

Summerslam Count-Up – 1997: Bret's World

Summerslam 1997

Date: August 3, 1997

Location: Continental Airlines Arena, East Rutherford, New Jersey

Attendance: 20,213

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Vince McMahon, Jim Ross

We're in a very different era now as the WWF has finally realized they needed to step things up against WCW. The result was the rise of Steve Austin in his war against the Hart Foundation. Tonight we have a main event of the now heel Bret challenging Undertaker for the world title with Shawn as guest referee along with the match that changed the wrestling world forever. Let's get to it.

We open with the Star Spangled Banner which isn't done often enough on PPV broadcasts.

The opening video talks about how heroes aren't forever with a focus on Bret going from the top of the world to America's public enemy #1 and Undertaker having to deal with a nightmare from his past.

Hunter Hearst Helmsley vs. Mankind

This is in a cage match and the continuation of a great feud. HHH beat Mankind to win the King of the Ring but had to cheat to do it, sending Mankind after revenge. You can only win by escape which I always like. Mankind is also one half of the tag team champions as Dude Love at this point. Helmsley dives for the door but Mankind makes an easy save. He pulls HHH off the cage wall and pounds HHH down into the corner. The running knee into HHH's head gives us a BANG BANG as this is one sided so far.

A Texas Piledriver puts HHH down but Mankind says close the door. There's the Mandible Claw but Chyna reaches through the bars to break it up. HHH can't get going though as a discus lariat puts him right back down.

Mankind tries to climb out but Chyna hits him in the leg, allowing Helmsley to superplex him down from the top of the cage in a big spot. Instead of leaving though HHH sends Mankind HARD into the cage and gives us a little curtsey.

More whipping into the cage ensues and HHH pounds away on Mankind's head. You could see the mean streak starting in HHH years before it really came out. The cage is especially loud tonight which makes the shots into it sound far more brutal. HHH goes up but gets caught by the head and dragged back inside. A hard kick to the side of the head puts HHH down but Chyna interferes AGAIN with a forearm to the head. Mankind comes back with a pair of atomic drops but he walks into the facebuster to stop the momentum again.

In a creative move Mankind suplexes HHH against the cage, causing his the future Game's legs to hang over the top. A running knee to HHH's upside down chest brings him down and it's time to taste the cage. HHH catches Mankind charging in with a backdrop into the cage and they both climb to the top rope. Mankind wins a slugout by crotching HHH but the landing knocks Mankind off the ropes too.

HHH's leg is tied in the ropes but Chyna slams the door on his head to make ANOTHER save. Now she rams the referee into the steps and throws a chair in to HHH. Mankind blocks a Pedigree onto the chair and catapults HHH into the cage, knocking Chyna down to the floor. A double arm DDT onto the chair puts HHH down but Mankind can't follow up.

Chyna comes inside and tries to drag HHH out as Mankind climbs over the top. He gets down to the apron and takes off his mask but climbs back up. The fans chant SUPERFLY as Mankind goes up, rips open his shirt to reveal a Dude Love heart, and drops an elbow off the top of the cage. Mankind climbs out and reaches the floor just before Chyna can drag HHH out to the floor.

Rating: A-. This was great stuff with Mankind overcoming everything HHH and Chyna could throw at him before hitting the huge spot to win it. There was a very good story built up between these two which would finally be blown off in a street fight at the first Raw in MSG. Great

opener here and the fans were WAY into it. You could see the future in these two and it was awesome.

Post match Mankind collapses on the floor next to the cage. The Dude Love music starts playing and Mankind's foot starts tapping. He gets up and struts to the back as Dude. The Foley character really was brilliant as he wasn't playing three different characters but rather one with multiple personalities. That's awesome when you think about it.

Call the Hotline!

Todd Pettingill (he still had a job at this point?) brings out the governor along with Gorilla Monsoon and the Headbangers for some reason. She got rid of some entertainment tax on wrestling shows to allow the first show in New Jersey since the 80s. Gorilla gives her a WWF Championship belt as a thank you present.

We recap Goldust vs. Brian Pillman...which is to say we hear about the stipulation: if Pillman loses he has to wear a dress until he wins again.

Video on the local festivities leading up to Summerslam.

Goldust vs. Brian Pillman

Goldust is a face by this point. Pillman jumps him to start but Goldust hits a jumping back elbow out of the corner. He pounds on Brian in the corner and kisses him to the floor but Pillman is ticked off. Brian drops Goldust with a clothesline and goes after Malena, only to be headed off by Goldie with an uppercut. Back in and Pillman takes him down with a snap suplex but Goldust crotches him off the top.

Marlena blows cigar smoke in Pillman's face, causing him to hide behind her and sucker Goldust into a DDT on the floor. A top rope forearm/clothesline gets two for Brian and we hit the chinlock. Pillman looks INSANE which fits the Loose Canon character very well. Back up and a clothesline puts Goldust down for two but Goldie hits one of his own to stagger Pillman. They slug it out with a double fist to the face putting Brian down. The bulldog is blocked and Goldie falls to the outside. He tries a sunset flip as he comes back in and a purse shot from Marlena is

enough to pin Pillman.

Rating: D. The match sucked for the most part with no real flow to it at all. This was a long running feud which was supposed to end with Marlina leaving Goldust for Pillman but Brian would be dead in about two months to prevent that from happening. It's a shame he was so banged up that he never got to realize his potential due to his injuries.

There's a new attendance record for a WWF event in this arena.

Godwinns vs. Legion of Doom

The Godwinns are in Deliverance mode at this point and the LOD are done with the war against the Hart Foundation and in need of a good feud. Unfortunately there wasn't a good team for them to feud with so we're stuck with the Godwinns. Henry had his neck broken in a Domsday Device months ago, prompting an attack on the LOD. The LOD has sworn revenge to set this up.

The LOD are actually referred to as Road Warriors here which is rare for the WWF. LOD cleans house to start, sending the Godwinns to the floor with Hawk hitting a clothesline off the apron. We get started with Phineas vs. Animal with the latter missing a charge into the corner, allowing the hog dudes to double team him. Animal comes back with a double clothesline of his own to send the Godwinns to the floor.

Off to Henry vs. Hawk with Henry trying to hurt Hawk's neck as a receipt. Hawk sends him into the steps before dropping some legs for two back inside. Back to Phineas for a hangman's choke on Hawk to no avail. Animal comes back in to work Henry's arm before a Cactus clothesline from Animal puts both guys on the floor. Henry knocks Animal into the barricade as they come back in to shift momentum. Lou Albano is in the front row.

Back in and Phineas puts Animal in a bearhug as the crowd gets hot all over again. As the hold continues, Lawler talks about Blue Ball, Arkansas. I really don't have a joke there but you have to mention that name. Animal breaks free but Henry breaks up the hot tag attempt. Phineas goes up but jumps into a clothesline and now we get the hot tag off to Hawk. House is cleaned as everything breaks down but Phineas breaks up

the Doomsday Device on Henry. Not that it matters as the LOD hit a spike piledriver on a guy recovering from a broken neck for the pin.

Rating: D+. This was supposed to be about revenge but the match never acted like that at all. The Godwinns were horrible as heels and this was a very dull match as a result. LOD still had a little bit in the tank here but they were going to explode in the next few months but almost no one cared.

We get clips of fans winning a contest for a shot at a million bucks. The fans are here and get to pick a key to try to open Undertaker's casket which contains cash. Two more fans are called but one isn't home and the other is disconnected. We finally get through to someone but nobody wins. Sunny's cleavage looked GREAT though.

We recap British Bulldog vs. Ken Shamrock which is another spinoff from the Border War. Bulldog was about to lose an arm wrestling match on Monday so he laid Shamrock out with a chair and shoved dog food down his throat.

European Title: Ken Shamrock vs. British Bulldog

Bulldog (defending) has agreed to eat dog food if he loses, but we see a graphic for Bulldog vs. Shawn at One Night Only for the European Title, which foreshadows things a little bit. It's a power match to start until Shamrock hits a wicked belly to belly, sending Bulldog to the floor. Back in and Shamrock takes him down by the leg but Bulldog is quickly into the ropes. A hard clothesline gets two for Ken but Bulldog gets a boot up in the corner and takes over.

The delayed suplex gets two and we hit the chinlock. The fans chant USA as this hold just keeps going. This is one of those matches that goes on for less than eight minutes but needs to have a fourth of it spent in a chinlock. A small package gets two for the champion and it's back to the chinlock. Shamrock is sent shoulder first into the post and out to the floor where he comes back with some right hands. Back in and Bulldog pounds away even more and Shamrock is bleeding from the mouth. We hit the third chinlock before going back to the floor for Bulldog to hit him in the face with dogfood. Shamrock snaps and it's a DQ.

Rating: D. This didn't do anything for me at all. The match was only seven and a half minutes and we had three chinlocks and two trips to the floor. Shamrock wasn't ready for a long match yet and Bulldog wasn't capable of carrying anyone at this point. Nothing to see here but it was just leftovers from the summer anyway.

Post match Shamrock chokes Bulldog out for a VERY long time, to the point where Bulldog would be dead. The referees get suplexes.

Shawn Michaels says he'll be a fair referee and there's nothing between him and Bret.

Los Boricuas vs. Disciples of Apocalypse

This is the Puerto Rican gang vs. the bikers as GANG WARZ continue. Vince calls this an eight man tag because he doesn't care enough about any of these guys. These guys feuded FOREVER and I don't remember the bikers ever winning a match in the feud. Savio Vega and Crush are the respective leaders and the rest are pretty interchangeable other than Chainz being the only other biker with hair.

It's a brawl to start of course and the bikers clear the ring. Skull starts with Jose and the big man throws him around with ease. Off to 8 Ball who hits a spinning sidewalk slam before bringing in Crush. Miguel comes in but walks into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for no cover. Back to Skull and 8 Ball (identical twins) to crush Miguel in the corner until Savio cheats to take over. All four Boricuas pound on Skull in the corner until the Nation of Domination (now with Ahmed Johnson) comes down to ringside, basically stopping the match cold.

Jesus hits a Fameasser on Skull to set up another four on one beatdown. We hit a chinlock but 8 Ball breaks it up to prevent further boredom. Skull finally gets over for the tag and everything breaks down. Chainz is sent to the floor and punches Ahmed who responds with a sitout powerbomb on the concrete, giving Miguel an easy pin in the ring.

Rating: D-. Oh man this was dull to sit through. Los Boricuas just weren't interesting at all and other than Savio they easily could have been interchanged with one another. The bikers weren't much better but at

least you could remember which was which. I guess the idea here was to appeal to a wider fanbase but it didn't do anything for me.

A 12 man brawl follows.

We recap Austin vs. Owen. Hart is Intercontinental Champion and pinned Austin in the ten man tag main event of Canadian Stampede. Tonight is their one on one showdown and if Austin loses he has to kiss up to Owen shall we say. Think Vince's special club.

Intercontinental Title: Steve Austin vs. Owen Hart

Owen takes him down by the knee and wraps it around the ring post right after the bell. Back in and Austin fires off right hands and hits the Thesz press before hitting the HARD whip into the corner ala Bret. Austin pulls him around by the hair and stomps the stomach for two. Back up and Austin works the arm with a wristlock as the fans chant USA. Owen does his spinning nip up to counter but Steve casually pokes him in the eye.

Back to the armbar followed by a hammerlock slam to stay on the arm. Owen finally comes back with a jumping elbow to send Austin to the floor. He goes into the post and steps as well before going after Austin's arm and fingers. Austin is tied in the ropes so Owen can stay on the fingers but Steve busts out a Stun Gun and a powerbomb of all things. A clothesline puts Owen on the floor again and he starts heading to the back. That would mean Austin having to pucker up so the fight continues in the aisle.

Back in and Owen takes over with a quick belly to belly and a neckbreaker for two. A top rope elbow gets two for Hart and we hit the neck crank. Austin fights back and tries a Sharpshooter but Owen goes back to the injured neck to take over again. A German suplex gets two on Austin and it's off to a camel clutch. Owen lets it go but gets two off a DDT and hooks a chinlock. Austin gets up and they trade sleepers with Austin escaping via a jawbreaker. Hart gets two off a Russian legsweep and it's back to the chinlock. Owen gets caught cheating and they get up again and then it happens.

Austin tries a tombstone but Owen reverses into one of his own and drops

Austin on his head. This is the move that changed wrestling forever as Austin's neck was pretty much destroyed, resulting in him completely changing his in ring style. Instead of being the well rounded wrestler that he was before, he was forced to create the Attitude Era brawling style which made millions upon millions upon millions of dollars and made Austin one of the biggest stars of all time. On top of that it required a year off for surgery but that wouldn't come until 1999.

Anyway Austin is temporarily paralyzed so Owen can't cover him. Hart walks around the ring shouting that Austin is done while Hebner tries to figure out what to do. Austin can move his limbs a bit as Owen tries to start a Canada chant. Austin rolls onto his stomach and in one of the toughest and dumbest moments in wrestling history, he gets the worst rollup of all time for the pin and the title before collapsing again.

Rating: B. Most famous wrestling injury of all time aside, this was a very solid match with both guys clicking very well. I'm assuming Austin was to win with the Stunner as otherwise Owen would have gotten a quick pin and gotten out of there. Austin was clearly going to be the next big thing but no one knew if he would ever walk again let alone wrestle after this match.

Austin can barely move but manages to sit up, only to fall over again. He can't even stand up right now. Some referees get him to his feet and Austin holds up the title to a BIG pop. It takes a bunch of people to get him to the back and his legs are VERY wobbly.

We recap Bret vs. Undertaker. It's a very basic idea: Bret was the top heel over the summer and Taker was just kind of around as world champion. Bret says if he doesn't win the title, he'll never wrestle in America again. Shawn Michaels is guest referee because he's the other top guy in the company.

We get the full Canadian national anthem before Taker's entrance.

WWF World Title: Undertaker vs. Bret Hart

Remember that Shawn is guest referee. Bret hits Undertaker in the back with the belt to start and pounds away but Undertaker throws him away and

out to the floor. The champion misses a charge into the post and is sent knees first into the steps by the Canadian. Bret tries to jump off the apron at Taker but is caught in midair and slammed into the post. Back in and Undertaker works on Bret's back before sending him into the corner a few times.

Off to a bearhug on Hart followed by a big boot to the face, but Taker misses a legdrop. A second big boot misses though and Bret goes after the knee. Hart cannonballs down onto Taker's knee and kicks the leg out from under the 6'10 champion. As a small sidebar, Vince says that you're not 6'10 when you're on the mat. I'm pretty sure he still is actually, but he just can't use that height advantage.

Hart cranks on the leg even more and puts on the Figure Four for good measure. This brings out Paul Bearer for some reason which angers the champion. Undertaker turns the hold over to escape before going after Bearer. Bret uses the distraction to jump Undertaker from behind and send him into the barricade. There's the Figure Four around the post by Bret as he stays on Taker's leg. Owen Hart and Brian Pillman of the Hart Foundation come out to ringside.

Taker's leg is wrapped around another post and Bret flips off a yelling fan. Shawn hasn't been a factor as referee yet. Back in and Bret puts on another leg lock but Taker rolls it over and uses the good leg to kick Bret in the face. With no provocation, Undertaker drops to the floor and beats up Owen and Pillman. Back in and there's the chokeslam but Shawn is watching for more Harts. Bret heads to the floor and rams Undertaker's back into the apron and post to take over again.

Shawn tells Bret to get back inside or the match is over. They head into the ring again with Bret getting two off a backbreaker. A suplex puts Undertaker down again and there's the middle rope elbow for two. Bret hits a DDT for the same but Undertaker drops him face first onto the turnbuckle for two of his own. Hart goes after the back again but can't hook the Sharpshooter. The chokeslam is countered with a kick to the leg but Undertaker hits an uppercut to put Bret down.

Undertaker hits his jumping clothesline to take over again before

whipping Bret chest first into the buckle for two. Bret tries to go up but gets chokeslammed down off the top for a close two. Old School is countered and Bret superplexes Undertaker down but he can't cover. Instead he puts on the Sharpshooter but Undertaker kicks him away, which is the first time the hold has been completely broken. Another clothesline puts Bret down but he escapes the Tombstone and puts on the Sharpshooter around the post in a new move. Taker kicks him off and he crushes Shawn in the process though.

Bret brings a chair into the ring and lays out Undertaker with no Michaels to see it. Shawn limps back into the ring but the count only gets two. Bret erupts on Shawn and flips him off before pounding away in the corner again. Shawn picks up the chair and is spat on by Bret. Shawn swings the chair but knocks Undertaker out cold, giving Bret the pin and the title.

Rating: B+. This took a lot of time to get going but with thirty minutes to use they had more than enough time to waste. Hart winning was definitely the right move after he spent all summer on top of the company. This opened up a lot more options than Taker was providing, which is what a champion is supposed to do.

Post match Undertaker is FURIOUS and goes after Shawn. The Hart Foundation celebrates to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This isn't the worst show in the world but there's nothing to see here other than the last two matches and the opener. Those matches take up a lot of the card but the rest of the stuff is just dreadful. This set up a lot of important stuff, ranging from the first Hell in a Cell to Kane to Montreal to Shawn breaking his back, but there's a very clear line between the good stuff and the bad stuff.

Ratings Comparison

Hunter Hearst Helmsley vs. Mankind

Original: A

Redo: A-

Brian Pillman vs. Goldust

Original: D

Redo: D

Legion of Doom vs. Godwinns

Original: C-

Redo: D

British Bulldog vs. Ken Shamrock

Original: D-

Redo: D

Disciples of Apocalypse vs. Los Boricuas

Original: D

Redo: D-

Owen Hart vs. Steve Austin

Original: B

Redo: B

Undertaker vs. Bret Hart

Original: A

Redo: B+

Overall Rating

Original: B

Redo: C+

About the same other than the world title and the overall rating which doesn't surprise me. That's the kind of show this is.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/07/31/history-of-summerslam-count-up-1997-shawn-vs-taker-begins/>

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Monday Night Raw – August 1, 2016: One Week

Monday Night Raw

Date: August 1, 2016

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

After last week's well received show, it should be interesting to see where everything goes with the full time Monday Night Raw roster. Last week Finn Balor made his main roster debut and earned himself a shot in the first ever Universal Title match at the upcoming Summerslam. On top of that, Brock Lesnar is going to be making his first appearance since Wrestlemania. Let's get to it.

We open with a "Last Week On Raw" video, which is a really good idea that I'd love to see become a regular feature, as long as they keep it short.

Opening sequence.

Here's Sasha Banks to open things up and that belt looks ridiculous on her tiny waist. We have to wait for the YOU DESERVE IT chant to die down before Sasha can talk about herself and Bayley stealing the show last year over Summerslam weekend. That's going to be the case again this year when she defends against Charlotte at Summerslam. Cue Charlotte who is walking much faster than usual.

That means we get the YOU TAPPED OUT chants before Sasha says she can't put her finger on what's different about Charlotte this week. Charlotte says it was a fluke because she was champion for over 300 days. Sasha thanks Charlotte would never have been champion without her dad and here's.....Chris Jericho to interrupt? Jericho calls Charlotte royalty and thinks she's done more than Flair ever did. Now we get to the important point: what makes Sasha his boss?

Jericho brings up the Snoop Dogg connection and calls Sasha a brat. Now it's Enzo Amore coming out without Big Cass to kiss Sasha's hand. Sasha doesn't seem to mind the ensuing flirting but Charlotte has heard bad things about Enzo's love life. This turns into a surreal scene of Jericho impersonating Cass and Sasha impersonating Enzo before it turns into Enzo saying Jericho is like a messed up iPhone.

Jericho calls Enzo a hip hop hobbit so the fans call Jericho a stupid idiot. Enzo talks about going back in time and warning Jericho to not buy that scarf but here's Foley to cut them all off. Foley: "Enzo is a certified G and I'm a certified GM." After a cheap plug for Holy Foley, Mick makes a mixed tag for right now.

Enzo Amore/Sasha Banks vs. Chris Jericho/Charlotte

To keep things odd, Kevin Owens is on commentary with Byron's tie around his neck. The guys start with Enzo scoring off some armdrags before it's off to Sasha for a quick rollup on Charlotte. Sasha's chop hurts her own hand so she wristdrags Charlotte down instead. A double clothesline puts

the bad people on the floor as Owens talks about wanting to knock Enzo out for interrupting him on Draft night. The double dive puts everyone down and we take a break.

Back with Jericho in control of Enzo until Amore gets two off a cross body and a faceplant to the knee. Jericho dropkicks him out of the air but bangs up his knee in the process, allowing the double tag to the women. Sasha kicks her in the face but here's Dana Brooke for a distraction. Jericho offers another distraction, setting up Natural Selection for the pin at 9:58.

Rating: C-. I like the match being a very fresh mix but at the same time I REALLY don't like the new champion getting pinned in her first match as champion. It weakens the new title reign, which is the last thing you want to do, especially when the champion is as on fire as Sasha is right now.

Post match Enzo takes a Codebreaker but Big Cass comes down for the save.

Braun Strowman vs. Evan Anderhold

When asked why he's here, Evan (better known as Corey Hollis from NXT) says it's because he gets \$1000 and \$5000 if he wins. Those numbers serve as great joke material for the announcers during Evan's massacre, capped off by the reverse chokeslam for the pin at 59 seconds.

Stephanie and Mick talk about how awesome each others' ideas have been when Mark Henry comes in. Henry thinks it's time to reopen the Hall of Pain but Stephanie thinks he would be better in a mentorship role. All Mark needs is one more chance so Foley gives him a US Title shot against Rusev.

Golden Truth is still looking for Pokemon but Goldust thinks they should focus on their match instead.

Golden Truth vs. Shining Stars

Goldust and Primo start things off as Truth is still playing Pokemon Go on the apron. Graves mistakenly says Truth is playing inside the ring as Goldust gets in a powerslam to change control. Truth has apparently

caught a Pokemon and misses a tag. On top of that he drops his phone and actually goes out to get it as Goldust is waiting for a tag. Epico grabs a sunset flip for the pin at 2:00. Cole: "Pokemon no for Golden Truth tonight."

Truth finds another Pokemon post match.

Michael Cole brings out Finn Balor for a chat. Finn says he's here to prove his draft status but Seth Rollins cuts him off. Seth tells us about Balor being a former NXT Champion, though he wasn't the first NXT Champion because that was Rollins. Balor was also a first round pick but he wasn't the #1 overall pick because that was Rollins too. Last week Balor pinned Roman Reigns, even though Rollins did the same thing in his first match back after a career threatening injury.

Balor is just like a bad Hollywood remake like the new Ghostbusters. The idea of Balor beating Seth for the title is like the Atlanta Braves winning the World Series. Balor says everywhere he's gone, there has been someone like Seth, saying they're the man until Balor comes in and takes that spot. They may have a lot of things in common, but at least Finn earned his spot in the title match instead of having it handed to him. The brawl is about to start but Balor easily kicks him out to the floor to send Seth running. Balor looked like an underdog here, though an underdog that belonged in this spot.

US Title: Mark Henry vs. Rusev

Rusev is defending and Lana is here in her wedding dress. Saxton: "What is she wearing?" Henry throws him around a few times to start and snapping his throat across the middle rope. Back from a break with Henry blocking the Accolade and kicking Henry in the face. Now the Accolade goes on and Henry taps at 6:35. Too much time spent during the break but this was every Henry vs. Rusev match you've ever seen.

Post match Rusev rips on the American Olympic teams for not having to face the superior Russian and Bulgarian athletes. This brings out Roman Reigns to a very distinct face pop. Rusev is chased off with a Superman Punch. That face pop has to be a big relief too, because if Reigns can't get over by standing up for AMERICA, he might as well be running a

doughnut shop.

Video on Nia Jax.

Darren Young vs. Titus O'Neil

Earlier today Titus asked the same question everyone has been asking: when was Darren great in the first place? Darren's chops don't have much effect and Titus hits a few backbreakers. The splash in the corner gets two and we hit the armbar. A slam gets two on Darren but he comes back with a kick to the face. Both finishers are broken up and Titus grabs a rollup with a handful of trunks for the pin at 3:58.

Rating: D-. Who in the world thought this was a good idea in any way? Neither guy is interesting and it was another spur of the moment heel turn that does nothing for either guy. The fact that it was a boring match because Titus has some of the worst offense in recent memory doesn't help either.

Stephanie presents Foley with his own tablet when Sheamus comes in to complain about getting overlooked for that US Title shot. Cesaro cuts him off though and says the fans want to see him. Foley says the only reason Cesaro wasn't drafted so highly was due to that shoulder. Sheamus on the other hand hasn't had his head in the game since cashing in Money in the Bank. Tonight they'll have a match and whoever impresses them the most (not whoever wins because that would make too much sense) gets a future title shot.

Backlund yells at Titus for cheating so O'Neil threatens to knock him out. Darren jumps Titus from behind and puts him down with one punch.

Nia Jax vs. Ariel Monroe

Ariel actually laughs at Nia to start and is pulled around the ring by her hair as a result. A fireman's carry into a powerslam is enough to flatten Monroe at 1:12. That's a much better finisher than the legdrop.

Post match Saxton asks Nia how it feels to be here so she runs Ariel over again. Nia: "Why don't you ask her?"

Sami is ready to face Rollins tonight.

New Day vs. Gallows and Anderson

Non-title and Woods is banned from ringside due to drawing a banana out of a bag instead of one of the two oranges. The obvious joke is about to be made but New Day says that's too serious. Big E. throws Anderson around to start but Karl gets in a cheap shot to take over. We get some Too Sweet but Big E. rolls Anderson up for the pin at 1:19.

Post match the brawl is on with Woods coming out, only to have New Day get destroyed and left laying. Big E. is crotched against the post to really hammer the point home.

Cesaro vs. Sheamus

They trade uppercuts to start with Sheamus getting the better of it. The fans don't seem entertained though and it's Cesaro coming back with more uppercuts. Cesaro sends him outside for the cannonball off the apron, only to have the bad shoulder go into the post. Back in and Sheamus hits the ten forearms to the chest, only to be deadlifted into a suplex because Cesaro is freakishly strong. The springboard corkscrew uppercut sets up the Neutralizer to put Sheamus away at 5:58.

Rating: C. How many times do we need to see these two fight each other? Cesaro vs. the winner of Rusev vs. Reigns should be a fun power brawl either way they go, despite Cesaro having next to no chance against either of them. Sheamus really is in need of ANYTHING new at this point as he's really just a guy in trunks with weird hair.

Cesaro and Sheamus are still brawling after a break, leaving Heath Slater and Jinder Mahal of all people to show up in the ring. Slater promises that 2MB is going to set Raw on fire but here's Foley to interrupt. Tonight they're going to have a match and the winner gets a job.

Jinder Mahal vs. Heath Slater

Mahal kicks him in the face for the pin at 14 seconds.

We look back at the mixed tag.

Jericho rants about how Enzo and Cass made fun of him earlier tonight and promises some revenge, you dig? He has someone in mind to watch his back and it's....Jimin Marvinluter, a Canadian shot put champion? Kevin Owens comes in to say he has Jericho's back instead because Jimin Marvinluter isn't a real person. Oh and Tom Phillips is a stupid idiot for saying his name isn't Tim.

Sami Zayn vs. Seth Rollins

The big attraction here: they've never fought on Raw before, making this completely different than the match they had on Smackdown about six weeks ago. They're quickly on the floor with Sami hitting his moonsault off the barricade to take over. Rollins sends him into the barricade and then into the corner with a hard whip. Sami is sent outside again and we take a break.

Back with Sami getting caught in the Buckle Bomb, followed by an enziguri to keep him in trouble. That's not enough for the Pedigree though as Sami climbs the turnbuckle for the tornado DDT, only to have Seth bail to the floor to avoid the Helluva Kick. That's fine with Sami who hits his flip dive to the floor instead. Back in and the Helluva Kick misses again, setting up the Pedigree for the pin at 11:40.

Rating: C+. I can't emphasize enough how lame of a finisher the Pedigree is for Rollins. I know that's become his thing now but it feels like they're just doing it to set up a match with HHH that really doesn't have the highest level of interest. It's a good idea to have Rollins go over various NXT stars to get ready for Balor, but I'm really hoping it doesn't end with Rollins going over Finn himself. We've been there and it's just not that interesting.

Puff Daddy guest stars next week.

Here's Paul Heyman to introduce Brock. At Summerslam, Brock is going to entertain the fans. Yes entertain, because his form of entertainment isn't what you see promoted in WWE. Instead it's something violent, which isn't something he should be saying but he can because he's standing next to Brock. Good point actually. That brings Heyman to Randy Orton, who has this great equalizer called the RKO. All Orton has to do is hit one RKO

at Summerslam to shock the world, just like when Brock conquered the Streak at Wrestlemania XXX. Heyman: "If that still bothers you, GET OVER IT ALREADY!"

Paul's advise for Orton is to take it from the wise old Jew (his words): Lesnar is going to drag him down to Suplex City. Maybe Orton can stay out of the hospital though and can fight again in 2016. Maybe he can do it if he can hit one RKO, but that's never gonna...and here's Orton with an RKO to lay Lesnar out. Yes indeed they made it a whole ONE WEEK before a Smackdown wrestler was on Raw. Orton bails through the crowd to end the show. I'll give them this: that one RKO with Lesnar being down for a few seconds is better than anything Ambrose got in his buildup.

Overall Rating: C-. So much for Raw being awesome. This was every episode of the show you've seen for years with a few more squashes thrown in. It wasn't terrible by any stretch and the ending segment was a good idea but there was just so much stuff on here that felt like a nothing episode.

The opening gave me some hope that they really were mixing it up but then a match was lost due to Pokemon, Jinder Mahal was back, Rusev squashed Mark Henry AGAIN, a champion got pinned and we were supposed to be excited about a match taking place on this show for the first time ever. Oh and Smackdown invaded. Welcome to the new era.

Results

Charlotte/Chris Jericho b. Sasha Banks/Enzo Amore – Natural Selection to Banks

Braun Strowman b. Evan Anderhold – Reverse chokeslam

Shining Stars b. Golden Truth – Sunset flip to Goldust

Rusev b. Mark Henry – Accolade

New Day b. Anderson and Gallows – Rollup to Anderson

Cesaro b. Sheamus – Neutralizer

Jinder Mahal b. Heath Slater – Kick to the face

Seth Rollins b. Sami Zayn – Pedigree

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Summerslam Count-Up – 1996: For Whom The Bearer Tolls

Summerslam 1996

Date: August 18, 1996

Location: Gund Arena, Cleveland, Ohio

Attendance: 17,000

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jim Ross, Mr. Perfect

Things have changed quite a bit since last year. For one thing, the NWO currently has its foot on the WWF's neck but no one knew how bad it was going to get. Shawn was pretty much tanking as champion but he's still defending tonight against Vader. The major match though is Undertaker vs. Mankind in a Boiler Room Brawl which has the potential to be awesome. Let's get to it.

The pre-show match is kind of famous so I'll throw it in as a bonus.

Steve Austin vs. Yokozuna

Austin is fresh off winning the King of the Ring and cutting the promo that made him famous. Yoko is so fat it's terrifying at this point. Austin still has very slow music here which sounds like it belongs in a romantic drama. He goes right after the big man to start but a single right hand puts Steve down. A double middle finger earns Austin a Samoan drop and a legdrop. Yoko loads up the Banzai Drop and the freaking ring breaks with Yoko falling down to the mat, giving Austin an easy pin.

The opening video is about monsters like Vader and Mankind wearing masks but heroes standing up to them no matter what.

Owen Hart vs. Savio Vega

Owen has a broken arm/wrist coming in. Feeling out process to start with the referee warning Owen about using the cast. Savio does the smart thing by ramming the bad arm into the buckle to take over. We hit an armbar as we cut to Vader's locker room to see Cornette firing him up. A monkey flip and a dropkick put Owen down and it's back to the armbar. Owen kicks out of a rollup and sends Savio shoulder first into the post as momentum changes all of a sudden.

Off to a wristlock on Vega as the match is still waiting to get off the ground. Owen puts on a long armbar followed by a DDT on the arm for two. Vega bites his way out of the hold as the crowd is dead quiet for this. Owen charges into a boot and here's Clarence Mason, a lawyer, to watch the match. An enziguri puts Vega down for two and a few rollups get the same for Savio.

Hart takes him down with a spinwheel kick but Savio comes back with right hands and clotheslines. Owen's missile dropkick gets two as the crowd is into this all of a sudden. Hart is crotched on another top rope attempt but Savio lands on the cast in his belly to back superplex. Owen slips off the cast and lays out Savio (with the referee looking right at him), setting up the Sharpshooter for the win.

Rating: C. This took awhile to get going and could have shaved off five minutes or so. Savio was nothing special at all and Owen was in a transitional phase of his career as he was trying to become a singles guy but wasn't ready to do it yet. The match wasn't bad and picked way up but

the ending was lame.

Post match Justin Hawk Bradshaw comes out to lay out Vega once again.

Todd Petingill is in the boiler room and finds Mankind licking a pipe and saying there's no place like home.

Tag Titles: Smoking Gunns vs. New Rockers vs. Bodydonnas vs. Godwinns

The heel Gunns are defending and this is under elimination rules. The New Rockers are Marty Jannetty and Leif Cassidy (Al Snow) and the Bodydonnas are Skip (Chris Candido) and Zip (Tom Pritchard). Skip is in a neck brace here due to a potentially broken neck but he's wrestling anyway. The Gunns have Sunny who looks GREAT as a cowgirl. Billy Gunn starts with Henry Godwinn with Hank throwing Billy around with ease.

A wheelbarrow slam sends Billy out to the floor and it's off to Phineas vs. Zip. After a comedic feeling out process it's off to both Gunns at the same time. Zip and Phineas strut across the ring for no apparent reason as the Gunns freak out about having to fight each other. The referee says either make contact or be disqualified. After no contact, Bart tags in Zip so the crowd can have something else to be bored by. Jannetty trips Zip and Billy gets an easy pin so the Bodydonnas don't have to be out there long.

Henry comes back in to crank on Billy's arm but Billy quickly tags out to Jannetty. Marty slowly pounds on Henry and plays to the comatose crowd. Leif gets the tag but quickly brings in Billy to work over Henry. The Rockers have a miscue with the Gunns and Henry gets two off a side slam on Billy. Marty's save results in an elbow drop on Billy as everything breaks down. Henry kicks Marty into Leif and hits the Slop Drop (reverse DDT) on Cassidy for the elimination.

We're down to the Godwinns vs. the champions and it's Bart in for the first time. Henry explodes out of the corner with a clothesline to put both guys down. Bart breaks up a tag attempt as this match is dragging terribly. Billy comes in and the place is so silent you can hear the insults between the wrestlers.

Back to Bart to pound away on Henry for a few moments before bringing Billy back in. Henry catches a charging Billy in a World's strongest Slam and there's the lukewarm tag to Phineas. He cleans house and everything breaks down with Phineas hitting the Slop Drop on Billy, only to have Bart blast Phineas from the top for the pin to retain.

Rating: D-. This was so boring I could barely keep my eyes open. The tag title scene was so barren at this point that there were practically zero interesting acts at all. That would be the case for over a year when the New Age Outlaws FINALLY brought the division back to life for a few years. Terribly boring match.

Post match Sunny insults the women in the audience and unveils a huge poster of herself to make the arena prettier.

Video on the Summerslam festivities in the city this weekend.

Sycho Sid vs. British Bulldog

Sid is just back after being out for about six months with an injury. He's part of Shawn's war with Camp Cornette, making this a lower level battle in the feud. The fans are WAY into Sid here which makes his title reigns a lot more understandable. Neither guy goes anywhere on some collisions until Sid slams him down to the floor. A LOUD Let's Go Sid chant starts up, giving us more interest than the entire tag title match had combined.

Bulldog tries to power out of a headlock as the announcers talk about Mason being out here instead of Cornette again. A powerslam gets two for Sid but Bulldog comes back with the delayed vertical suplex. That's some impressive power, especially on a guy that tall. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Bulldog clotheslines Sid to the floor. Bulldog clotheslines him down again and flips forward to entertain us while Sid is down. Back to the chinlock before Bulldog hits the powerslam clean, but here's Cornette to argue with Mason. Another powerslam is countered into the chokeslam and an AWESOME powerbomb is good for the pin.

Rating: D+. The match was better than you would think with both guys' power stuff looking good. That powerbomb was great as Bulldog just

stopped once he hit the mat and the selling was even better. Sid is just scary over at this point, which made his heel turn all the better. To be fair though, the fans just wouldn't boo the guy even when he was a heel. Take that for what you will.

The managers keep arguing post match.

Video on Shawn.

Goldust vs. Marc Mero

Marlena and Sable are the seconds here and Goldust has a thing for the latter. Goldust takes him into the corner and rubs his own chest before slapping Mero in the face. Some armdrags take Goldie down and he hides in the corner. They run the ropes a bit with Mero getting two off a cross body and hooking an armbar. The crowd is dead again so the announcers talk about Ahmed Johnson's kidney injury.

Back up and Goldust backdrops Mero out to the floor before dropping him throat first across the barricade. Goldust hooks a chinlock and here's Mankind who has been calling Sable mommy lately. Some referees chase him off a few seconds later, making this your pointless cameo of the show. A knee to the ribs puts Mero down for two but he comes off the middle rope with a back elbow to the jaw.

A clothesline and a backdrop put Goldust down again and a million dollar kneelift does the same. Goldust counters punches in the corner and they both tumble to the floor but Mero slides back in and hits a running flip dive. A slingshot legdrop gets two followed by the debut of the Shooting Star Press, called the Wild Thing. Since this is 1996 WWF, it only gets two. A few seconds later Goldust hits the Curtain Call (reverse forward suplex) for the pin.

Rating: D. Another dull match here other than the Shooting Star. Goldust was all thought and character but little in the area of substance in the ring. The crowd was dead again here other than for the Wild Thing which was by far the most exciting thing in the match. There wasn't much to see here but as was the case back then, a lot of matches on PPV were filler.

Goldust stalks Sable post match until Mero makes the save.

We recap Jake Roberts vs. Jerry Lawler. Jake claimed to have sobered up and was speaking at churches about how Jesus helped him overcome his demons. Lawler claimed that Roberts was a fraud (which was the case in real life as he was still hooked on crack) and tonight is the showdown.

Jerry Lawler vs. Jake Roberts

Before the match we have the debut of a new Olympian who will be getting in the ring soon: Mark Henry. Lawler brings his own bag with him along with something in his pocket. He's also wearing a Baltimore Ravens jersey (the beloved Cleveland Browns had recently moved to Baltimore and become the Ravens) because Lawler knows how to rile up a crowd like few others ever could. Henry thinks it's hilarious despite being a face.

Lawler pulls out two bottles of Jim Beam to be Roberts' partners tonight and says Roberts' wife only looks good after a six pack. Henry is so stupid that if he won a gold medal he'd have it bronzed. Once Roberts uses his bar stool as a walker to get out here, Lawler is going to knock him sideways so everyone can recognize him. It's very impressive how easily Lawler can have a crowd eating out of the palm of his hand like this.

Roberts finally comes out so Lawler pulls a huge bottle of booze from the bag. Jake pulls the snake out of his own bag to scare Lawler to the floor and the bell finally rings. Lawler looks for a microphone but Jake sends him face first into the steps and hammers away back inside. Back to the floor with Lawler being sent into various hard objects until he steals a drink from a fan to blind Jake. Henry: "So what is the fan going to drink?" Lawler gets one of the bottles from ringside but has to block a DDT attempt. Another DDT is countered and Jerry hits him in the throat with the bottle for the pin.

Rating: D. This was much more of an angle than a match with Lawler giving a great lesson in how to fire up a crowd. Roberts wouldn't be around much longer before heading to ECW and the indies. This would lead to Henry's first mini feud against Lawler which started got his career going in slow motion.

Post match Lawler says Roberts is holding his throat because he wants a drink. Lawler opens the big bottle to pour it down Jake's throat but Mark Henry makes a delayed save.

Bob Backlund campaigns for President.

Paul Bearer comes to the ring. The next match will be won by retrieving the Urn from his hands.

Undertaker vs. Mankind

This is the Boiler Room Brawl, meaning the fight starts in the boiler room and you win by fighting to the ring and getting the Urn from Bearer. Taker goes into the room where Mankind is hiding somewhere. This is bordering on creepy as Taker is looking through the shadows to find Mankind but only finds machines. Mankind sneaks up on him with a pipe to the back as the fight begins. Keep in mind that the people in the arena are seeing this on TV screens as there's no Titantron yet.

Undertaker comes back with a trashcan lid to the head and they brawl around the room with Mankind in control. The announcers have stopped talking as Mankind stuns Taker across a wooden stand. A stiff right hand puts Taker down and Mankind chokes away. The camera cuts out for a few moments so something can be edited and we come back with a trashcan shot putting Taker down.

Taker finds a pipe to knock the can into Mankind's face but Mankind turns a valve to shoot steam into Taker's face. A clothesline sends the can into Mankind's face and the slow brawling continues. Taker hits him in the face with a wooden pallet but Mankind hits Taker low with a pipe of some kind. Mankind sends him into a wall and hits the running knee to drive Taker's head into the wall again. An elbow off a ladder keeps Taker down and Mankind drags him along the floor.

The camera goes out again and the audience boos. Back with Undertaker laid out on the floor and Mankind setting up a ladder next to him. Mankind climbs up and in the best remembered spot of the match, Undertaker sits up and pulls him down onto a pile of pipes. Back up and Mankind goes for the door but Undertaker grabs him by the ankle. A fire

extinguisher blast to the face puts Mankind down and it's Undertaker out the door first. Mankind rams him into the door and gets out, only to fall in the aisle.

With Taker still inside Mankind barricade the door but Taker kicks it in anyway. They fight up the aisle with jobbers watching from the doors. Taker shoves him across the coffee area, allowing Mankind to get ahead a bit. He throws hot coffee onto Undertaker and crawls into the arena to give the fans something to see in person. Taker catches up with him and pounds away but Mankind keeps him out of the ring.

A Texas piledriver onto the concrete knocks Undertaker out cold but he sits up just in time to pull Mankind off the apron, slamming the back of his head into the concrete. Undertaker gets inside and gets on one knee in front of Paul but Bearer won't give him the Urn. Mankind gets in and knocks Taker out with the Claw before Bearer does the unthinkable by turning on Undertaker and giving Mankind the Urn.

Rating: B. This is a hard one to grade as it was VERY long (nearly half an hour) and was unlike any other match up to this point. This match would have killed in the Attitude Era but here it's just quite good. Bearer turning was shocking as he had managed Undertaker for nearly six years and I don't think anyone believed he would ever turn on Undertaker.

Druids come out to carry Undertaker to the back. He'd be back the next night like nothing happened.

Camp Cornette is ready for Shawn Michaels. Cornette: "When Vader grabs you by the neck Shawn Michaels, you're going to sound like Peter Frampton's electric kazoo." WHERE DOES HE COME UP WITH THIS STUFF???

WWF World Title: Vader vs. Shawn Michaels

Vader is challenging after pinning Shawn in a six man tag at In Your House #9. He pounds Shawn in the face to start before taking his head off with a clothesline. Shawn catches a big boot and leg sweeps Vader down before hitting a low dropkick to stun Vader. Michaels fires off rights and lefts from his knees and Vader bails to the floor. A HUGE dive takes him down again as the fans are finally waking up a bit.

Back in and a standing hurricanrana takes Vader down and a victory roll sends him back out to the floor. Shawn's plancha into a hurricanrana is caught in a powerbomb and momentum changes in a hurry. Vader puts him on his shoulder and carries Shawn up the steps with one arm in a very impressive power display. A big suplex puts Shawn down again and Mr. Perfect gloats a lot. Shawn is sent into a Flair Flip in the corner and another whip sends him out to the floor.

Vader pounds away back inside but Shawn comes back with rights and lefts of his own. He can't drop Vader though and a hard clothesline takes Shawn down again. Shawn tries to skin the cat but Vader pulls him back in and hits a kind of reverse jackknife for two. Off to a modified bearhug on the champion for a few moments until Shawn fights back with a running knee to the chest. Vader blocks a sunset flip but his jumping seated senton hits knees.

A hard clothesline puts Vader down and we get a semi-famous spot as Shawn goes up but aborts the elbow in mid flight, instead hitting a flying stomp. He throws a fit and yells at Vader before a cross body puts both guys on the floor. Vader drops Shawn throat first across the barricade....for a countout win? Seriously? Female fan: "NO! NO! NO!" Cornette agrees because he wants to win the title by pin instead of countout.

Shawn agrees to get back in but Vader punches him down on the floor. Cornette pops Shawn in the back with the tennis racket and a belly to belly gets two for Vader. Michaels punches his way out of the powerbomb and hits the forearm/nip-up combo. He tunes up the band but Cornette throws in the racket, only to have Shawn intercept it and blast Vader for the DQ.

The third part of the match begins (Cornette, WE DON'T WANT IT THAT WAY, ring the bell again) with Shawn avoiding another seated senton and now the top rope elbow connects. Sweet Chin Music only gets two and the referee is knocked to the floor. Vader hits the powerbomb and a second referee comes in to count two. Cornette is stunned as Vader goes up, only to miss the moonsault. Shawn goes up top and hits a moonsault press to retain the title.

Rating: B+. I've only seen this match once or twice and it really holds up. Shawn was in his element here against a monster and he capitalized on Vader's greed for the title to finally beat him. The problem was the people didn't care about Shawn until he got in the ring which made him a hard sell for the fans. Still though, excellent match here.

Overall Rating: C. Well the last two matches are both good to great, but it takes awhile to get there. Thankfully for the show those matches take up over an hour of the card and help things out a lot. Unfortunately the NWO was running roughshod on the wrestling world at this point so the good matches here didn't mean much at all. This wasn't one of the stronger entries in the series though.

Ratings Comparison

Owen Hart vs. Savio Vega

Original: B+

Redo: C

Smoking Gunns vs. Bodydonnas vs. New Rockers vs. Godwinns

Original: B-

Redo: D-

British Bulldog vs. Sycho Sid

Original: D

Redo: D+

Marc Mero vs. Goldust

Original: C+

Redo: D

Jerry Lawler vs. Jake Roberts

Original: C-

Redo: D

Mankind vs. Undertaker

Original: A-

Redo: B

Vader vs. Shawn Michaels

Original: A-

Redo: B+

Overall Rating

Original: A

Redo: C

Did I owe this show money a few years ago? My jaw is hanging open as I read these ratings again.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/07/30/history-of-summerslam-count-up-1996-mick-foley-has-arrived/>

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Summerslam Count-Up – 1995: The Low

Summerslam 1995

Date: August 27, 1995

Location: Pittsburgh Civic Center, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 18,062

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Vince McMahon

....no. No please don't make me do THIS show! I'll pay you to not make me do this waste of a show. If there's a bottom of the barrel for Summerslam and perhaps the WWF in general, this is it. The main event tonight is King Mabel vs. WWF Champion Diesel in a match that is the preferred method of torture in 19 countries. There is however one bright spot: Shawn vs. Razor II, again in a ladder match. Let's get to it.

The opening video is like a trailer for the main event matches on tonight's show, such as the main event, the ladder match, Bret vs. Lawler's royal dentist and the FINAL blowoff to Undertaker vs. DiBiase's Corporation.

Dean Douglas (Shane Douglas as a high school teacher) will be grading tonight's matches. That's a brilliant idea. Someone else should watch a lot of matches and grade them in detail.

Hakushi vs. 1-2-3 Kid

The Kid is still a face here and is starting to look someone older. Hakushi is a Japanese guy who is covered in individual characters, even on his face. Feeling out process to start as they fight over a top wristlock. The Kid backflips out of a wristlock and armdrags Hakushi across the ring to take him down. Things speed up with the Kid hip tossing him down but being kicked off by Hakushi into a stalemate. They run the ropes again but both hold a rope and try superkicks but neither

can connect.

Hakushi goes to the throat as Vince calls the show SummerSlime. A tilt-a-whirl slam puts the Kid down and Hakushi poses on the ropes for a few long moments. Hakushi hits a Vader Bomb for two and Vince thinks the match should be stopped. The Kid is sent to the floor and Hakushi hits a gorgeous moonsault from the mat to the floor followed by a top rope shoulder block for two back inside. A swan dive misses though and Kid sends him to the floor for a dive of his own. Back in and a slingshot legdrop gets two and a frog splash gets the same. The Kid tries a spin kick but gets caught in a quick powerbomb for the pin.

Rating: C+. Solid opener here with both guys looking good throughout. Hakushi really was something special and the fans would turn him face through pure love of his high flying abilities alone. The Kid would be turning heel soon after this in a move that most people didn't care about for the most part.

Doc Hendrix (Michael Hayes) is WAY too excited about what Mabel's master plan is for Diesel. Mabel says we have to wait and does a decent evil laugh.

Hunter Hearst Helmsley vs. Bob Holly

This is the future boss' PPV debut. Helmsley is the stuck up blue blood here so he walks around with his nose in the air. Holly takes him down with some armdrags but gets in a cheap shot to Bob's head. Holly comes back with some kicks in the corner but runs into a knee to the face to put him down. Helmsley chokes away in the corner before hitting a HARD whip across the corner. A backbreaker gets two and a Flair knee drop gets the same.

We go split screen to see the British Bulldog arriving but he has nothing to say. Helmsley hooks an abdominal stretch but has to hiptoss Holly over the top after he counters. Holly comes back with some dropkicks and some jobber level offense including a backdrop. He tries a second one though and gets caught in a Pedigree for the pin.

Rating: D. Well he had to get better after something like this. HHH

didn't look like anything of note but the Pedigree was a good finisher. It was actually his second finisher as he started with a Diamond Cutter but changed it quickly into his run. Holly would also completely change his character in coming years until it finally clicked with the hardcore character.

We get a video of a charity tug of war between wrestlers and Pittsburgh firefighters. It's for charity so no jokes here.

Blue Brothers vs. Smoking Gunns

The Brothers are Jacob and Eli but are more famous as the bald Harris Brothers (also known as DOA, Creative Control, the Bruise Brothers and about ten other names over the years). Their manager is Uncle Zebekiah, who is currently (as of July 2013) Zeb Colter in WWE. Jacob elbows Billy down to start before it's off to Eli for a slam and some elbow drops. Billy gets a quick two count on Jacob before it's off to Bart for some arm work. Jacob whips Bart into the corner before bringing Eli back in to get caught by a cross body for two.

The Gunns get a near fall off some double teaming but Billy walks into an H Bomb (double powerbomb) to stop the momentum dead. Eli puts Billy in the Tree of Woe but tags in Jacob instead of doing anything about it. Jacob draws in Bart to allow for more double teaming and Eli gets two off a powerslam. Billy comes back with a face plant to Jacob and makes the tag off to Bart. Everything breaks down and the Blues are sent into each other, allowing the Gunns to hit the Sidewinder (side slam/guillotine legdrop) on Eli for the pin.

Rating: D. This wasn't so much bad as it was completely uninteresting. That's the problem with so many parts of 1995 WWF: the people just weren't interesting at all and there was no reason to care about a lot of the matches. All you had here was a midcard tag match that ran about six minutes. It wasn't any good and there was no story to it, so why was I supposed to care?

We recap the rise of Barry Horowitz. He literally didn't win a match in years but won a miracle against Skip (Chris Candido) on Action Zone. They went to a ten minute draw a few weeks later and tonight is the final

chance for redemption.

Barry Horowitz vs. Skip

Skip has a 22 year old Sunny with him here, putting all the attention on her. Barry has the awesome rock version of Hava Nagila as his theme music. Horowitz starts fast and drops a knee on the fitness guru for two. A knee to the chest puts Skip down and Barry takes down the suspenders. Skip is clotheslined to the floor but Barry pulls him right back in. An O'Connor roll gets two for Barry and he suplexes Skip to the floor. Sunny tries to bring in a towel but gets ejected instead.

She doesn't leave though and trips Barry up to finally shift momentum. A suplex and a middle rope legdrop get two on Horowitz and the beating continues. Horowitz finally gets up and hits a few shoulder blocks for two but his offense is rather limited. Skip comes back with a clothesline but the fans are chanting for Barry. A powerslam puts Barry down again and some quick legdrops get two for Skip. Off to a chinlock but Barry is quickly up, only to have both guys try dropkicks at once.

Skip is up first and gets a close two off a swan dive. The fans are starting to get behind Horowitz here, but it's hard to care about a jobber in this big a match. A piledriver is countered and Barry starts his real comeback with a dropkick. He goes up but gets crotched again, allowing Skip to hit a superplex for no cover. Cue Hakushi who Skip cost a win earlier this week to dive over Skip, allowing Barry to roll him up for the pin.

Rating: D+. The match wasn't terribly boring or anything but at the end of the day this was a ten minute match with Barry Horowitz facing Skip at Summerslam. That's not the easiest thing to get into and is more of an historical anomaly than anything significant at all. Nothing to see here at all other than Sunny.

Dean Douglas calls the last match a travesty.

Shawn says he has nothing but the IC Title so there's nothing Razor can do to take the title from him.

Women's Title: Bertha Faye vs. Alundra Blayze

Blayze is defending and Faye is this rather frumpy fat chick designed to be disturbing. She also has Harvey Whippleman with him as her worshiping admirer. Alundra fires off some quick kicks to start and the 280lb or so Faye runs her over in response. A bad looking hair pull sends Blayze down and some legdrops get two. Bertha misses a middle rope splash and a victory roll gets two for the champion. Three clotheslines get no count for Alundra as Harvey has the referee. Some middle rope dropkicks stagger Bertha but she avoids a third before hitting a Batista Bomb for the title.

Rating: F. See, Faye was fat and that's the extent of her character. The title would literally be trashed on Nitro in a few months in the right ending for it. Nothing else to say here.

Remember how I said this show sucked? It's somehow going to get worse.

We recap Undertaker vs. Kama. Kama stole the Urn at Wrestlemania and melted it down into a big chain which ticked off Taker's Creatures of the Night (goth fans). They brought a black wreath but Kama destroyed both the wreath and the Creature himself. Tonight it's a casket match.

Taker says Kama went too far.

Undertaker vs. Kama

Kama is more famous as Godfather and is the Supreme Fighting Machine here, which is kind of an MMA gimmick. Taker pounds away in the corner to start before choking Kama down, only to be kicked in the back when he looks at the casket. Taker knocks Kama over the top and onto the casket to freak him out before hitting a quick splash in the corner. Old School connects and Kama is thrown into the casket but pops right back out. A top rope clothesline puts Taker down for a second but he sits right back up.

Kama hits a quick belly to belly suplex but Taker is right back up again. He throws Kama into the casket again but DiBiase makes a quick save. Kama pounds on Taker in the corner and clotheslines him onto the top of the

casket where DiBiase can get in some shots. The managers almost get into it but we're lucky enough to get more of Taker and Kama's slow brawling. Kama posts him and rams Taker face first into the casket. A suplex onto the casket works over the back a bit but Kame, the genius that he is, can't open the casket with Undertaker on top of it.

They both stand on the casket and Undertaker backdrops Kama into the ring to block a piledriver. The fans get WAY into this all of a sudden but Kama takes him down with a powerslam. The genius covers Taker but he sits up a few seconds later. Off to a chinlock because this match hasn't gone on long enough already. Bearer shoves Kama's feet off the ropes to break up the hold so it's off to a headlock.

Taker finally fights up but gets whipped into the corner to stop him cold again. The jumping clothesline puts Kama down and a regular clothesline puts him inside the casket, but Undertaker falls in with him and the lid closes. Kama fights out again and hits a neckbreaker in the ring to put the Dead Man down again. Not that it matters as Taker stands up, hits the chokeslam and tombstone and throws Kama into the casket for the win.

Rating: D. WAY too long for the level of "action" in this match. Also did anyone think Kama had a chance against Undertaker in a major match? There was nothing here and the match running seventeen minutes didn't help it at all. Undertaker would move onto a feud with King Mabel which was at least different than the year of Undertaker vs. DiBiase.

We recap Isaac Yankem vs. Bret Hart. I'll let Todd Petingill explain it to you in his voiceovers:

"Lawler did what he does best: got somebody else to fight his battles for him. He went out and got someone else to fight for him. He got a dentist. Yankem was a demented tooth fairy."

Tell me that "He got a dentist" line doesn't sound straight out of bad horror movie trailer.

Isaac Yankem vs. Bret Hart

You might know Yankem better as Fake Diesel, who you might know better as

Kane. Isaac's music is made up of dentist drills which is rather creepy. Bret wants to know if he has to fight an evil chiropractor next. The fans lose their minds for Bret, which makes you wonder why he's fighting A FREAKING DENTIST. Isaac grabs him by the throat and sends Bret into the corner to take over early. This is his debut so Bret isn't sure what to do with him.

Bret's right hands in the corners don't get him anywhere but he avoids a charge and takes Yankem to the floor with some clotheslines. A plancha takes Isaac down and a middle rope clothesline looks to set up the Sharpshooter but Isaac blocks. Instead a backslide gets two for Hart, only to have Isaac throw him into the ropes and tie up Bret's arm. The hard whip into the corner puts Bret down and the ropes look pretty loose. Yankem stomps Bret down in the corner and puts him on his back for a choke but Hart counters into a small package.

Lawler rants about having to kiss Bret's feet after a previous match and is thrilled when Isaac clotheslines him to the floor. Bret is rammed back first into the post and the selling is the mastery you would expect it to be. Back in and Yankem hits a top rope Fameasser for two and a pair of clotheslines for two. Bret knocks him to the floor and sends him into the steps before getting two off the bulldog back inside. The backbreaker sets up the middle rope elbow but Lawler breaks up the Sharpshooter.

Bret is sent into the steps again as Lawler is playing cheerleader. Yankem loads up the top rope clothesline but Bret slams him down and pounds away in the corner. Bret trips Yankem up and ties the legs around the post to stomp away before going after Jerry. Isaac escapes and dives off the top onto Bret before tying his head up in the ropes. That's finally enough for the referee and he throws the match out.

Rating: C. This took time to get going but you could see the potential in Yankem. The problem is he was a gimmick wrestler in the vein of T.L. Hopper and Repo Man: you can only go so far with one idea. That's why Kane was the idea that worked: it was a character that could evolve and had more than one idea to him, thereby making him interesting and someone with staying power. That's why WWF in 1995 was so terrible: they were all about the dull one note characters and the interest never was there.

Razor Ramon says he's ready to become a four time Intercontinental Champion and there's nothing Shawn can do to stop it. Shawn's pain brings him pleasure and he better be ready to dance.

Intercontinental Title: Shawn Michaels vs. Razor Ramon

This is the second ladder match and Shawn is defending. Michaels is over like free beer in a frat house at this point so Razor is the heel by default. The original plan was Shawn vs. Sid but I guess Vince decided to give the show one awesome match to go with the rest of the drek. Also Doc Hendrix is on commentary now. Vince says you would have to be Andre the Giant with a jetpack on your back to reach the belt. SOMEBODY MAKE THAT MOVIE NOW!!!

They slug it out to start and things speed WAY up until Razor avoids a superkick. A quick Razor's Edge is escaped and we have a stalemate. Razor hits his driving shoulders and whips Shawn over the corner and out to the floor. Doesn't that put him closer to the ladders? Shawn jumps Ramon as he goes for the ladder because SHAWN gets to bring in the ladder. Razor suplexes Shawn to the floor with Shawn hitting his knee on the barricade. You can hear Vince see Wrestlemania flash before his eyes.

Back in and both finishers miss again and they clothesline each other down. Razor kicks him into the corner and hits a middle rope fall away slam. We get the first ladder brought in as Sid watches in the back. Shawn heads to the floor as the ladder is thrown in but Razor drops him with a great right hand. Shawn shoves the ladder over to stop Razor's climb and going up himself, only to have his tights pulled down and his leg caught in the falling ladder. Razor slams the leg in between the ladder in a smart move.

The knee is slammed into the ladder as Razor is starting to go heel mid match. He slams Shawn down onto the ladder a few times as the fans aren't sure what to think of this. The ladder is placed on the middle rope but Shawn can't be whipped across the ring. He can however send Razor (who has bad ribs, mentioned for the first time here) into the ladder. Razor comes right back and drops the knee on the ladder before cannonballing down onto the leg. Shawn uses the good leg to shove him to the floor,

only to have Razor wrap the leg around the post.

Razor makes his climb but Shawn comes off the top with an ax handle to break it up. Both guys go up the same side of the ladder but it's Shawn taking Ramon down with a belly to back suplex. Shawn moves the ladder into the corner and sends Razor hard into it before doing the same again in another corner. Michaels' knee is suddenly fine as he stomps on Razor but climbs the ladder for a moonsault press. A splash off the top of the ladder misses though and both guys are done.

Ramon moves the ladder back to the middle of the ring and both guys climb very slowly. They slug it out on top of the ladder but both fall to the side, crotching themselves on the top rope. Shawn picks up the ladder and charges but falls to the floor with Razor falling out as well. Razor pulls out a second ladder and is fast enough to catch Shawn going up in a Razor's Edge to put both guys down again.

Both guys climb a ladder but neither are directly under the belt. Shawn kicks Razor's ladder down and jumps at the belt but crashes down to the mat instead. Ramon is backdropped to the floor on another Razor's Edge attempt, leaving Shawn to climb up....and fall when he tries to get the belt. Shawn is TICKED about the botch (how often do you hear about him making one of those?) and sprints up the ladder to retain.

Rating: A. This is a different kind of match than they had in 1994 but it's still excellent stuff. The first match was all about the high spots but this was based in drama and who could survive the match. I wasn't wild on Shawn forgetting his knee injury and the botches at the end, but that's nitpicking an excellent match. This worked very well and was great stuff for nearly half an hour.

Razor hands Shawn the belt post match and reaffirms his face status.

Dean Douglas says the previous match wasn't all that great and Ramon lays him out.

WWF World Title: King Mabel vs. Diesel

Diesel is defending and Mabel has Sir Mo with him. The idea here is Mabel

has some kind of a Royal Plan to take the title off Diesel. Diesel fires off right hands to start but gets taken down by a big clothesline. The champion comes back with running clotheslines in the corner but can't pick the fat man up. More clotheslines stagger Mabel and a running shot sends him out to the floor.

In the ONLY interesting spot of the match, Diesel dives over the top to take Mabel out. Mabel no sells it and sends Diesel into the post but has to stop for a Twinkie break. He finally charges into a boot and Diesel pounds away back inside. Mabel reverses a whip and hits the worst Boss Man Slam you'll ever see. It looked like Diesel was hitting a DDT on the arm. The buckle pad was ripped off somewhere in there.

Mabel sits on Diesel's back for another breather before hitting a slam. Mo gets on the apron as Mabel misses an elbow drop...and the referee is bumped off camera. Mo comes in for a double team and Luger runs in for the save but gets nailed by Diesel who thinks Luger is on Mabel's side. Diesel is knocked to the floor and Mabel drops a leg before throwing the champion back in. Luger beats up Mo in the aisle as Mabel gets two off a belly to belly. A middle rope splash misses and a middle rope shoulder from Diesel is enough to retain the title.

Rating: F. Just...yeah. I'd love to know what Vince was on when he came up with this idea but it's one powerful drug. Mabel was one of the worst heels of all time as he couldn't move and was waddling around in shiny purple and gold. This was a terrible match as Diesel couldn't do anything with the fattness. This might be the worst main event of all time. Luger would be in WCW in eight days on the debut of a show called Nitro.

Overall Rating: D. This show has one good thing going for it: Shawn vs. Razor is 34 minutes long counting intros and post match stuff. The rest of the show, only decent opener aside, is drek. This was a very bad time for the company as the Kliq was dominating everything (notice that they're in the opening matches and the main events) as Bret was fighting a dentist. Things would pick up a bit by next year but the company was on its deathbed by then. This show is definitely bad but it's not the worst show of all time.

Ratings Comparison

Hakushi vs. 1-2-3 Kid

Original: B

Redo: C+

Bob Holly vs. Hunter Hearst Helmsley

Original: D+

Redo: D

Smoking Guns vs. Blu Brothers

Original: D

Redo: D

Skip vs. Barry Horowitz

Original: B

Redo: D+

Alundra Blayze vs. Bertha Faye

Original: D+

Redo: F

Undertaker vs. Kama

Original: B-

Redo: D

Bret Hart vs. Isaac Yankem

Original: B-

Redo: C

Razor Ramon vs. Shawn Michaels

Original: B+

Redo: A

King Mabel vs. Diesel

Original: F+

Redo: F

Overall Rating

Original: F

Redo: D

The original had higher individual ratings but the overall rating was lower. I really was bad at this.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/07/29/history-of-summerslam-count-up-1995-worst-ppv-ever-pretty-much/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's WWE Grab Bag at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01IH70904>

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

Summerslam Count-Up – 1994: In Case One Wasn't Enough

Summerslam 1994

Date: August 29, 1994

Location: United Center, Chicago, Illinois

Attendance: 23,000

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jerry Lawler

Things have changed a lot in the last year. First and foremost, we're living in Bret Hart's WWF now as he regained the world title at Wrestlemania over Yokozuna, more or less vanquishing him once and for all. On that same show though, Bret's brother Owen pinned him clean in the masterpiece of an opening match. Owen has chased the title all summer and tonight is his opportunity at it inside a steel cage. The other main event is the Undertaker vs. the Undertaker in a match that I want to put off talking about for as long as I can. Let's get to it.

We open with highlights of the WWF softball team (that exists?) playing in a charity game against the Chicago media. Shawn of course plays without a shirt on. The video goes on for like five minutes with Monsoon doing commentary through every inning. Randy Savage, a former professional baseball player, hit a three run home run. The WWF won 9-7.

On to the actual wrestling tonight with Macho Man as Master of Ceremonies again. As Savage is posing in the ring, Lawler tells us that Diesel (currently Intercontinental Champion) and Shawn won the tag titles from the Headshrinkers last night in Indianapolis.

Headshrinkers vs. Bam Bam Bigelow/I.R.S.

Bigelow and IRS are part of DiBiase's Million Dollar Team. This was originally going to be for the belts but the Samoans lost the titles last night. The production values have been upgraded by this show as we now

have logos for every team/wrestler in the aisle as they come to the ring. The Headshrinkers have Afa and Lou Albano with them which I believe was Albano's last managing job in the company.

Bigelow runs over Fatu to start but misses a charge and walks into a superkick for two. A slam doesn't work on Bigelow so he comes back with an enziguri. That shouldn't work on Fatu and thankfully he rolls away from the diving headbutt. Off to Samu for a double superkick but the Samoan misses a charge, allowing for the tag off to IRS. Now it's the tax man's turn to miss a charge in the corner and fall outside where Samu sends him into the steps. Back in and Fatu stays on IRS until Bigelow pulls the top rope down to send Fatu out to the floor.

The Million Dollar Team takes over on Fatu but a double clothesline puts he and Bigelow down. A double tag brings in Samu to face IRS as things break down a bit. A middle rope headbutt gets two on IRS and Bigelow is clotheslined out to the floor. IRS takes a double Stroke and Fatu adds the top rope splash but DiBiase has the referee. Bigelow goes after Albano which draws in Afa for the DQ.

Rating: D+. A DQ? In the opening match? 1994 was an odd year for this company. The match wasn't bad but the lack of the titles being on the line brought the level of interest way down. Without that it was a Superstars main event which is ok, but the Headshrinkers were never in any real trouble at all and it wasn't much to see.

Everyone brawls up the aisle.

We now get to the white elephant of the show: Leslie Nielsen and his partner from the Naked Gun movies is here to solve the mystery of the Undertaker. See, Undertaker had disappeared after the Royal Rumble but had vowed to return. DiBiase had a fake Undertaker doing his bidding but the real one was supposed to return tonight.

WWF's brilliant idea? Bring in some detectives from crime spoof movies to solve the case. Nielsen comes complete with inner monologues about what he's doing and completely out of place jokes (Nielsen: "I'm on the case." Partner: "We're both on the case." The camera pans down to show them both standing on a briefcase.). Don't get me wrong: Leslie Nielsen is

hilarious, but this isn't what I want to see at the second biggest show of the year.

Razor Ramon is ready to get his Intercontinental Title back tonight from Diesel. He'll have Chicago football legend Walter Payton in his corner tonight.

Women's Title: Bull Nakano vs. Alundra Blayze

Nakano, the challenger, is a Japanese monster and has Luna Vachon in her corner. A quick clothesline and a hair drag put Blayze down as Nakano looks strong early. We hit a chinlock less than two minutes in but Blayze gets her feet on the ropes. A spin kick puts Nakano down for a few seconds but she comes back with a choke to take over again. Off to a modified Boston Crab as Nakano is destroying the champion so far.

Blayze FINALLY makes the rope but Nakano pounds her right back down like she's not even there. Bull starts a Sharpshooter but after turning Blayze over (Nakano doesn't step over) she reaches down and pulls her up by the arms in a PAINFUL looking hold. Blayze finally gets an arm free to grab a rope but almost immediately Nakano has a modified cross armbreaker on the champion. Alundra FINALLY comes back with a hair takedown but Bull is easily out at two. Bull easily counters a powerbomb attempt and drops a knee for two, only to miss her guillotine legdrop finisher. Blayze hooks a quick German suplex to retain.

Rating: C. This was an interesting match but it was hard to get into at times. Nakano was a monster who destroyed Blayze for about eight minutes and then Alundra got a quick suplex for the pin in fifteen seconds. Bull would win the title in a few months in Japan in a near masterpiece.

Shawn and Diesel brag about winning the tag titles but say Diesel will have no problem with Razor Ramon tonight. This is right around the time where the Kliq had taken over backstage and were basically running the company, hence them dominating the title scene.

Intercontinental Title: Diesel vs. Razor Ramon

Shawn and Walter Payton are in the respective corners and Diesel is

defending. The toothpick toss actually staggers Diesel and Ramon fires off right hands to start. A discus punch finally puts Diesel on the floor for a meeting with Shawn, likely over how they can get the WWF Title. Back in and Diesel uses the big man forearms to work on Razor's back before taking him down with a big boot. There's the corner leg choke but Razor comes back with more right hands.

The extra big man puts the big man in a sleeper but Razor comes out of it with a belly to back suplex. Diesel comes right back by launching Razor out to the floor, allowing Shawn to untie a buckle pad. Payton finally goes after Shawn but the distraction lets Shawn clothesline Razor down. Back in again and the champion hits his elbows and knee lifts in the corner but the referee stands in front of the exposed buckle. The referee looks at Shawn like an idiot, allowing Diesel to whip Ramon into the buckle for two.

Snake Eyes onto a covered buckle puts Ramon down again and an elbow to the back gets two. We hit the chinlock with a knee in the back and a comeback attempt is countered by a boot to the face. Diesel hooks an abdominal stretch but eventually gets caught holding the top rope. Razor puts on an abdominal stretch of his own, only to be hiptossed down onto his bad back. Snake Eyes onto the exposed buckle is countered into a rollup for two and Razor starts coming back with right hands.

The middle rope bulldog gets two on Diesel as the fans are getting louder and louder. The Jackknife is countered but Diesel suplexes him down before Razor can follow up. Shawn tries to bring in the belt but gets caught in a tug of war with Payton. The referee yells at Payton so Shawn tries a superkick but of course hits the champion. Payton pulls Shawn out and Ramon pins the out cold Diesel for the title.

Rating: C+. As political as the Kliq was, they could usually put on some solid matches. Razor was just big enough to make you believe he could go toe to toe with Diesel while still being small enough to look like an underdog. Payton was there as a celebrity and didn't add a thing to the match at all. That superkick would set up years of stories, as Shawn and Diesel would start to disintegrate, which led to WM XI, which led to Shawn's face turn, which led to everything up until Austin in a way.

Diesel rants about Shawn screwing up and blames him for the loss.

Shawn says he'll get Diesel another shot and vows revenge on Payton. Don't worry: Diesel would be world champion in three months.

Tatanka and Lex Luger are in the back where they hear the results of a WWF Hotline poll. 54% think Luger sold out to Ted DiBiase but he still denies it. Tatanka is convinced because of the times DiBiase has been watching Luger and the few times DiBiase has helped Luger win a match. Earlier today DiBiase went into Luger's dressing room with a bag and that's enough proof for Tatanka. Luger swears he didn't sell out.

Lex Luger vs. Tatanka

The fans aren't sure how they feel about Luger at the moment. They finally lock up with Luger taking it into the corner for a clean break. A shoulder puts Tatanka down but Luger still won't follow up. Tatanka grabs the arm as we're still in first gear. A cross body gets two for Tatanka and it's time to slug it out with Lex taking over. Tatanka starts the war path and hits a top rope chop for two but a high cross body only hits mat. Luger starts his comeback but here's DiBiase with a bag of money. Lex shouts that he didn't sell out, allowing Tatanka to roll him up for the pin.

Rating: D. The match was very slow paced which isn't good in a short match. We were waiting for the angle here instead of the match which is fine, but it didn't make the match any less dull. Tatanka was into a more serious phase of his career here and his matches got a lot less fun to watch as a result.

Post match Luger is mad and he kicks the bag out of DiBiase's hand....only to have Tatanka reveal the HE sold out by destroying Luger. Tatanka puts him in the Million Dollar Dream and shoves money down Luger's throat. This has always been a favorite of mine.

Jeff Jarrett vs. Mabel

Jeff Jarrett is a country singer from Tennessee and Mabel is a 500lb+ monster in purple and gold. Mabel lumbers around like an oaf while

Jarrett struts. Jarrett's wristlock is easily thrown off so Mabel struts a bit. A clothesline puts Jeff on the floor as we're somehow two minutes into the match. Jeff trips Mabel from the floor to take him down and drops a middle rope elbow for no cover. Some middle rope ax handles stagger Jarrett a bit but a third is caught in a bearhug.

A sleeper finally gets Mabel down but he drops Jeff into the corner to escape. The big man actually hits a spinwheel kick for two as Abe "Knuckleball" Schwartz, a baseball themed guy, is in the crowd with a sign saying he's on strike. See, Major League Baseball was on strike at this point, and if we reference something that's going on in the world, it's funny, right? Mabel misses a middle rope splash but blocks a sunset flip attempt. He tries to drop onto Jeff's chest but misses completely, allowing Jarrett to score the fluke pin.

Rating: D-. This was very dull as Jarrett had nothing to work with at all. Mabel was just so huge that it was almost impossible for anyone to do anything against him. Unfortunately for us Mabel would be pushed down our throats the next year, somehow main eventing the 1995 edition of the show. The match sucked.

The detectives are in the aisle, Undertaker pops up behind them, neither sees him, more PPV time is wasted.

We get a LONG recap of Bret vs. Owen. Owen had felt he was living in Bret's shadow and turned on his entire family at the 1993 Survivor Series when he was the only member eliminated due to a mistake by Bret. Bret offered to team up with Owen to win the tag titles which appeased Owen for awhile, but at the Royal Rumble Bret wouldn't tag out and the referee stopped the match due to his knee injury.

Owen snapped and kicked out Bret's good leg, turning full heel in the process. He demanded a match with Bret at Wrestlemania and defeated him clean in the opening match. Bret won the title in the main event, so Owen wanted a shot at the title throughout the summer. Tonight is Owen's big chance in a cage match.

Bret says his recent battle with strep throat won't affect him tonight.

WWF World Title: Bret Hart vs. Owen Hart

It's escape only to win. Owen jumps him as soon as Bret is inside the cage, raining down right hands in the corner. Bret comes back with an atomic drop and a clothesline as their parents are watching in the front row. Owen pulls Bret down as he tries to climb out before going for a climb of his own. Bret pulls him back down and goes for the door, only to be pulled back in as well. We're still very early in the match at this point.

Bret keeps lunging for the door but Owen keeps pulling him back in. They swap the roles for the next turn but Owen still can't escape. With the door closed Bret tries to climb out, only to be slammed off the cage wall. Owen climbs up and manages to get all the way out but he can't get down on the floor before Bret makes a save. Owen is pulled back in and they fight on the top rope with Bret being knocked back into the ring. Instead of climbing out again though, Owen dropkicks Bret down and climbs again.

The champion makes another save before climbing up to the top of the cage, straddling the top of it. Owen pulls him back in and they continue slugging it out on the top rope. Bret rams him into the cage wall but loses his balance in the process, putting both guys back down. Jim Neidhart and Davey Boy Smith, both brothers in law of the two in the ring, are watching in the crowd.

Bret punches Owen down again and drops an elbow but Owen makes another save. This time as Bret comes down though, he slams his knee into the mat to put him in real trouble. Neidhart, who has since turned on Bret and sided with Owen, is very pleased. Even though Bret is down, he isn't down enough to stop Owen from leaving. He gets slammed down off the cage but Owen grabs a climbing Bret's leg, pulling him back inside.

Owen is up first but Bret makes about his 49th save of the match. Bret rams him face first into the steel and goes up again but Owen reaches through the bars to bring him back in. Back in again and Owen plants the champion with a piledriver but Bret still makes a save. Owen throws Bret down off the cage but Owen falls as well. Bret crawls for the door and

gets the upper half of his body out, only to be pulled back in again by his younger brother. The drama on these near escapes is getting higher and higher.

Back in and Bret slingshots his brother into the cage, rattling his brains even more. They both slowly get up and Owen is rammed face first into the cage. The problem is that as Bret rams him in, Bret rams his knee into the cage and injures it. The champion tries to get out but can't climb that fast, allowing Owen to make ANOTHER save. Owen makes another attempt to get out but his exhaustion slows him down and lets Bret stop him.

They slug it out on the top rope with both guys being rammed face first into the cage. Bret knocks Owen down but gets pulled back down as well. A double clothesline puts both guys down one more time and it's Owen going up first. He climbs to the corner though, allowing Bret to catch up with him and superplex Owen off the top of the cage. Bret crawls for the door but Owen makes the save and puts on the Sharpshooter.

There aren't any submissions in the match but it can make it impossible for Bret to climb. However Bret, the master of the Sharpshooter, counters into one of his own and Owen is in trouble. Bret goes for the escape but he STILL can't keep Owen down long enough. They ram each other into the cage and both fall down before Owen climbs again. Both guys climb to the outside and it's a race to the bottom. Owen is rammed into the cage though and gets his legs caught in the cage bars, allowing Bret to drop down and retain the title.

Rating: A+. This match was all about drama and they certainly gave us that. The match ran over half an hour and had nothing but near escapes the entire time. Bret didn't so much win this match as he did survive it. This match has been called the last great cage match and it's really hard to argue with that. Excellent match with great drama throughout.

Post match Neidhart jumps Davey Boy, throws Bret back in and locks himself in with them. A huge beatdown of Bret ensues as the Hart Brothers try to get in the cage. Davey Boy FINALLY gets in and the other brothers follow to save Bret.

In the back Owen says Neidhart is his real family. A series of great tag matches followed.

We recap the Undertaker disappearing at the Royal Rumble. 9 guys beat him up and locked him in a casket but his "spirit" levitated out of the casket, swearing to return. We get a bunch of people saying they had seen Undertaker in delis and coffee shops but DiBiase said he would bring Undertaker back.

Paul Bearer said that was impossible but Ted brought out the "Undertaker". Anyone with a pair of eyes could tell it was a fake which was the point of the whole thing. Paul tried to regain the power of the Undertaker using the Urn but DiBiase's money stopped him. The real Undertaker's voice came over the PA, saying that he would be back.

Undertaker vs. Undertaker

We'll call them real and fake to tell them apart. The fake one is played by ECW's Primetime Brian Lee who wrestled in the WWF as Chainz. For the real entrance, we have druids, a casket containing the Urn and then the real guy. The entrances alone take about 10 minutes. Real is a few inches taller and blocks a right hand before pounding on Fake a bit. A big boot and uppercut send Fake to the floor, allowing Real to suplex him back in for no cover.

Fake is thrown to the floor again but Real follows him out this time. Back in and Fake hits a Stunner across the top rope to take over. This is VERY slow so far and the idea isn't interesting at all. Real blocks Fake's Old School but Fake sits up. The Real's Old School connects but Fake clotheslines Real down. The crowd is SILENT for this nonsense which Vince writes off as being in shock.

Real misses a charge and falls to the floor where Fake sends him into the steps. Back in and Real wins a slugout but walks into a good chokeslam for no cover. Fake Tombstones him down but takes too long to cover, allowing for the sit up. A second Tombstone is countered into the Real one, followed by two more for the pin.

Rating: F. Well that happened. Seriously, what else do you want me to say

about this? It went on for ten minutes, they were aspiring to hit a snail's pace and the Chicago crowd, as in one of the most insane groups of fans you'll ever see, was quieter than a cemetery watching this mess. Taker would literally spend the next year feuding with DiBiase and company.

Taker gets his Urn back and we cut to the back with the detectives finding a closed briefcase. "The case is closed." Seriously, that's how they end this.

Overall Rating: D+. BIZARRE main event choice aside, this wasn't the worst show of all time. Bret vs. Owen is a masterpiece which eats up $\frac{1}{4}$ of the show and there's some other decent stuff sprinkled in on top of the card. The rest of the show is pretty terrible though and there's nothing other than the world title match worth going out of your way to see.

Ratings Comparison

IRS/Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Headshrinkers

Original: C+

Redo: D+

Alundra Blayze vs. Bull Nakano

Original: D+

Redo: C

Razor Ramon vs. Diesel

Original: B-

Redo: C+

Lex Luger vs. Tatanka

Original: C-

Redo: D

Jeff Jarrett vs. Mabel

Original: D-

Redo: D-

Bret Hart vs. Owen Hart

Original: A

Redo: A+

Undertaker vs. Undertaker

Original: B

Redo: F

Overall Rating

Original: C-

Redo: D+

...a B? I'd like to know what I was on back then so I can go get more of it.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/07/28/history-of-summerslam-count-up-summerslam-1994-from-great-matches-to-leslie-nielsen/>

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Monday Night Raw – March 27, 1995: Your Wrestlemania Commercial

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 27, 1995

Location: Memorial Civic Auditorium, Stockton, California

Commentators: Jim Ross, Gorilla Monsoon

It's the go home show for Wrestlemania and there's only one match announced as we have Bret Hart vs. Owen Hart in an anything goes match. Other than that the hyped up matches were done on the Sunday Night Slam special so there's a good chance tonight is just going to be one big Wrestlemania preview, which to be fair it probably should be. Let's get to it.

The opening video is a recap of Bret vs. Owen but we'll only start back in November 1994 when Bret cost Owen the WWF World Title.

Opening sequence.

JR and Gorilla are in some corner of the arena so yeah this is a special episode. How lucky we are.

We go to Vince McMahon and Todd Pettengill who promise to talk to almost everyone involved with Wrestlemania this year.

We recap Shawn Michaels vs. Diesel. They used to be friends but then Shawn bailed on their tag team, leaving Diesel to win the WWF World Title. Shawn is angry and won the Royal Rumble, earning himself a title shot.

Shawn makes Pamela Anderson miserable.

With Diesel gone, Shawn debuted Sid as his new bodyguard.

Clip of Shawn's speech at the press conference.

Vince and Todd speculate that Shawn might win the title and plug an online chat.

Salt N Pepa are ready for Wrestlemania.

Vince and Todd talk about Lawrence Taylor vs. Bam Bam Bigelow.

Recap of Bigelow vs. Taylor. Bigelow shoved him at the Royal Rumble and a match was eventually made.

We hear from Taylor's team of NFL stars.

Vince and Todd hype the match.

Fan Festival ad.

Bob Backlund promises to trigger a cascade of chemical reactions in Bret Hart's mind.

Video on the Intercontinental Title, which Jeff Jarrett won at the Royal Rumble thanks to Razor Ramon's knee injury. Ramon gets his rematch at Wrestlemania.

Chat about Undertaker vs. King Kong Bundy.

Undertaker, with his eyes looking even freakier than usual, says Bundy's time is up.

Bret tells Backlund to watch the no holds barred match so he'll know what's coming.

Bret Hart vs. Owen Hart

No holds barred. Bret starts fast and chokes on the ropes a bit before getting two off a DDT. They head outside with Bret in full control before Owen is tossed back inside to keep up the beatdown. Owen finally takes

over with a rake to the eyes and a headbutt between the legs to slow things down. Back to the floor with Bret being sent into the barricade a few times in a row as this is already better than almost anything that would happen at Wrestlemania.

We take a break and come back with Bret caught in a chinlock. Owen ties him in the Tree of Woe and exposes another buckle, leaving the referee to untie Bret. Monsoon is completely accurate as he says the referee isn't supposed to do that. I know it sounds heelish but Gorilla is right there. Bret uses the break to send Owen face first into the exposed buckle for two, followed by a good looking piledriver for the same.

A quick poke to the eye breaks up the Sharpshooter (Gorilla: "Do what you can!") and Bret goes chest first into the exposed buckle (of course). Owen goes up for the missile dropkick but dives into a slingshot into the steel (of course again), setting up the Sharpshooter to give Bret the win.

Rating: B-. Sweet goodness this needed to be on Wrestlemania instead of half of the dreck we saw instead. These two had a much better rivalry than Bret vs. Backlund, which was long since done by this point. If nothing else it would keep Owen looking like a big deal and let Bret get his win back from last year.

Referee have to drag Bret off.

One more batch of interviews, this time from celebrities, fill in even more times.

Ted DiBiase and company are ready for Taylor and company.

One last BUY OUR SHOW speech finally wraps us up.

Overall Rating: D. Well that happened. This is almost literally a big commercial for Wrestlemania and that doesn't make for an interesting show. The first half of this was a bunch of ads and while the match does help improve things a lot, it was necessary for the sake of the pay per view. I've seen worse though and somehow that's an improvement.

Here's Wrestlemania if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/03/20/wrestlemania-count-up-wrestlemania-xi-an-extremely-underrated-show/>

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Monday Night Raw – March 20, 1995: Sweet Goodness 1995 Was Bad

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 20, 1995

Location: Memorial Civic Auditorium, Stockton, California

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jim Cornette

There are less than two weeks to go before Wrestlemania and that means it's time to really crank up the football talk. Ignore the fact that it's not the most exciting story in the world because there are CELEBRITIES involved and that makes up for any lack of interest, talent or care whatsoever. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Razor Ramon vs. Henry Godwinn

This is still during Henry's heel push which went as far as the evil hog farmer character was going to take him. Razor starts in on the arm as we hear something about his contract issues. A wheelbarrow slam plants Razor and Cornette continues to amaze me by never being able to shut up. He goes from insulting Steve McMichael to talking about Ernie Ladd to hyping up the Tag Team Title match to doing color on this match in the span of two minutes.

Henry chokes on the ropes a bit and we hit the neck crank as Cornette goes on a mini rant about Jim Ross reporting on everything. We take a break and come back with Razor scoring with some right hands. A bad looking middle rope bulldog (more a cross body to the back) gets two on Henry but here's the Roadie for a distraction. The 1-2-3 Kid comes out to kick Roadie in the face and for some reason Henry is distracted as well, allowing Razor to hit the Edge for the pin.

Rating: D. This was too long with Godwinn not being anything worth watching other than a big strong man and Razor being way off his game for some reason. The interference was a good call but Razor and the Kid were really getting tiresome at this point as they were almost glued together at the hip.

Post match Razor is ticked off at Backlund getting a title shot on some upcoming Sunday night special. Razor wants to know what happens if Backlund wins the title and goes to Wrestlemania to defend against Bret so he basically promises to interfere in the match.

Just in case you have no idea what's going on here, we see Backlund signing the contract last week.

Also on that Sunday night show, Lex Luger will face Tatanka in a cage match.

Jim Cornette leaves commentary to get ready for the Tag Team Title match.

Fan Festival ad.

Lawrence Taylor says he's scared of snakes and alligators but he doesn't see those things in Bigelow.

Yesterday on Action Zone, Bigelow shoulder blocked Doink like a football player.

Steve McMichael replaces Cornette on commentary.

King Kong Bundy vs. Raven Clarke/Adam Croomes

Bundy slams the jobbers together and the camera keeps cutting to the announcers instead. This just keeps going for awhile and an Avalanche ends Croomes.

Post destruction, here's Kama to get in a brawl with McMichael.

Wrestlemania Report with a few nothing interviews that fill in some time.

Tag Team Titles; Smoking Gunns vs. Heavenly Bodies

The Bodies (Jimmy Del Ray and Tom Prichard, basically another attempt to recreate the Midnight Express) are challenging and have Cornette in their corner, leaving Vince alone on commentary. Billy has bad ribs coming in but starts with Tom anyway. Cornette yells at Del Ray for some reason, leaving Tom to get chopped by Bart.

Back to Billy for an armbar before Bart elbows Del Ray in the jaw. We take a break and come back with Tom holding Bart in a front facelock. Billy accidentally distracts the referee to break up a tag as this match just keeps going. A double clothesline drops Bart as the fans are trying to find ANYTHING to care about in this thing. In case the match wasn't boring enough yet, Prichard puts on a reverse chinlock.

Del Ray misses a top rope splash but we need a double clothesline before the hot tag can bring in Billy. A modified Sidewinder looks to finish Tom but Del Ray comes in off the top and puts...no one into a cover for some reason. Billy grabs a backslide for the pin to retain the titles.

Rating: D+. Technically the match was certainly acceptable but there's just no interest in watching these teams fight. Neither team has a personality between them and it was clearly just a Rock N Roll Express vs. Midnight Express knockoff without anything that made those matches work. Well, save for Cornette of course.

We see clips from a charity auction last night with Undertaker signing autographs. That's always weird to see.

Vince and Cornette preview the Sunday Night Slam (Sunday special) to end the show.

Actually not quite as Tatanka is ready for Luger in a cage next week to really end the show.

Overall Rating: D. Really not much to this one either as we're heading straight for Wrestlemania with every single boring story they can cram in there along the way. The long tag match at the end didn't help things either as it really didn't set up the title defense at Wrestlemania. To be fair though that would imply something is more important than the football match and that's just not true. There was very little sarcasm in that last sentence if that wasn't clear.

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Monday Night Raw – March 13, 1995: Bret Hart Is Not A

Racist

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 13, 1995

Location: Memorial Civic Auditorium, Stockton, California

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jim Cornette

We're crawling towards Wrestlemania and that means this is going to be NFL and Shawn Michaels heavy. On top of that we have a big match for tonight with Jerry Lawler facing Bret Hart all over again because these two have only had their great feud going for the better part of two years now. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Lawler vs. Hart, which started at King of the Ring 1993, then we jumped ahead about twenty months and Lawler accused Hart of being a racist with promises of proof coming tonight.

Opening sequence.

Headshrinkers vs. Blu Brothers

This isn't even the match they had advertised in the opening video as the Headshrinkers are replacing 1-2-3 Kid/Bob Holly, the latter of whom wrestled on a dark match and the former of whom appeared later in the night. Odd indeed but I can't imagine it was anything serious. Fatu and Jacob shove each other a bit to start and the twin makes the mistake of sending a Samoan into the buckle. It's off to Sionne (Barbarian) to help on a double shoulder but it's time to talk about clotheslines not being legal in the NFL.

Sionne gets knocked to the floor for a beating and the Blu's tag, leaving Vince completely confused as to which is which. Back from a break with Sionne fighting out of a chinlock. A shoulder sends Eli outside and the twins switch. Not that it matters as they double team Sionne down to keep control. Sionne gets in a powerslam and the hot tag bring in Fatu to clean house. Everything breaks down and it's a double countout.

Rating: D. I'm a Headshrinkers fan but this was too long and boring.

Holly and the Kid would have been a lot better here as it would have freshened up the styles a bit. You can only have power brawlers vs. power brawlers for so long and by the time you need a chinlock and a commercial, the match has probably gone on too long.

Lawrence Taylor says he'll fight like crazed dogs.

We see some of the NFL plays that will be in Taylor's corner. One of those players, Steve McMichael, is going to be here next week to see this Kama guy.

Bam Bam Bigelow and the Million Dollar Team are ready for Wrestlemania.

Former NFL player and wrestling legend Ernie Ladd offers his thoughts on the match, which he thinks will go to Bigelow due to Taylor going into this with too much emotion.

Barry Horowitz says he's confident and has been talking to Razor Ramon about his match tonight.

Jeff Jarrett vs. Barry Horowitz

Non-title. Jarrett jumps him from behind because you need an advantage over Barry Horowitz. We get an awkward sequence in the corner until Barry grabs an armdrag into an armbar. A legdrop on the arm keeps Jeff in trouble as this is already more competitive than I was expecting. We get some bad news: the President of the San Francisco 49ers can't call in to the show. Roadie's save attempt fails and Barry gets in a high knee but hurts himself in the process. A quick Figure Four ends Horowitz.

Rating: C-. Much better than I was expecting here and it helped that Barry was actually building up to a moderate push and a win at Summerslam. Jarrett wasn't interesting but that never stopped the company (or any company for that matter) from pushing him all over the place.

We look at Jerry Lawler landing on one foot to save himself from elimination in a battle royal, only to have Bret come out and eliminate him for real.

Bret promises to get rid of Lawler tonight. Not quite buddy, though this

was as fired up as I've seen Bret in a long time.

It's time for the Wrestlemania Report with the usual recaps and hyping up. The big stories are Salt N Pepa singing Taylor to the ring and the announcement of Owen Hart/??? vs. the Smoking Gunns for the Tag Team Titles. We also see Shawn hitting on Pamela Anderson, who clearly HATES this and doesn't really try to hide it. Finally we see Men on a Mission turning heel in a turn that didn't matter for months. This goes on for the better part of ten minutes.

Jerry Lawler vs. Bret Hart

Lawler brings out Japanese wrestler Bull Nakano to prove that Japan likes him better. Bret immediately punches him out to the floor before tying him in the Tree of Woe. Cue Bob Backlund as Bret sends Lawler into the buckle over and over. Now Hakushi and his manager Shinja come out to watch as Bret is sent into the steps. We take a break and come back with Lawler getting annoyed at the BURGER KING chants. A suplex drops Bret for no cover but the top rope fist goes awry, allowing Hart to take over. They head outside again with Nakano getting involved, causing Bret to get counted out because this referee is stupid.

Rating: C. Bret vs. Lawler is one of those matches that is going to work no matter what you have them doing because it's such an easy story with the skilled technician vs. the dirty cheater who you want to see get beaten up. The Japanese stuff certainly was a story and I know they needed something to keep this going but it was still a bit weird.

Bret beats Lawler up post match.

Jeff Jarrett has had a contract drawn up to give Barry Horowitz a rematch for the Intercontinental Title next week but Backlund steals the contract and signs up instead because that's how contracts work.

Overall Rating: D+. If you don't like Wrestlemania, you're going to HATE this show and almost everything about it. The Taylor vs. Bigelow stuff was clearly a spectacle but that doesn't mean the build is anything remotely interesting. The Bret vs. Lawler stuff really felt like a way to pad out the show and it did help somewhat but this was still a rough show

to sit through.

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Monday Night Raw – March 6, 1995: The First Of So Many

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 6, 1995

Location: Macon Coliseum, Macon, Georgia

Attendance: 2,751

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jim Cornette

We'll jump back to 1995 and the build to the horrible Wrestlemania XI. Shawn Michaels won the Royal Rumble back in January but things aren't over yet as he has to deal with the British Bulldog, who Shawn last eliminated to win the Wrestlemania title shot. Other than that we're still setting up the real main event and it's likely we'll hear something about that here. Let's get to it.

We open with clips of the Wrestlemania press conference which certainly doesn't exist solely for the sake of sports reporters hearing from Lawrence Taylor.

Opening sequence.

Shawn Michaels vs. British Bulldog

Shawn has Sid in his corner. Smith shoulders him down a few times to start and an atomic drop (Cornette: "HE HAD PLANS TONIGHT!") sends Shawn outside. Back in and Shawn gets caught in a headlock as they clearly have a lot of time to use here. Shawn reverses into a short arm scissors but, after a commercial (making me think there wasn't a lot missing during the break) with the hold still on, we get the same counter that Bulldog has always used as he muscles Shawn up into a powerbomb for the escape.

We hit a surfboard on Shawn before Bulldog backdrops him to the floor...but Sid catches him. That's certainly guarding the body. The delayed vertical suplex gets two before Shawn sends him outside to possibly injure Bulldog's knee. Back in and we hit the chinlock on Bulldog for a LONG time until a belly to back suplex breaks things up.

We take another break and come back with Shawn sending him into the corner, only to miss a charge. Bulldog crotches him on the top (I understand he had plans tonight) but goes flying through the ropes for one of the softest bumps you'll see in a long time. Back in again and Shawn hits the superkick for the pin. More on that in a second.

Rating: C. This is a good example of a match that is much longer than good which tends to get confused from time to time. While it might not have been the best match (though it's far from bad), this did a few things in one match and both of them helped Shawn as he was heading into the World Title match at Wrestlemania.

First of all, it gets rid of the Bulldog as an obstacle in Shawn's way. While it's not much, there's no need to have Bulldog's grudge hanging around after the Rumble. A clean(ish) pin for Shawn gets rid of that and lets him focus on Diesel and Diesel alone. The other is a big more historic.

That was one of the first times Shawn had won a big match with the superkick. Now instead of having to use that stupid teardrop suplex, Shawn can kick Diesel in the face to possibly win the title. That alone

is the way to get someone ready for a major match and wound up being one of the most successful finishers of all time. No one knew it yet but they just witnessed history.

Long video on the Wrestlemania press conference with a bunch of bored reporters listening to Shawn and Diesel talk about their match before they hear from Taylor. After that eats up a bunch of time, we hear about all of the celebrities who will be around, headlined by Pamela Anderson.

Video on the Fan Festival, which is like the grandfather of Axxess.

Bob Backlund vs. Buck Quartermaine

Buck won't shake hands to start so the announcers talk about all the NFL stars scheduled to be in Taylor's corner at Wrestlemania. Backlund armdrags him down as Cornette wants Taylor to "strap a bucket of fried chicken around his back and ride a motorcycle across Ethiopia." I could listen to that man all day.

As Backlund grabs a test of strength, Vince announces Backlund vs. Hart for Wrestlemania in an I Quit match. I love it when they just throw a match out there like that during another match. It doesn't need to be some big segment because you can just do something like this to the same reaction. Buck actually drops him with a shoulder and gets two off a small package. Vince still thinks Buck might get the pin even after the hold has been broken. The Crossface Chickenwing puts Buck away with ease.

Rating: D-. Way longer than it needed to be here but again I really like the idea that they had a match going instead of stopping everything for the sake of announcing a match. Backlund was certainly winding down at this point and the Bret match at Wrestlemania would pretty much be it for him as a full time guy though he would be around for over another year.

Recap of Bret Hart vs. Jerry Lawler, who face off again next week. This time Lawler is calling Bret a racist for reasons.

Stephen Dunn vs. Duke Droese

Duke, the garbageman, starts working on Dunn's arm as Lawler calls in to insult the Hart Family even more. Jerry promises proof that Bret is a

racist as Dunn suplexes Duke for no cover. Vince finally hangs up on him as Dunn is actually still in control. Back up and Dunn charges into a boot in the corner, setting up a powerslam to give Droese the pin.

Rating: D-. How bad do you have to be to be the surviving member of Well Dunn? Droese is a great example of one of those characters that existed on a single note and nothing more. Why should I like or dislike him? He's a garbageman. What makes him good or bad other than his rather generic actions? This happened way too often in the WWF at this point and it made for a bad period.

Dunn goes after Duke's garbage can but there's \$100 inside.

An actor from NYPD Blue accuses Paul Bearer and Mr. Fuji of kidnapping/murdering Yokozuna. For reasons I don't want to understand, both managers wind up in drag.

A 45 second highlight package takes us out.

Overall Rating: C-. This was basically Shawn vs. Bulldog and then whatever else they could get to fill in the rest of the hour. This was clearly not a good time for the company though as you had Shawn vs. Diesel and then a bunch of weak celebrities who weren't going to do much for the audience. Bret vs. Lawler should be good though so at least there's something to look forward to.

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Ring of Honor TV – July 27, 2016: Well, They Didn't Lie

Ring of Honor

Date: July 27, 2016

Location: Cabarrus Arena, Concord, North Carolina

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Nigel McGuinness

We're still in North Carolina but this time there's a big time main event as ROH World Champion Jay Lethal defends against Kyle O'Reilly. That means it's likely an Adam Cole appearance as Cole has vowed to keep Kyle from becoming champion no matter what. In theory this should start the push towards Lethal vs. Cole, which somehow still hasn't been announced despite what happened at Global Wars way back in May. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

ROH World Title: Kyle O'Reilly vs. Jay Lethal

Lethal is defending and this is going to be the whole show. Well most of the show at least as Cole comes out before Lethal to say Kyle won't even be wrestling in this match. Cue the Young Bucks with a double superkick to O'Reilly, which gets a face pop because ROH fans don't get the concept of heels. Cole comes down to join them with a chair beatdown, including a Conchairto Pillmanizing (now THAT'S extreme) of the left arm. Bobby Fish finally comes out for the save and we take a break.

Back with a recap of what we just saw, which I thought ROH was above doing.

Kyle is getting his shoulder taped up in the back and tells the doctor that he wants to wrestle.

Due to the injury, it's time for standby matches.

Tough Guy Inc. vs. War Machine

That would be Brutal Bob Evans and Tough Tim Hughes. Fallout ends Evans in 42 seconds.

Post match Shane Taylor and Keith Lee come out for the brawl but this time War Machine gets the better of it.

The Briscoes are ready for the Young Bucks next week. I can't imagine that ends clean.

Cheeseburger vs. Will Ferrara

And never mind again as the Cabinet comes out to interrupt after about thirty seconds.

In case you haven't heard about their one segment, the Cabinet is the Donald Trump inspired political group comprised of Caprice Coleman, Rhett Titus and Kenny King. Coleman, the Minister of Information, says this match is canceled because neither of the people in the ring meet the criteria to be a wrestler. King (the Commissioner of Championships) and Titus (the Secretary of Shoulders) rip on Cheeseburger and Ferrara and tell them to go buy a ticket or face the consequences. Ferrara says they don't have a bear or an ox but they have something better: a TNA wrestler also named after an animal.

The Cabinet vs. Will Ferrara/Cheeseburger/Moose

We're joined after a break (and a Young Bucks promo inviting the Briscoes to a superkick party) and we might break five minutes this time around. It's a big brawl but Nigel McGuinness has to run to the back for some reason. Moose is left alone in the ring but elbows his way out of trouble before running the ropes for a spinning cross body.

Things settle down to Cheeseburger and Ferrara running into King in the corner, only to have Coleman come in and knee Ferrara in the face to take over. Titus slaps on a chinlock for a bit before the hot tag brings in Moose to clean house. A Rocket Launcher only has Cheeseburger hitting raised knees which of course does no damage to the knees. King corkscrew dives onto Moose and it's Cheeseburger getting beaten down three on one,

including a high angle Edgecution to give Titus the pin at 5:42.

Rating: D. I hated this Cabinet gimmick from the second it started as it's not going to be entertaining while it lasts but thankfully it's pretty much only going to last until the elections in November. These current events storylines and angles rarely work and having something inspired by the Trump campaign probably isn't the best idea in the first place.

Kyle has demanded to wrestle tonight despite his shoulder.

ROH World Title: Kyle O'Reilly vs. Jay Lethal

Lethal is defending but before the match he respectfully offers Kyle an out due to his injury. Kyle wants to fight like men though and we're ready to go. Kyle is very tentative to start and throws a few kicks, only to get taken down by a headlock. A shoulder block makes Kyle scream but he comes back with a kick to the spine. Another kick jars the arm though and Lethal kicks him in the shoulder to send Kyle outside.

Back from a break with Kyle fighting back as the announcers talk about Lethal's change of attitude since Truth Martini has been gone. The Lethal Combination gets two and we hit a modified Crossface. Jay hits a pair of suicide dives but looks very mad at having to do them due to the injury. Kyle comes back with a dive of his own and a missile dropkick but he can't get up.

It's Jay up first with a top rope elbow but Kyle reverses into a cross armbreaker, only to have Jay stomp at the shoulder for the break. That means another break and we come back with Kyle fighting out of another Crossface. Jay plants him with a series of shoulder breakers but he asks for a stoppage instead of the Lethal Injection. Kyle says no way and they slug it out until Jay kicks the shoulder, setting up the Lethal Injection for the pin at 15:04.

Rating: B. I liked this a lot more than I expected to as I'm really not a huge Kyle fan. The concern over the shoulder injury is going to go a long way in Lethal's face turn, though I can't imagine Cole isn't champion in the next few weeks, likely at Death Before Dishonor. Good main event here

though and that was the point, along with giving Kyle a nice rub along the way.

Lethal is disgusted and says that wasn't right. Jay leaves and here's the Bullet Club again with Cole hitting a backbreaker onto the knee. Security is held off, allowing the Bucks to hit an Indytaker onto a chair. Fish and Lethal come out just too late for the save. McGuinness grabs the mic and says Cole is NEVER getting another shot at the World Title.

Overall Rating: C+. The show long story was a good idea and a clever enough way to get around having the match go throughout the entire show. The Cabinet stuff really doesn't work and unfortunately it got a big chunk of the action here. It's definitely the best show since the New Japan guys left and that's a positive sign.

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