

Rating: D+. Match was another mess with no flow to it at all. The Steiners were so bored/boring by this point that it was unreal. They had beaten every team in existence and there was no one left to challenge them. Since the Outsiders were allergic to wrestling I suppose, this was just another waste of time and it was pretty clear the Steiners didn’t care at all.

Juventud Guerrera/Hector Garza/Lizmark Jr. vs. La

Parka/Psicosis/Villano IV

Ready for some pointless lucha libre for the sake of only having lucha libre? Onoo is with Parka and Psicosis. This is under lucha libre rules, meaning if you go to the floor someone else on your team can come in sans tag. Lizmark and Psicosis start us off as Tenay tries to explain rudos vs. technicos. Juventud's team is tecnico here. They do some speed stuff and then Villano and Garza come in because they feel like it.

Things speed up and after this point I'm really not going to try to keep track of what's going on because the point of it is to go completely insane for awhile. Sonny tries to kick Juvy but he moves and the kick hits La Parka instead. The power of money keeps him from mauling Onoo. Psicosis misses a running dropkick and the rudo team has an argument.

Juvy hits a springboard triple splash for two and all three technicos hit stereo planchas as the referee literally ducks and covers in the corner. Juvy tries a springboard cross body but Psicosis gets something like a dropkick up to block it. They go to the corner and Psicosis gets something like a sunset bomb on steroids for two. They do some more insane stuff and Garza gets a moonsault press for two.

Everything breaks down again as some heels collide. We get the four man move called the Star that never got over in America. Basically they're all on the mat and have leg locks on someone while two guys get in the middle and do a move. It's WAY too contrived to look good at all. Five man Tower of Doom is broken up and everyone goes to the floor.

Lizmark is the last one out with a big dive to Villano. Air Juvy (love that move) and again I can't keep up with this at all. Garza hits his HUGE corkscrew plancha to take out everyone else. Villiano V comes out and switches with his brother but gets caught by a missile dropkick and standing

moonsault for the pin by Garza.

Rating: B. This is a hard one to grade because from an American standpoint, it was an insane mess but from a lucha libre standpoint, I'd think it was rather good. It certainly was exciting and got the crowd going again, but at the same time this kind of stuff happened about once a PPV for WCW. This was one of the more fun ones though.

Kevin Sullivan vs. Chris Benoit

This is a career match and is out with Sullivan. No Woman though. Sullivan hasn't wrestled in three months and Benoit is a Horseman. You figure the ending out. This is the final match of a feud that has gone on for a year now and it's another slugfest which was done best the first time and has gone downhill ever since. Sullivan suplexes him to the floor and it's a brawl already.

They tear apart a piece of the guardrail and Benoit suplexes Jackie. She of course no sells it because she's Jackie and can take moves from men so she's tough and should be on TV for the next 10 years right? Benoit is finally like screw this and tosses her at Sullivan then pounds on him for awhile. She interferes again because she can I guess. Jackie needs to get hit by a bus. Seriously.

They fight up to the set and Benoit goes through a surfboard house. I don't think this is No DQ but who cares I guess. Benoit has sand all over him. They destroy most of the set and Sullivan is thrown into a tree. Sullivan takes a beach chair to the head and Jackie hits Benoit again. Seriously, go away. They fight to the other side of the set and keep punching each other.

Sullivan hits a Piledriver in the aisle and since it's been 18 seconds since Jackie did something, she drops some elbows. Kevin gets a garbage can lid shot to Benoit's lid but it just fires Chris up. And never mind as he gets sent to the floor so

Jimmy can get some shots in. Benoit gets hung upside down with his back to the apron and Sullivan chops away even more.

Back in and Benoit pounds away on him even more. Sullivan bites his stomach so Benoit bites Sullivan's ear. Crossface goes on but only gets two arm drops. Heenan says this show has the largest audience in the history of PPV. I won't even start on that one. Benoit pulls him back to the middle and puts it right back on but can't get it full.

The hold is broken so Chris kicks him a lot. Now he chops him a lot and Sullivan is a face somehow. He Hulks Up for lack of a better term and puts Benoit in the Tree of Woe. Three running knees hit him as Jackie gets a wooden chair. Jackie pops Sullivan with the chair for no apparent reason other than to give herself a reason to yell some more. Swan Dive ends Sullivan's career.

Rating: C-. The problem for this comes down to one thing: they had the same match for a year straight. Why in the world would I want to watch another big brawl between these two so many times over and over again? It's not horrible but we've seen it such a ridiculous amount of times that no one cares. Also, WAY too much Jackie time here.

Sullivan gets some big sendoff by the announcers like he was some great guy or something.

US Title: Jeff Jarrett vs. Steve McMichael

Jeff is champion here. They both pose with the belt to waste some time. It should be noted that Jarrett is about as popular as George Wells was. If you're saying "who?" to that name, you're getting the point. There's a reason he would be back in the WWF in about three months. Jarrett takes him down to start and struts to waste some more time. He is from Tennessee after all.

He wastes too much time though and walks into a Bossman Slam.

Mongo takes out the knee so Jeff heads to the floor a bit longer. For some reason Jeff accepts a test of strength with a big power wrestler. What could go wrong with this? It's pretty clear Mongo has no idea how to actually pace a match or use psychology or anything like that at all but he's not messing up every move anymore.

Out to the floor and Mongo goes into the steps. That doesn't seem to hurt him and Jeff goes into the railing to further injure the knee. Mongo chokes him with a cord and we head back into the ring. Weak gorilla press is followed by a powerslam for two. Mongo misses a knee in the corner and now Jeff uses a football tackle on the knee. There's a second one and Mongo is down. He sets for the Figure Four but Debra gets up on the apron, "accidentally" gives Jarrett the case and he hits Mongo with it...in the arm. He tries again and hits him in the head for the pin to retain. Debra leaves with Jeff.

Rating: D. The lack of psychology and anything remotely resembling it hurt this a lot. Mongo would get the title in a few weeks so it's not like this mattered that much. Jarrett and Debra would go back to the WWF soon enough so we didn't have to put up with this feud much longer. Jarrett got better with age but at this point he wasn't nearly as good as he's known as today.

Hogan and Rodman say nothing of note.

Scott Hall/Randy Savage vs. Diamond Dallas Page/???

Hall is a tag champion but is teaming with Savage here because Nash is busy at a taco festival I suppose. The partner is likely either Raven, Hennig or Sting. It's pretty clearly not going to be Sting because it would be too big of a waste for his return. Raven...probably not due to it being kind of a big jump up for him in the card. Hennig was more or less the default pick and it turns out he is in fact the partner. This is his WCW debut in the ring, because he popped up on Nitro

for no apparent reason other than to make sure this wasn't an actual shocking debut at the PPV.

Page vs. Savage starts us off which is one that's hard to screw up based on how obsessive they were about setting up matches beforehand. Page sends him to the floor and Savage stalls some more. There's a bunch of stuff in the ring for some reason and Savage doesn't want to fight. Not sure what it is but the referee keeps wiping it off the mat. Off to Hall vs. Hennig now and they look at each other a lot. They go to the corner and Hennig actually gives a clean break.

Both combinations seem more interested in seeing how long they can go without actually getting into a full on match. Curt hits an atomic drop and Hall does his hop selling. Back to Page so he can hammer on Scott a bit. Page gets beaten down and it's the NWO in control. Since it's a match between 1996 and 1999, Page has bad ribs. Out to the floor and the beating continues. Hall gets a discus punch for two.

Back off to Savage as Page gets a right hand in. Page kind of falls down and it's ice cold tag to Hennig. Granted the match is like seven minutes old at this point so it's not like he was in peril long. And since this is in 1997, Hennig of course turns on Page and leaves him to the wolves known as Hall and Savage. The beating goes on for awhile and the big elbow ends it. Hennig wouldn't officially join the NWO for a few weeks after pretending to join the Horsemen.

Rating: D+. Total meh match here as the whole thing was about going from debut to the turn (if you can actually be one way or the other after five minutes) in under ten minutes, which is pretty wasteful but they're trying at least. Hennig would join the Horsemen soon enough and then the NWO because that's what everyone did, minute the Horsemen part I guess.

Roddy Piper vs. Ric Flair

Because the fans were BEGGING for it! WCW really doesn't help

themselves with the lack of recaps. I have no idea why most of these matches are happening and it's totally random as to whether or not you get a recap of it. Even a quick sentence can sum up a lot of stuff. To the shock of no one, this is more of a brawl than a match. Piper beats the tar out of him to start and sends him to the floor.

Back in and Piper chops away in the corner and Flair is looking like a clueless putz. No idea if Flair is face or heel here. Piper hammers away in the corner and there's a Flair Flip in the corner. Flair eats post and Piper chops away some more. I don't think he's done anything but punch or chop. Back in again and Flair gets a shot to the knee to take over. Figure Four goes on and Piper reverses it.

Roddy actually gets a swinging neckbreaker for two. Wouldn't have expected that one. Low blow takes the Canadiscot down and it's back to the knee. That doesn't work either so Piper fires off punches and kicks Flair's leg. Out to the floor again which doesn't last long. Back in Flair gets a jawbreaker to quickly break up a sleeper.

After a bunch of two counts Flair goes up and you know how that goes. Figure Four goes onto Flair and is broken rather quickly. Illegal object from Flair is stolen by Piper and Flair goes out. Here are the Horsemen and Piper of course outsmarts them until Mongo of all people is able to piledrive him. That only gets two and Piper Hulks Up. Sleeper ends this which is supposed to be some big deal, even though WE HAVE NO IDEA WHY THEY'RE FIGHTING.

Rating: C+. Well I can't really say it sucked, but is there any real point in having these guys fight? It's not a bad match and is actually kind of good, but the time hurt it as this got nearly 15 minutes and with Piper only being able to chop and punch, how good can it really get? Also, no Malenko, Guerrero or Mysterio on here, but they get 15 minutes. And people wonder why this company went out of business.

Dennis Rodman/Hulk Hogan vs. Lex Luger/The Giant

I get that Rodman was a legit big draw and at the time he was an A-list celebrity so it's not as stupid as it sounds like now, but what does this accomplish from a storyline perspective? Oh that's right: it keeps Hogan from having to defend the title so he can hold it even longer. Buffer says tens of millions of people are watching this around the world. Savage is out with the heels here.

Luger and Hogan start and I'd expect Hogan to wrestle more in this match than he has in the past five weeks combined. They go to the mat and it's just ugly. We put the camera on Andrew Galotta (boxer) and Rodman's agent for awhile. Not much contact so far as Hogan is stalling a lot, mainly because were twenty five minutes left in the show when the bell rang.

The first major contact is a shoulder block by Hogan about three minutes in. Luger hits one as well and by hits I mean you can see a good three inches between their arms. Hogan hammers him down and it's his usual heel stuff. He asks the fans if they want Rodman to come in and it's pretty clear Rodman is the most popular guy in the building. Hogan goes over and makes the tag and it's time for the announcers to overhype everything like never before.

Rodman is in sunglasses here. He stalls like Larry Zbyszko dreams of and they lock up. Rodman gets an armdrag and the reaction from the announcers (the WCW ones mind you, as in the ones that HATE the NWO) makes the one when Sting won the title later in the year pale in comparison. I mean they lose their minds because Rodman hit an armdrag. Luger armdrags both guys twice and the overreaction is just stupid. Have these guys never seen a Ricky Steamboat match? This is proving why the match is stupid, right here.

A leapfrog and a shoulder block by Rodman (meaning a basketball player is capable of jumping and leaning his arm

forward) are hailed as “flashes of brilliance” by Tony. The guys on Tough Enough have flashes of brilliance in their second episode then. A single clothesline sends Rodman looking for a nurse and it’s off to Giant vs. Hogan. They proceed to do a basic Nitro match for a few minutes as no one cares with no Rodman in there.

Rodman offers to come in and fight the Giant and plays face because he doesn’t know any better. He tries more leapfrogs and then we realize that it’s stupid to try to jump over a guy called THE GIANT. Heenan loses his mind because his apparently new sexual object of desire known as Rodman is in trouble. If you were new to this product and heard the commentators, you would swear Hogan and Rodman were the good guys.

Hogan and Rodman get a double clothesline to Giant and Rodman breaks up Hogan’s pin attempt for some reason. Hot (and unseen) tag brings in Luger but Hogan takes him down pretty easily. Savage interferes and this is rapidly getting boring. There’s the legdrop for two and ZERO reaction from the crowd and announcers. This is the Hulk Hogan legdrop and it got no reaction. Maybe Hogan should try a leapfrog. Actually that would get a reaction.

Back off to Rodman as this slows down even more. There’s the foot choke in the corner which gets a bigger reaction than the Hogan legdrop. Another unseen tag brings in Giant but this one doesn’t count for some reason. Giant comes in anyway and here’s Not Sting. He hits Giant with the bat and everyone thinks he’s NWO. Pay no attention to the fact that he’s maybe an inch shorter than Giant and comes in over the top rope. Hogan accidentally hits Rodman and the Rack ends Hogan finally.

Rating: F+. Totally awful main event but the announcers overreacting is pretty funny stuff. In short, Rodman isn’t a wrestler so he’s not really at fault here. I mean, would you turn down probably a minimum of six figures for twenty minutes

of "work"? He just took a check and did his thing out there to a huge reaction. That being said, this proves nothing and the whole thing was just a mess because we had to protect Rodman (again not his fault).

Luger Racks Rodman and Savage post match.

Overall Rating: D. This was a hard one to grade. It's certainly a low level show and that needs to be kept in mind. This show wasn't about having a good show but rather having a big buyrate due to Rodman. It's definitely not the worst show ever but it shows a lot of what's coming for WCW and how things would start falling apart. They clearly weren't trying that much here and they wouldn't do much next month either because it was in front of a bunch of drunk bikers. Bad show, but for different reasons than usual.

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