

ROH Final Battle 2016: TV Not Required

Final Battle 2016

Date: December 2, 2016

Location: Hammerstein Ballroom, New York City, New York

Commentators: Steve Corino, Kevin Kelly

This has been a fairly big request so I might as well get it out of the way before it's way too late. Final Battle is the biggest Ring of Honor show of the year and this edition is headlined by Adam Cole defending the ROH World Title against Kyle O'Reilly. The card isn't the strongest in the world but there's always potential. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

We open with Story Time with Adam Cole, who has a story about two knights. One of them went on to become the King but everyone was jealous of him. The King had all the friends he needed and all the other knight had was a shot at the throne, which he failed. Then he failed again and again until Kyle O'Reilly is out of shots. Cole drops the story and promises that tonight, Kyle fails all over again.

Opening sequence.

The announcers run down the card (as in the one you already paid for) which now includes a triple threat instead of a fourway as Bobby Fish's mother passed away, forcing him out of the match.

Rebellion vs. Motor City Machine Guns/Donovan Dijak

The Guns are still in search of a permanent partner because trios are suddenly awesome. The Rebellion is the former Cabinet (Caprice Coleman/Kenny King/Rhett Titus) because Rebellion might actually be an even weaker name. To really show how rebellious King is, he has an upside down ROH logo on his trunks. Sabin and King run the ropes a bit to start with a grand total of nothing happen. Gotta love that non-offense from these rebels.

A quick triple team puts Dijak down and it's Titus, billed as the BIG DAWG with a similar ROH logo on the trunks, getting triple

teamed right back. Shelley does a little Ric Flair strut and helps hold Titus up for a middle rope splash from Dijak. A good right hand (Corino: "PS!") drops Sabin though and it's time for the Rebellion (and their dastardly trunks to take over. Coleman, the true rebel here due to his slacks, gets in a few stomps of his own.

More triple teaming ensues until Sabin gets in a tornado DDT. That means Dijak gets to clean house with a top rope chokebreaker (close enough at least) getting two on Titus. The fans are WAY into Dijak here but the chants are cut off as the Guns start speeding things up. Well as speedy as they can make them at this point in their careers.

Dijak actually busts out a springboard flip dive to make my eyes pop open. Feast Your Eyes sends Titus into a powerbomb for two with Coleman and King diving in for the save. Another powerbomb puts King down but Skull and Bones are broken up. The Sky Splitter sets up the Big Dawg (frog) splash to put Sabin away at 12:27.

Rating: C+. Now this is a good way to start a show: with a mostly meaningless six man tag featuring a bunch of flying around and fast paced offense that gets the crowd going early on. Unfortunately that's about it for the good stuff as the Rebellion might be the least interesting idea for a gimmick this year. It's one of those cliched names that you throw out there on a tiny indy show, not the biggest show of the year for one of the biggest promotions in the country.

We recap Silas Young vs. Jushin Thunder Liger. Young got annoyed at a fan dressing up like Liger so he wanted to beat up the inspiration for never showing his face like a coward.

Jushin Thunder Liger vs. Silas Young

Young has Beer City Bruiser with him. A cheap shot puts Liger trouble but the threat of a surfboard sends Silas bailing to the floor. Back in and we hit the surfboard until Silas grabs the referee for the break. A neckbreaker puts Liger down and the Bruiser offers a cheap shot (it's not like he's going to do much else) to keep Silas in control. Young actually goes for the mask because he really is that evil.

Liger gets caught in a backbreaker for two but manages to get in a double clothesline for a breather. It's too early for the Liger Bomb though and a big neckbreaker gets two for Young. That means it's

time for a shot of beer, which is spat on Liger's mask. It's enough to make Liger hit a brainbuster but a top rope splash hits knees. Misery puts Liger away at 11:04.

Rating: C-. Nothing to see here but above all else the right person won. Liger is still an attraction and a win over him seems to mean something, which is exactly what someone like Silas needs. It's nothing great but it did its job well enough. I'm still not sure where they're going with Young but we've waiting on it for a long time.

We recap Colt Cabana vs. Dalton Castle, which is your standard short term tag team breakup feud with Cabana playing heel.

Colt Cabana vs. Dalton Castle

You can tell Colt has turned as his music into something much slower with rap lyrics. Castle comes out in a chariot pulled by the Boys. Dalton immediately poses on the middle rope with his legs crossed like a gentleman. A quick takedown puts Colt on the mat and he bails to the floor, allowing Castle to do his strut after faking Cabana out on a suicide dive. The Boys are thrown in so Castle uses them as stepping stones to set up a dropkick. Now that shows some thinking out there.

Another trip to the mat goes badly for Cabana but he finally pulls Dalton out of the corner to take over. A quick Billy Goat's Curse sends Castle diving for the ropes, which looked quite a bit like a tap. Dalton grabs a hurricanrana before sidestepping a Lionsault press. Colt pops up but can't hit the Chicago Skyline. He can however reverse the Bang A Rang into a rollup for two but Dalton grabs the Bang A Rang for the pin at 10:22.

Rating: C. Castle is another guy who could be something special if he's given the right kind of push. However, his character is one of those kind that has a firm ceiling above its head because of the nature of the persona. He's getting better in the ring though and those eyes being all buggy make things even better.

Jay Lethal gives a great promo about how he won't be remembered if he doesn't do something memorable. Tonight he's going to show why he's the best wrestler in the world, like he's been for years.

Cody vs. Jay Lethal

Brandi Rhodes gets in a chuckle worthy line with "Where we're going

we don't need Rhodes." Lethal has a vest containing his wish list, which include Cody. We're not quite ready to go yet though as the Addiction comes out to interrupt. They're cool with the night off after what they went through at Ladder War. Daniels talks about growing up watching Dusty Rhodes and how important it is to have wrestlers like Cody on the roster. Addiction will be sitting in on commentary.

Feeling out process to start as they hit the mat early on. A hiptoss exchange goes fine until Lethal gets in a dropkick for the first major offense. Cody comes right back with a very delayed gordbuster and starts in on the arm. Addiction keeps putting over the idea of Cody having experience in big matches and not buckling under the pressure.

A skinning of the cat is broken up by Jay dropkicking Cody in the face (that's a new one) to send him outside. That means three straight suicide dives with Cody being ready for the third and breaking it up with a Disaster Kick. Back in and another Disaster Kick grazes Jay's hands but he backflips on the impact anyway. Eh it wouldn't be Ring of Honor if there wasn't an unnecessary flip.

Lethal comes back with a Crossface but Cody rolls into a modified Indian Deathlock of all things. After a rope is grabbed, Cody turns him inside out again with a clothesline and the frustration sets in on the kickout. The moonsault press misses, which Kevin calls Cody's first mistake. Oh I'm sure I could find a few. Jay starts striking him in the face but we've got a ref bump, allowing Cody to kick Jay low for the surprise heel turn. Cross Rhodes puts Lethal away at 13:12.

Rating: B-. Best match of the night so far but it still wasn't great. Turning Cody heel is certainly interesting though as you don't often send in someone like Cody and then have them do anything other than be a short term conquering hero. A win over Lethal is still a big deal, even though Jay has taken a few steps down from where he was recently. Good enough match too.

Post match Cody mocks the Code of Honor and flips Lethal off. Addiction chases him away while Corino jumps back in on commentary to say "he was right all along." Rhodes shoves Corino down but Steve keeps his cool.

Long recap of the Six Man Tag Team Title tournament. Lio Rush is

replacing ACH, who has left the promotion.

Six Man Tag Team Titles: Kingdom vs. Kushida/Jay White/Lio Rush

The titles are vacant coming in and I still have no idea which one is TK O’Ryan and which is Vinny Marsegila. Before the bell, Corino says the Father (likely meaning Kevin Sullivan) said the evil was coming and that’s clearly Cody. Things start very fast with Rush hitting a standing C4 and frog splash for a pretty hot two.

After a break on the floor, White takes O’Ryan down until it’s off to Kushida for a dropkick to the head. Rush comes in for some YES Kicks but Taven sneaks in for a DDT to take over. O’Ryan adds a spear for two as things settle down into your normal formula. The first hot tag brings in Kushida for the Hoverboard Lock but O’Ryan is quickly in the ropes.

The announcers are nice enough to start explaining why we should care about the Kingdom as Kushida scores with a double Tajiri handspring elbow. Everything breaks down and White gets two off a missile dropkick. To really pick things up a bit, White gets caught in a half crab from the top rope, only to have Kushida put Vinny in the Hoverboard Lock on the top for the save.

A superplex breaks the submissions which don’t count because they’re in the ropes and it’s time for Rush to get to show off because ROH LOVES that guy. Kushida gets in a big dive to take all of the Kingdom down, only to have Taven dive onto the even bigger pile. Back in and Rush has Vinny beaten so TK dives off the top to take out the referee. Rush goes crazy with his strikes but the triple powerbomb crushes Lio to give the Kingdom the belts at 15:22.

Rating: C+. This is a good example of just throwing titles out there and not bothering to put anything important behind them. There’s no reason to care about Six Man Tag Team Titles when there were barely any trios in the first place. It comes off like someone else did something so now we’ve got Trios Titles. That doesn’t mean it works and the match wasn’t great either, making this the finals of one heck of a waste of time, especially with the winners being a reincarnated stable that is missing all the parts that made it work in the first place.

We recap the rapidly changing TV Title picture. Will Ospreay took the title from Bobby Fish, only to lose it two days later to Marty Scurll. Dragon Lee is involved here as well because we need to bring

in other people from around the world whether they're interesting or not. Fish is out of the match due to a death in the family earlier in the day.

TV Title: Will Ospreay vs. Dragon Lee vs. Marty Scurll

Scurll, dubbed the Villain (I can work with this) is defending. As you might expect, everything starts fast with all three doing a bunch of flips without making any real contact. Will and Lee chop it out before all three wind up on the floor, only to have Lee hit a big flip dive. Back in and Will's standing shooting star gets two on Lee, starting a British double team.

With Lee dispatched, Ospreay and Scurll start slugging it out until Marty gets caught in the Tree of Woe. Cue Lee for the Alberto Del Rio top rope double stomp and a near fall. A running hurricanrana pulls Ospreay off the apron and down to the floor but Will pops back up for a big running flip dive of his own.

A very fast series of dives has Scurll in trouble but he catches a final dive in his crossface chickenwing. Lee dives in for the save and it's time for the circle chop fest. Ospreay does a double Tajiri handspring spinning kick to the face. Well that works. Scurll gets tired of this nonsense and BREAKS LEE'S FINGER, setting up the chickenwing to retain the title at 11:04.

Rating: B+. See, now this is something I can get behind. They didn't bother trying with anything other than fast paced action and that's what we got. I was having flashbacks to the Cruiserweight Classic here as it was all about speed and nonstop action, which is why you bring people like these three in. It might not have been the highest quality match but it was a lot of fun and highly entertaining.

We recap the Tag Team Title match, which is just about the Briscoes wanting their ninth title reign.

Tag Team Titles: Briscoe Brothers vs. Young Bucks

The Bucks are defending. Mark and Nick get things going but it's quickly off to Jay (now with hair, making it easier to tell them apart) for an elbow. That goes nowhere so it's a big staredown. The double superkicks are countered with the Bucks being sent to the floor, only to come back in for the slingshot dropkicks. A flip dive takes the challengers down and even more dives have them reeling.

The Briscoes are a bit more old school though and will have none of

this being on defense thing, meaning a big double clothesline takes the Bucks down. Jay drops a BANG BANG Elbow off the apron because he's not that original. We settle down to the Bucks in trouble because ROH is a weird company where the heels are faces and the faces are weaker faces because the heels are cool heels in Japan, which makes them faces by default.

Nick gets up and sends Jay outside for a tornado DDT off the apron, only to have the Briscoes come back in for a double superkick of their own. Unfortunately that means the Bucks start with their own superkicks and Corino SHOUTS THE MOVE'S NAME A LOT. Eh I'll still take it over Joey Styles.

The draped over the ropes Swanton to Jay sets up More Bang for Your Buck on Mark, sending the fans even further into Buck-Love. Jay comes back in with a superkick of his own and the Jay Driller sets up the Froggy Bow for a very close two on Matt. A springboard Doomsday Device gets the same and the Briscoes can't believe it.

That's a bit too much selling for the Bucks though and it's Nick cleaning house with a bunch of strikes because he can beat up both Briscoes on his own. The Meltzer Driver gets two on Mark and then, I kid you not, TWENTY EIGHT SUPERKICKS IN A ROW give the Bucks a double pin to retain the titles at 16:08.

Rating: B. I know the Bucks are annoying but they're still two of the best high fliers going right now. The superkicks get really, really annoying at times (albeit nowhere near as bad as the "we're cool heels like the NWO" schtick) but at least you get some good matches out of them. The Briscoes will be fine when they do whatever is up next for them and that's been the case for years.

The lights go out....AND WE'VE GOT BROKEN MATT HARDY! They'll be coming to ROH soon (probably around Wrestlemania season) to make the Bucks and the Briscoes obsolete. The fans are WAY into the DELETE chant. The Bucks look stunned.

We recap Kyle O'Reilly vs. Adam Cole in a video that aired on ROH TV. The idea is they've spent years associated in some way and Cole is obsessed with keeping the title away from Kyle at all costs.

ROH World Title: Adam Cole vs. Kyle O'Reilly

Cole is defending and this is now anything goes as per Kyle's request to not have to be held responsible for his actions. Kyle

wins an early slugout and gets the armbreaker over the top rope. It's not clear why he lets it go but Cole kicks him in the head for his general stupidity. Back in and Kyle kicks away before getting shoved off the top to give the champ control.

Even more kicks have Cole reeling but he stops a dive with a belt shot. That's how a heel should use the weapons and it even draws blood from Kyle's forehead. Kyle can't stand up due to the blood loss so Cole puts a trashcan over him for a superkick. O'Reilly starts no selling chair shots (Seriously?) and suplexes Cole onto an open chair for....well very little actually.

Instead he takes Cole outside again and dropkicks a trashcan into Cole's chest for a big crash. It's table time and, after fighting it off for a bit, Cole gets belly to back superplexed through the table for the big crash. That's not enough for Kyle so he grabs a guillotine choke on the apron and kind of DDT's Cole off the apron and through a second table.

Kyle looks under the ring (where they keep all those freaking streamers) and finds a chain for a callback to their match in Dallas. Cole (busted as well) gets in a low blow for two and it's time for thumbtacks. The triangle choke has Kyle in control so Cole powerbombs him onto the tacks for the break. O'Reilly one ups him with a BRAINBUSTER ONTO THE TACKS, followed laying down on those tacks while locking in the cross armbreaker for the submission and the title (announced after a few seconds for some reason) at 19:14.

Rating: B+. I wanted to see more of this and that's a good thing. It felt like the needed a few more minutes to really flesh it out but Kyle laying in the tacks after dropping Cole onto them made it feel like he really just wanted to beat him no matter what. Cole felt like a jerk throughout but he just didn't have heart to keep up with Kyle, which is wrestling in a nutshell. It's not a classic but it told a story, albeit one that should have had its trigger pulled a long time ago. Maybe it's just that I'm not a huge fan of this feud but I never got into the big emotional impact here.

O'Reilly celebrates to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. The first half of the show isn't as strong as the second but it's still more than good enough to set up the main events. Nothing really stands out above everything else but nothing was bad and the last three matches range from good to very good.

This show's problem is the lack of a strong build, as nothing on here really feels like it's something worth seeing. That makes it a rare instance where it's better to watch the show with no TV build as the pay per view is actually very strong and better than most stuff ROH puts out.

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Roadblock: End of the Line: Feel Free to Try Something

Roadblock: End of the Line

Date: December 18, 2016

Location: PPG Paints Arena, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

We'll wrap up the pay per view calendar with this show, our third pay per view in about a month. This isn't the hottest card in the world with a fairly lame main event of United States Champion Roman Reigns challenging Kevin Owens for the Universal Title. There's also an Iron Man match as Sasha Banks defends the Women's Title against Charlotte. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Rusev vs. Big Cass

This is over Big Cass defending Enzo Amore, who tried to sleep with

Rusev's life. Before the match, Enzo says something about Lana owing him money and Rusev playing Jumanji in the hotel room. Enzo puts on a red nose and Cass lists off the eight reindeer. Cass kicks Rusev in the face and we take a break less than thirty seconds in.

Back with Cass hammering away and dropping the Empire Elbow for no cover. They head outside Rusev taking him out into the crowd, leaving Enzo to go after Lana. Rusev defends his wife while Cass checks on Enzo, leaving Rusev to beat the count at 4:33. Not enough for a rating but this was rematch bait.

The opening video has a police chase theme with the idea being that everything ends at the end of the line.

Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Cesaro/Sheamus

New Day is defending. Big E. is confused about what the show is called because he thinks it's a rather different, very un-PG kind of blocking. I'll let you figure out what the joke there is. Woods suggests that the challengers should be called Swing Low Irish Chariot. Cesaro dropkicks Kofi at the bell for two and it's already time for the uppercut train. It's too early for the Swing so Sheamus clotheslines Kofi instead.

The slingshot shoulder gets two on Kingston and Swiss Death is good for the same. This has been completely one sided so far. Kofi breaks up the ten forearms and brings in Big E. for the spear off the apron. The Warrior Splash gets two on Sheamus and everything breaks down. Sheamus kicks Cesaro by mistake and Woods kicks Cesaro by design, setting up the Big Ending for a very close two.

The Midnight Hour is broken up and Big E. gets the Brogue Kick. Cesaro Swings Kofi into the Sharpshooter for the submission...but Woods has the referee. Cesaro lifts Kofi up into a suplex and rolls into the Neutralizer for two with Big E. making the save this time. That was some scary power, as is always the case with Cesaro.

Woods sacrifices himself to take the Brogue Kick and the SOS gets two on Sheamus. Cesaro comes in without a tag (though Sheamus was right next to him), meaning Kofi kicks Cesaro for no count. Instead

Sheamus sneaks in and rolls Kofi up for the pin and the titles at 10:00.

Rating: B-. The ending was really good but I have no interest in Sheamus and Cesaro holding the belts. It's more than fine to take them off New Day now but you really couldn't do this at the Rumble against Enzo and Cass or ANYONE that might draw some interest? People didn't care about Cesaro and Sheamus at first and I doubt they will now, but this was going to happen no matter what.

New Day gets the big show of respect and we get the battle for the spotlight from the new champs.

Kevin Owens doesn't care about New Day because that will never happen to him. After insulting the interviewer, Owens flags down Chris Jericho and gives him a present. Jericho isn't impressed with his holiday scarf.

Sami Zayn vs. Braun Strowman

Ten minute time limit as Raw GM Mick Foley is scared for Sami's health. The ring announcer says Sami must last ten minutes though, which makes things a bit unclear. So can Sami not even go for wins? Sami dodges for the first thirty seconds and Braun no sells a chop. Braun gets his hands on Sami for a big toss and kicks him in the ribs for good measure.

We're down to eight minutes as Sami knocks Braun over the top, only to have Strowman come back in and hammer away with ease. The referee starts to check on Sami with about six minutes to go but Zayn wants to keep going. Braun lets Sami stumble around as we get down to five minutes. Some very hard clotheslines take us to four minutes and here's Foley with a white towel.

Sami is thrown down at Mick's feet and Braun goes outside to talk trash. Zayn grabs the towel and throws it into the crowd with two minutes left. Strowman promises to finish this himself but misses a charge into the post. Another missed charge sends Braun through the barricade but Strowman beats the count with 47 seconds left. A third missed charge hits the post and Sami gets two off a high crossbody.

Sami is knocked to the floor but comes back in for the Helluva Kick as time ends at 10:00 (really 10:12).

Rating: D+. Corey sums it up perfectly: Sami didn't win anything here. He just didn't get killed. This really belonged as an angle on Raw to set up the pay per view match instead of being the match itself. Sami hitting his finisher (which didn't knock Braun down) to end the match was a nice touch but I really have no idea where this goes outside of Braun beating Sami in another match.

Package on the UK tournament.

We recap Chris Jericho vs. Seth Rollins. Jericho lost to Rollins several times but then started costing Rollins matches against Owens. This earned Jericho a Pedigree on top of a car and that means a match.

Seth Rollins vs. Chris Jericho

Jericho headlocks him to start and does the Gift of Jericho pose. Chris stops him with a raised boot and the missile dropkick gets two. A rake of the eyes slows Rollins down (he even makes like he can't see for a bit, which you almost never see anymore) but he's easily able to catapult Jericho into the buckle.

Jericho gets in a clothesline and we hit the ASK HIM chinlock. Back up and Rollins fires off some right hands followed by the Slingblade. A Blockbuster gets two and Jericho gets shoved out to the floor. Rollins' springboard knee is countered into the Walls which last about as long as you would expect them to. Now the Lionsault is good for two and Seth's Falcon's Arrow gets the same.

Rollins tries the Pedigree but Jericho powers out and gets in a hurricanrana, which transitions into the Walls. Seth counters that with a small package for two, followed by the frog splash. Cue Owens for a distraction, just as Jericho grabs a small package. The Pedigree is countered again but Jericho stops to yell at Owens, allowing Seth to get in the jumping knee. Rollins gets the Pedigree for the pin at 17:12.

Rating: B+. I really liked this one as Jericho's roll continues. You

can almost pencil in Jericho vs. Owens for the Rumble and that story is going to write itself very well. Rollins getting the pin makes sense and maybe we can FINALLY do the blowoff between him and HHH so Rollins can move on with his career.

Pre-show recap. Cass vs. Rusev II is set for tomorrow night.

Cruiserweight Title: Brian Kendrick vs. TJ Perkins vs. Rich Swann

Swann is defending and Austin Aries is sitting in on commentary. One heck of a forearm puts Kendrick on the floor, leaving Perkins to take the champ down. Swann hurricanranas both guys down at the same time (Aries: "I've done it before.") but gets caught in the Captain's Hook.

Perkins makes the save with the kneebar but Swann makes a save of his own. Cole: "Who is the favorite now?" Aries: "I would be if I was in there." Kendrick gets tossed and Perkins slaps on another kneebar, sending Swann to the ropes. That's not a break in a triple threat but Perkins lets go anyway. Back up and Swann kicks Perkins in the head to retain at 5:59.

Rating: D+. Can we please, please, PLEASE get Aries anything he wants? He was by far and away the most interesting thing about this match as he just commands respect and I completely buy him as the greatest cruiserweight of all time. I mean, I know he's not but he gives you the belief that he is and that's what matters.

Post match Neville makes his return to celebrate with Swann before turning heel (!) and destroying all three. Fans: "THANK YOU NEVILLE!" I can totally go for this, though the idea that Neville weighs under 205lbs is downright laughable.

Owens goes to Jericho's locker room but Chris won't let him in. Kevin tells him to put his name on the list but Jericho still doesn't open the door. That hurts Owens' feelings and he walks away.

Recap of Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte. They've traded the title for months and this is the final match.

Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Sasha Banks

Banks is defending and this is a thirty minute iron man match,

though JoJo says the winner is the woman with the most pinfalls. I'm going to assume that's an error because nothing like that was ever mentioned before. Feeling out process to start and they hit the mat for the first two minutes. Banks headlocks her down and things stay slow to start. Some chops have Charlotte in more trouble but it's too early for the Banks Statement.

Another attempt fails just as much so Banks opts for a dropkick instead. Banks: "Your daddy loves me more!" Sasha wraps her up in something like a rear naked choke but Charlotte drops her back onto the mat for two. Charlotte heads outside and takes the double knees as we hit eight minutes in. A cross arm choke has Charlotte in more trouble but she doesn't tap out as we get to ten minutes.

Sasha throws her outside for a suicide crossbody, only to be tripped face first into the steps in a bad looking crash. We're twelve minutes in now as the referee slows things down a bit to check on Sasha. Three straight knees get two on the champ but another one misses to give Sasha a breather. Charlotte does the figure four headscissors and we're at the halfway mark.

Something like a neckbreaker onto the knee gets two on Sasha and Charlotte seems to be getting frustrated. Natural Selection connects for two but Banks can't get the Bank Statement. Instead Charlotte is put on top, only to come back with a super Natural Selection for the first fall with 10:45 to go.

Charlotte talks a lot of trash but can't get another fall as we hit nine minutes left. Banks goes to the air and spins into a rollup for the tie with 8:43 to go. That means Charlotte needs to get aggressive, only to have Sasha grab the Bank Statement for the tap out with six minutes left. Charlotte gets smart by draping the knee over the middle rope and crashing down onto it as the clock keeps ticking.

Some cannonballs down onto the knee set up a leglock as we've got three minutes left. A not great Figure Four goes on with two minutes left and Sasha is in big trouble. The hold is turned over a few times until Sasha gets caught in the middle of the ring. We're down

to thirty seconds left and Banks screams a lot. Charlotte FINALLY turns it into the Figure Eight and Banks taps with two seconds left, meaning it's a draw at 30:00.

This is the END OF THE LINE though so let's do sudden death. Charlotte gets in a shot at the bad leg before the bell rings and a small package gets two for the champ seconds into the extra period. The Bank Statement goes on but Charlotte grabs the bad leg to break the hold. It's turned into a Figure Four and Sasha (with a bloody mouth) taps to the Figure Eight at 2:58 of overtime.

Rating: B. Well that happened. I'm completely out of things to talk about with these two trading the title because WWE has no concept of how to wrap up a feud in an appropriate manner. Charlotte winning is fine, though the question now is who challenges her next. I know the obvious answer is Bayley, but do you trust them to do something that logical?

We recap Owens vs. Reigns. Roman beat him a few weeks ago to earn another shot here tonight but the big story is about the drama between Jericho and Owens.

Universal Title: Kevin Owens vs. Roman Reigns

Owens is defending and I'll only refer to him as champion for the sake of simplicity. Kevin quickly bails to the floor but gets punched in the mouth for his efforts. Something like a spinebuster gets two for Reigns but the threat of a jumping clothesline sends Owens outside. The champ takes over on the floor and hits the backplash off the steps, followed by the chinlock back inside.

Owens wants to know why Reigns didn't put his title on the line but suspects it's a lack of testicular fortitude. A standing flip legdrop of all things gets two on Roman and it's back to the chinlock. Reigns finally powers out and drives Owens into the corner, only to have the champ throw him down with a German suplex. The Superman Punch is countered into a DDT for two more.

Reigns no sells the Cannonball and hits the Superman Punch for two of his own and both guys are down. Owens goes up top and gets

Superman Punched again but still manages to grab the swinging superplex. A Swanton Bomb hits Roman's raised knees and it's spear time. It might be the big scream before the spear but somehow Owens knows to bail to the floor. Reigns gets suckered in and a splash off the apron onto the announcers' table doesn't break the table.

The second attempt works though and Reigns' ribs are hurt again. Reigns dives in at nine so Owens bolts to the top for another frog splash and the accompanying near fall. Roman's sitout powerbomb and Owens' Pop Up Powerbomb get two each and the champ doesn't know what to do. He goes outside for the title belt, earning himself a spear as he comes back inside. Cue Jericho, who looks back and forth at both guy. A Codebreaker to Owens draws the DQ at 23:33.

Rating: B. Good, though the waiting for Jericho took a little away from it. Unfortunately this shows the problem with Reigns being US Champion coming into this match: what good does it do to tie the title up in this match with no challenger for the title in sight? Yeah Owens vs. Jericho will be fine but sweet goodness enough with the champion vs. champion nonsense.

Jericho raises Owens' hand because IT WAS A SWERVE to end the show. Uh, couldn't he just tap Reigns and get the same result? Rollins comes out and helps with the beatdown, including a DoubleBomb to put Jericho through the table. Owens goes through the announcers' table to end the show to almost no reaction.

Overall Rating: B+. I liked this a lot more than I thought I would but it's a great example of a show I'm never going to watch again. Other than Charlotte getting the title back like we've seen before, nothing was really interesting here, though I can always go for a night of good wrestling. That being said, they really, REALLY need something fresh in the main event scene on Raw because "oh wait they're still best friends who get beaten up by the Shield guys" was tired a month ago.

Results

Cesaro/Sheamus b. New Day – Small package to Kingston

Sami Zayn b. Braun Strowman by surviving the time limit

Seth Rollins b. Chris Jericho – Pedigree

Rich Swann b. TJ Perkins and Brian Kendrick – Spinning kick to the head

Charlotte b. Sasha Banks three falls to two

Kevin Owens b. Roman Reigns via DQ when Chris Jericho interfered

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Lucha Underground – December 14, 2016: Tournaments Are Cool

Lucha Underground

Date: December 14, 2016

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

We're wrapping up the first round of the Battle of the Bulls tournament this week and that could mean some good things. Last week's matches were all about the action and that's exactly what they should be. It might be nice to hear from the champ for a change

though as Johnny Mundo doesn't feel important. Let's get to it.

The recap looks at Angelico wanting Johnny Mundo, the Kobra Moon Tribe, Matanza wanting Rey Mysterio and Sexy Star earning a title rematch inside a cage.

Battle of the Bulls First Round: Dante Fox vs. Killshot vs. Jeremiah Crane vs. Mariposa

Killshot and Crane quickly clean house and turn it into a one on one fight. Fox gets back up and starts kicking people in the head, followed by a string of suicide dives. Everyone is down so let's talk about how inspiring Sexy Star is. Killshot's running moonsault dive takes some people down, only to have another knocked away by a Jeremiah chair shot.

Crane throws in a pile of chairs and sets them up, eventually meaning a Tower of Doom with Killshot getting the worse of it. Mariposa is the only one up so the fans cheer, even when she beats on everyone else with chairs. Killshot gets in a few shots of his own and everyone is down.

It's Crane up first with a sitout powerbomb and Brock Lock to put Killshot in trouble. The Butterfly Effect onto a chair gives Mariposa two on Killshot (he's been busy tonight) but Fox takes her out. The 450 hits Crane's boots though and a Cranial Contusion (Jay Driller) gives Jeremiah the pin at 11:02.

Rating: B-. More good stuff in these first round matches and I like the idea of Crane getting a push. Of course he's not going to win the match and of course not the title but it's cool to see him get a win like this to make people take him seriously. Good enough match here, though it was a lot of crashing with little flow for the most part.

Killshot kicks Fox in the head and gives him the top rope double stomp.

Taya is filming the rest of the Worldwide Underground in what feels like an NWO inspired vignette.

Sexy Star sees a spider and freaks out. So now she can rise above

spiders.

Kobra Moon vs. Drago

This is over Drago leaving the tribe and annoying Moon. A loud dropkick puts Moon down early but Drago doesn't seem to want to follow up. Another hard kick has Moon in trouble but here's one of Moon's cronies (shown last week) to jump Drago for the DQ at 2:45.

Fenix and Aerostar come in for the save, only to have Moon summon a masked monster to clean house. The fans call him Luchasaurus for a good name. Drago gets tombstoned and carried out.

Star goes after Mariposa, accusing her of planting the spider. A wall is broken and Mariposa seems intimidated.

Battle of the Bulls First Round: PJ Black vs. Jack Evans vs. Son of Havoc vs. Angelico

They break down into the expected tag match to start until Angelico headlocks Havoc. That lasts all of three seconds before they dive onto Evans and Black to crank it up a bit. Back in and Angelico gets double teamed in the corner, only to have Havoc use a pair of top rope double stomps to save his buddy. Black and Evans catch Havoc's spinning crossbody but Angelico kicks them both in the head a few times.

The Fall of the Angels (running Razor's Edge) is broken up, only to have Havoc come back in for the save. A Doomsday Device doesn't work but Jack breaks up Havoc's shooting star. The Tower of Doom is broken up so Angelico superplexes Evans onto the other two on the floor. Back in and Angelico is shoved inside, leaving Black to tell Evans to pin him. It's a swerve though as Black rolls him up for the pin at 8:43.

Rating: C. They managed to turn a fourway into something like a tag match and that's the right move all around. I get the idea of moving Black on and this could help set up the end of the Worldwide Underground, which isn't the most interesting group in the first place. They also made sure to keep Angelico strong by not having him take the fall, which helps set him up for Mundo later on.

That leaves us with PJ Black vs. Jeremiah Crane vs. the Mack vs. Cage for the title shot.

Mysterio is recovering when Dragon Azteca Jr. comes in. Rey says they can't win the fight against Matanza but Azteca has to try.

Overall Rating: C+. I'm getting into this Battle of the Bulls thing and the fourway final should be a lot of fun. Any of them vs. Mundo (please don't switch the title back) would be interesting though I'd like to see Crane for the sake of making a new star. The tribe stuff is fine as well due to a lack of challengers to the Trios Titles (Remember those?). It's been a nice few weeks and I'm starting to look forward to this show for the first time in a good while.

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Roadblock: End of the Line 2016 Preview

It's time for Roadblock and that means....no that doesn't mean we're a month away from Wrestlemania. No actually it means WWE is really stupid for using the same name twice in a year when there are plenty of other names available for this show. I mean, was Vengeance taken? Or No Way Out? Or We Really Don't Need to Have This Show But We're Doing It Anyway? It's a Raw show and that means we're likely in for

an annoying cameo from one or both of the bosses. Let's get to it.

We'll start with the pre-show match between Big Cass and Rusev. This is one of the few matches on the show I'm looking forward to as Cass is clearly on the rise but Rusev isn't the kind of guy that is going to lose to someone who is making his solo pay per view debut. The match springs from the usual: someone beat up Cass' buddy Enzo Amore and the big man is out for revenge. There was also something about Amore trying to sleep with Rusev's seemingly willing wife but that detail might make Rusev seem sympathetic again so we'll ignore that part.

As much as I want to go with Cass to start his rocket push, I really can't imagine Rusev losing another pay per view match. It's also a bit early for Cass to get a win like this, though I've heard of worse ideas. This really could go either way, though they would be better off having Rusev win via a Lana distraction or the threat of Amore getting hurt again. If nothing else, I want to see a mixed tag between these four down the line, assuming man vs. woman is allowed.

We'll knock out a title match next with New Day yet again defending the Tag Team Titles against Cesaro and Sheamus. New Day set the record on Monday (for all intent and purpose) and now they get to defend against these guys again because WE WILL RESPECT CESARO AND SHEAMUS!

I know the obvious move is to change the titles not but I think I'm going to say New Day retains yet again with the big change coming at the Royal Rumble. There's no reason to keep the belts on them any longer save for breaking the 500 day mark, which means a grand total of nothing. Maybe it's just that I'm really not a fan of Cesaro and Sheamus but I have no desire to have them be the ones that finally get the belts off New Day. There's a good chance I'm wrong and I probably am but I'll say no title change here.

In another title match, Cruiserweight Champion Rich Swann is defending the title against TJ Perkins and Brian Kendrick in a triple threat match. Swann beat Kendrick for the title and both of them have gotten into it with Perkins, who is the only other man to

hold this incarnation of the title.

It would seem that they're setting up Noam Dar as the next challenger for the title and he would seem to match up best against Swann. I'll go with another title being retained with Swann overcoming the odds. He's a more interesting champion than both former champions and it would be a really bad idea to take the title off of him already. Either that or turn Perkins heel like he should have been from day one, but for some reason that seems out of the question.

We'll jump towards the main events now with Chris Jericho facing Seth Rollins in a match that should be for the US Title. Jericho keeps costing Rollins World Title matches against Kevin Owens so Rollins Pedigreed him on top of a car. Instead of assault and battery charges, we get a pay per view match as a result.

I'm going to go with Rollins here, as the big match on the horizon seems to be Jericho facing Owens in some form. Therefore, with Jericho being more than ready to turn mega face for the match, the WWE is almost guaranteed to make him lose because that's how they get people to cheer for you. So yeah, Rollins goes over and it's Jericho vs. Owens, likely at the Rumble.

Now we'll move on to the first of two timed matches on the card with Sami Zayn facing the monster Braun Strowman in a ten minute time limit match. This is about Zayn wanting to be like Mick Foley (I'm still not sure how that works) and not wanting to have to be treated like a baby because Strowman will crush him.

I think this goes to the draw with Zayn showing that he can hang in there with Strowman but barely surviving at the end of the match. Zayn certainly shouldn't beat Strowman, who could be ready for a huge match down the line, but at the same time you don't want Zayn to be completely destroyed. Strowman has Zayn done but the time runs out and it's officially a draw.

In the other timed match we have Sasha Banks defending the Women's Title against Charlotte in a thirty minute Iron Man match. This is being billed as the final match between the two of them but the

stipulation sets up the prospect of a draw, meaning they get one more match.

That being said, I think they'll put the title on Charlotte again because the big pay per view winning streak ending at Wrestlemania would be a better way to go rather than ending it at a nothing show like this. I like the Iron Man idea but it also brings up the problem of there not being much of a point to watching the first twenty five minutes of the match unless the two of them tear the house down, which of course they're capable of doing.

We'll wrap it up with the main event as Universal Champion Kevin Owens is defending against United States Champion Roman Reigns. As much as I can't stand the idea of a double champion, I have a bad feeling WWE might pull the trigger on another Reigns title run for the sake of trying to be like the UFC with Conor McGregor.

That being said, I'll actually go for the long shot and say Owens retains to set up a major title defense against Jericho at the Royal Rumble. Unfortunately that match can be done with or without the title so there's no real need for Owens to hold the belt here. I really don't need to see Reigns as champion again this soon as it isn't exactly going to do much for making him into a bigger star.

Overall Roadblock is really just there, much like most Raw pay per views. The wrestling should be fine but WWE is going to manage to make it feel like it's overstaying its already limited welcome. The main event scene is ice cold right now as I can barely even remember why Owens and Reigns are fighting in the first place. There will be some good stuff but this is just a filler show until we get to the important stuff in January.

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Vengeance 2002 (2016 Redo) : Serious Stephanie

Vengeance 2002

Date: July 21, 2002

Location: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Attendance: 12,000

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Tazz

We're in an interesting place here as both shows have their first General Managers but the stories are hit and miss at best. The main event is the Rock, who has had one match since he came back, challenging Undertaker for the title in a triple threat also involving Kurt Angle. This is really just a pit stop before Summerslam though so let's get to it.

We open with a Biblical passage talking about being your brother's keeper. Somehow this is supposed to be about the main event. I'm pretty sure this is the Samuel L. Jackson speech from Pulp Fiction.

The show's announcing will actually be divided in half with Smackdown commentary first and then Raw. I don't remember them doing that very often.

Dudley Boyz vs. Chris Benoit/Eddie Guerrero

Elimination tables match and the Smackdown commentary is already weird here as they have no connection to these guys. Benoit runs Spike over like he's Chris Benoit and he's wrestling Spike Dudley. A quick tag brings in Bubba, who can suddenly stick with Benoit and

Guerrero.

Benoit quickly takes Bubba down and drops some running elbows, followed by the first German suplex. The heels take turns stomping away in the corner until it's time for the first table. Spike makes a quick save but doesn't make a tag, meaning Bubba's beating continues. Now the table is set up in the middle of the ring so Spike has to save Bubba from a double superplex. By that I mean he moves the table instead of breaking it up so Bubba goes flying. Spike is a really, really bad partner.

That's not cool with Benoit and Guerrero so they try to put Spike through the table, only to have Bubba tackle him down to prevent going through the table. So Bubba is a better partner too. Everything breaks down and Spike gives Benoit a top rope double stomp, followed by What's Up.

Bubba's middle rope splash only hits table, which doesn't count as an elimination because it wasn't an offensive move that put him through the table. Well yeah it was but it was Bubba's own offensive move. Spike actually does something right by giving Eddie the Dudley Dawg through a table. It bangs him up too much though and Benoit throws him through a table of his own, only to get Bubba Bombed onto a table to give the Dudleyz the win.

Rating: C+. Stupid decisions by Spike aside, this was entertaining stuff and a good way to open the show. Now of course it doesn't make a lot of sense to have Eddie and Benoit lose to Bubba and Spike of all people but you can't expect WWE to get things right with them just yet.

Bischoff chases down HHH, who is going into Stephanie's office. See, HHH is always negotiating.

Cruiserweight Title: Jamie Noble vs. Billy Kidman

Kidman is challenging and they exchange some fast near falls to start. A hurricanrana has Noble staggered and a Fameasser with Jamie in the ropes makes it even worse. Like a good heel should though, Noble hides behind Nidia and takes Kidman's arm out to take over.

The arm goes into the post but Kidman is still fine enough to dropkick his way out of trouble. Jamie takes him right back down into a Fujiwara armbar. The title has gone to Jamie's head though as he thinks he can powerbomb Kidman, earning himself a Sky High for two. The Shooting Star press misses and a tiger bomb gives Jamie the clean pin.

Rating: C. This was fine as a coronation match to crown Rey Mysterio's first victim for the title. Kidman is still one of the best performers on the roster but he's stuck in the cruiserweight division again because everything that happened in the last year of WCW means nothing. I mean, it was worthless back then too but this just proves it even more.

Kurt Angle is ready to win the title when Paul Heyman and Brock Lesnar come in for the dream match staredown. Brock wishes him luck and leaves. Kurt: "I hate pompous people."

European Title: Jeff Hardy vs. William Regal

Jeff is defending and gets shouldered down for three early near falls. The sitout jawbreaker puts Regal down for two and they head outside, only to have Jeff miss the barricade running clothesline. Back in and Jeff's Swanton (in case you had it confused with Regal's Swanton) hits knees, only to have Jeff roll him up to retain.

Rating: D. Well that happened. This might as well have been on Raw because the title means nothing more than a way to fill time. Hardy retaining is fine and in theory should let him move on to his next feud but why would anyone want the thing at this point? It's just a worthless belt and at least Regal holding it made sense. Now it's a prop for Jeff, who is no more over now that he has the thing.

Hogan and Flair congratulate Jeff before shaking hands. Hulk thinks he might hit a Swanton of his own tonight. After that bizarre visual, Hogan wants to know what's up with the new GM's. Flair is worried about the young superstars getting caught up in the power struggle. I have no idea why this was added save for giving Flair a cameo and therefore a payday.

Chris Jericho vs. John Cena

Rematch from Smackdown where Jericho got disqualified. Jericho is all ticked off and grabs a chair before the bell, only to have Cena take it away and blast Jericho over the back. Now we get the bell because anything that happens before the bell only counts when it's important to the story. Cena gets in a few right hands until a shot slows him down and calms Canadian fans everywhere. A few more right hands put Cena down and he even throws in a little shuffle.

Chris takes too long going up and gets caught in a superplex but Cena can't follow up. Instead he misses a dropkick, only to roll away from the Lionsault. The second attempt works but Jericho doesn't want to cover. Chris tries the Walls and is quickly small packaged for the pin.

Rating: C-. Cena getting the win is a big deal for him but you can only give him so many flukes before he needs some kind of big offense of his own. At the moment he's just a tough rookie, which is fine for a start, but he needs something more substantial going forward. For now though it's fine as the long list of pins over Jericho begins.

Jericho has a fit after the match.

Bischoff fails to stop Stephanie's attorney from going into her locker room.

The commentary switches up.

Intercontinental Title: Rob Van Dam vs. Brock Lesnar

Lesnar is challenging after defeating Van Dam in the King of the Ring final. Some quick strikes have Brock on the floor, followed by some kicks to the knee. Lesnar gets knocked outside a second time but he easily catches Rob diving through the air for a powerslam. Back in and it's suplex time but Rob escapes a second and kicks Brock in the face. Heyman: "THAT HAD TO HURT!" They're doing a good job here of showing that only strikes work on Brock as all of Rob's high flying has gotten in trouble.

An attempt at a monkey flip sends Rob over the top and into the

steps, followed by the bearhug to keep things slow. Brock makes it even better with an abdominal stretch which lasts as long as your average abdominal stretch is going to last. The top rope kick to the chest sets up Rolling Thunder for two on Brock. Heyman's advice in this situation: "DON'T LOSE!" The F5 is countered into a tornado DDT and Rob adds the Five Star, causing Heyman to pull the referee for the DQ. Big pop for Van Dam retaining the title.

Rating: D+. There's just not much left to do with Brock other than put the title on him and hope for the best. He's dominating everyone he faces until Heyman has to save him at the end. Thankfully WWE wasn't stupid enough (yet) to set up a champion vs. champion match on pay per view because they still realized you could do two title matches and get twice the impact.

Post match Heyman breaks up the Van Terminator, allowing Lesnar to F5 Van Dam onto a chair.

Stephanie comes out of her office and says he signed in her intimidating voice. HHH comes out a second later and Bischoff yells at him. It turns out though that those were divorce papers and HHH hasn't made up his mind. Sweet goodness why am I supposed to care about this stupid stuff?

Big Show vs. Booker T.

No DQ and a rematch from Raw. In other words, the same story as Jericho vs. Cena from Smackdown plus the stipulation. Booker's early kicks are pulled out of the air as Big Show sends him flying. An enziguri slows Show down but that's a bit too much selling so he clotheslines Booker outside.

A chair swing is punched out of the air but since this is Big Show, he screws up by clotheslining the post. They fight behind the announcers' table as this is finally starting to play towards the gimmick. A monitor shot to the head knocks Show down and we get the big spot of the match with an ax kick through the table. Back in and another ax kick sets up the Houston Hangover to give Booker the pin, which is treated like a huge upset.

Rating: C. The match wasn't anything great but the important thing here is Booker going over. Beating Big Show isn't going to change his career or anything but it's a sign that WWE is actually doing something with him. Not a great match of course as Big Show is mostly worthless at this point, though he's fine for a punching bag. Torrie Wilson and Dawn Marie argue over who is winning the main event.

Here's HHH for the big contract decision. Bischoff comes out for the first pitch and suggests making HHH a movie star because everything will be business., meaning there's no ex-wife to deal with on Raw. Talk of a sneaker deal brings out Stephanie with that horrendous "I'm all grown up" theme and Lawler saying she's hot.

Stephanie brings up their past successes and says it's all personal this time around. She even has an ace in the hole by bringing up Bischoff calling HHH a no talent back in the day. HHH insults them both and says he could say screw you to both of them, though Stephanie would like it. He'd rather go with the devil he knows (Stephanie)....and here's Shawn Michaels.

Shawn said he'd come out here but he doesn't want to get in the middle of all this. The NWO is out of business and Shawn wouldn't want to be in HHH's shoes. However he wants HHH to remember something. The two of them had more fun together than anyone else ever and it would be a blast to make Bischoff miserable. HHH hugs Shawn and goes to Raw, wrapping this up at just shy of sixteen minutes, or longer than any match so far.

Actually we're still not done as Bischoff has to rub Stephanie's nose in it to make this even longer. Bischoff: "The one big difference between you and I? I've got testicles and you don't." Stephanie slaps him and leaves to her music to make sure we know she's tough. So yeah, Stephanie is all awesome and amazing but Raw got HHH because like he was going to stick around on Smackdown.

Now we go to Rikishi of all people to hear about HHH leaving Smackdown. He thinks it's bad.

Booker is glad HHH is coming to Raw. Are we really having a post announcement reaction show?

Tag Team Titles: Hulk Hogan/Edge vs. Un-Americans

Lance Storm and Christian are challenging here with no Test in sight. During the entrances, JR outdoes himself by saying Wrestlemania III was 15 years ago and saw Hogan face Ultimate Warrior. He then corrects himself by saying it was Wrestlemania VI because Wrestlemania III was here in Chicago.

Hogan dumps Christian out to the floor to start and there goes the bandana. Storm gets punched in the face as Lawler is talking about bra and panties. It's off to Edge for some right hands in the corner, only to have Christian offer some cheating to take over for the first time.

The fans want Hogan as Edge fights out of a chinlock. It's back to Hogan for the usual with the legdrop getting two on Christian as Storm saves. Hogan is sent outside for the superkick from Storm and the stomping begins. It ends just as quickly though with a double clothesline to drop Storm and Hogan.

The tag brings in Edge for a series of clotheslines and the ref gets bumped. Cue Test for the big boot to Edge, giving Storm two. They actually had me on that one for a second. Rikishi waddles down to deal with Test, allowing Jericho to come in and hit Edge with a belt for the pin and the titles.

Rating: D+. Not much to the match here but again they get the booking right by using Hogan and Edge as a transitional team to get the belts on a regular team. The Un-Americans aren't the best act in the world but I'll take them over thrown together teams like Rikishi and Rico.

Bischoff tries to get Angle on Raw. Kurt says they'll talk later. Stephanie promises to win the war because she's in contact with EVERY Raw superstar.

The announcers recap the show.

We recap the World Title match. Rock tried to cost Undertaker the

title at King of the Ring so Undertaker wanted to fight him. Then Undertaker vs. Angle went to a draw so Angle was added to this match.

Undisputed Title: Kurt Angle vs. The Rock vs. Undertaker

Undertaker is defending and comes to the ring without his bandana for a weird look. It's a three way staredown to start with Undertaker and Rock jawing at each other while Angle waves his arms behind them. That earns him a double right hand and a big clothesline to send him outside.

Undertaker gets the same treatment but Kurt slides back in for a belly to belly on Rock. The champ takes Angle's place and gives Rock a side slam for two. To really mix things up, Rock chokeslams Undertaker, which is pretty much just a release Rock Bottom anyway. All three are back in now and Rock grabs a horrible, HORRIBLE ankle lock on Kurt.

Angle gets out and Rock Bottoms Rock, only to get Angle Slammed by Undertaker. Cute sequence though Rock's ankle lock was worse than his Sharpshooter. The spinebuster sets up the People's Elbow with Angle pulling Rock to the floor and stealing the two count. Everyone heads outside with Rock being dropped onto the announcers' table and Kurt getting busted open.

Old School, with a right hand to the face instead of the shoulder, gets two on Angle. The running DDT gets the same on Rock, who doesn't even need help kicking out. Angle brings in a chair but gets caught in the middle of alternating right hands. The ref gets bumped (of course) and one heck of a chair shot knocks Undertaker out. An Angle Slam drops Rock as the referee is back up (good) but he kicks out at two and puts Angle in the Sharpshooter.

Undertaker saves and gives Rock the Last Ride, only to have Angle break it up with the ankle lock. That's rolled through and now it's the triangle choke that made Undertaker tap a few weeks ago. Rock makes a save this time and gets ankle locked, which is quickly escaped as well. A Rock Bottom gets two on Undertaker but he walks into the Angle Slam. One more Rock Bottom puts Kurt away to give

Rock another title.

Rating: B. The over hyping hurt this as JR made it sound like the greatest thing he had ever seen. It's certainly good and entertaining with the stolen spots sequence being one of the better parts but Rock winning the title by beating Angle isn't great. Then again that's how triple threats work most of the time and Rock is just holding it for Lesnar anyway.

Overall Rating: C-. This is such a forgettable show and there isn't much other way to put it. The main event was very good but that's really about it. Maybe they could have had a better match in the middle if we didn't need a fifteen minute HHH announcement but that's where the money is in this company, or so WWE would tell us. There's just not much to say about this one and it shows badly. Summerslam will be the bigger deal though and that's what really matters.

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Smackdown – July 18, 2002:

And There It Is

Smackdown

Date: July 18, 2002

Location: First Union Arena, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

It's the go home show for Vengeance but the bigger story here is the in ring return of the Rock who will be facing Kurt Angle to warm up for his World Title match on Sunday. Other than that we get to meet the first Smackdown General Manager, who I'm sure won't be a huge disappointment and create a bunch of plot holes. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Eric Bischoff being announced as the Raw GM. Bischoff has promised to show up tonight and sign Rock, which apparently you can just do. The idea here is that he likes to steal talent, though I'm not sure why Vince would care since he owns both shows.

Opening sequence.

Chris Jericho vs. John Cena

Cena starts fast as has been his custom so far but misses a charge, sending him flying out to the floor. Back in and Jericho takes too long on top, allowing Cena to dropkick him down. A belly to belly and DDT get two each on Chris so he hits Cena low for the quick DQ.

Post match Jericho puts Cena in the Walls of Jericho and beats him down with a chair.

A smiling Bischoff arrives.

Bischoff goes looking for Hulk Hogan. Hint: it's the room with the HULK HOGAN sign on the door. Hulk doesn't seem interested and tells Eric that they're not down south anymore. Eric asks if Edge is really attached to Smackdown but Hulk still doesn't seem convinced.

Hurricane vs. Chavo Guerrero Jr.

Chavo slaps the handshake away and gets taken down by a neckbreaker. Hurricane blows his knee out on a leapfrog though and Chavo wraps it around the post. The Tree of Woe makes things worse but Hurricane grabs him by the throat. Cole: "I think it might be the chokeslam!" That's enough of a tip off for Chavo to take the knee out again. The knee is fine enough for a Shining Wizard and Blockbuster for two

each but Chavo gets all fired up. A Brock Lock with Chavo lifting Hurricane up for a kind of powerbomb sets up an STF to make Hurricane tap.

Rating: C. The match was fine though I'd still like to point out that Chavo isn't interesting on his own. He's someone who really needs a gimmick because there's just not enough there on his own. He looked extra vicious tonight though and the leg work was good stuff. Chavo can wrestle a totally acceptable match but that doesn't mean he's interesting.

Chavo is sick of these Rey Mysterio videos and challenges him to a match next week.

Vince arrives.

Rico offers Bischoff his services but Eric runs into Vince. Eric says he's off to see the Rock to show off ruthless aggression.

Undertaker had a sitdown interview earlier (that's not something you see every day) which he turns into a promo about how Rock and Angle are in for beatings. He and Angle could fight a thousand times and Kurt could never make him tap. This was a pretty rambling promo but Undertaker doesn't get a lot of practice.

Billy and Chuck vs. Hardcore Holly/Big Valbowski

Billy punches Holly down in the corner to start but Hardcore hits his kick to the very lower ribs (Tazz: "This might not even hurt Billy!") to take over. The partners come in with the veterans keeping Chuck in trouble. A belly to belly puts Hardcore down but the advantage lasts all of a few seconds until a double clothesline drops both of them. Venis gets a hot tag with what had to be a sweetened crowd pop. Everything breaks down and the Alabama Slam into the Money Shot finishes Billy.

Rating: D+. Sure why not. It's not like the tag division has anywhere to go but up so give a new team a win to make them players. I know it's not much and Holly/Venis aren't going to be anything serious but it's better to try to do something instead of running the same teams over and over again. Also, you can almost guarantee a passable match from the veterans and that's better than taking a gamble on someone who won't go anywhere and could put on a disaster.

Edge/Hulk Hogan/Rikishi vs. Un-Americans

It's Edge and Storm to get things going and the other Canadians are

quickly tripping Edge from the floor. The fans already want Hogan as we take an early break. Back with Edge still in trouble, including a chinlock from Test. The big boot misses though and Edge gets in the half nelson faceplant but Storm breaks up the tag. Do Canadian schools teach you how to cut off the ring? Edge powerslams Lance and brings Hogan in as everything breaks down. Storm's superkick triggers the Hulk Up but Test breaks up the Stinkface. Not that it matters as Edge spears Christian and hits the Edgecution for the pin on Storm.

Rating: C+. Totally fine six man here and, again, they kept Hogan's in ring time limited. The fans love him and want to see him do his stuff so why let him ruin a match due to age and physical limitations? This was exactly what it should have been, save for Rikishi being a bit of an odd fit with the champs.

Bischoff gives Rock his sales pitch and Rock says he'll be at Raw...because he'll be the new Undisputed Champion. See, Rock could go on any show and be a success. Rock could even show up on Frasier and make it electrifying. Bischoff thinks Rock would have been great on Nitro but Rock says he was too busy helping to put WCW out of business.

Here's Vince to announce the new GM. Before we get there though, Vince says any talent can negotiate with any show if they're interested. The Smackdown General Manager tried to put Vince out of business as well and has a history of ruthless aggression. The new boss is....Stephanie McMahon, because being banished FOREVER means less than four months. As expected, she takes WAY too long to get to the point while screeching a lot. Short version: HHH is signing with Smackdown and she's going to throw Bischoff out.

Stephanie goes to the back in full power walk mode to find Bischoff talking to the Un-Americans. We get the big staredown that a total of four people care about. Bischoff is willing to leave but says a lot can happen in three days. He'll see her at Vengeance, assuming her AMAZING PRESENCE doesn't melt him before then.

So yeah....this isn't a surprise. Everyone knew Stephanie's banishment would never last because WWE exists as a way to make her look awesome. Ignore the fact that people don't care and Stephanie's angry voice is more funny than intimidating. This is the new version of Vince vs. Flair and Stephanie is a weaker talker than either of

them, meaning things are already looking down.

Tajiri vs. Billy Kidman

The announcers hit the "let's praise Stephanie" button in a hurry as the match is easily ignored. Tajiri fires off some chops in the corner but the reversal is enough to make the announcers acknowledge the match, only 54 seconds after the bell. Kidman gets caught in the Tarantula and we hit a chinlock to keep things slow. A good superkick drops Kidman but he bulldogs Tajiri down and drops the Shooting Star for the pin.

Rating: C. This was a victim of time as there's only so much you can do in about 3:45 with a chinlock in the middle and a crowd that is still annoyed at the Stephanie announcement. The cruiserweights are starting to get somewhere and it's only going to get better with Mysterio coming in as the division's star.

Jamie Noble comes after Kidman and, with the help of Tajiri's mist, powerbomb him down.

Jericho goes to see Stephanie and is given a match with Edge next week. Swearing ensues after he leaves.

Rey Mysterio is here next week.

The announcers run down the Vengeance card.

Kurt Angle vs. The Rock

Before the match, Angle promises to make Rock tap. Undertaker comes out to watch so just pencil in the post match brawl now. Rock charges to the ring and does those one punch knockdowns. They head outside with Rock suplexing him on the ramp but getting catapulted into the post for one of those awesome bumps.

Angle stomps him down and gets two off a clothesline, only to walk into a belly to belly. There will be no suplexing our American hero though and the rolling German suplexes get two on Rock. Angle spends a bit too much time talking to Undertaker but is perfectly fine with more suplexes.

A long chinlock fills in some time before the Angle Slam, with Rock bumping so hard it almost looked like a reverse AA, gets two. Rock pops back up and grabs the quickly broken Sharpshooter. They head outside with Rock going after Undertaker, only to catch Angle in the spinebuster without much effort. The People's Elbow is loaded up but

Undertaker comes in for the DQ.

Rating: B-. Not a great match or anything but perfectly acceptable as a big time TV main event, especially with Rock making his big comeback here. The triple threat will be fine and as long as it gets the title off of Undertaker, everything will be fine. Angle and Rock always have chemistry together and this was good, especially given the circumstances.

Post match Angle chairs Undertaker down and puts Rock in the ankle lock.

HHH is going to his limo (Was he even on the show?) when Stephanie comes up to him. She wants to have a professional discussion with him but HHH only asks if she's gaining weight. He gets in the limo and Bischoff is waiting for him. Stephanie shouts a lot (I'm shocked) to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. I really can't emphasize how much that Stephanie announcement sucked the life out of this show. It really does make you realize how much none of this show or company matter because it's all about the McMahons. Even the Rock, who might be the most charismatic wrestler of all time, could barely make a dent in what Stephanie brings to this show. It's an entertaining night but you can really feel where things change all at once.

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<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01MQKDV50>

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<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Main Event – December 16, 2016: Making My Christmas Merry

Main Event

Date: December 15, 2016

Location: Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Michael Cole, Corey Graves

The dates on these shows continue to be all over the place as you hear about the show being on Friday but it's already available, making me wonder why I care about these things in the first place. It's been firmly established that this show has been taken over by the unstoppable force that is Darren Young vs. Jinder Mahal. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

SWEET! IT'S ANOTHER SPECIAL EPISODE! I'm assuming nothing was taped due to 205 Live being moved to Monday this week as Tuesday was Tribute to the Troops.

We'll start with a match from Raw.

TJ Perkins vs. Brian Kendrick

An early wristlock doesn't get Kendrick very far and he has to bail from the kneebar. The Wrecking Ball dropkick knocks Brian outside and we take a break. Back with Perkins hitting a jumping spin kick to the head and a springboard missile dropkick for two. The Captain's Hook is countered into the kneebar so Kendrick dives over to the ropes. Back up and Sliced Bread #2 gives Kendrick the pin at 8:24.

Rating: C-. So flash back to any time these two have fought in the last few months and update the details as necessary. This wasn't interesting because neither of the wrestlers are interesting. The triple threat has some potential but for the life of me I never need to see these two fight again.

Our first flashback shows Kane and Daniel Bryan exchanging presents. Bryan gets a Slammy and Kane gets....a puppy! Kane: "Thanks. I'm

starving!" Bryan: "NO! NO! NO!" I miss these two together.

And now, Ebenezer Piper. Oh this could be glorious. Jacob Marley comes to visit and tells him that three guests will be visiting the rotten Piper tonight. First up is the Ghost of Christmas Past and Piper makes jokes about his shoes. This goes nowhere so the Ghost of Christmas Present shows Piper how bad the Cratchits have things this year. Piper won't give up his Scotch tape (it doesn't make much more sense in context) so the Ghost leaves.

Finally we have the Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come (Piper: "You don't shave under your arms do you?") and of course he shows Piper his grave. Roddy throws him out and that's it. This really wasn't funny and it's just the standard Christmas Carol with Piper doing some of his standard jokes.

Long video on Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte.

We go back to December 2001 with the Rock in the ring talking about Test. Rock likes Test so much that he's going to sing a little rendition of the 12 Days of Christmas. He lists off some things that Test is going to go through, including five seconds of the people chanting the Rock's name. This was really fast but I'd completely buy Rock doing this off the cuff.

Back in 2012, Alberto Del Rio hit Santa with his car. This set up Cena vs. Del Rio in a Miracle on 34th Street Fight and I think you can get the idea. During the match, Santa took a turn for the worse but, with his heart rate monitor to the beat of Jingle Bells, he came out to help Cena get the win. It turned out that Santa had a sock in his belt and a certain Mandible Claw was used.

Back in 1990, Bobby Heenan gave Gorilla Monsoon a banana. Heenan got some tools, which he used to break the janitor's present. It turns out he got things a bit backwards though and broke his own present: a Rolex. Cue the wah wah wah music.

In 1997, a kid told Santa he wasn't real so Steve Austin came out and Stunned the imposter for not knowing what Austin wanted when he was six. Jim Cornette: "He cracked Kris' Kringle!"

We see the last ten seconds of New Day's first triple threat win, plus the events that set up the main event. Only the last few minutes of the main event airs but New Day breaks the record. We also get the post match spear to Kevin Owens.

A rundown of Sunday's card wraps up the show.

Overall Rating: D+. This is a situation where your individual tastes will vary wildly. This show wasn't about much other than filling in time because they didn't tape anything new. I'd much rather see something like this than just Raw matches though and it's always cool to crack open the video library. Other than that pretty bad Piper thing, all of the clips were either short enough to not be bad or funny enough on their own. Good show this week and instantly more entertaining than two jobbers having a dull match.

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<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01MQKDV50>

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The WWE UK Tournament

As you've probably heard by now, WWE is going to be holding a UK wrestling tournament in early 2017 which is likely leading to a regular TV series. Now if you listen to WWE, this is for the sake of expanding their international brand. If you pay attention, it's to crush ITV's attempt at reviving World of Sport. This isn't the first time WWE has done something like this and it certainly won't be the last.

I'm sure the tournament is going to be entertaining as they know how to do these things really well, especially with Nigel McGuinness on commentary. They're going to crush ITV's stuff with pure star power and that's all they need to do. If this is anything like the Cruiserweight Classic or the potential upcoming women's tournament,

this is going to be a blast.

There isn't much to say about this because it pretty much is what it is: WWE is buying up a lot more talent and giving us cool wrestling with it. I don't know what is left for WWE to do unless they invade Japan next but I'm sure they would find a way to do it well. Odds are this doesn't last long but at least it's a cool concept and should be fun while it lasts.

Daily News Update – December 16, 2016

We Hope This Slammy Awards Rumor Isn't True. December 14, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/we-sure-hope-this-slammy-rumor-isnt-true/>

Which Big Name is in Talks to Return to TNA? December 14, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/big-name-talks-tna/>

Which Former TNA Champion Has Caught WWE's Eye? December 15, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/former-tna-champion-caught-wwes-eye/>

WWE Signs Three New Female Talents. December 15, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/wwe-signs-three-new-female-talents/>

When is Big Show Planning on Retiring? December 15, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/big-show-planning-retiring/>

Randy Orton Talks Eventual Retirement and Winning More World Titles. December 16, 2016.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/randy-orton-talks-eventual-retirement-winning-world-titles/>

Impact Wrestling – December 15, 2016 (Total Nonstop Deletion): I Knew They Wouldn't Come

Impact Wrestling

Date: December 15, 2016

Location: Hardy Compound, Cameron, North Carolina

Commentators: Josh Matthews, Jeremy Borash

I knew it would come. Tonight is Total Nonstop Deletion, meaning the entire show is taking place at the Hardy Compound in North Carolina. The big draw for the show is Tag Team Apocalypto with teams from “throughout time and space” showing up for one huge match with the Tag Team Titles on the line. There have been next to no spoilers leaked for this so I’m coming in blind. Let’s get to it.

Senor Benjamin tells us that we shouldn’t try this at home. In Spanish of course.

No drones were harmed in the making of this presentation.

We go to Gilbert Corsey (former OVW interviewer) who says there is seismic activity in Cameron, North Carolina.

At the scene of the Hardy volcano, Itchweed (yes I spelled that right) runs up to the volcano with a weed whacker and shouts a lot of unintelligible words.

We go to the Dome of Deletion, a mini arena set up with a live crowd, a ring and an entrance shaped like Matt’s open mouth. The Hardys come out with Matt promising fifty of his followers appearing tonight. If they don’t prove their greatness tonight, the Seven Deities will remove the powers of deletion.

Cue Rockstar Spud to say he’s sick of all this, including King Maxel. The infant gets a chant so Spud wants to be his first

opponent because the kid hasn't had a match yet and he's more over than Spud has ever been. Spud promises to stretch Maxel and make him a loser like his father. Matt actually sanctions the match and makes it No DQ.

King Maxel vs. Rockstar Spud

Maxel drives to the ring in a mini Mercedes because of course he does. The bell rings, Benjamin tases Spud and Maxel gets the pin in 19 seconds. Cool moment, though Kevin Owens basically did the same thing in PWG a few years back.

Disco Inferno is watching from the back and asks if anyone wants to play some poker. It should be noted that Inferno was once arrested for involvement in an illegal poker game.

The news anchor and reporter talk about how the city has been locked down. Shane Helms and the Helms Dynasty roll up in a truck because they're local roughnecks and ready to fight.

The Rock N Roll Express arrived earlier today. They are PERFECT for something like this and it wouldn't have felt right if they weren't around. Matt offers them green beans or meat and invites them inside.

Corsey is taking bets on the match.

Sienna names herself #1 contender for the Knockouts Title and is willing to put that spot up against anyone or anything. Then the following happens.

Sienna vs. Vanguard I

Actually never mind as the referee won't let this happen so Vanguard I is ejected. We have a replacement though.

Sienna vs. ODB

ODB starts fast and runs Sienna over, setting up a Bronco Buster. A middle rope Thesz press gets two and Sienna is rather disgusted. The referee gets bumped so there's no count when ODB knocks a chair into her face. Vanguard I comes out to count (with the numbers appearing over his (His?) head) until the referee pulls him out. The Silencer

puts ODB away at 4:15.

Rating: D. I've never been a fan of ODB but I'll take her over Grado in some intergender non-comedy. They had to do something like this because you can't just have some big mess all night long. Some actual wrestling has to take place and if it just has to be ODB, so be it I guess.

ODB rubs Vanguard I on her chest.

The Helms Dynasty wants to fight but Matt has a pre-mo-nition. Tonight, we will see an appalling reincarnation.

If you order ANYTHING off ShopTNA.com, you get a free download of Dixie Carter's new song. So they're literally just giving it away. That's probably the only way anyone would take it.

Itchweed vs. Chet Sterling

This is under House Hardy Rules and the announcers aren't sure what that means. The announcers talk about how the land will be destroyed if the Hardys lose Apocalypto as Itchweed puts on a sleeper...and falls asleep himself. Itchweed is up at seven and puts Sterling through a table. The Pesticide Elbow finishes Sterling off at 3:33.

Rating: D. This is another good example of what happens when you let the Hardys loose without their medication. Itchweed is one of those characters who isn't really funny but I'm sure it means something to Jeff. Where else is he going to get to do some nonsense like this?

We get a flashback to Matt talking to a giraffe named George Washington and Jeff boxing a kangaroo named Smoking Joe.

TNA World Title: Lashley vs. Eddie Edwards

Lashley is challenging and shoulders the champ in the corner to start. They head outside with Lashley shoving a fan, causing the audience (who might be the 50 followers Matt was referring to earlier) to hold him back so Eddie can snap off some chops. We take a break and come back with Eddie grabbing a neckbreaker. Lashley sends him face first into the buckle with some Snake Eyes before cranking on the ribs. Fans: "YOU CAN'T BEAT HIM!" Except for the time he did of course.

Eddie saves himself from a superplex and scores with a missile dropkick. The Shining Wizard gets two but Lashley gets in the Dominator for the same. Back to the floor with a powerbomb sending Eddie into the crowd. Looked cool but not much pain involved. Lashley picks things up a bit and spears Eddie through the wall as we take a second break.

Back again with the warnings that opened the show. Edwards and Lashley have fought into the woods and the match keeps going...but we don't have cameras. I guess we'll come back to that later.

Tag Team Titles: Tag Team Apocalypto

The Hardys are defending and this is under elimination rules with eliminations coming via pinfall or submission. The match starts in the arena so we get to see who is in at the start. Here's the lineup:

Hardys, Helms Dynasty, Rock N Roll Express, Decay

That's it for now as smoke fills the arena and everyone has to evacuate the building. We see Lashley and Edwards still fighting before cutting back to the teams. Everything goes insane and the teams are outside with firework guns. Abyss: "NO! NOT AGAIN!" The fireworks going into the air and Helms tells his boys to get out. Matt appears in the back of their truck and attacks Lee so Jeff tells the referee to get on the back of his motorcycle to chase after them.

A bunch of teams are at the entrance to the Compound and Decay lets them in because this is going to be beautiful. Matt throws Everett into the Cameron City Limits sign for two (yes there are counts in this) with Helms making the save. It's a huge fight as some of the teams get in, though none of them are introduced. Crazy Steve snaps one of their necks for a pin on someone never identified.

Another team is allowed in as Spud is shown waiting on his partner. The Bravado Brothers (Harlem and Lance) show up as the Dynasty and Hardys fight in front of an antique store. Where did the Express go? Back at the entrance, a team called the Ugly Ducklings (maybe) enter

and are eliminated in just a few seconds via Abyss' chokeslam.

The Hardys and Dynasty keep fighting as Abyss beats up a team called Showtime. The Bravado Brothers sneak in as Showtime is quickly dispatched by way or a rock to the head. I'm almost certain we're not supposed to know who any of those teams were though it's not like we got a good shot at almost any of their faces. Spud's partner finally arrives and we take a break.

Back with Spud's partner being revealed as.....Hornswoggle. Decay lets them pass so we cut back to the brawl taking place by the Lake of Reincarnation. A jumping knee to Jeff's face gets two as Matt makes the save by moving the boat with his mind. The Dynasty starts stomping on the boat until Jeff makes the save with a double noggin knocker.

Matt shoves Helms into the Lake and it's time for a 3 Count reunion, by which I mean Shane being part of 3 Count and yelling that Everett and Lee are no Evan Karagias and Shannon Moore. They superkick Helms into the Lake as the Bravados show up to roll them up for two each. The Express are in another ring (four sided this time) nearby and call the Hardys in for a fight.

This goes as well as it's going to go in 2016 but now we cut back to Edwards and Lashley because that's still going. Wait now it's back to the Dynasty vs. the Bravados with the referee coming out of a portable toilet to do his job. Everett hits a standing moonsault onto I believe Lance, leaving Harlem to be sent into a wall. They head inside the arena to keep brawling as we cut back to the other ring. Ricky and Jeff are in the kind of machines used to get people to the top of telephone poles and it's time for another break.

Back with the cranes coming together so Ricky can work on the arm. The volcano is going off in the background as Robert works on a spinning toehold. Matt grabs one of the crane's controls to send Morton flying through the air. We go back to the other arena where Everett is covered for two. We're back to the cranes though with Jeff Swantoning out and missing Robert, only to have Matt hit a Twist of Fate to get rid of the Express.

So I believe we're down to Decay, Spud/Hornswoggle, the Bravados and the Dynasty, assuming no one else arrives. Back in the other arena, Spud and Hornswoggle go after the two downed teams with Hornswoggle swinging a chair. Spud eliminates the Bravados but gets powerbombed by Hornswoggle, setting up the Tadpole Splash. Everett pins Spud to get rid of another team.

Back to Lashley choking Edwards with a cord of some kind as Morton is still stuck on the crane, demanding to be let down. Road Warrior Animal of all people is here, asking how Morton got stuck up there. Decay finds James Storm in a mask but multiple other DCC members show up. One of them takes off his mask and Storm has no idea who it is. Whoever it is gets knocked out with Abyss getting the pin, which eliminates the entire DCC. Storm gets in a superkick for good measure. Steve wants to go add to this pile of bones and we take another break.

We come back again with the Hardys and Decay fighting near the volcano and Lashley and Edwards fighting nearby. The volcano erupts violently and we've got the Hurricane rising from the Lake. That means it's time for breaking news with Corsey saying Cameron's fate is in the Hardys' hands.

Back to the outside ring with Decay and the Dynasty each picking a Hardy to beat on. Matt is taken to a graveyard of Hardy logos as Jeff fights back on Decay. Janice is brought in and Jeff's comeback is cut off by a low blow. Vanguard I comes in and that means another fireworks war. Abyss takes one to the eye and Vanguard celebrates.

To the other teams as Hurricane saves Matt from a shovel to the head. Apparently the Dynasty is broken and a double pin (Can Hurricane do that?) gets rid of Everett and Lee. Matt and Hurricane bury them, which Matt says would make even the man with three H's proud. Lashley throws Eddie onto the house's porch and then no sells a Hornswoggle spear.

Abyss is back up but a huge Hardy symbol catches on fire around him. A lot of brawling ends with Abyss taking Matt back into the ring. Matt gets Janice though and a shot to the ribs (with some quick

edits) means Matt can make his weird noises. Steve and Jeff fight near the volcano with a Twisting Stunner sending Steve into the mouth. A big explosion sends Steve's charred body flying into the ring so Matt can get the pin to retain at 44:10.

Rating: N/A. You think I have any idea how to rate this? As I've said many times, I rate wrestling, not a bunch of people running around a big field with a few wrestling rings involved. I know there's an audience for this and I was excited about what it might be, but you knew they were over hyping this to death.

All that talk about teams breaking contracts and such to show up turned out to be the nonsense that it was expected to be, leaving us with a joke like the Rock N Roll Express, an indy team in the Bravados, Spud and Hornswoggle as another joke (I think?) and three TNA teams. Oh and the jobbers. Don't forget the jobbers.

No one really bought that any WWE names were going to show up here and the match was a big mess of standing around waiting for the bigger names to show up. The big moment here (I guess) was the Hurricane return and that's really nothing special. If you knew you weren't going to be able to get anyone here (Young Bucks? Maybe?), don't hype it up like it's a done deal. No they never said it, but if it's nothing outlandish, mentioning a name in wrestling means THEY'RE GOING TO SHOW UP.

I was really, really disappointed in this as I bought into the hype of the whole thing. But, of course, TNA manages to let me down and thinks that I'm going to be entertained by a joke about HHH burying people when the Hardys (combined age of 81) just beat almost the entire tag team division in less than an hour. There was no big moment, there was no big surprise and there was no big difference between this and the rest of the Hardy specials.

Reby reveals that she's pregnant to end the show, meaning the World Title match ends without a finish at 1:11:17.

Rating: C-. This is for the World Title match, which actually did something before it turned into a bunch of cameos. Lashley vs. Edwards has been done so many times now that it's really hard to

care about it anymore, especially when we're waiting on the conclusion to Carter vs. Edwards. Hey, maybe we can have a triple threat! That would be something new!

Overall Rating: D. Yeah this didn't do it for me. Basically they took a few camera crews and told the Hardys to do whatever they wanted. In other words, it's a big Hardys special and if you don't like it, you're just not up to their level. This wasn't really interesting and, much like the rest of their big matches, didn't add anything new. We've seen the Lake of Reincarnation done to death and the fireworks look cool but don't add much.

What we really saw tonight was how limited TNA is. If the best they can do is bring in the Bravado Brothers and Hornswoggle plus a few old guys who will probably do anything for a payday, you really can see their limited influence. On December 2, Ring of Honor brought in the Hardys, Jushin Thunder Liger and some big names from England. Tonight, it was some big names from the 80s who haven't been on the big stage in years. Which of those do you think is more impressive?

Overall, this felt like a big way to give Matt and Jeff whatever they want. We've seen the Broken gimmick for so long now and while Matt's acting and quirks are still entertaining, they need to either do something fresh with this or wind it down already. The show and big match kept my attention but by the end I was getting tired of it. It's AMAZING production work as the camera cuts were all solid but it's a case of not knowing when to say that's enough, which has been one of TNA's biggest issues for years.

I get why a lot of people will like it though and this isn't a case where I'm going to really harp on how wrong they are for thinking that way. It really is a situation where you either get it or you don't and I think I fall into the latter. There were entertaining moments but that's not enough for a two hour show. Much like back in the Immortal days, if you don't like this one idea, you're better off not watching. That's a really risky way to run TV and TNA does it far too often.

Results

King Maxel b. Rockstar Spud – Spud was shocked with a taser

Sienna b. ODB – Silencer

Itchweed b. Chet Sterling – Pesticide Elbow

Eddie Edwards vs. Lashley went to a no contest

The Hardys won Tag Team Apocalypto last eliminating Decay

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