

Monday Night Raw – October 21, 2002 (2017 Redo): Katie Vick

Monday Night Raw

Date: October 21, 2002

Location: Gaylord Entertainment Center, Knoxville, Tennessee

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're past No Mercy and the big story on the red side is the potential murder/necrophiliac did NOT win the World Title, meaning the Intercontinental Title has ceased to be. That means we're in need of a fresh challenger and I'm terrified to think of what HHH is going to do to them. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last night's title match.

Here are HHH and Ric Flair to get things going. HHH talks about everyone saying he didn't deserve to be handed the title and he has one thing to say to them: SCREW YOU! He's beaten everyone that's gotten in the ring with him (in the full SIX WEEKS he's been champion) and last night was just like another nail in Katie Vick's coffin.

Kane isn't here tonight because he probably doesn't want to team with Rob Van Dam against the two of them. Or maybe there's one other option....and Flair pulls out a tape. HHH says it's going to show whether or not Kane had sex with Vick before or after she was dead and no one will ever look at Kane again. Hurricane comes out and tries to steal the tape but gets beaten down.

Jeff Hardy vs. Christopher Nowinski

Hardy speeds things up to start and sends Chris to the floor for a sloppy flip dive (with his leg smacking Nowinski in the head). Back in and Jeff shrugs off some forearms to the back before getting two off a Thesz press of all things. The announcers bicker about the tape with JR saying "there's no semen in wrestling".

A side slam gives Nowinski two and a hot shot gets the same. Hardy gets in some right hands and the legdrop between the legs but the Swanton is broken up. Nowinski goes for a chair but here's Al Snow

to take it away. That allows Jeff to dropkick it into Chris' face but Al pulls Nowinski out of the way of the Swanton, giving Chris the pin.

Rating: D-. Jeff is at a horrible point and Nowinski never was worth much in the first part. It doesn't help that this match was almost as horrible as it possibly could have been as they were both missing almost every other move. I have no idea what's up with Hardy lately but he's getting more and more useless every time.

Eric Bischoff is watching a tape of his issues with Big Show when Stacy Keibler comes in. She wants to referee a match tonight so Bischoff says anything but the main event. Now it's Show coming in so Bischoff gives him Rico and 3 Minute Warning in a handicap match.

Tommy Dreamer wants to know what's up with Snow helping Nowinski. Snow says he's just looking out for one of his kids but Dreamer wants revenge in a Singapore cane match. Nowinski comes up and says he doesn't need Snow's help.

William Regal/Lance Storm vs. Bubba Ray Dudley/Spike Dudley

The winners get a future Tag Team Title shot. Before the match, Storm says the Un-Americans are done but he and Regal share a mutual respect. Oh and America is horrible. Storm and Spike have a nice technical sequence to start with Storm looking stunned that Spike can keep up with him. It's off to Bubba for a shoulder and neckbreaker and Regal takes a backdrop. Kane is shown arriving as Spike comes back in for his running forearms. Everything breaks down and Spike hurricanranas Lance out to the floor and the Dudley Dog puts Regal away.

Rating: D. The tag division is so worthless right now and it's amazing to see how much it pales in comparison next to its Smackdown counterpart. Smackdown had a Match of the Year candidate last night and Raw can't even give a nothing match four minutes as a team goes one a one match winning streak to become #1 contenders.

Regal and Storm beat up the Dudleyz with a superkick to Bubba's head and some brass knuckles shots to Spike's ribs.

Trish Stratus finishes up a photo shoot and says she doesn't know what's up with Victoria. Christian and Chris Jericho come up to awkwardly hit on her while bringing up the barking for Vince thing. It's obvious that Trish wants an injection of Vitamin C. These two

were great together and Trish's disturbed face made it even better. Here's Eric Bischoff with an announcement to top Smackdown's Cell match from last night. At Survivor Series, you will see the Elimination Chamber.

Batista and all of his muscles are still coming.

D'Lo Brown vs. Test

Stacy Keibler is guest referee and slaps Brown before the match. Test jumps him from behind and tries a full nelson slam but gets kicked away so Brown can shout a lot. A slam gets two on Test with Stacy doing the really slow slam. That's quite a slam if it would have gotten the pin otherwise. The Sky High connects but Stacy stops to tie her shoe, allowing Test to get in the big boot for the normal pin.

Stacy jumps into Test's arms. Lawler: "You ever see Earl Hebner do that?" JR: "Maybe one time with a large woman in Wisconsin."

Victoria rants about how Trish is a liar but here's Goldust to mock her in a Dusty voice. Booker joins him to help set up a six person tag tonight. Again: why in the world is this all Booker has to do? Booker calls her a sucka and Goldust gets in a little spank. Faces are now sexual harassers.

Goldust/Booker T./Trish Stratus vs. Chris Jericho/Christian/Victoria

Trish goes after Victoria to start and an early Chick Kick gets two. Victoria sends her throat first into the bottom rope though and it's off to Christian for some intimidation. That earns him a slap and Trish crawls through his legs for the hot tag to Booker as things speed up. A Victoria distraction lets Christian knock Booker outside and it's time for the beatdown segment.

Back in and Jericho punches Booker in the head a few times but the spinning sunset flip puts Chris down for two. Christian's dropkick sets up a top rope knee to Booker's knee as Lawler says Trish wants Jericho. Booker gets in a spinebuster on Jericho and the hot tag brings in Goldust to clean house. A middle rope bulldog drops Jericho but Trish tags herself in for a high crossbody. Goldust kisses Victoria and Booker clotheslines Christian out to the floor. With no one else around, Jericho blasts Trish with a clothesline and grabs the Walls for the tap out.

Rating: D+. Well at least Booker didn't do the job again, though I'm

not sure how this helps anyone. I had forgotten that Victoria was even involved in the match until the ending, which she didn't even play a part in. This really didn't work and that's not a good thing with two stories hitting a wall at the same time.

HHH delivers the tape to the production truck.

Terri is waiting outside Kane's locker room in case this tape is horrible.

Here's the tape. We're in a funeral home and HHH is in a Kane shirt and mask. He goes up to the casket and talks to Katie (a mannequin). It's her fault that she died because she wouldn't give him what he wanted before they got in the car. He wants her now more than ever and sees no reason why they can't be together.

Censored fondling ensues and HHH takes off his shirt. Katie's clothes are removed too and HHH mounts the mannequin as we go to shots of the funeral home with various sexual noises in the background. Back to the casket with HHH appearing to be missing his clothes. He reaches down to her head and pulls up some goo. HHH: "I did it. I screwed your brains out!"

Normally I would give an explanation of why this didn't work but this one speaks for itself. And yes, it's actually worse than you remember.

Al Snow vs. Tommy Dreamer

This is a Singapore Cane match because, you know, because you can just go from the tape to this off a single commercial. They trade cane shots to start until Dreamer hits the post by mistake. The trapping headbutts stagger Tommy but Nowinski comes in and smacks Snow with a cane shot to give Dreamer the pin. This was nothing and I don't think it cleared the Katie Vick stuff from the fans' minds.

Rico/3 Minute Warning vs. Big Show

Show cleans house to start and the trio takes a breather on the floor. Back in and Show shrugs off a double clothesline before sending 3 Minute Warning to the floor. Triple teaming works a bit better but Show fights up, clears out Rico and Rosey and ends Jamal clean with a chokeslam in just over two minutes. So yeah, remember all those months of Jamal and Rosey being monsters? Forget all that because Big Show needed the win.

Post break, Big Show is traded to Smackdown. Again: what happened to

the whole CONTRACTS ARE TOTALLY LOCKED IN NO MATTER WHAT?

Hurricane is standing next to a car, perhaps waiting on Kane.

Shawn Michaels is at the World and says he doesn't hate anyone. He stands up from his wheelchair and he's coming for HHH.

Ric Flair/HHH vs. Rob Van Dam/Kane

The good guys hammer away in the corner to start and a pair of kicks to the face have the villains in trouble. Rolling Thunder gets two on Flair and it's off to the regular match. Actually scratch that as everything breaks down again with Van Dam kicking HHH a few times. Lawler calls the tape a public service and JR demands an explanation. As Jerry talks about how it was showing the world what REALLY happened, Flair sends Van Dam into the steps to really take over.

Kane breaks up a near fall as Lawler says HHH is really cerebral because he screwed Katie's brains out. We hit the sleeper on Van Dam as Lawler is still on the necrophilia stuff. Flair goes up top and JR is making jokes about him as he's only halfway up. Lawler: "It's like Kane with Katie Vick! He just kept trying until he made it work!" Another kick puts HHH down but Flair offers a distraction so the referee doesn't see the tag.

That's the only good thing about the match so far, which isn't a good sign seven minutes in. The hot tag is made a few seconds later and it's Kane coming in off the top with the clothesline. Everything breaks down again and Flair low blows Van Dam, setting up a suplex for two. Kane has HHH up on the stage as Van Dam kicks Flair in the face and hits the Five Star for the pin.

Rating: D-. This was one of the least interesting matches I can remember in a long time and I can't say I'm surprised. At the end of the day, there's just no way to buy either of these two as a real threat to HHH because it's clear he's not laying down for either of them. If that's the case, what's the point to having a match like this? The commentary made things even worse as Lawler kept making necrophilia jokes and JR had to be incredulous

In the back, Kane knocks HHH into the trunk of the car Hurricane is next to. Kane promises to screw him, but the question is if HHH will be alive or dead. He drives away to end the show.

Overall Rating: F-. Nope. In every definition of the word possible,

no. I can't think of a single thing on this show that I liked, cared about, was interested in or want to see continue. This was one of the worst episodes the show has ever done with one of the worst segments in wrestling history. It wasn't funny, it wasn't intelligent, it wasn't innovative and it had no business on this show. Other than someone higher up on the food chain thinking it was hilarious, I have no idea who decided it needed to be on the show. The rest of the show might not have been as bad but that's not exactly a high bar to reach.

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Monday Night Raw – March 20, 2017: The Wrestlemania Reds (Because Smackdown is Blue)

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 20, 2017

Location: Barclays Center, New York Center, New York

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

WE WANT PAIGE! Sorry just thought I'd get you used to those tonight

as the New York crowd is going to let you know about it all night long. We're less than two weeks away from Wrestlemania and there's a good chance tonight is going to be all about the big push towards the show. Already announced tonight is Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman and Kevin Owens on the Highlight Reel. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of the end of last week's show with Mick Foley being told he had to fire someone and getting in a fight with HHH as a result. This led to Seth Rollins coming out and brawling with HHH as well until a crutch to the knee took Rollins down to end the show.

Here's Mick Foley to get things going but he has to read a speech off some cards, thanking HHH and Stephanie for giving him his job. He talks about the end of last week's show and how stupid it was. Foley says he's taking a leave of absence but goes on a rant about how he was given these stupid cards ten minutes before the show started. He's been in this business for thirty one years and this is how he's treated. Foley: "I'M MICK FREAKING FOLEY!" The mic gets cut off and here's Stephanie to a rousing chorus of boos.

Stephanie rips on Foley for not being able to do anything right and finally fires him. Cue Sami Zayn of all people to say that Foley has had more integrity in the last nine months than she's had in her whole life. Sami rips on her but she laughs him off and says Sami isn't worthy to speak to her at all, let alone like this. She tells him to get out of here but Sami says he's going to stay here and do the right thing. Cue Samoa Joe (with Stephanie talking over his music) and we've got a match. Sami hits a big flip dive before a break or the bell.

Sami Zayn vs. Samoa Joe

Joined in progress with Sami firing off some forearms until a hard elbow to the face puts him down. Joe's big kneedrop gets two and the powerslam gets the same as Corey sums up Joe in a single line: "Beating will continue until morality improves." That's an old Craig Pittman line (don't bother looking it up) and one of my favorites ever. The Muscle Buster is broken up so Joe knocks him outside for

the suicide elbow.

Back from a break with Sami caught in a bow and arrow and shaking his head rather hard. Sami gets up and hits one heck of a clothesline to sent Joe outside but Joe is right there to break up the suicide dive. Joe gets posted and the diving DDT through the ropes crushes Joe, only to have Sami comes up holding his arm. Back in and the Helluva Kick is countered into the Rock Bottom out of the corner. The Koquina Clutch ends Sami at 12:20.

Rating: B-. Good, hard hitting match here and more entertaining than their pay per view match at Fastlane. Joe is being treated like a killer and is already as effective as he was down in NXT. I had a fun time with this one as Sami is one of the best ever at taking a stiff beating, especially from someone as good as Joe.

We look back at Braun Strowman attacking Roman Reigns at the Royal Rumble.

Post break Foley is talking to Sami, who thanks him for everything and says it's a rare instance where it's ok to meet his hero. Sheamus and Cesaro thank Foley for believing in them and hugs abound. Speaking of hugs, Foley runs into Bayley for another hug but turns around to see HHH, who tells him to have a nice day. Foley leaves, without his luggage for some reason.

We look back at Rollins vs. HHH from last week.

Video of Rollins' rehab.

We get a talk with a doctor, who says Seth's knee has been re-aggravated and only the brace saved it from being horrible. It's going to be several MONTHS before Rollins is ready to compete but there's a big reason to believe he'll be at Wrestlemania anyway. No doctor will clear him in time.

Charlotte vs. Dana Brooke

Fallout from Charlotte turning on Dana last week. Dana waistlocks her to the mat and hammers away in the corner, sending Charlotte out to the floor for a breather. Back in and Dana gets two off a clothesline followed by an elbow drop. Charlotte looks stunned as a

WE WANT PAIGE (to the NEW DAY ROCKS beat) starts up. A quick big boot takes Dana's head off for the pin at 3:40. That was Charlotte's only major offensive move.

Rating: C-. This was a way to push Dana a bit and it worked to a certain degree. The roster could always use some fresh blood so pushing Dana is a good idea and I can see why they didn't put her over Charlotte in her first match. Not bad though. The ending was really sudden though and it hurt things a lot.

Bayley questions Stephanie's actions so she makes Nia Jax vs. Bayley for later tonight. If Nia wins, the Women's Title match at Wrestlemania is a fatal four way. We'll throw in a bonus by making it No DQ.

Here's Jericho for the Highlight Reel. Jericho wants to talk about the REAL Kevin Owens but first has to acknowledge the Friends of Jericho, who he'd like to "CHEER ME ON MAN!" Chris gets back to the point and shows us a picture of Owens at 16 years old in a Y2J shirt, doing a Jericho pose.

That looks like a fan of Jericho and "he was marking out man!". Then he was signed to WWE in 2014 and actually sent Jericho a DM on Twitter (which we see) where he asked if Jericho had any advice. At the end, Owens said he'd be there if Jericho needed anything. That brings us to Fastlane, where Owens was terrified when Jericho came out.

See, the truth is that Jericho isn't Owens' friend because he's Owens' idol. At Wrestlemania, Owens is facing his hero and idol, the best in the world, the Ayatollah, Chris Jericho man! Do you know what happen when you stab Chris Jericho in the back? Cue Samoa Joe for a distraction so Owens can jump Jericho from behind. Owens gives him the Pop Up Powerbomb and RIPS UP THE LIST!

We look at Strowman and Reigns' contract signing from last month.

TJ Perkins vs. Brian Kendrick

Perkins sends him outside for the slingshot dropkick, followed by a high crossbody for two. Not that it matters as Perkins gets caught

in Sliced Bread #2 for the pin at 1:25.

Post match Kendrick talks about Akira Tozawa not being in the country and pulls out Tozawa's passport. So how did he leave the country?

Roman Reigns says this is his yard.

Long video on Goldberg vs. Lesnar, focusing on Goldberg's rise and their Wrestlemania XX match.

Stephanie makes Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Enzo/Big Cass/Gallows/Anderson. If Sheamus and Cesaro lose, they're out of the triple threat.

Nia Jax vs. Bayley

Non-title and No DQ. Bayley goes right after her to start but gets knocked outside with Nia throwing her around like she's not even there. The running hip attack hits the steps though and we take a break. Back with Nia holding a chinlock before dropping some big elbows. With that not going anywhere, Nia takes her outside and swings Bayley into the barricade a few times. It's chair time but Bayley baseball slides it into her face. The fans are doing the Wave and chanting for Sasha as Bayley gets in a high crossbody for two. Now it's off to the CM Punk chants as the Samoan drop ends Bayley at 10:10.

Rating: D. "We put Bayley in backstage segments with Bayley. If she can't overcome all these losses and times where she's treated like nothing, that's just her fault." That's pretty clearly the mentality around here because WWE has no idea what made Bayley work in NXT and thinks she can be treated like anyone else. BUT DID I MENTION SHE'S BEEN IN SEGMENTS WITH STEPHANIE??? Oh and there was no reason for this to be No DQ. Bayley could have hit a regular baseball slide and it would change nothing.

Women's History Month video on Mae Young.

Here's an in-ring sitdown interview with HHH. The boss talks over the CM Punk chants and explains how people like Mick Foley started listening to the fans, just like Seth Rollins. HHH talks about the end of last week's show and we see it again (third time tonight).

HHH: "That's on you!" He finds it funny that the crutch had to use a crutch to come to the ring last week and it was the crutch that cost him in the end. He's done with Rollins because Seth won't be able to fight at Wrestlemania.

HHH has pulled some tickets for Rollins and hands them to Cole before going to leave. Not so fast though as HHH thinks we might need to get this over with once and for all. Everyone wants to see this fight so he'll draw up a release saying Seth can't sue HHH for ending his career. If Rollins is the man he thinks he is, he'll show up next week and sign the paperwork so they can have the match.

Clip of Reigns beating Strowman at Fastlane.

Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Enzo Amore/Big Cass/Anderson and Gallows

Enzo and Cass do their thing before the match and get in a fight with Anderson and Gallows. The distraction sets up a Brogue Kick on Gallows for the pin at 36 seconds.

Enzo and Cass beat up the champs again post match.

New Day is in the back and Big E. asks if Woods has anything to tell him about. That would be Wrestlemania actually as the trio talks about the bigger matches. Big E. is really, really excited for Goldberg vs. Brock Lesnar. They even act out a little bit of the buildup.

Austin Aries vs. Tony Nese

Aries claps his hands around Nese's ears to start but gets forearmed in the face as we take an early break. Back with Nese holding him in a torture rack but missing a springboard moonsault. Aries comes back with a suplex and the very popular Pendulum Elbow. A missile dropkick sets up the discus five-arm (dang it Terry Taylor) for the pin at 7:55.

Rating: C-. This was just a way to show you that Aries is indeed awesome and ready to face Neville at Wrestlemania. I can go for Aries getting a good push before his title match as he needs to get back in ring shape. Aries is already better than most of the division so a few wins like this are a good idea.

Post match Neville comes out and Aries is more than ready to go. Neville says he's not wasting his time going to the ring because Aries is beneath him. Aries sees a man who knows he has to face the greatest man who ever lived. Over the next thirteen days, Neville needs to enjoy the title while it lasts because it's time for the title to go to the A-Double Level.

Emma is coming soon.

Video on Goldberg vs. Lesnar over the last few months.

Strowman says he's going to destroy Reigns.

Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman

Reigns starts fast and knocks Strowman to the floor but the apron dropkick is broken up with one heck of a clothesline. Back in and a hard whip sends Reigns into the buckle before we hit a very big chinlock. Reigns fights up with some clotheslines before avoiding a charge in the corner.

That means more clotheslines but he has to escape a chokeslam. The Samoan drop (with some effort) gets two and the apron dropkick makes things even worse for Braun. Not that it matters as Reigns is whipped hard into the steps, which are then thrown into the ring. Roman Superman Punches them out of his hand though and escapes the powerslam. Another Superman Punch drops Braun and Reigns loads the spear, only to have Undertaker appear in the ring. Undertaker actually chokeslams Strowman, winces a lot and turns around for the spear. We'll say the match is a no contest at about 9:00.

Rating: C-. These two work well together and I'm glad there's no finish as Reigns pinning Strowman didn't need to happen again (nor did it really need to happen in the first place but that's a different story). Reigns vs. Undertaker will be fine, assuming Undertaker can keep going physically.

Reigns leaves and Undertaker sits up about thirty seconds later, which Graves says should shake Reigns' confidence.

Overall Rating: D. Yeah this wasn't much, especially due to the lack of wrestling. I mean, it's no surprise that it's happening as we're

two weeks away from Wrestlemania and the card is mostly set in stone but it doesn't make this the easiest show in the world to sit through. I'm not interested in the Stephanie story (though I rarely am) but she mostly disappeared in the second half of the show. This wasn't a great week but it was almost exactly what I was expecting. Next week is going to be about the same, if not even worse and you should just prepare for it now.

Results

Samoa Joe b. Sami Zayn – Koquina Clutch

Charlotte b. Dana Brooke – Big boot

Brian Kendrick b. TJ Perkins – Sliced Bread #2

Nia Jax b. Bayley – Samoan drop

Cesaro/Sheamus b. Enzo Amore/Big Cass/Anderson and Gallows – Brogue Kick to Gallows

Austin Aries b. Tony Nese – Discus Five Arm

Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman went to a no contest when Undertaker interfered

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Monday Night Raw – October 14, 2002: An Embarrassment to Wrestling Fans

Monday Night Raw

Date: October 14, 2002

Location: Bell Centre, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

I'm going to get straight to the point on this one: we're in the Katie Vick era. No Mercy is in six days and the big story is HHH claiming that Kane killed someone named Katie Vick ten years ago. Now if you know your wrestling history, you know what we're coming up on in the next few weeks and you know how bad this is going to be. Let's get to it.

We open with a quick look at the end of last week's show.

Kane yells at Coach for asking about what HHH said last week.

Opening sequence.

Tag Team Titles: Hurricane/Kane vs. Christian/Chris Jericho

Kane and Hurricane are defending. Hang on a sec though as Booker T. runs out to jump Jericho before we get going. That means Christian has to take a Shining Wizard from Hurricane for an early two while Jericho is stuck on the floor. Jericho finally gets it together but Hurricane hits a big flip dive onto both Canadians.

Kane comes in for some power, including a tilt-a-whirl powerslam for two on Christian. Things finally go the challengers' way after Jericho low bridges Hurricane to the floor and the double teaming begins. As this goes on, JR says he's not going to believe that Kane is a murderer. There's one of those lines that doesn't sound good out of context and sounds very stupid in context. Hurricane gets in a Blockbuster and makes the hot tag to Kane for the top rope clothesline.

Christian tries to bring in a belt but settles for a low blow. A missile dropkick gives Jericho two as JR thinks it would be an upset if we have new champions. Kane Rocket Launches Hurricane onto

Jericho for two before chasing Christian up the ramp. Back in the ring, Jericho reverses the chokeslam into the Walls, which is reversed into a rollup. Chris reverses that too though and throws his feet on the ropes for the pin and the titles.

Rating: C-. Not a terrible match but it goes to show you how annoying transitional reigns can be a lot of the time. Kane and Hurricane could have been any two guys (Bubba and Spike would have made sense if they want Bubba to be a big deal) but instead they merged the tag team and singles champions into one story for no apparent reason. At least it's over though.

Post break Booker yells at Jericho so a Tag Team Title match is made for Sunday because Bischoff has to keep even with Stephanie.

Al Snow vs. Lance Storm

Snow's music asks what everybody needs. Maybe someone else getting this spot? William Regal is on commentary to talk about wearing women's clothes last week, which apparently didn't fit. Storm throws some right hands to start but springboards into a powerslam. That sounds like a perfect time to show another shot of Regal as a showgirl, which sends him off commentary and down to the ring.

Snow's trapping headbutts have Storm in trouble as we hear about Tough Enough III debuting soon, which explains Snow being on TV lately. Al slips to the floor and decks Regal but has his crossbody rolled through for two. Regal gets in a cheap shot and slides Storm the knuckles but Snow knocks them away. Not that it matters as Storm gets in the superkick for the pin.

Rating: D-. I'm so glad that we got a Tough Enough commercial while we watched Al Snow eat up TV time. Snow is talented but outside of him being insane or doing his hardcore stuff, is there really any reason to be interested in him? I have no idea why this mini feud is preferred over just saying Tough Enough is coming and talking about the show but they have bigger issues in the Katie Vick era.

Victoria suggests that Trish slept her way into a job so Trish comes up and slaps her in the face.

Jeff Hardy and Spike Dudley are in the back when Rob Van Dam comes up to talk about last week's match. Bubba has a severe concussion and doesn't remember the match (apparently he kept talking to Jericho during the match and barely had a clue what he was doing).

Bischoff pops in and shows them a video of last week's match. Eric makes Jeff vs. Rico and sends Spike off before giving Van Dam a match at No Mercy with Ric Flair. As for tonight, Rob has a Canadian lumberjack match (as in the lumberjacks will have straps) against HHH.

HHH doesn't know what a Canadian lumberjack match is before explaining what a Canadian lumberjack match is. After that lack of thinking, HHH and Flair collude about Kane with HHH deciding to tell the world the whole story if Kane doesn't confess.

Jeff Hardy vs. Rico

Rico gets in some cheap shots to start but Jeff takes him to the floor and stomps away. There seems to be some kind of an incident near ringside (though it might just be people going to the concession stands) as Rico scores with some kicks to the head for two before grabbing a bodyscissors. The announcers talk about anything else they can think of (Kane's potential murderer status and Bubba's concussion) until Jeff gets two off the Whisper in the Wind. Rico gets dropkicked out of the air and the Swanton is enough for the pin.

Rating: D. So that happened. They had a match, Jeff won when you would expect him to and...that's about it. This was nothing but filler and you can tell the announcers weren't interested either. Rico is fine for a low level heel but Jeff has been the same person since his singles run started faltering, which was pretty much the day it started.

Kane is mad and tells Hurricane to leave him alone. Terri of all people comes up to talk him through it because he has no chance against HHH in this frame of mind. Basically he needs to tell everyone what happened and everything will be fine. I'm not sure if that's how it works.

Post break Kane is in the ring to talk about how Katie Vick's death was an accident, meaning he is NOT a murderer. He and Katie were friends about ten years ago when he started wrestling (Was this federation in the asylum? I know Kane has one of the more detailed backstories in the company but you would think they could have remembered that part.) and she was the only one who cared about him. They went to a party one night and Katie had too much to drink so he drove home. He didn't quite know how to drive a stick shift and hit

an animal. The crash broke his arm and killed her instantly but it was an accident and HE IS NOT A MURDERER. I'm so glad he cleared that up.

Cue HHH to say Kane was drunk too and cops found Kane's semen in her. Kane loved her but Katie didn't feel the same. Kane wasn't charged with anything but the fact is KANE IS A MURDERER! HHH asks if Kane forced himself on her or just do it to her corpse. Kane's mouth hangs open and we go to a break.

I've watched a lot of wrestling in my day and I've seen some very dumb stories. It's very rare that I find something that would make me embarrassed as a fan but that's what happened here. This is one of, if not THE DUMBEST ideas I've ever seen in wrestling. Let's start with one of the obvious questions: HOW DOES HHH KNOW ALL THIS??? I can get the idea of maybe finding something in a newspaper article but he sounds like he was at the same school watching the whole thing.

Speaking of where someone was during this whole thing, do you remember about three years before this when Kane was a big monster covered in burns and scars? As in the guy who could only speak through a voicebox and had his first girlfriend (Tori) around the same time? Apparently he was not only trained as a wrestler back around 1992 but went to parties and had a female friend.

Finally, and most importantly, how does this really change anything? So Kane did something a long time ago and there was a big accident which may or may not have been his fault. Now he's not going to get a title match on pay per view as a result? This is really the best thing they can do? Just talk about how important the titles are or something but stop WAY before you reach this level of nonsense.

After a break, Kane leaves to avoid doing something he'll regret.

Molly Holly/Victoria vs. Trish Stratus/Jackie

Stacy is guest referee and we're supposed to just go with the women after Kane is accused of necrophilia. Of course we are. The brawl is on to start with Stacy looking rather confused about what to do here. Trish gets the Stratusphere on Molly before it's off to Jackie as JR keeps pointing out that Stacy isn't your normal referee. You know, in case you didn't get that yourselves.

Jackie armdrags both villains down at the same time as something

else goes on in the first few rows. It seems that someone ran down to the barricade to get a picture and was sent away for his efforts. At least it's better than listening to the announcers talk about how good the women look. Trish gets double teamed in the corner and Molly rips at her face. Victoria adds the slingshot flipping legdrop for two but Molly misses the handspring elbow. Jackie gets two off a side slam but it's time for the referee has a sore shoulder bit. We get a ref bump before a DDT looks to finish Molly....so here's another referee to count the pin

Rating: D. The match was as good as it was going to be for how overbooked the whole thing was. Trish vs. Victoria has potential as they're actually showing some fire and the other two are fine additions to make this a tag. On the other hand, I have no idea why Stacy was involved here. I mean that in storyline terms of course as the outfit spoke for itself.

Booker gets his strap for later.

Batista is still coming.

Eric Bischoff is in the ring to say Kane will get his title shot no matter what (so the story IS pointless). That's going to be important because it's the final time the Intercontinental Title will be defended. Therefore, as a special treat, here's the first Intercontinental Champion and Montreal native Pat Patterson.

Pat greets the fans in French but Bischoff tells him to speak English. That's fine as Patterson says he doesn't trust Bischoff but Eric has a tribute to the history of the Intercontinental Title. It's actually pretty solid but as soon as it's over, Pat has to fight off 3 Minute Warning. This goes as well as you would expect, as does Gerald Brisco's attempt at a save. Big Show and D'Lo Brown (former 3 Minute Warning victims) make the save, followed by Jeff Hardy after the work has been done. Again, this felt like filler.

The Anthology CD collection is coming. I bought that.

Al Snow praises Christopher Nowinski for never giving up but Chris doesn't think much of him.

Christopher Nowinski vs. Tommy Dreamer

The feud that won't die. Dreamer gets two off an early neckbreaker but gets sent hard into the corner. A spinebuster gives Dreamer two more so Nowinski hits one of his own. Tommy comes back and puts him

in the Tree of Woe for some crotching, only to go after a Singapore cane. Al Snow won't let it happen though and Dreamer gets caught in a full nelson slam for the quick pin. This was bad, mainly due to the people involved.

HHH says he found all this stuff out in police reports which were given to him by someone else. He'll win tonight and on Sunday too.

Video on Randy Orton.

Here's Randy to say he's torn his shoulder apart but will be back in 3-4 months. There's even an e-mail address set up for fans to send him get well wishes. This is the city where Bret Hart got screwed but unlike Bret, Orton will be back. Orton is cranking up the smugness here and it's working FAR better than anything else he's ever done.

Booker T. vs. Big Show

Falls count anywhere. Booker hammers away but gets sent outside for two as the announcers argue about Kane AGAIN. This is probably the sixth time tonight and it's Lawler making a joke and JR shouting KANE IS NOT A MURDERER. Anyway they fight into the crowd as we discuss JR's sandwich from earlier in the day. They head backstage and the crowd noise just stops in one of the worst edits I've ever seen.

More hardcore brawling ensues and we see Flair directing a HHH driven forklift in the background (that was funny for some reason). Show kicks a steel wall and gets sprayed with a fire extinguisher for two. The fight goes into the women's locker room and Booker kicks him low to block a chokeslam. A woman is in a towel (Lawler: "I hope it's not Molly." Give me a break already.) and backs into the corner as the lame brawl continues. We see that it's Trish as Jericho comes in and hits Booker with a chair to give Show the pin.

Rating: F. It says a lot when two talented people can do something this worthless. The hardcore stuff didn't need to be there, the brawling was awful, the women's locker room was just there to tease twelve year old boys and I have no idea why these two are fighting again. Terrible stuff here and another moment to make this show even worse.

The forklift blocks the locker room door so the good lumberjacks can't get out.

HHH vs. Rob Van Dam

Non-title with all heel lumberjacks. Van Dam charges the ring and hammers away but gets sent to the floor for a whipping. Back in and they slug it out as WE TALK ABOUT KANE ONE MORE TIME! Van Dam takes another whipping and JR is aghast at the unfairness. HHH is sent outside for no violence so Rob dives onto a bunch of people. The champ starts in on the back with your standard heel fare: backbreakers, shoulders to the back and a suplex for a few two counts.

An abdominal stretch sets up more whipping from the lumberjacks before Rob escapes another suplex. Rolling Thunder gets two and Jericho celebrates the kickout. Rob's spinwheel kick looks to set up the Five Star but Jericho crotches him on top (with the referee looking right at him). Cue Booker T. and the good lumberjacks for the big brawl. The referee goes outside too and of course there's no count on the Five Star. Flair, belt shot, pin.

Rating: D-. You know, because THIS MATCH couldn't go to a no contest. It's the perfectly boring ending to one of the worst episodes of Raw that I've seen in a long time, which is covering a lot of ground. Van Dam taking the pin was stupid but I'm sure beating Flair on Sunday is going to make up for it right?

Kane comes back and cleans house to end the show.

Overall Rating: F-. So the match of the night is a completely forgettable Tag Team Title change. It was all downhill from there with the commentary and Kane/HHH promo being tied for some of the worst stuff I've seen in far too long. How in the world is this supposed to make me want to see a wrestling pay per view? I can't think of a single good thing about this show and that should never happen. PLEASE get us past No Mercy and on to the Shawn return because it has to be better than this garbage.

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Monday Night Raw – March 13, 2017: Marching on Together

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 13, 2017

Location: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

It's the final show in the famous Joe Louis Arena and we're getting closer to Wrestlemania XXXIII. The big story seems to be Undertaker vs. Roman Reigns, which was made official earlier in the day. That leaves the Universal Title match between Brock Lesnar vs. Goldberg, assuming one or both of them are actually booked for the show. Let's get to it.

In Memory of Ron Bass.

We open with a recap of Lesnar taking Goldberg out last week.

Here are Paul Heyman and Lesnar to open things up. Heyman can't believe that something happened last week because Goldberg was supposed to be unstoppable. In twenty nights at Wrestlemania, Lesnar is going to prove the world wrong and destroy Goldberg in short order. Heyman teases Goldberg being here but says the champ isn't in the arena. Every time Lesnar has run into Goldberg it's been spear, Jackhammer, Goldberg. Last week though it was F5, Lesnar. At Wrestlemania, it's an F5 to end the great comeback because the F5

means Goldberg goes down. I still don't know why I'd want to see this match again.

Stephanie McMahon and Mick Foley are in the back with Stephanie talking about how Foley isn't the best businessman. She's his manager and needs to develop him so he can grow in abilities. Tonight it's time for Foley's first lesson: by the end of the night, he needs to fire someone.

Sasha Banks vs. Dana Brooke

Dana takes her into the corner to start but gets rolled (with a handful of tights) for the pin at 1:18. It's as sudden as it sounds. Post match Charlotte gets in the ring and yells at Dana for losing. She sounds like she's about to fire Dana but Dana hits her in the face and the beating is on. Charlotte eventually gets away from a yelling Dana.

Eric LeGrande, a former Rutgers football player who suffered a spinal injury, is getting the Warrior Award.

Brian Kendrick/Tony Nese vs. Akira Tozawa/TJ Perkins

Kendrick trips Tozawa to start but gets sent to the floor for a kick from Perkins as we take a break. Back with Nese forearming Tozawa in the face and grabbing a bodyscissors. Tozawa finally gets up and dives over for the tag as everything breaks down. Nese knees Perkins in the face for two but gets caught by a good looking springboard DDT for the same. Another knee sets up some face communication though as Perkins crashes into Tozawa, setting up a rollup with a handful of Perkins' tights for the pin at 9:00.

Rating: C. Let me make sure I've got this straight: Raw has however many writers and bookers and we get two straight matches ending in a rollup with a handful of tights? You can't throw feet on the ropes or something like that? The match itself was a bit disjointed and longer than it needed to be, though I'm still interested in Kendrick vs. Tozawa.

Anderson and Gallows don't know why they can't get any attention in the tag team division.

Here's Kevin Owens (in a snazzy KO Mania II shirt which looks like a Wrestlemania II shirt and a good piece of masking tape) for a tag match. Before anyone else comes out though, Owens says it's time to get the spotlight back where it belongs. After a clip of the Festival of Friendship, Owens says Jericho was never his friend and the feeling was mutual. Then he'll take the US Title at Wrestlemania, leaving only the tears of Jericho. "Cry them out man." Besides, who needs Jericho when you have a destroyer on your side?

Kevin Owens/Samoa Joe vs. Sami Zayn/Chris Jericho

Owens starts with Jericho but Kevin tags out instead of fighting (like a good heel is supposed to do). Sami comes in and takes a beating of his own, including a backsplash from Joe. It's back to Owens who catches Jericho with a superkick off the apron, only to have Sami hit a big flip dive but he comes up holding his knee. Owens goes right after the knee and it's time for some double stomping, drawing a DQ at 3:45.

Rating: C-. I always fall for the selling but the fact that they went to a DQ so fast doesn't give me good feelings about Sami. You could see the knee hit the ground and then they went to a very fast finish in a match that feels like it should have gone a lot longer than four minutes. It was good while it lasted but this has me worried.

Post match Owens and Jericho go at it until the double teaming gets the better of Chris.

Stephanie suggests that Foley fire Sami Zayn when Nia Jax comes in. Nia wants justice by being added to the Women's Title match. Stephanie gives her a match with Bayley tonight.

Jinder Mahal demands that he's not fired tonight because Rusev was holding him back. He wants a match to prove himself, so Foley gives him Roman Reigns.

New Day has their own talk show segment called New Day Talks, which means Big Show as their first guest. Big Show talks about the Jetsons movie until Titus O'Neil comes in to call the show stupid.

Titus shoves Show as New Day eats popcorn. Woods: "Here's your lesson: Titus O'Neil ruins everything!"

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Cesaro/Sheamus

The winners get Anderson and Gallows at Wrestlemania. Before the match, Enzo shills his cuppa haters coffee cup and Cass talks about how they're not the #1 seed but rather the bracket busters. Cesaro and Sheamus clean house to start before a standoff takes us to the first break. Back with Cesaro blasting Enzo with a clothesline and the double teaming begins. Enzo slips away and makes the hot tag to Cass, who eats a top rope clothesline. Sheamus can't get the ten forearms as Cass kicks him to the floor, only to have Anderson and Gallows come in for the no contest at 8:01.

Rating: D+. ENOUGH WITH THE FREAKING TRIPLE THREATS ALREADY!!! JUST PICK A TEAM OR DROP THE WHOLE THING BECAUSE NO ONE CARES ABOUT THESE TITLES IN THE FIRST PLACE!!! This is the first match I would cut from the 13 or 14 match Wrestlemania card and now it's likely going to be a three way instead of just giving Enzo and Cass the belts the next night on Raw which would guarantee a huge pop and also let the pay per view breathe a little bit.

Anderson and Gallows destroy both teams.

We look back at the end of last week's show.

Post break Anderson and Gallows laugh at Foley for getting one over on him because there were no winners. Say it with me: triple threat match.

Roman Reigns vs. Jinder Mahal

An early Samoan drop gets two on Mahal and Roman pounds away in the corner until the Undertaker's gong strikes. The distraction lets Mahal getting a knee to the face and a sitout slam gets two. Not that it matters as back to back Superman Punches put Jinder away at 2:54.

Post match Reigns calls Undertaker out and we take a break. Back from a break with Reigns still in the ring and Shawn Michaels coming out. Reigns says it's nice to see him but he wanted to see the

Undertaker. Shawn says he saw Reigns get distracted by the gong and that can't happen going into Wrestlemania. We're twenty days from Wrestlemania and Undertaker is already in Reigns' head. At Wrestlemania, Undertaker is going to eat Roman alive.

Reigns says that's not happening because Undertaker needs to be wondering what it's going to be like to be in the ring with him. Shawn says he's in Reigns' yard but Roman needs to get his head on straight. That's not enough for Roman, because he remembers Undertaker retired Shawn at Wrestlemania. Come Orlando, Reigns is retiring Undertaker. Reigns goes to leave and gets run over by Braun Strowman, who earns himself a THANK YOU STROWMAN chant.

Stephanie is pleased but Foley is still upset over the firing order. Mick doesn't want to do it because we're so close to Wrestlemania (and there's NO OTHER WRESTLING SHOW for anyone to wrestle on) but Stephanie says do it or she will.

We look back at Austin Aries decking Neville last week and defeating Tony Nese the next night on 205 Live.

Austin Aries vs. Ariya Daivari

Aries forearm him in the face to start before snapping off some armdrags. A nasty backdrop sends Aries face first into the apron. Not that it matters though as Aries hits a neckbreaker onto the knee, followed by the roaring elbow for the pin at 3:48.

Rating: D+. Not enough time for this to go anywhere but I'm glad they're setting up the Cruiserweight Title match by actually having Aries win a few matches. It's clear that we're getting Aries vs. Neville for the title but there's no need to just throw it out there. Let them build something up instead and make Aries into something serious.

We look at Heyman's speech again.

Emma is coming.

Titus O'Neil vs. Big Show

A chop, a slam and three chokeslams end Titus at 1:52. That's all it needed to be.

Billy Jean King Women's History Month video.

Bayley and Sasha are ready for Nia Jax.

Chris Jericho wants to show the world the real Kevin Owens so next week, the REAL Kevin will be the guest on a special edition of the Highlight Reel. Chris calls the interviewer Tom Phillips but it's Mike Rome. Jericho doesn't buy it and puts Tom Phillips on the List.

Bayley vs. Nia Jax

Non-title. Nia throws her into the corner and then out to the floor for a whip into the steps as we take a break. Back with Bayley wrapping the knee around the ropes for a few kicks. Nia pops back up and stomps away in the corner for the DQ at 7:15. Not enough to rate but that's two DQ's to go with two pullings of the tights and a no contest tonight.

Nia throws Bayley into the barricade for good measure.

Next week it's the Highlight Reel and Braun vs. Roman.

Here's Stephanie to introduce Foley for the firing announcement. Foley hadn't been able to think of anyone all night but in the last ten minutes, someone's name came to him and he knows what to do. After thanking Stephanie, he announces.....Stephanie should be fired. Stephanie isn't pleased (of course) and rips into Foley, who talks about how Stephanie lied to him six months ago when she said she had nothing to do with HHH interfering.

Foley goes on about how HHH makes an army for himself but Stephanie cuts him off mid-insult. Cue HHH to say Foley can say this to his face. Foley says that's fine but he didn't think HHH really existed. HHH laughs him off and they go back and forth about how Foley doesn't need this job and HHH uses his position to abuse his power. HHH says Foley needs to leave and go around the world again telling his sad story, but if he does, his kids can forget about working for WWE.

What Foley needs to do is go backstage and have an epiphany about how much he loves his job before doing whatever Stephanie tells him to do. Foley turns to leave but stops as Stephanie rants against the

people for not respecting their bosses enough. HHH goes after Foley and gets Mr. Socko for his efforts. Stephanie makes the save with a low blow and HHH unbuttons his sleeves. Cue Seth Rollins on a crutch but it's quickly thrown to the side. Rollins comes in and hammers away but HHH grabs the crutch and hits him in the bad knee. HHH even busts out a reverse Figure Four to make Rollins scream to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. This was a really different kind of show as they were getting ready for Wrestlemania so most of the wrestling and action wasn't important (hence all the DQ's etc). They pushed towards Wrestlemania here and that's exactly what they needed to do. We already know most of the card so there's not much of a point to adding anything new (save for a triple threat match of course). The show wasn't the best but it did its job, which is much more important.

Results

Sasha Banks b. Dana Brooke – Rollup with a handful of tights

Tony Nese/Brian Kendrick b. Akira Tozawa/TJ Perkins – Rollup with a handful of tights

Sami Zayn/Chris Jericho b. Kevin Owens/Samoa Joe via DQ when Joe and Owens double teamed Jericho

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Cesaro/Sheamus when Anderson and Gallows interfered

Roman Reigns b. Jinder Mahal – Superman Punch

Austin Aries b. Ariya Daivari – Roaring Elbow

Big Show b. Titus O'Neil – Chokeslam

Bayley b. Nia Jax via DQ when Nia attacked in the corner

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Monday Night Raw – October 7, 2002: Gimmicks Gone Wild

Monday Night Raw

Date: October 7, 2002

Location: Thomas and Mack Center, Las Vegas, Nevada

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're in Las Vegas for a special show as WWE continues to fight (in vein) against Monday Night Football. This week it's Raw Roulette, meaning every match is Spin the Wheel, Make the deal. I was always a fan of that gimmick back in WCW but having a full show built around it could be a mess. Let's get to it.

Quick video on Raw Roulette which basically says "tonight is Raw Roulette". Thanks for that one.

Eric Bischoff is in the back with some showgirls and explains the concept: a spin of the wheel determines the gimmick for every match tonight. First up: a steel cage match.

Opening sequence.

Booker T. vs. Big Show

In a cage of course. There's a weird buzzing sound coming through commentary so I have another annoying sound to deal with aside from JR and King try to explain why this match is happening. Show tosses him into the cage and hits a hard clothesline before throwing Booker into the corner again.

The very slow beating continues as this is going nowhere. Booker

slugs away a bit so Show kicks him in the face for his efforts. A side kick knocks Big Show into the cage and a top rope scissors kick (cool move) knocks him silly. Somehow that's not enough to finish it either as Booker has to low blow Big Show off the top before escaping for the win.

Rating: D-. For a regular match it was boring but for a cage match it was a disaster. This is a good example of what's going to be going wrong all night: these gimmicks aren't adding anything to the matches but we're getting them for the sake of trying to fight off football. Really boring stuff here as Show does little more than throwing Booker into things and that's not enough to fill in eight minutes.

Chris Jericho runs in and lays Booker out, even drawing some blood. Kane and the Hurricane get to defend the Tag Team Titles in....a TLC match. Bischoff: "Tables, ladders and chairs." Hurricane: "Holy Mick Foley!"

Jericho is tired of being overlooked and wants some respect.

HHH gets a blindfold match and thinks it should be against one of the showgirls. Flair calms HHH down and introduces Bischoff to his own personal lesbians. William Regal comes in to say this is ridiculous so the wheel gives him a Las Vegas Showgirl against Goldust. As in they have to dress like showgirls. We're really going the drag route?

Batista is coming to Raw. Anything that gets him away from D-Von is great, but what about the contracts being frozen a few weeks ago?

HHH vs. D'Lo Brown

Non-title and they're both blindfolded. They slowly walk past each other before the miss right hands. HHH talks smack to a turnbuckle and Brown hits a lucky right hand. Of course he grabs the referee because he thinks HHH wrestles in a shirt. Some right hands have Brown in trouble but he backdrops his way out of a Pedigree. There's the Sky High but HHH rolls over to the ropes. A Flair distraction lets HHH cheat and hit the Pedigree for the pin. What a waste of time and the WORLD CHAMPION.

Christian, Bubba Ray Dudley and Jeff Hardy are in Bischoff's office where he says no one knows more about TLC matches than they do. All three of them can pick their own partners for tonight's title match

and Bubba stares Eric down. Goldust comes in in his showgirl attire and seems right in his element.

Quick sidebar. The Raw tag division is a wreck, Smackdown is having to put together any two people they can to do a tournament and these three are all split from their respective partners. Edge is doing wonders on his own and Matt is doing pretty well (albeit as a goon in the Undertaker vs. Lesnar feud) but D-Von is a disaster. Can anyone give me one good reason why the Dudleyz weren't back together two months ago? And maybe the Hardyz too? Anyway, Goldust pops up in his showgirl attire.

Goldust vs. William Regal

They're both dressed as showgirls and of course Regal goes WAY too far with it to great comedic effect. It's a good thing they had showgirl outfits in mens professional wrestlers' sizes. Goldust takes over and tries the Shattered Dreams but Lance storm offers a distraction. Regal pulls the knucks from his bra (just go with it) and knocks Goldust cold for the pin in less than a minute.

Christian isn't going to pick any of the Un-Americans to be his partner because he'd like to win. Instead he'll have Chris Jericho as his partner.

Stacy Keibler vs. Trish Stratus for the Women's Title gets two spins: paddle on a pole and bra and panties. The first to strip their opponent wins and then gets to spank the loser.

Bubba picks Tommy Dreamer as his partner tonight but sees Spike being upset. Spike has watched Bubba and D-Von for years and wanted to be there one day. Bubba changes partners and Spike smiles (Dreamer is fine with this).

Women's Title: Stacy Keibler vs. Trish Stratus

Trish is defending and this is a bra and panties match. Stacy jumps her from behind and sends Trish face first into the title. They both lose their tops until Trish reverses a rollup and gets Stacy's shorts off for the win. Normal situation here: great visuals, horrible non-wrestling.

Victoria comes out and destroys Trish post match.

Jeff Hardy picks Rob Van Dam as his partner.

Victoria wants the Women's Title and suggests that Trish has done

some horrible things in her past, <http://onhealthy.net/product-category/allergy/> including things that hurt Victoria personally.

Al Snow vs. Test

Las Vegas Street Fight, meaning they've found a new way to put hardcore back on TV. The weapons are pulled out and Snow starts swinging plastic dice. Test knocks him out of the air with a trashcan lid but gets suplexed onto the full can. A trashcan lid shot to the head staggers Test again and Snow grabs a bowling ball. Test gets up but slips on a trashcan lid (unintentionally) and gets hit in the head with the ball for the pin.

Rating: D. Remember when they got rid of the hardcore division because it was the same stupid stuff over and over? That's exactly what the case was here as there was nothing we hadn't seen before. Snow was one of the more entertaining hardcore guys but they got rid of this nonsense for a reason.

Jerry Lawler vs. Steven Richards

It's Legal in Nevada match, meaning here come the Godfather and his ladies. The winner here gets to take a ride on the train so I think you know where this is going. Richards jumps Jerry from behind and gets two off a suplex. Lawler gets his feet up to block a middle rope fist drop though and the strap comes down. Jerry hits the dropkick and fist drop for two. Back up and Richards tries a sunset flip but Lawler drops down for the pin.

Lawler is very, very happy.

Randy Orton video. Bob Orton: "In ten years, I see Randy being one of the best of all time." He's not wrong.

Kane is all fired up to become a triple champion at No Mercy. Coach comes up to tell him that Flair and HHH are beating up Hurricane so Kane runs off for the late save.

Tag Team Titles: Rob Van Dam/Jeff Hardy vs. Dudley Boyz vs. Chris Jericho/Christian vs. Kane/Hurricane

TLC with Kane defending on his own as Hurricane is still down in the back. It's a huge brawl to start with Jericho throwing in an early ladder as people pair off. Christian and Jericho are easily shoved off said ladder though and everyone else heads outside. Jeff dives off the barricade to take Kane down and it's Christian and Jericho

putting the ladder on the turnbuckle.

Spike goes into the ladder but heel miscommunication puts Christian down. Kane comes back in with the top rope clothesline and chokeslams Bubba for good measure. There's a ladder up in the ring as Kane throws Spike over the top and onto Van Dam. The Canadians knock Kane to the floor and put him on a table so Jeff can hit a legdrop off a ladder. Christian gets powerbombed off the ladder and we take a break.

Back with Bubba and Jericho slugging it out on top of the ladder as it's clear that Kane is the only one tall enough to reach the belts at that height. Jericho bulldogs Bubba off the ladder and Christian gives Van Dam a reverse DDT off another one. This match is still all over the place and doesn't feel like there's any teamwork or anything other than a bunch of people doing a bunch of spots.

With everyone down, the fans want tables. Christian goes up but gets crotched on the top by Kane, followed by a powerslam to Jeff. Bubba plays Matt for some Poetry in Motion to Kane and there's the Van Terminator to knock him even sillier. Jeff goes up so Bubba superplexes him right back down and everyone is done. In an interesting note, we see a replay of the superplex and the original commentary is still there. You don't hear that too often.

Now it's Jericho going up with Spike shoving the ladder over, sending Jericho out to the floor in a scary looking crash. Christian throws Spike through a table as this just keeps going. The Five Star hits Christian and Jeff misses a Swanton before being backdropped through a table. Kane comes back in and chokeslams Jericho off a ladder before pulling down the titles for the win.

Rating: B-. This was entertaining but WAY too long at over twenty five minutes, the fourth longest of all time and the longest team version ever. Above that though, there was no flow or psychology to the match. With the more famous one, you could tell that the matches were laid out with far more precision, which made for a better match. This one was all over the place with everyone hitting random spots and popping back up for the next one. It's entertaining but nothing I'll remember watching in a day or two.

Post match here are HHH and Flair to mention the name....here we go....Katie Vick, who Kane killed ten years ago. HHH calls Kane a murderer to end the show as the audience doesn't seem too thrilled.

Overall Rating: D-. The second best match of the night was Stevie Richards vs. Jerry Lawler in a match to leave with a bunch of random women. This was ALL about gimmick overload and proof that there's no benefit from just throwing gimmicks out there for the sake of having them without the stories behind them. The wrestling barely existed and a main event that wasn't all that great was nowhere near enough to save it, especially with the big angle to end the show. Terrible show here as they're looking more and more desperate every week.

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Monday Night Raw – March 6, 2017: In Case You Thought Fastlane Meant A Thing

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 6, 2017

Location: Allstate Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

So Fastlane was last night and I'm kind of at a loss for anything positive to say about it. Roman Reigns beat Braun Strowman clean, Charlotte's pay per view streak was broken in a weird moment where

Sasha Banks cheated to help Bayley and then Kevin Owens lost the Universal Title to Goldberg in 22 seconds. If that sounds bad, imagine Chicago getting to react to it. Let's get to it.

We open with a quick recap of last night's main event. How quick can a recap be when the match is 22 seconds long?

Here's Chris Jericho to get us going, which is the absolute best thing they could do to keep the crowd from turning on the show. Tonight is the rebirth of Chris Jericho because last night at Fastlane he screwed Kevin Owens out of the Universal Title. A few weeks ago, Owens took a knife and he stuck it in man.

Jericho wants Owens out here right now so here's Kevin. Owens starts to talk but Jericho immediately cuts him off and wants to know why he was stabbed in the back. Kevin says there was no stabbing in the back because they were never best friends. Remember who his best friend used to be? Sami Zayn, who Owens stabbed in the back as he would do over and over again.

Jericho is just a tool and Owens did whatever he could to keep the Universal Title. Chris was there to watch his back because he knew what to expect but he was also gullible. Then Jericho outlived his usefulness by accepting the match against Goldberg on Kevin's behalf. Last night Goldberg would have been outsmarted but Jericho got the better of Kevin last night.

Jericho calls trusting Owens the worst thing he ever could have done but now he has friends around this arena. Chris: "I've got the friends of Jericho! CHEER ME ON MAN!" Jericho isn't done with Owens though because last night was the beginning of a road that ends at Wrestlemania. The match is made but since the show is in a month, let's have a fight right now. Owens comes down to the ring for the brawl until Samoa Joe comes in to jump Jericho. Sami Zayn runs out with a chair for the save and house is cleaned. I heartily approve of every single thing that happened here.

Sami Zayn vs. Kevin Owens

I had the tag match written up but I sit here surprised. Sami

hammers away to start and sends him outside for a kick to the chest. One heck of a flip dive (over the referee) takes Owens out but he comes back in with the Pop Up Powerbomb for no cover. Instead he hits a brainbuster onto the knee, followed by a second Pop Up Powerbomb for the pin at 3:54.

Rating: C-. It was fun while it lasted but this was just a step above a squash. It's not like Sami has anything to do right now but I could go for a match like this being a little longer than four minutes. Sami's dive was cool but I'm not sure why this needed to be so short. At least Owens gets some heat back after last night.

Cruiserweight Title: Rich Swann vs. Neville

Neville is defending. After the handshake, Swann wastes no time in going after the champ and pounds him out to the floor. Neville is right back though and sends him head first into the LED apron for a thud. Back from a break with Swann getting out of a chinlock as the AUSTIN ARIES chants strike up. Swann sends him outside and hits a bit flip dive off the top (Aries: "Was that a swan dive?") but gets crotched back inside.

The superplex knocks Swann silly but he's able to roll outside before the Rings of Saturn can go on. Back from another break with Swann getting in a German suplex and kicking Neville in the head for a close two. Another kick to the head sets up the Phoenix Splash but Swann only hits mat, setting up the Rings of Saturn to retain the title at 13:33.

Rating: B-. The lack of drama and abundance of commercials hurt this a lot but Neville is just nailing it right now. He looks unbeatable, which should mean that it's time for the Greatest Man that Ever Lived to get his shot. I've liked Neville more than almost anyone else in WWE as of late and I look forward to seeing him every week. Post match Aries goes into the ring for an interview with Neville but the fans cut him off with the AUSTIN ARIES chants. Neville says he's laid waste to pretender after pretender and there's no one left on 205 Live to challenge him. Aries makes sure he understood that: there's no one that can challenge Neville?

The fans chant for Aries and he actually acknowledges them for a change, which isn't cool with the champ. Neville gets in his face so Aries takes off the sunglasses and Neville keeps at it until Aries has a question for him. Actually it's more of a statement and that means a big left hand to Neville. A discus forearm puts Neville on the floor to a MASSIVE pop.

Enzo and Big Cass get in Cesaro and Sheamus' face for some short form trash talk.

Here's Goldberg and EGADS the booing starts when the music stops. Goldberg holds up the title and says it belongs to the people as much as it belongs to him. Goldberg says he has information he's never mentioned before but the CM PUNK chants start up. He kind of rolls with them but here's Paul Heyman instead. Heyman knows he's not man enough to get in the ring with Goldberg but he knows someone who is.

Cue Brock Lesnar for the staredown with Heyman saying that no one is happier for Goldberg than Lesnar himself. Only one of them can walk out as the winner because the other will walk out of Wrestlemania as the loser. Lesnar extends his hand as Goldberg looks at Lesnar, meaning it's an F5 for the new champ. This still flat out does not need the title involved.

Tag Team Titles: Enzo Amore and Big Cass vs. Anderson and Gallows

Enzo and Cass are challenging after Amore's foot was pushed off the ropes to end their title shot last night. Cass runs over Gallows and the champs are sent to the floor. They're smart enough to move before Enzo can dive though and here come Sheamus and Cesaro. Back with Amore in trouble but grabbing a tornado DDT. A suicide dive takes Gallows out again but Enzo spills Cesaro's coffee. That's enough to draw Cesaro and Sheamus in for the DQ at 6:53.

Rating: D. I'm so over this feud and I have a bad feeling that we're going to be getting a triple threat title match at Wrestlemania for reasons that still aren't clear. I don't know who would want to see that match, which is why we're so likely to see it. If Amore and Cass win the belts there then it's going to be worthy of a great pop

but there's nothing to look forward to on the way.

Cesaro and Sheamus clean house post match which might set up a triple threat.

Rick Rude Hall of Fame announcement.

Post break Foley breaks up Amore/Cass and Cesaro/Sheamus from fighting in the back. They'll have a #1 contenders match next week. Everyone seems happy so HERE'S FREAKING STEPHANIE to tell Mick to go come to her office.

Ariya Daivari vs. Akira Tozawa

Daivari takes him down to start so Tozawa shouts a lot and sends Daivari to the floor for a suicide dive. Back in and the snap German suplex ends Daivari at 2:08.

Tozawa says he wants to fight Brian Kendrick but Brian comes out and says be careful what you wish for.

New Day vs. Shining Stars

Before the match, New day shows off their ice cream cart and say they can now host a lot of things, including a beating for the Shining Stars. A butterfly gutbuster puts Kofi down to start and Big E. is knocked off the apron. The Stars go after the ice cream cart but Big E. is there for the save. The Midnight Hour wraps up Primo at 1:18.

Women's History Month video on Trish Stratus and Lita.

Foley is in the ring to introduce Bayley. The champ is glad to have retained the title but she doesn't feel right about how she kept it last night. She had wanted Sasha Banks to stay in the back but something else happened instead. When she was a kid, her calendar began and ended with Wrestlemania and now she's going to the show but she doesn't feel right about it.

Foley asks who she'll be defending the title against (Shouldn't he be telling her?) but here's Sasha to interrupt. She wants the shot and Bayley seems to agree but Foley asks for the people's opinion. Cue Charlotte and Dana Brooke to say this was the plan all along.

Whoever lost at Roadblock wasn't supposed to get a second chance and now Banks is pulling this. Charlotte blames Foley and says she's the victim because she was robbed.

Cue Stephanie to say she's the boss (yes Stephanie you haven't made that clear enough yet) and call out the fans for being losers like CM Punk. Stephanie makes Charlotte #1 contender but Mick says you can't leave the Boss out. Stephanie: "Mick, who is the boss?" Mick suggests Charlotte vs. Banks for the #1 contendership next week but Stephanie has a better idea (well duh): Bayley vs. Sasha right now and if Sasha wins, the title match at Wrestlemania is a triple threat.

Sasha Banks vs. Bayley

Non-title. Banks takes her to the mat to start and gets two off a rollup. Bayley gets the same off an armdrag and they stare each other down a bit. Sasha hiptosses her into the corner as Charlotte keeps complaining about how she was cheated last night (completely true). A hard chop staggers Bayley and a wristdrag out of the corner sends her outside. They don't seem to want to hurt each other here. Back in and a hard clothesline drops Bayley as we take a break.

We come back with the slow pace continuing and a camera shot of the announcers' desk instead of the ring. Bayley can't get the suplex but here are Charlotte and Dana to ringside. Banks misses the middle rope knees in the corner, followed by Bayley missing a high crossbody. The Bank Statement goes on and Sasha kicks Charlotte off the apron as Bayley taps at 13:00.

Rating: D+. Hey we want some triple threats! I get why they flat out can't leave Charlotte out of the match but what in the world is the point in booking Bayley like this? She became one of the biggest stars in NXT history by being an underdog so now she's having her friends help her win title matches and losing in a match to set up a triple threat because Stephanie and Foley are still fighting. And people wonder why this show makes people's heads shake.

Charlotte takes Sasha out post match.

Roman Reigns says if Braun Strowman wants to even the score, he'll be in the middle of the ring at the end of the show.

Video on Seth Rollins rehabbing his knee.

HHH joins us via satellite to talk about how great WWE's medical program is and hopes that Rollins will listen to the experts. He's been called many things over the years but everyone knows he's always been the man. Why Rollins can't use his head and stay away isn't clear but if HHH has to do something about it, so be it.

Emma is coming. Graves: "Not this again!"

Samoa Joe vs. Chris Jericho

Non-title with Owens and Zayn banned from ringside. Joe takes him into the corner to start and stomps away before a quick crossbody gives Chris two. The Walls are quickly countered so Jericho settles for an enziguri. A dropkick puts Joe on the floor and Jericho baseball slides to the floor...right into the Koquina Clutch. Joe grabs the hold on the floor and it's a countout at 3:55.

Rating: D+. Again it was fun while it lasted but was this really the best idea? The champ just got choked completely out and lost the match because Joe was better. It's a great way to push Joe but Jericho looked like he was in over his head here. Eh to be fair though it's not like the US Title has meant anything lately anyway. Joe goes after Jericho again and takes a Codebreaker. That helps the result a good bit.

Here's Strowman to finish what he started last night. Roman's music starts but is quickly replaced by a gong because here comes Undertaker. The fans are WAY into this staredown but Braun bails into the crowd as the fans cheer for Undertaker. As Undertaker goes to leave, cue Reigns for the real staredown. The fans aren't quite as into this and boo Reigns out of the building as he says this isn't about Undertaker. Reigns says it's his yard now (that's all this match needed to set it up) and that earns him a chokeslam. We get a shot of the Wrestlemania logo over Undertaker's shoulder before he walks out to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This show started off white hot and then cooled WAY down. They were brilliant to start this off with Jericho and Owens because it's the hottest feud in the company right now and the thing people want to see. The rest of the first hour was good stuff too with Neville vs. Aries as a highlight. After that it was mainly business as usual but it was nowhere near as bad as it usually gets. I had a good time with this one and you can really see how utterly worthless Fastlane was. That show was a mess and worthless while this one was energetic and built towards Wrestlemania. Raw wins, which you don't say often.

Results

Kevin Owens b. Sami Zayn – Pop Up Powerbomb

Neville b. Rich Swann – Rings of Saturn

Anderson and Gallows b. Enzo Amore/Big Cass via DQ when Cesaro interfered

New Day b. Shining Stars – Midnight Hour to Primo

Sasha Banks b. Bayley – Bank Statement

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Monday Night Raw – September 30, 2002: The Sledgehammer of Reality

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 30, 2002

Location: Compaq Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We'll wrap the month up here with less than three weeks to go before No Mercy, which hasn't even been addressed yet. All I know is we're going to be seeing a lot more of Ric Flair and HHH because HHH is in charge and wants Flair to feel special again or something like that. Let's get to it.

Here's Eric Bischoff in the ring to tell us to not bother going over to Monday Night Football. Tonight there are going to be three title matches with Trish Stratus, Chris Jericho and HHH all putting their titles on the line. Good idea but I'm scared about who might be challenging. As for No Mercy, it's going to be title vs. title at No Mercy because we're going to have one show and one champion.

That brings him to Lita, who has been standing behind him.

Apparently Lita recently said Smackdown was better than Raw and it wasn't because of having better talent. Eric calls her a rather rude word and says that Lita is worthless after breaking her neck in Hollywood. Lita says that's her opinion so she has three minutes to get out. Cue Jeff Hardy, Booker T. and Goldust for the save and that means it's time for a match.

3 Minute Warning vs. Goldust/Booker T.

Booker gets knocked to the floor to start but comes right back in to break up some double teaming. We settle down to Jamal hammering on Goldust as the fans rip on Rico. Rosey drops a spinning legdrop for two and it's time to continue the beating. Thankfully the fans switch over to a Goldust chant and he grabs a neckbreaker to put

Rosey down.

That's enough for the hot tag off to Booker as house is quickly cleaned. The side kick sets up the Spinarooni but the ax kick only gets two. Rico gets in a kick to drop Goldust, leaving Booker to clothesline the monsters. A World's Strongest Slam puts him down though and Jamal's top rope splash is good for the pin.

Rating: D+. Nothing to the match here but it's not a good sign when Booker, as in the hometown favorite, gets to lose AGAIN. Booker has been one of the hottest acts on Raw for months now and I have no idea why he and Goldust keep losing so much. They should have been the Tag Team Champions a month ago with Booker moving up the ladder in a hurry. To be fair though, at least they're pushing SOMEONE fresh and that's a lot better than you can say most of the time.

Rico is ready to take 3 Minute Warning to the Tag Team Titles.

Christian and Lance Storm argue over last week's title loss but William Regal wants them to concentrate on Storm's match with Randy Orton.

Chris Jericho says Kane's chances of becoming Intercontinental Champion are as real as Terri's chest. Ace reporter Gregory Helms comes in to say his sources have told him that Jericho has no chance. Jericho: "Has everybody in this company gone completely insane?" Chris goes on a rant against freaks when Kane comes in to scare him away. After Kane kissed her last week, Terri kisses Kane and leaves. Kane: "Chicks dig the mask."

Randy Orton vs. Lance Storm

Orton starts fast with his backbreaker as the announcers talk about Saddam Hussein. That's about it for the early offense though as Storm takes him into the corner for some yelling and choking. It's off to an armbar with Orton slapping the mat to no avail. Storm tries an O'Connor Roll with trunks but Orton rolls through into one of his own and grabs the tights for a sloppy pin.

We're not done yet though as Christian steals Jim Ross' hat and says Storm dropped the ball again. That means a challenge.

Randy Orton vs. Christian

Randy starts fast again and dropkicks him before the bell, only to get draped across the top rope. Orton shrugs off some choking and gets two off a powerslam. Christian ducks a high crossbody and tries the Unprettier but Orton reverses into the Overdrive, botches the heck out of it, and then hits the second attempt for the pin.

JR gets his hat back and I have no idea why the Un-Americans are being treated like this.

Bischoff yells at Jeff and gives him another match with Big Show. Jeff leaves and Ric Flair comes in to say that kid has no respect. Apparently Rob Van Dam has challenged Flair for tonight and Eric isn't sure if the match will take place. Flair is working on an ex-Smackdown talent but details are scarce.

Jeff Hardy vs. Big Show

Jacqueline is guest referee because that's interesting. Jeff dives at him and is launched right back inside so the beating can begin. That includes a choke in the corner and a toss into the air for a big crash. One heck of a toss sends Hardy outside but Show posts himself. Jeff dropkicks a chair into Show's head to knock him over the barricade and that's a DQ.

Rating: D. The wrestling hasn't been this show's strong suit and it's not like Jeff gets anything from this win. Big Show is right back to the lumbering oaf period and the bald spot isn't helping him. It's a bad match and bad booking, which has been a theme so far tonight. That's not good when we're a third of the way through the show.

Booker T. wants to fight Jericho (who insulted Booker in his earlier promo) but Chris already has a match tonight you see. The catchphrase is loaded up but Jericho dares to cut him off before the sucka. Dang man. Booker can't get anything in tonight.

Raw World Title: Bubba Ray Dudley vs. HHH

Bubba is challenging and spray paints HHH on a table. We get a pretty nice speech about how Bubba wants to earn his title and prove

that he's more than just a tag wrestler. I'd buy into this if this wasn't Bubba Ray Dudley vs. HHH in 2002. Or ever for that matter. They slug it out in the corner before heading outside with Flair looking a bit nervous.

Back in and Bubba spears him down for some right hands but no reaction because no one buys this as a potential title change. A Flair distraction lets HHH take over and we hit the choking for two. It's off to the sleeper as we hear about how Bubba has waited twelve years for a title shot. The sleeper experiment has seemed to end though as there isn't even a dramatic arm drop.

HHH misses a right hand and gets caught in a German suplex for a breather. Bubba adds a Samoan drop and a DDT for two, followed by the Bubba Bomb. Of course that draws Flair into the ring for a distraction so there's no cover. Bubba can't hit a powerbomb so HHH Pedigrees him to retain.

Rating: C-. I'll give them points for throwing a bone to Bubba but no one who had ever watched wrestling before bought him as any kind of a threat. The match didn't even run eight minutes and the fans just did not care because they knew it wasn't going to happen. It wasn't even bad, which is a minor miracle in its own right, but the lack of drama killed off anything they could have done.

Victoria jumps Trish as she's getting ready.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Victoria

Trish is defending and charges to the ring to start the brawl in a hurry. Victoria is thrown in and right back out but she sidesteps a dive off the apron to send Trish into the barricade. The slingshot legdrop gets two on the champ but Trish grabs a neckbreaker for the same. The Stratusphere gets the same and Victoria falls to the floor...where she grabs a chair for the DQ. This was kind of rocking until the quick ending.

Bischoff is spinning a wheel when Stacy (looking great here) cuts him off and asks for support in the semi-finals of the Internet Babe of the Year contest. Eric doesn't care and explains Raw Roulette

(Spin the Wheel, Make the Deal), which makes its debut next week. Stacy is given a match with Trish next week and leaves happy. Bischoff: "You're not going to see anything like this on Monday Night Football."

Video on Randy Orton.

The Un-Americans bicker some more.

Coach goes to talk to HHH but finds Flair, a good looking blonde and a bottle of champagne. HHH gets out of the shower to talk about his title defense at No Mercy. Two women call him back into the shower but Jericho comes in and wants a word. Coach is told to leave so Jericho hits on one of the girls. You would think they would throw the camera out too but maybe they're into that kind of thing.

Tommy Dreamer/Rob Van Dam vs. Test/William Regal

Remember eight days ago when Van Dam was in a World Title match on pay per view? Dreamer throws Regal around to start before it's off to Rob (still with bad ribs) to kick away at Test. It's back to Regal for one heck of a suplex and Van Dam is in trouble.

Unfortunately Jerry can't talk about the possibilities of a bra and panties match so the match, which isn't the most interesting in the world, isn't getting any attention. Not that it matters anyway as Dreamer comes in off the hot tag and everything breaks down. Test can't get the pumphandle so Van Dam kicks him into a rollup to give Dreamer the pin.

Rating: D. I'm so glad HHH gave Van Dam the rub so he could go and have a match like this. I know Dreamer is fine but teaming with him is a major downgrade for Van Dam, who was nothing but a sacrificial lamb for HHH. Then you have the Un-Americans who were champions two or three weeks ago and now they're 0-3 tonight. I have no idea what the point is in the fast turnover but it's been rather jarring.

Christian and Storm come out and get in a fight with Test and Regal before Dreamer and Van Dam clean house.

Booker gets in his SUCKA on Jericho an hour after he said "can you dig that". I've always wanted him to do that and now he finally has!

Uh, it's not quite the thrill I was expecting.

Wrestlemania XIX press conference clip.

Intercontinental Title: Chris Jericho vs. Kane

Kane is challenging and peppers the champ in the corner with some right hands. Jericho bails to the floor and gets slammed off the top for his efforts. Cue Flair to ringside (I'm sure he and Jericho are just fine after their big feud over the last month and a half.) so he can put Jericho's foot on the rope after Kane hits a tilt-a-whirl slam.

The chase doesn't go anywhere so Kane throws Jericho out to the floor for a big crash. Flair tries to get Jericho up, earning himself an ejection. Kane slugs him up the ramp for good measure and we take a break. Back with Kane getting crotched on top and superplexed as the fans seem to be cheering for Jericho. It's time to start in on the knee with Kane getting knocked to the floor.

Lawler keeps talking about Jericho's music career so JR suggests that he join the band as a spoon player. That's quite the visual. Kane uses the good leg to kick his way out of a leglock so Jericho switched to the Hartbreaker around the post. Back in and Jericho stays on the leg but throws in a little dance to make it a bit more versatile.

Kane gets in a belly to back suplex and a tilt-a-whirl powerslam as the knee seems just fine. Jericho is sent into the steps and the top rope clothesline gets two. Now it's HHH coming out for a distraction but it's not enough to set up the Walls. HHH gets in a spinebuster (which looked so bad that JR called it a belly to belly, which isn't that far off) on the floor for two and Jericho grabs a chair. With JR being SURE that HHH and Jericho are in cahoots, Kane gets to the ropes to break the Walls. The big boot and chokeslam give Kane the title.

Rating: C. I'll give them points for the longer match but I really don't buy that Jericho and Flair are all cool so soon. I get that Flair is just a goon at this point and HHH had some meeting with

Jericho but Chris and Flair being willing to work together so soon doesn't fit. What also doesn't fit is the match being focused on the knee and then having Kane just pop up like nothing happened. At least have a problem getting him up for the chokeslam. Finally, if you're going to have Kane be the next sacrificial lamb to HHH, what's the point in giving him the Tag Team Titles?

Overall Rating: D+. The problem here is the booking as we're closing in on HHH vanquishing Kane (and beating a double champion in the process) and...who else came out of this show looking good? The Un-Americans are mostly split, Booker T., Goldust, Jericho and Van Dam all look to have nothing positive right now and Jeff Hardy is thrilled with a countout win over Big Show.

This show is all about HHH looking great and smarter than anyone else, which really does make me wonder why I'm supposed to care about the rest of the roster. Maybe HHH can give them a rub, which of course means him beating them into dust because it's his show and anyone who thinks otherwise is getting the sledgehammer of reality to the head.

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Monday Night Raw – February 27, 2017: Undisguised Filler

Monday Night Raw

Date: February 27, 2017

Location: Resch Center, Green Bay, Wisconsin

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

It's the go home show for Fastlane and that could mean a few things. This show could range from entertaining to a mess and any point in between. Goldberg will be here tonight and there are rumors of Seth Rollins and Ric Flair making appearances as well. Either way it's the last Raw before we get to the pre-Wrestlemania season so let's get to it.

Here's Goldberg to get things going. He thanks the fans for their chants but gets straight to the point: he's winning the title at Fastlane with his son cheering him on. This brings out Kevin Owens to say what he really thinks about Goldberg. When he got to this company, Owens promised to grab this company by the throat and show WWE what he was really about.

Then he beat John Cena in his first match, followed by beating Dean Ambrose, AJ Styles, Seth Rollins and the Big Dog himself, Roman Reigns. Now why should Goldberg be any different? Goldberg likes the speech and wants to fight right now but Owens doesn't think Green Bay deserves to see him fight. They'll fight on Sunday and the Goldberg chants die.

Here's New Day for a chat. They've got a lot on their plates by hosting Wrestlemania, but we need to be concerned with what's in our bowls. New Day knows the fans want something else and that means ice cream. They even know what the name is going to be: New Day Pops. First though, they need to face the Shining Stars.

Cue Primo and Epico....but someone hands Woods an envelope. It turns

out that the Shining Stars' match is later tonight against Big Show. Instead, the envelope says "Rusev and Jinder Mahal". Ok you knew this was coming and there was no real way around it. Ignore the fact that they really just recreated the idea and didn't actually do anything new here. In other words: standard WWE comedy.

New Day vs. Rusev/Jinder Mahal

Woods headscissors Mahal down and we hit the Honor Roll for good measure. Big E. gets in a splash as we take a break. Back with Woods not being able to get over Rusev for the hot tag. The slow beating continues and Woods' crossbody is easily caught. He does manage an enziguri though and there's the hot tag to Big E. Everything breaks down with Big E. cleaning house. A blind tag brings in Woods for a high crossbody but Rusev makes the save. Kofi and Lana get in an argument on the floor to distract Rusev, leaving Woods to grab a rollup for the pin on Mahal at 9:43.

Rating: D+. Not much to see here but they're doing a good job of keeping the matches shorter. There's no real need to see these teams go much longer than this as it's hard to imagine Rusev and Mahal giving one of the best tag teams ever a real run for their money. New Day is in an interesting place here and I'm curious to see what they have for Wrestlemania.

Rusev and Mahal argue post match because the division is deep enough to split a team already.

We look back at Enzo Amore and Big Cass becoming #1 contenders.

Enzo is really fired up about the idea of becoming champions because he gets his name on the belt. Cass thinks he needs to chill a bit but says they'll win.

Cesaro and Sheamus want their titles back when Samoa Joe comes up to say Cesaro will never figure things out. Joe: "You mad bro?" Cesaro doesn't like the brass ring jokes and says all Joe does is carry HHH's jockstrap. A match seems to be made for later.

Stephanie is annoyed at someone for bad dictation when Mick Foley comes in. She wants to apologize but it turns into rant about how

Foley doesn't live up to his old stature. That's how Foley will be remembered: as a shadow of his former self. Much like the Oscar joke, you had to know this was coming: Foley said something to Stephanie last week so tonight she had to burn him at the stake.

We look at Brian Kendrick beating Akira Tozawa last week and Kendrick talks about Tozawa rejecting his offer to be the newcomer's mentor.

Akira Tozawa vs. Noam Dar

Dar gets kicked in the chest to start and the backplash gets two. A good fake out lets Tozawa nail him again but Alicia Fox offers a distraction. That sets up some arm work but Tozawa sends him outside for a suicide headbutt. Back in and the snap German suplex puts Dar away at 2:59.

Post match Kendrick jumps Tozawa from behind and talks about how Tozawa needs to learn his lessons.

Mick Foley is upset when Samoa Joe comes in and needles him about not having a nice day. Foley doesn't want to hear it because he sees Joe as a puppet for HHH. Joe doesn't like that so Foley makes Joe vs. Cesaro for later tonight.

Charlotte/Dana Brooke vs. Bayley/Sasha Banks

Before the match, Charlotte talks about how Bayley is willing to go to any degree to take what she wanted because she has everyone fooled. Charlotte calls Bayley a one hit wonder but here's Bayley to cut her off. Bayley talks about dreams and moving on from this one. Next up for her is walking into Wrestlemania as Women's Champion but Charlotte says there's a long way to go before then. Sasha Banks comes out to say Charlotte has a stupid face and is jealous of the champ. More importantly, there's a tag match tonight. Charlotte says there is but with a little change in the lineup.

Charlotte/Nia Jax vs. Bayley/Sasha Banks

Nia throws Sasha around to start and runs her over in the corner as a bonus. It's off to Bayley who can't do much with Nia either but some right hands in the corner do enough good. Nia clotheslines

Bayley's head off though and the beating begins in the corner. That doesn't last much longer either and it's back to Banks vs. Charlotte with Sasha taking over. Dana tries to interfere on the floor and gets a Bayley to Belly for her efforts. Serves that cheater right. Back from a break with Sasha trying to fight back against Nia and getting headbutted away. Charlotte misses a charge though and the hot tag brings in Bayley to clean house. Everything breaks down again and Bayley tries a choke on Nia. That goes nowhere though and a Charlotte distraction lets Nia run Bayley over. Nia drops the big leg to pin the champ at 12:20.

Rating: C-. That seems to be the way to set up the much discussed four way at Wrestlemania whether it makes the most sense or not. I still don't know why they didn't just bring Becky Lynch over for the Four Horsewomen match in the place where they got started but my guess is WE CAN'T CHANGE THE ROSTERS EVER BECAUSE THE DRAFT SAYS SO. Braun Strowman demands Foley give him a contract signing with Roman Reigns tonight. Foley agrees but basically guarantees a fight will break out.

Luke Gallows vs. Big Cass

Gallows kicks him in the face to start and easily breaks out of a chokeslam. Another kick puts Cass on one knee and Corey says he's not seven feet tall anymore. That line is always annoying because he's still that tall but he's not standing upright. Why is that so complicated? Cass makes his comeback and watches Enzo send Anderson into the steps. A big boot ends Gallows at 2:43.

The announcers hype the WWE Network turning three years old.

Earlier today, Titus O'Neil and Sheamus got in a fight at catering.

Titus O'Neil vs. Sheamus

Titus jumps Sheamus before the bell and throws him inside for the official start. The Brogue Kick ends O'Neil in 17 seconds.

We get a long video on the long history of HHH making Seth Rollins. They've been together for years but then Rollins hurt his knee which HHH referred to as dropping the ball. Rollins is injured but the

question is can he get back in time.

Here's Rollins, on crutches, for a sitdown interview with Corey Graves. He doesn't know where he is mentally now but it seems that he's in Chicago because we get a freaking CM PUNK chant. Thankfully it's loudly booed and Seth can get back to the point. He's not sure if he can continue at this point and as of right now, the doctors haven't cleared him for Wrestlemania.

This brings out HHH and Samoa Joe with the former talking about how Rollins has no idea what he's doing here. HHH knows Rollins isn't going to Wrestlemania because that's how he is. It was HHH who handed him the title and then Rollins bit the hand that feeds him. Rollins didn't mind reaping the benefits along the way but now he's treating HHH like this. Seth needs to make the right decision and not come to Wrestlemania because HHH is done playing with him.

If Rollins shows up there, it's the last thing he'll ever do in a WWE ring. HHH goes to leave but Seth cuts him off and says he'll be in Orlando and it's going to be the last thing HHH ever does. This dragged a lot and just reenforces the idea that there isn't much of a need to have this match. The match should have happened at Night of Champions or HIAC or something but instead it's at Wrestlemania because that's where HHH wrestles no matter what.

Big Show vs. Shining Stars

Double teaming actually puts Show down for a bit before he shrugs the cousins off. A KO Punch and chokeslam wrap things up at 1:48.

Black History Month video on Martin Luther King Jr.

Neville tells Tony Nese that the purpose of tonight's tag match is to put Jack Gallagher in his place before Sunday. Nese basically says he's in this for himself.

Austin Aries video package.

Jack Gallagher/TJ Perkins vs. Tony Nese/Neville

Neville kicks TJ off the apron at the bell but gets bulldogged by TJ. Cole: "You're only going to see this kind of action on Monday Night Raw!" Yeah he doesn't watch 205 Live either. Nese gets rolled

up for two and it's off to Gallagher as things speed up a bit. The headbutt puts Neville on the floor and it's the Detonation Kick into the running corner dropkick for Nese. Jack takes Nese down with something like a seated abdominal stretch while kicking Nese in the face for the tap out at 1:58. This was more filler on a show full of it.

Beth Phoenix Hall of Fame video. I miss the days when these were announced on Raw and now in a newspaper earlier in the day.

Bayley and Sasha are icing their injuries from earlier. Sasha is going to be in Bayley's corner on Sunday but Stephanie adds Banks vs. Jax to Fastlane.

Samoa Joe vs. Cesaro

They take turns driving each other into the corner and Cesaro tweaks his knee. He tries to muscle through it until Joe goes after the knee to take over as we take a break. Back with Cesaro muscling Joe up into a suplex and countering a kneebar attempt. Cesaro hits that reverse Angle Slam move of his and gets two off a double stomp. Uh, shouldn't he be in a bit more pain after stomping on someone with a bad knee? Joe breaks up the springboard uppercut though and kicks at the knee, setting up the Rock Bottom for the pin at 7:45.

Rating: D+. What in the world was up with Cesaro's selling here? This was all about the knee injury but he was using his power stuff and did a freaking double stomp. You need WAY more selling than just that and I have no idea what was up with Cesaro in this case. He's smarter than that and I don't get it.

Post match Joe says it doesn't matter who comes against the Destroyer because he's taking them apart. This brings out Sami Zayn for the brawl until the referees break it up.

It's time for the contract signing with Mick Foley running the show. Strowman doesn't think much of him and says he would have respected him back in the day when Foley was competition. Foley finally snaps and yells at Strowman, basically threatening to get physical because he's still a legend, even if he won't be the General Manager that

much longer.

Cue Reigns to start the fight, which quickly heads into the crowd. Strowman beats on him even more until Reigns spears him through the barricade and a security guard in the process. Back in and Reigns stops to sign the contract but gets sent into the corner so hard that the top rope breaks. Strowman leaves and Reigns signs to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. This show really enforced the idea that Fastlane doesn't need to exist. There were multiple matches with no story and even more that didn't last long enough to rate. I have a very low tolerance for undisguised filler and Sheamus vs. Titus O'Neil in a 17 second match over a fight at catering is nothing but a way to fill in time. Fastlane was almost half booked tonight and that's a really bad sign six days before the pay per view. I've seen worse shows but I just want to get to Wrestlemania and Fastlane is an annoyance we have to get through on the way there.

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Monday Night Raw –

September 23, 2002: The Bad Times Are Here

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 23, 2002

Location: Arrowhead Pond, Anaheim, California

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the night after Unforgiven and the big story on the Raw side is Ric Flair joining forces with HHH to form...well to form nothing at the moment but that's the only noteworthy thing that happened last night. I'm worried about what we'll be getting going forward but that's so often the case around here. Let's get to it.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Molly Holly vs. Victoria

Trish is defending after winning the title last night. Victoria goes after the champ before Molly even gets to the ring and the fight is on in a hurry. As Lawler asks if Trish is the hottest Women's Champion ever, the challengers start double teaming Trish as you might expect them to do. That earns them a double clothesline and some signature stuff but Molly lifts her up for a toss out to the floor (and one heck of a bump). Back in and Molly avoids Victoria's moonsault, setting up a collision to knock Molly into Trish's rollup to retain the title.

Rating: D+. The match was nothing to see (save for that nasty crash to the floor) but this was quick enough to not overstay its welcome. The women just aren't good enough at this point to work a long match so it's a good idea to keep things short here. Victoria looked a lot more aggressive here and that's the best thing possible for Trish and the title.

Booker T. and Goldust show some of the roster clips of last night with Eric Bischoff getting humiliated. Goldust: "I haven't seen anything that bad since Chris Jericho's last Fozzy concert." As a bonus, Goldust has a picture of Bischoff with Rikishi's thong replacing the face. Rico: "That's disgusting! I'M TELLING ERIC!"

Bischoff welcomes an unnamed face to the Raw side when Rico comes in. Eric wants to know where Rico was last night but it was Bischoff who sent them out on the town. Anyway Rico tells him what Booker and

Goldust were up to and Eric is ticked.

After a break, here's a ticked off Bischoff in the arena. Bischoff isn't cool with the fans booing him but more importantly, Vince McMahon has issued a new decree: there's a freeze on all contracts and no one gets to jump between shows unless there is an official trade. However he made a few last minute deals before the deadline with details coming later.

For now though, Booker needs to come out here RIGHT NOW. Bischoff wants an explanation but Booker calls him a skippy hippie. Booker keeps making jokes about last night and says Bischoff's breath is heinous like a fat man's anus. Cue 3 Minute Warning and Rico for the beatdown with Goldust's save going nowhere.

Post break, Rico offers to face Booker tonight and Chris Jericho comes up to demand a shot at Goldust for the Fozzy insult. Eric agrees but makes it an Intercontinental Title shot. That's a very face move for a heel boss.

Jeff Hardy vs. Big Show

Jeff goes right after him to start and actually hits something like a suicide dive. That's not what you do to a giant though and he tosses Jeff over the top so we can have the opening bell. Back in and Jeff dropkicks him in the knee and hits the Swanton across Show's back for what is likely his only near fall. Show just blasts him with the overhand chop to bust open Jeff's shirt. That's enough for Show as he plants Jeff with the chokeslam for the pin.

Rating: D. I'm so glad we're getting the renewed Big Show push because I just don't want to imagine a WWE without it. Allegedly Hardy was rather, ahem, unable to perform last week so this might have been punishment as a result. I'd rather have that instead of "comedy" but Big Show might not be the best choice to push.

We look back at Tommy Dreamer beating up Christopher Nowinski two weeks back.

Nowinski is in a classroom and wants to fight dreamer. Post break Dreamer shows up and gets caned down. Dreamer puts him through the ceiling and the beating just keeps going because we NEED hardcore stuff around here without actually having hardcore matches.

Randy Orton vs. Steven Richards

Here's one of the talent jumps but it's not clear if he was the

mystery man earlier. Orton hits his quick dropkick as the crowd is just silent for this. Richards slows things down and gets two off a side slam. The rather slow pace continues until Orton slips out of a neckbreaker and grabs a belly to back suplex.

Commentary would suggest that the company wants Orton to be the next Rocky Maivia but it's not quite working. How can Orton be considered a blue chipper without a Jheri Curl? Orton's backbreaker and powerslam get two each, only to walk into the Stevie Kick for two. That means a freak out session and choking from Richards, only to eat the high crossbody to give Orton the pin. Lawler: "THIS KID IS PHENOMENAL!" Just...no Jerry.

Rating: D-. Above all else this was incredibly boring. Orton has no character at this point and there's only so much you're going to be able to do in a match against a low level nothing like Richards. It's a really boring match and that doesn't make Orton seem like the bright star that the announcers are pushing him to be.

The Union Underground performs Across the Nation (Raw's theme) while some Divas dance. Lillian looks like she's just enjoying the song, Terri looks like she has no idea what she's doing (might not be her kind of music) and Jackie is having a great time while barely staying in her top. Stacy is miles ahead of all of them as she looks amazing and clearly has done this kind of dancing for a long time.

Here's Flair for the big explanation. Last week, HHH yelled at him and said Flair was pathetic. HHH was right and it's because Flair was too busy listening to the fans. When he was a kid, HHH wanted to be Ric Flair (or Hulk Hogan if you listen to the story from back in April) and now Flair is going to try to pull that off.

If HHH is willing, Flair is going to teach him how to get to another level. Flair's payment is very simple: he gets to be by the champ's side and spend the twilight of his career on top where he belongs. Rob Van Dam tries to interfere but HHH beats him down from behind. The double team is on until Bubba Ray Dudley makes the save.

Two notes here: first of all, they kept this short but covered the point. We know why Flair did it and we know what he gets out of it. Simple yet effective, as promos often need to be.

Second, this is a great example of how important it is to have the right character in the right role. I can accept the idea that HHH is a huge Flair fan and wants to be just like him. There's no specific

reason but it's something I could accept at face value. For an example of it going bad, look back at AJ Styles doing the same thing in 2010. I can imagine AJ being a Flair fan but I absolutely can't believe one of the most natural faces ever being a Nature Boy clone. You need to have the right kind of character for any given role and it works very well here, which is why the angle should work as well as it's going to.

Post break Bubba and Van Dam say this is the people's show and demand a tag match tonight. Bischoff comes up to say it's his show but allows the match anyway.

Intercontinental Title: Chris Jericho vs. Goldust

Jericho is defending and these two are somehow still active fifteen years later. Goldust gets in a quick hiptoss and catapult to send him into the buckle. The champ comes right back with a bulldog and cranks on the neck as we hear about how big a band Fozzy really is. With that going nowhere, Jericho hits an extended trash talk sequence. It's enough for Goldust to fight back with something like a Boss Man Slam/chokeslam but the Curtain Call is broken up. Goldust will settle for a powerslam but the referee breaks up Shattered Dreams. Jericho gets in the enziguri and the Walls retain the title.

Rating: C. Not bad here, as you might expect. I don't think anyone was going to buy Goldust as a full fledged threat to win the title but you're going to get a completely watchable match out of him. I'm still not entirely sure why Jericho has the title again but he's far from the worst choice.

Tag Team Titles: Un-Americans vs. Kane/???

Kane is challenging along with his partner....the Hurricane? Again it's not clear if he was the one who was in Bischoff's office or not but it doesn't really matter. An early Blockbuster puts Christian down but the rest of the team jumps Hurricane on the floor. Kane does his best angry stare for the save and it's Christian getting in a few stomps of his own. We hit the chinlock for a bit until a clothesline puts both guys down.

Hurricane dives over for the hot tag and the fans react as strongly as they can. House is quickly cleaned until Regal gets in a title shot to Kane's head. Er, mask. Either way, it only gets two and Regal and Test are both ejected for their efforts. Charles Robinson trying to be intimidating is one of the best comedy spots of the

year. Hurricane gets a sloppy hurricanrana on Christian and heel miscommunication sets up a double chokeslam (eh cute) for the pin and the titles.

Rating: C-. I'm so glad we had the Un-Americans all over the show for so many weeks to have them lose to the latest thrown together team. I've seen worse matches though and Hurricane is always entertaining, at least for a quick laugh. Not bad here and the fans got into the American victory, which is the whole point here.

Post break Hurricane says he and Kane are perfect together because they both wear masks and both use chokeslams. Tonight it's time to celebrate and Kane says freaks are cool. Hurricane is ready to go to the Hurricave but Kane stops to kiss Terri before leaving with his partner.

Regal isn't happy but says the team will regroup.

Booker T. vs. Rico

Booker hammers away in the corner until Rico reverses and fires off some kicks to the head. That springboard version always looks good. A kneelift only seems to fire Booker up and it's the forearm into the Spinarooni. The scissors kick ends Rico in short order.

Post match it's 3 Minute Warning for the beatdown and Goldust for the failed save. The difference is Booker is in gear instead of street clothes like earlier and Goldust actually hits Shattered Dreams on Rico before getting taken apart. Totally different idea you see.

Bischoff makes 3 Minute Warning vs. Goldust/Booker T. for next week. Again, not exactly a heel move. It's putting them on square footing and taking away the Samoans' advantage. How is that a heel boss?

Van Dam says he's at peace with HHH and Flair but isn't impassionate despite his bad ribs.

Bubba Ray Dudley/Rob Van Dam vs. HHH/Ric Flair

After some long entrances, HHH jumps Bubba from behind and gets backdropped for his efforts. The fans want tables but get Flair, who has no issues with Bubba, making this kind of pointless. Some shoulders put Flair down as JR thinks Ric is going through "the change of life".

It's right back to HHH as Bubba seems a bit hesitant to tag in the

injured RVD. Bubba gets the better of a chop off with Flair before it's off to Rob for a series of kicks. Rolling Thunder isn't the best idea and HHH doesn't stay down long enough to really validate the pain on the bad ribs. HHH gets in a belly to back suplex but the hot tag brings in Bubba a few seconds later.

The fans react like they're watching an Orton match and only pick up a bit as Bubba hammers on Flair. House is quickly cleaned and Van Dam plays D-Von on What's Up. It's table time but HHH shoves Van Dam off the top. A throat snap across the top knocks Bubba into a Flair rollup (with tights) for the pin.

Rating: D+. This was awkward with the wrestling not being great and the story being sort of all over the place. It's clear that they're setting up Bubba as the next challenger (which is likely only going to be short term) and I'm really not sure how that's going to work. The story makes sense but I'm not sure if Bubba Ray Dudley is going to work in that role no matter what. Van Dam really does look like a one off challenger and that's a really bad thing given how second rate he looked next to HHH.

Bubba saves Van Dam from a low blow and almost completely misses the table when powerbombing HHH. The champ hit the corner and the table didn't even break, causing the crowd to go almost silent. Van Dam legdrops him through the table (makes sense due to the bad ribs) instead to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. The bad times are here and that's got me worried going forward. There was WAY too much 3 Minute Warning vs. Goldust/Booker T. (a fine feud on its own but it was a lot of overkill here) and too many nothing matches (the opener, Orton and Hardy vs. Big Show) to fill out a two hour show. Cut out some of the filler (like the concert, which felt completely tacked on) and turn it into some better stories and the show will improve. As for now though, Raw is back to its normal horrible.

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Monday Night Raw – February 20, 2017: They've Hit the Switch

Monday Night Raw

Date: February 20, 2017

Location: Staples Center, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

It's a big show this week with a ton of things to get to. First of all, Brock Lesnar is scheduled to be in the house and that's huge in general. Second, Bayley has been told to either give her title back to Charlotte or else, which could mean multiple things. Oh and Rock might be in town. Let's get to it.

In Memory of George Steele. Not Ivan Koloff for some reason.

We open with a long recap of the Festival of Friendship and Kevin Owens turning on Chris Jericho. Sweet popcorn baked into a pie that was an amazing segment.

Owens is sitting in the ring in the dark in a chair to get things going. When he was growing up, if anyone had told him he would be defending the World Title against Goldberg in the main event of a pay per view, he would have thought you were crazy. Of course he'd be in the main event of a pay per view, but against Goldberg? The Goldberg chants start up and Owens thinks that's exactly what he wanted to hear.

That's the chant that makes Goldberg think he's invincible as they head into their match at Fastlane. At the pay per view, all Owens has to do is outlast and outsmart Goldberg because the longer a Goldberg match goes, the weaker and weaker he gets. Owens is the master of outsmarting opponents and no one knows how to play the game like him.

Goldberg can say Owens is next all he wants but as far as Owens is concerned, Goldberg is nothing. As for what happened last week with Jericho...Owens drops the mic and walks out. This is the Owens that we've been waiting to see on the main roster for a long time and that's nothing but good as we head into the final stretch to Wrestlemania. Owens was great here and that's awesome to see.

Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Enzo Amore/Big Cass

The winners get a title shot at Fastlane. Cass slugs it out with Cesaro to start before it's off to Enzo, who is launched at Sheamus in the corner. Back from an early break with Enzo in trouble but backdropping Cesaro out to the floor. Sheamus gives chase though and Cesaro just blasts Amore with an uppercut to break up the hot tag attempt (Cue crowd reaction shot!). Cass comes in a few seconds later and everything breaks down. The corkscrew uppercut drops Cass but Enzo breaks up the swing. The East River Crossing ends Cesaro at 9:17.

Rating: C-. Can we please wrap up the Cesaro and Sheamus experiment already? They weren't an interesting team in the first place and for some reason we're still watching them do their thing. Then again, the tag division is pretty much four teams (if you count New Day) so it's not like there's any better option.

Post match Enzo runs his mouth and gets Brogue Kicked. That doesn't feel exactly like a heel turn.

Owens is leaving when Mick Foley comes in to say he has a match with Sami Zayn tonight. Kevin chuckles and says he thought Foley liked Sami.

Video on Braun Strowman.

Video on Bayley winning the Women's Title and fulfilling her lifelong dream. This sounds like the setup for a cruiserweight match.

Roman Reigns interrupts Foley and wants to fight Strowman tonight. Foley says that can't happen but here are Anderson and Gallows to interrupt. They want to fight Reigns again tonight and Foley agrees if Roman can find a partner.

Brian Kendrick vs. Akira Tozawa

I would have expected a bit longer build to this one. Tozawa won't shake hands so Kendrick hits him before the bell, including sending him neck/ear first into the turnbuckle hook. The Captain's Hook knocks Tozawa out and there's no match.

In the back, Kendrick says he won't be disrespected like that.

Roman Reigns/??? vs. Anderson and Gallows

Non-title and Reigns' partner is.....not here as this is just going to be a handicap match. Anderson starts for the team but Roman drops them both to control early on. Gallows kicks him in the face though and it's already off to the chinlock. The Boot of Doom is broken up and it turns into a double beating on the floor. A chair is brought in but Reigns takes it away and beats the champs down for the DQ at 3:57.

Rating: D+. Another short match that makes me wonder what the point is in having the Tag Team Champions get treated like this. Is there NO ONE ELSE that can do the mini feud with Reigns? Like, no two big guys you could throw out there? It's almost like having the divisions this divided has ruined a lot of things and gives us moments like this.

Post match Reigns Superman Punches Gallows and spears Anderson out of the air, sending the champs crawling away.

Video on New Day being announced as the hosts of Wrestlemania.

New Day vs. Rusev/Jinder Mahal

Reigns couldn't have beaten up Rusev and Mahal? Before the match,

New Day says they're working on a bunch of things right now, including being the hosts of Wrestlemania and trying to become the voices of the hyenas in the new Lion King movie (Kofi: "That's not a joke.").

On top of that, they've got the ice cream machine plans back and THEY'VE DIGITIZED THEM! Lana holds up a tablet and says she has the plans...which seem to be authentic. Apparently they include a flux capacitor, three unicorn hairs and New Day starts panicking. Woods: "HOW DID SHE GET THE PLANS?" Big E.: "You know she's Russian right?"

The match is joined in progress with Rusev grabbing a bearhug on Kofi. It's quickly off to Jinder, who can't do a thing due to high levels of being Jinder Mahal. Big E. comes in and cleans house, including putting Rusev on the floor for a big dive. This lets Woods take the tablet back and completely destroy it for a big pop. The Midnight Hour puts Jinder away at 3:42.

Rating: D+. What in the world happened to Rusev? Like really, the guy should have been a big deal or at least feuded with Big Cass but now he's jobbing in a nothing tag team? This really is a waste of someone who could have been something special and of course he still could be fine, but at the moment it's a big waste of time. New Day is fine in this role as it's not like they have anything else to do right now so let them have fun at Wrestlemania.

Video on George Steele.

Austin Aries is in the ring for the contract signing between Neville and Jack Gallagher. Since Gallagher is present, there are already cookies and tea prepared. Gallagher quickly signs before Neville can even come out. Neville does the same and immediately goes to leave, only to be stopped by Gallagher.

Neville mocks all of the British stereotypes and calls Gallagher a caricature. The real streets of England look like Neville but Gallagher is what the WWE Universe wanted Neville to be. Gallagher assures him that he is NOT a joke because this is the real thing. The table, including the tea is turned over and the fight is on with the headbutt sending Neville outside. Gallagher is one of my

favorites at the moment but if they don't do Neville vs. Aries for the title at Wrestlemania, they've lost their minds.

Nia Jax b. Sara Pierce

Splash and Samoan drop finish Pierce at 34 seconds.

Post match Nia says she's putting Bayley and the title on notice.

Black History Month video on Barack Obama.

Here's Bayley for her first appearance as Women's Champion. She grew up here in California and had a dream of being a champion and getting to point at a Wrestlemania sign. When she was a kid, her dad brought her to the events and bought her all the shirts and toys. Last week, the first thing she did was call her dad and it's a call she'll never forget. Bayley's dad is here tonight and the fans are making her look cool in front of her dad.

Cue Stephanie McMahon to ask if Bayley's dream included everyone wondering if she could have done it without Sasha Banks. Stephanie's daughters look up to her and she wants to know if Bayley is going to throw everything away for the sake of a championship that she didn't earn. Bayley is about to hand it over when Sasha Banks comes out to say don't do it. She thinks about it but says no way is she handing the title over. Bayley won the title because of the WWE Universe. The title belongs to all of them and she'll defend it any time any place.

Cue Charlotte to say she's cashing in her rematch at Fastlane. Sasha cuts her off and says Bayley will keep the title at the pay per view. As for tonight though, Sasha's knee is feeling fine so let's have a trip down memory lane. Stephanie makes the match right now because of course she gets to have the last word.

Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte

Bayley is on commentary. Joined in progress again with Sasha grabbing a headscissors but getting her face driven into the match. Charlotte does the Figure Four faceplants and grabs a necklock. Sasha is sent outside and we take a break. Back with Charlotte grabbing a dragon sleeper. Sasha fights out and makes her comeback,

including a dropkick in the corner. Cue Dana Brooke for a distraction but Bayley cuts her off, allowing the Banks Statement to make Charlotte tap at 10:03.

Rating: C-. This didn't have time to go anywhere with the long break in the middle but you can pretty much pencil in the four way at Wrestlemania from here. Sasha is going to make a great heel when she turns, even if you can see it coming a mile away. Oh and can we please drop the "renewal of a rivalry" when they last fought about two months ago? That's rather pitiful.

Diamond Dallas Page Hall of Fame video. This is LONG overdue.

Sami Zayn knew Owens would do this kind of thing and he told us all it would happen. He sees a lot of similarities between Owens and Samoa Joe (insert your own Scott Steiner "HE'S FAT" joke here), including both of them doing all kinds of horrible things for the sake of some demented loyalty to someone else. Tonight, Sami is kicking Owens' teeth down his throat.

Kevin Owens vs. Sami Zayn

Non-title. Before the match, cue Samoa Joe to massacre Sam. For some reason he agrees to the match anyway and it's a Cannonball to crush Zayn even worse. The referee pulls him off so it's a second Cannonball and the Pop Up Powerbomb to give Owens the pin at 1:11.

At 10:48pm, this show is dedicated to the memory of Ivan Koloff.

The bosses are in the back and Stephanie ribs on Foley for not coming out there during either the women's segment or Samoa Joe beating Sami down. Foley FINALLY stands up for himself and blames Stephanie for Seth Rollins being injured. He was telling HHH and Stephanie how great Samoa Joe was twelve years ago and yells about how he's not letting Stephanie's greed get in the way of this show. Stephanie threatens him with an "accident" and Foley leaves.

Cole is in the back for a sitdown interview with Brock Lesnar and Paul Heyman. We get straight to the point with Goldberg but Heyman cuts Cole off and says Lesnar isn't interested in questions like this one. Heyman says Lesnar isn't interested in hearing about

Goldberg winning the title so Lesnar scares Cole away and stares straight into the camera.

Paul talks about Owens attacking Jericho last week because Lesnar disagrees with Owens being the most violent champion in years. Lesnar isn't interested in hearing about Owens but Heyman talks about Kevin's greatness anyway. A lot of people want to see Owens pull it off but Lesnar disagrees because if Owens loses, it's Goldberg vs. Lesnar for the title. That's just one more thing for Lesnar to conquer at Wrestlemania and that's what he wants to do. The ring is reenforced for the main event.

Braun Strowman vs. Big Show

And yes, this really is the main event. Show grabs a wristlock to start but Braun rolls around and nips up to escape. Now that's going to get him noticed. Show shoves him down but gets punched in the jaw and dropped for his efforts. Strowman charges into a choke but easily reverses into a DDT for two. A clothesline drops Show for two and it's all Strowman so far.

Show reverses a suplex into one of his own and grabs the chokeslam for two. The powerslam doesn't work so Show puts him on top for the superplex. Strowman escapes that but dives into the KO Punch for two. Show loads up the Vader Bomb, only to have Strowman get up for the powerslam (doesn't look great) for two of his own. Not that it matters as Braun hits another powerslam for the pin at 12:10.

Rating: C. Right here is a great example of a match that doesn't need to be good to get the point across. Much like last week, this was about Strowman showing that he's the new star instead of the old guard like Show or Mark Henry. It's a very simple idea but they're telling the right story, which is all you can ask for.

Post match Reigns comes out and gets in a few Superman Punches but Strowman hits the powerslam to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This was an odd show as they advanced a lot of stories and set up a bunch of stuff for Fastlane but there's nothing going on here that is worth going out of your way to see. Above all

else though they've hit the switch and it's clearly time to get ready for Wrestlemania. They're taking things more seriously and you can see where a lot of the stories are going. I can't believe I'm saying it but for once, I actually care about the Raw stories more than Smackdown. The show has been good lately and it's at the perfect time.

Results

Enzo Amore/Big Cass b. Cesaro/Sheamus – East River Crossing to Cesaro

Anderson and Gallows b. Roman Reigns via DQ when Reigns used a chair

New Day b. Rusev/Jinder Mahal – Midnight Hour to Mahal

Nia Jax b. Sara Pierce – Samoan drop

Sasha Banks b. Charlotte – Bank Statement

Kevin Owens b. Sami Zayn – Pop Up Powerbomb

Braun Strowman b. Big Show – Powerslam

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