

Monday Night Raw – March 10, 2014: Occupied By Problem Solving

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 10, 2014

Location: FedEx Forum, Memphis, Tennessee

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're less than a month away from Wrestlemania and something big might change tonight. The main story is Hulk Hogan making a major announcement for Wrestlemania which may have something to do with Daniel Bryan. Other than that John Cena is advertised to wrestle and Undertaker is in the building. Let's get to it.

We open with Hogan to a nice reaction. He says people have been welcoming him back to the WWE and he's spent two weeks watching his Wrestlemania matches on the WWE Network. Hogan talks about watching his match at Wrestlemania III and slamming Andre the Giant over his head. It's got him so jacked up that he wanted to wrestle the whole neighborhood but then he had an idea. At Wrestlemania, there's going to be a thirty man Andre the Giant memorial battle royal. The winner gets....a trophy shaped like Andre.

Hogan says goodbye to the Mempho-nites but here's John Cena (without a limp). John agrees that Hulk still rules and talks about trying to tear off his shirt back in 1987 but not being strong enough yet. Cena asks whatcha gonna do...when he's the first name entered into the battle royal. Hogan is surprised but here are the Wyatts.

Bray says pride has always been his favorite sin because it blinds everyone, even those who claim to be immortal. "Hey kids, make sure to say your prayers and take your vitamins with hustle, loyalty and respect." He talks about the two heroes giving everyone false hope when hope is dead, just like John's future.

Bray lays it all out for Cena right now: if he looks up at Bray, he'll see a friend, if he looks down at Bray he'll see an enemy but if he looks at Bray in the eyes he'll see a god. Cena of course responds by singing Jimmy Buffett and cracking jokes about how stupid Bray and the Family look. Thankfully he keeps the jokes short and takes himself out of the battle royal before challenging Wyatt for Wrestlemania. Bray sends the Family forward but we go to a break as they get to the apron.

Erick Rowan vs. John Cena

We're joined in progress after a break with Rowan in control and crushing Cena's head in the double fist vice. A tilt-a-whirl backbreaker gets two on John and his cross body is caught in a fallaway slam. Cena tries another charge but runs into a bearhug with Rowan literally throwing Cena from side to side. Rowan puts him down with a powerslam but Cena grabs a rollup for the pin out of nowhere at 3:39.

Rating: C-. Cena literally did not have any major offense until the rollup at the end. Rowan hasn't won many matches but he's dominated Bryan and Cena before losing in the end. That's how you make a guy look strong in defeat and it's more proof that Rowan has a future after the Family breaks up.

Bray is livid but walks away from Hogan and Cena. The two superheroes pose.

You can pick what kind of a match Christian and Sheamus have: falls count anywhere, 2/3 falls or Memphis street fight.

Here's the Authority to the stage with something to say. Stephanie says Bryan should have been fired after last week but instead offers him an apology. He's a talented guy but not quite as big of a talent as guys like Batista, Orton or HHH. Bryan is a solid B+ player but he needs to apologize as well. Stephanie makes fun of Bryan for being short and hopes we enjoy the rest of the show.

Usos vs. Ryback/Curtis Axel

Non-title and the Outlaws are on commentary. Ryback and Axel are

officially entered into the Wrestlemania battle royal. Jimmy walks into a hard uppercut from Axel before being thrown hard into the ropes. Ryback (with a heavily taped right arm) works over Jimmy for a bit before it's back to Axel for a chinlock. Jimmy fights over to the corner for a tag and Jey cleans house. A superkick drops Curtis, Jey dives onto Ryback and the Superfly Splash is enough for the pin on Axel at 2:59.

Kane yells at Shield for being unprofessional. Ambrose asks if there's a point to this and Kane says he doesn't like the cracks in the team. Those cracks started when Reigns and Rollins lost the Tag Titles to the Rhodes Brothers, so tonight they're having a rematch. Seth thinks Kane is deflecting his anger from losing twice last week to Bryan and Big Show. Reigns gets in Kane's face and the Shield leaves.

Big E. vs. Jack Swagger

Non-title again. Big E. counters a whip into the corner and hits some hard running shoulders but Jack slams him down to take over. A running clothesline drops Big E. and Swagger cranks on his arms as we get an inset interview with Big E. saying he's looking forward to winning the battle royal. Back up and Big E. hits a belly to belly but Jack takes out his leg. Colter tries to get Cesaro to interfere to no avail. Jack yells at Cesaro, allowing Big E. to roll him up for the pin at 3:02.

Rating: D+. This was all angle and story rather than wrestling and that's ok. I'm surprised that Big E. is in the battle royal instead of a title match but it frees up another spot on the card. Cesaro not cheating points to a face turn for him, but that's been the case for months now. Nothing to the match but inset interviews always make me smile.

Post match Colter is livid and takes his vest off. He says this is getting settled right now and demands they shake hands. Swagger finally agrees but Cesaro squeezes his hand hard enough that Jack almost goes down.

Here's Undertaker with something to say. On the way to the ring, the announcers talk about Brock Lesnar having no chance to break the Streak. Before he can get anywhere though, Paul Heyman is on the stage to interrupt. He sounds very nervous while talking about Undertaker

preserving the greatest streak in sports, entertainment and sports entertainment. So many people throw around the number 21-0 without considering what it means.

Mr. Wrestlemania Shawn Michaels never won two matches in a row (not true as he won at Wrestlemania 7 as a member of the Rockers and 8 on his own). HHH could never get to three straight, Hulk Hogan couldn't get to four, Steve Austin and John Cena couldn't get past four. Think about that for a minute and it really is astounding. Heyman admits that Brock is stepping into the unknown at Wrestlemania by fighting Undertaker, but it's something that Undertaker needs to fear because Brock will conquer the Streak.

Undertaker says since Heyman is Brock's messenger boy, take this back to him: the fear of death is far greater than the death itself. But the fear of the unknown is the greatest fear of all. One more thing: tell Brock that if he shows up in New Orleans at Wrestlemania, he will rest in peace.

Tomorrow on Main Event live it's Ambrose vs. Mark Henry for the US Title and Natalya vs. AJ for the Divas Title.

Cody Rhodes/Goldust vs. Roman Reigns/Seth Rollins

Cody hits a delayed front suplex for an early two on Rollins. It's off to Goldust for a backdrop and two on Seth as the brothers control early. Back to Cody who is sent face first into the middle turnbuckle, allowing for the tag off to Reigns for a hard headbutt. He misses a charge into the corner and the tag brings in Goldust for some quick clotheslines. The kneeling uppercut staggers Reigns and a spinebuster is good for two. Both Shield members are sent to the floor and the Brothers hit stereo dives (Cody off the top, Goldust off the apron) to take them down as we go to a break.

Back with Goldust getting suplexed for two before Rollins comes in and puts on a chinlock. Reigns hits the kick to the apron which is now just one boot instead of two. Rollins cranks on Goldust's arm before bringing Reigns back in. Goldust actually snaps off a powerslam on Reigns, allowing for the hot tag off to Cody. House is quickly cleaned and a

Disaster Kick knocks Reigns off the apron.

The moonsault press gets two on Rollins and a MuscleBuster of all things gets the same. Goldust and Reigns both come back in and the spear puts the golden one down. Cody loads up Cross Rhodes on Rollins but Seth rolls through. The Disaster Kick is countered into the buckle bomb and the Black Out (running curb stomp) is good for the pin at 14:20.

Rating: C+. Nice match here and it's nice to see Shield get a clean win for a change. That Black Out looked great and I'm glad that they didn't have it keep going on a near fall. Far too often anymore a big move hits but it's only good for two. It's also nice that neither team seems to be splitting anytime soon.

Bella Twins vs. AJ Lee/Tamina Snuka

Natalya is on commentary. Nikki cranks on Tamina's arm to start before it's quickly off to Brie for a running knee to the chest. Tamina comes back with another of those HUGE superkicks to send Brie to the floor. Back in and Tamina hooks a chinlock and it's off to AJ for some kicks and a guillotine choke. Brie fights out and makes the tag to Nikki who cleans house. Everything breaks down and Nikki counters the Black Widow into the Rack for the pin at 4:10.

Rating: C. Not for the match of course. It's for commercial, because this was nothing more than an ad for Total Divas. At the end of the day, the Bellas are just not that good in the ring. They're the definition of girls who are having to walk through every single move they do and are out there as eye candy. There's nothing wrong with eye candy, but don't make us sit through their matches.

Chris O'Donnell and LL Cool J of NCIS: Los Angeles are here.

We recap the opening segment with Cena making fun of Bray.

Here's Bryan for his apology, but the only apology Bryan is going to make is not kicking HHH in the face a long time ago. HHH can't have it both ways. He can't be all corporate and all macho at the same time because if HHH is going to come after Bryan, Daniel is going to fight back. If HHH

thinks Bryan is just going to lay down for the Authority, Bryan has one word for him: NO.

This all ends tonight because HHH just isn't listening to these people. Therefore tonight, the YES Movement is going to occupy Raw. He isn't leaving the ring until he gets his Wrestlemania match with HHH, but he actually means it because he isn't alone. This ring and arena will be filled with the YES Movement and on cue a bunch of fans in Daniel Bryan shirts get into the ring as we go to a break.

We come back with probably close to 100 fans filling the ring and ringside, all chanting YES. For once these aren't even local wrestlers as some of them are old, young and most of them clearly aren't in wrestling shape. HHH and Stephanie come out to draw a NO chant. HHH says all the other dirty little hippies and trolls that live under a bridge with Bryan must be happy with him, but now real life comes in.

After thirty seconds, HHH calls for security to come get everyone out. Bryan says if they get thrown out, this entire arena can leave and Raw will be in front of an empty arena. Security (two middle aged bald guys) come out and Bryan starts cracking jokes. The security guards look at the mob and immediately turn around. Stephanie yells at the guards but Bryan says this is the fans' ring. HHH wants the next match to start right now so get someone out here.

Damien Sandow comes out but stops halfway down the aisle. HHH and Stephanie come out and yell at him before Stephanie invokes the name of McMahon and how this is all hers. Bryan asks for the match at Wrestlemania again, saying the show stops until the match is made. HHH thinks about it before saying the truth is he likes Daniel. He saw something in Bryan and tried to protect him from success. HHH would end everything at Wrestlemania because he won't stop until Bryan is done. The match is on and the place goes nuts. NOW GET OUT OF HIS RING!

Bryan says hang on a second because he's not done yet. As much as the people want to see him fight at Wrestlemania, they really want to see him fighting for the WWE World Heavyweight Championship. How about this: if Bryan beats HHH at Wrestlemania XXX, he's added to the title match in the

main event. HHH charges at the ring but the security drags him away. As he's being dragged away, the match is made.

The fans have voted for a Memphis street fight by a wide margin for Sheamus vs. Christian.

Sheamus vs. Christian

Street fight of course so they set up the musical instruments. Sheamus has a bad arm coming in and misses an early Brogue Kick. A clothesline puts Christian out to the floor and Sheamus sends him back first into the barricade. Christian misses a big guitar shot against the post but gets in a few shots to the ribs with a second guitar. Sheamus whips him knees first into the steps and crushes Christian's head against the steps. They head up the ramp with Christian shoving Sheamus off the ramp and hitting a tornado DDT onto the concrete but the pin has to take place in the ring.

Back from a break with both guys in the ring and Sheamus charging shoulder first into the post. Christian gets a kendo stick and goes off on Sheamus with shots to the arm and back for two. Sheamus avoids a big stick shot in the corner but a knee to the ribs puts him down again. Christian's hiptoss is blocked and Sheamus comes back with running knees and an ax handle to the face.

Sheamus gets the stick now but misses his big swing. The rolling fireman's carry gets two but Christian reverses the ten forearms. JBL spends the match accusing Lawler of orchestrating the Occupy Raw segment. Back in and Sheamus beats Christian with the stick so hard that it's splintering but White Noise only gets two. Now about twenty forearms connect with Christian's chest as Cole calls it the Ten Beats of an Irish drum whose name I couldn't understand.

JBL says don't turn around because it's not the Gentrys (Jimmy Hart's band) you hear beating on a drum. Christian bails to avoid the Brogue Kick but Sheamus sends him into the post. The Irish Curse off the steps has Christian in agony but Sheamus wants a bass drum. They head back inside as the announcers argue over which Beatle played which instrument. Christian comes back with some hard chair shots before putting two chairs

on Sheamus' chest. A frog splash onto the chairs gets a close two on Sheamus but he Brogue Kicks Christian through the drum for the pin at 14:26.

Rating: B-. This was fun for the most part but the musical instruments were just silly. It's annoying that Sheamus dominates the feud over and over again, but at least the match here was good. I'm glad these two are (likely) going to be in the battle royal so we don't have to see this again at Wrestlemania.

How to get the Network on whatever you have!

Brad Maddox tries to calm Batista and Orton down as they yell about the Bryan decision. The Authority is gone tonight but they've told Orton and Batista to be A+ players and take care of things tonight. Orton agrees to make it work with Batista but Big Dave smirks and walks away.

Lana and Rusev come out to do their weekly thing.

We look back at the opening segment but the Wyatts take over the feed. Harper says Cena made a big mistake by falling into the hands of the Reaper. We pan over to Bray looking at us upside down in a creepy moment. Bray says he's not of this world but was thrilled seeing Cena and Hogan together. He sees Cena's future in Hogan because they're both too self absorbed to just let it go.

Cena couldn't admit that he's every bit the monster that Bray is and it's the most foolish thing he'll ever do. Bray has a thousand faces and a million names. He can be an evil beast or a smiling child but as for Wrestlemania, he accepts. Just remember: Cena has everything to lose because his time is up, but Bray's time is forever. Rowan tells us to run to end things.

Big Show/Daniel Bryan vs. Batista/Randy Orton

Bryan quickly takes Orton to the floor for the FLYING GOAT and we take an early break. Back with Bryan holding a chinlock on Orton but the champ fights up and hits a knee to the ribs. Batista comes in and works on Bryan's ribs in the corner before sending him to the floor to ram him

into the apron. Back inside and a hard clothesline gets two for Dave but Bryan finally gets up and tags in Big Show to almost no reaction.

He grabs Orton by the throat but Batista goes after his knee to break it up. Orton comes in again and stays on the leg before Batista loads up the Bomb. Big Show easily backdrops out of it and tags Bryan for the usual stuff. The YES Kicks get two but he misses the swan dive. Orton grabs a rollup for two but gets reversed into the YES Lock until Batista makes the save.

Everything breaks down and Big Show superkicks Batista, only to walk into the RKO. Batista accidentally spears Orton and there's the big knee to Dave. Orton avoids the running dropkick and hits the Elevated DDT with a point to the sign. The RKO is countered into a backslide for two and the running knee gets the pin on Randy at 13:06.

Rating: C-. This was like the last thirty minutes of Saturday Night's Main Event: all the good stuff is out of the way but they have to fill in the last bit of time. It was nothing more than a way to get Bryan in there with the title contenders and the fans just weren't interested. The Occupy Raw segment really should have closed the show.

Overall Rating: C+. Tonight was a story heavy show and that's what it needed to be. The major matches are now set for Wrestlemania and the big segment did what it was supposed to do. I'm very intrigued by the battle royal because it opens the door for a lot of new names, hopefully from NXT. There weren't many other options to get the huge roster on the card and having it be about Andre is a fine idea. I'm getting more and more fired up for Wrestlemania and tonight accomplished a lot. Wrestlemania's main event is (seemingly) predictable but that's not a bad thing.

Results

John Cena b. Erick Rowan – Rollup

Usos b. Ryback/Curtis Axel – Superfly splash to Axel

Big E. b. Jack Swagger – Rollup

Roman Reigns/Seth Rollins b. Cody Rhodes/Goldust – Black Out to Rhodes

Bella Twins b. AJ Lee/Tamina Snuka – Rack to AJ

Sheamus b. Christian – Brogue Kick

Daniel Bryan/Big Show b. Batista/Randy Orton – Running knee to Orton

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Bryan's Match At Wrestlemania

It's one of the options people thought might happen. HHH vs. Bryan is set, and if he wins he's in the title match. It's official, but the moment was AWESOME. I won't spoil it here so make sure you check it out.

Hulk Hogan's Announcement

It solves some Wrestlemania problems. There's going to be a thirty man Andre the Giant memorial battle royal. That certainly gets a lot of people on the card.

Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: March 3, 2014

It's better than any other title I could come up with.

The Punk music to open the show was a brilliant move. You had to let those fans let off some steam and putting one of their idols in Paul Heyman out there was one of their best options. Paul talking about Punk like a Paul Heyman Guy again was the best way they were going to calm the fans down because Heyman is capable of taking an audience into his hands and make them do whatever he wants. The reaction when Heyman said that Punk wasn't there was a great moment with the fans being calmed down but then getting angry all over again.

Then they one upped that by transitioning the heat over from Punk to Lesnar vs. Undertaker by tying the stories together. It didn't do as well as they would have liked, but the fans weren't freaking out as much about Punk and got into another idea. I wasn't wild on Mark Henry coming out to confront Lesnar again as it's just getting old, but that shot with the steps made me cringe.

The Usos FINALLY won the Tag Titles and I can't complain about much here. I wasn't wild on the Outlaws winning the belts but I said I didn't care as long as they were transitional champions. I could have waited for Wrestlemania for this but they had to do something to keep the crowd calm. The moment worked well and felt like it was a long time in the making. That plancha with a tag in the middle is freaking cool.

I'll combine the Big E./Real Americans segments into one. It's getting clear that the team isn't long for this WWE but I'm not sure how they're going to get there. Cesaro is getting way too popular to be in a jobbing tag team much longer but I'm not sure how they go about breaking the team up. Big E. has nothing else to do so you would have to assume he's involved with them at Wrestlemania, but I can't imagine they're doing a triple threat. Cesaro winning makes more sense, but at the same time Swagger seems to be the more likely winner. Good developments last night

though and the first real sign of a split between the team.

Next up was Shield vs. Wyatts II as the fans continue to be appeased. The match was nowhere near as good as their first encounter but it wasn't a fair comparison to make. This match was all about the storytelling with Rollins going INSANE and then breaking away from the team. He was clearly upset by what he did but the team had to split someday. You would think Shield vs. Wyatts in a street fight would be as easy of a layup as you could have and there's a chance it happens at Extreme Rules but it doesn't look all that likely right now.

Rollins bailing from the team makes sense given how he's been presented as the glue that holds the team together. That being said, the other two played their roles perfectly. The Wyatts kept Reigns out of the match for as long as they could, similar to what the Horsemen did to the Giant when they feuded with the Dungeon of Doom back in 1996. Ambrose looked INSANE last night when he was diving on people and punching the tar out of them. That's the Ambrose that got over huge and the Ambrose that the Undertaker picked for a singles match last year in England. Also, he put on a better Figure Four than Miz could ever dream of.

Batista had a quick promo about Daniel Bryan. "Deal With It" grows on me more and more every time I hear it.

The dancing match happened and that's really all there is to say. Emma is slowly winning the crowd over as she's allowed to be herself and not Santino's latest conquest. Imagine that: you let someone do the stuff that got her to the main roster and it works better.

So then there was that segment where Stephanie talked about showing her daughters great moments in McMahon history which showed the problem with WWE's "Real Talk" moments. That segment felt endearing, sweet and kind and served as a good ad for the Network. Yeah, it's a cool idea for parents to be able to show their kids the stuff they grew up watching and I'd do that if I had kids who were into wrestling, but it's coming from Stephanie McMahon.

That would be the same Stephanie McMahon who is currently one of the top heels in the company and would be ripping Daniel Bryan apart just an hour

later. Last night I was waiting for that segment to turn into a heel promo against someone, but it was one of those moments that was supposed to be serious. You don't have heels do sweet stuff like that because it gets them sympathy, which defeats the purpose. Have ANY face with kids do that same speech and it works just fine. But this is WWE, where Stephanie and HHH are heels but also the kind of people we're supposed to relate to and admire because....why is that actually?

Sheamus and Christian had another match, then they set up yet another match. Again, there seems to be no idea how to book Sheamus and it's getting more and more tiresome each time. At least the match wasn't bad though.

The Divas....yeah.

This brings us to the big showdown between HHH and Bryan. In theory they're setting up Bryan vs. HHH, but later in the night they seemed to be setting up Bryan in the triple threat for the title. That being said, the Bryan speech worked well and got the crowd into them again, but there's one key thing to this: HHH AND STEPHANIE ACTED LIKE HEELS. I could get behind this version of the Authority being evil to the fans and then getting their comeuppance down the line. The problem is will they ever get that comeuppance.

It's clear that they're going towards one of those two matches, but at the same time it seems like they're heading to both of them at the same time. For the life of me I can't imagine Bryan beating HHH to qualify for the title match later in the night. They need to pick one: either Bryan knees HHH's head into the Gulf of Mexico or pinning Batista to win the title. The idea of doing both just doesn't quite work, but the triple threat makes more sense. At the end of the day they're just not going to go with heel Orton vs. heel Batista to close out Wrestlemania and they'd be crazy to have the match at all. I think they're going with the triple threat but it's still up in the air.

Aaron Paul's guest star segment was fine. There's only so much you can do with stuff like that and it worked as well as it could have.

Paul Bearer going into the Hall of Fame works and was going to happen one

day. I do like that the class this year is far smaller as they're looking at 5-6 entrants at this point.

The Cena promo was good stuff. He acknowledged the fans' chants (which is all they're really wanting) and tied it in to the Wyatt feud, which is the best possible thing he could have done. Bray talking about Cena being lonely on top is an interesting way to go as Bray could get psychological on Cena, who is as well guarded a character as there is. Also: Cena continues to take Wyatt seriously, which is the most important thing he could do.

I've pretty much covered the main event already and there isn't much else to say on it. Bryan won but the story was the post match stuff, as is almost the case every single time.

Now that leaves us with the big story from last night: the crowd. There's only one way to explain this crowd, so join me in 1979.

Odds are a lot of you have seen the movie The Jerk. In the movie, Steve Martin goes on a rant about how he doesn't need anybody or anything....except for this. And this. Plus this. Maybe this too. And a few other things.

The Chicago crowd last night absolutely hated WWE and Raw in general. Except for Undertaker. Brock Lesnar. Dolph Ziggler and Aaron Paul because they're just cool. Shield vs. Wyatts because they're all awesome. Uh....Cena isn't bad. Heyman is of course a genius. Daniel Bryan isn't even worth bringing up because he's the best in the world. Oh the Usos winning the titles was a cool moment. Christian is awesome so we can't boo him. You can't boo the Divas because they look good. Cesaro is freaking STRONG. But yeah, WWE sucks right now and they're holding everyone down and we need to protest!

The fans came off like spoiled children who get 14 out of the 15 items on their Christmas lists and throw a fit because they didn't get that ONE last thing.....until their parents open the closet and find a surprise package. That's the catch to this whole thing about Bryan: HE DOESN'T HAVE A MATCH YET. If you were just listening to people talking about Bryan, you would think he's on the preshow against Heath Slater. He's

going to be in one of the main events and there's a very real chance he's walking out as WWE Champion. The card is going to rock (Taker vs. Lesnar, Shield explodes, Cena vs. Wyatt, Cesaro swinging someone around for an hour. How is that not going to be AMAZING?) but because ONE THING isn't there, the fans think it's time for a revolution.

Actually there are two things they might not be getting in Bryan and the biggest name from last night, CM Punk. As has been said about a million times, Punk isn't a martyr. He's a guy who wasn't getting what he wanted in WWE and walked out two months before their biggest show of the year. The fans can act like this is all WWE's fault because fans aren't realistic (and shouldn't be), but at the end of the day CM Punk walked out because he didn't want anything but the main event at Wrestlemania. If he comes back and gets into the title picture then cool, but don't act like he's doing this for some cause, because it's pretty clear he isn't.

Overall the show was more story advancement for the most part, which is interesting stuff given that there are still so many loose ends. There are still two options, but both of them are looking less and less likely, leaving us with one of two weak options. There's still a month before the show but they need to pick something already so they can build the thing up. Maybe that's what Hogan's announcement next week will be? Good show overall but they need to pick something already.

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Monday Night Raw – March 3, 2014: Not In Our House

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 3, 2014

Location: Allstate Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

This is one of those shows I've been wanting to see for what feels like months. We're in one of the holy lands of smart fans and there's a possibility that they'll try to hijack the show with CM Punk chants. We'll also get more build to Wrestlemania, including a match between Daniel Bryan and Batista. Let's get to it.

First thing up: CM Punk's music but Paul Heyman coming out instead. Nice little tease there. Heyman holds the mic out to the crowd as a HUGE CM Punk chant starts up. Heyman: "I believe he deserves louder than that." He sits down in the middle of the ring and says he's here to tell the story of a Paul Heyman guy who was never truly wanted in WWE. This was a Paul Heyman guy that was too small to main event Wrestlemania with too many tattoos who would rebel against the first family.

He's here tonight to tell you about a guy born in, raised in and still living in Chicago. His name is Paul Heyman and this is his pipe bomb about CM Punk.....who is not here this evening. After pausing for another CM Punk chant, Heyman says no one is more upset than him about CM Punk not performing in this ring tonight. So what happened? Why won't anyone talk about why CM Punk isn't here tonight? There's someone to blame for why Punk doesn't get to perform around here. That finger of blame is being pointed at every single fan here tonight.

This is why Heyman finds it easier to lie all the time. He managed Punk to a 434 day WWE Title reign and then the fans took him away with promises of love and affirmation. But all that did was take Punk away from everybody, including the fans themselves. Heyman also blames the Undertaker because Punk couldn't stop the Streak last year and now Paul

wants revenge. He wants to see Streak taken away from the Undertaker, but how do you kill someone who is already dead? There is only one man that can conquer the Streak: the beast incarnate, Brock Lesnar.

A ticked off Lesnar comes out and we see a clip from the end of last week's show with Undertaker stabbing Brock with a pen to sign the contract for Wrestlemania XXX. Brock says Undertaker is scared to death of him and last week proved it. Many people have tried to conquer the streak but many men have failed to do so, including Chicago's own CM Punk.

The Streak will be conquered by Brock Lesnar and Lesnar is ready to leave, but here's Mark Henry for a staredown. Brock says bring it on and charges right into a right hand. Mark gets thrown into the steps and Lesnar looks livid. He blasts Henry in the face with the steps with one of the hardest shots I've seen in years. An F5 through the table knocks Henry even more out cold and the fans chant for Punk.

Tag Titles: New Age Outlaws vs. Usos

The Outlaws are defending but Road Dogg doesn't think the fans here are worthy of hearing his catchphrases. It only took them two months to remember they're heels. Jey hammers on Roadie to start but gets whipped hard into the corner. Uso comes out holding his knee so Dogg kicks him to the floor for a breather. Billy throws him back inside and hammers away before it's back to Dogg. Jey's leg seems to be holding up well enough and Dogg even works it over a bit. Roadie throws him to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Jey fighting out of a chinlock but getting slammed down for two. Dogg comes back in and takes a spin kick to the face (the knee seems fine). The hot tag brings in Jimmy to face Billy. Dogg gets knocked off the apron and a Samoan drop puts Gunn down. There's a Bubba Bomb to Billy and the running Umaga attack in the corner to Roadie.

A reverse Whisper in the Wind hits Gunn and there's a superkick to knock Dogg to the floor. Gunn rolls up Jimmy for two and the tilt-a-whirl slam gets the same. The Fameasser just misses and the Usos do the plancha with the flying tag, setting up the superkick and Superfly Splash to FINALLY

give the Usos the Tag Titles at 9:27.

Rating: C+. It's about three years overdue but this was the best way to do it. I have no problem with the Outlaws keeping the title for just a few weeks as they put the young guys over 100% clean before Wrestlemania. Good little match and they made it feel like it meant something, which is rare for these titles.

The Divas watch a clip from Need For Speed and pine for Aaron Paul. Apparently Dolph Ziggler is riding here with Paul tonight. Aksana wants to ride with him too because she likes fast cars.

Big E. vs. Cesaro

Non-title again. Cesaro quickly catches Big E. in a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker and the fans are completely behind him. Big E. sends him into the corner and snaps off a great belly to belly suplex, only to be sent to the floor before the Warrior Splash can hit. Big E. drops Swagger with a right hand but walks back inside for the Swing. Not that it matters as Swagger runs in for the DQ at 1:24.

Cesaro takes the Big Ending post match.

Shield vs. Wyatt Family

The fans think this is awesome while Bray is still in the chair. He stands up and whips off the hat but Ambrose and Rollins dive through the ropes to take out the Family. Reigns runs over Bray and sends him to the floor as the bell ring. Harper puts Rollins on the top rope but Seth backflips off and lands on his feet, runs into the ring and flip dives onto Harper and dives back inside to flip dive onto Rowan. Rollins goes back up but Bray throws Ambrose into the ropes to knock Seth to the floor in a nasty fall.

Back from a break with Rollins in a chinlock before being run over with a shoulder block. Ambrose goes to yell at Bray and Reigns goes to get him, leaving no one for a free Rollins to tag. Seth hits a quick Downward Spiral to send Rowan into the middle buckle and makes a tag to Dean as things speed up. He runs over Erick and hammers away before going after

the leg.

Dean slaps on a Figure Four but Harper breaks it up with a double stomp. Reigns comes in as Dean brawls with Wyatt. The fans are WAY into Wyatt here as he hammers on Ambrose's head and shouts a lot. Ambrose is caught in the cultish corner as the fans think this is awesome. Another Punk chant starts up while Harper stands on Dean's chest. Back to Rowan for the fist vice but Dean is still able to taunt the Wyatts. He pulls Erick's beard to break it up but walks into a sidewalk slam for two. The fans chant for Reigns as Ambrose takes Harper's head off with a clothesline.

Bray comes in and knocks Roman off the apron, leaving only Rollins to take the tag from Ambrose.....but he drops to the floor. Seth walks away and Roman tries to play peacekeeper. Rollins shouts that Reigns wasn't there for him when he needed a tag so the other two can figure it out. Wyatt runs over Ambrose but Roman makes the save. Reigns goes nuts with Superman Punches and Ambrose is back in as well.

Reigns hits a running boot from the floor to the apron as Ambrose hammers on Wyatt. Reigns spears Rowan over the announce table and Harper hits a suicide dive to send Reigns over the table. Dean goes after Luke but Bray posts him. Rollins is still on the ramp as a THIS IS AWESOME chant starts up. Sister Abigail is enough to end Ambrose at 13:55.

Rating: B+. This wasn't the match from Elimination Chamber but it didn't need to be. We already got the showdown and tonight was all about the story. There's more to come from this story as Rollins looked conflicted about his decision, meaning there's going to be something special at Wrestlemania. Again, I'm loving this time in WWE and this is going to make Wrestlemania even better.

Batista thinks the YES Movement is one of the stupidest things he's ever seen. These fans are turning someone like Daniel Bryan into a superhero but he could never be like Batista. No one may like it, but they have to deal with it. That's a great heel catchphrase.

The Usos will defend against the Outlaws tomorrow night on the live Main Event special.

Santino Marella/Emma vs. Fandango/Summer Rae

We open with COMEDY as Santino keeps high fiveing Emma which means they have to switch. Fandango jumps Santino to start and gets two off a spinwheel kick. Santino comes back with a jawbreaker and it's off to the girls for some Emma dancing. The Dilemma (Tarantula) sets up the Emma Sandwich (running cross body to a seated Summer) and the Emma Lock gets the win at 3:24.

Rating: D+. Believe it or not the fans actually didn't hate this. Emma is the kind of girl that is going to get over due to being rather cute and fun when given the chance, which she's finally getting. It helps that she can go in the ring and some of those submission holds proved it. Nice showing here but I'm tired of this same match in various forms week after week.

Stephanie loves showing her daughters great moments in McMahon history on the WWE Network. This is treated like a sweet moment.

Sheamus vs. Christian

Christian stalls before the bell and then slaps Sheamus in the face. The chase is on and Christian is sent into the barricade. Back in and a knee drop gets two on the Canadian but he sends Sheamus into the corner for some choking. Christian slaps him in the face again and gets an Irish Curse for his efforts. Sheamus misses a charge to the floor but just steps out of the way of a plancha. Christian escapes a powerslam and hides behind the announcers as we go to a break.

Back with Christian missing something off the middle rope but still being able to shove Sheamus off the top and out to the floor in a BIG crash. Christian throws him over the barricade and talks trash before taking Sheamus back inside. Sheamus says bring it on so Christian suplexes him down but misses a top rope splash. The rolling fireman's carry sets up the ten forearms but Christian fights out. Christian goes up top but gets caught in mid air and now the ten forearms connect.

A running knee on the apron sets up a running knee in the ring for two for Sheamus. The Irishman is holding his shoulder and arm so Christian

takes him down and gets two off the frog splash. Back to the CM Punk chant as White Noise gets a VERY close two. Christian throws him to the apron but Sheamus hits a quick Brogue Kick anyway and comes back inside for the pin at 14:00.

Rating: B-. Definitely the best match in their series as they treated it more like a fight than a match. The crowd of course didn't care and called the match awful because they're petulant children that only care what they want and have no problem messing with three million fans at home because it's what they want to do.

Back from a break and Christian jumps Sheamus in the back and hits the injured arm with I believe a light.

Bella Twins vs. Aksana/Alicia Fox

Brie runs over Aksana to start but it's quickly off to Alicia to ram Brie's head into the mat. The heels work on Brie for a bit as this is already going nowhere. Fox slams Brie out of the corner but gets slammed down for two. Nikki finally comes in off the tag and shouts COME ON a lot. Everything breaks down and the Rack is good for the pin on Alicia at 4:17.

Rating: D-. Next.

Preview for a new USA show called Sirens.

Here's Daniel Bryan with something to say but he has to wait for the crowd to calm down. He says the fans have a voice and he's not leaving this ring until one of two things happen. The fans chant for Punk but Bryan says he isn't leaving until Batista comes down to fight him or HHH accepts his challenge for Wrestlemania. Here are Stephanie and HHH to answer, drawing an even louder CM Punk chant. Thankfully HHH acts like a heel this time and soaks the whole thing in.

Bryan ignores Stephanie and lays out his evidence of HHH holding him back for the last six months. Daniel is stronger than ever and wants to settle the score at Wrestlemania. HHH says that's not going to happen and asks why Daniel's generation can't accept its inadequacy. He dubs this the

Excuses Era because no one in this era can just admit that they're not good enough. They blame everyone else and make excuses about being held down and buried.

The reality is that anyone who has ever failed in WWE is because they weren't good enough. Bryan is nothing more than a B+ player and there's nothing wrong with that. However, it's not enough to make HHH lace up his boots at Wrestlemania. Bryan says the fans chant because they see through HHH's lies and there go the people again. HHH claims to be doing this for the WWE Universe but he just isn't listening to what they want.

They want to see someone like him succeed and the only way he can do that is by beating HHH at Wrestlemania. Stephanie says they won't listen to this sea of inadequacy because they'll turn on you at the drop of a hat. The only people that won't turn on him are her and HHH because they know what he means for the business. Stephanie gives the whole "my family made all this" speech, so Bryan asks to fight her at Wrestlemania while HHH wears Stephanie's skirt.

HHH thinks she would beat Bryan up too, but Bryan vs. HHH just isn't happening. He goes into his most condescending voice and says Wrestlemania is the showcase of the immortals. As much as Bryan hates it, he just doesn't measure up and needs to get out of HHH's ring. Bryan says this is the fans' ring but HHH says Bryan and all of the fans belong to him, so get out. Daniel says make him so Stephanie calls out Kane. The FLYING GOAT lays out Kane but the referees pull Daniel off of him.

We look back at Lesnar destroying Henry.

The expert panel recaps the night.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler comes in via a Shelby Mustang driven by Aaron Paul from Need For Speed. Paul is a shorter guy but has a ton of energy which is all you can ask for from these guys. He jumps in on commentary as the fans chant for Ziggler. Del Rio takes him down and does Ziggler's hair flip pose as the announcers talk about video games.

The tilt-a-whirl backbreaker gets two for Del Rio but the low superkick misses. Ziggler gets two of his own with the running DDT but Del Rio slams him down again. Paul gets up on the announce table and the Zig Zag is good for the pin at 2:43. This is par for the course on the guest star segments anymore and that's fine.

Paul Bearer is announced for the Hall of Fame. Nothing wrong with that.

Big E. vs. Jack Swagger

Cesaro runs in for the DQ at 4 seconds and Neutralizes Big E.

The Real Americans argue post match and Cesaro loads Jack up in the Swing but Colter calls him off. The fans chant for Cesaro to do it and he lets Swagger go. Colter says help your brother up and Cesaro does so, albeit roughly. Zeb makes them hug it out and they reluctantly obey.

Daniel Bryan vs. Kane is made for tomorrow night's live Main Event.

Here's a limping Cena (after the Wyatts' intro started by mistake) who can't even do his signature entrance. The fans chant for Punk and Cena thanks him for the usual Chicago welcome. Cena can't wrestle tonight, drawing a HUGE YES chant. He'll take that as their version of get well soon. John is out here to feel that energy from the crowd because he's had some great moments in this arena, such as getting his face kicked in by Brock Lesnar and having a very special match with somebody at Money in the Bank.

Cena says he's heard about this whole hijacking thing and it's clear that the people want change. He can respect that, but success has to be earned and change comes through him. That brings him to Bray Wyatt, who isn't in the driver's seat after last week. Cena started his career in this arena and he's still standing tall right here.

The Wyatts appear on screen and Bray asks if Cena can feel these people. Cena reminds him of a great throughbred racehorse that has been winning his entire career, but then he starts to slow down. That horse is now in the back of the barn waiting to be put down. How long does Cena think he can fend the Wyatts off? Bray is the reaper and he is going to put Cena

down because he knows Cena's greatest fear. The loneliest man on earth is the man who sits on the top of his empty castle. Follow the buzzards.

Orton wishes Batista luck out there tonight.

Alexander Rusev speaks Bulgarian on the stage.

We look back at Hogan returning last week and see him on the Today Show. Hogan has a Wrestlemania announcement for next week.

Batista vs. Daniel Bryan

Orton comes out to watch. The bell rings at 11:02 so this probably doesn't last long. Cole incorrectly says this is a first time ever match on Raw as these two fought once back in 2010. The fans immediately chant B00-TISTA as he runs Bryan over with a shoulder. Daniel goes after the leg though and Batista is in trouble. A dropkick to the knee puts Batista down again and Bryan follows up with a half crab. Batista kicks him off and knocks his head off with a clothesline. The fans think Batista can't wrestle as he throws Bryan to the floor...and we take another break.

Back with Bryan backflipping over Batista and hitting the running dropkicks in the corner. Batista rolls to the floor to avoid the third so it's the FLYING GOAT. The YES Kicks get two but here comes the Authority for a distraction. The fans chant for Punk as Batista sends Bryan into the steps. Daniel is thrown into Randy Orton and Batista looked annoyed. Daniel is thrown back inside and gets an overrated chant plus a high kick from Daniel Bryan. Not that it matters as Orton comes in to attack Bryan for the DQ at 10:10.

Rating: C. Not a bad match here but they were just waiting for the screwy ending to close things out. I was thinking they would have Bryan get the pin here to change things up even more but this keeps the triple threat hopes looking solid. At the same time it keeps the Bryan vs. HHH hopes looking solid so I'm still not sure where they're going. That's still an awesome feeling.

Post match Orton loads up the RKO on Batista but gets shoved into the running knee. Bryan goes after the Authority but gets speared down by

Batista. HHH gets in the ring and yells at Bryan but Daniel kicks him from the mat. A Batista Bomb lays out Bryan and HHH adds in a Pedigree, leaving the Authority standing tall to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. This was the WWE fighting back against the fans and showing the product is what really matters. The fans chanted all night and at the end of the day it came off as desperate pleas for attention instead of something witty or funny. The Punk chants just got annoying by about 9:30 and I don't think anyone was paying attention to them.

The show itself was very solid with Wrestlemania being shored up and a title change that needed to happen finally taking place. Brock looks like a killer heading into Wrestlemania and there are still doors open for major matches on the card. WWE is at it's full power here and it's a very exciting time. Bryan and Punk are still wild cards and there's the announcement next week that might be something interesting. Good show this week and things are really picking up.

Results

Usos b. New Age Outlaws – Superfly Splash to Gunn

Big E. b. Cesaro via DQ when Jack Swagger interfered

Wyatt Family b. Shield – Sister Abigail to Ambrose

Santino Marella/Emma b. Summer Rae/Fandango

Bella Twins b. Alicia Fox/Aksana – Rack to Fox

Dolph Ziggler b. Alberto Del Rio – Zig Zag

Big E. b. Jack Swagger via DQ when Cesaro interfered

Daniel Bryan b. Batista via DQ when Randy Orton interfered

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We Knew This Was Coming

And it still worked. Shield seems to have split tonight with Rollins walking out on Ambrose and Reigns due to them not being on the apron for a tag. There's more to come though as Rollins looked very conflicted about his decision.

Title Change On Raw

And got the crowd to calm down a bit. The Usos FINALLY won the titles by clean pin over the Outlaws. The place went nuts for it too as it should have happened years ago.

Brock Lesnar Is A Scary Man

He just hit Mark Henry with the hardest shot I've seen in years. Undertaker is actually going to die at Wrestlemania. He'll win the match, but his corpse will get the pin.

More In Depth Thoughts On Monday Night Raw – February 24, 2014

This was one of those special shows that sticks with you for awhile after it's over and that's exactly what WWE needed right now.

To begin with, Hulk Hogan returned to announce that he will be hosting Wrestlemania XXX. I know a lot of people haven't been pleased with Hogan due to all of the nonsense in TNA, but at the end of the day he has to be at a major Wrestlemania. Yes he's old, not in ring shape and can't remember a basic line like WWE Network, but HE'S HULK HOGAN. He was the hero to a lot of children over a generation including myself. He'll be around in the coming weeks and will probably use his powers before then so things will be fine. It's a great moment and just felt right.

Next up we had the first of the How To guides for the Network. There were several of them last night but they were far less obnoxious than the WWE Apps ones. Also you have to expect these as it's actually a big deal for a change instead of the stupid App. This was fine and they'll be fine over the upcoming months.

Batista and Del Rio had a rematch from Sunday and surprisingly enough, Batista got pinned. Yeah it was off a distraction, but it was his second singles match back in the company. The crowd still didn't want to see Batista, but at least the promo after the match gave signs of hope. Batista isn't going to work as a face and at least the company seems to have caught on to that idea. They're not going to do a heel vs. heel title match though, leaving a few distinct possibilities for Wrestlemania.

They could turn Orton, but he's come off as such a spineless coward when dealing with the Authority that I don't think it's going to work. The other big option is to add someone else to the match to make it a triple threat. The only two serious options are Punk and Bryan, but Daniel seems to be locked into a HHH match and Punk might not even be on the show. For the life of me I can't imagine Batista and Orton getting a one on one match, but stranger things have happened. I can't think of any at the moment but I'm sure they have.

Big E. survived against Cesaro but it was a good example of a match where both guys looked good. It also looked to set up the Real Americans split due to Swagger costing Cesaro a potential win (emphasis on the word potential, as Cesaro was going to set up the Neutralizer but hadn't knocked Big E. out yet). Cesaro needs to beat Swagger at Wrestlemania and split from Colter, but it would only destroy Swagger even more. He needs to do something but that's been the case for years.

Cena and the Wyatts were up next in a match that we've known was coming for at least a month now. The storyline coming in seems to be a (fake) knee injury for Cena which is a basic idea that has been done before but still works wonders if done right. Cena vs. the Wyatts is going to depend on how serious John takes it. If he treats them like the monsters they are and acts cautious but serious he'll be fine. On the other hand, if he treats them as goofy guys who wear weird close and have insane hair, the feud is going to come off as a joke, even if Wyatt wins. Thankfully it was Serious Cena on Monday so I'm cautiously optimistic.

The interesting thing here though is how the WWE has kind of booked themselves into a corner. After Sunday, the logical match would seem to be Shield vs. Wyatts II in a gimmick match (elimination tag maybe?) but instead we're getting Cena vs. Wyatt. Now that being said, the singles

match will be fine but it's not the match that the people seem to be clamoring for. Wyatt beating Cena on the biggest stage of them all will be great for his career but it's not great for short term booking.

Christian vs. Sheamus was fine, but it's clear that Christian is not going to be anything more than he is right now and that his time is winding down. The match wasn't bad but Sheamus was carrying him for the most part. I'm not sure where these two go at Wrestlemania, but there's a chance the two of them will have a match that no one wants to see.

Ambrose and Reigns having an argument would seem to foreshadow a match at Wrestlemania, but I'm hoping Reigns doesn't get the title. He's too good for that kind of a burial.

I'm glad we got Bryan vs. Kane out of the way. Those two have been in a story for over a year and a half now and they needed to have a blowoff match. I didn't buy the idea that it was happening at Wrestlemania and having it here on Raw was the right call. Bryan got the pin with the running knee and then challenged HHH to a match at Wrestlemania. No it isn't the title match, but it makes the most sense with the story they've been telling. Believe it or not the best move would actually be Bryan beating HHH for the title, but that's opening up a can of worms that isn't worth the payoff.

One more note: get the undershirt off Kane. He looks like Marlon Brando from Streetcar Named Desire.

Emma and Summer Rae...happened. That's really the only way to describe it. Emma is getting better but Santino continues to take the focus off of her. Why is she stuck in this dancers feud when AJ is desperate for ANY

competition? If nothing else they've got Emma in her ring gear, which is always going to get a better pop than being mostly covered up like she's been since debuting.

As I saw in another review: the Usos and Outlaws need to watch the Hart Foundation vs. the Bolsheviks from Wrestlemania VI. Thankfully the Usos getting the titles seems to still be happening.

Bray and Roman had their singles match and it ended the only way it could have. It wasn't a classic or anything but it was a match in the last hour of a huge show in Wisconsin. Give them a build with an atmosphere on a bigger stage and the quality goes up. Reigns needs more ring time on his own though.

That brings us to the big ending of the show. Again, Lesnar vs. Undertaker was pretty much set in stone months ago but the match was still awesome. I'd like to remind you of something: HE STABBED HIM WITH THE PEN. For the first time in years Undertaker is the aggressor in a feud and that's an idea I can get behind. It might have been seventeen years ago, but go back and watch his stuff from the Attitude Era. Undertaker is at his best when he just starts breaking stuff and it's even better when he breaks them with people's bodies. I'm not sure if Undertaker can keep up with Lesnar's physical style, but the build is going to be fun.

Raw this week was supposed to be a big show and it worked like a charm. At the end of the show I was ready for Wrestlemania for the first time this year and that's exactly what it was supposed to do. There are still five weeks to adjust some things and the main event is still up in the air, but the rest of the card looks solid from here. It looks more like Wrestlemania XIX than Wrestlemania XVII, but that's not the worst thing

in the world.

One of the most interesting things last night was the amount of ring time the matches got. We had four matches break fourteen minutes and another that got ten. There were almost no recaps or stupid backstage segments and the show worked far better. I'm not saying there's no place for a backstage bit here and there, but we don't need to see these long drawn out segments to reenforce stuff that's already been made.

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Monday Night Raw – February 24, 2014: That Old Feeling

Monday Night Raw

Date: February 24, 2014

Location: Resch Center, Green Bay, Wisconsin

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

To say tonight is a stacked card is an understatement. First and foremost we have a slew of returning stars, including Hulk Hogan, Brock Lesnar, Shawn Michaels and potentially Undertaker. It's also the night after

Elimination Chamber which saw a masterpiece between Shield and the Wyatt Family and Randy Orton retaining the WWE Title inside the Chamber. The interesting thing is what happens with Daniel Bryan, who was screwed out of the title again, leading to a tirade from Michael Cole about how it has to stop. Let's get to it.

We open with the return of Hulk Hogan to a very nice reaction. He soaks it in...and almost immediately screws up his lines, saying the WWE Universe has officially launched. Hogan almost saves it by saying the Universe launched the Network. He talks about his career making a turn as he's coming home to be the official host of Wrestlemania XXX. So whatcha gonna do when Hulkamania runs wild on you brother?

The announcers show us how to use the Network on various platforms.

Batista vs. Alberto Del Rio

The reaction is somehow even worse than last night. Batista points out one of the Boo-Tista signs in the crowd with a little smirk. Dave pounds him into the corner with right hands to start and a clothesline sends Del Rio outside. Alberto goes back first into the apron before being sent back inside for a suplex. Batista clotheslines him back to the floor but Del Rio trips him up and drops him on the apron. Del Rio sends him into the steps as Lawler talks about the reaction at the Rumble, coming to the logical conclusion of the fans just wanted to see Bryan.

Back from a break with Del Rio stomping on Batista in the ring. Batista comes back with some shots of his own and takes Del Rio down with some clotheslines. A Codebreaker on the arm puts Batista on the mat but he ducks the low superkick and avoids the charge in the corner. There's the spinebuster but here's Randy Orton as well, allowing Del Rio to roll Batista up for the pin at 10:17.

Rating: D+. This felt more like an angle than a match and at this point that's the best thing that can happen to Batista. Del Rio hasn't been bad lately but the fans are going to cheer anyone that's against Batista right now. The match didn't have time to go anywhere with most of it being in a commercial.

Randy calls that one of the funniest things he's ever seen before talking about the fans rejecting Batista ever since he came back. He thinks Batista must regret returning but Batista says Orton couldn't be more wrong. Batista loves this business and the fans have their own voice. However, he has his own voice too and will boo them right back. He'll be going to Wrestlemania to fight one of his former friends and taking the title, so deal with it.

Cesaro vs. Big E.

Non-title. Big E. quickly runs him over with a shoulder but Cesaro comes back with a series of knees to the ribs. A very nice overhead belly to belly sends Cesaro flying and some running shoulders in the corner are good for two. Back up and they collide before Cesaro kicks Big E. in the face to take over. We hit the chinlock for a bit before a series of backbreakers put Cesaro down. Cesaro puts him down with a headlock as JBL and Cole have an unfunny conversation about what the E. stands for. Cesaro catches a charging Big E. in a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker as we take a break.

Back with Cesaro holding a chinlock but Big E. fights up for a gorilla press. He misses a charge into the post though and Cesaro pounds away in the corner before putting on a chinlock. A big powerslam gets two on E. and Cesaro tells Colter he's got it. We hit the chinlock again but Big E. fights up, only to get caught in a sleeper. He rolls free and slams Cesaro down before taking off the straps.

Cesaro escapes the Big Ending and somehow hits Swiss Death for a VERY close two. The Swing is countered and Big E. hits something like a Rock Bottom out of the corner. Big E. is sent to the floor but he has to run over Swagger, allowing Cesaro to Swing the champion. Cesaro looks to set up the Neutralizer but Swagger comes in for the DQ at 15:50.

Rating: C+. This was a match with two big guys beating the tar out of each other for fifteen minutes and you can't screw something like that up. Cesaro is an absolute freak but Big E. was more than holding his own out there. The Real Americans need to split already as Cesaro is ready to make a big jump but Swagger is holding him down.

Post match Big E. goes after Jack but Cesaro jumps him from behind and hits the Neutralizer.

Stills of the Chamber and the Wyatts costing Cena the match.

Here's Cena to finally address the Wyatts. First off though, he says how great it is to see Hulk Hogan back where he belongs. Over the last few weeks Cena has been saying that anyone who wants to get to the top of the WWE has to go through him. The fans are of course split and Cena is of course cool with that idea. This brings him to Bray Wyatt, who has caused quite a stir since he showed up around here.

Last night Cena came face to face with Bray Wyatt and Bray cost him a championship match. That was a bold move and John Cena is right here if Bray wants to make another bold move. Here's the whole Family to respond but Bray sits in his chair in the aisle. He says this world has an infection and a virus known as the human race. Through all of these times it makes sense that Cena would put himself right in the middle of all of them. What would the world be without its hero or its knight in shining hero?

John Cena is full of empty promises because he can't save these people from this terrible world. Cena says the future has to come through him and Bray couldn't agree more. Wyatt introduces himself to Cena and they are the reapers who bring death to this era of lies. Cena introduces himself as well and says if one of them comes into this ring, they're starting something they might not be able to finish.

The monsters storm the ring and the numbers are too much for Cena. Bray pulls the Family back as Cena is favoring his left leg. Cena charges at them anyway but they're just too bit. He's holding that knee almost the entire time. John gets up again and the Family walks away but Cena can barely walk. He has to chase off Rowan, allowing Bray to run Cena over again. Follow the buzzards.

Cena was stretchered out during the break.

Christian vs. Sheamus

This was set up on the pre-show by Brad Maddox due to the two of them having issues since Smackdown on Friday. Christian is quickly sent to the floor but he comes back in with some right hands. Sheamus is fine with that and takes Christian into the corner for some clubbing forearms. A clothesline gets two on the Canadian and we hit a chinlock. Christian tries to wrap Sheamus' leg around the post but Sheamus pull him face first into the steel instead. Christian counters the ten forearms to the chest and scores with a missile dropkick for two. Sheamus backdrops him to the floor and hits a shoulder off the apron as we take a break.

Back with Christian shoving Sheamus off the top and to the floor before ramming him into the steps. Christian stomps away in the corner before putting on a body vice to work over Sheamus' bad ribs. Cole tells us that Cena's injury is to his knee and it's swollen pretty badly. Christian puts on an abdominal stretch but Sheamus elbows his way out and avoids a cross body.

Sheamus is sent to the floor but he catches a charging Christian with a knee lift and hits the ten forearms to the chest. A slingshot shoulder gets two and Sheamus busts out the Cloverleaf but Christian is quickly in the ropes. White Noise is countered into a sunset flip for two but the Brogue Kick misses. Christian goes up top but jumps into the Brogue Kick for the pin at 15:50.

Rating: B-. Another nice long match tonight with Christian getting to do what he does best: look good in a losing effort. Sheamus is still in a weird place as the fans like him and always pop for the Brogue (hard not to) but he really needs something to do. Good match here and that's all you can ask for at times.

Earlier tonight the Authority called today the biggest night since the first Wrestlemania when Bryan came up screaming, saying that he'll fight HHH right now or at Wrestlemania but HHH laughed it off.

Black History Month video on the Soul Patrol of Tony Atlas and Rocky Johnson.

Dean Ambrose is tired of explaining himself to Rollins and Reigns. They don't trust him so he's out of here. Rollins and Reigns are left alone

when the Wyatts come in. Reigns challenges them to a fight right now, but says he'd love to fight Bray one on one tonight, with the Family and the dogs staying in the back. Bray accepts and laughs.

Ric Flair and Booker T were on the Raw pre-show panel to talk about the show. Flair starts a YES chant to take us to the next match.

Daniel Bryan vs. Kane

Kane slugs away to start but Bryan comes back with kicks to the leg. A running dropkick to the knee has Kane in trouble and some chop blocks put him down. Kane fights out of a half crab and stomps away but Bryan fights back like the plucky hero he is. A shot to the shoulder puts him back down though and we hit the armbars, only to have Bryan send Kane to the floor. The FLYING GOAT is blocked by an uppercut and we take a break.

Back with Kane stomping away and putting on an armbars, only to have Bryan quickly punch his way out. Bryan hits the moonsault out of the corner and takes Kane down with the running clothesline. There are the YES Kicks but the big one is countered and a side slam gets two. Bryan fights back again and gets two of his own off a top rope hurricanrana before hitting the running corner dropkicks.

Kane charges over the top to the floor and there's the FLYING GOAT! Another running dropkick knocks Kane against the barricade and a missile dropkick connects back inside. A big kick to the head gets two but Kane counters the top rope headbutt with a chokeslam for a close two. Bryan can't get the YES Lock the first or second time so he hits a quick running knee for the pin at 15:40.

Rating: C+. This was the match that the two needed to have and it gets rid of the idea of Bryan vs. Kane at Wrestlemania. It's pretty clear that we're heading towards HHH vs. Bryan in the showdown and there's nothing wrong with that at all. Not a great match or anything but it was a good performance by both guys. Kane needs to lose the shirt though.

Bryan calls HHH a coward for running from a challenge and hiding behind Stephanie's skirt. Ever since HHH put on the suit, he's ignored the people's wishes, even when they make their voices heard. The YES chant

starts up and Bryan asks HHH if he's listening. There's an entire arena of people here in Green Bay, Wisconsin chanting YES so give them what they want: HHH vs. Daniel Bryan at Wrestlemania XXX.

Emma vs. Summer Rae

Emma gets her full entrance with the bubbles and dancing but the people still don't care. Emma grabs a small package for an early two but Summer kicks her head off to take over. Summer puts on a chinlock as the match slows quite a bit. The fans actually cheer for Emma to fight up and she counters another spinwheel kick into the Emma Lock (bridging Indian deathlock) for the win at 3:24.

Rating: D+. Emma still isn't working due to the Santino factor but that's WWE for you. Just let her be goofy and adorable and the fans will get into her. The lack of the long pants and shirt helped her here but she still needs to be herself instead of Santino's latest chick. Seriously he's had like four Divas now.

We look back at Hogan's return earlier.

Usos vs. New Age Outlaws

Non-title. Dogg gets on the mic and says we know how this ends so the young kids need to get out of the ring. The Usos actually do it so the Outlaws can do their schtick but the twins come in and clean house with Jimmy superkicking and splashing Road Dogg for the pin at 1:13.

Bray Wyatt vs. Roman Reigns

They trade right hands to start and Bray rolls to the floor. Back in and Reigns shoves Bray around before a finger to the eye sends Wyatt outside again. Bray comes back in again and takes over with a boot to the head followed by a hard clothesline for two. Roman will have none of this selling stuff and takes Bray outside for an even harder clothesline as we take a break.

Back with Bray hitting a running backplash and drawing what sounds like a SCARY chant. We hit the headlock on the mat as the fans are already

bored because this hasn't been going a thousand miles an hour. Bray hits his running cross body and a splash in the corner but Reigns avoids another charge. The dropkick from the floor to the apron sets up a belly to back slam (similar to Cena's ProtoBomb) for two...and here are the other Wyatts.

They're just on the floor but Rollins sprints in from the crowd and DIVES on both of them, giving Bray a rollup for two. Reigns misses a charge into the post as Rollins is beaten down. Ambrose finally charges in from the back to join the fight but Reigns scores with the Superman Punch. He has to go after Harper though and Ambrose comes in for the DQ at 14:00 though.

Rating: C+. This was the only way to go here and the ending was about as good as it could have been. They clearly couldn't job either guy and it advances Dean's split. It helped that Ambrose was caught up in the moment rather than doing something stupid so Reigns has a reason to believe him when he says it wasn't intentional.

Here are Heyman and Lesnar to close the show with a table in the ring. Paul calls Brock the undisputed #1 contender but apparently HHH won't let him in the title match. He's offered Brock an open contract at Wrestlemania but that's just not good enough. What Brock wants is to conquer history, just like he's done with every single thing he's done in his life. The only reason Brock Lesnar can't conquer the WWE Championship is the Authority won't give him the chance.

That's how they get you in WWE, so Paul has advised Brock to turn down the open contract and demand the title match. If not, there's no Lesnar at Wrestlemania...and there's the gong. Brock isn't sure what to think because apparently the lightning, thunder, smoke, organ music and UNDERTAKER BEING ON THE SCREEN AREN'T CLEAR ENOUGH. Undertaker comes through the curtain (with black Ministry beard of course) and Brock still isn't sure what to do.

Taker turns to Brock and stares him down as a LOUD Undertaker chant starts up. He looks over Brock at the sign and we get the big staredown. Paul gets the idea and open the contract for Brock. Lesnar immediately

signs and hands Taker the pen. Heyman offers Taker the match so Taker STABS BROCK'S HAND WITH THE PEN and chokeslams him through the table. The hood comes off and he's got a little mohawk going to make him look even more evil. Brock is left laying to end the show.

Overall Rating: A. I had a blast with tonight's show as it feels like we're getting to Wrestlemania season. We've got three major matches practically penciled in and a lot of stuff got nice build as well. Couple that with four matches going 14+ minutes and you can't go wrong here. The ending was the high point of course but I can't shake that feeling I got from Hogan. It just felt right seeing him back on Raw and I can't help but smile.

Results

Alberto Del Rio b. Baitsta – Rollup

Big E. b. Cesaro via DQ when Jack Swagger interfered

Sheamus b. Christian – Brogue Kick

Daniel Bryan b. Kane – Running Knee

Emma b. Summer Rae – Emma Lock

Bray Wyatt b. Roman Reigns via DQ when Dean Ambrose interfered

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