

Impact Wrestling – October 20, 2016: I Think We Have A Bad Connection

Impact Wrestling

Date: October 20, 2016

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Josh Matthews, D'Angelo Dinero

The main event scene has picked up in the last week as we have what seems to be a four way feud between Lashley, Cody, Moose and World Champion Eddie Edwards. Other than that there's the start of the Hardys vs. the Tribunal and more of Maria Kanellis-Bennett and company vs. Gail Kim over the Knockouts Title. Let's get to it.

We look at the end of last week's show with Moose beating Carter to earn a shot against Lashley for a future title shot and Maria losing her rematch against Kim, meaning she's out of power in the Knockouts division. As for tonight, Cody is ready to take the World Title from Eddie Edwards.

Here's Cody to open things up. He's a fan of country music and a song has been making him think about why he left his former employer. It wasn't because of the money but because of the moments. Tonight he gets one of those moments when he has a chance to win the World Title. When he was fifteen he told his dad he wanted to be a wrestler. Dusty wasn't sure but he gave his blessing, but only if Cody was the best. That means becoming World Champion so here's Eddie to interrupt.

Eddie praises Cody for his career and says Cody has reinvented himself over and over. When Eddie is in the ring taking beating after beating, he knows who he is because of the Wolves Nation. The question is does Cody know who he is. Cody lists off parts of various characters he's had over the years before getting in Eddie's face. This brings out Lashley, who says the future is him hurting one of the two people in the ring. Cue Moose and our first match is after the break.

Moose vs. Lashley

The winner gets a title shot at some point in the future. They immediately start slugging away but Lashley's suplex is no sold. The Moose punches send Lashley outside, only to have him send Moose into the post. Back in and Moose gets thrown around again but he dropkicks Lashley off the top. A very big running dive is nearly left short but is still good enough to take Lashley out.

They trade spinebusters for two each (Moose's looked way off) before Moose no sells a superplex (that's Lashley's third vertical suplex in about five minutes). A spear each gives both guys another near fall. Moose's discus lariat gets two more but the chokebomb is broken up, allowing Lashley to hit the middle rope spear for the pin at 7:35.

Rating: C+. I really wouldn't go out of my way to point out how similar Lashley and Moose's offenses are like they did here. On top of that, they're really going to have Moose lose clean this soon? I mean, it's fairly clear that he and Lashley have very similar styles (give the whole trading moves here) so they're going to stick with the same guy that has been in the main event for well over a year now and not exactly set the world on fire? Oh yeah: this is TNA.

The Tribunal talks about wanting respect but the feed cuts out to hear from the three masked men. Chaos arrives tonight.

Tyrus ad.

Here's Fact of Life with Eli Drake. Eli is Bound For Gold and rips on the crowd a bit, which responds with a laugh track. The guest this week is Aron Rex and the "audience" isn't thrilled. Rex loves the title and what it means so he calls it sweetheart. Drake talks his usual trash so Rex goes through various champions who don't talk trash.

Since Rex beat Edwards for the Grand Championship, that makes him the man around here. Rex says none of them have anything on the man who is Bound For Gold. This brings Rex around to Ethan Carter III, who Drake says is bound for the dumpster. Cue Carter but Drake sends it to a break, complete with a TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES DUMMIES graphic. This segment gets

better and better every week.

Back with Carter in the ring and calling Eli out for a fight. He wants to destroy that set but wants Eli to press the button so he can punch Drake (YEAH!), kick Drake (YEAH!) or choke Drake (YEAH!). Eli pushes the button over and over so Carter dives on the security and the fight is on. Rex tries to break it up but Jesse Godderz (who Rex insulted during his interview) comes out to go after Aron. Security breaks it up.

Here are the Hardys to do their catchphrases and accuse the Tribunal of trying to take food off King Maxel's plate. Thankfully the Tribunal cuts off the DELETE chants.

Tag Team Titles: Hardys vs. Tribunal

Hardys are defending and it's another brawl to start with the champs taking over early on. The announcers talk about the Best of Sting DVD being back in stock, which is one of the first merchandise plugs I've heard in a LONG time. Dax gets in a few shots on Matt but it's quickly off to Jeff for some forearms to the head. Jeff is quickly taken down into the challengers' corner but WAIT! We have to pause the match because Josh has an update on a new Pop television event! I could live with those a lot better if Josh knew anything about making a transition.

A legsweep gets Jeff out of trouble and it's off to Matt for a bunch of biting. Did the Hardys ever have a face turn moment and I missed it? Or am I just supposed to cheer for them because the schmucks in the Impact Zone do? Not that it matters as we're getting the Hardys whether we like them or not because they're stars or something. Matt hits a quick Side Effect but gets caught in a double spinebuster for two. Back to back Twists of Fate end Baraka at 7:49.

Rating: B-. This was every bit of the tag team formula and it actually worked well. The Hardys can still do a basic match very well but that doesn't mean I want two Hardy themed specials airing at Christmastime. That's one of TNA's major issues: they have no idea when to slow down on something.

Post match the three masked men appear and lay out the Tribunal. So we

have masked men who appear after a series of weird visuals and attack people. And the response from the TNA fans who got annoyed at Final Deletion being copied will be.....?

Allie is getting ready to stand up to Maria when Braxton Sutter comes up. That goes nowhere as Laurel Van Ness comes in to say Maria has something to say to Allie. Laurel hits on Braxton a bit too.

The masked men say no one is safe because they're here to stay.

Lashley talks to Cody about destroying various saviors. Cody doesn't think the good luck wishes are genuine and says it's not bragging if you can back it up. Lashley says their paths will cross sooner or later.

We look back at the end of Gail vs. Maria from last week.

Here are Maria, Allie and Laurel with something to say but their entrance is drowned out by Josh going on and on about the reign of terror being over. Maria may not be in charge anymore but she's still the greatest Knockout of all time. Of all the people she can blame though, it's all Allie's fault. Maria demands an apology but Allie finally stands up to her and says Maria is the one to blame. The beatdown is on and Allie is left laying with Maria saying it's Allie vs. Laurel next week.

Lashley tries to play mind games with Eddie but the champ isn't buying it.

Tyrus tells Mahabali Shera to not dance because he's going to fight tonight.

Ethan Carter III and Jesse Godderz want to face Aron Rex and Eli Drake next week.

Mahabali Shera vs. Mike Bennett

Bennett's music is restored this week. Shera poses to start so Mike knocks him into the corner, only to have his chops no sold. Bennett sends him into the corner and beats on Shera for a bit, only to get caught with slams and a bearhug. Since this isn't 1984, none of that has any effect and Bennett rakes the eyes to set up the MIP for the pin at 2:57.

Video on Eddie vs. Cody.

DJZ says himself, Mandrews and Braxton Sutter are the beat Team X Gold team around. Cue Rockstar Spud (who gets a TATER TOT chant) to ask why he hasn't been asked to participate. DJZ: "Nobody likes you." Spud says he has his own team who will be here next week and they're better than X, Y and Z. Do they really think they have room for Trios Titles around here? That's what they think is the best use of their time?

TNA World Title: Eddie Edwards vs. Cody

Cody is challenging and has Brandi Rhodes in his corner. Feeling out process to start and a double dropkick gives us a standoff. Back from a break with Cody getting kicked down to the mat, only to have him chop Eddie into an armbar. Eddie fights up again but eats the Beautiful Disaster, followed by a springboard dive to the floor.

A slam on the ramp sets up a modified Muscle Buster on the champ for another near fall and Cody is getting frustrated. The champ is loaded up for a superplex but reverses into a small package (looked horrible as Cody was laying on the mat and then raised up to get to the pin) to retain at 13:05.

Rating: C+. This was fine but it's just another title match being handed to an ex-WWE guy who hasn't proven a thing in this company yet. At least Rex had to win a tournament to get his title. Cody on the other hand was literally handed a World Title match the day he arrived and that's not a good look for TNA.

They shake hands and Eddie lets Cody pose (Why? He hasn't actually done anything yet.), allowing Maria to come out and attack Brandi as the show ends.

Overall Rating: C. Horribly choreographed ending aside, this was a mostly watchable show. However, there's a big problem that TNA has had for a very long time now and this week showcased it more than they've done in a long time: there's no one to connect with for most fans. Here are some of the characters on this show:

A MMA/professional wrestler

A former NFL player

The freakshow with magical powers

A loudmouth with a model wife who was treated like a huge deal on arrival

A guy who likes to dance and hired a fixer to do his fighting for him

The son of a legend who was literally given a World Title shot without winning a single match

There are a few relatable characters (Allie, maybe Eddie) but they're very few and far between. They might do cool stuff every now and then and the wrestling can be good but the characters aren't people I'm going to have a connection with. Look at Daniel Bryan: the everyman held down by the system who kept fighting until he won. It's something people can connect to, which isn't the case in TNA the majority of the time. Give us someone we care about instead of someone fun to watch. It can make a world of difference.

Results

Lashley b. Moose – Middle rope spear

Hardys b. Tribunal – Twist of Fate to Baraka

Mike Bennett b. Mahabali Shera – MIP

Eddie Edwards b. Cody – Small package

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Monday Night Raw – May 20, 2002: So Steve Austin Walks Into A Bar

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 20, 2002

Location: Pyramid, Memphis, Tennessee

Attendance: 8,000

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the first night of the Undertaker regime and that means we're getting closer to King of the Ring. In addition to that, I'm sure there's a good chance that we're going to get more of Austin vs. the NWO, which is now adding names for Austin to beat up from week to week. As long as it's not Austin vs. Big Show, I think we're good. Let's get to it.

We open with a rest in peace video for the British Bulldog. There's a lot more effort here than in most of these, though the fact that he was only 39 makes it even harder to accept. That's just too young for anyone.

Opening sequence.

Rob Van Dam comes to the ring because the scripts calls for him to be there, only to have Undertaker come out and beat the tar out of him. A whip into the steps busts open Van Dam's eye and Undertaker hits him with the steps for good measure. Undertaker is mad that he didn't get to open the show and had to beat up Van Dam for trying to steal his spotlight. When he feels like he has something to say, he's going to come down here and say it no matter who is in the ring.

The number one rule around here is respect the Undertaker and you can ask

Hulk Hogan what happens when you disobey. Last night, he killed Hulkamania and it's over for good. In fact, Hogan is going to announce his retirement on Smackdown. As Undertaker keeps talking, the referees are STILL checking on Van Dam, which means we're just waiting on him to get up and do something else. We keep hearing about respect as Van Dam crawls into the ring. Undertaker thinks Van Dam is thick between the ears and the fight is on with Rob kicking him down and hitting a Five Star.

Undertaker demands a match with Van Dam tonight so Ric Flair makes it a title match. Makes sense given their history but doesn't make a ton of sense given Flair as a smart heel who would want to stay on Undertaker's good side.

Hardy Boyz vs. NWO

X-Pac and Big Show here. Jeff starts with a headscissors on X-Pac as the announcers don't have much to say about the Hardys getting destroyed by Lesnar last night. Matt comes in with a Side Effect but Show realizes that he's Big and runs Matt over from the apron. Show gets in his big beatdown segment but it's back to X-Pac who misses a charge in the corner. I can't picture this pair of screwups being the best idea for a team.

The brothers get smart and try to double team X-Pac, only to get thrown around by Show. Booker T. kicks Big Show by mistake because this team is rapidly turning into a big joke that just won't go away. With things going horribly for the NWO, here's Goldust as Elvis for an accidental distraction, allowing Jeff to grab a rollup for the pin.

Rating: D+. This is where the NWO belongs: as a tag team who can probably beat some lower level pairings but aren't quite good enough to go after the Tag Team Titles, mainly because they don't exist on Raw at this point. It's amazing what happens when you get rid of Hall and let X-Pac do most of the wrestling. The matches aren't good but they're a lot less horrible.

Paul Heyman talks to Trish about her lingerie and sex is suggested. Denied, but it's suggested.

The NWO argues over who should be the leader. Maybe Flair should have joined. Somehow this gets us to Goldust/Booker T. vs. the Hardys later tonight. Did anyone ask Matt and Jeff if they're cool with this?

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Jacqueline

Trish is defending. Jackie slaps her in the chest to start, giving Lawler his favorite spot in years. A headlock doesn't get Jackie anywhere but an armdrag into an armbar works a bit better. Trish fights up with forearms and a suplex for two. Lawler: "I'd like to be her thigh master." Jackie misses a charge in the corner and the bulldog retains the title. This was actually pretty good while it lasted but the time hurt it, as is always the case.

Heyman and Lesnar come out and threaten Trish with violence if she doesn't go out with Paul. Cue Bubba Ray Dudley for the save to give Brock his first singles feud.

Video on last night's big matches. Isn't that how you should open the show?

Tommy Dreamer is still gross and one person continues to laugh. This time he eats hair as he gets it cut and washes it down with something called Barbicide, which is apparently a disinfectant. What do you even say to something like this?

Rob Van Dam isn't going to listen to the doctor who tells him not to wrestle tonight.

GET THE F OUT!

European Title: William Regal vs. Bubba Ray Dudley

Bubba is challenging and starts fast with a slam and those big elbows. You really can see the Dusty Rhodes influence in there and that's not the worst thing in the world. Molly Holly, in Regal's corner here, trips Bubba to let Regal take over but the guys slam heads for a double knockdown. The Flip Flop and Fly have Regal in trouble and it's table time for no logical reason. Cue Lesnar for the DQ.

After an F5, Molly slips Regal the knuckles to knock Bubba out again.

Here are Flair and Arn Anderson for the 10pm chat. Flair admits that he's made some mistakes over the years but there are too few to mention. See, last night, Austin pinned the illegal man so it's time for a new plan. This brings out Austin to hear said plan face to face. Or face to heels actually. Anderson threatens him with violence and Austin doesn't seem impressed. Anyway, Flair says he owns Austin and is going to take him out of the ring. Stunning and beer drinking ensues.

Hardy Boyz vs. Goldust/Booker T.

Raven of all people comes out for commentary and rips on Lawler for his lame job calling matches. Lawler won't be too interested in this match because Lita and her puppies aren't here. JR asks about Goldust and Booker's relationship. Raven: "You don't know much about relationships Lawler. That's why your wife left you." Some forearms put Matt down to start and Booker dances around a bit before tagging Goldust in. The Side Effect puts Goldust down but here's the NWO to kick Goldust in the back of the head. Matt grabs a small package for the pin.

Austin and Debra are at a karaoke bar. I don't see this being funny.

Back in the ring, Goldust is still down with the NWO around him. Booker isn't cool with X-Pac and Big Show interfering because it cost him a match. They yell at each other over their actions last night with Booker saying X-Pac can't get laid. Show points out that they never invited Booker to join the team, which makes you wonder WHY HE'S STILL THERE. Can the boss just assign people to stables? Anyway Kevin Nash comes out to take charge of the group and rips into them like a bunch of losers. Booker is officially on the team and seems very happy about it because Nash is just so darn inspirational.

Eddie Guerrero is at the bar as well and sends Debra a teddy bear. Does the bar just happen to sell teddy bears? Austin isn't pleased.

After the announcers plug the upcoming Australia show, Raven asks if Lawler knows anything about wrestling anymore. Raven gets on a regular mic and yells at Lawler for only talking about puppies. A challenge is

issued for later tonight.

Debra asks Austin to sing but Eddie takes the mic and sings....I have no idea actually. It's booted off the stage as expected.

Raven vs. Jerry Lawler

Raven starts with some basic stuff and Lawler gets a bit more height than I was expecting off a backdrop. They head outside so Raven can yell at JR but Lawler gets all fired up and takes the strap down. A bunch of right hands and rams into the buckle have the crowd all entertained and knock Raven loopy. Raven bails before the fist drop can hit.

Rating: D-. They can't even have Raven do a job for Lawler in Memphis? I'm fine with Jerry doing this once or twice a year to give the fans a quick thrill because nothing the company is going to put out there is going to fire them up like a quick Lawler match. That being said, I really don't get the idea of having Raven walking out instead of just taking the pin. Then again, the insults he got in on Lawler were pure gold and more than make up for the loss.

Austin sings Margaritaville but Eddie doesn't like it. Since this is 2002 Austin, he turns his back on Eddie and gets a beer bottle broken over his head. Aside from this taking WAY too long to finally get to the point, the idea of Austin vs. Guerrero is a huge improvement over the NWO nonsense. It's going to suck for the Intercontinental Title but at least they're elevating someone.

Undisputed Title: Rob Van Dam vs. Undertaker

Van Dam is challenging and his eye probably isn't healed up yet. A big dive takes Undertaker out before the bell, which probably isn't the best idea in the world. Undertaker crotches himself with a missed big boot and some kicks get some two counts. A clothesline puts Undertaker on the floor and Van Dam is right back out there with some kicks to the back. Undertaker gets back inside but can't hit the Last Ride.

Instead he ribs off a buckle pad but opts to elbow Rob in the face instead. The chokeslam is broken up and Undertaker goes into the exposed

buckle. Rolling Thunder connects for the pin with Undertaker's foot on the ropes and Memphis is way too smart for that. Cue Flair to say the foot was on the ropes so the match is continuing. The Last Ride retains the title.

Rating: C. Undertaker gave Rob a lot here and it was a lot more entertaining than I was expecting. Van Dam moving higher up on the card is a good thing and it's always cool to see someone younger in the main event scene. I remember watching this live but I had missed the foot being on the rope. It's amazing how much fun you can have when you get surprised by something like this and buy that they did something like that.

Flair is pleased to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. There's a lot of bad stuff on here and it's certainly not a good show but WHAT AN IMPROVEMENT this was over recent weeks. Guerrero and Van Dam are moving up the card, the NWO has an actual leader (though they lost both of their matches), Undertaker, though still bad, is a huge upgrade over Hogan as champion and Brock vs. Bubba could give us some good fights.

That being said, there's a lot of bad around here too. There was way too much time spent on the bar segments and Undertaker's opening segment, which could have been done in half the time. The short matches still don't do the show any favors and it's not a good sign that the Hardys have to work twice. They have so many people running around on the show with nothing to do but we need to see Matt and Jeff twice in an hour and a half? It's still not a good show but this was miles ahead of everything they've been doing in the last month.

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NXT – October 19, 2016: I Love NXT and I Don't Know How Else To Say It

NXT

Date: October 19, 2016

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're getting closer to the second round of the Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic and it's also the start of a fresh taping cycle. The other interesting story is the return of Shinsuke Nakamura to go after Samoa Joe. It's fairly obvious that they'll be facing each other again in Toronto. Let's get to it.

We open with a look back at Nakamura being laid out about a month ago but coming back last week to go after Samoa Joe.

Opening sequence.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic First Round: Rich Swann/No Way Jose vs. Tony Nese/Drew Gulak

It should be interesting to see this work so much better here than it would on Raw. Rich and Drew start things off as the fans aren't sure which good guy to cheer for. It's time for some fast flipping to start with Rich bouncing over Drew and handing it off to Jose for the big guy

dancing. Nese comes in and eats a big flapjack (that sounds good) for two. Some quick kicks put Jose down for two but it's back to Rich for some kicks to the chest. They head outside and it's Nese superkicking (of course) Swann as we take a break.

Back with Gulak and Swann clotheslining each other for a double knockdown. That means a double tag off to Jose and Nese with the dancing one turning Tony inside out off a clothesline. Gulak gets thrown into the air and punched right in the jaw (better than most Superman Punches) for two with Nese making the save. The full nelson slam ends Gulak at 10:40.

Rating: C+. I've said it before and I'll say it again: Jose is WAY too talented for this dancing party guy gimmick. He looked even more like a star than usual here as he was towering over the other three and was able to show off with the power game. It really is amazing how much more interesting the cruiserweights are when they're in front of a crowd that actually wants to see them.

Rich and Jose are ready for the Authors of Pain, who better not look past them. Dancing ensues.

Quick discussion of Hideo Itami's injury, meaning he's out of the tournament.

We look back at Glorious Ten splitting up.

Tye Dillinger has requested and been granted a match against Bobby Roode in Toronto.

Austin Aries would rather talk about potassium instead of his surprise partner. The tournament isn't for everyone, such as Hideo Itami. Hideo is out because an MRI revealed he doesn't have a spine.

Bobby Roode vs. Sean Maluta

Maluta actually grabs a rollup for an early two but Roode takes his head off with a clothesline. A hard whip into the corner makes it worse for Sean, followed by a spinebuster to break up his comeback. An implant DDT ends Sean at 3:07.

Rating: D+. Just a squash here, which is a good role for some of the lower level cruiserweights. We've seen what they can do in the tournament so these wins are more impressive than the ones you see over the run of the mill jobbers. Maluta has a good look and can be pushed if the need ever arrives, just like so many of the other people NXT has been using lately.

Roode laughs off Dillinger's complaints because Tye was the one who begged Roode to team up for the Dusty Classic. All Roode wanted to do was bring Tye up to a GLORIOUS level. After a line about Klingons, Tye comes out and clears the ring. The fans, who went nuts over Roode's entrance, give Tye a huge TEN chant.

Liv Morgan is in the back when Peyton Royce and Billie Kay jump her from behind. Morgan is dragged out to the stage and laid out again, leaving Kay and Royce to brag about how this is their division.

Dusty Rhodes Tag Team Classic First Round: Austin Aries/??? vs. Tucker Knight/Otis Dozovic

Aries' mystery partner is.....the debuting Roderick Strong, who teamed with Aries to win the ROH Tag Team Titles as part of Generation Next. The announcers put Strong over hard, mentioning his matches against people like AJ Styles, Samoa Joe, Daniel Bryan and Kevin Owens. Otis throws Aries around to start before it's off to Tucker for some hard chops to Strong.

Everything breaks down and Aries has to break up a Vader Bomb from Otis. Aries and Strong start trying to chop down the massive Dozovic but he pretty easily suplexes them both at the same time. The hot tag brings in Knight for a double splash in the corner but he misses a charge and falls outside. Back in and the Sick Kick knocks Knight silly for the pin (ignore the shoulder being up at one) at 6:15.

Rating: B-. It's strange to see the smaller, faster guys as the heels but this was a better match than I was expecting. Dozovic and Knight are two big power guys and I'm always entertained by seeing guys their size chopped down. Aries/Strong vs. TM61 should be a lot of fun, which is the cool part about tournaments like this one.

Andrade Cien Almas attacked Cedric Alexander over a lack of respect. Now it's time to take the respect for himself.

Nikki Cross vs. Danielle Kamella

Cross is just as crazy as she used to be and throws Danielle with a suplex. After biting and scratching herself, Nikki ends this with a fisherman's neckbreaker at 1:20. Total squash.

Nikki keeps beating on Danielle so the referee reverses the decision.

Here's Shinsuke Nakamura with a message for Samoa Joe. Nakamura confirms the rematch with Samoa Joe in Toronto because he'll beat Joe with no mercy. This brings out Patrick Clark, who wants the title shot for himself. Instead he gets a kick to the head, only to have Joe come out for the big staredown. Joe stays on the ramp while Clark eats Kinshasa to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. I had a really good time here as they covered almost everything that's likely to be taking place at Takeover: Toronto in less than an hour. We had good tag wrestling, a debut, story advancement and a hot ending. In other words, things you rarely get on Raw and/or Smackdown and in even less time. NXT knows how to turn on the jets whenever they need to and that's exactly what they've done again here.

Results

No Way Jose/Rich Swann b. Tony Nese/Drew Gulak – Full nelson slam to Gulak

Bobby Roode b. Sean Maluta – Implant DDT

Austin Aries/Roderick Strong b. Tucker Knight/Otis Dozovic – Sick Kick to Otis

Danielle Kamella b. Nikki Cross via referee's decision

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We're recording tonight so let me know what you want NorCal and I to talk about.

New Column: The Sword Of Triple H Is Dangling Over Our Heads

And why he's killing the Raw World Title.

<http://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-the-sword-of-triple-h-is-dangling-over-our-heads/>

Remember to go to wrestlingrumors.net for your wrestling news, as partially written by one KB himself. They go a long way in allowing me to do what I do.

Smackdown – October 18, 2016: The Chin Who Got The Win(s)

Smackdown

Date: October 18, 2016

Location: Pepsi Center, Denver, Colorado

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, David Otunga, Mauro Ranallo

This is an interesting time for Smackdown as they don't really have anything to do for the next month until Survivor Series. That means some upgraded TV shows, including tonight as James Ellsworth (The Chin Who Got The Pin) challenges AJ Styles for the Smackdown World Title. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's Ellsworth vs. Styles match to set up the title rematch.

Dean Ambrose gives Ellsworth a pep talk and his own shirt, which you can really buy at WWEshop.com.

Here's Randy Orton to open things up. Orton praises Bray Wyatt for being far more evil than Randy expected. Escaping Wyatt is like trying to get out of quicksand: the more you pull, the tighter it becomes. Bray appears on screen from inside a coffin and says he's having so much fun messing with Orton. By the way, he's here.

Randy Orton vs. Luke Harper

Harper shoves him outside to start but his suicide dive is broken up with a forearm. Back in and Luke goes up, earning himself a superplex back down. There go the lights though and we've got Bray being brought to the ring in his coffin, carried by druids in sheep masks. We come back from a break with Orton on the floor and Bray walking around near the casket. A Michinoku Driver gets two for Harper but he can't put Orton in the

casket. Instead, Orton comes back with his clothesline and powerslam but Wyatt comes in for the DQ at 7:48. Too much was spent on Bray's entrance and the commercial to rate, though it was just angle advancement.

The Wyatts load up the casket but Kane is inside. Orton and Kane clean house but the lights go out again and the Wyatts disappear. Now this is the kind of thing I can go with: the Wyatts using their supernatural powers to mess with people and stay a step or two ahead of their opponents. We don't see that enough.

AJ Styles is worried because Dean Ambrose is lurking around tonight. This could wind up being just like in WCW when David Arquette became WCW World Champion. If Ambrose tries something, AJ will find him anywhere he goes.

Naomi vs. Alexa Bliss

Alexa has Nightmare on Elm Street style attire. Naomi starts fast with right hands and those dancing kicks. Back up and Bliss eats a springboard clothesline, followed by a legdrop for two. Bliss gets sent into the buckle and heads outside as we go to a break. Back with Naomi scoring off a backbreaker and jawbreaker, only to be sent hard into the corner again. A quick Twisted Bliss gives Alexa the pin at 10:49.

Rating: D+. So what in the world was the point in having Naomi go over at the pay per view? Like really, what did that accomplish? Alexa just comes right back and wins on Smackdown like the No Mercy match never happened. This is the kind of thing that you never see on Smackdown and feels like it belongs on Raw.

Bliss says Becky's fairy tale ends in three weeks when she becomes the champion, just like the fairest of them all.

We look back at Miz beating down Dolph Ziggler last week until Heath Slater and Rhyno made the save.

Curt Hawkins vs. Apollo Crews

Hawkins' theme music is him reciting his Curt Facts. After he wins tonight, Apollo is going to have to change his last name to LOSE. Apollo hits him in the face and that's enough for Curt, who walks out before the

bell. No match.

Here's Carmella for a talk about Nikki Bella. Two months ago she was basking in the glow of her first pay per view match but heard Nikki Bella's music. Before she can get much further though, here's a ticked off Nikki. Carmella says she's stealing the spotlight again but that's not surprising since Nikki's boyfriend is John Cena. Nikki doesn't think that's much of a surprise since the relationship is featured on two TV shows and all over the internet. She's right actually.

Carmella shows us clips from Total Divas and Total Bellas with Nikki being some....well being a big bunch of stuff ranging from annoying to needy to talkative to nothing out of the ordinary. The graphic says Total Need-Freak but Nikki says she wears the pants in her relationship and fights her own battles. It's all about being fearless and all the fans know she's not afraid of anything, including a Boss, a Queen or a Princess from Staten Island. Carmella: "Did John help you come up with that?" She accuses Nikki of using her looks and relationship to become famous but leaves before Nikki can do anything.

Ellsworth can't believe this is happening and starts crying over the idea of telling his grandkids about this.

Miz/Spirit Squad vs. Dolph Ziggler/Heath Slater/Rhyno

Rhyno clotheslines Mikey down to start as Otunga talks about the Spirit Squad coaching high school cheerleading. Slater and Ziggler take turns on Mikey as Miz looks on. Mikey finally gets in a few shots on Dolph and brings him into the corner for the tag off to Miz. The threat of a superkick sends Miz outside though and we take a break.

Back with Miz in control of Ziggler and handing it back to Kenny for two off a legdrop. The fans want Slater but have to settle for Dolph suplexing Mikey. Miz comes in and knocks Rhyno off the apron, only to walk into the superkick from Dolph. The big diving tag brings in Slater as everything breaks down. Rhyno Gores Mikey and Slater rolls Kenny up for two. A right hand from Miz gives Kenny the pin on Slater at 9:25.

Rating: C. This was fine and I guess sets up the Spirit Squad as the next

challengers for the Tag Team Titles. It's not exactly the Usos or American Alpha but when you have all of five teams (since Breezango has disappeared), adding in another is hardly the worst thing you can do. At least Ziggler didn't get pinned.

Natalya comes in to see Daniel Bryan and offers her services on the Survivor Series women's team. Bryan isn't sure, even though there are only five women active at the moment. Natalya: "Are you following my cat on Instagram?"

Jack Swagger vs. Baron Corbin

Corbin says this is for everyone who says WE THE PEOPLE. A shoulder block knocks Swagger off the apron and into the barricade so Corbin can drive in a bunch of forearms to the back of the head. End of Days wraps Swagger up at 1:40.

Natalya is still showing Bryan her cats when Ambrose comes in wearing a referee shirt. Bryan says thanks but no thanks. If Dean wants to, he can be timekeeper, ring announcers or whatever. Dean: "I'll do that."

Smackdown World Title: AJ Styles vs. James Ellsworth

AJ is defending and Ambrose is at ringside to do a variety of jobs. Ambrose handles ring announcing and introduces Ellsworth as weighing about 160 or 170 and as Rocky II, III and IV rolled into one. After ringing the bell about 50 times, Ambrose grabs the mic and says to stop the match because we have to take a break. Back with AJ hammering away in the corner as JBL loses his mind about Ellsworth being in a title match.

AJ starts taking his time but Dean says someone has left the lights on in their Corolla. With some frustration setting in, AJ throws James outside but Dean throws him back in. This is repeated about five times and the distraction lets Ellsworth get in a superkick. JBL: "DON'T DO IT! DON'T DO IT!" Otunga: "He hit him with No Chin Music!" The fans start getting behind Ellsworth....until he charges into a spinebuster. AJ hammers away in the corner....and that's a DQ at 13:15. Dean: "The loser of this match: AJ Styles!"

Rating: C. Obviously the wrestling wasn't the point here but I liked the idea. Would you rather have them advance Dean vs. AJ with the same stuff they've run into the ground for years now or with something fresh for a change? The last two weeks have been fun for a change and that's exactly the point. It's advancing the story in a different way, which is far better than seeing AJ and Dean with tag partners for a one off match.

Dean gives AJ Dirty Deeds and announces Ellsworth as the man who has more victories over Styles than John Cena. Ellsworth can't stand up to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. The storytelling around here continues to feel fresh as we're getting a lot of the same stuff presented in different ways. I don't feel bored throughout this show and there's nothing as stupid as Titus Brand Rolexes. This actually works as a wrestling show and they're building to some good stuff coming up. Good little show here with a fun main event and that's all you need.

Results

Randy Orton b. Luke Harper via DQ when Bray Wyatt interfered

Alexa Bliss b. Naomi – Twisted Bliss

Miz/Spirit Squad b. Dolph Ziggler/Heath Slater/Rhyno – Rollup to Slater

Baron Corbin b. Jack Swagger – End of Days

James Ellsworth b. AJ Styles via DQ when Styles wouldn't stop attacking in the corner

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Monday Night Raw – October 17, 2016: The Long, Slow Tease

Monday Night Raw

Date: October 17, 2016

Location: Pepsi Center, Denver, Colorado

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

It's a big moment tonight as Goldberg will be making his first appearance in WWE in over twelve years. Goldberg is back tonight to answer Paul Heyman's challenge for a match against Brock Lesnar at some point in the future (likely next month's Survivor Series). Other than that we have two more shows before the Cell is lowered so let's get to it.

Opening sequence. Is there a reason why they got rid of Last Week on Raw? Taking too much promo time up?

Here are Kevin Owens and Chris Jericho for the opening chat. Owens thinks Mick Foley has a personal vendetta against him because he's put the title match inside the Cell. Jericho's calls for quiet backfire so he talks about all the stuff that happened inside the Cell over the years, including ending Foley's career.

It's still going to be the Chris and Kevin Show because Jericho should have been in that match as well. We hear Jericho's resume again, including beating Rock and Austin on the same night. Jericho: "Bet you forgot about that one!" He only lost last week because of bad refereeing so THE REFEREE IS ON THE LIST!

This brings out Rollins to a BIG face chant. Like, even bigger than the

time he beat up Roman Reigns and should have been turned face then. Rollins thinks everything about Jericho should be on the List, including the trunks which Rollins refers to as Sparkle Crotch. Jericho: "I AM NOT SPARKLE CROTCH!" For calling him that, Rollins JUST MADE THE LIST!

Seth brings up Owens bailing on Jericho two weeks in a row but that's just to keep the team strong. Jericho issues a challenge to Rollins, who wants to fight right now. Actually hang on because Seth wants to know what Owens is going to do. Jericho and Owens disagree about whether Owens should stay or go with Jericho saying he's got this because Owens can be here in spirit. Rollins: "Let's do this. Owens, get your hands off Sparkle Crotch."

Chris Jericho vs. Seth Rollins

First good sign of the match: the bell rings as we get back because Foley made it official during the break. Do that WAY more often. The SPARKLE CROTCH chants begin as Rollins clotheslines Jericho out of the corner and stomps on the Canadian. A backbreaker gives Jericho two and control but he has to fight out of a Pedigree attempt. Jericho backdrops him over the top and face first onto the apron as we take a break.

Back with both guys getting up and Rollins scoring with a Sling Blade for two. The nose breaking knee has Jericho in trouble but here's Owens for a distraction. Rollins hits the springboard knee but gets distracted anyway, allowing Jericho to grab the Walls. The referee sees Owens holding the ropes away from Rollins though and the hold is broken. Instead Jericho goes with an enziguri but the Codebreaker is countered into a Pedigree for the pin at 14:36.

Rating: B-. This third straight loss for Jericho is proof of how important talking is in wrestling. Jericho has lost to Rollins three times now and he's still going to be one of the most over acts on the roster with all of his stupid lines and charisma. It's something so few people have going for them and Jericho is one of the best ever at it.

We look at Goldberg's first win in WCW.

Earlier today, Lita sat down with Charlotte for a chat about what it

means to go inside the Cell. Charlotte brags about how awesome she is and how this is the latest moment on her already amazing resume. She's won eleven pay per view title matches in a row and this is going to be another one. Charlotte lists off all her accomplishments and says she's going to win again because that's what she does.

Golden Truth/Mark Henry vs. Shining Stars/Titus O'Neil

This is over the Shining Stars trying to rip Henry off fake Rolexes. Apparently they were Titus Brand watches so there's your reason for this match. Titus beats on Goldust to start and it's off to Primo for a chinlock. The powerslam allows the hot tag to Truth as everything breaks down. Henry tags himself in and the World's Strongest Slam ends Titus at 3:09.

Rating: F. Oh screw off WWE. This was another waste of time because they don't bother with putting together a storyline and just threw six guys out there for the sake of throwing six guys out there to fill in time. I have a big problem caring about WWE when it's clear that they don't care either. Either give this time to something worthwhile or have the people out there eating sandwiches because it might actually be more interesting than a three minute match over a Titus Brand Rolex.

Jericho yells at Owens for coming down to ringside and almost calls him a Stupid Idiot. Owens calls him out on it and here's STEPHANIE TO SAVE THE DAY! She says this is what Seth Rollins is trying to do and somehow ties it into the feud with Smackdown over the upcoming Survivor Series matches. Stephanie leaves and the guys are all quiet because Mama yelled at them.

Big E. vs. Sheamus

Before the match, Big E. laughs at the idea of Cesaro and Sheamus being a good team. Kofi points out that you can't say Sheamus without the word SHAME. Woods: "I doubt these two are even friends on Facebook." Sheamus isn't pleased and starts fast with a German suplex. Cesaro watches on Facebook Live because WWE wants you to stop watching the show and go look at that. The apron splash gets Big E. out of trouble and Cesaro stops for more video.

Back from a break with Sheamus diving into a belly to belly but blocking the Warrior Splash. Big E. grabs a powerbomb of all things for two and Sheamus gets the same off White Noise. Cesaro takes this opportunity to go into the crowd with his phone but Sheamus takes it away and demands that he film the following Brogue Kick. Instead it's a splash in the corner and a rollup to give Big E. the pin at 10:24.

Rating: C-. Not a bad match here but OH MY GOODNESS this story is annoying. The whole thing is a way to hype up WWE on Facebook Live and we're stuck sitting through the next two weeks of watching Cesaro and Sheamus losing but hoping they might pull it together in the title match. That's storytelling in today's Raw tag team division.

The next Goldberg video is him winning the WCW World Title from Hollywood Hogan on July 8, 1998. Cole actually makes two mistakes here, which is bad even for him.

1. Cole says this was when Goldberg had been undefeated for a year. You would know this is wrong because about half an hour ago, Cole showed us Goldberg's debut in September 1997.

2. Cole says Goldberg was the first undefeated WCW World Champion. Save for Giant of course, who won the title in his debut match.

Point to all this: WWE is bad at wrestling history so you should buy my books about it instead.

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

Bo Dallas vs. Neville

Curtis Axel is in Bo's corner and is the biggest Bo-liever of them all. Dallas is all aggressive to start and knees away on a much smaller looking Neville. He's clearly lost some muscle, perhaps for a cruiserweight run. Neville misses his running kick to the face but does his an Asai moonsault. Back in and Bo charges into a boot to the face but manages to leg sweep his way out of the Red Arrow's path. A Roll of the Dice gives Bo the big upset at 2:56. So this is what you get for being arrested on a flight.

Bo beats Axel up post match and holds up the B0-LIEVE IN B0 sign.

Bayley vs. Dana Brooke

Dana runs around a bit to start but gets caught in a Stunner over the middle rope. Back in and Dana knees her in the ribs, meaning it's time for a Ken Bone joke. A chinlock doesn't last long and Bayley starts with her elbows, followed by a dropkick to the back. Dana sends her face first into the post and....gets the pin at 4:10. The ending looked a bit odd, as in not the planned ending. I think Dana was supposed to put her feet on the ropes (she was swinging her leg near them) but didn't get them up there, meaning it was closer to a clean win.

Rating: D+. I was getting into this until the screwy ending. In theory that was designed to set up a rematch at the pay per view but instead it's basically Dana just beating Bayley in about four minutes. If that's the case then it makes a lot more sense but this ending hurt things a lot.

Paul Heyman joins us via satellite to say Goldberg isn't worth Lesnar's time because it's a fantasy challenge. It would behoove Goldberg to just not show up tonight because otherwise Lesnar is going to hurt him very badly. The fans chant YES but Heyman says that's just hurting Goldberg even worse.

Braun Strowman vs. Mile High Trio

The jobbers don't have names but one of them thinks Strowman will have issues with the altitude. One of the guys has curly hair so Graves says he thought it was No Way Jose's less intimidating cousin, Perhaps Not Jorge. Strowman throws two of them to the floor and LAUNCHES the third onto his partners. One of the trio tries to leave so Strowman chases him down and throws him back in. A powerslam and reverse chokeslam give Braun a double pin at 2:16.

Strowman says he's coming to take matters into his hands right now but here's Sami Zayn to cut him off. Strowman shoves him out to the floor and walks off. At least it's something for both guys and that's a good thing.

Sami says he'll fight Strowman because no one else will.

Here are Rusev and Lana to run down America and its horrible family values. He's heard about Roman's family but he doesn't want to hear about 700 Samoans sitting around a campfire dipping a turkey leg in mayonnaise. As a counter, Rusev, has a photo album of his own family.

This includes his mother (two time world rowing champion), his father (who wrestled in the military), his brother Rusev (Rusev Rusev? Either way he's a chef.), his grandmother and their award winning dog. Reigns FINALLY comes out to interrupt and is quickly beaten down, allowing Rusev to put Reigns in the Accolade. The fight was good but the family bit ran WAY too long.

Clip of Goldberg debuting in WWE. So he had two big moments in WCW and then he was on Raw? That's quite the reason to hype him up this much.

Emmalina video.

Big Cass vs. Karl Anderson

Cass erupts on Anderson in the corner and sends him flying with a fall away slam. Back in after a quick brawl with the partners and it's the East River Crossing for the pin on Karl at 1:10.

Tony Nese and Drew Gulak agree on some kind of a deal with Brian Kendrick when TJ Perkins comes in. Perkins thinks there's been a deal made but Kendrick says he doesn't know how this works. TJ thinks this is WWE2K17 and he has unlimited lives but this is Kendrick's last life. Cedric Alexander and Rich Swann come in and there's a six man later. I appreciate the attempt at a story but the delivery was TERRIBLE here.

Earlier today Sasha Banks sat down with Lita. Sasha knows Charlotte will be ready because they've fought so many times before. Charlotte needs to know that the show is in Boston though and Sasha will be on her game in her hometown. Sasha is over her back injury and might be a bit intimidated by the Cell but she's not afraid.

Video on Goldberg winning his second World Title at Unforgiven 2003.

Cedric Alexander/TJ Perkins/Rich Swann vs. Brian Kendrick/Tony Nese/Drew Gulak

Gulak takes Alexander into the corner to start before it's off to Perkins to slam Nese in the corner. A tornado DDT is countered into a suplex for two on TJ and Kendrick comes in, only to get caught in the kneebar. Back from a break (yes a break in this match at 10:45) with Swann coming in for a hurricanrana as everything breaks down. Nese gives Rich the 450 and the Captain's Hook is enough for the submission at 7:15.

Rating: C. This match exists and I'm not sure what else there is to say about it. The big takeaway for me is we have a six man tag that people don't really care about so ALL SIX GOT AN ENTRANCE on a show that is already packed to the gills. Someone needs to map this show out a lot better because it's only making things better.

The Bosses recap the idea for Survivor Series and make Jericho vs. Owens vs. Rollins for next week. Stephanie LOVES the idea. Foley: "I feel like we have a connection." Stephanie: "Like the Rock N Sock Connection?"

We see Goldberg's comments on SportsCenter from two weeks ago.

We see Heyman's comments from last week.

Cole brings out "the greatest champion in WCW history". I'll just let that sink in for a moment as Goldberg gets the big, long walk entrance through the back with everyone applauding him (and the Governor of Colorado being shown on camera chanting his name). Goldberg finally comes out and soaks in some cheers before saying you should never say never again. His wife and son are here to see him for the first time ever.

Back in January, he got a phone call from 2K asking him to promote their new video game. The thing he misses most, other than hurting people, is being a hero for kids. Somewhere along the way, he created some drama around here and maybe it's better left alone. Fans: "NO!" Goldberg: "BUT THEN!" Fans: "YAY!"

Goldberg talks about Brock having Heyman challenge him to a fight, which made him think he has one more beating left in him. Maybe he has one more

spear and Jackhammer in him. That means Brock is next but he's also last. Goldberg goes around the ring and picks up some kids (including his own) to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. This show was a three hour tease until Goldberg FINALLY showed up to do what pretty much everyone was expecting. Raw is a show that really could use the NXT formula: have an A crew and a B crew and don't put them on the show every week. There's so much stuff on here that feels like it's crammed in because EVERYTHING has to make air every show, leading to a lot of short matches that don't have time to do anything because we need to move on to something else.

There are a few good things scattered throughout the show but with nothing getting a focus (and the World Champion stuck in the opening segment as a background character while the adults do everything else) until the end, the show was WAY too long and full of stuff that wasn't interesting, which is the case far too often anymore.

Results

Seth Rollins b. Chris Jericho – Pedigree

Golden Truth/Mark Henry b. Shining Stars/Titus O'Neil – World's Strongest Slam to O'Neil

Big E. b. Sheamus – Rollup

Bo Dallas b. Neville – Roll of the Dice

Dana Brooke b. Bayley – Ram into the post

Braun Strowman b. Mile High Trio – Reverse chokeslam

Big Cass b. Karl Anderson – East River Crossing

Brian Kendrick/Tony Nese/Drew Gulak b. TJ Perkins/Rich Swann/Cedric Alexander – Captain's Hook to Swann

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Lucha Underground – October 16, 2016: Wrestling With An Accent

Lucha Underground

Date: October 12, 2016

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

Things started to pick up a little bit last week as Prince Puma and Matanza had one heck of a match for the Lucha Underground Title. On top of that we have some new characters coming in with Ivelisse's boyfriend Jeremiah and whoever Killshot left behind in war. We'll also have the Gift of the Gods Title on the line tonight as Sexy Star defends against Jack Evans. Let's get to it.

The opening recap focuses on Rey Mysterio Jr./Chavo Guerrero/Dragon Azteca Jr., Johnny Mundo wanting the Lucha Underground Title and the Famous B. saga.

Chavo attacks Dragon in the back with a chair. Mysterio comes in and awkwardly shouts Chavo's name.

Son of Havoc/Mascarita Sagrada vs. Famous B./Dr. Wagner Jr.

Havoc and Sagrada come in on a motorcycle with a sidecar, freaking B. out for some reason. Why he's shocked that a biker comes out on a bike isn't clear but Famous B. is a complex guy. The bad guys slide to the floor, allowing Havoc and Sagrada to hit stereo dives. Havoc throws the mini into a hurricanrana to send B. flying and the fans are way into this early on. Wagner gets rolled up for two as he starts with Havoc but it's quickly off to Sagrada to frustrate the Doctor.

B. comes in (rocking the white suit and tie) to take over on Sagrada because B. isn't exactly good in the ring. A headscissors is enough to keep Wagner down and allows the tag off to Havoc. Everything breaks down and Sagrada gets to beat up B., including a pretty impressive Wasteland. Havoc gets shoved off the top though and it's a Dr. Driver for Sagrada, allowing B. to get the pin, with Wagner's stethoscope of course, at 5:25.

Rating: C+. They were smart to not give this one too long as it's not the most interesting story. Famous B. is a good choice for the Jimmy Hart role though as he can go and work an easy match like this if necessary, which so many managers can't do at the same level. I'm not sure where this story can go though, unless we're actually getting Sagrada vs. B. at Ultima Lucha III.

The Rabbit Tribe is coming soon.

Dario's Dial of Doom is back next week. Also next week: Prince Puma vs. Mil Muertes.

Gift of the Gods Title: Jack Evans vs. Sexy Star

Star is defending. Before the match, Evans rhymes about this being Sexy's last match because she's going to need a lawyer after facing the star destroyer. I've heard worse, like from Men on a Mission. Star hits him in the face with whatever she can but gets dropkicked back down.

For some reason Star decides to speed things up against JACK EVANS, though it actually works as she armdrags him to the floor. A running seated senton off the apron has Jack reeling but he easily takes her down for a chinlock, complete with him making her speak Spanish. Jack's multiple flips set up a double thumb to the eyes but gets caught in some

slingshot bronco busters. That's a new one, followed by some old knees to the back for two.

With that being a bit too complicated, Star shoves him off the top and dives outside after him, only to have PJ Black springboard in for a distraction. Cue Johnny Mundo to spear Star for two, followed by Aerostar and Drago to take them out. Then it's Aerostar interfering to distract the referee, allowing Star to hit Black low. A fisherman's neckbreaker retains the title at 9:17.

Rating: C-. I really don't like the WWE style starting to sneak into this promotion. This match didn't even go ten minutes and had five people interfere, along with a kendo sick. Lucha Underground goes hardcore and violent at times but I'd like that kind of stuff to stay far, far away from the regular matches. At least Star retained for a little while longer though and that's important.

Chavo is in Dario's office and the boss puts him in the main event for attacking Azteca. Mysterio comes in to blame Chavo for the attack and a fight breaks out. Dario puts them in a three way match with Pentagon Dark for the main event.

Pentagon Dark vs. Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. Chavo Guerrero

The good thing here: Pentagon comes out for his match with Azteca but is told the match has been changed. In other words, there was something planned before the new main event was announced. You almost NEVER get that in WWE or anywhere else for that matter. Mysterio and Pentagon split the chants as NO ONE CARES ABOUT CHAVO. Rey starts fast with some headscissors and both villains are quickly knocked out to the floor.

Pentagon comes back in and eats a springboard crossbody as Chavo looks for some toys. That earns him a baseball slide to drive a chair into his face, leaving Pentagon to shout into the camera. A hard shot to the knee has Rey in trouble but Chavo sends him face first into the chair in the corner. To be fair, Pentagon had to expect that when he loaded the thing up in the first place. It's just wrestling logic.

Chavo comes back in with a suplex for Rey and a lot of stomping ensues.

Now it's Pentagon getting back up and dropkicking Rey to the floor, followed by something like a monkey flip into a Codebreaker for two. Chavo can't quite hit Three Amigos, which Striker calls blasphemy. No, blasphemy is suggesting that Matt Striker deserves to be on commentary in wrestling. A Guerrero using a Guerrero move is pretty normal. Mysterio has had it with Chavo and takes him out with a 619, only to get caught in the package piledriver out of the corner to give Pentagon the pin at 8:50.

Rating: C+. I always approve of any match where Chavo Guerrero is beaten up. Pentagon winning is a good thing as he deserves more than what he's doing at the moment. I'm not entirely sure why we're still on Mysterio vs. Guerrero but maybe the next step is getting Dragon Azteca on to something better as well.

Post match Chavo cleans house with the chair and crushes Rey's knee.

Overall Rating: B-. The wrestling was better here and that's going to solve a lot of the problems in any promotion. Unfortunately, this is turning into just a run of the mill wrestling show with a theme instead of the off the wall and completely insane show that made me have so much fun with it for such a long time. I'm still having fun with it but it's not must see anymore and that's a shame.

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Which Survivor Series Should I Redo?

It's that time again. Starting on the 22nd, I'll be counting the shows up again. As always I'll be doing last year's show and one other. In the comments, let me know which you'd like to see me do again. 2003 and 2005 were done last year and are therefore out of the running.

Judgment Day 2002 (2016 Redo): Time Heals Some Wounds

Judgment Day 2002

Date: May 19, 2002

Location: Gaylord Entertainment Center, Nashville, Tennessee

Attendance: 14,521

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

The company is ice cold coming into this show and I can't imagine this is going to make things any warmer. Raw has turned into a mess with the old guys doing whatever they want while Smackdown is about Vince somehow failing to sleep with Stacy Keibler because he can't just get a room somewhere. Let's get to it.

The opening video is rather disturbing with a bunch of nooses and small children talking about death. What a great way to get me in a fun spirit for the show.

Intercontinental Title: Eddie Guerrero vs. Rob Van Dam

Van Dam is challenging in a rematch from last month's title change. They start fast as you would expect with Eddie being sent outside in early frustration. Back in and Eddie tries to duck a crossbody but gets head faked, allowing Van Dam to drop a split legged moonsault for two. A tilt-a-whirl backbreaker keeps Eddie in trouble and we hit a surfboard. Lawler: "That looks more like my dating strategy."

The announcers try their hands at Spanish as Eddie takes over with right hands in the corner. A monkey flip sends Eddie flying and stays on his back so Rolling Thunder can get two. It's too early for a Five Star though as Eddie crotches him on the top. A powerbomb can't set up Eddie's frog splash though as Eddie spends a bit too long dancing on top.

Van Dam still can't hit the Five Star though as Eddie moves away, leaving the announcers to wonder how to say RVD in Spanish. He can however hit a high crossbody for two (Lawler: "Mama Mia. Is that Spanish?"), followed by a backslide for the same. Ever the cheat though, Eddie grabs a backslide of his own and puts his feet on the ropes for the pin to retain.

Rating: B. Now why can't these two get this kind of time on Raw? I know you can't give a single match twenty minutes a week but would it kill them to have ten minutes on an episode of Raw and cut out one of the multiple matches that don't even get three minutes because they don't matter? Anyway, good stuff here, as you would expect from these two.

Reverend D-Von and Batista are with Vince and Stacy, the latter of whom they pray for before her match against Trish. Vince, who looks at Stacy while they're praying and tells D-Von to wrap it up, asks if Bubba is going to be here. D-Von doesn't think so, despite Vince saying Bubba would be here and Bubba being shown on the graphic.

GET THE F OUT! Did they only record that one gardening bit for the campaign?

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Stacy Keibler

Trish is defending and Lawler freaks out over her shorts. D-Von, Batista and Bubba come out after the entrances, leaving me time to wonder how we went from Trish vs. Molly to Trish vs. Stacy. Maybe because Stacy is more willing to wear leather shorts and a tied off leather top? Stacy kicks Trish in the head for two to start but gets pulled down into a Boston crab and they're not even hiding what they're going for with the visuals.

Trish gets in a kick of her own to knock Stacy outside, allowing her to slap Bubba in the face. Batista uses the distraction to slam Trish and give Stacy a two count. That's finally enough for Trish as she baseball slides Stacy and hits a bulldog (more like the kind Jericho uses to set up the Lionsault) to retain. Stacy clearly had no business out there but to be fair they didn't try to act like she did and got them out of there fast.

Bubba and D-Von get in a fight post match with Batista helping put Bubba through a table.

Vince comes in to see Ric Flair and Arn Anderson and the bosses share their hatred of Austin. Remember like two months ago when the company was split in half because of their feud?

Hardy Boyz vs. Brock Lesnar/Paul Heyman

Thankfully Heyman is in full body workout gear. The brothers are smart enough to take out the monster for all of ten seconds but don't have Matt beat the tar out of Heyman or just roll him up while Jeff slows Lesnar down for reasons that aren't clear. Brock saves his buddy and starts beating on Matt as the fans chant for Goldberg. Please, don't make me think about that match.

The backbreaker has Matt reeling but he grabs a quick tornado DDT to scare Heyman half to death. Jeff gets the tag and everything breaks down with the brothers going after Heyman. Brock gets tired of these flies and throws Jeff into Matt, setting up the F5. Heyman comes in and grabs the pin like a chicken heel should.

Rating: D-. What were you expecting here? Lesnar really needs to move on to something else, though to be fair he squashed a great tag team more

than once and they made him look like a monster. He needs to move way up the ladder in a hurry though because this sort of act is only going to work for so long.

Booker T. is now in an NWO shirt but cancels an interview to hit on a woman who just happens to be standing off camera. The woman has something in mind and gives Booker her hotel room key. I smell shenanigans.

We recap Steve Austin vs. Ric Flair/Big Show, which is just the latest Austin vs. McMahon clone. Flair and Austin have been fine on the talking but there's just no heat to this feud because everyone knows it's warmed over leftovers. They even show Austin vs. Vince clips in the build. Show is here because he's mad about not being on Wrestlemania, which is of course Austin's fault in wrestling logic.

Steve Austin vs. Ric Flair/Big Show

Based on the entrances, I'm pretty sure Flair isn't in the NWO. I'm also fairly sure that Show's low cut one piece women's swimsuit attire is some of the dumbest gear of all time. Just have him in shorts and a Big Show shirt. Austin slugs away at both guys to start but decides to try a Figure Four on Show. Instead he has to knock Ric out of the air first and put him in the hold.

Show misses an elbow drop and Austin wisely grabs a chair. The referee takes that away so Austin gets another one and has a seat. We finally get started with Austin punching Flair out to the floor, meaning it's time for beer. A tackle dropdown goes well for Austin and an exchange of chops give us a Flair Flop. Show comes in and because 2002 is a strange year, Austin isn't sure what to do. His decision: push-ups. Not a fan of exercise, Show chops him down and throws Austin into the corner, allowing a tag to Flair for a low blow.

Flair goes up and is slammed right back down (JR: "From no man's land to Parts Unknown!") but Show comes back in with a powerslam. The team starts taking turns on the knee as this isn't exactly thrilling. It's not a bad match or anything but it's just there. The idea of Flair taking someone's knee apart has worked for years but I don't buy the story behind the match and a match being just ok isn't enough to make up for that kind of

a downside.

Flair gets the Figure Four until Austin turns it over, only to have Show break that up as well. Austin's back is fine enough for punches vs. chops, giving us WHAT vs. WOO in one of the more eye roll inducing chants. Austin starts in with the spinebusters as X-Pac comes out. Show no sells a Stunner for some reason but X-Pac's missed superkick puts him down. Huh? The Stunner puts Flair away a few seconds later.

Rating: C+. The match was totally fine but it's really hard to buy Austin in this midcard role. I know it's one of the top stories on Raw but this is midcard level stuff at best. Austin vs. Flair isn't interesting and Austin beating up the NWO week to week is even worse. Big Show and Booker T. are the big names in the division and there's no reason either of them would be a real threat to Austin in the ring. What's interesting about seeing Austin fighting midcarders like X-Pac? The feud was dead from the start and it feels like they're wasting what Austin has left.

We recap Edge vs. Kurt Angle, which is over Edge messing with Angle's new shirt. For some reason this set up a hair vs. hair match.

Kurt Angle vs. Edge

They start fast with Edge getting an early rollup and getting stomped in the ribs for his efforts. That's fine with Edge who ties Angle up in the ropes for a spear, only to have Angle suplex him way over the top. Back in and a spinebuster gets two for Angle (not something you see him use that often) as the announcers discuss the shapes of the wrestlers' heads.

We hit the chinlock for a bit before Angle pulls him down by the hair. That's a nice little touch, albeit not the most subtle. Edge comes back with a belly to belly of his own (JR: "He ain't wearing a hat!") and an Edge-0-Matic gets the same. Angle is sent outside for a dive from Edge so it's time for more suplexes. JR: "That suplex was finer than frog hair split four ways."

An Edgecution gets no cover for no logical reason as Edge goes up top, allowing Angle to hit a great looking pop up superplex. Edge DDTs him out of the corner for two of his own but spears the referee by mistake. That

means the spear only gets two on Kurt, who spears Edge right back. The Angle Slam looks to set up the ankle lock but Edge small packages him for the pin.

Rating: B. These two work really well together and it's a great way to make Edge look like a star as he pinned a former World Champion clean to win the feud. The company really needs some fresh stars in the main event scene and Edge makes as much sense as anyone else. As usual, Angle can make people look great and that's so valuable in wrestling.

Angle goes after Edge but gets an Edgecution. It takes too long to get him to the chair though and Kurt escapes.

We go to the Marriott where Booker is in bed. The woman joins him and the lights go out...so Goldust can say he wants Booker to leave the NWO and come back to him. The lights come back on and Goldust is in bed with them. Booker runs off with his underwear hanging down. Goldust: "I bought this nightgown for nothing!" They mentioned that Goldust planned the whole thing but I could go for him just randomly appearing in the room with them. It suits him that way.

The Cell is lowered.

We recap HHH vs. Chris Jericho. These two have feuded since Wrestlemania with HHH winning almost all of the matches. HHH then went after Vince, who set this match up as punishment.

HHH vs. Chris Jericho

Even with a lower level match like this, it's cool to see the Cell in any form. HHH starts in with the knee and some right hands in the corner. They head outside so neither can be sent into the cage, followed by Jericho's flying forearm to take over. Jericho misses a charge into the post though and HHH takes him outside for a whip into the cage wall. Neither can keep an advantage again though as Jericho whips HHH over the corner for another crash to the floor. HHH comes right back with a whip to send Jericho's bloody arm into the steps. At least they're bringing the violence early on.

The Pedigree onto the steps is countered into a catapult into the cage wall. Since the Cell isn't enough, Jericho brings in a ladder to smash HHH in the face, drawing more blood. Jericho throws the ladder over the top at HHH in a spot that always looks good. I'm actually surprised by how much they're giving Jericho here. I know it's HHH in a big match against an opponent he owns but they're doing a really good job of making Jericho look strong here.

HHH's chair shot doesn't get him out of trouble but the drop toehold to send Jericho into the steps works a bit better. To make it a bit worse, HHH just throws the steps at Jericho for a painful sounding thud. Now we get to the bad part of the match as HHH whips Jericho into referee Tim White, knocking White off the apron and into the Cell. The bump badly hurt White's shoulder and basically ended his in ring career.

Jericho beats White up even more (if he wasn't hurt before, he is now) and busts him open for a rare visual. Since White has the key, the other referees have to cut the door open to check on White. That's enough for HHH and it's time for a sledgehammer off Jericho's head. No referee of course though so Jericho crawls out of the Cell, continuing the running joke of THE CELL DOESN'T WORK.

They head to the announcers' table (of course) where Jericho loads up a Pedigree (of course) but HHH counters (of course) into a DDT through the table. HHH pulls out the barbed wire 2x4 and Jericho goes up the Cell wall with HHH following. For reasons of pure stupidity, HHH THROWS THE BARBED WIRE UP BOARD UP FIRST, allowing Jericho to take it away and hit HHH in the back.

With HHH's back busted open, we hit the Walls of Jericho on the roof, meaning a referee has to climb up. You know, because now falls count on top of the Cell. HHH kicks away and hits Jericho low, followed by a barbed wire shot. A Pedigree onto the roof (that was scary) finally ends Jericho.

Rating: B. That's probably the best HHH vs. Jericho match ever and it's really not great. They did a much better job of making me believe Jericho could pull it off, which is something these two have never been able to

do. I mean, would you believe that this Jericho could beat HHH in a major match? That being said, this still felt like it was missing a big chuck in the middle. They did the Jericho beatdown but then they were on the outside for the final act. It's still good though and an acceptable blowoff, though it would have been fine as a regular cage match.

Angle runs from Edge in a goofy looking chase.

Get The F Out, set to Mark Henry's Sexual Chocolate theme and taking place in the back of a steamy car. At least that answers my question.

Maven and Torrie go on a date at WWF New York.

Tag Team Titles: Billy and Chuck vs. Rikishi/???

Welcome to the death slot. Billy and Chuck are defending and Rikishi's mystery partner is.....Rico. This is officially Vince's decision so he indeed likes the wacky partners. Billy's DDT has no effect on Rikishi to start but Rikishi's charges misses both champs. Rico won't tag in though and the champs take over in the corner.

Chuck gets a rather impressive overhead belly to belly for two as the fans aren't exactly caring, meaning the death slot is living up to its name. The big man fights back again with some Samoan drops before sitting on Chuck's chest for two. A HORRIBLE looking one man 3D (which JR calls a headbutt in mid air, which is probably closer than what Rikishi was going for) gets two on Billy but Rico kicks Chuck by mistake. Rikishi kicks Chuck as well and gets the pin for the titles. No reaction or anything, but he got the titles.

Rating: F. The story is tired, the result is predictable and the match sucked. I'm really not sure what else you were expecting here as Rikishi is somehow the old veteran on Smackdown. Hopefully this isn't a long reign and we can get ANYONE else as better champions sometime soon.

Angle attacks Edge (instead of LEAVING) and brings him back to the arena. Edge reverses into a sleeper and Angle gets the big haircut. Edge wants the new chant to be YOU'RE BALD and it sounds as bad as it seems.

We recap Hulk Hogan vs. Undertaker, which is a game of how bad can we

really make this. Undertaker won a match last month to become #1 contender and they've messed with each others' motorcycles since. The question tonight is how embarrassing can Hogan actually be with Undertaker having to carry the match.

Undisputed Title: Hulk Hogan vs. Undertaker

Undertaker is challenging and has Hogan's weightlifting belt. As always, Hogan takes too long coming in and gets whipped over the back. Hogan no sells (duh) and hammers away before doing a little whipping of his own. We get the opening bell and it's time for Hogan do do his stuff while Undertaker does most of the selling, which is both the right call and a major stretch on Undertaker's part.

Undertaker is whipped into the steps and things are made even worse when Old School is broken up. I'll give them this: they're three minutes in and Hogan hasn't horribly botched anything yet, meaning we're going well so far. Hulk actually hits a superplex (biggest spot he's done in YEARS) for two before settling back in for some right hands.

A chop block gives Undertaker a target though and it's time to slowly work over the knee. That of course means a few kicks to the leg and laying on it in a leglock. Yeah it's boring but it's also one less thing they could horribly botch. Hogan fights up and hits the big boot but the legdrop is countered into a dreadful half crab. Some rights and lefts have Hogan in trouble, though I'm not sure what's scintillating about them.

Undertaker grabs him by the throat and Hogan barely moves, leaving Undertaker to loudly shout JUMP before hitting one of the worst chokeslams you'll ever see (This is COMPLETELY edited on the Network as Hogan not moving is edited out along with Undertaker shouting. It's also a different camera angle.).

That's enough for the Hulk Up and the usual gets two for the champ. The running DDT gets the same for Undertaker as this is actually picking up a bit. Cue Vince as Hogan kicks a chair into Undertaker's face and drops another leg for no cover. Instead Vince is dragged in for a legdrop of his own but Undertaker cracks Hogan with the chair. The chokeslam (better

but still bad) is enough for the pin and the title.

Rating: D. The best thing they could have done here was keep this pretty short (about twelve and a half minutes) instead of having either guy out there for the marathons they had back at Backlash. Undertaker is a shell of his glory days at this point but he's WAY ahead of Hogan and isn't as likely to embarrass himself in the ring. Boring and familiar is much better than the nightmare that was watching a Hogan match so this was the only possible call in the options they had.

Vince is happy and Undertaker gets in some more chair shots for revenge to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. There's an important lesson to be learned here: as bad as WWE can be around this time, there is good stuff worth checking out. Van Dam vs. Guerrero, the Cell match, Austin vs. Flair/Show and Edge vs. Angle were all good to very good matches. That's half the card and a big chunk of the show that can be considered entertaining. Unfortunately there's everything else and that stuff starts at horrible and goes downhill from there. I don't think this changes much about TV going forward but at least we had a good two hour and forty minute show to enjoy.

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