

# Lucha Underground – November 23, 2016: They're Better Than This

## Lucha Underground

Date: November 23, 2016

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

We're in a new stretch for Lucha Underground as Sexy Star dethroned the Monster Matanza last week and became the new Lucha Underground Champion. However there's no rest for the new champ as Johnny Mundo is cashing in his Gift of the Gods Title to get a shot at Star tonight. Let's get to it.

Of course we open with a recap of Aztec Warfare. Also covered is the Black Lotus Tribe vs. Pentagon Dark and the Gift of the Gods Title being cashed in.

The White Rabbit Tribe is here.

Trios Titles: Rabbit Tribe vs. Fenix/Drago/Aerostar

The Rabbit Tribe is Paul London, Mala Suerte (Bad Luck) and Saltador (guy in a checker suit). Basically they're all tripped out on drugs and acting weird. They're also challenging because they're making their debut here and are neither fabulous nor kangaroos. It's a brawl to start as Striker says London's reputation got the team this early title shot. London does a big backwards dive onto the champs as Vampiro suggests getting Striker high for a trip down the rabbit hole.

Back in and Suerte tells his partners to back Fenix up before hopping off the top and running across the ring for a dropkick. Fenix kicks Suerte in the head but crawls over to the wrong corner as the Rabbits changed places. The champs finally get tired of these antics and hit stereo kicks to the Rabbits' heads. They unleash the dives as we see Kobra Moon

watching from the top of Dario's office. Back in and Fenix rolls Saltador up to retain at 5:43.

**Rating:** C-. Just in case the 1938 different references from the announcers didn't make it clear, the Rabbits are all on drugs and tripping out. I can go for some characters with simple concepts but I can't handle these characters where they beat you over the head with their gimmick time after time. At least they didn't get the titles in their debut.

Moon says she'll make Drago bow.

The Mack congratulates Sexy Star on her win but she politely declines his offer to help against the Worldwide Underground. See, she's all independent and has to prove that she's awesome because of bullying or something.

#### Dante Fox vs. Killshot

I would have expected this to come a lot later. They talk a lot of trash to start with Killshot not wanting to do this. He's willing to defend himself though and it's a dropkick to put Dante down. A springboard dropkick sends Killshot to the floor and that means a suicide dive. Fox shows off his skills with a shooting star off the apron, only to have Killshot grab a neckbreaker from the apron to the floor.

Back in and the slug it out, which seems to freak Fox out. Fox tries another roll but flips right into a cutter to freak the crowd out. A cross armbreaker is countered and Fox puts him on the top, only to get caught in a Death Valley Driver onto the apron for a sick crash. Selling really isn't a thing around here though as Killshot comes back with something like an inverted fisherman's buster for the pin at 8:15.

**Rating:** C+. One guy hits the other really hard and then reverse it. Fox is a fun guy and should fit right in around here, much like so many other people who debut with a backstory and just happen to be a fully trained wrestler. Killshot is still one of the better performers in Lucha Underground and this was no exception. He'll be fine after a loss like this.

Johnny Mundo comes in to see Dario and tells him that Angelico has been barred from the building via a restraining order.

After a break, Dario comes back into his office and runs into Black Lotus. She wants Pentagon Dark and gets her wish....in a gauntlet match, including the rest of the women who attacked Dark last week.

#### Lucha Underground Title: Sexy Star vs. Johnny Mundo

Star is defending as Johnny is cashing in the Gift of the Gods Title, meaning it's officially vacant. Johnny takes her down into a chinlock to start and kicks away for two. A rollup gets two for the champ but she gets caught in something like a YES Lock. Mundo really doesn't seem to be trying here as Star is way beneath him.

Johnny hammers away and puts her in the Tree of Woe for a bit to keep up the destruction. The comeback is knocked away with ease but Star hits a few dropkicks for two. A neckbreaker cuts Star off again though and we hit the chinlock. Star finally gets in a Backstabber for two but a Russian legsweep puts Johnny in control again.

The same comeback and cutoff kills off another minute or so as this is getting boring in a hurry. Johnny misses a baseball slide and gets kicked into the barricade for more false hope. Star stomps away until Johnny steals a fan's crutch. The champ goes over to check on the fan and gets laid out with a brass knuckles shot. Back in and the End of the World changes the title at 11:12.

**Rating:** D. What a boring match. Star is the most transitional champion in the history of transitional champions and that whole standing up to the bullies idea went less than nowhere. Mundo is a better choice as champion but sweet goodness could they have made this any less interesting? Star never had a chance and they didn't even try to hide it. Really disappointing here but that was the case when Star won the title in the first place.

The fan was Taya of course and the Worldwide Underground celebrates to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. I know it doesn't sound right to say this but putting the title on Star, even for a week, was a big setback. It was a great last few minutes of Aztec Warfare but egads that was the end of the line for her usefulness on top of the promotion. I stopped caring about her as soon as the title match was announced and the main event made that very clear. Fox vs. Killshot is good but it's the lone bright spot here. Maybe this was just a necessary evil but I really didn't care about anything on here as the energy was just gone.

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# What Culture Pro Wrestling Loaded Episode 5: I'm Impressed

## WCPW Loaded Episode 5

Date: August 8, 2016

Location: 02 Academy, Newcastle Upon Tyne, England

Commentators: Alex Shane, Dave Bradshaw

This is What Culture Pro Wrestling, which is a promotion created by Whatculture.com, a pop culture site with a bunch of top ten lists and such. For some reason they started a wrestling promotion in the UK and it's been getting some solid reviews. Solid enough that someone asked me to take a look at them so let's get to it.

As is almost often the case with indy companies, I have no idea what to expect coming into this and know nothing about the promotion.

We open with a graphic saying these wrestlers aren't accurate portrayals of their real lives. "Our ring is actually a young single father. Sometimes his mind wanders when he lies awake at night. What happens when he gets too old to do this? Who will provide for Little Timmy then?" Oh this is going to be FUN.

A guy (presumably a boss) is on the phone with Roman (oh yeah I'm going to like this) and says he can't hire Roman until he's clean. Apparently his name is Adam Pechitti and he's the GM. I love it when promotions that love to poke fun at WWE always goes with the exact terminology WWE uses. Anyway, WCPW Champion Big Damo has injured someone named Rampage so we need a new #1 contender. Therefore tonight, it's Douglas Williams vs. Aaron Stevens (Damien Sandow). The announcement is done in less than two minutes (counting the earlier graphic) so they're already on a roll.

The set is simple with a ramp and three screens, the middle one featuring the company logo. Works for me.

### Noam Dar vs. Will Ospreay vs. El Ligero

Dar has a Star Wars theme (DAR WARS!) so hopefully he impresses me a bit more than he did in the Cruiserweight Classic. As the announcers talk about Dar nearly beating Jay Lethal to take the ROH World Title, we get some dancing with the ring announcer. Ligero is a bull themed luchador. Ospreay was in that really well received match with Riccochet a few months back and then had the match against Vader as a result.

Dar dances around a bit at the bell and I can't understand British chants. An EL LIGERO chant starts up but it's quickly off to ALL THESE GUYS. The only contact in the first minute and half is a few handshakes.

Being so polite is quite British of them. They finally get things going and everything misses until it's a standoff for a round of applause. Ospreay starts firing off some strikes as the announcers talk about Will feeling the pressure of being considered one of the best in the world.

Ligero is sent outside but Dar can't get anywhere on Ospreay's knee. The announcers debate what the fans might be chanting with one of the commentators saying he speaks fluent What Culture fan. Ligero kicks Ospreay in the face as they're doing the two men in, one on the floor formula. Dar comes back in and catches Ligero in a kneebar (I'm really not wild on this move towards submission cruiserweight wrestling). The save doesn't work for Ospreay as he gets caught in a kneebar at the same time.

Dar and Ligero exchange strikes until Ospreay moonsaults into a double kick to the head to put all three down. Ospreay starts picking up the pace and sends Dar outside so he can kick Ligero in the corner. That sets up a big running flip dive over the corner to take Dar out again, assuming you ignore most of the dive missing him completely. Something like a Phenomenal Forearm drops Ligero but he ducks a Rainmaker as New Japan's influence hits another promotion (it's still just a freaking clothesline).

Dar comes back in and dropkicks Ligero out of the air but Will makes the save. A rollup into a faceplant drops Ospreay but it's Ospreay making a save of his own at two. All three are down for the FIGHT FOREVER chant and it's time for the strike off. Ospreay does one of those WAY too complicated flips into a kick to the head (which didn't appear to connect) before the Oscutter (springboard into a cutter) is good for the pin on Dar.

**Rating:** B. That was the only possible option for the ending as Ospreay was definitely stealing the show here and being treated like the top star. The announcers hyped this up a lot more than it deserved but that's what you're going to get for a long indy triple threat. This was a lot of fun though and Ospreay looked like a star, which was the entire point. If you're a fan of this style, you'll LOVE this match.

A heel stable called the Prospect talks about how bright their future is. Whoever the leader (his name might be James R. Kennedy) is who welcomes a new member named Drake.

Joseph Connors comes up to a guy named Joe Hendry (seems faceish) and they seem to be a team having issues. It seems that they're arguing over who gets the most spotlight during their entrance and Connors is getting sick of this whole thing. He leaves Hendry on his own and Joe looks frustrated.

### Joe Hendry vs. Alex Gracie

Gracie has Prospect with him. Hendry seems very popular and his entrance video is him singing a wrestling themed version of AC/DC's TNT ("Cause I'm Joe Hendry, I'm dynamite, Joe Hendry, I'm always right, Joe Hendry, my first name is Joe!" Oh I think I've got a new favorite indy promotion.).

Joe takes him straight to the mat to start and it's time for a Prospect meeting on the floor. Back in and they seem to botch something so Hendry goes with a hard clothesline to drop Gracie for two. Sometimes you just need to hit someone really really hard. As the announcers make jokes about being attracted to each other (it fits in context), another Prospect member sneaks in for an Eat Defeat/Russian legsweep combo to take over on Hendry.

We hit the chinlock for a bit before Prospect is right back on Hendry. Back in and they chop it out with Hendry making a comeback but getting distracted by Prospect. Eat Defeat looks to set up something from the top but Joe grabs a fall away slam for the quick pin. Seriously, a fall away slam?

**Rating:** D+. It's pretty clear that Hendry is much more of a character than a wrestler and there's nothing wrong with that. The in ring part wasn't great but at least the pre-match was really entertaining and made me want to see more of Hendry. Prospect seems to have potential as well but a clean loss doesn't help them.

Post match Prospect beats on Hendry until Connors makes the save. Both

guys get interview time but Hendry says this is Connors' chance to talk. Connors thinks there are problems but it's Prospect behind those problems. They have each others' backs though and that's all that matters. Hands are shook and things seem to be fine.

Grado runs into someone not important enough to name and they both take off their shirts. Insults are exchanged but they quickly apologize. The announcers say the other guy's name is Martin Kirby. Good enough.

Here's General Manager Adam Pacitti with something to say. He gets right to the point: there's going to be a women's division and it starts RIGHT NOW.

### Bea Priestly vs. Nixon Newell

Bea is the heel here and both women are rather good looking. Feeling out process to start as they work on wristlocks with no one getting the upper hand. A chop and strut out of the corner make Newell even more popular and Bea rolls outside for a breather. Bea sends her into the post and licks Nixon's face to freak the announcers out.

Back in and things slow down a lot, as you might expect when a heel takes over. A really weak looking kick to the back gets two for Bea but a better looking kick to the face gets the same. To crank up the gross factor, Bea takes the gum out of her mouth (Who chews gum while wrestling?) and puts it in Nixon's mouth.

Possibly due to the high levels of WHAT IS WRONG WITH YOU, Nixon gets a near fall of her own off a Shining Wizard. Bea gets the better of an exchange of kicks to the face and drives a knee to the face for two. Nixon gets all aggressive again and headbutts her down, setting up a really sloppy looking Canadian Destroyer for the pin.

**Rating:** D+. This was better than a lot of women's matches you'll see outside of WWE but there was a lot of room for improvement. Then again, this was just the debut for the division so it's not like they have anywhere to go but up. Both women looked passable out there and seem to mainly be needing polish, which will come over time.



Liam Slater and Johnny Moss, a new team, are getting ready for their match when James R. Kennedy comes in to recruit Slater to Prospect. Moss basically throws him out because he wants to fight Prospect tonight.

### Prospect vs. Liam Slater/Johnny Moss

It's Drake/Lucas Archer for the team here. The announcer compares Prospect to New Day or the Freebirds as they regularly change members. I actually like that as everyone knows who those teams are and there's no reason to act like this is anything new or to act like they don't exist. Also, and perhaps above all else, they don't pretend like WWE is some horrible promotion. It comes off like WWE exists, they're good, but check out this new promotion as well because it can entertain you as well. That's really refreshing and it's nice for a change. Slater isn't very big and looks to be the speed guy while Moss is built like a tank.

Moss headlocks Drake to start and it's off to the very skinny Archer, who loses some chest skin in the corner. Slater comes in and the announcers bill him as Moss' protege. That makes a bit more sense as Moss really doesn't look like he needs much help. Some technical stuff puts Drake down but he knees Liam down to take over.

It's back to Moss a few seconds later so the announcers can keep sucking up to him. Slater gets kicked in the head though and it's time for the double teaming to begin. That goes nowhere though as it's off to Moss who cleans house with a double suplex. A jumping tombstone plants Archer and Drake gets pulled out of the air, setting up an avalanche headbutt from Liam for the pin on Archer.

**Rating:** C. This was ALL about Moss who looked really impressive. He's basically Ryback with the great look and in ring abilities to make it work even better. I had a lot of fun watching him while the other three were just kind of there. Prospect is a group that looks good on paper but haven't actually been the most impressive in the ring.

Some guy who calls himself a Prince leaves a hotel and insists that some guy who he refers to as his servant carry him to the arena. The servant reluctantly agrees.

Douglas Williams is offended that Aron Stevens is called a fellow wrestling legend. I'd be offended by that as well. Williams goes on a short rant about British wrestlers going overseas and turning their backs on wrestling. "Let's make ourselves great again."

### Douglas Williams vs. Aron Stevens

Stevens is of course Damien Sandow/Aron Rex. The winner gets a WCPW Title match at some point in the future. Before we get going, Stevens uses his towel to wipe down the top rope for far longer than is necessary. A wristlock sends Williams out to the floor and I think the fans call him boring. To keep the fans entertained, Stevens does a cartwheel. Back in and Aron sends him into the corner a few times before going back to the wristlock. I'm so thrilled that Stevens is bringing that cutting edge generic offense to the UK.

Stevens is sent outside as the announcers bicker over Youtube subscribers. We hit a figure four necklock as the USA chants begin. The fans want Aron to do some very horrible things to Williams but settle for a suplex. I think you can guess the chant for that one. Williams goes up and tries something like a Swanton but lands SQUARE ON HIS HEAD.

Thankfully he's not dead and Stevens can hit a few clotheslines, followed by a running flip neckbreaker for two. Williams tries a running knee but his leg gives out (the leg injury might explain the crash) so Stevens sits down on a sunset flip for the pin and the title shot. The count might have been a bit fast too as Williams looked badly hurt.

**Rating:** D+. Aron Stevens is just not very interesting. He got over with the whole stunt double thing and the solution now is to take away everything that made him popular in the first place? The match was messed up by the injury and Williams not being able to continue but everything before then didn't work well either. It doesn't help that I haven't seen Stevens do anything great since he left do WWE and this didn't change that trend.

Post match Adam Blampied comes out with the WCPW Title and talks long enough until Big Damo can come out and hit Stevens low. Trash talking ends the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. I had a lot of fun with this one. Like, a lot of fun with it. I'm actually looking into going to see this promotion when I'm in Orlando for Wrestlemania weekend and they're making their American debut. They're far from perfect but they come out with a confidence that you don't see a lot of promotions have. Their in ring work could use some polish but the fans care and they clearly have some money to spend on imported talent. This was a lot of fun though and you get a bunch of stuff on a single episode. Good show here and a promotion I liked WAY more than I was expecting to.

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## **Lucha Underground – November 16, 2016 (Aztec Warfare III): Letting Them Fight**

### **Lucha Underground**

Date: November 16, 2016

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

It's time to go big with AZTEC WARFARE. In other words it's the Royal

Rumble but with pinfalls or submissions only for eliminations, meaning the entire show is going to be spent on one match with the Lucha Underground Title on the line. This is almost always a blast and hopefully that continues today. Let's get to it.

Dario Cueto is walking through the back when he runs into Johnny Mundo, who promises to become a double champion tonight. Taya comes up with a camera of his own as Johnny, who is entrant #12, says he'll be cashing in his Gift of the Gods Title next week. That's fine with Dario, who rips up Johnny's #12 card to make him #2.

### Lucha Underground Title: Aztec Warfare

There are twenty entrants with 90 second intervals. Matanza, defending here, is in at #1 and Mundo is in at #2 (taking Sexy Star's spot). Johnny gets to the apron for a kick to the face but Matanza pulls it out of the air and throws him with a suplex. Son of Havoc is in at #3 and the duo wisely joins forces to go after the champ. A spinning crossbody/legsweep combo gets two and it's Jeremiah Crane (great name) in at #4.

Matanza gets kicked out to the floor and the three others start fighting for some reason until Pentagon Dark (POP) is in at #5. Back from a break (such a rarity around here) with little having changed and Pentagon cleaning house. Matanza gets back in and knocks Pentagon to the floor, likely in a preview of a HUGE rematch down the line. PJ Black is in at #6 and gets two on Crane via a top rope Lionsault.

Mariposa is in at #7 as we're hitting the midcard portion. I know it seems that I'm skipping a lot of stuff but it's your standard battle royal without much going on between entrances. Matanza picks up Crane and swings him into a German suplex for the first elimination. A swinging chokeslam gets rid of Mariposa as Rey Mysterio comes in at #8 for the superhero staredown with Matanza.

Back from a second break with the Worldwide Underground preventing Rey from getting in (I'm very glad they're pausing the show during commercials, if nothing else so I don't have to figure out who has come in or been eliminated) and then hiding under the ring. Dr. Wagner Jr. is in at #9 and it's Marty Martinez in at #10 without much going on. At the

moment it's Matanza, Mundo, Pentagon, Black, Mysterio, Wagner and Martinez.

Marty and Matanza slug it out to make things more interesting. The fight goes outside with the champ getting the advantage until Jack Evans is in at #11. The Worldwide Underground triple teams Havoc for an elimination and it's Sexy Star in at #12 as we go to the third break. Back again with a little bit clipped (balderdash) and Star being thrown outside so the dives can be unleashed. Ricky Mandel is in at #13...and is promptly package piledriven.

Pentagon loads up the arm but here are Black Lotus and three other good looking women to beat the heck out of him. A standing Canadian Destroyer from one of them is enough for Mundo to steal the pin and the elimination. Black pins Mandel and it's Mascarita Sagrada in at #14. Wrath of the Gods gets rid of Sagrada in about ten seconds as they're clearing the ring out a bit. Famous B. is in at #15 and tries to sign Rey up, earning himself a 619 and springboard splash for another elimination. Marty comes in and cleans house until Rey grabs a rollup for a fast pin.

The Mack is in at #16, followed by Joey Ryan at #17. Just like last year, Ryan handcuffs himself to the guardrail to hide...but it's Mil Muertes in at #18. Mil BREAKS THE HANDCUFFS (ignore the camera cut) and throws Joey inside for a Flatliner. Matanza gives Wagner Wrath of the Gods at the same time and it's a double elimination. That means it's time for the big monster brawl and it's the still useless Kobra Moon in at #19.

Mack Stuns Evans for an elimination and does the same to Black for the same result. Drago is in at #20 to give us a final field of Matanza, Mundo, Mysterio, Star, Mack, Muertes, Moon and Drago fighting for the title. It's a wild brawl all over the place with Matanza piledriving Muertes on the floor, leaving Drago to roll Moon up for the elimination. The champ runs in and powerbombs Drago to get us down to six as things settle down in a hurry.

Everybody goes after Matanza and it's finishers a go-go with a 619 looking to set up....another 619, only to have the champ catch Rey in mid swing. That's reversed into a quick Code Red and Matanza is eliminated as

we go to what is likely the final break. Back with Matanza going nuttier and beating the heck out of Rey before SHOVING DARIO DOWN. Johnny pins Rey and we're down to four.

The referees check on Rey's back as the eliminated Black and Evans come back in to beat on Star. Mysterio is taken out on a stretcher but cue the returning Angelico to dive off the balcony to take out the Worldwide Underground for the big dive. Star actually pins Mundo for the big surprise, leaving us with Star, Muertes and the Mack. The spear and Flatliner get rid of Mack (good as there was no chance he was winning), leaving Muertes to beat the heck out of Star. Due to reasons of ECW IS AMAZING, it's table time instead of Mil just finishing Star off like he should be able to do with all of no effort.

Star reverses a chokeslam into a DDT onto a chair and a series of chair shots gets a great false two. The spear only hits the table and Star gets two more off a rollup. Mil PUNCHES HER SQUARE IN THE JAW (that sounded great) but stops to get another table (boy you stupid). The super Flatliner is broken up with Mil being shoved through the table, meaning it's a top rope double stomp to give Star the pin and the title at 56:58.

**Rating:** A-. And this is why Lucha Underground works. Can you imagine this happening on one of the big shows? They would cram it into the last thirty minutes with a ton of talking segments before the match actually started and there's no way a midcarder would get the belt in the end. Above all else though, the crowd helped this one so much in the end with the big gasps at the near falls. The middle part brings this down a bit as it felt more like having people out there for the sake of filling in spots and that's not a great feeling. Still though, outstanding stuff here, as is always the case with Aztec Warfare.

**Overall Rating:** A. Great match, cool moment and a title match set up for next week. Mundo winning by beating a weakened Star would be as perfect of a title win as he could possibly have and it would continue a great story. I had a blast with this show because Lucha Underground knows how to do shows like this. The show is picking up a lot and that's a very big relief.

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# Lucha Underground – November 9, 2016: The First of Many Highlights

## Lucha Underground

Date: November 9, 2016

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

It's a special week around here as we get one of the signature matches from Lucha Underground: Grave Consequences. While most promotions call it a casket match, Lucha Underground turns it into one of the biggest deals in their entire calendar. It helps that the match is between Mil Muertes and Prince Puma, which basically guarantees how awesome it's going to be. Let's get to it.

The opening recap looks at Famous b. vs. Mascarita Sagrada (with Son of Havoc and Dr. Wagner Jr. thrown in) and of course Grave Consequences.

Catrina gives Muertes a pep talk, saying she won't bring him back again

if he loses.

### Mascarita Sagrada vs. Famous B.

Believers Backlash, meaning fans bring the weapons. Sagrada grabs some football pads and headbutts B. low with the helmet, followed by a splash off the stepladder. Don't bother asking where the weapons are coming from here as the fans are just handing them over. B. misses a shot with a big bag of popcorn as the comedy is actually working here. How serious can a manager vs. a mini really be?

Some trashcan shots to Famous draw the Duke Droese reference and it's time for an atomizer full of perfume, which is actually labeled Arrogance. Nice touch. Sagrada pulls out a wizard hat and makes a bowling ball appear for the Al Snow spot. Cue Wagner and Havoc who quickly cancel each other out, leaving Sagrada to blast B. with a portrait of...Famous B. Brenda gets pied (which freaks the fans out WAY more than it should) and a tornado DDT puts B. away at 7:02.

**Rating:** B-. It was fun and that's all they were going for. I get really tired of seeing matches like this go from comedy to serious and then back to a goofy finish and that's not it needed to be. Good, entertaining match here and that's all it needed to be. Sagrada should have destroyed B. and he did just that.

Sagrada cuts up a big cardboard cutout of B. and Havoc gives him a vest.

Dante is getting ready when Killshot comes in. Apparently Dante has gotten a job and they have to fight together tonight, though neither seems happy with it.

Kobra Moon is still trying to get Drago to join a tribe but gets turned down again. Vinny appears and is still creepy.

### Mack/Mariposa/Marty Martinez/Jeremiah Crane/Ivelisse vs.

### Killshot/Argenis/Dante Fox/Cage/Texano

The winning team is in Aztec Warfare. Crane kicks Fox in the face to start and a Death Valley Driver sends Fox over to tag Killshot. The couple actually starts beating on Killshot but Cage comes in to throw



Ivelisse into the corner. The rapid tags that you would expect begin and it's already time to lose track of everything that's going on.

We unleash the dives until Fox and Killshot argue in the ring. As with any arguing team, they're fine enough to work perfectly together and kick Marty and Mariposa in the face. Ivelisse flips out of a suplex into a hurricanrana (sweet) for two...and then crashes to the floor, injuring her ankle again like she did in season one. She screams NOT AGAIN as Fox lays out Killshot so Marty can get the pin at 4:03.

**Rating:** C. This was a bit too short to mean much but it was the kind of entertaining match you would expect from a show like this one. Fox and Crane are good additions to the roster and the rest all have roles (save for Argenis, who the announcers said was basically just there), making this exactly what it needed to be.

Dario Cueto gives Matanza a pep talk.

#### Prince Puma vs. Mil Muertes

Grave Consequences and Puma kicks Muertes in the face during the entrances. That earns Puma a whip into the empty chairs, only to have him hit Mil in the mask with the bell. Puma goes to get the casket and is promptly powerbombed onto it. Of course it's table time because where would we be without one of those?

Unfortunately even death doesn't make you smart enough to not put a chair in the corner, meaning Muertes goes head first into it. That's completely no sold though and Puma is speared through the table in the corner. Mil unhooks the turnbuckle (Why not?) and the casket is brought inside. That takes too long as well, meaning it's a springboard 450 onto Mil on the casket. The lid is slammed onto Mil's back over and over...and here's another table.

Vampiro is WAY too happy about this evil side of Puma and you can feel his inner darkness coming out. Mil can't quite close the lid and the Flatliner is countered with a kick to the head. As expected though, Puma takes too much time setting up something big and gets chokeslammed through two tables at ringside. Mil goes to the back and finds the same

casket that he put Konnan inside. A Flatliner on the floor is enough to finish Puma at 16:03.

**Rating:** A-. Great stuff here as they beat the heck out of each other with Mil just being too much for Puma when it came to the violence. In addition to getting rid of Puma for the time being, it also helps charge Muertes up before we get to Aztec Warfare next week. We haven't really seen Muertes vs. Matanza in their big fight last season and a return to that violence would be a lot of fun.

Puma's casket is carried out to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** A-. If there's one thing Lucha Underground knows how to do, it's set up something big for a major main event. Other than the great main event, we also had the fun opener and more names announced for Aztec Warfare. That's going to be an even more entertaining show next week as Lucha Underground gets better, despite us only being at the beginning of a forty episode season (that should explain some of the slower pacing).

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# Lucha Underground – November 2, 2016: It Worked Before

## Lucha Underground

Date: November 2, 2016

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

We're only a few weeks away from Aztec Warfare and that means things are about to pick up in a big way. With Matanza seemingly unstoppable in singles matches, the best way to get the title off of him is to throw everyone at him at the same time, even though that didn't work so well last year. Let's get to it.

The opening recap...is cut off by an ad for a movie marathon airing this Saturday. It seemed to be talking about the undercover cops and Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. Chavo Guerrero in a loser leaves the temple match.

It's time for Dario's Dial of Doom and the spin lands on Dario's Choice. After a tease of Mysterio, Dario has a surprise for us.

## Lucha Underground Title: Matanza vs. Cortez Castro

Castro is challenging and has a broken arm. Striker asks if we should get the Bob Orton Jr. jokes in now or save them for later. See, it's because Matt is the wrestling fan and overly smug. Matanza kicks him in the arm and breaks the cast in two. That actually gives Cortez an opening as he swings the broken cast at the champ, only to get smacked back down. Wrath of the Gods retains the title at 2:27.

Dario calls Castro a rat in a rare instance of the backstage stuff being mentioned in front of the cameras.

Dario and Joey Ryan are laughing in the back when Son of Havoc comes in with Mascarita Sagrada. Mascarita wants to face Famous B. so Dario makes Havoc vs. Dr. Wagner Jr. If Havoc wins, Mascarita gets to pick the stipulations for the match with Famous B. If Wagner wins, he gets to

pick.

Here's Prince Puma to address the crowd for one of the only times ever. He pinned Mil Muertes a few weeks back but that's not enough revenge for Muertes putting Konnan in a coffin. Therefore, Puma wants Grave Consequences. Catrina comes out to accept almost immediately but here's Muertes to jump Puma. The Prince fights back and clears the ring, complete with his backflip into the pose.

#### Dr. Wagner Jr. vs. Son of Havoc

The winner gets to pick the stipulations for next week's Famous B. vs. Mascarita Sagrada match. Wagner gets clotheslined to the floor at the bell and Havoc follows with back to back suicide dives. Havoc sends him into the barricade but gets spun inside out off a clothesline back inside. Famous B. goes after Sagrada due to reasons of evil as the fans chant 423-YOU-SUCK. The clothesline is returned to put Wagner down and the shooting star gives Havoc the pin at 5:25.

**Rating:** C-. This might be better if it wasn't designed to set up a glorified comedy feud. I mean, does anyone really care about Mascarita Sagrada beating up his former manager? This feud has gone on for months now and they were really smart to bring in some fresh names but it's still not interesting whatsoever.

Mascarita picks Believers Backlash, meaning fans bring the weapons. I'm not sure how that helps him but I'll just be glad for this feud to end.

The White Rabbit Tribe is still coming.

Grave Consequences is confirmed for next week.

#### Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. Chavo Guerrero Jr.

Loser leaves the Temple and unfortunately that means we have to hear about how great and legendary Chavo is. Chavo headlocks Rey down to start as Dinero talks about how many times this match has taken place over the years. Not the best argument, but neither is having Chavo in a featured role.

Rey headscissors him out to the floor for another headscissors into the crowd but the fans are too busy chanting for Chavo Classic (Chavo Senior, in the crowd tonight). Back in and Rey's hurricanrana is countered so Chavo can start in on the leg for a smart move. Chavo throws Rey off the top but gets powerbombed down for a double crash. A tilt-a-whirl backbreaker sets up Three Amigos on Rey but he comes right back with a headscissors. Cue Chavo Classic with a chair....to hit his son and that's a DQ, meaning REY IS GONE!

Actually never mind as here's Dario to say we're restarting this match under No DQ rules because Chavo Classic isn't ruining his main event. Classic takes the 619 but Chavo Jr. rolls through a top rope seated senton into a half crab. Rey gets out but his leg is really banged up. The Gory Bomb gets two more on Mysterio, who comes back with a basement dropkick. Now the 619 and springboard splash get rid of Chavo at 13:40.

**Rating:** B-. Chavo is a great example of someone skilled but not interesting. Aside from his time with Eddie and the last few months of WCW, I don't remember a single time where I was interested in seeing a Chavo Guerrero match? The guy is just there and probably wouldn't be on this show without his last name. The false finish was good stuff though and the match was solid for an off weak main event. Chavo being gone is for the greater good and that's the most important part.

**Overall Rating:** C. There's a different feeling around here because Aztec Warfare gives us something to look forward to. You can only get so much out of short form stories like Lucha Underground has been doing for months now and this is the big upgrade that the show has been needing. It's still entertaining enough and I'm looking forward to the big gimmick matches they've got coming up. In other words, Lucha Underground is getting back to what works and that's very good.

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# Lucha Underground – October 27, 2016: It's A Soul In A Box

## Lucha Underground

Date: October 26, 2016

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

The countdown to Aztec Warfare is on and that means things are about to pick up around here. The problem with this season so far has been the lack of any meaningful story but the entire roster contending for the title in one match should get us somewhere. If nothing else it would be nice to see something other than one random challenger a week. Let's get to it.

This week's opening recap looks at Texano vs. Cage, Johnny Mundo getting a Gift of the Gods Title shot and Ivelisse's boyfriend Jeremiah. These things are a great refresher and a solid preview of things to come tonight.

Sexy Star comes into Dario Cueto's office and demands her Lucha Underground Title shot next week. Dario admires her huevos but says she has to defend the Gift of the Gods Title against Johnny Mundo tonight. If Aerostar, Fenix or Drago interfere, they're banned from the Temple forever.

## Marty Martinez vs. Ivelisse

Marty smiles as Ivelisse forearm him in the face and a middle rope crossbody is turned into a powerslam. As the beating goes on, Vampiro says Marty weighs 300lbs. I know wrestling weights are gimmicked but that sounds insane. Mariposa gets in a few bites (thereby freaking Melissa Santos out) and Marty elbows Ivelisse in the face. A few strikes stagger Marty but Ivelisse's guillotine choke actually brings him down. Well at least a little down until he knocks her silly with a spinebuster. A full nelson slam puts Ivelisse away at 4:20.

**Rating:** D+. Lucha Underground is normally pretty good with their intergender matches but in this case it was Marty destroying one of the best women in the promotion. Ivelisse never had a chance here and Marty, who isn't much of a star in his own right, basically squashed her. What happened here?

Post match Jeremiah comes in and cleans house until it turns into a brawl, likely setting up a tag match. Jeremiah seems to apologize to Ivelisse for interfering but she's not pleased.

The Rabbit Tribe, including Paul London, is coming soon.

Jeremiah is still apologizing and suggests he join the Temple. The idea of them fighting together seems to appeal to Ivelisse.

And now, let's make things interesting. We go to the inside of Councilman Delgado's limo when Dario gets in. Dario says someone's ascension is complete (they might be talking about their boss but it's not clear) and Delgado talks about needing a host body. It seems that the series between Texano and Cage will be for the right to be the host so Delgado hands Dario a box....which I assume contains a soul? Now THIS is Lucha Underground!

## Texano vs. Cage

This is match #3 in a best of five series with Cage up 2-0. Texano goes right after him (because he's desperate) and a clothesline sends Cage outside. A whip into the eternally empty wooden chairs makes things even

worse for Cage so he throws Texano right back. Texano pops back up as well and sunset bombs Cage over the top and back onto the floor.

Back in and the no selling continues with Cage throwing him down in a fall away slam. A top rope superplex puts both guys down in a heap and Cage is the first to cover for two. Cage's pumphandle faceplant gets the same so Texano hits a middle rope leg lariat for his own near fall. This is a bunch of trading spots and that's all it should be. A buckle bomb sets up an F5 on Texano and the kickout frustrates Cage even more. With Cage at his wits' end, Texano grabs a small package for the pin at 7:45.

**Rating:** C+. I'm a big fan of that ending as they were beating the heck out of each other until one guy puts the brakes on and goes in a completely opposite direction for the pin. It's good psychology and works almost every time. I'm sure we'll see these two fight again but it's nice to keep them from fighting on every single show. In other words, this isn't Cesaro vs. Sheamus.

Dario is looking in the box (What could that possibly look like?) when Rey Mysterio comes in. Rey wants to face Chavo Guerrero in a Loser Leaves the Temple match. Dario agrees and says you have to put a dog down for its own good. Now anyone other than a wrestling face would see that something is up with a statement like that but Rey is cursed with being an idiot.

#### Gift of the Gods Title: Johnny Mundo vs. Sexy Star

Star is defending. It's a change of pace this time as Star tries to stay away to start, only to get taken down into an amateur wrestling contest. This goes badly for the champ and Johnny kicking at the legs make it even worse. A botched looking neckbreaker puts Sexy down again and a running knee to the face gets two.

Johnny goes Backlund with a crossface chickenwing before putting Star on the top rope and elbowing her in the face. You don't see that very often but it's happened twice on this one show. Johnny tries a moonsault but lands on raised feet to FINALLY (ok they're four minutes into the match) give Star an opening. Star goes with some weak looking right hands to the face and a failed monkey flip because YOU CAN'T MONKEY FLIP JOHNNY MUNDO!



Yeah doesn't have quite the same ring.

Mundo spears the referee by mistake and of course Star chokes Johnny out a few seconds later. Cue the Worldwide Underground to lift Star up so Johnny can charge at her, sending her flipping over and down to the mat (Chikara's BDK used it as their finisher, Ragnarok). Another referee comes in as the Underground leaves (So he was watching the match to see the ref bump but not the interference?) to count two, meaning Johnny knocks him out too.

The Underground wraps a chair around Star's neck but before they can Pillmanize her, it's the Mack running in with a bunch of Stunners. Star chairs Mundo in the head for two and I can hear Vince Russo's laughter in my head. Johnny misses the split legged moonsault but pulls out a pair of brass knuckles to knock Star out for the pin and the title at 11:43.

**Rating:** D. I know this is a promotion where the suspension of disbelief has to be stretched but the idea that the referees didn't catch on to ANY of that cheating is too much for me to take. This was Sexy Star vs. the World (wide Underground) and it really didn't work. Mundo cheating to win once or twice at the most would have been fine but this was two people interfering, a chair, two ref bumps and brass knuckles. There's a line you can cross where it's too much to take and this match jumped over it.

Prince Puma is working out when Vampiro comes in to say beating Mil Muertes was a great first step. Vampiro brings up Muertes killing Konnan, which Puma finds due to Vampiro's hatred of Konnan. Puma seems to think about it to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. This wasn't a strong episode on the wrestling side though we're starting to get back on the right path with the storytelling, which is where Lucha Underground shines. You can tell there's going to be some big stuff coming at the Aztec Warfare show and that's a good sign going forward. This show wasn't a good sign though and that's quite the fall after last week's strong outing.

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# Lucha Underground – October 19, 2016: It's A Big Deal Again

## Lucha Underground

Date: October 19, 2016

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

Things haven't been great around here but this week will see Prince Puma facing Mil Muertes. If that's not going to help things out around here, there's nothing that's going to. Other than that we're likely seeing more in the never ending Chavo Guerrero vs. Rey Mysterio feud. Let's get to it.

The opening recap looks at Prince Puma's rebirth, Killshot being stalked, the Worldwide Underground vs. Sexy Star and Dario's Dial of Doom.

Vampiro goes up to Puma for some advice but the Prince wants nothing to do with him.

We open with Dario's Dial of Doom for the Lucha Underground Title shot.

## Lucha Underground Title: Matanza vs. Killshot

Killshot is challenging but has a bad back coming in. Matanza is smart enough to go after the ribs and throw Killshot down onto the back. Some backbreakers have Killshot in even more trouble and Matanza shrugs off anything Killshot throws at him. Killshot goes up and has to escape a super tombstone of all things. Instead it's a superkick to crotch Matanza into an elevated DDT. The double stomp misses though and Wrath of the Gods retains the title at 4:08.

**Rating:** C. I kind of like the idea of Killshot winning one of these in a glorified squash. Matanza doesn't always have to be vulnerable and Killshot's back injury prevents this from killing Killshot's credibility. He's already got a story going and isn't a main event name so let the big name beat him decisively while he can move on.

Post match a guy with more dog tags (Former Evolve Champion AR Fox.) comes in to see Killshot. After an awkward hug, the unnamed man kicks Killshot in the face and gives him a fisherman's buster. With Killshot down, the guy throws the dog tags on him and says Killshot left him for dead. I'm digging this story and the matches should be awesome.

The Rabbit Tribe is still coming.

## Drago vs. Fenix vs. Aerostar

This is for one of Dario's unique opportunities and that could mean anything. If nothing else it should mean a sweet match. Speaking of sweet, Dario announces AZTEC WARFARE returning in four weeks. Matanza will be entering at #1 and the winner of this match will be entering at #20, though the losers are OUT. That certainly is a unique opportunity.

Fenix is on the apron to start as they're actually having tags. Feeling out process to start until Aerostar is sent outside, meaning Fenix can legally come in. The tags are quickly forgotten (as they should be) and things speed way up in a hurry. Fenix gets slammed face first into the mat to bust him open, leaving Aerostar to kick Drago in the corner. That's fine with Fenix who superkicks the heck out of Aerostar, setting off the streak of dives to the floor.

Back in and Aerostar gets two off a DDT with Drago making the save. Drago puts Aerostar on the apron and Fenix on the top, only to have the latter take him out with a high crossbody. Fenix grabs his standing Indian deathlock on Drago but gets caught in a Black Widow at the same time. I know they look cool but I'm not a fan of spots where they're clearly working together. Fenix is sent outside and Drago grabs a running Blockbuster for the pin on Aerostar at 8:47.

**Rating:** B-. This is the kind of lucha match that the show has been lacking. Just have three people (who happen to be the Trios Champions) go out there and fly around for a bit so the crowd can have fun. It's an idea that worked really well before and it's working well now. Fenix and Aerostar being out of Aztec Warfare is interesting, even though Fenix would have been a dark horse contender.

Drago is in the back when Kobra Moon crawls up to him. She wants him to bring the title back to their tribe but he says he left years ago. Vinnie Massaro of all people comes up eating pizza and saying this is the men's locker room.

Johnny Mundo comes in to Dario's office and STILL demands to be Lucha Underground Champion. Mundo gives Dario most of \$100,000 for a shot at the Gift of the Gods Title.

#### Mil Muertes vs. Prince Puma

Puma strikes away to start but the headscissors is broken up with a knee to the ribs. A springboard clothesline only gets Puma so far but he avoids a charge and hits two straight dives. That's fine with Muertes who spears Puma in half and hits him with a wooden chair. For some reason Muertes stops to look at the stone though and Puma hits a huge dive off the balcony to take him down again. What a sweet looking spot. There's nothing else that needs to be said there: he went up really high, dove off, and looked cool. Sometimes that's all you need.

Back in and Mil snaps off a powerslam before forearming Puma out of a spinning kick. A painful looking swinging chokeslam gets two on Puma but a superkick sets up the 630 for the completely clean pin on Muertes at 8:50. I know Muertes has taken a backseat to Matanza in the last year or

so but that's still a big win.

**Rating:** B+. This is the kind of match I love seeing on Lucha Underground. It's an old feud and they beat the heck out of each other with a bunch of big spots. Puma is someone who could be rocketed right back to the top of the card and this is the kind of win that could do that for him. The same is true of Muertes, who will get to rebound from this kind of a loss.

Rey Mysterio is talking to Chavo Guerrero Sr. about his respect for Chavo Jr. Sr. respects Rey as well.

**Overall Rating:** B. Now that's more like it. This was an action packed show but more importantly they now have something to look forward with Aztec Warfare. That match is the kind of thing that feels unique to Lucha Underground, which is something they've been missing for a long time now. Then again, maybe it was the lack of Chavo as that's always a good thing.

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# Lucha Underground – October

# 16, 2016: Wrestling With An Accent

## Lucha Underground

Date: October 12, 2016

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

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

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

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

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

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

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

allowing B. to get the pin, with Wagner's stethoscope of course, at 5:25.

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

The Rabbit Tribe is coming soon.

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

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

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

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

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

**Rating:** C-. I really don't like the WWE style starting to sneak into this promotion. This match didn't even go ten minutes and had five people interfere, along with a kendo sick. Lucha Underground goes hardcore and

violent at times but I'd like that kind of stuff to stay far, far away from the regular matches. At least Star retained for a little while longer though and that's important.

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

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

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

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

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

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



something better as well.

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

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

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# Lucha Underground – October 5, 2016: Now That's An Upgrade

## Lucha Underground

Date: October 5, 2016

Location: Lucha Underground Temple, Boyle Heights, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

I don't know how many other ways I can put this but Lucha Underground has been pretty boring lately. There's been one good match with Killshot vs. Marty the Moth but the rest of the season has been spent running around in circles from one loose end to another. Maybe this is the show that starts to fix things though so let's get to it.

We open with recaps of Dario's Dial of Doom, Prince Puma vs. Mil Muertes and Texano vs. Cage.

Here's Dario Cueto to spin the Dial and it's....Prince Puma. Now that's an upgrade.

### Ivelisse vs. Mariposa

Mariposa has Marty in her corner. Ivelisse is taken down to the mat to start and Mariposa goes after her hair. They fight over a lockup and Ivelisse takes over with a clothesline. The fans are way into Ivelisse here and it's hard to argue as she looks awesome out there. A Marty distraction lets Mariposa take Ivelisse down by the hair and it's off to something like a Sharpshooter but with Ivelisse using her arms instead of the legs.

After the rope is grabbed, Marty gets slapped away so it's time for both villains to choke in the corner. Ivelisse fights out of a fireman's carry and kicks out of a Samoan drop. Mariposa can't get the Butterfly Effect either so it's Code Red (running sunset flip bomb) to give Ivelisse the pin at 6:20.

**Rating:** C-. The women of Lucha Underground are such a strange group. Sometimes they can have the best match in weeks and other times you would think they had learned by watching old Bella Twins tapes. This felt like a collection of moves instead of a regular match and that's rarely a good thing. As usual, it's another match for the sake of having a match, which has plagued this season.

Marty decks Ivelisse post match.

Dario is on the phone when Johnny Mundo comes in, yet again demanding a title shot. Why did Puma get one tonight? He didn't earn it like Mundo

earned his abs so why should he get a title shot? Dario says no so Johnny will settle for Sexy Star and the Gift of the Gods Title. That's not happening either because Johnny's Worldwide Underground stablemate Jack Evans already has that shot. Johnny isn't pleased.

The White Rabbit Tribe is coming. Somehow I like this idea.

### Texano vs. Cage

Match #2 in a best of five series with Cage up 1-0. Texano misses a running boot to start and gets shouldered in the corner. Cage is knocked outside and sent into various metal objects but Cage comes right back with a superplex for two. A hard elbow to the jaw drops Cage again but he grabs a powerslam to set up a middle rope moonsault. Striker is very happy that we're guaranteed another one of these though I don't quite share that sentiment. Cage catches him coming out of the corner with a sitout Alabama Slam and an F5 wraps up Texano at 6:28.

**Rating:** C. Striker thinks that going up 2-0 makes Cage the favorite to win the whole thing. That's Michael Cole levels of stating the obvious and it's getting harder and harder to sit through. It's also getting hard to sit through this best of five series, but at least the matches have been quick and we should be done next time. Then again, this is wrestling so we're going to go to five matches because of course we are.

Ivelisse's boyfriend Jeremiah (Sami Callihan) wants to beat on Marty and Mariposa for jumping her but Ivelisse says she wants to keep things separate.

### Lucha Underground Title: Prince Puma vs. Matanza

Matanza is defending and has Dario in his corner. They trade hard shots to the face to start with Matanza getting the better of it, only to miss a charge and get dropkicked out to the floor. A shooting star off the apron makes things worse for the champ but he's more than capable of hanging in a fight on the floor.

Puma is whipped hard into the barricade and it's time for the monster to throw him around with raw power. We hit the chinlock for a bit before

Matanza runs him over with a hard shoulder so Puma can sell the heck out of it. That's so important and makes monsters look even better. Puma comes back with something like a 619 around the post to set up a springboard clothesline.

Another shooting star gets two on the champ as the fans are WAY behind Puma here. Matanza opts for another splash but Puma actually pulls him out of the air for a lifting suplex. Now THAT makes the fans lose their minds but Puma's kick is caught in the air and turned into a capture suplex for two more. Wrath of the Gods is countered into a DDT though and Dario gets to panic all over again. More kicks to the head set up the 630 but Mil Muertes comes in with a spear to take Puma out....but Dario says it's No DQ. Muertes gives Puma a Flatliner and Wrath of the Gods retains the title at 12:55.

**Rating:** B. This was a very entertaining match but because it had two people who know how to wrestle the big match style. However, there's only so much you can do with no story. Other than a wheel spinning, there's no reason for Puma to get this shot. The action more than carried this one though and that's what makes something like this work.

Killshot is lifting weights when Joey Ryan comes in with a note for him. Killshot asks who gave it to him. Ryan: "What do I look like? A detective?" The note says Killshot left someone for dead.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This show was better than usual but the big problem is still there: the lack of stories building up to the big matches. Almost none of these matches have any real build to the showdowns and almost everything feels like it's thrown together in a few minutes. Lucha Underground works because they build things up over time whereas recent weeks have been little more than "here's the story and here's the match a week or two later". That takes away the uniqueness from the show and that's not a good thing.

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# Middle Kingdom Wrestling – September 18, 2016 (Season 2 Finale): A Different Kind of Upgrade

## Middle Kingdom Wrestling

Date: September 18, 2016

Location: CWE Gym, Dongguan, China

Commentator: Eddie Strong

It's the season finale with MKW Champion Dalton Bragg defending against the huge King Michael. This has been a rather different season as there hasn't been much of a focus aside from the stuff over the title near the beginning. I'm still liking it well enough though and there's a story to get us here, which is the most important thing. Let's get to it.

## M.A. vs. King of Man

This is a bonus match and a Kung Fu Showcase. No story or anything here and I don't know who either of them are but that's standard around here. They trade kicks and strikes to start of course with King (there probably shouldn't be two Kings on the same show) getting the better of it until he gets thrown off the top. I don't remember that in the full two Kung Fu

movies I've seen.

A nice looking headscissors sends M.A. flying and a Vader Bomb elbow gets one. M.A. comes back with some running clotheslines in the corner as Strong (dang it I miss Ferguson) tells us that M.A. is the heel. See, that's something so easy that a simple statement clears up. King gets caught in a hard chokeslam for two but he comes right back with a basement dropkick for two of his own.

We hit a dragon sleeper on M.A. as Strong tells us about the horrible weather in China at the moment. A missed moonsault from King sends both guys outside and M.A. hits a Triad Kick (Mafia Kick) for two. M.A. gets a bit more creative with a chokeslam spinebuster for yet another two, only to have King throw him down and hit a spinning top rope splash for the pin.

**Rating:** C+. I'm not sure where the Kung Fu part came in but this was another nice match with some time to make it work. Of course it's not exactly up to par with most stuff you'll see but it was still an entertaining match with one guy as the heel and the other as the face. A story would have been nice but at least we had something entertaining for the first half of the show.

Quick recap of King Michael vs. Dalton Bragg. Michael attacked Bragg earlier in the season and a match was made. Simple, yet effective.

Middle Kingdom Wrestling Title: Dalton Bragg vs. King Michael

Bragg is defending and this is anything goes. This is kind of an odd visual as Michael is huge and Bragg is a stick but he's still taller than Michael. I also don't buy for a second that Michael is 500lbs as he looks closer to 350. You can gimmick the weights but there's a limit. Bragg gets shouldered down and splashed for two so it's time for weapons.

Michael sets up a piece of wood over some boxes but has to shrug off some clotheslines before easily blocking a suplex. Instead it's a chokebomb to put Bragg...onto the wood, which just kind of flew to the side instead of breaking. A World's Strongest Slam sets up some kendo stick shots but Bragg takes it away and pounds on Michael.

We hear about Bragg's deathmatch background (which was mentioned in season one) as Michael takes it outside where some of his cronies get in a few shots to Bragg's back. Another table is set up but Dalton gets in a few more kicks to stagger Michael in front of the table....for a very, VERY long time.....until a jumping kick knocks Michael onto the table (again, not through it) to retain the title.

**Rating:** C. This is a tricky one as the story was there but there's only so much you can do when Michael is a one dimensional monster and Bragg MIGHT weigh 140lbs if you put a half dozen bricks in his pockets. The match was watchable enough but I really could have gone with another segment between them or some promos about why these two wanted to fight.

Post match the Slam comes out for a staredown. Bragg punches him in the jaw and a really bad looking slugout wraps things up.

We get a graphic for an upcoming wrestling festival featuring the MKW roster and some other wrestlers, including the Powers of Pain. Well that's a bit of an upgrade.

**Overall Rating:** C+. For a stand alone show, this was fun enough but not so much as a season finale. For the last show we'll be seeing from these guys for months, your longest match probably shouldn't be between two newcomers without much of a story. That's where MKW starts to fall apart for me: they rarely have more than one or two stories going on at a time and that gives a show like this a hard time. It's still an easy sit through and that's important.

Overall season two was....odd. They set up the title match to start things off but then it was a few one off matches before we got to the six man (which is still confusing) and the season finale. It was cool to see the international talent but they all feel out of left field and therefore like filler instead of something out of MKW. I still liked it (partially due to the length of the shows and some better details in the stories we had) but it would have been nice to have some better character development and a reason to care about these people. I'm not sure I'd call it an upgrade but it's definitely different.

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