

# Newest Hall of Fame Member Announced

That makes seven for this year. It's Scott Hall, who actually belongs in the Hall of Fame.

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## Raw Is In Brooklyn Tonight

And the fans are feeling chatty. It's going to be a long show.

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## Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: March 18, 2014

Last night's show was about driving these shows into the fans' hearts. The matches are mostly set but now we need a reason to care about what we're watching. The show did a good job of making you feel what the wrestlers were feeling and that's hard to do. Let's get to it.

The HHH/Batista/Orton argument to start things off was as good as it was going to be. Batista being acknowledged as a movie star and the No Papparazzi shirt were signs of a character change for him and of things to come. HHH getting so frustrated with both guys that he put himself into the match makes sense and offers some drama to the Bryan vs. HHH match.

Yeah it's obvious that Bryan makes the title match and gets the belt (in theory) but it's nice to see them adding something to it. There's nothing wrong with having an obvious ending, but adding some drama isn't a bad idea. This is the Mike Tyson as guest referee of Wrestlemania XXX.

It's also nice to see some animosity between Batista and Orton. Until now they've just been kind of there in the background of Daniel Bryan vs. HHH which didn't work as there was no actual guarantee either of them would make the title match leading into last night. I'm glad they haven't been forgotten because there's a natural history there if they'll just acknowledge it. Making it a three or even a fourway isn't my favorite thing in the world but it's the logical call this year.

The Real Americans beat the Usos to presumably earn a title shot. Because THERE ARE NO OTHER IDEAS IN THE HISTORY OF BOOKING OTHER THAN HAVING THE CHAMPIONS GET PINNED BY A CHALLENGER BECAUSE JUST HAVING A FREAKING #1 CONTENDERS MATCH IS TOO COMPLICATED FOR A BUNCH OF HOLLYWOOD HACKS WHO CAN'T GET A JOB OUTSIDE OF STEPHANIE MCMAHON'S OFFICE!!!

I wasn't big on the booking if that wasn't clear.

WWE has a new animated series called Slam City where the wrestlers all get fired and have to get real jobs. It's an idea but can we get a Hulk's Rock And Wrestling channel on the Network?

Sheamus beat Titus O'Neil in the St. Patrick's Day thing. It's nothing of note but it looks like Titus is going to become a jobber to the stars. Titus, Sheamus and Christian are all in the battle royal which isn't a

surprise.

Arnold Schwarzenegger and Scooby Doo will be guest stars next week. Yeah Arnold isn't a big deal anymore, but I sat through Florence Henderson as the guest star of a Raw I went to. I approve of Arnold.

Cena and Bray Wyatt had the segment of the night. Cena admitted to being afraid of Bray because Wyatt is something he's never faced before. Bray has accused Cena of being hollow and being afraid of what's coming to him after his career is over. There's a HUGE story to get into with that angle if they choose to but I have a feeling it's not happening. When I say huge, I mean that could culminate at like Wrestlemania 35.

Bray continues to be one of the best promo men in the business as I totally bought everything that he's saying. However, there was one thing during his promo that was incredibly interesting: a John Cena chant.

Think about that for a minute. Bray Wyatt is talking about getting rid of John Cena and the fans LOUDLY chant for John as a result. You often hear fans booing Cena and the "Let's Go Cena/Cena Sucks!" chants, but as soon as the idea of no more Cena comes up, it's "CENA! CENA! CENA!" I've said it before and I'll say it here again: so many fans aren't going to realize how truly great Cena is until the day he's gone.

I've mostly covered the Orton vs. Bryan stuff earlier, but the No DQ stipulation helped a lot here. Batista came out to help Bryan and they set up a nice shot at the end: Batista takes out Orton, Bryan steals the pin. Nice "what if" scenario for Wrestlemania.

Heyman's weekly promo was nothing special but the idea of Brock being able to destroy Undertaker's opponents far more easily than Undertaker could. The line of "Now he conquers death itself" line was excellent.

Goldust vs. Fandango was an interesting idea but the match wasn't much. I did really like having a random match though, just as a breather from the rest of the show.

Kane vs. Shield sounds like a way to bring Ascension up as the replacements for the Shield. There isn't much else to say than that. Lawler was just a catalyst for the story advancement.

Yet again a champion got pinned to set up a future match. It seems like we're getting Nikki vs. Naomi vs. AJ vs. Tamina for the title. It's so we can have a Total Divas season finale, but at least they didn't rush through AJ's title reign to get there.

Mr. T. goes into the Hall of Fame. No complaints from me on that one.

The battle royal match was nothing special and exactly what it needed to be. I'm sorry for all the short lines here but there isn't much to say about a lot of this stuff.

Bray squashed Kofi and looked awesome doing it.

The big segment to end the show was HHH saying he respected Bryan but being sent back on Stephanie's orders. Cops came out and handcuffed Bryan

before being revealed that they weren't really cops and it was all A RUSE. The huge beating ensued and HHH looked pure evil. That's what this story has needed and it worked like a charm here. I've heard complaints that HHH beat him up too long but I didn't get that feeling at all. I forgot to mention that Stephanie revealed she had the key all along. Why that's supposed to be a shock doesn't quite register to me.

Overall last night's show was excellent and there's nothing I can really add to it. It's really hard to go on and on about a show I really liked and it's even worse when it's just building up to the rest of the pay per view. Great episode this week and Wrestlemania is going to rock.

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

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00HY4NV7Y>

And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for under \$4 at:

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

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# Monday Night Raw – March 17, 2014: The Pathos to Wrestlemania

**Monday Night Raw**

Date: March 17, 2014

Location: AT&T Center, San Antonio, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

We're under three weeks to Wrestlemania now and we've got the biggest matches down now. The main story coming into tonight will be HHH retaliating against Daniel Bryan as he promised to do on Smackdown. Other than that we're likely going to get some more entrants into the Andre battle royal. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Occupy Raw last week.

HHH is in the ring and says what happens at Wrestlemania is all going to be our fault. He's had a week to think about what happened with Daniel Bryan and it doesn't sit well with him. At Wrestlemania, he's going to do what he always does in the ring, but we'll see that in twenty days. He tells us to enjoy the rest of the show but here's Batista to interrupt.

Batista says HHH has problems with Daniel Bryan but the real problems are with him. HHH has no right to add Bryan to Batista's main event because he's back to be WWE Champion. Batista wants to know what HHH is thinking, but HHH wants to know why Batista thinks Bryan has a chance to make it to the title match at all.

This brings out Randy Orton to throw in his two cents. Orton is worried about Bryan being added as well but HHH cuts him off and asks if Bryan is really that much in their heads. The fans chant YES and Batista says Bryan may be in their heads, but nowhere near as much as he's in HHH's. Orton asks for and receives a No DQ match against Bryan tonight to prove he can do what Batista couldn't.

Orton and Batista argue with Batista saying the YES Movement exists is because Orton sucks. He calls Orton a paper champion who only has those belts because of HHH's support. HHH tries to hold them apart but gets shoved away so he just leaves. Batista says HHH has to fix this but HHH says he's sick of this.

He's sick of the little troll face Daniel Bryan, the fans chanting for him, of Hollywood movie stars telling HHH how to run this business, and of talented guys who need him to hold their hand to win a match. Maybe the old man was right: the only one you can trust in this world is yourself, so there's going to be a triple threat at Wrestlemania, but Daniel Bryan won't be in it. Instead, HHH is going to beat Daniel Bryan and go into the match himself. In other words, the winner goes to the title match. HHH leaves and Orton lays out Batista with an RKO.

Batista leaves and says coming back was a big mistake.

### Real Americans vs. Usos

Non-title and this is a result of the Usos saving Cody Rhodes and Goldust from a post match attack by the Real Americans on Smackdown. Jey runs over Swagger to start and catches him in a spinebuster. Cole screws up early this time and says a win for the Tag Team Champions could give the Real Americans a shot at the titles. Cesaro comes in and works over Jey in the corner but gets caught by a kick to the chest.

Off to Jimmy for an uppercut and a slam. Jey comes back in and tries a leapfrog but jumps into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for two. Off to Swagger again for a chinlock but Jimmy fights up and tags his brother back in to speed things up. A Cesaro distraction lets Jack kick Jimmy to the floor and we take a break. Back with Cesaro in control of Jimmy but he punches his way out of the corner.

Swagger catches him in a belly to belly suplex for two, followed by the Vader Bomb/Cesaro double stomp spot. The announcers praise the company for some awards the WWE App has won as Cesaro nails Jimmy with a European uppercut. Jimmy avoids a charge from Swagger and knocks Cesaro to the floor. A spinning kick to the back of Swagger's head is enough for the hot tag to Jey who shouts US a lot before the corner Umaga attack gets two.

Jimmy breaks up a Cesaro Swing attempt and throws Cesaro at Jey for a Samoan drop and a near fall. Swagger comes back in and gets caught by the double superkick to send him to the floor. Jimmy dives onto Jack but Cesaro blocks a Jey dive with the European uppercut, setting up the Neutralizer for the pin on Jey at 12:25.

**Rating:** C. The match was fun but at the same time can we PLEASE stop having new champions lose matches to set up a future Tag Title match, which will likely have the New Age Outlaws as well. Here's a simple way to do this instead: "The following contest is for the #1 contendership to the Tag Team Championship!" Throw Los Matadores out there and have a match, making both the champions and challengers look strong. Why do I have to give writing lessons to a WRITING TEAM?

We look at WWE Slam City, an animated series about what happens when the wrestlers all get fired and have to get day jobs. I've heard worse ideas actually.

Clip from Smackdown of the Shield costing Kane a match and leaving him laying after a Reigns spear to end the show.

Kane comes up to Shield in the back and says all four of them made mistakes on Friday. Ambrose doesn't seem to care but Kane says they have a mission. If he can't count on them then the Authority can't count on them, meaning they're a liability. Kane asks if he can count on them. Rollins says they're united and Reigns says believe it. Kane gets even more serious and calls them replaceable.

Hornswoggle hands out t-shirts to fans when Bad News Barrett rises up on his podium. He makes fun of the leprechaun celebrating St. Patrick's Day and talks about St. Patrick chasing the snakes out of Ireland. However, the bad news is the fans will spend all day getting drunk, have a hangover tomorrow and regret all the stupid things they've done.

Sheamus vs. Titus O'Neil

Hornswoggle is still at ringside. Titus is officially in the battle royal and comes out with a big green and white hat and a bright orange beard painted on his face. Christian is on commentary and announces himself as an entrant as well. O'Neil hammers Sheamus into the corner to start but gets sent to the floor and shouldered off the apron. Titus rams him into the post as Christian says he's undefeated except for the losses he's caused himself.

Christian says JBL looks like David Spade in a fat suit and JBL nearly loses it. Titus slams Sheamus to the mat and then the floor before throwing Hornswoggle inside. He tries a fall away slam but Sheamus comes back in and catches the little guy before throwing him into Titus' ribs. There are the ten forearms to the chest and a powerslam setting up the Brogue Kick for the pin at 4:11.

**Rating:** C. Decent little power match here but Titus needs to win a match that matters instead of just being a jobber to the stars. He showed so much potential before the Darren Young match but this is his first appearance in weeks. It's better than having nothing to do though so it could be worse.

Sheamus enters the battle royal post match but Christian attacks him and hits the Killswitch on the floor because this feud just can't end.

Next week's guest star: Arnold Schwarzenegger. Scooby Doo and the Mystery Machine will be there as well.

Here's Cena to talk about the Wyatts. He says he's been here 12 years and has had over 3,500 matches which makes him like family to the WWE Universe. They're like an old married couple and he has a secret for them: he's afraid of Bray Wyatt. He's afraid of everything Bray stands for and what he is, because he's never fought anyone like Bray before.

Bray is trying to convince the people that what you see with John Cena isn't real. Cena won't take that because he believes in everything he's

done and stands for because Wrestlemania is about fighting for every scar and injury he's been through. He'll fight for his legacy at Wrestlemania and here are the Wyatts on screen.

Bray is wearing a Cena shirt and says children believe in superheroes because they want to believe the world is good. They haven't learned the truth about life yet. Bray's childhood wasn't all rainbows and butterflies. He has scars of his own because the world gave them to him. Everything he loves in life is going to wither away and die.

The fans chant for Cena as Bray says he could be just like John. He could sign autographs and kiss babies to make sure people bought his merchandise and go home to his plastic girlfriend in his castle while making jokes about everything to make himself feel better. At Wrestlemania, Bray doesn't care if he dies as long as the world sees Cena the way he does. Follow the buzzards.

### Randy Orton vs. Daniel Bryan

No DQ and non-title. Orton hammers him into the corner to start but can't ram Bryan face first into the buckle. Daniel scores with a knee to the ribs and wraps Randy's leg around the post. Back in and Orton uppercuts Bryan down and heads to the floor for some forearms to the chest. Daniel comes back with a hard shot to knock Orton off the apron before nailing the FLYING GOAT. Orton pulls a kendo stick out from under the ring and says there's no bell to ring because it's No DQ. He belly to back suplexes Bryan onto the announce table and we take a break.

Back with Orton still in control and working over Bryan's back before crotching him against the post. He hits the backbreaker from the apron to the floor in a nice looking move as the announcers talk about HHH losing his cool earlier tonight. They head inside again with Orton throwing Bryan into the corner before stopping to do the YES motion. Bryan backflips over Orton out of the corner and hits the running clothesline.

Daniel hits the running dropkick in the corner to set up a top rope hurricanrana for two. It's kendo stick/YES KICK time with Daniel going off on Orton. The big kick to the head gets two more but Randy pops up and crotches Daniel on the top rope. A superplex gets two for the champion and he just stomps on Bryan out of frustration.

The Elevated DDT puts Daniel down but he rolls to the floor before the RK0. Orton comes outside and gets caught by the running dropkick, sending Orton into the timekeeper's area. Randy gets a chair and blasts Daniel in the ribs and back before heading back inside, only to have Batista spear Orton in half. Bryan dropkicks Batista outside and steals the pin on Batista at 14:32.

**Rating:** B-. These guys get better each time they're out there and this was their most entertaining match in awhile. The No DQ rule helped a lot and even though it was pretty obvious Batista was coming back, the stuff we got leading up to that was entertaining as well. Good match here.

Batista hits the Bomb on Orton post match.

How to get the WWE Network.

Here's Heyman with something to say. He says Undertaker has gotten a lot of wins at Wrestlemania but barely survived. Those same opponents have been easily beaten by Brock Lesnar and Heyman has proof. We get a video of Undertaker's Wrestlemania matches, showing how much more difficult each victory has been because Undertaker is getting older. On the other hand, Brock has destroyed HHH, Mark Henry and CM Punk. The video closes with a great line: "Now he will conquer death itself." Heyman says the Streak will Rest in Peace at Wrestlemania.

HHH and Stephanie are in the back and Stephanie doesn't like the idea of HHH talking to Bryan tonight. She'll ignore him saying he wants to talk to Bryan "like a man" and goes on a rant about Bryan spitting on the McMahon legacy. HHH says it's just talking but Stephanie wants to know

what happens when HHH wins the title and has to go on the road. What about their business or the family. HHH glares at her and says he's got this so don't worry about it. Stephanie says he better take care of things before storming out.

### Goldust vs. Fandango

Goldust looks at Summer Rae and still catches Fandango coming after him. A few atomic drops have the dancer in trouble and Goldust does a few steps of his own. Summer gets on the apron as Goldust does some disco dancing. He barks at Summer but Cody catches her, only to have Fandango get in some cheap shots.

Summer doesn't mind being caught by Cody but Fandango isn't pleased. We hit the chinlock for a few moments before Goldust fights up, only to get caught in the chinlock again. Goldust has a bit of blood next to his right eye. A suplex gets two on Goldust but Fandango misses the top rope legdrop. Goldust hits a quick Final Cut for the pin at 5:13. Goldust looked angry about the cut.

**Rating:** C-. You know what? I kind of liked this. No story, no reason for the match, nothing after. Just two guys having a match for about five minutes and the bigger star getting a clean pin. Everything has a point most of the time and it gets a bit tiring at times. I rather enjoyed just having a quick match with no meaning to it at all. Not a bad match either.

Here's Kane to address the Shield. He talks about all the safety codes that were broken last week in the Occupy Raw movement and blames someone for causing it. Jerry Lawler of all people was apparently responsible for getting those fans into the ring, which JBL accused him of doing last week. Lawler won't get up so here's Shield to deal with the problem. Kane unbuttons his shirt and says he's known Jerry for a long time. Lawler isn't in fighting shape so Kane is only going to enjoy this a little. Jerry is given the chance to speak on his own behalf as Shield surrounds

him.

Instead it's Rollins saying he sees the look in Lawler's eyes and has a good feeling Daniel Bryan isn't coming to save him. The Shield however, always does what's best for business. They slowly turn to face Kane and Lawler takes the opportunity to run for his life. Kane stares the three of them down and shakes his head. He says Reigns doesn't know what he's about to do and the beating is on. Kane fights them off for awhile but Rollins kicks his head off and the spear drops him. There's the Triple Bomb and Kane is left laying. This still didn't feel like a face turn but rather an anti-Kane turn.

#### Funkadactyls vs. AJ Lee/Tamina Snuka

Naomi is back with a patch over her eye (and of course it has glitter) and the Bellas are on commentary. Nikki thinks she should get a Divas Title shot, even though Naomi is #1 contender. Cameron hammers away on Tamina to start but gets her head taken off by a clothesline. AJ comes in and puts on a chinlock as the Bellas tease JBL with talk of tattoos. Back to Tamina but Cameron makes the tag off to Naomi. Everything breaks down and AJ grabs a guillotine choke on Naomi, only to be slammed down, followed by the split legged moonsault for the pin at 3:42.

**Rating:** C. For commercial for Total Divas. Multi-Diva match at the PPV. Next.

AJ yells at Tamina post match and gets shoved down. Tamina walks off.

The latest inductee into the Hall of Fame is Mr. T., which was announced earlier today.

We look back at Hogan announcing the battle royal last week.

#### Big E./Big Show/Dolph Ziggler/Mark Henry vs. Alberto Del Rio/Damien

## Sandow/Curtis Axel/Ryback

All eight of these guys are in the battle royal. Big E. and Ryback start things out and a weak Goldberg chant begins. Ryback shoves him into the corner but Big E. runs him over with a big shoulder. Off to Henry vs. Axel with Mark kicking Curtis' face off. Ziggler gets the tag to a high pitched pop and grabs a neckbreaker on Ryback. A dropkick sends the power guy to the floor and it's a standoff as we go to a break.

Back with Sandow working over Ziggler before it's off to Ryback for a delayed vertical suplex. He takes a bit too long though and Dolph counters into a small package for two. Back to Axel for some elbows to the head but Ziggler comes back with a DDT. Sandow breaks up the hot tag attempt and sends Dolph head first into the buckle. He misses a charge though and goes head first into the buckle as well, allowing the hot tag to Big Show. Everything breaks down and people are thrown up and over the top rope. Big Show and Sandow are left alone and it's a chokeslam for the pin at approximately 12:00.

**Rating:** C-. This was just a preview for the battle royal and there's nothing wrong with that. Much like everything else tonight, the wrestling wasn't the point here and it really didn't need to be. The battle royal is going to be a big part of the show and it's going to be a fun match so points for actually building it a big.

We look back at the Bryan/Batista/Orton situation from earlier.

Batista tries to leave again and says he's never quit anything in his life. He's leaving Wrestlemania with the title no matter who the third man is.

## Bray Wyatt vs. Kofi Kingston

Before the match we get a video on Bray vs. Cena set to a rap song about

a guy being strange since birth and talking about legacy with clips of Bray's original backwoods videos, comparing them to Cena's mainstream appeal. This is really starting to work. The match is a total squash with Bray destroying Kofi while singing about having the joy down in his heart. He runs Kofi over with a clothesline and drives in right hands before dropping him with a gutbuster. Sister Abigail ends this squash at 2:55.

Trailer for Oculus, a new movie from WWE Studios. It's a horror movie about an evil mirror.

Here's HHH for the big talk with Bryan. Daniel accepts his invitation down to the ring and HHH says this has never been personal. It's always been about what's best for business whether Daniel can understand that or not. Somehow this has been where it's always led and they're going to fight in three weeks at Wrestlemania. HHH won't apologize for what he does to Bryan in that ring and he wouldn't expect an apology from Bryan either. Bryan has crossed a line and HHH has to put an end to it at Wrestlemania because he has no choice.

HHH has to end the YES Movement and end the uprising and shut everything down. He has to do that and if he has to destroy Daniel to do that, then so be it. There are no hard feelings in all of this and may the best man win. HHH sticks out his hand but Bryan shakes his head no. That's cool with HHH because he would do the exact same thing. HHH has tried to stop Bryan since Summerslam and dumped a world on top of him, but Bryan is still standing here. The fans chant for Daniel Bryan because he hasn't folded under the pressure. Now the fans try a CM Punk chant as HHH says Bryan has earned his respect.

He goes to leave but here's Stephanie to rant about respect. Bryan endangered people's lives last week including HHH's, so she's pressing formal charges. Cops come out to arrest Bryan, though I'm not sure they have jurisdiction over something that happened in Tennessee. The cops surround Bryan and forcibly take him to the ground with nightsticks. They

don't beat him, but HHH has that evil smile on his face. He calls the cops as Bryan's hands are bound behind his back.

HHH says this isn't what he wants because these aren't even real cops. They leave the ring and Stephanie is smiling as well. HHH is looking forward to this and goes after a defenseless Bryan. They head outside with HHH sending him into the steps and announce table as Stephanie cheers him on. Bryan comes back with some headbutts, only to be dropped on the announce table again.

He screams about his arm before HHH throws him into the barricade and punches even more. The beating keeps going with Bryan just getting destroyed. HHH lays him on the table one more time and Stephanie mocks the YES motion. She gets in a few slaps for good measure. Bryan: "YOU HIT LIKE A GIRL!" HHH lay shim against the post and cracks Bryan in the head with a chair like a Concharito. Daniel is out cold so HHH adds a Pedigree and kisses Stephanie. He says this belongs to them and there is no YES Movement.

**Overall Rating:** B+. Tonight was all about the emotions leading up to Wrestlemania. We saw it in the triple threat story, heard about it with Cena being afraid of Bray Wyatt, heard it from Big Show when he talked about what the battle royal meant to him and saw it with Kane being angry at the Shield.

The matches are all set but tonight was a big step in making us care. Having a good match is one thing, but making the fans CARE about it is a different story entirely. The latter is very rare but they're going for it with this Wrestlemania. That's the right way to go about a big show and they're giving it the effort it needs. Tonight made me want to see these matches on a different level than I did before and that's exactly what these shows are supposed to do.

Results

Real Americans b. Usos – Neutralizer to Jey

Sheamus b. Titus O’Neil – Brogue Kick

Daniel Bryan b. Randy Orton – Pin after a spear from Batista

Goldust b. Fandango – Final Cut

Funkadactyls b. Tamina Snuka/AJ Lee – Split legged moonsault to AJ

Big E./Big Show/Dolph Ziggler/Mark Henry b. Alberto Del Rio/Damien Sandow/Curtis Axel/Ryback – Chokeslam to Sandow

Bray Wyatt b. Kofi Kingston – Sister Abigail

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## Next Week’s Guest Stars

This is actually big.

Next week’s guest stars: Arnold Schwarzenegger and Scooby Doo with the Mystery Machine. Arnold actually did a YES chant in the promo spot. For once, I’m actually looking forward to this.

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# Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: March 11, 2014

We've got a lot to cover this week after a huge Raw last night.

First up was Hogan making his announcement that he could rip the bumper off a Cadillac (jack) and wanting to wrestle the whole neighborhood. Other than that the big announcement was the Andre the Giant Memorial Battle Royal which is a great way to put thirty names on the card. That's the best way they can go about doing so as the roster is huge and they couldn't fit everyone in without having about thirteen matches with a bunch of multi-man matches. The battle royal also opens up the possibilities of some new faces, hopefully from NXT.

After the announcement, John Cena showed up to praise Hogan and throw his name in the battle royal. While a lot of people may not like them, Cena and Hogan are two of the biggest stars of all time and seeing them together for a glorified photo-op is worth seeing. After the usual speeches, the Wyatts showed up with Bray making an incredible speech with the great line of if Cena looks up at him he'll see a friend, if he looks down at Bray he'll see an enemy but if he looks Bray in the eye, he'll see a god.

Cena responded with the usual jokes and a Jimmy Buffett song. You knew this was coming and thankfully it was just a quick blast of jokes before he went on to challenging Wyatt for a match at Wrestlemania. Later in the night Bray accepted the challenge after saying he saw Cena's future in Hogan. There's probably a lot of truth in that and an interesting look at where we could be moving with Cena's character. At some point Cena is going to start facing the end of his career and it's going to be interesting considering how WWE is his life. That's a very interesting

idea and something we haven't ever really gotten to see.

Oh and Cena beat Rowan after getting destroyed (just like he was by Cesaro) before getting a quick pin. Rowan has a future and has looked very good in his two matches with Cena and Bryan.

Moving on we had the Authority demanding an apology from Daniel Bryan. I'll save the rest for later as it's a huge moment.

The Usos beat up Ryback and Curtis Axel in a quick match and it's pretty clear the Outlaws are getting a rematch at Wrestlemania. Not much else to say here.

Kane made Shield vs. the Rhodes Brothers, saying their problems started when they lost the Tag Titles. The Shield said that Kane was deflecting his anger from losing two straight matches last week on them. It seems like a way for Kane to leave the Authority by giving into the inner hate and losing his corporate image. It makes sense and is the logical progression for the character, assuming they go there.

Big E. beat Swagger with the second rollup finish in under three and a half minutes of the night. The story here though was the Real Americans being forced to shake hands after Cesaro refused to help Swagger cheat. Again it implies a face turn for someone which is interesting given how strong he's been pushed lately.

We got Undertaker doing his usual Wrestlemania promo on Brock Lesnar after being interrupted by Paul Heyman. There isn't much to say here as it was the same stuff we've always heard: Brock will dominate, Undertaker

is unbeatable, the match will be a way. The most intriguing part here was the commentators saying Brock had almost no chance at Wrestlemania. That's not something you hear that often and it's another interesting twist to the match.

One other note: Paul Heyman mentioned that Shawn Michaels had never won two straight matches at Wrestlemania. Incorrect, as he won at Wrestlemanias VII and VIII. Yeah VII was the Rockers but Undertaker won a handicap/tag match at Wrestlemania XIX so pick one or the other.

Shield vs. Rhodes Brothers was exactly what you would expect after these teams fighting over and over. Cody and Goldust are pretty much done as a top tag team but it's nice to see that they haven't split. The Black Out from Rollins was awesome looking though and is a good finishing move for him.

Next up was the Divas match which continues to prove one simple truth: the Bella Twins are not very good in the ring. You can see them making sure to go through every single spot step by step without being natural about it at all. They're basically wrestling in swimsuits (nothing wrong with that) but treating them like they can keep up with the traditional wrestlers is just wrong. Nikki pinned AJ and held up the title while looking at Natalya. I'm thinking a multi-woman match at Wrestlemania for the belt.

This brings us to the big segment of the night. Daniel Bryan came out for the apology but said tonight he was getting what the fans wanted by occupying Raw. The show went to a break and came back to see probably over 100 fans in and around the ring, all in Daniel Bryan shirts and chanting YES. Bryan stayed on the corner and said the show wasn't going anywhere until he got his match at Wrestlemania with HHH. The Authority

came out and said no way, but security walked away from trying to clear the ring.

After a LONG back and forth segment, HHH finally agreed to the match. That still wasn't enough for Bryan though because he knew the fans wanted to see him wrestling for the WWE Championship at Wrestlemania. Therefore he threw out an idea: if he defeats HHH, Bryan gets inserted into the title match in the main event. HHH said it would destroy Bryan but finally agreed.

This was quite the spectacle but it wasn't perfect. For one thing, the segment went on too long and HHH looked like he just snapped instead of letting this build up over time. On top of that, the Authority just can't act. Stephanie's acting has always been a joke but HHH sounds like he's trying to take it too far. The segment felt a bit forced but it didn't go terribly.

That being said, it got the job done. There was really no other option to get the results that were needed at Wrestlemania short of a fourway which I don't think would have worked at all. It seems obvious that Bryan wins the title after beating HHH, but I can't shake a feeling that Batista walks out with the title. I don't think Bryan loses to HHH of course, but for some reason I think he loses the main event, probably setting up a rematch at Extreme Rules.

Sheamus vs. Christian was good and a nice blowoff to their feud. I could have done without the musical instruments stuff, but it was a good brawl with some nice false finishes. Sheamus still does need to lose once in awhile, but at least the match wasn't a squash. Christian is falling apart before our eyes though and I can't picture him being around much longer.

That brings us to the main event which didn't mean anything at all. Occupy Raw should have closed out the night and the match just didn't work as a result. It was basically a reason to get Bryan in there with the title contenders and there's nothing wrong with that, but the match was a letdown after the bigger moments earlier in the night.

Raw last night was all about the heavy lifting for Wrestlemania. We got Bryan vs. HHH, Cena vs. Wyatt and a thirty man battle royal all set up for the PPV. It solved a lot of the problems the show had been facing and gave us some awesome moments in the process. It was a show that needed to happen for awhile now and a lot of things look better. Wrestlemania is a stacked show now with almost everything of note set up. That's what these shows need to do and they're doing it quite well.

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# **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.

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## **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.

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# 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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