

Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2002: It's Time To Play The Rumble

Royal Rumble 2002

Date: January 20, 2002

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Attendance: 12,915

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

This is the first step to things falling downhill, as we're a few months away from the Brand Split and things falling through the floor in quality. The main event tonight aside from the Rumble is Jericho defending his newly won Undisputed Title (which he won by beating the Rock and Steve Austin IN THE SAME NIGHT in case you didn't know that) against Rock. HHH is back in the ring tonight also (he may have fought on Smackdown before this but I don't think he did) so let's get to it.

The opening video has clips of various Rumble wins in a photo album kind of theme. The theme for this year's show is 30 Men, 1 Winner. I've heard worse ideas which we'll get too very soon.

Tag Titles: Spike Dudley/Tazz vs. Dudley Boys

I LOVE Stacy as the Duchess of Dudleyville. I never remember her looking better. Anyway, Spike and Tazz are defending here in a reign that I don't think anyone ever remembers. The Dudleys beat up Spike recently so he's in a neck brace. The Dudleys attack to start and hit the belly to back neckbreaker on Tazz on the floor. It's Bubba vs. Spike to start things off in a handicap match for all intents and purposes. Bubba rips the neck brace off and drops a big elbow.

Bubba shouts at Spike to get up as we get a very nice shot of Stacy. Tazz is back on the apron as D-Von hits a Hennig necksnap of all things. Bubba loads up a second brainbuster on Spike but gets countered into a Dudley Dog for no cover. The tag to Tazz is missed so Spike has to take a double flapjack instead. Spike avoids a headbutt from D-Von and makes the Dudleys clothesline each other. Hot tag brings in Tazz to clean house

with suplexes. A big boot to Bubba's head sets up a top rope cross body by Spike for two. Stacy interferes and gets put in the Tazmission. D-Von gets caught in the same hold and the champions retain.

Rating: D+. I have no idea what the point of this being on PPV was as it barely broke five minutes. Nothing with Stacy in the Dudley attire can be bad, but this came about as close as you can get. Actually scratch that as it wasn't so much bad but just short. I have no idea why this wasn't on Raw or something like that. Tazz would be retired very soon after this due to a horrible neck.

We immediately go to a recap of Regal vs. Edge which is based on Regal using brass knuckles over and over again. Edge got fed up with it and beat up a lot of people with a chair.

Edge has a chair with him tonight to counter the knuckles. Apparently he broke Regal's nose recently.

Intercontinental Title: Edge vs. William Regal

Edge is defending. The referee checks Regal over and over again for knuckles and finds them in his trunks. Well you can't say he didn't do his job. The referee stupidly puts them on the ring post instead of like, giving them to someone to take to the back or something. Edge pounds away to start and chokes with his boot in the corner. He goes after Regal's bad nose as Lawler claims conspiracy.

Regal comes back with a clothesline but Edge kicks him in the back to put both guys down. Being the British dude that he is, Regal suplexes Edge down for two. Make that four. Uh six. Yet somehow that isn't three. Off to an arm trap chinlock followed by a hard forearm to put the champion down again. A double arm powerbomb hits Edge for two and they head to the apron. Edge busts out a DDT onto said apron, further injuring Regal's nose.

Back in and they ram heads to put both guys down as the match continues to drag at a slow pace. Edge wins a slugout and takes Regal down with a spinwheel kick and a suplex for two. Regal suplexes him down as well, only for Edge to hit a big old clothesline for two more. The Regal

Stretch goes on out of nowhere but Edge reverses into a terrible version of his own to no avail. A top rope spinwheel kick puts Regal down but he finds another set of brass knuckles. Instead of swinging them though, he pulls the referee in the way of Edge's spear. Regal clocks Edge and wins the title.

Rating: D+. This didn't click at all. Regal didn't seem interested in selling at all and Edge wasn't ready to carry a match by himself yet. He was getting to the point where he could but it would take a summer of feuding with Eddie to get him up to that point. Regal wouldn't really do anything with the belt other than lose it to RVD. Nothing to see here.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Jazz

Jacqueline is referee for absolutely no apparent reason and Trish is defending. Jazz is basically being a bully and has injured Trish's hand coming into this. Jazz jumps Trish to start but misses a splash, giving Trish two off a rollup. A modified hot shot slows the champ down again and a legdrop gets two. Jazz works on the bad hand for a bit but Jackie pulls them out of the ropes. Jackie of course makes it all about herself and won't count a cover on Trish. Stratusfaction hits out of nowhere for two and Jazz is up a few seconds later, basically no selling it. Trish hits a bad looking running bulldog to retain.

Rating: D. It was short, it was sloppy, the ending was stupid and Jackie was in it. What other kind of grade do you expect here? Stratus was starting to get better but it would take another year and Lita before she got amazing. Jazz was a pretty stupid pick to bring over to WWE as no one remembered her and she didn't have the looks to back up any lack of hype. Bad match here.

Flair says he'll win.

We recap Vince vs. Flair. Flair debuted after Survivor Series as the new co-owner of the company and has driven Vince crazy since. This led up to a street fight tonight between the two of them tonight which isn't as big a deal as they were shooting for I don't think. The highlight of it was Vince dressing up as Flair and saying destroying lives turned him on.

Ric Flair vs. Vince McMahon

Remember this is a street fight. Vince shoves him down to start and struts, so Flair punches him down and struts as well. Flair wins a chop battle in the corner (duh) so Vince goes to the eyes to escape. There's the Flair Flop followed by a Flair Flip in the corner as Vince is in full control. We head to the floor and get our first weapon shot, with Vince pounding on Ric with a metal Keep Off sign.

There's a trashcan shot to the head and Flair is busted open. How thin must the skin on his forehead be? Anyway, Vince steals a camera from someone to take a picture of Flair's cut before we head back inside. Since he's a jerk, Vince starts working over the knee in (less skilled) Flair fashion. The leg is wrapped around the post and Vince puts on a Figure Four that Dusty Rhodes would be jealous of.

Flair turns the hold over and Vince IMMEDIATELY lets go of the hold. So not only is he better at it than some wrestlers, he's also smart. Never let it be said that Vince doesn't know what he's doing. Vince bails to the floor and grabs a lead pipe that he used to bust Flair open in the build up to the match. Flair catches him coming in with a low blow and pounds away on the floor.

Vince takes a monitor shot to the head and in a weird spot, we see a replay on the monitor on the table as the live match goes on. Vince is busted open now and we head back inside. Scratch that as we go back outside immediately where Flair's family takes pictures of Vince's cut. Set it up earlier, pay it off later. Good move. Back in and Flair kicks him low again just because he can, cracks him in the head with the pipe and ends it with the Figure Four.

Rating: C+. At the end of the day, this match makes as much sense as almost anything you'll see. Vince controlled at the beginning, but at the end of the day he's a boss and Flair is a veteran wrestler and athlete. It makes sense for him to be able to shrug that off and destroy Vince with relative ease once he got the upper hand. On top of that we got some good blood and Vince getting hit in the balls so how can this not be entertaining?

Stephanie talks trash about everyone else in the Rumble and runs down Debra as well. Austin walks up and WHAT's her away. Cole gets a bit of it too. This is when the bit was brand new and still kind of funny, as opposed to now when it ruins almost every serious promo.

No highlight package for the world title match? For those of you not around in 2002 (LUCKY!), Jericho won the title in December, beating Rock along the way. It makes sense for Rock to get the first shot, especially since they feuded over the end of the year.

WWF World Title: The Rock vs. Chris Jericho

Jericho still has both titles because HHH wasn't there to win the first Undisputed Title and get the new belt. Rock decks him immediately and the champ heads to the floor, only to run back in and get punched some more. Jericho misses a charge and hits the post but pulls off a hot shot out of nowhere to give himself a breather. They trade strikes in the corner before Jericho hits a spinwheel kick to Rocky's arms for two.

A suplex gets two for Jericho and for some reason Rock's left thumb is sticking out. The champ unhooks a buckle but can't get the Walls. A missile dropkick gets two on Rock and it's off to the chinlock. That goes on for a good while so Chris goes up again, only to get crotched and superplexed. A belly to belly suplex gets two for Rock but Jericho clotheslines him down and hits the Lionsault. Due to high reasons of arrogance, Jericho waits forever to cover and fights with the referee after getting two.

Another dropkick attempt by Jericho is caught in a Sharpshooter, but here's Lance Storm for a distraction while Jericho taps. Christian comes in as well and is promptly punched out by Rock. Jericho hits a Rock Bottom on Rock for two and the frustration begins. The champ loads up a People's Elbow but Rock nips up and sends Jericho out to the floor.

Both guys are rammed into both announce tables before Jericho's Rock Bottom attempt is countered into an AWESOME looking Rock Bottom by Rock from one table through the other. That only gets two back inside before Jericho counters another Rock Bottom into the Liantamer (yes I said Liantamer instead of the Walls). Ok now it's the Walls, which allows Rock

to make the rope.

The jumping clothesline takes the referee down by mistake, allowing Jericho to blast Rock with the belt. Another referee slides in and gets two off that and Rock DDTs Jericho down. Rock covers...and Nick Patrick won't count. There's a Rock Bottom for his efforts and a People's Elbow for Jericho but there's no referee. Rock checks on Hebner, allowing Jericho to hit him low, send him into the Chekov's Gun in the shape of an exposed turnbuckle. All that plus a rollup with his feet on the ropes is enough for Jericho to retain the title.

Rating: B. This took awhile to get going but once things picked up it turned into what you would expect from Rock vs. Jericho in a nearly 20 minute match. The overbooking worked here as Jericho needed something to boost him up to Rock's level, which is what you're supposed to do as a heel. Good stuff here and a very fine title match.

Shawn Michaels, in a really stupid looking Texas flag shirt, is at WWF New York. He picks Taker or Austin to win the Rumble.

Video on the Rumble. The main picks to win are Taker, HHH, Angle and Austin.

Royal Rumble

Rikishi and Goldust are #1 and #2 respectively and we've got two minute intervals. Goldie walks around Rikishi to start and gets punched in the face for his efforts. Rikishi knocks him around for a bit but can't quite drop the big load on Goldie's chest. A backdrop puts Goldust on the apron and Boss Man is #3, making it 2-1 against Rikishi. Goldust gets punched in the face but Boss Man pounds Rikishi into the corner. The heels explode after a long one minute partnership.

Bradshaw is #4 and hopefully he can pick things up a bit. He beats up everyone as Rikishi loads up the Stinkface on Boss Man. A superkick and a clothesline put Boss Man out and there's a Samoan Drop to Bradshaw. Goldie pounds away on Bradshaw in the corner and gets powerbombed for his efforts. Lance Storm is #5 and absolutely nothing of note happens until Al Snow (on Tough Enough at this point) is #6. Bradshaw kills Storm with

the Clothesline as the fans want Head.

Billy of Billy and Chuck is #7 and we're still waiting on something to happen. The fans are still into this at least so it's not a failure at this point. Storm and Snow fight to the apron with Snow superkicking Lance to an elimination. Billy dumps Bradshaw and Undertaker is finally #8 to pick things up a bit. A chokeslam kills Billy (the third in the series, not starring Uma Thurman) and another one puts out Goldust. Snow and Rikishi are dumped out and Billy follows them, leaving Undertaker alone to a big reaction. He's evil here in case you're not up on Taker history.

Matt Hardy is #9, which is interesting as Taker injured both Hardys and Lita. The redhead gets in along with Matt and helps him take the big man down via a low blow. Matt hits a Twist of Fate and stomps away but can't get Taker out. Naturally Jeff Hardy is #10 because that's how the TOTALLY RANDOM draw works in the Rumble.

Taker slugs down one of the best tag teams ever in just a few seconds, only to get caught in the Twist/Swanton combo. Again, why would you use moves that keep a giant on the mat? Not that it matters as Poetry in Motion is caught and Jeff is easily thrown out. The Last Ride kills Matt and he's gone too, leaving Taker alone again. The clock during that segment was REALLY long too as they were roughly three minutes each to get the whole segment in.

Maven from Tough Enough is #11 but Lita is on the apron. Taker PUNCHES her down, drawing the Hardys back in. Taker dumps both of them again, but Maven dropkicks Undertaker in the back and eliminates him in arguably the biggest surprise elimination ever in the Rumble. The look on the Dead Man's face is hilarious as he has absolutely no emotion at all. He calmly turns around, gets back in the ring, and mauls Maven, sending him through the ropes to the floor. A HUGE chair shot cracks Maven's head and the beating continues until Scotty 2 Hotty is #12.

Taker punches Scotty down and throws Maven back in to eliminate him, which under old Rumble rules would count. The beating goes into the crowd as there's nothing in the ring at the moment. Christian is #13 but has no

one to fight because Scotty is still down. Instead we go to the back where Maven is rammed face first into a popcorn machine. Taker eats a handful of popcorn and finally leaves Maven alone.

Scotty gets in and walks into a DDT as DDP is #14. Nothing of note continues to happen until Scotty superkicks Page through the ropes to the floor and hits the Worm on Christian. Page sneaks back in and throws Scotty out as Chuck is #15. They all beat on each other for a bit with Christian and Chuck teaming up for a bit. Godfather, now the owner of an escort service in an attempt to salvage the gimmick, is #16 and brings out 12 good looking women with him. Page is eliminated off camera during this.

With Godfather in the ring after about 15 seconds due to dancing, Albert is #17. He's the Hip Hop Hippo at this point and lasts about 45 seconds before being tossed by the villains. Godfather is dumped soon thereafter, and here's Saturn at #18. Chuck and Perry slug it out as the fans cheer for the Ho's leaving. Nothing happens again, until Austin is #19. Chuck is the first victim, getting stomped down in the corner. There goes Christian, Saturn gets a Stunner, Chuck is eliminated, Saturn is dumped, Christian gets thrown back in, Stunned and thrown out again, Chuck gets the same as Christian, and Austin takes a breather.

Val Venis is #20 (and also returning) and things go about as you would expect, although Val does get in some offense and survives until Test is #21. A double teaming lasts for a bit until Austin remembers who he's fighting and dumps both guys in a few seconds. Austin does his watch bit when no one is in the ring with him. Notice the difference between the big stars and the regular guys: the big ones are CONSTANTLY trying to keep the audience entertained instead of letting them die.

Speaking of entertaining the crowd, HHH is #22. The entrance takes about a minute and a half, they stare at each other for about twenty more seconds, and the slugout only lasts for a few seconds until Hurricane is #23. Luckily for him, the legends knock each other down so Hurricane can try a double chokeslam. The look on Austin's face is hilarious as the two of them dump Hurricane with ease.

Austin and HHH chop each other in the corner until Faarooq is #24 and lasts about that many seconds. Mr. Perfect makes a surprise return at #25 to a big surprise reaction from the audience. He looks a bit, shall we say, tipsy here. Perfect chills on the floor a bit as JR makes a mistake, saying Perfect debuted at the Rumble in 1993. In reality he was #4 in 1989. Austin and HHH double team Perfect to no avail so here's Angle at #26, drawing the rare double chant of YOU SUCK WHAT.

HHH and Angle pair off as do the other two guys and the match slows down a bit. Kurt starts suplexing people but can't dump HHH because Austin makes the save due to reasons of a big ego. Big Show is #27 in his one piece women's swimsuit. Angle gets chokeslammed so Austin and HHH double team the big man to limited avail. HHH saves Angle, presumably because he wants Kurt's help to get Show out. Makes sense I guess.

Show dominates everyone until Kane is #28. HHH gets chokeslammed so we can have our battle of the giants. Jerry: "They're not getting any smaller are they JR?" Uh yeah Jerry, actually they are. They do the double chokeslam spot but Kane kicks Show low and picks him up, slamming him to the floor. AWESOME display of strength there, but Angle immediately dumps Kane to get us back down to four.

Van Dam is #29 and hits a Five Star on Angle who is down from something we didn't see. Everyone but HHH gets kicked down so he hits a Pedigree to put Van Dam down. Booker T is #30, giving us a final group of Booker, RVD, Angle, Perfect, HHH and Austin. Booker throws out RVD without having to do anything else thanks to the Pedigree. We get a Spinarooni, followed by a Stunner and elimination to get us down to Austin, Angle, HHH and Perfect.

Austin hits a slingshot into the post on HHH who walks into an Angle Slam. Angle rolls some Germans on Austin and the C/Kurts try to dump Austin. Austin hits some HARD right hands to break that up but as he tries to dump Perfect, Angle runs up and dumps the Rattlesnake. Austin pulls Perfect to the floor but Kurt sends Austin into the steps to break it up. Steve still isn't done as he comes back in with a chair for all three guys. Eh he's Austin so he can get away with it.

Angle accidentally clothesline Hennig but doesn't eliminate him. There's the PerfectPlex (BIG pop for that) to Kurt but HHH dumps Perfect a second later. Angle and HHH stare each other down and the Game pounds away on him to take over. Kurt gets HHH to the apron but can't get the win. HHH chokes away but charges into a backdrop, sending him to the apron. Kurt makes the classic mistake of not making sure the other guy is out and gets clotheslined to the floor, giving HHH the Rumble. For you trivia guys, this is the longest Rumble ever to date, even going 11 seconds longer than the 40 man version.

Rating: C+. This has some very bad spots in it but the rest of the stuff is solid all around. Once Austin gets in there things pick up a lot, but the 18 guys before him don't do much. Taker's elimination came too fast which hurt things here, as there was no one of note from #9 until Austin at #19. Still though, the good stuff here was good enough to check this out, but you might want to fast forward some parts of it.

Overall Rating: B-. This is a pretty good but certainly not great show. 2002 was a bad year for the company on Raw and things were clearly starting to look weak here. The main problem was the lack of elevation of anyone new to the main event in the year, as the main events for almost every PPV were people who had been there before. There's nothing on here that's required viewing but there's also nothing terrible on here either. Check it out but don't expect to be blown away.

Ratings Comparison

Spike Dudley/Tazz vs. Billy and Chuck

Original: C-

Redo: D+

William Regal vs. Edge

Original: C-

Redo: D+

Trish Stratus vs. Jazz

Original: D+

Redo: D

Ric Flair vs. Vince McMahon

Original: D+

Redo: C+

Chris Jericho vs. The Rock

Original: B+

Redo: B

Royal Rumble

Original: C-

Redo: C+

Overall Rating

Original: B-

Redo: B-

Yep, about the same for the most part here.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/21/royal-rumble-count-up-2002-game-on/>

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TNA One Night Only – Live: Maybe They Should Stick With Taped

Live

Date: January 8, 2016

Location: Sands Bethlehem Events Center, Bethlehem, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Josh Matthews, D'Angelo Dinero

So due to the cancellations of the India and Gulf Coast tours (due to “issues”), we get a special live edition of One Night Only. The only good that comes out of this is I don't have to search for the show for months before I can get it done so two people can read it. At least in this case the stories are current so there might be something important here. Let's get to it.

We open with a quick preview of the show, which only has a few matches announced due to the really short turnaround. The big story tonight is the return of Beer Money, who will be facing Bram/Eric Young in a very quickly put together feud.

X-Division Title: DJZ vs. Mandrews vs. Crazy Steve vs. Tigre Uno

Elimination rules. Tigre Uno is defending against the same people he's fought for months now. Mandrews is now a full on Dynamic Dude with a skateboard and backwards hat. Uno is in a big shoulder wrap after his injury at Bound For Glory. It's a brawl to start as this is under tornado rules. Just what we needed. DJZ is quickly sent outside so everyone else

can brawl, including Tigre suplexing Steve for two.

Back in and DJZ gets a good looking dropkick to knock Mandrews outside. Good. Stay out there. Mandrews comes back in for two off a hard hurricanrana to DJZ, leaving Tigre to spinwheel kick Steve in the face. A Tower of Doom is broken up with some kicks, leaving Mandrews to dropkick Tigre out to the floor. The fans are behind Steve here for reasons I don't want to understand.

Mandrews flips out onto Tigre and swings his legs back inside to trip DJZ. That means it's time to skateboard down the ramp into a headscissors to send DJZ into Steve. Tigre dives onto all three of them before dropping a top rope seated senton for two on Crazy. Back up and Steve grabs a crossface chicken wing on Tigre's bad arm in the middle of the ring. Ever the schnook, Mandrews drops a shooting star on both of them to break the hold and pin Steve.

After the elimination, Steve snaps and puts Tigre in the hold again. So I guess that's a heel turn? Mandrews misses another shooting star but grabs a rollup to get rid of DJZ. We're down to one on one and Mandrews goes after Tigre's bad arm. A belly to back gets two on the champ but Tigre breaks up another shooting star (good), setting up a C4 to retain the title at 10:21.

Rating: C. This was more fun than their usual matches but can we please get some fresh faces in this division? Tigre is turning into a special X-Division Champion with a long reign but there's no way he holds the thing until Destination X when people remember the title exists. On the other hand, I have no idea what people see in Mandrews. He's a skateboard and a ton of shooting star presses. How is that entertaining?

Post match here's Gregory Helms to stare down Tigre again. Helms implies that time is running out on Tigre's reign. Fans: "3 COUNT!" Josh: "Gregory Shane Helms is, in my opinion, coming for the X-Division Title!"

Eric Young, now with fresh arm tattoos, says he and Bram are the only news anyone is going to be talking about in the very near future. Beer Money being back makes people happy but Young and Bram are never happy. Young rants about Matt Hardy costing him the World Title.

Aiden O'Shea vs. Rockstar Spud

Spud does the old Chris Jericho pose by laying against the barricade. After the bell (at least I hope after), Aiden offers Spud a chance to walk out and take the countout instead of a beating. O'Shea keeps calling Spud a mutt as Spud teases leaving, only to come back and flip the big guy off. Aiden pounds him down and keeps talking trash on the mic, shouting that this is a heavyweight division.

The announcers don't think this is a match because they can't remember a bell ringing three minutes ago. Spud drives him into the corner but O'Shea shoves him down again. Unfortunately he finds the mic again and talks more trash before pounding in some forearms. Josh throws in a line about Spud being a replacement for Mahabali Shera, whose tires were deflated earlier in the day. Wait it was earlier in the day and he couldn't get a taxi here? I mean, open a case and do the Shera Shuffle (or is it the Shake?) because IT'S SWEEPING THE NATION!

A backbreaker stuns Spud and Aiden is still talking about how stupid Spud really is. Spud comes back with a baseball slide to knock O'Shea to the floor, followed by a nice dive. O'Shea sends him hard into the barricade and then the announcers' table, drawing some VERY loud swearing from Spud. Josh: "I guess this was a match." The referee counting didn't seem to give Josh the hint. Back in and Spud starts getting fired up, including a double bird and another F bomb. An enziguri and some forearms have O'Shea in trouble, followed by the Underdog for the pin at 9:33.

Rating: D. I'm really not sure what to make of this one. It's easy to make fun of Josh for not knowing that it was a match because it really wasn't like a match for a long stretch. Instead it was much more like Aiden cutting a promo and yelling at Spud until we got a quick match. I'll give them credit for trying something but this mostly missed.

Kurt Angle and Drew Galloway are ready when the Wolves come in. The Wolves came in and said they want a match with the two of them. Eli Drake and Jesse Godderz come in to add themselves. This might have been from Tuesday.

We look at Carter winning the title on Tuesday and see his post match

victory speech where he basically says he told us so. He's called himself several things since arriving in TNA including the new game. With this title, he may not be the new game anymore but he's certainly going to change it.

Robbie E. vs. Mike Bennett

Before the match, Maria comes out and asks if we believe in the Miracle. Robbie goes right after him to start and fires off some right hands to knock Mike out to the floor. A nice dive takes Bennett down, meaning Mike has already taken more offense than he should have already. Robbie tries a hurricanrana on the floor but Mike pulls him up and swings him head first into the barricade to take over.

Back in and a big boot gets two on Robbie before we hit the chinlock. Robbie fights up again but can't hit the Boom Drop. He can't hit a high cross body either but the second Boom Drop connects to knock Mike out to the apron. The delay gives me time to realize that Robbie E. wears the same style shorts that Alexa Bliss wears. Back in and Mike hits a quick cutter, followed by a fireman's carry into a Michinoku driver for the pin at 7:33.

Rating: D-. What the heck was that? Keep in mind that this was a debut for someone who was supposed to be a top star. Robbie is a solid midcard act but this should have been just a step above a squash. Instead it was a back and forth match with Robbie hitting his finisher. Who in the world thought this was a good way to book someone's debut? Horrible booking here and it showed very badly.

Post match the finisher is named Divine Intervention. Bennett promises to build a kingdom of miracles.

Gail Kim is happy for the gauntlet match because she won the first Knockouts Title in the same kind of match. Whoever wins is in for a fight. JB goes over some of the people in the match, actually trying to pretend that Kong isn't going to win. That's adorable.

Video on the Knockouts, basically giving a quick profile on each. This should have been on Impact.

Gauntlet Match

This is a mini Royal Rumble but it turns into a regular match when we're down to two with the winner becoming #1 contender. Madison Rayne is in at #1 and Jade is in at #2. They botch a headscissors to start with Jade going down anyway, only to send Madison over the top and out to the apron. It's way too early for an elimination though and Madison gets back in but misses an enziguri.

Jade gets kicked out of the corner and slapped in the ribs a few times until it's Rebel in at #3. A quick spinning kick to the head (drawing the second Holly Holm reference of the night) drops Madison as we get a weak NXT chant. Rayne has to try to fight both of them off until it's Chelsea (unfortunately not the gorgeous one that hung out with Desmond Wolfe but rather Daniel Bryan's version of Claire Lynch) in at #4.

Chelsea can't quite eliminate Rebel but does give Madison a breather. The pairs fight against the ropes until it's Marti Bell in at #5 to give the Dollhouse yet another advantage. Rebel does her splits choke in the corner to keep Chelsea in trouble and the Dollhouse dominates. We still have no eliminations until it's Deonna (recently of NXT) in at #6. Deonna takes down Rebel and Marti with a bad looking double clothesline as the ring is getting too full. A triple spear puts the Dollhouse down and Rebel is knocked out.

Awesome Kong is in at #7 and it's time to clear some room. Kong starts cleaning house and uses the other Dollhouse members as projectiles in a smart move. Chelsea and Deonna try to double team the monster and get chokeslammed at the same time. Both are quickly eliminated and it's Velvet Sky in at #8 to give us a final grouping of Sky, Rayne, Kong, Jade and Bell. Velvet starts knocking the Dollhouse around and the Beautiful People actually knock Kong down.

Marti gets low bridged to the apron but Velvet doesn't bother to eliminate her. Rayne takes care of Marti for her partner but Velvet is eliminated a few seconds later, leaving us with Madison, Kong and Jade. Kong stands on Rayne's hand as Pope talks about being in this kind of match before. Josh: "You've been in a #1 contenders gauntlet match for

the Knockouts Title?"

That's why Josh Matthews is a horrible commentator in one sentence. Pope is trying to sound like a professional and apply some of his experience to what we're watching but Josh has to try and make himself sound smart instead. I'm so glad to see Josh getting himself over instead of doing his job. Kong puts Jade on her shoulders and swings her at Madison, only to have Jade get knocked out to the floor and get us down to one on one.

Rayne is quickly taken down to the mat and put in a leg lock which doesn't go anywhere. Some clotheslines have little effect on Kong but a missile dropkick actually puts her down for two. The shocked look on Kong's face is great, only to have her grab the Implant Buster to put Rayne away at 16:08.

Rating: D. These things just don't work. They just don't. I know TNA has tried this match for years now and I can only think of one or two that wasn't a borderline disaster. I don't know if it's the way they're booked or how much time they take but these things are almost always bad. Granted in this case it was the lack of any doubt about Kong winning because who else was going to get the title shot here?

The Wolves are glad to have Beer Money back, even though Beer Money is the past. They'd love to face Beer Money any time but here are Eli Drake and Jesse Godderz to interrupt. A lot of bragging leads to a pull apart.

Trevor Lee vs. Pepper Parks

Parks is an indy regular. Trevor jumps him at the bell and stomps Pepper down in the corner, allowing Pope to get in a "salt in pepper's wounds" line. Pepper sends Trevor to the floor for a flip dive and stops to play to the crowd a bit. It seems to work this time so points for trying something so many people forget to do. Trevor comes back with a knee to the face as Josh actually brings up Trevor being part of the GFW invasion. Lee puts a knee in Parks' back and pulls back on the arm for a painful looking hold before actually getting a near fall.

Back up and Lee does his cool belly to belly suplex to counter a cross body and we hit the chinlock. Parks simplifies things a bit by kicking

Trevor in the face and gets two off a backslide. A fisherman's neckbreaker gets the same and Parks cuts off a comeback with a Sky High. Trevor gets creative though with what looks like a dropkick but turns it into a stomp to the chest. That and a fisherman's buster into a small package are enough to pin Parks at 8:05.

Rating: C+. Is there a reason Parks doesn't have a job somewhere? He's a name you hear about all over the place but he's only been brought in to job here and there. Lee continues to be entertaining and could have a future in TNA if they don't manage to screw him up like they do almost everyone else.

The Dollhouse celebrates in the back and Kong ACTUALLY TALKS, telling Kim to clean that title up before she comes for it. Has she ever talked before? If so I'd hope it was something more than this. She's actually not a bad talker and sounded a lot more confident than you would have expected.

Pope is in the ring for some reason. He's been insulting someone on commentary lately and would like to talk to him face to face. This brings Grado dancing out to the ring, much to Pope's disgust. Pope talks about how they're not exactly friends and Grado says something I can barely understand, talking about meeting Pope in 2011. They took a picture together and Grado got TWENTY SIX LIKES on Facebook!

Pope gets annoyed all over again and calls Grado a joke for dancing all over the place instead of taking this ring seriously. Grado offers to speak in an American accent (and not a terrible one actually) so Pope can understand him. He says he'd fight anyone in the back to prove himself to Pope and that means it's time for a match.

Before we get to the match though, a quick question: why has TNA not had Pope work a match? He's not exactly a great commentator and he's still active on the indy circuit, even holding a title in OVW. He was a total heel here though and I have no idea why as he's normally a face commentator. This was really weird and Pope was doing everything differently than he's been doing in recent months.

Grado vs. Abyss

Monster's Ball of course with Abyss setting up the rules by telling Grado he likes to dance too. Grado actually dances before kicking Abyss low for an early advantage before the bell. It's time for some early weapons but Grado knocks the cheese grater away from the monster. Some trashcan shots have little effect on Abyss and he knocks it right into Grado's face to take over.

We get a table bridged between the apron and the barricade plus the bag of tacks poured out on the floor. Grado is smart enough to use the time to get the cheese grater and blast Abyss low, followed by some kendo stick shots to drop the monster. Abyss is getting up as Grado heads up top, only to have a trashcan pelted at his head, knocking him down through the table for a huge crash.

Instead of just ending it though, here's the barbed wire board to make it even worse. It's also Janice time and of course it gets stuck in the turnbuckle. Grado kicks him onto the barbed wire board and now Pope is on Grado's side. Another board is put on top of Abyss to make a sandwich, followed by a top rope splash to crush him even worse. Grado grabs Janice but gets chokeslammed onto the tacks to give Abyss the pin at 9:23.

Rating: D. What was the point of this? Grado is called a goofy loser, then does goofy stuff in the match and then gets beaten? I'm not a Grado fan but this felt like a way to make him look horrible instead of treating him like someone they might want to capitalize on. The match was your usual Monster's Ball, which you can almost paint by numbers anymore.

Drew thanks Kurt for the chance and promises to bring it on Tuesday.

Tag Team Titles: Eli Drake/Jesse Godderz vs. Kurt Angle/Drew McIntyre vs. Wolves

Wolves are defending. Jesse headlocks Davey to start but Richards tags in Eddie as Pope almost calls this a WWE Tag Team Title match. Drake comes in and suplexes Edwards for two, only to get a WE WANT ANGLE chant. Instead they get Jesse kicking Eddie in the head but getting suplexed down a few seconds later. Drake is smart enough to pull Davey off the apron to break up the tag, leaving Eddie to tag in Angle.

It's time to bust out the Germans, including one to both Wolves at the same time. Drew comes in and helps his partner clean house Eddie finally crotches Drew on top to put him in the Tree of Woe, allowing Richards to add a top rope headbutt for two. Nice sequence there. Eddie and Drew get in a chopping contest in opposite corners before deciding to chop each other for a bit.

Drake finally breaks it up with clotheslines but Angle comes back in with an Angle Slam to Jesse. It's Drew nailing Eddie with the Claymore to put all six down. Drake and Jesse bail to the floor, leaving the other teams to slug it out. That's fine with the Wolves who both hit the ropes to take out the cowards on the floor.

Drew flips over the top to take out all four and throws Drake back in for an Angle Slam, only to have Davey slide in for a save. The referee gets distracted, allowing Drake to nail Drew with a title for another near fall. Jesse kicks Kurt low but gets sent to the floor, leaving Eli to take the Wolves' Chasing the Dragon knockoff for two. Not that it matters as Eddie grabs a leg bar to make Eli tap at 10:13.

Rating: B-. This is the standard tag team formula these days and I'm still not a fan. The matches rarely last very long before the whole thing breaks down into pure chaos. It's still entertaining enough to work but I could go for a more traditional style of tag match with two teams instead of three once in awhile. Still though, match of the night so far.

The good guys all pose together post match.

Lashley is sick of Tyrus costing him the World Title and wants some revenge.

Lashley vs. Tyrus

This has potential, though Lashley's orange headband kind of ruins the image. Some running shoulders to the ribs in the corner have Tyrus in trouble as the announcers unfortunately remember that Tyrus has a World Title shot coming to him in the near future. Lashley can't get the legs so he goes with a standing armbar instead. Josh actually talks some strategy by pointing out that Lashley likes to fight in close quarters.

That's accurate but completely forgotten when Lashley jumps onto Tyrus' shoulders for a standing cross armbreaker. Well that was awesome. The annoying TNA fans want Shera as Tyrus drops down to break the hold before suplexing him over the top and out to the floor. With the referee checking on Lashley, Tyrus pulls the top turnbuckle off, which I'm sure won't come back to haunt him.

A headbutt to the chest puts Lashley down again for two and we hit the nerve hold. Thankfully it doesn't last long as Tyrus throws him over with a t-bone suplex before sending him hard into the exposed buckle. Lashley shrugs it off but misses a charge (mostly) into the post, allowing Tyrus to get two off a cross body. They go over to the exposed buckle but the referee gets bumped. For some reason this fires Lashley up and he goes totally insane, sending Tyrus into the exposed buckle TEN TIMES IN A ROW! Ok so they were really gentle shots but still it's a cool idea. The spear puts Tyrus away at 9:35.

Rating: D+. This could have been a lot better if they just beat each other up for ten minutes but instead it was Tyrus laying around and doing his slow offense because he's not that interesting. At least Lashley didn't lose again as I'm really getting tired of seeing him lose every important match he ever has. Not horrible here and the ten buckle spot was a new idea but Lashley needs someone else to throw around.

The announcers recap the show.

Beer Money video.

Roode and Storm are ready.

Beer Money vs. Bram/Eric Young

Storm headlocks Young down to start and drops him with a Russian legsweep, followed by a knee drop from Roode. With the wrestling not working, Young bites Roode on the shoulder and makes the tag off to Bram. Everything breaks down and Bram gets double hiptossed. Young is rammed into his partner to send both guys out to the floor. That's fine with Roode who backdrops Storm onto both guys for a crash.

There's the double suplex but Bram breaks up SHOUTING THEIR NAMES, which must be considered the big spot. Things settle down with Storm getting beaten down in the wrong corner until he grabs a running neckbreaker on Young. It's not enough for the hot tag though as Bram keeps Storm down and grabs a chinlock.

Roode and Young yell at each other on the apron, allowing Young to take Bram's place with no tag. Those horrible villains. Storm fights up and catches Bram in a double clothesline, only to have Young pull Roode off the apron. Not that it matters as Storm gets in another clothesline a few moments later and makes the hot tag.

Everything breaks down and Storm busts out a hurricanrana from the top, setting up a top rope splash from Roode for two. The villains come back with a Hart Attack for the same but Storm breaks up the piledriver with a Last Call. Now Beer Money gets to SHOUT THEIR NAMES and it's the DWI (Drinking While Investing, a suplex into a powerbomb) for the pin on Bram at 15:05.

Rating: B-. I liked this one more than the three way tag as it had more structure (and time to be fair) before everything broke down. Beer Money is still a good team though I'm not sure what they're going to do after they have the dream match against the Wolves. That's good for a one off match or maybe two but after that, the division is still horribly dry.

A big celebration ends the show.

Overall Rating: D+. This was WAY better than most One Night Only shows but it felt like a long episode of Impact instead of something special. It's not a bad show and the two tag matches are both entertaining, but as usual this felt like a contractual obligation instead of something they needed to air. Unless you absolutely loved Impact earlier this week, don't waste your time with this.

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2015 Awards: Worst Angle of the Year

Now this one doesn't have the ending you might expect.

We'll start with the most recent as Paige brought up Charlotte's deceased brother Reid to help set up their title match. Here's the thing: this was short. Yeah it was a bit tasteless (though nothing compared to some of the stuff WWE has done before) but they didn't bring up Reid by name or how he passed away etc. This was more tasteless than bad, but the match itself was even worse because they didn't go anywhere with the hatred. It's bad, but I think there's worse stuff they could do.

Earlier in the year in a much bigger story we had Roman Reigns' original push towards Wrestlemania XXXI. This is one where we all knew what we were going to get but again I didn't hate it as much as some. They felt like they were trying to push someone new and we got some good matches out of it. The problems here were the feeling predictable and that Reigns hadn't earned the title yet. However, what people overlook is that he didn't win it just yet. They bailed out at the last second and that helps things so much more. The ending and the fact that it wasn't that bad in the first place keeps this away from winning.

Also from late in the year, we had the latest Wyatt Family disaster with Bray kidnapping the Undertaker and Kane, stealing their souls (whatever

that meant), taking their fireworks power, and then apparently just leaving them alone so that they could escape and win the match at Survivor Series. As bad as this was, it's actually pretty low on the list of bad storytelling with the Wyatts and Bray in particular. This is just what happens to the Wyatts and until it changes, it's hard to really call it horrible all over again.

Then James Storm threw Mickie James on train tracks. It's stupid, it's ridiculous, and at the end of the day it's TNA. I almost feel bad about picking on them at this point and I have issues complaining about anything involving Mickie James. The biggest problem here was that Mickie was back way too soon with no problems, which makes it more stupid than bad.

At Summerslam, Jon Stewart cost John Cena the WWE World Title because he didn't want Cena to tie Ric Flair's record. I mean....yeah. What else is there that I'm supposed to say on this one? You had a talk show host there as the celebrity and then he costs Cena the World Title? At Summerslam? REALLY? This was the best they could come up with?

However, last but not least, we have the love...whatever shape it was with Ziggler/Summer Rae/Rusev. You had Summer loving Rusev and maybe loving Ziggler while Lana jumped to Ziggler from Rusev and thought it was about 1984 with all the denim. This went on forever with the pairs teasing getting back together and the whole thing was a big soap opera, ultimately ending with Lana getting hurt and WWE deciding that EVERYONE followed TMZ and knew that Rusev and Lana were engaged in real life.

And I liked it. Yeah to this day I'm still not sure why, but I really don't get the hatred for this storyline. I know it's stupid and I know the story really didn't make sense and I know the ending was HORRIBLE because WWE pulled the plug on the whole thing but I really didn't mind it. This gave these people something to do and Summer telling Rusev that they weren't getting married until he won a title was a good idea. That and it got Lana into some different looks and started to expand her character until the injury derailed the whole thing. I know it's hated, but I really didn't mind this story nearly as much as some people did.

For me, the worst was Jon Stewart. The celebrity stuff is stupid in the first place, but to have it be at Summerslam for the World Title and having it wind up as ANOTHER way to remind us how amazing Ric Flair is and how his record is just so sacred was too much for me. I love Jon Stewart and it was cool having him around, but this was just so stupid and such a lame way to keep the title on Rollins.

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Thunder – August 16, 2000: All The Rage

Thunder

Date: August 16, 2000

Location: Riverside Coliseum, Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada

Attendance: 3,264

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Mike Tenay, Stevie Ray

With New Blood Rising out of the way, it's time to crank up the horrible again as this past Monday went insane all over again. We're building towards a double main event at Fall Brawl with Kevin Nash vs. Booker T. for the World Title and Goldberg vs. Scott Steiner in a battle of the monsters. Let's get to it.

Kevin Nash is in the back when Rick Steiner comes up to argue about who should be the #1 contender. The solution: Nash vs. Steiner tonight. If Steiner wins, his brother gets the title shot. Well at least they're not jobbing Scott again.

Team Canada arrives, minus Jacques Rougeau (allegedly over not wanting to do a job). Cat comes up to say it's going to be Team Canada vs. three Americans. Can one of them please not be the Cat?

Kronik vs. Juggernaut/Ladies' Choice/Michelle Starr/Rockford 2000

Jobbers of course and Kronik promises to beat them in less than two minutes. I don't think this requires too much of an explanation as it's total destruction with Clark taking them to the floor and powerbombing one onto the bodies of the other two. The full nelson slam and High Time pins Juggernaut in a hurry.

Post match the Harris Twins appear on the screen with a challenge before riding away on their bikes.

Mark Madden and Gene Okerlund are getting ready in the back. Yes they're actually doing this.

Disco can't convince the Filthy Animals to let Mike Sanders join. He'd be better at talking than any of them so I don't see their objection.

Vampiro yells at Muta and throws an ax.

Here's David Flair to call out Miss Hancock. After a lot of lame lines about how amazing she is, David drops to a knee to propose. Before he can get the question out though, here's MIA for no apparent reason to destroy him. Wall chokeslams him a few times before the team leaves. Hancock, ever the nice person, yells at David for screwing this up too and leaves, only to stop to dance a bit. Ok then.

The MIA says no one touches Major Gunns like David did on Monday. Tonight they're going to war with Team Canada and Rection promises to bring the US Title back to America.

Crowbar and Daffney saw what happened to David but Daffney says she's

over him. This gives Crowbar hope but a guy comes up with candy and flowers for her from the secret admirer. She continues to be oblivious to Crowbar's feelings for her. Given that Russo is writing, can we set a timer before Crowbar snaps and beats her up?

Rey Mysterio/Juventud Guerrera vs. Mark Jindrak/Sean O'Haire

I don't think the titles are on the line here. Sanders is with the Animals here, or "Above Mike Average" according to Tony. Disco lets Mike talk for a bit and gets a glare from Konnan. Juvy pounds on Jindrak in the corner to start but he gets caught in the wrong corner. On commentary, Konnan says any combination of the Animals can defend the titles. It's quickly off to Mysterio vs. O'Haire with Rey charging into a powerslam as Tygress makes it a five person commentary booth.

Everything breaks down and Juvy uses Rey as a springboard to take Jindrak down and a bulldog does the same. Back up and Sean sends Rey in for a tilt-a-whirl side slam, followed by a backdrop to send Juvy outside. There's the Seanton bomb to Rey and Sanders turns on Konnan (shocking), allowing Palumbo (no Stasiak) and Reno to come in and beat on the Animals for the DQ.

Rating: C-. The match was fine until the obvious and nonsensical ending. Was there any reason to have Sanders out there with the Animals in the first place if he was just going to turn on them a few minutes later? It was actually working because you had talented guys having a match but of course that wasn't going to last around this time.

Okerlund asks Norman Smiley for help but Smiley is too busy trying to get out of the hardcore division. With no help coming, Gene thinks about doing a hurricanrana.

Tank Abbott is annoyed at 3 Count and tells them to get back to the studio to fix the new song. 3 Count doesn't seem pleased but are you going to argue with Tank?

Demon vs. Great Muta

No Vampiro anywhere in sight to start. Muta fires off some kicks but

charges into a boot in the corner. Demon slowly beats on Muta with his really lame offense, including a snapmare and suplex for two. Thankfully Muta, who is more uninterested here than horrible, comes back with his kicks and starts working on the knee. Cue Vampiro to make sure this doesn't get interesting as Demon makes his comeback. Vampiro throws Muta a kendo stick, which the referee doesn't seem to mind, to beat Demon down again. The dragon screw leg whip is broken up by an enziguri, only to have the green mist set up Muta's moonsault for the quick pin.

Rating: D. Nothing to see here as this story continues to bore everyone half to death. I have no idea why I'm supposed to care about Vampiro, Demon and Muta having these random matches against each other while Vampiro tries to be a less talented (and shorter) Undertaker. Another dull match though with Muta just going through the motions, though can you blame him?

Post match Demon gets beaten down some more and Vampiro promises to destroy Sting.

Someone knocks on Rick Steiner's door but there's no one there.

Madden insults Pamela and promises to beat up her sugar daddy tonight. Who knew Gene was loaded?

Misfits in Action vs. Team Canada

Rection/Loco/Cajun here. The fans go off on the Misfits for interrupting the Canadian national anthem which is still odd to see. Skipper can't keep up with Cajun to start and gets caught in a quick suplex so it's off to Loco and Carl (with his hard to spell last name, though apparently he's now known as the Rage). A headscissors staggers Carl so he grabs Loco and hits one heck of a chokeslam to knock him silly.

It's off to Skipper for a suplex before handing it to Storm for a great looking dropkick. Loco finally gets in a DDT to Storm and makes the hot tag off to Rection. Everything breaks down as Rection cleans house, including No Laughing Matter on Carl, only to have Skipper nail him with the Cruiserweight Title. Storm grabs the Maple Leaf to make Rection tap.

Rating: D+. Quick and mostly inoffensive here but there really isn't much to see. Team Canada winning in Canada was the only option but the Misfits really aren't the most interesting team in the world. Does anyone remember why they started in the first place at this point? Now they're just a military themed midcard stable which has been done so many times before.

Post match Cat comes out and makes himself vs. Storm with the US Title and commissionership on the line.

US Title: The Cat vs. Lance Storm

Storm is defending so Cat elbows him in the face to start, only to dance too much and get caught in a sunset flip. A jawbreaker and shoulder (with Storm landing on his feet) drop Cat but he pops up with the Feliner. The referee takes his sweet time counting though, likely meaning Carl was late running to the ring with the Canadian flag for the DQ.

Cat promises vengeance on Nitro.

Rick Steiner yells at Pamela (why do people hate her so much?) and a piece of the set falls on him. Scott Steiner comes in to yell at people.

Mark Madden vs. Gene Okerlund

Let's get this over with. Madden is in a Steelers jersey and says when he kills Okerlund, every coroner on the planet will swear it was old age. Gene is in what looks like a local hockey jersey, a Canada hat and sunglasses. They make it a street fight just because. Before the match, we have a posedown with Madden teasing taking his shirt off. A single forearm drops Mark but he comes back with a few chokes.

Cue Smiley but Carl (WAY too much of him tonight) cuts him off. This brings out Vito to fight Carl as Gene gives Madden a right hand for the most awkward two count of all time. Madden loads up a Vader Bomb but here's Pamela to hit him low and give Gene the pin. Too short to rate but they kept this goofy enough to prevent this from being horrible.

Pamela kisses Gene during the celebration.

Here's your weekly sitdown interview, this time with Jeff Jarrett. Jeff talks about wrestling being ahead of the curve for years and they're right in the middle of that at the moment. He sees the problem as people learning to wrestle in six months at the Power Plant and then showing up on Nitro without learning how this business works. Quite true actually. The fans are the only ones that can change that but Jeff goes into a discussion of wrestlers who want it because they'll put in the effort to learn every time they're in the ring.

As for leaving the WWF, Jeff hasn't looked back and knows it was the right decision. Jeff thinks WCW is starting to get it, even though they're down right now. Tony brings up the New Blood Rising match and calls it the match of the year. Jeff doesn't agree (good) and thinks he could have done better. The match was good and he respects Booker T., who should be a model of what wrestlers should be. Jeff wants to bring the workrate up in WCW but backstage issues have been causing them a lot of problems. Imagine what could happen if they kept going in the right direction.

This interview, while far less infuriating because Jeff was absolutely right on a lot of things he was saying, continues the trend of having no real point. Jarrett was out of character here, which probably confused most of the fans watching this. It made sense to me because I got what was going on, but most fans would have been wondering why he was so nonchalant about losing to Booker and wasn't threatening Tony with a guitar.

In other words, these things continue to only entertain people who already know what Jarrett or others are talking about and really offer little to the masses. Hence why it's longer than any match on the show, because that's what these shows exist for: to entertain everyone other than the viewers at home.

Kidman tells Vito that he'll have his back against Carl tonight. Apparently Vito vs. Reno is family business.

Big Vito vs. Carl Ouellet

Carl jumps him to start and gets in a quick slam, only to miss a middle

rope legdrop. Vito hits his own legdrop, followed by a top rope elbow (still looks pretty good) for two. Back up and Carl grabs a powerslam but his top rope splash hits knees. A middle rope headbutt gets two more for Vito as they're moving far better than you would expect here. They chop it out until Vito knees him in the ribs, setting up the inverted DDT for the fast pin.

Rating: C-. Much better than I was expecting here, even though I really didn't need to see Carl involved in three different matches tonight. Vito isn't ever going anywhere with his generic Italian character but he does seem to actually be working hard with it. Ouellet on the other hand needs to get out of here already as he's just not that good.

Post match Reno comes in and Rolls the Dice on Vito, only to have Kidman come out and dropkick a chair into Reno's face. Palumbo, O'Haire, Jindrak and Sanders run in and eventually lay Kidman out, only to have the Filthy Animals run in for the save. Storm and Skipper come in but are held off, only to have Mike Awesome run out to clear the villains away.

Rick Steiner is being taken away in an ambulance, apparently due to being hit with a pipe by Goldberg. Glad to know we didn't have time to see that.

Here's Kevin Nash for his weekly non-match. Hall isn't here because they were out having a good time last night and he's not recovered yet. So Scott is just traveling around the world, following WCW wherever they go? That's rather sad. Nash isn't going to bother calling out Goldberg tonight because he knows Bill is scared of him. That brings him to Booker, who he'll take the title from at Fall Brawl. Cue Booker to disagree, even though he respects Nash. They'll give the people what they want at Fall Brawl but Nash promises not to go after Booker tonight. They shake hands and Nash lays Booker out with the usual to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. This was actually one of the better Thunders in a good while despite the show just being there. Nothing on this show really mattered and they're just kind of meandering towards Fall Brawl with no real direction. Now that being said, I'll take a lame show over the horrible Nitros they've been airing anytime. Nothing on here was so bad

that I didn't want to keep watching (Madden vs. Okerlund was short and it involved Pamela) and there was very little shooting (angle wise at least) to mess it up. Somehow this passes for better in WCW these days though, which is just sad.

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Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2001: There's Wrestlemania

Royal Rumble 2001

Date: January 21, 2001

Location: New Orleans Arena, New Orleans, Louisiana

Attendance: 16,056

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Austin is back and that's by far the biggest change from last year. He's been on a warpath after Rikishi and I think HHH for running him down last year. Other than that there isn't much going on in the Rumble. We also have Angle defending against HHH and Jericho vs. Benoit with twenty minutes and a ladder. I think we'll have another solid show here. Let's get to it.

The opening video is what you would expect: one out of thirty will win and the rest will fall.

Tag Titles: Edge and Christian vs. Dudley Boys

The Canadians have the titles and the Dudleys have concussions. It's a brawl to start with the champions trying to bail very quickly. We wind up with Edge vs. D-Von to start as the challenger gets two off a neckbreaker. Off to Christian who is elbowed down for two of his own. Bubba comes in as Jerry makes fun of the Dudleys' injuries. A side slam gets two on Christian and it's off to D-Von vs. Edge again.

Christian finally goes for the back of D-Von's injured head to give Edge control and we get into the meat of the match. Christian gets the tag and starts pounding away on D-Von's head, followed by a neckbreaker from Edge for two. After a quick chinlock Edge hits a neckbreaker for two more as Bubba looks like he's about to cry. Since it's a Dudleys match, the fans want tables. Lawler wants gumbo.

D-Von breaks up a spike piledriver for reasons of wanting to stay alive, catapulting Edge into Christian. Edge and D-Von clothesline each other and the referee misses the ensuing hot tag. A Conchairto misses D-Von and there's the seen hot tag to Bubba. A pair of hot shots takes down a pair of Canadians and there's a Bubba Bomb to Christian. What's Up hits Edge but wouldn't that hurt D-Von's head even more?

D-Von goes to get a table and the distraction lets Edge get a title belt. Bubba ducks the shot and gets a VERY close two off a rollup. 3D is broken up by a spear to Bubba and a DDT to D-Von but Bubba kicks out again. The champions try What's Up but the Dudleys escape and the 3D on Edge gives us new champions.

Rating: B. This is one of those annoying matches where it's really good and therefore there's nothing to make fun of. These guys had some of the best tag matches the WWF has ever seen and this was no exception, with all four guys looking great out there. Notice something about Edge and Christian and the Hardys: they came from tag teams but they were allowed to grow up in said tag teams, meaning once they made the transition to singles matches they had a far easier time. That NEVER happens today

which is why tag teams don't make good singles wrestlers anymore. The crowd is white hot tonight too.

Drew Carey is here. He's promoting an improv comedy PPV and somehow got in the WWE HOF out of it.

Vince says Austin will be in the Rumble despite what happened on Smackdown with HHH. What actually happened isn't mentioned but whatever.

HHH tells Stephanie to not come to the ring with her tonight but she says she'll be there to take care of Trish. Drew Carey comes in and pleasantries are exchanged. He talks about meeting Kamala in an airport and plugs his PPV a bit. Drew seems cool here at least. Stephanie offers to introduce him to Trish for some reason.

The APA shows each other their Rumble numbers. Crash comes in and says he'll throw them both out even though they're friends.

We recap Jericho vs. Benoit. Do you really need an explanation here? They suplex each other a lot and fight over the IC Title so tonight it's a ladder match with Benoit defending. Oh and Benoit has hurt Jericho's arm.

Intercontinental Title: Chris Benoit vs. Chris Jericho

It's a slugout to start with Jericho getting a very early advantage. Benoit tries the Crossface but has to escape the Walls instead. Jericho misses a charge and hits the post before missing the springboard dropkick and crashing to the floor. Benoit posts him and goes for the ladder but stops to send Jericho into the steps. We're only three minutes into the match though so Jericho stops Benoit's climb. A ladder shot to the face puts Benoit down and the referee tells them they have thirteen minutes left.

Jericho lays the ladder across the top rope and of course goes face first into it as a result. Good to see that even Canadians follow the first law of wrestling. Benoit tries a suicide dive but Jericho puts up a chair, causing Benoit massive head trauma. Jericho tries to ride the ladder from the apron onto Benoit on the barricade but the other Chris moves out of the way. A ladder to the face stops Jericho again and now Benoit swings a

chair.

Back in and Benoit loads up a ladder in the corner before ramming Jericho face first into it. Jericho gets up and puts the ladder in the corner again before tying Benoit's legs between the rungs for a kind of Russian legsweep off the middle rope. Benoit comes right back with a dropkick to send the ladder into Jericho's face and a hard belly to back suplex. The ladder is placed on the top rope again and Benoit's face is whipped into it HARD. Jericho immediately follows up by see-sawing the ladder into Benoit's face. Almost every one of these shots would be classified as FREAKING OW MAN.

A missile dropkick puts Benoit down again but he saves a climb attempt by Jericho. Benoit suplexes Jericho out to the floor and both guys are down again. Benoit goes up again but has to stop to kick Jericho away. Jericho gets up anyway and bends Benoit backwards into the Walls ON TOP OF THE LADDER. Benoit falls on his head but still kicks the ladder over to stop Jericho. AWESOME sequence there.

Jericho drills him with the ladder and goes up, but Benoit immediately pulls him down into the Crossface. Jericho taps out but it means nothing other than pleasure for Benoit here. Benoit sends him shoulder first into the post but Jericho comes back by sending Benoit face first into the ladder. The ladder is moved to the corner and both guys climb, resulting in Jericho being superplexed back down.

The Swan Dive hits the mat though and Benoit is in big trouble. Jericho puts the ladder on top of Benoit's ribs, but the champion shoves it over anyway from the mat, sending Jericho face first into the buckle and out to the floor. Benoit goes up again but gets shoved out to the floor, allowing Jericho to sprint up the ladder and win the title.

Rating: A+. Take two Canadians, give them a ladder and 19 minutes and this is what you should expect. These two beat on each other HARD and the match was excellent as a result. They came up with some new stuff while mixing in basic stuff like HIT THE GUY IN THE FACE WITH A LADDER but it was so intense that it became a classic. Check this one out.

Drew hits on Trish but she says no because she's involved with someone.

Vince comes in and isn't exactly cool with Drew being around Trish. More PPV plugging ensues and Vince says to promote the PPV, Drew should be in the Royal Rumble. Drew says sure why not.

Billy Gunn is worried about Chyna hurting her neck again in the next match.

Jericho says he proved Benoit wrong.

We recap Chyna vs. Ivory. The RTC (Ivory's censorship group) hurt Chyna's neck with a spike piledriver and tonight is about revenge. This forces us to sit through Chyna trying to be emotional.

Women's Title: Chyna vs. Ivory

Ivory is defending here. Chyna immediately runs her over with a pair of clotheslines and a toss around by the hair. Stomping ensues and Chyna knocks her out to the floor. They head into the crowd so Chyna gorilla presses her right back to ringside. Back in and Steven Richards gets beaten up as well. In an ending to set up Wrestlemania, Chyna tries the Muta Handspring Elbow but hurts her neck (on the softest bump in the corner you'll see in years) and Ivory gets the pin to retain.

Rating: D. Ivory was squashed until the end when she won off an injury. What are you expecting from a match like this? This was designed to get more attention on Chyna because no female could conceivably beat her, so making her Women's Champion for her Playboy hype wouldn't do much good. Nothing to see here at all unless you're a fan of Chyna in leather.

Chyna gets looked at by Lawler, Gunn and medics, resulting in a stretcher job.

Trish and Stephanie run into each other and still don't get along. I can't decide if Chyna or Stephanie is a worse actress.

Drew Carey gets some gear and talks to Kane. Nothing funny is said and much glaring ensues.

Low Down, as in Headbanger Mosh and D'Lo Brown doing an Arab comedy gimmick (don't ask) is told that the Rumble spot they won earlier on Heat

will be going to Drew Carey. See, THIS is a good use of a celebrity. Who cares if Mosh or Brown isn't in the Rumble? Carey isn't exactly a huge star, but he's more interesting than either of those two. He promotes his PPV, the WWF gets some publicity, life is good.

Fans at WWF New York talk about the world title match.

HHH breathes a lot.

We recap Angle vs. HHH. Angle is on the roll of a lifetime to begin a career, having won the title from the Rock and defended it against Undertaker. HHH got the shot through some corruption and says he's allowed Angle to be champion this long. Trish is playing both sides of the field, being in Kurt's corner tonight but obviously sleeping with Vince, who is on HHH's side at the moment. Stephanie couldn't act, but dang she looked good in leather pants while she argued with Trish.

WWF World Title: HHH vs. Kurt Angle

Angle is defending. They trade wristlocks to start with Angle taking it to the mat before HHH takes it to the corner. A clothesline puts HHH on the floor as things slow down early. Back in and Angle escapes a suplex and hits three of his own for a near fall. HHH bails tot he floor and gets punched for his efforts, but he manages to send Angle into the barricade to slow things down.

Back in and HHH takes Angle to the mat which isn't likely his best option. Since it's a HHH match, we go old school with an Indian Deathlock. A dragon screw leg whip puts Angle down again but as he loads up another one, Angle takes him down with an enziguri for two. Kurt comes back with a whip to send HHH over the corner and out to the floor. This is slow to start but they have a ton of time.

They slug it out on the floor and HHH goes into the steps. Angle punches him around a bit more until a Stephanie distraction lets HHH crack Angle's knee with a chair. Still good psychology so far and I'm digging the pace. We get our first Flair move as HHH hits a knee crusher onto the steps. They head back inside after about three minutes on the floor and HHH cranks on the knee even more.

Off to an inverted Indian Deathlock because we can't quite reach the 80s yet. The facebuster gets two for HHH and it's time for a bad looking Figure Four, although at least it's on the correct leg. Trish interferes to try to break it up and we get a catfight on the Spanish announce table. Vince comes down to break it up as we completely stop watching the match. Vince carries Trish away but Stephanie pulls her off her dad's shoulder. We haven't seen anything in the ring for about two minutes now.

We FINALLY return to the match for a small package for two for Angle before it's back to the knee. HHH gets kicked into the buckle and Angle grabs a DDT for two. A Russian legsweep looks to set up the moonsault but HHH hits him low to block. HHH busts out a Razor's Edge out of the corner of all things for two. I've never seen him use that other than here. The Pedigree is countered into a slingshot into the post and Angle headbutts HHH in the crotch to boot.

Now the moonsault hits (I'm as shocked as you are) but he hurts his knee in the process. It only gets two as a result and Angle heads to the floor to walk his knee out. HHH dives off the apron and takes out Hebner by mistake. Angle goes into the post and we head back in where Angle runs the ropes (selling the knee? What's that?) for an armdrag off the top. Angle tries to get Hebner up but HHH rams Angle into Hebner, sending Earl into the steps as a result.

HHH grabs the belt but Angle counters into an overhead belly to belly. Now Kurt gets the belt but HHH blocks into a Pedigree for no cover. Austin runs out and beats on HHH before hitting him in the face with the belt. He throws Hebner back inside but Angle is still down. A Stunner puts the bloody HHH down and Angle gets a VERY delayed pin to retain the title.

Rating: B. This was good but the overbooking brings it way down. Basically you have two matches here with the dividing line being the Vince/girls stuff. The match was starting off as a great psychological battle and it turned into an Attitude Era main event which it just didn't need to be. This was disappointing after the way the match started.

Rikishi (#30) and Undertaker warm up for the Rumble.

Rock talks about how the Rumble is like a big bowl of jambalaya. As for Kane and Undertaker possibly being together, he doesn't really care if they want to give each other a box of chocolates or kick each others' faces in, because Rocky is throwing them both out. It could come down to Rock vs. Bull Buchanan, Rock vs. Perry Saturn, or Rock vs. Steve Austin, but either way he's going to Wrestlemania. Rocky was feeling it here.

Rumbly hype video, where there are a legit high number of possible winners. Austin is the favorite but it's not 100% as long as Rocky is in there. This is also one of the last years where they really pushed the idea that ANYONE could win.

Royal Rumble

Jeff Hardy is #1 and Bull Buchanan is #2. Bull charges into the ring and the beating is on fast. Jeff fights back and goes up top before hitting a headscissors. The intervals are two minutes again this year if you care about those kinds of things. They slug it out in the corner with no one getting an advantage until Matt Hardy is #3. Poetry in Motion and a double clothesline quickly dispatch Bull, so the Hardys fight for awhile.

The clock starts so the Hardys stop brawling as Faarooq is #4. Things don't go any better for Faarooq than they did for Buchanan, resulting in a Twist of Fate and Swanton to knock him out as well. Jeff poses and Matt tries to dump him, resulting in some friction. Matt wins a slugout but gets caught by a Whisper in the Wind. Drew Carey is #5 and he wisely stands at ringside as the Hardys eliminate each other off the corner.

Drew is the only one left standing and the crowd seems amused. Then Kane is #6. JR: "Oh my God oh my God oh my God." Drew begs the Hardys to get back in as Kane stalks him. After about a minute, Kane gets in and Drew offers a handshake and then cash. Kane grabs Drew by the throat until Raven is #7. Drew wisely eliminates himself, high fives some fans and bails. This was perfectly fine as he was in there like 3 minutes and gave us a decently funny moment. Also he seemed to enjoy being there which is more than I can say for most celebrities. Good stuff.

Anyway, Raven pounds on Kane with a kendo stick and a fire extinguisher blast. Al Snow jumps the gun at #8 to pound on Raven who eliminated him

recently. Snow legally comes in a few seconds later with trashcans and lids, followed by a bowling ball which goes into Raven's crotch. Big gasp from the crowd for that one. JR: "It looks like a hurricane has blown through New Orleans."

Snow and Raven pound away on Kane with everything they can find before FINALLY taking him down with a double drop toehold into a trashcan. Perry Saturn is #9 and goes after Kane's knee which is pretty stupid in a battle royal. Everyone takes their shots at Kane and some triple teaming finally gets him to his knees. Steve Blackman with his hardcore fighting sticks is #10 as the hardcore segment continues.

Things slow down a bit as they are known to do in hardcore matches until Grandmaster Sexay is #11. Kane finds a trashcan and explodes, eliminating everyone in about thirty seconds. Honky Tonk Man, Lawler's second straight relative, is #12. He brings his guitar and starts to sing until Kane destroys the guitar over his head and gets his sixth elimination in a row.

Kane is standing tall so here's the Rock at #13 for our first big showdown. Rock goes off with punches and a jumping clothesline but Kane blocks the elimination attempt. Rock keeps pounding but runs into a big boot to put him down. Goodfather is #14 and Rock eliminates him after two punches. Kane pounds him down again, prompting JR to say "Kane is a carnivore chewing on a big piece of Rock Burger." Lawler: "...Rock Burger?" Tazz is #15 and lasts even less time than Goodfather.

Rock and Kane slug it out for a bit until Rock hits a Samoan Drop. Both guys are down until Bradshaw is #16. He's cool with fighting both guys and hits the Clothesline on Rock. Rock comes back with the spinebuster but Kane clotheslines Rock down to take over again. Albert is #17 to keep up the size and power trend. Albert and Bradshaw pair off as do the other two guys but we can't get an elimination.

Hardcore Holly is #18 as Albert hits the chokebomb on Bradshaw. A bicycle kick from Albert puts Kane down in a pretty impressive looking move. Rock tries to dump Kane but the dude in the mask stays in. K-Kwik (R-Truth) is #19 and is immediately slammed down by Bradshaw. Nothing of note happens

until Val Venis is #20. The ring is getting full now with Kane, Rock, Bradshaw, Albert, Holly, K-Kwik and Venis.

Rock powerslams Kwik down and William Regal is #21. He also beats up Kwik who isn't having a good night so far. Nothing of note happens again until Test is #22. He immediately knocks out Regal before pounding away on Albert. Big Show makes his return from a trip to OVW to try (and fail) to lose weight. He clotheslines Test out and dumps Kwik as well. Everyone not named Rock gets chokeslammed as Rock kicks Show low and eliminates him for the second year in a row.

As Crash Holly is #24, Big Show seemingly turns heel and chokeslams Rock through the announce table. Everyone goes after Kane and Undertaker is #25, meaning it's finally time to get rid of some of these guys. The Brothers clear the ring other than the two of them and Rock left on the floor. The tall guys stare each other down and Scotty 2 Hotty is #26. Not exactly the brightest guy in the world, Scotty gets inside and is gone in about 45 seconds.

Austin is #27 but HHH runs out to avenge the earlier interference. Rock climbs in as the Brothers watch Austin get beaten up on the floor. Austin is busted open as Taker beats on Rock off camera. Billy Gunn is #28 to save Rock for some reason. Taker DDTs Rock down as HHH leaves. Haku, as in Meng, the reigning WCW Hardcore Champion, is #29. He goes right for Taker and pounds him into the corner and everyone pairs off. Rikishi is #30, giving us a final group of Rikishi, Haku, Rock, Austin, Undertaker, Kane and Billy Gunn.

Rikishi gets in a fight with Austin on the floor and everyone is in the ring now. Austin dumps Haku as Taker ERUPTS on Rikishi. A chokeslam puts Rikishi down but a pair of headbutts go badly for the Dead Man. Rikishi superkicks Undertaker out in a pretty big upset. As impressive as that was for him, he tries the Banzai Drop on Rock and deserves the elimination he gets.

We're down to four with Kane, Austin, Rock and Gunn. Gee I wonder which one is going out first. Gunn escapes the Stunner and hits the Fameasser on Austin but gets thrown out anyway a few seconds later. Rock DDTs Kane

down as Austin chills in the corner. Rock and Austin lock eyes and the fight is on. That's Wrestlemania people. The spit punch drops a weakened Austin but he escapes the Rock Bottom. The Stunner hits but Austin stops to go after Kane and charges into a Rock Bottom.

Kane gets back up and gets sent through the ropes by Rock, leaving Rock vs. Austin for the moment. They slug it out some more and fight for an elimination, but Kane comes back in and dumps Rock in a shocker. That also gives Kane the record for most eliminations in a Rumble at 11. Austin kicks Kane low to put both guys down and Kane bails to the floor. Kane brings in a chair but walks into a Stunner. About four chair shots and a clothesline send Austin to the main event of the best show ever.

Rating: B+. It's not as good as last year but it was awesome for the most part with some BIG star power out there. They did a great job of keeping you guessing until the end as Rocky winning here was a very legitimate possibility. Austin is back from his surgery and back where he was before, which is exactly what he needed to do. Very good Rumble with some nice surprises.

Overall Rating: A. While it's not quite as great as last year, this is pretty easily the second best Rumble so far. The ladder match is excellent and the Rumble is quite good as well. The world title match is great too and there's a solid opening tag match on top of that. The Women's Title match sucks but it's less than four minutes long. Great show again, but things would be coming down soon.

Ratings Comparison

Dudley Boys vs. Edge and Christian

Original: B-

Redo: B

Chris Jericho vs. Chris Benoit

Original: A

Redo: A+

Ivory vs. Chyna

Original: N/A

Redo: D

Kurt Angle vs. HHH

Original: B

Redo: B

Royal Rumble

Original: B

Redo: B+

Overall Rating

Original: A

Redo: A

I'm surprised that I liked it that much less last time. Still a great show.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/20/royal-rumble-count-up-2001-drew-carey-could-go-to-wrestlemania/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of Wrestlemania at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B0188BJRGU>

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Wrestling Wars Podcast Episode 35

NorCal, Shocky and I talk about one of the biggest news weeks in a long time.

<http://mightynorcal.podbean.com/e/wwp-35-shockyandkb-help-mekickoffthe-year-with-an-insane-week-of-newsone-vs-allforreigns-the-newsmackdownthesigning-of-thenjpwfourandjohncenas-injury/>

2015 Awards: Surprise of the Year

I'll be doing 18 this year with one going up per day (allegedly) as we look back at the best of 2015.

This is one of those awards that rarely has a lot of options but the big ones are the ones you remember for a very long time.

We'll start down in NXT with one of the weaker options: the debut of Samoa Joe at Takeover: Rival. Sami Zayn was beaten down and badly injured so everyone knew he was going to be out for awhile. That left an opening for a challenger to the title, allowing Samoa Joe to debut and become the next challenger. For some reason this didn't go anywhere, but at least it

was a good debut.

Now we'll look at a stronger candidate: the Dudley Boyz returning the night after Summerslam. This was a real surprise with no build to the fireworks going off and the return of one of the best teams of all time. It helps that they have one of the most exciting entrances in wrestling and that the division was dying for some fresh blood. This is a big candidate for the potential winner as I was genuinely surprised here.

Another real surprise was the reveal of Vampiro as Pentagon Jr.'s master in Lucha Underground. For months, Pentagon Jr. had talked about serving a master who was teaching him to be evil. His final test was to destroy Vampiro, but the big reveal at the end was that Vampiro had sent Pentagon to destroy Vampiro himself to see how evil he really was. The match was an underrated gem but the moment where Pentagon bowed to Vampiro after nearly destroying him was awesome.

One more return would be Alberto Del Rio, who returned to answer John Cena's US Open Challenge after being gone for over a year. It was obvious that whoever answered the challenge was going to be the new champion, but who in the world thought Del Rio was going to make a big return like that? The Zeb Colter appearance beforehand hurt things a bit but it was still quite the surprise.

However, most big upsets come in the form of matches themselves with Kalisto pinning Ryback in the World Title tournament being near the top of the list. Ryback had been built up for a long time over the summer and it seemed that Kalisto was going to be a roadblock on the way to the next round. Then Kalisto kept hanging around and finally hit a middle rope Salida Del Sol for one of the biggest upsets in recent years.

We'll get back to the in ring upsets in a bit but first we need to look at one of the biggest surprises in years: New Day becomes awesome. Yeah people forget this but New Day used to be horrible. They were this nothing team with three guys who had no potential to go anywhere and people were booing them out of the building every week. Then they were finally allowed to turn heel and be themselves, making them one of the hottest acts in years. It amazes me that went from one end of the

spectrum to the other like they did and it's really remarkable to see.

Finally though, there's one more from earlier in the year that made me lose my mind. Back in May, NXT Champion Kevin Owens debuted on Monday Night Raw and cut one of the best promos of the year, going back and forth with US Champion John Cena. This led to a non-title match at Elimination Chamber where Owens pinned Cena 100% clean in the middle of the ring with a pop up powerbomb.

The pin came at the end of a long back and forth match with both guys hitting huge move after huge move. I know Cena loses a lot and puts over a ton of people, but it's rare to see it happen clean like that. Owens launched off like a rocket with this win and really hasn't looked back since. It made a new star overnight and gave me a reaction like I haven't had in a very long time. For once it felt like they were doing something right and that's more than you'll almost ever hear out of WWE.

Edit: somehow I forgot Rollins cashing in. That's kind of the biggest one of the year.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of Wrestlemania at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B0188BJRGU>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2000: Making The Game

Royal Rumble 2000

Date: January 23, 2000

Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City, New York

Attendance: 19,231

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Jim Ross

After sitting through 1998 and 1999, this is my reward. What we have here might be the best Rumble show of them all with one of the best matches ever and a great Rumble on top of it. 2000 is the best in ring year the company ever had and this was a great way to kick that year off. Let's get to it.

The opening video is about Cactus Jack challenging HHH for the world title in a street fight. This is that "one of the best matches ever" that I was talking about. The idea is simple: Cactus wants the title back and he's facing HHH in a street fight, which means HHH is in WAY over his head. We're in Foley's hometown in Foley's match with Foley's most hardcore character. How can this not be a masterpiece?

Kurt Angle vs. ???

Angle is undefeated at this point. Kurt says he's a real winner here, unlike the New York Knicks. This is goofy Kurt, which means he's hilarious. He says that the mystery opponent must be scared to come face him, but the opponent needs to take a deep breath, come out here, and face Angle like a man. The self-help thing here is hilarious. The fans chant WE WANT TAZ...and here he is!

Kurt Angle vs. Tazz

Tazz pounds away on Angle and hits a HUGE backdrop to send him to the floor. Angle escapes a suplex in the aisle (painted like a street with a big cab hanging above the entrance, which looks like an alley. It's really cool) and takes over. Back in and Kurt hits a forearm for two and

chokes away in the corner. A belly to belly puts Tazz down but Angle goes up and gets crotched. Tazz hits a super Tazplex for two before getting rolled up for two. Angle gets two more off a bridging German before walking into a release German from Tazz. We unleash the suplexes on Kurt before the Tazmission ends Angle's undefeated streak.

Rating: C+. This was short, but to say it was an effective debut is an understatement. The place ERUPTED when Tazz won which is exactly the point of the opening match. See, this is what you call LISTENING to the audience. WWF knew they had to appeal to the ECW fans and what better way than to have Tazz debut here? Today, Tazz would be in some comedy match and would likely lose, because Heaven forbid that the fans get what they want in one city for one night.

Angle does a stretcher job.

We go to the Hardys in the back and get a clip of them and the Dudleys putting each other through tables. Terri, the Hardys' manager here, is told to stay in the back. She would be gone from the team soon, thank goodness.

Tazz says Angle is just the first victim.

Dudley Boyz vs. Hardy Boyz

I believe match #1 or #2 in a series of roughly 8000 and it's an elimination tables match. Bubba praises John Rucker of the Braves who had recently gone on a massive anti-New York rant in Sports Illustrated. The Hardys hit the ring and the match starts fast with Bubba hitting the Bubba Bomb on Jeff. No tags here thank goodness. Bubba sets up a table in the ring but before he can get another one, Jeff takes him out with a HUGE flip dive.

Jeff gets sent into the steps as Matt escapes a powerbomb through the table. D-Von suplexes Matt as Jeff CRACKS Bubba in the head with a chair. In a SICK spot, Jeff tries to run the railing but Bubba throws the table at Jeff, knocking him out of the air. That sounded GREAT. The pairings trade off and Bubba loads up the backsplash through the table, only for Jeff to come back and try a double superplex. D-Von moves the table but

doesn't stop the suplex.

Matt brings in a ladder because this might as well be a TLC style match. We head to the floor where the ladder is set up in front of a table with Bubba on it. Matt dives through Bubba through the table just as Jeff dives in from off camera with a splash, sending Bubba through the table in another awesome looking spot. So it's 2-1 now with Jeff leaning a table up against the barricade. The steps are set up on their end and a table is set up like a bridge between the steps and the apron.

D-Von is placed on the bridged table but moves before Matt dives through him. He moves AGAIN to avoid a diving Jeff, sending him through the leaning table. Cool sequence there by Ninja D-Von. Apparently Bubba doesn't have to leave. Ok that makes things more interesting. The Dudleys set up two steps in the ring and put a table across them before hitting a HUGE powerbomb on Matt to eliminate (in a sense) him. The tables are LOUD tonight too. Jeff gets beaten into the aisle but Matt quickly follows, only to get WHACKED in the head with a chair.

The Dudleys stack up four tables in front of the entrance (it's the MSG setup where the entrance is opposite the cameras). Matt gets put on the tables and Jeff is CRACKED in the head again to break up the save attempt. Bubba climbs onto the taxi over the aisle to splash Matt, but remember that wouldn't win the match. Jeff climbs up after him (I'm not sure where D-Von went) and blasts him with a chair, knocking him through two of the tables (still doesn't win). Matt puts D-Von on the table and Jeff dives off the taxi with the Swanton through D-Von through the table for the win.

Rating: B+. This was AWESOME with all four guys being young and hungry here. The Dudleys were out to prove themselves and the Hardys were out to show they could hang in a fight. They had already proven they could fight in a violent match like the ladder match, but this was a brawl instead of a high flying match. REALLY fun stuff here though and well worth a look if you haven't seen it. The Dudleys would get the titles next month, setting up the first triangle ladder match at Mania.

Angle gets a concussion test and complains that being choked out is

illegal.

It's time for the Miss Rumble Bikini contest with Sgt. Slaughter, Tony Garea, Moolah, Johnny V, FREDDY FREAKING BLASSIE and Andy Richter from Late Night with Conan O'Brien as judges. Jerry gets to emcee of course. The contestants are Ivory, Terri, Kat, Jackie, BB (You shouldn't remember her) and Luna. The idea here is that Kat legitimately took her top off (full exposure too, the only intentional female nudity in WWF history) at Armageddon and more nudity was promised here.

Ivory doesn't want to do it but eventually does. Terri does her usual skin colored one which we've seen before. Lawler freaks out over her bending over the ropes. Jackie...no one cares. BB isn't bad but again, the whole point of this is for Kat to win. Luna won't show. Kat is in a bikini made of bubble wrap. Creative if nothing else. The judges start tallying their scores but here's Mae Young to enter as well. She takes off her robe, and THERE is the nudity (it was fake). Mae wins to complete the joke. Lawler's reaction of "OH MY GOD I SAW THEM" is priceless. Mark Henry comes in to save our collective retinas.

The recently hired Coach doesn't have much to say from WWF New York.

Chyna and Jericho, the co-IC Champions, argue over who gets to wear the belt to the ring. There was a double pin in a title match and they became co-champions as a result, which is a pretty creative idea.

Angle says he's still undefeated. Rock would pin him on Smackdown a few weeks later.

Intercontinental Title: Chris Jericho vs. Chyna vs. Hardcore Holly

You know Jericho is fired up to be in MSG. He talks about how awesome his championship celebration will be, as it will make the millennium celebration look like his sister's seventh birthday party. Holly piefaces Chyna down to start before getting in a slap fight with Jericho. Chyna gets sent to the floor for the Slaughter fall, leaving the blondes to fight for a bit. Holly hits that perfect dropkick of his but Jericho comes back with the forearm.

They slug it out until Holly tries a rana (huh?), only to get caught in the Walls. Chyna makes the save, basically turning heel at the same time. Chyna sends Holly to the floor and gets drilled by Jericho. Holly and Chyna go to the floor where Jericho tries a dive but slips and only hits Holly. Back in and there's the handspring elbow and DDT from Chyna to the Canadian for two. Everyone heads to the floor where Jericho saves Chyna from a chair shot. Back in and both champions go up for a kind of double splash for two.

They both tried for a cover and a fight breaks out as a result. Chyna escapes a belly to back suplex and hits Jericho low, followed by a Pedigree for two on Holly. Chyna goes up but gets caught in a modified Doomsday Device (cross body instead of a clothesline) for a very close two. That probably should have been the finish. Now Jericho loads up a superplex but gets crotched for his efforts. Holly gets superplexed by Chyna but gets two on her off the bounce. Chyna chairs Holly in the head and puts on the Walls, only to have Jericho break it up and hit the Lionsault for the undisputed title and a BIG pop.

Rating: C+. This was pretty good and too short to get bad. It could have been on Raw but see, back in 2000, there was this crazy idea of finishing angles on PPV. I know that's insane now and everything ends in a big match on Raw or rather just stops happening one day, but back in the old days, they ended like this. Match was fine.

Rock is worried about two and only two men in the Rumble: Crash Holly and Headbanger Mosh. Cole (minus facial hair) suggests maybe Rock should be worried about, say, Big Show. Rock says go make a glass of shut up juice (not one of his better catchphrases) and tells Big Show he doesn't care what he thinks. He guarantees to win the Rumble right here in New York City and the place eats it up. I want one of those jerseys he's wearing.

Jericho says he said he'd win and he'll lead the Jerichoholics like a pied piper.

Tag Titles: Acolytes vs. New Age Outlaws

The Outlaws are defending and there's a backstory that doesn't deserve to be listed. Who would have thought that THIRTEEN YEARS LATER the Outlaws

would be on house shows for the WWE again? The Outlaws are heels here but they're over like free beer in a frat house here in New York. The APA storms the ring and the beating is on quickly. Bradshaw and Billy officially get us started with Billy taking a fast beating. Both guys tag as the referee is adjusting his ear piece.

Farooq imitates Dogg's dance before getting double teamed a bit. Bradshaw breaks up the shaky knee drop and everything breaks down. The Clothesline kills Billy and there's the spinebuster to Roadie...but Billy pulls the referee out. The ref is bumped and Road Dogg is hit with a double powerbomb. X-Pac runs in and kicks Bradshaw's head off. The Fameasser to the future JBL retains the titles in like two and a half minutes. This had to be cut for time. The Outlaws would lose the titles to the Dudleys next month and that would be the end of the team.

Dogg rhymes about keeping the titles.

We recap HHH vs. Cactus Jack. HHH won the title the night after Summerslam from Mankind via cheating. Big Show got the title at Survivor Series but lost it back to HHH in January. Mankind stood up to the newly formed McMahon-Helmsley Era and got beaten down for his efforts. Foley got fired and we had a fake Mankind get humiliated. Rock then said that every single wrestler would walk out and form the Rock Wrestling Federation if Foley wasn't rehired. See how different storylines could be back then? Mankind got HHH to agree to a street fight at the Rumble but got beaten up for his efforts.

This led to an AWESOME promo on Smackdown, where Mankind said he wasn't ready to face HHH in a street fight, but he knew someone who did. He took off his mask and ripped open his shirt to reveal Cactus Jack, scaring HHH to death. These two, as in Cactus Jack and HHH, had fought in 1997 in the match that basically brought hardcore to the WWF and they did it in MSG, with Cactus winning clean. This was an excellent story and there was a VERY real feeling that Cactus could pull this off, because HHH was in WAY over his head. Check out the build to this match as it's some of the best stuff you'll EVER see.

WWF World Title: Cactus Jack vs. HHH

Street fight. It should also be noted that Foley lost about 30 pounds inside of a month and a half and is by far the slimmest you'll ever see him look here. HHH does the long slow walk to the ring which makes things feel even more epic. Stephanie heads to the back which is probably a good thing. Dang I miss that big title. It's SO much better looking than the stupid spinner version. Even now when it doesn't spin it doesn't look like something special but rather something like a toy. The belt on HHH looks classy.

Cactus looks like an animal and HHH looks terrified. Jack wins a quick slugout and pounds HHH down into the corner. We head to the floor for a swinging neckbreaker on HHH and a legdrop onto the apron knocks the Game back to the floor. HHH is rammed into various metal objects but comes back with a bell shot to take over. NOW we get to the fun part as the first chair is brought in.

Back in and Jack charges right into a chair shot like an idiot. Granted for him, that's playing the character right. HHH goes to unhook the buckle instead of covering for some reason and Jack pops up to clothesline the champ down. There's a legdrop onto a chair onto HHH's head for two and we head outside again. HHH gets backdropped into the crowd and the beating begins again. JR: "They're out in the sea of humanity." Jerry: "Humanity? JR we're in New York."

HHH gets rammed into something made of metal that we can't see and they head into the aisle. Cactus sets up a wooden pallet and suplexes HHH onto it before screaming in his face. This isn't falls count anywhere mind you. There's a trashcan to the head and HHH gets rammed into the steel doors. The fans chant for Foley as he gets suplexed onto the trashcan. The crowd is just RUTHLESS against HHH here as they head back to the ring. The aisle is really short so it's not a long walk.

Jack rams a knee into HHH's head to drive it into the steps and it's back inside now. This is almost all Jack so far. There's the 2x4 in barbed wire but HHH hits him low to get the board away. Some shots to Cactus' ribs and back have him in trouble and HHH looks at the board as if to say "did I just do that?" Cactus blocks a shot to the head and hits HHH in the balls with the board. The double arm DDT puts HHH down as the referee

takes the board out of the ring, drawing the loudest booring of the night.

Cactus wants the board back and beats up the Spanish announce team who the board was left with. He gets a board (clearly not the same one but that's likely for safety reasons) and after the referee is crushed, HHH gets hit in the forehead with the wire. The board is driven into HHH's forehead and he's busted something fierce now. The referee is back up now and we get the most famous spot of the match with Jack ripping the wire across HHH's cut to make him scream.

Cactus tries to piledrive HHH through the announce table (same thing he won the 97 match with) but HHH counters with a backdrop. JR: "The champion is bleeding like a horse." When does a horse bleed? HHH is bleeding from his leg which is a rare sight to see. The place LOUDLY cheers for Foley and we head back inside. The Pedigree is countered into a slingshot into the post and a bulldog on the wire gets two.

HHH has a spot called to him about the steps before the Cactus Clothesline takes them both to the floor. Cactus charges but gets hiptossed into the steps, banging his knee in the process. You know a Flair disciple like HHH knows how to work on a knee. Back inside and HHH clips him down before picking up the barbed wire for another shot to the knee. HHH pulls out some handcuffs in a flashback to last year.

Cactus fights back and hits HHH in the head with the cuffs in a smart move. The cuffs are locked up a few seconds later though and HHH starts pounding away. The steps are brought in but Foley comes out of nowhere with a drop toehold to send HHH face first into the steel. A low blow keeps HHH down and Cactus bites away. HHH gets back up and grabs a chair which he literally BREAKS over the back of Cactus. They head outside again and Cactus takes some shots to the head from the chair.

Cactus says hit me again but before HHH can crush the skull, Rock pops out of nowhere and blasts HHH in the head with a chair of his own. A cop comes in and unlocks the cuffs, freeing Cactus. HHH starts backpedaling fast but gets caught on the Spanish Announce Table. The piledriver hits this time but the table DOESN'T BREAK.

We haven't gotten violent enough yet, so here's a bag of thumbtacks.

Stephanie comes out (complete with snakeskin choker in a nod to Cactus) and HHH comes back with a backdrop onto the tacks. There's the Pedigree but Cactus kicks out at two to blow the roof off the place. It doesn't last long though as a Pedigree ONTO THE TACKS finally ends Cactus.

Overall Rating: A+. FREAKING OW MAN! If there's a match that made a guy into a legitimate force better than this one made HHH, I'd love to see it. This was an absolute war with both guys destroying each other for about 27 minutes. The place never gave up on Foley and it's easily one of his best matches ever. This is one of the best brawls ever and yet again it's well worth checking out.

HHH is taken out on a stretcher but Cactus pulls him back into the arena. There's a barbed wire shot to the head and the place cheers like crazy for Mick some more.

Linda is at WWF New York to talk about HHH's title reign. Wait no she's not. She would NEVER be involved with something involving bloodshed. And Stephanie is oh so precious and does SO much work for charity don't you know.

Royal Rumble

The intervals are "two minutes or less" according to the Fink. We get a quick look at Shawn's miracle save in 95 which would play a role in the coming weeks. D'Lo Brown is #1 and Grandmaster Sexay is #2. Feeling out process to start with Sexay countering Brown's running powerbomb into a rana. A middle rope missile dropkick puts Brown down and Mosh, complete with cones on his chest, is #3.

Kai En Tai, two guys ticked off about not being in the Rumble, runs in and are immediately thrown out. Nothing else happens for a minute or so until Christian (with his AWESOME solo theme called Blood Brother. Look it up) is #4. Nothing happens again so here's Rikishi to a POP at #5. Mosh, Christian and Brown are quickly dispatched, leaving Grandmaster and Rikishi.

Scotty 2 Hotty is #6 to complete the trio...and it's time to DANCE! The place absolutely loses it over this until Rikishi clotheslines and

eliminates them both. Note that it is NOT a heel turn and just business, which Too Cool is ok with. Rikishi dances a bit more on his own and the place is still erupting.

The company took notice of those eruptions too, and the three of them wound up feuding with the Radicalz for the next four months or so, resulting in Too Cool getting the tag titles and Rikishi getting the IC Title. In other words, they were given a stupid gimmick, got it over, and were rewarded. Today, you get to lose the US Title to Jack Swagger and become a jobber to the stars if you get yourselves over. As I typed that, Steve Blackman came in at #7 and was eliminated.

Viscera is #8 and you know New York loves itself a fat boy battle. Big Visc rams into him a few times but misses a charge and three straight superkicks put him down. Big Boss Man is #9 and won't get in, drawing some good heel heat. He stays out on the floor until Test is #10. Test pounds away on Boss Man to finally get all three guys in there. Boss Man hits Test low but Rikishi hits Test low to put both guys down.

British Bulldog is #11 as things slow down a bit. There's a low blow for Rikishi as well and Bulldog tries to get him out until Gangrel is #12. Kai En Tai comes out again and Taka is thrown over the top into a 360, landing face first on the floor. FREAKING OW MAN. This would be played multiple times over the rest of the match, much to Lawler's amusement. Edge (starting to mean something and over in New York) is #13.

Boss Man takes a Banzai Drop and Bob freaking Backlund is #14. He comes out to Hail to the Chief as he's legitimately running for Congress in Connecticut at this point. You would think that would have been a tip for Linda's future but alas no. Everyone goes after Rikishi and dumps him out to get us to the second part of the match. To recap, we've got Boss Man, Bulldog, Test, Gangrel, Backlund and Edge in there at the moment. Jericho is #15 to his third or fourth big pop of the night.

Jericho goes right for Edge in a match that would be for the world title eventually. That doesn't last long though as Jericho dumps Backlund, who yells at some fans before leaving. Actually he goes into the crowd to look for Connecticut registered voters. For a guy as bland as he was back

in the day, Crazy Backlund is one of the best performances I've ever seen.

Crash is #16 and gets a double spanking from Edge and Bulldog. Ok then. Edge is sent to the apron by Bulldog so he punches the British Boy in the balls. Chyna is #17 in the far less remembered Rumble appearance. She goes right for Jericho and suplexes him out in about 30 seconds but gets knocked out by Boss Man almost immediately. Faarooq is #18 and here's the Mean Street Posse who is also out of the Rumble. Those three and Kai En Tai were all thrown out of the Rumble on Heat so five more guys could be added in.

Anyway Faarooq is quickly dumped and Road Dogg is #19. The crowd does his entrance for him but he runs right into a low blow. The fans want Puppies, a term Road Dogg invented. Crash survives an elimination and Al Snow is #20. Roadie throws out the Bulldog and Val Venis is #21. Funaki runs in on his own and is thrown out almost immediately again. Prince Albert (Tensai) is #22 and there goes Edge.

The ring is getting too full now with Boss Man, Test, Gangrel, Crash, Road Dogg, Snow, Venis and Albert. Dogg continues his strategy: hide in the corner and wrap all four limbs around the bottom rope. I've heard worse ideas. Hardcore Holly is #23 and we're getting down to almost only big names left. Crash gets knocked to the apron but gets back in AGAIN.

Now we get to the final part of the match as The Rock is #24 to bring everyone to their feet. Boss Man is the first victim, being eliminated by a spit punch. Venis and Test double team him but Rock hangs on in the corner. He beats up Hardcore for a bit as Billy Gunn is #25. He goes right for Rocky but since no one believes Billy Gunn is going to eliminate Rock, the Great One throws out Crash to give himself something to do instead. Dogg has shifted over to another corner now.

Big Show, Rock's opponent for this match, is #26. Rocky pounds on him immediately but Albert sticks his fat head in Rock's business. Show dumps Gangrel and Test before going to stomp on Rocky. Bradshaw is #27 and is out in about 30 seconds at the hands of the Outlaws and the Mean Street Posse. Kane is #28 complete with the still sexy Tori. Venis gets thrown

out almost immediately and Show stupidly gorilla presses Gunn down instead of out. Kane knocks Albert out as Godfather is #29. The Ho's are especially good looking tonight.

Funaki comes out for the fourth time. JR: "For the love of Pete." Jerry: "No that's Funaki." X-Pac is #30 which was announced in advance. The final group is Road Dogg, Al Snow, Hardcore Holly, Rock, Gunn, Show, Kane, Godfather and X-Pac. Snow dumps Holly and Show puts Godfather out. Rock dumps Snow to get us to six. Billy dumps a talking too much Roadie just before getting dumped by Show.

We've got X-Pac, Kane, Big Show and Rock as the final four. I've seen far worse. Rock throws out X-Pac but the referee is with Kane who is fighting the Outlaws on the floor. Pac gets back in and the guys pair off. Show sends Rock into Kane for a big boot as the giants choke each other. Pac kicks Rock down and Kane hits a pretty good enziguri and an even better slam on Big Show. Pac kicks Kane out and a Bronco Buster on Big Show.

Rock dumps X-Pac and we're down to two. The spinebuster sets up the Elbow but since IT'S JUST A FREAKING ELBOW DROP, Show gets up and chokeslams Rock down. Show takes WAY too much time though and Rock holds onto the top rope, sending Big Show out to go to Wrestlemania. Awesome ending to an awesome match.

Rating: A. AWESOME Rumble here with the absolute right ending. This was the Rock's Rumble and there was no other person who should have won it. The only part that was a little dull here was the middle but it's certainly not bad. This followed the three part structure as all great Rumbles do and as usual, it worked like a charm. Great Rumble and one that might have a claim to best ever.

Rock says he's going to Wrestlemania when Big Show comes in and knocks him to the floor. Show stands in the ring as Rock leaves to end the show.

Overall Rating: A+. This is one of the best shows the WWF has ever put on. Period. There isn't a bad match on the whole card, the crowd is ON FIRE all night and you have two excellent matches to round out the show. I can't imagine anything in the next 12 years surpassing this one and I can't recommend it highly enough. Outstanding show.

Ratings Comparison

Tazz vs. Kurt Angle

Original: A-

Redo: C+

Hardy Boyz vs. Dudley Boyz

Original: A

Redo: B+

Chris Jericho vs. Chyna vs. Hardcore Holly

Original: C

Redo: C+

New Age Outlaws vs. Acolytes

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

HHH vs. Cactus Jack

Original: A+

Redo: A+

Royal Rumble

Original: A-

Redo: A

Overall Rating

Original: A

Redo: A

Still great and still the best Rumble ever.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/19/royal-rumble-count-up-2000-match-of-the-decade-maybe-yeah/>

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Smackdown – January 7, 2016: USA! USA! USA!

Smackdown

Date: January 7, 2016

Location: Laredo Energy Arena, Laredo, Texas

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Byron Saxton, Jerry Lawler

This is a big night as Smackdown is now on the USA Network after sixteen and a half years bouncing around various other networks. Therefore tonight is going to be a major show with two title matches and an appearance from the now injured John Cena. We're now in full build towards the Royal Rumble where Roman Reigns will be defending the WWE World Title against 29 other men. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap Reigns defending the title against Sheamus and then Vince announcing his Rumble title defense. Thankfully this was a minute long instead of four times as much.

Opening sequence.

New commentator Mauro Ranallo is welcomed to the team.

Here's John Cena for a chat. He hypes up the two title matches tonight and says the only thing missing is the USA Champion. It's a new year and a new network so let's try a fresh start tonight. Cena does a pretty good Ricardo Rodriguez introduction for Alberto and here's the champ. However, Alberto is too smart to fall for what Cena is trying. There's no way that Juan is getting his title shot tonight.

That's not what Cena is going for though. The fans are fired up to see Alberto Del Rio tonight and they're clearly wanting to see a US Title match tonight right? Fans: "SI! SI! SI!" Alberto will fight anyone not named John Cena, though the title doesn't seem to be on the line. Cena has the perfect choice.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Kalisto

Non-title. Kalisto quickly sends him out to the floor and Cena is right there doing the Lucha Dragons dance. Back in and Kalisto handsprings into a kick to the head. The threat of the Salida Del Sol sends Alberto outside though and we take an early break. We come back with Del Rio getting two off a belly to back suplex. Del Rio gets in a kick to the head of his own as the fans chant something in Spanish.

Kalisto is put in the Tree of Woe for some kicks to the ribs. Thankfully it's not for that top rope double stomps just yet though as Alberto misses a charge into the post, allowing Kalisto to speed things up again. The hurricanrana driver is countered into a sitout powerbomb for two and the frustration is starting to set in. A good looking DDT puts Kalisto on the floor and Alberto taunts Cena. Back in and Del Rio loads up the cross armbreaker, only to have Kalisto grab a quick hurricanrana for the pin at 9:15.

Rating: C+. Nice match here with Kalisto's unlikely rocket push continuing. I don't think it's going to lead anywhere but with all the injuries, pushing someone as a new underdog star isn't going to hurt anything. Cena endorsing Kalisto could be a good sign, though none of this matters if Kalisto loses the title rematch.

Becky Lynch says she and Charlotte are no longer friends. Tonight she's going to take the title and not be friendly about it at all.

It's time for MizTV with Miz talking about the Royal Rumble for a few seconds before New Day cuts him off. After Big E. makes it clear that they are NOT a bunch of rootie tooties, Woods says Jericho stole the light up jacket from him in the old NXT days. Cue Dolph Ziggler for no apparent reason but Goldust cuts him off before we can get to the witty insults. Goldust is willing to give Miz and company some golden globes so here's Neville to interrupt as well.

Neville offers to teach Miz his accent and whatever else he wants as long as Miz cancels this horrible show. Miz is offended but R-Truth cuts him off this time. Truth tries to answer Del Rio's US Open Challenge so Miz has to tell him there's no such thing. Truth: "...all right. What were you all here talking about?" Instead, Truth tries to enter the Royal Rumble but isn't sure he can afford the entry fee. Miz offers him a dollar to buy a clue so Truth hits him with the mic, meaning it's time for an eight man tag.

Miz/New Day vs. Neville/Goldust/R-Truth/Dolph Ziggler

This is joined in progress with Truth hip thrusting at Miz and bringing in Goldust. Make that Ziggler with a dropkick to Kofi before it's time to start in on the arm. Neville does some hip gyrating and drops a standing shooting star for two. Some right hands in the corner have Kofi in even more trouble until Woods finally pulls Neville off the ropes to give his team a breather.

Back from a break with Neville caught in the Unicorn Stampede (thank you Ranallo for finally using the proper term). Woods gives us some music and New Day is astounded by Miz's dancing. We hit the chinlock from Woods for a bit before Neville backdrops him over the corner, leaving Woods on the

floor with some very glossy eyes. The hot tag brings in Zigler to clean house with Ranallo bringing up the Social Outcasts from Monday. Everything breaks down and Miz winds up surrounded, setting up a Zigler superkick for the pin at 11:16.

Rating: C-. It's not a good sign when some champions lose to a thrown together team of low level jobbers and Zigler but I'm assuming this is how they make up for Zigler losing on Monday. You know because Dolph Zigler is the kind of person who needs to get his head back.

Post match Zigler beats up his teammates and throws Goldust to the floor because it's every man for himself. Not a heel turn but the fans didn't seem thrilled.

The Flairs say Charlotte is ready.

Divas Title: Charlotte vs. Becky Lynch

Becky is challenging. After some big match intros, Charlotte takes her down to start as Lawler is trying to call Ranallo M.R. An early armbar attempt doesn't work for Becky so she tries some rollups for two each. Charlotte has to spin out of a hammerlock but a springboard kick to the chest puts the champ on the floor. Becky goes after her but Ric gets in the way, allowing Charlotte to kick her in the face to take over. Charlotte throws her with some suplexes but stops to pose as we take a break.

Back with Becky caught in a figure four choke before Charlotte flips her over a few times. Lynch actually gets underneath her to drop Charlotte face first into the buckle for the break and it's time for the clotheslines. You have to have clotheslines. Charlotte comes back with a neckbreaker out of the corner for some near falls but Becky small packages her to break up the Figure Eight. There's the Disarm-Her but Flair puts Charlotte's foot on the ropes right before Charlotte taps. Becky is furious, allowing Charlotte to grab a rollup with her feet on the ropes for the pin at 14:12.

Rating: B-. Good match but the Ric Flair stuff is getting annoying. I mean, we get it already. He's there and he's going to help his daughter

cheat. It got old in a hurry with HHH and it's already gotten annoying here with Charlotte. I'm not sure where they go now for a challenger but maybe it's finally time for Sasha.

We look at Owens brawling with Ambrose on Monday.

Owens gives Renee one minute of his time and says he's killed quite a few roaches in his time. That means Ambrose isn't going to be any different.

Recap of Monday's main event and Vince making Reigns defend the title in the Royal Rumble.

After Raw went off the air Monday, Reigns said he's ready to fight all at the Rumble.

Ambrose says Owens is the prize fighter but the prize is on Dean's shoulder. Let's fight.

Intercontinental Title: Dean Ambrose vs. Kevin Owens

Owens is challenging. They shove each other around to start and the threat of Dirty Deeds sends Owens out to the floor as we take a break. Back with Kevin ripping off some chops but Dean tells him to bring it. Ambrose grabs a headlock for a bit before Owens hits him in the face. The rebound lariat is broken up as Kevin shoves him to the floor, only to be sent hard into the barricade.

Dean hits a running clothesline off the apron but he gets caught in a hanging DDT on the way back in. We take another break and come back with Owens holding a chinlock. The backsplash misses and Dean gets two off a quick bulldog. A tornado DDT doesn't work and Owens sends into the corner off a German suplex. Dean is ready for the Cannonball though and gets two off another tornado DDT.

Owens crotches him on top though and now the Cannonball gets two. The superkick sets up the rebound lariat to give Dean two more of his own. Ambrose briefly wins a slugout until Kevin drops him with a clothesline, only to be sent out the floor. Dean sends him over the table and then into the crowd for a double countout at 17:33.

Rating: B-. This was more long than good and pretty clearly just a way to set up a gimmick rematch at the Rumble. That's the better option though as both guys have earned a match on a bigger stage. You can almost guarantee they'll both get a run in the Rumble itself as well so this was really just a preview.

They fight up to the stage and then to the technical area with Dean driving them both through a pile of tables to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. Good debut on USA here but it was hardly a classic. This felt like a big episode of Smackdown with little storyline advancement but some good wrestling. I'd be fine if this is the kind of show we got week to week but the last several years would suggest that there's no reason to believe that's happening. Ranallo was very different than most WWE announcers as he has a much deeper voice and treats things more seriously, though he's nothing that's going to change the way I feel watching the show. It's a good debut, but as is always the case, I have no reason to believe it's going to stay this way.

Results

Kalisto b. Alberto Del Rio – Hurricanrana

Dolph Ziggler/R-Truth/Goldust/Neville b. New Day/Miz – Superkick to Miz

Charlotte b. Becky Lynch – Rollup with feet on the ropes

Dean Ambrose vs. Kevin Owens went to a double countout

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Royal Rumble Count-Up – 1998: It's Austin's World

Royal Rumble 1998

Date: January 18, 1998

Location: San Jose Arena, San Jose, California

Attendance: 18,542

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the year of Austin and for once, the WWF is looking good going forward as the debacle that was the main event of Starrcade has caused WCW to hit a brick wall. The main event tonight is Shawn defending the title against Taker because he didn't want to face Owen Hart, the most logical opponent. Also there's the Rumble, which is obvious of a winner as there's been in years, but in this case that's ok. Let's get to it.

The opening video is about the two main matches as you would expect. The rest of the card doesn't mean much anyway.

Mike Tyson is in a skybox.

Vader vs. The Artist Formerly Known As Goldust

This is during Goldie's midlife crisis/PAY ATTENTION TO ME phase. These two had a great match at Clash of the Champions so maybe this won't suck. Goldust jumps him as Jerry is glad the gold one is in men's clothing again. Vader shrugs off the shots to the back and chases Goldust to the floor. Vader rams him into Luna as we hear about Austin not being here yet. Goldust is sent into the steps as Vader keeps control.

Back in and Luna trips Vader up, finally allowing Goldie to get in a clothesline. Another clothesline puts him down and Goldust works on the leg a bit. Goldie drops a middle rope elbow to the ribs and we head back to the floor. Vader is sent into the steps so Luna can choke him a bit before we head back in. Goldust pounds away again but stops to kiss Vader. I may not be a pro wrestler, but I know better than to kiss a guy called the Rocky Mountain Monster.

Vader kills him with a clothesline and suplexes Goldust down before getting two off a splash. Vader loads up the Vader Bomb but a low blow stops him cold. Another clothesline puts Goldie down again and Vader sits on his chest. He loads up the Bomb again and despite Luna jumping in his back, Vader drops it anyway and crushes Goldust for the pin.

Rating: D. The place popped for the ending which did look cool, but other than that this was a messed up match. Goldust in this gimmick didn't really work because at the end of the day, he's still boring old Dustin Rhodes working the same standard style. It's not horrible but it's not a good choice to have on a PPV.

Austin gets here and tells Cole to park his truck. Southern Justice (the heel Godwinns) follow him, presumably to jump him.

Max Mini/Mosaic/Nova vs. Battalion/El Torito/Tarantula

Minis here with Sunny as the referee. Max Mini (more famous as Mascarita Sagrada) is by far the most famous of these guys as he's about 4 and a half feet tall but can move around very quickly. Nova and Tarantula start things off with Tarantula (on the heel team) being way bigger. Nova takes him down with some headscissors before it's quickly off to Battalion

(military themed guy) vs. Max. Max armdrags him to the floor which brings in Torito, meaning we're in lucha rules (meaning sending someone to the floor means another member of your team can come in without an actual tag).

Torito can actually get his head over the top rope, meaning he's just under the size of Rey Mysterio. Mosaic comes in and gets caught in a gorilla press and a release flapjack. A second flapjack attempt is caught in a wrist drag to send Torito to the floor and it's off to Tarantula. That goes nowhere so here's Battalion again. The fast tags continue as here's Nova vs. Torito already.

They both hit the floor so Mosaic speeds things up against Battalion again. Mosaic spins him around again a few times before it's back to Mini vs. Tarantula. Max gets caught in a spinebuster but goes up top almost immediately for a delayed rana. Max sends him to the floor and Tarantula backs off. Back in and Torito hits a Mafia kick to the back of Max's head and a chop puts him down again.

For no apparent reason Sunny picks Max up so he can dropkick the villains. I can only assume Sunny is there to give the fans anything to care about. Mosaic and Battalion go to the floor as does Torito so Max can hit his big dive. The others dive on them as well and it's a big pile on the floor. Back in Max rolls up Torito for the pin.

Rating: C. I'm going with a C because I have no idea what else to go with. I don't know who these people are, I have no idea why I should care, and I might have seen these guys twice other than this (aside from Max). These matches are really hard to get into because there's nothing to them. Much like a lot of the luchador matches in WCW had the same issue: why should I care about these people?

The Nation goes to attack Austin but only find an Austin foam finger.

The McMahons are in Tyson's sky box.

We recap Shamrock vs. Rock. Shamrock has charged through the Nation to get this shot at the unofficial leader of the team. Mark Henry joined the Nation to save Rock from Shamrock less than a week ago.

The Nation argues over which of them will win the Rumble. Rock says the fans of course want to know what he thinks of Clinton and Paula Jones, so he tells the President not to lie down with dogs or you might get fleas. This joke would be done way better over the next few weeks.

Intercontinental Title: The Rock vs. Ken Shamrock

Rock is defending of course. Feeling out process to start with Rocky trying to get a cheap shot in the corner. Both guys shove the other into the corner and Shamrock blocks a shot to the face before hitting one of his own. They run the ropes a bit until Shamrock kicks him in the chest and knocks the champion out to the floor. Back in and Rock pounds away a bit before hitting a corner clothesline. Ken comes back with some clotheslines of his own but the standing clothesline is countered into a hot shot for two.

They're trying to get out of first gear here but it's really not working that well. The champ pounds on him in the corner and but gets caught in a fisherman's suplex for two. Back to the floor with Shamrock going into

the steps and then back into the ring. The spinning DDT gets two for Rock and it's off to the chinlock. Rock tries the spinning DDT again but gets caught in a northern lights suplex for two instead.

Shamrock pounds away some more and gets two off a powerslam. The Nation comes out and sneaks Rocky some knuckles which go upside Ken's head for two. Rock hides said knuckles in Shamrock's trunks, just before getting belly to bellied for the pin and the title. Keep that in mind of course.

Rating: D+. Rock would get better, but at the end of the day this didn't work that well. It was mainly punching with both guys trying to throw in a move here or there. This feud never quite worked as well as they were shooting for I don't think and with Rocky holding the title forever, it didn't do Shamrock much good either.

Post match the referee finds the knuckles and reverses the decision. The referee is beaten up very badly for his efforts.

A Coliseum Video Exclusive from "moments later" show a clean and dry Shamrock in jeans attacking the Rock.

Los Boricuas attack someone that they think is Austin but find one of the Disciples of Apocalypse. Brawling ensues.

We recap the LOD vs. the Outlaws, which is old school vs. new with the Outlaws defending the titles. The Outlaws put a big old beating on the LOD and tonight is their return.

Tag Titles: New Age Outlaws vs. Legion of Doom

The Outlaws make fun of the 49ers who lost in the NFC Title game recently to the Packers. The LOD says that Animal's back is fine and they're putting the Outlaws on ice tonight. The Outlaws jump the challengers which goes badly in a hurry, as Animal powerbombs the Dogg. The champions try to walk out but get thrown back in so we can start with Hawk (who had one mohawk shaved off earlier in this feud) vs. Roadie.

Off to Animal as Road Dogg's mouth is bleeding. The pounding continues so here's Hawk for his one wrestling move in the neckbreaker. Gunn gets the tag and Hawk hits a freaking Lou Thesz Press of all things so he can pound away some more. Animal powerslams both Outlaws down and it's off to a reverse chinlock on Gunn. Hawk comes in for his second surprise move of the match in an STF.

That goes nowhere so it's back to Animal, who is tripped up by Roadie. They head outside where Animal is sent into the steps to finally switch the momentum. Hawk gets double teamed in the ring but clotheslines both Outlaws down (Animal is still legal) but charges into the post. Dogg finds some handcuffs and attaches Hawk to the post, making it a handicap match. Animal makes a comeback with a double clothesline, but Dogg hits him with a chair for the DQ.

Rating: D. So with an injury AND his partner tied up on the floor, Animal STILL couldn't lay down for a pin? Seriously? This match sucked and would have been just slightly better on Raw with less time. The LOD was nothing at this point while the Outlaws were finally starting to turn some heads. Until this point though, they were two jobbers with the titles who kept escaping with them. Brighter days were coming.

The Outlaws destroy Animal until Hawk snaps the handcuffs to make the

save.

Some fan wins the Austin truck.

We recap the build up to the Rumble. Basically, everyone knows Austin is going to win and EVERYONE else in the Rumble is trying to stop him but not one has been able to slow him down at all. The only difference here: the fans were eating this stuff up with a spoon.

Royal Rumble

Cactus Jack is #1 and Chainsaw Charlie (Terry Funk) is #2. The intervals are supposed to be two minutes again this year but they would wind up being closer to 90 seconds. Terry brings his chainsaw into the ring so Cactus throws in a bunch of chairs. The referee finally gets the saw out and they pound on each other with chairs. Cactus hits Funk in the head with one, then hands the chair to Funk so he can return the favor. These two aren't exactly normal if you didn't catch that.

Tom Brandi is #3 and lasts about ten seconds. Terry punches Jack down but can't piledrive him on a chair. Cactus suplexes him through two chairs but can't put him out. Rock is #4 and both hardcore guys are down. Rock pounds on Terry in the corner but Cactus blasts him with a trashcan and the double beating begins. Cactus puts the can over Rock's head and they pound away on him, knocking him through through ropes and out to the floor. Funk hits Cactus low as Mosh is #5.

Mosh and Funk pair off as do the other two guys. Funk (the announcers are calling him that too) tries a moonsault but it winds up being more of a headbutt than a splash. Phineas Godwinn is #6 and helps Rock beat up Mosh. Not much happens for a bit until 8-Ball of the DOA is #7. Jack misses a charge and Funk backdrops him out to empty the ring out a bit. Apparently someone who might have been Ken Shamrock has attacked Austin.

Funk barely hangs onto the rope to avoid elimination until Blackjack Bradshaw (yes that Bradshaw) is #8 and looking as muscular as you'll ever see him look. We talk about Mike Tyson while things slow down a bit until Owen Hart is #9. Jeff Jarrett, the NWA North American Champion at the time in a strange invasion angle, attacks Owen on his way in. Yeah this

is what Owen gets for not bolting to WCW after the Montreal Screwjob. Yes I know he was under contract but you know Vince couldn't hold him to it in that situation. Hart can't get in the ring yet.

Steve Blackman is #10 and he has a hairy chest. 8-Ball piledrives Funk as there are way too many guys in the ring right now. Since people seem content to just tease eliminations on the ropes, no one is eliminated until D'Lo Brown is #11. Rock DESTROYS Blackman in the corner before getting in a fight with his Nation teammate D'Lo. Kurrigan, still a psycho monster at this point, is #12.

Thankfully he gets rid of some people like Mosh and...that's about it for now. Dang it clear the ring out a little bit already. You're a monster Kurrigan. Go destroy some villager. Marc Mero is #13, giving us a pop for Sable. Mero pounds away on Blackman in the corner but Kurrigan dumps Steve. Bradshaw pounds on Kurrigan as Rock teases not stomping his teammate before kicking away.

Ken Shamrock is #14 and he immediately kicks Kurrigan down. A big gang takes out Kurrigan as Rock hits the People's Elbow (not yet named) on Funk. Thrasher is #15, giving us Funk, Rock, Phineas, 8-Ball, Bradshaw, Owen (not in the ring), Brown, Mero, Shamrock and Thrasher, or as they're collectively known, WAY TOO MANY PEOPLE. Still nothing happens and Mankind is #16, confusing the announcers and immediately punching Funk out.

Shamrock finally gets his hands on the Rock as Mero asks Sable for praise. Goldust is #17 in a silver bodysuit with a thong painted on. A minute or so later he puts out Mankind but there are still way too many people out there. Jeff Jarrett is #18 and Owen runs in to beat him down. A spinwheel kick puts Jeff down, followed by Owen skinning the cat and dumping Jeff. Honky Tonk Man is #19 as HHH (on crutches) and Chyna come to the ring. Rock dumps Shamrock to complete Ken's humiliation tonight.

HHH gets on the apron and cracks Owen with his crutch to knock Hart out as well. Ahmed Johnson is #20, looking as bored as I can remember a wrestler looking in a long time. WAY too many people in the ring again. Mark Henry of the Nation is #21 and JR says Henry is "handling the big

Johnson." There's no #22 which was supposed to be Skull, but he was jumped earlier remember.

Johnson is dumped out and he still doesn't look like he cares. He would be gone next month anyway. Phineas is out after a ridiculous 28 minutes. On top of being in too long, he accidentally kicks a referee in the head on the way down, giving him a legit concussion. Kama Mustafa is #23 to give the Nation four members at the moment. We're just waiting for Austin at this point.

FINALLY the glass shatters at #24 and the roof goes off the place. Austin comes in through the crowd because he's got ten people waiting on him as he comes in. There go Mero and 8-Ball and things slow down AGAIN, because we need at least ten people in the match at all times for some reason. Henry Godwinn is #25 and nothing happens. Savio Vega is #26, but since we STILL don't have enough people in the ring at the moment, he brings in the other three Boricuas to beat on Austin.

Thankfully Austin beats them out quickly but doesn't eliminate anyone. Faarooq is #27 to give us the entire Nation in the ring. He goes right for the other Nation members though as his face turn continues. Not that anyone cares mind you but he is indeed turning. Austin and Rock tumble through the ropes through the floor to brawl a bit because that's what those two guys do.

Dude Love is #28 to complete the running joke of the match. He immediately puts out Bradshaw as Goldust is on the floor but not eliminated. You can't see most of the mat because of how many people are in the ring at the moment. Austin pounds on Rock even more with Rock falling to the floor again. Chainz of DOA is #29 as Faarooq puts Brown out. More brawling ensues until Vader completes the field at #30. This gives us a final group of....hang on I need a breath first....Rock, Thrasher, Goldust, Honky Tonk Man, Mark Henry, Kama, Austin, Henry Godwinn, Vega, Faarooq, Dude Love, Chainz and Vader, or THIRTEEN PEOPLE.

Vader immediately pounds on Goldust and dumps Honky a few seconds later. Austin dumps Thrasher after an insanely too long 28 minutes. Austin puts out Kama to finally clear the ring out a bit. There goes Vega at Austin's

hands as well before Goldust dumps Vader. Godwinn goes out as well before Faarooq puts out Henry. We're down to Rock, Austin, Love and Faarooq as Chainz was put out by Austin off camera.

The Nation members are thrown together and Rock gets hit by Sweet Shin Music and the double arm DDT. Austin hits Dude low and Faarooq throws Love out. Rock puts out Faarooq to give us Austin vs. Rock. They slug it out and Rock is thrown to the apron. Austin is fine with Stunning him and throwing him out to go on to Wrestlemania where he would claim his destiny.

Rating: D+. Austin was awesome as he always was in 1998, but the rest of this match pretty much sucked. As I said over and over, there were way too many people in there for the most part. Also you had WAY too many people getting time they didn't deserve. I mean did anyone need to see Phineas, 8-Ball, Bradshaw, D'Lo Brown and Thrasher all getting over 28 minutes? Not much to see here other than Austin and Foley's funny bit.

Tyson celebrates "Cole Stone" Steve Austin winning the Rumble.

We recap Shawn vs. Undertaker. Basically they feuded extensively in the fall but then after Montreal, Shawn didn't want to face Owen for a fear of him trying to legit hurt him. Therefore they rehashed Undertaker vs. Shawn for the title here in a casket match. Most of the video here is about the first Cell match, which is still amazing stuff. Oh and one more thing: DX (still just three people at this point) attacked Taker on Raw but Kane had saved his brother, uniting with him for the first time ever. That was six days ago, and remember that a certain Vince Russo is booking.

WWF World Title: Undertaker vs. Shawn Michaels

Like I said, Shawn is defending and this is a casket match. Taker throwing the lights back on makes Shawn jump out of the ring. It's a brawl to start and Taker immediately grabs Shawn by the throat. Shawn punches his way out of it but jumps into another choke by Taker. An attempt at putting Michaels in the casket doesn't work, but a backdrop that put Michaels out of action for four and a half years by slamming his spine onto the casket does work.

Shawn slowly gets up and is kicked into the casket but he immediately bounces out. We head back in with Taker missing an elbow but hitting Old School. Shawn gets whipped into the corner for the Flair Flip to the floor, which is probably the last move he needed to do at this point. Back in and Shawn dives into a powerslam but Taker still can't slam the lid shut. Shawn comes out throwing powder and manages to get a breather. Taker is sent knees first into the steps and Shawn smashes the challenger's back with the steps.

A piledriver on the steps actually works for Shawn but he's got a broken back and can't follow up. HHH whacks Taker with the crutch (where is Owen if he's so angry?) as Shawn stays in full control. Back in and a jumping back elbow puts Taker down but he fights out of the casket. Shawn neckbreakers Taker before putting on a sleeper which is eventually countered into a Saito Suplex.

The forearm from Shawn sets up the nipup which sets up the top rope elbow. He must be either high as a kite on painkillers or on a huge adrenaline rush to be able to have a match like this at this point. The superkick knocks Taker out cold but Shawn is Shawn and stops for a crotch chop. Taker grabs him by the balls and we head back inside for the beating Shawn deserves. Another Flair Flip sets up the big boot, but Taker misses a clothesline and lands in the casket.

Shawn drops an elbow into the casket, closing the lid on both guys. Cool spot actually. Shawn crawls out but in a semi famous shot, Taker pulls him back into the casket, closing it with both guys inside again. Back in and Undertaker hits one of the biggest chokeslams he's ever hit followed by a JUMPING TOMBSTONE into the casket. The Outlaws and the Boricuas run in as we reenact Royal Rumble 1994, but here comes Kane to save the day. By save the day, naturally I mean turn on Undertaker and shut him in the casket to keep the title on Shawn and end the match.

Rating: B. Considering Shawn's back was literally broken in half during the match, this is a pretty awesome fight. When Taker gets ticked off and wants to hurt somebody, he can lay a beating out like few others in the world. Shawn struggling through a match in this condition is nothing short of great, and the fact that he survived Wrestlemania like this as

well is perhaps the greatest physical accomplishment of all time.

Post match Kane nails the casket shut and hacks at it with an ax. He pours gasoline inside and LIGHTS IT ON FIRE to end the show. Taker of course would disappear from the casket once it was opened up.

Overall Rating: D. Good main event aside, this was a REALLY dull show overall. 1998 would wind up being an awesome year, but this wasn't the best start to it in the world. We saw a lot of the relics of the bad times here, but Austin was coming and there was absolutely nothing WCW could do to stop him. This wasn't a good show at all, but it was a necessary evil to get us to the glory days.

Ratings Comparison

Vader vs. The Artist Formerly Known As Goldust

Original: B-

Redo: D

Max Mini/Mosaic/Nova vs. Battalion/El Torito/Tarantula

Original: B-

Redo: C

The Rock vs. Ken Shamrock

Original: C+

Redo: D+

Legion of Doom vs. New Age Outlaws

Original: D+

Redo: D

Royal Rumble

Original: D+

Redo: D

Shawn Michaels vs. Undertaker

Original: B

Redo: B

Overall Rating

Original: C-

Redo: D

...what in the world was I on back then?

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/18/royal-rumble-count-up-1998-austin-isnt-a-lock-to-win-please-believe-us/>

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