

# Monday Night Raw – April 21, 2003: Where Do I Even Start?

## Monday Night Raw

Date: April 21, 2003

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Jonathan Coachman, Jerry Lawler

It's the go home show for Backlash and we have a major main event for a change. This week will see HHH defending the Raw World Title against Booker T. in a Wrestlemania rematch, but there's something a bit bigger to cover. Tonight is also the second Rock Concert as Rock is ready to deal with Bill Goldberg this coming Sunday. Let's get to it.

Ric Flair is in Eric Bischoff's office complaining about Bischoff's actions of late. Bischoff calls it compelling television and makes Shawn Michaels guest referee for tonight's title match. Flair is livid but seems to calm down when Bischoff suggests that Shawn might beat Booker up out of principle.

Opening sequence.

## Chris Jericho vs. Hurricane

Fallout from last week's main event. Hurricane throws the cape over Jericho's face to start and hammers the Canadian out to the floor. That means a big dive as the announcers debate whether or not Hurricane is a real superhero. Back in and we hit a very early Walls of Jericho, sending Hurricane bailing to the ropes. Jericho sticks with the back and grabs a chinlock with a knee to the spine.

Hurricane fights up with a running clothesline and neckbreaker for two but the Overcast misses. It's too early for the Lionsault though and Hurricane gets two off the Shining Wizard. The chokeslam gets the same with Jericho getting a boot on the ropes as this is already better than it should have been. Back up and the Eye of the Hurricane is countered into the Walls for the tap.

**Rating:** C+. Not a great match here but Hurricane continues to show off his more than adequate in-ring skills. If they were to, say, have him win another big match it might actually go somewhere. As usual, this is a case where the Intercontinental Title would do wonders for them but instead the focus needs to be on Shawn vs. HHH vs. Nash for the only title worth anything. Brilliant indeed.

Post match Flair runs out to beat on Hurricane, including the Figure Four.

Rock arrives and he's got a guitar. Rock: "No no no, it's not boo. It's the Rock Concert TWO!"

### Rodney Mack vs. Sean Evans

Behold, the debut of the Teddy Long Five Minute White Boy Challenge. Teddy promises that this will be off the hizzle fo shizzle. In about as long as it takes me to look up what that means, Mack crushes the jobber while Jerry defends himself from running against a black man for Mayor of Memphis. A running powerslam ends Evans in less than two minutes.

Booker T. asks Shawn what's up with him being guest referee tonight. It was in this arena where Shawn superkicked him out of the NWO, which Shawn says makes them even after last week. That's how Booker wants the match tonight called: even.

Goldberg got to meet some troops earlier today.

Coach brings out Lita for her first appearance on Raw in over a year. She's gotten some great news from her doctor but here's Bischoff to cut her off. Bischoff sends Coach off and tells the fans to cheer for Lita. In a rather out of character moment, Bischoff creepily hits on her and suggests that she do Playboy instead of wrestle. After the fans get done being rather pleased with Bischoff's suggestion, Lita says no way. Bischoff offers to just let her give him a private showing instead, or just sleep with him to save her job. Lita tells him where he can go and walks off so Bischoff fires her.

What was the point of this? Bischoff is a lot of things but he's not the

creepy predator like Vince. This was completely out of character for him and felt much more awkward than evil. I can buy people trying to get the Divas to sleep with them to keep their jobs but Bischoff isn't that kind of villain. I'm also not sure what the point of this was in the first place, though it's good to have Lita back.

Flair and HHH want some insurance for the title match. HHH has an idea.

### 3 Minute Warning vs. Test/Scott Steiner

Chris Nowinski is on commentary. Jamal takes Steiner into the corner and hammers away to start before Rosey comes in with a side slam. The announcers talk about Stacy as Jamal breaks up a hot tag attempt. Jamal misses a top rope splash and the hot tag brings in Test for the running clothesline in the corner. The pumphandle powerslam gives Test two as Rosey splashes Jamal by mistake. Rico kicks Stacy down so Steiner checks on her, allowing Rosey to splash Test. Not that it matters as Steiner comes back in for a reverse DDT and the pin on Jamal.

**Rating:** D. 3 Minute Warning had a lot of potential but sweet goodness they've become one of the lamest acts I've seen in a long time. They're just big guys who do the stereotypical big man offense, which is about as interesting as you can get. Test and Steiner are no better as Stacy continues to be the only good thing about either of them, which really isn't all that surprising. You can tell the story is going to continue as well, which is far from the best news.

Post break Test and Steiner yell at each other until Stacy breaks it up.

Kevin Nash comes in to see Bischoff and talks about being brought in under the false pretense of teaming with HHH and Shawn. Nash says he's going to pick a side and it'll be the winning one.

Rock is warming up for the concert and promises a surprise.

Here's Rock for the concert. After a hitch of the pants and some annoyance at the Rock chants, we're ready to go. First up is Goldberg on My Mind but the fans chanting for Rock makes him snap again. Rock has had enough of this and calls Goldberg out right now...and it's time for

another Gillberg cameo, complete with fire extinguishers and sparklers.

After some jokes about Gillberg's physique, Rock reads the words to The Rock Went Down to Georgia. Gillberg dances a little jig and the real Goldberg arrives in the back. As Goldberg comes through the back, Rock says that Gillberg is in trouble for the years of impersonations. Goldberg comes out so Rock hides behind the security, which is quickly dispatched.

Rock bails so security gets beaten down, leaving Gillberg to try his luck. That's enough for Rock to sneak back in (as sneakily as a 6'5 275lb wrestler in leather pants can be) for a Rock Bottom before running again. We head to the back where Rock gets in the Hummer limo. Goldberg jumps in his Barracuda to give chase but the car stalls. Well of course it does. Goldberg gives chase on foot but Rock pops up, having faked running away. How shenanigans.

Trish Stratus and Spike Dudley are here for a match but Chief Morely comes out to introduce their opponents, who will also be challenging Rob Van Dam and Kane on Sunday.

#### Trish Stratus/Spike Dudley vs Dudley Boyz

Bubba powerbombs the heck out of Spike and Trish is even more scared than she was before. D-Von can't bring himself to attack her though, leaving Bubba to splash Trish instead. Morely wants Trish put through a table but D-Von won't have anything to do with it. Van Dam and Kane come in for the save. The guys all leave so Jazz and Teddy Long run in to beat down Trish with the Jazz Stinger sending her into the upset table.

Rock is still here and ready for an encore.

HHH and Nash are having a chat.

Rock is in the ring and it's time to continue the concert. Before he can get a single note out though, here's Goldberg to beat him down again. Christian comes out to take Goldberg down from behind though and the beatdown is on. Rock spears Christian down but gets chaired in the back for the real beatdown. It's nice of them to have Rock get in some shots

like this, but I can't imagine this is making people think he has a chance on Sunday.

Backlash rundown.

Shawn talks to HHH.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Booker T.

HHH is defending with Shawn Michaels refereeing. They slug it out with Shawn breaking it up multiple times until Booker takes over with some chops. A side slam gets two as the announcers discuss the Trojan Horse. Flair gets knocked off the apron and here's Jericho at ringside because this match isn't big enough already. A few shots to Booker's back while HHH has Shawn distracted (probably planning the next slumber party) take us to a break.

Back with Booker fighting out of the sleeper as Lawler wants to know why Shawn is allowing Jericho to stay at ringside. Fair question actually. The spinebuster gives HHH two and the kneedrop is good for the same. The slow beating continues as King talks about how great it is to see the Kliq back together.

Everyone used to talk about them you see. As usual, the problem is that they were never a thing on WWE TV and it's WWE assuming that everyone knows and/or cares about the backstage stuff. If that's what you're going with, at least make it clear what you're talking about instead of just acting like it's something everyone already knows. HHH grabs the second sleeper until Booker fights back with a side kick to put both guys down.

Another side kick triggers the real comeback, including a third kick to knock HHH out of the air for a rather near fall. The missile dropkick gets two more as Flair is out of the jacket and panicking as only he can. HHH grabs a DDT but the Pedigree is broken up, setting up the ax kick. Flair and Jericho have to be dealt with before the cover though and HHH gets out again.

The Houston Hangover is loaded up but HHH shoves Shawn into the ropes for the crotching. Why this isn't a DQ isn't clear but it's good for two

more. Shawn deals with Flair as Booker hits ANOTHER kick, only to have Jericho get in a belt shot. For once though Shawn is actually smart enough to figure this out and won't count. Instead he superkicks HHH and decks the other villains but they come back in to break up the count, setting up the no contest.

**Rating:** B-. The match was good, especially if you forget that Booker STILL doesn't have a big singles win as he's stuck in the middle of the Kliq's family fighting. The match was good enough and helped to set up Sunday but that brings us to the big problem: a World Title match and the main event of the Raw World Title match at Wrestlemania is being used to set up a nothing six man tag. That's quite the stretch for priorities and it's not a good thing. Having a match be good doesn't make up for the fact that it's all to set up such a stupid story and actually makes it far worse.

Nash comes out to play peacemaker but HHH decks him from behind to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D-. Where do I even begin? Above all else, the two top stories on this show range from stupid to completely uninteresting. You can take your pick between Rock having to pretend that the fans love Goldberg and that he actually has a chance of winning on Sunday or HHH, Shawn and Nash arguing over who gets to keep the kid (pick which of those is which) after their divorce in matches that mean absolutely nothing.

The six man isn't going to be used to elevate Jericho or Booker but it gets Nash and Flair main event spots for the simple reason of who they hang out with backstage. I'm assuming we're heading towards Goldberg as the top face star, but not until Nash vs. HHH gets to headline a few pay per views, despite the fact that ONLY Nash and HHH are interested in seeing that match.

What did we have aside from this stuff? Bischoff being creepy, Test and Scott Steiner fighting over Stacy Keibler, Chief Morely as the enforcer who makes the Dudleyz beat up Trish Stratus and the Five Minute White Boy Challenge. I have no idea how this is considered their best possible option but I would love to have that explained to me.

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# Monday Night Raw – September 18, 2017: The Slow Lane

## Monday Night Raw

Date: September 18, 2017

Location: SAP Center, San Jose, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

It's the go home show for No Mercy and that means we should be in for a hard push towards Brock Lesnar vs. Braun Strowman. I say should be because it's not entirely clear if that's going to be the case or not due to Lesnar's limited appearances. What we will be having though is Alexa Bliss facing Nia Jax for the first time ever. Let's get to it.

In Memory of Bobby Heenan. If there's not a long video package on him tonight, be patient. WWE has a tendency to like to wait until they have the time to set these up.

Here's Kurt Angle to open things up. He talks about Sunday's two big matches but gets cut off by Miz and the Miztourage. Angle congratulates

him on his upcoming fatherhood but Miz cuts him off to say he doesn't want to hear it. This is the second straight pay per view where the Intercontinental Title won't be on the line. Not so fast though as Angle has a fatal four way planned for tonight to crown a new #1 contender.

Tonight it's Jeff Hardy, Matt Hardy, Jason Jordan and Elias facing off to get a shot on Sunday. Miz rolls his eyes about Jordan being in the title picture and says it's only because he's Angle's son. They get in an argument about who is the better father but here's Jordan to interrupt. Jordan wants his shot but Miz insults Angle, triggering a brawl. Jason fights off the Miztourage without too much effort and the Angles/Jordans/whatever you call them stand tall.

Post break Jordan is frustrated but Angle gives him a pep talk, basically saying it's ok to not fight back every time someone brings him up. If Jordan wants to get back at Miz, go take his Intercontinental Title.

#### Alexa Bliss vs. Nia Jax

Non-title. Alexa bails to the floor to start before completely failing at a waistlock. Nia chokes her a bit and Bliss goes up the ramp, only to be cut off by Sasha Banks. Jax runs Bliss over again and we take a break. Back with Nia going shoulder first into the post and a dropkick staggering her again. Bliss' high crossbody gets countered into a Samoan drop for the pin at 6:39. Not enough to rate but this was a squash. I'm not wild on a champion being pinned clean but it fights the story perfectly in this case and is a lot more acceptable.

Sasha comes in and gets tossed down as well. Cue the returning Bayley (hometown girl) to help Sasha and Alexa clear Jax to the floor. Bliss celebrates with them and gets beaten down as well. Sasha and Bayley celebrate a bit.

The announcers plug the Network with the easiest sales pitch they can have: sign up for free for thirty days and you get two free pay per views. That really has seemed to be the big solution to so many of their problems.

Curtis Axel and Bo Dallas are now in the #1 contenders match.

We see some Tweets from wrestlers about Bobby Heenan's passing.

Long video on Brock Lesnar vs. Braun Strowman, featuring video from Brock Lesnar from 2002 talking about how dominant Lesnar truly is. This turns into a video on Lesnar's current run with Heyman talking about how no one can conquer him. Then it's clips of Strowman manhandling Lesnar at Summerslam and laying him out multiple times. This turns into a more traditional look at the match with Heyman talking about how Lesnar isn't used to facing someone bigger or stronger than he is. The question comes down to whether or not Strowman is bad enough to take down the baddest man in the world.

Here are Sheamus and Cesaro for a chat before a match. Sheamus talks about the love of nostalgia and thinks it's kind of boring. You have the people wrapping themselves up in the blanket of the Hardys and pretending it's the good old days. They destroy nostalgia acts and you can ask the Hardys for proof of those things. Cesaro says nostalgia will fade soon enough, just like the nostalgia for this reunion between Seth Rollins and Dean Ambrose. They'll be there to take the Tag Team Titles when the team falls apart because they are the bar.

Cue Ambrose and Rollins to call Cesaro and Sheamus a cross between Braveheart and Taxi Driver. Ambrose says they're brothers and sometimes brothers fight, but they would never let a brother leave the house dressed like that. Now it's Anderson and Gallows to say they're the good brothers. They call the champs nerds and that's a bit too much for Ambrose. No one calls him a nerd and the brawl is on. Ambrose and Rollins clean house without too much effort.

Asuka is coming.

Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose vs. Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Anderson and Gallows

Non-title and one fall to a finish. Sheamus and Gallows slug it out for a good while before Seth springboards in with a clothesline. Ambrose and Rollins double team Sheamus until Sheamus runs Rollins over. It's off to Cesaro, who swings Ambrose into the barricade to take over.

Gallows drops a series of elbows until Ambrose rolls away, allowing the

hot tag to Rollins. Everything breaks down and Seth's sunset powerbomb gets two. Ambrose breaks up a double powerbomb on Rollins and the Magic Killer gets two on Seth with Dean making another save. Back from a break with Cesaro knocking Rollins off the apron and into the barricade. We hit the chinlock for a bit before a 3D of all things gets two.

Back up and Seth sends Sheamus into the post, followed by a tornado DDT on Cesaro. The hot tag brings in Ambrose for a superplex on Anderson, followed by the top rope elbow. Ambrose and Rollins hit back to back suicide dives and everyone is down. Sheamus makes a blind tag right before Ambrose hits Dirty Deeds on Anderson. That's enough for Sheamus to slide in and steal the pin at 18:47.

**Rating:** B-. Good match but the usual problems abound. These matches just keep going because there's no one else for the teams to face and there's no reason for them to continue otherwise. Couple that with I'm supposed to be interested in seeing them fight again just six days after they fought here. Not that it matters as they'll likely be fighting again the next month because they don't have anyone else to slide into the spots. Give us something fresh, even if it's for a month or so.

Miz gives Miztourage a pep talk but they're not thrilled. Dallas cites his history of giving motivational speeches and Axel talks about his family's history with the Intercontinental Title. Miz doesn't seem thrilled but wishes them luck.

Video on....the first Money in the Bank match at Wrestlemania XXI. Uh, sure?

Video on Roman Reigns vs. John Cena, focusing on how they were both prospects and rose up the ranks in a hurry. Cena was the guy and now Reigns wants to be the guy. Reigns doesn't like Cena being a part timer who gets all the credit for what Reigns does while Cena basically says Reigns can't fill his boots.

Goldust is in Angle's office without face paint. He wants one more shot with Bray Wyatt and he's asking as Dustin Rhodes. Angle gives in and grants the match.

Curt Hawkins is in the ring to say the Star Factory is closed. Instead it's the Curt Hawkins History Machine and tonight, his losing streak comes to an end.

### Curt Hawkins vs. Apollo Crews

How sad is it that I knew it was going to be Crews because I knew this was the kind of spot he would be in? Hawkins takes him down and grabs a chinlock, followed by a rollup with trunks for two. The enziguri into the toss powerbomb ends Hawkins at 2:19. That's 116 losses in a row for Hawkins.

Lesnar and Strowman have a sitdown interview (in different places). Heyman doesn't think much of Lesnar being the underdog because that was the case when he conquered the Streak. Strowman is confident because he's destroyed people before and will do so again. Heyman talks about Lesnar not being able to train for Strowman because there's no one like him.

Last week Strowman popped up from a German suplex so this Sunday, Lesnar will just have to take him to Suplex City all night long. Strowman doesn't care because he's in charge no matter what. Heyman goes into his usual speech about Lesnar's accomplishments but Lesnar cuts him off. He thanks Strowman for challenging him because that's when he's at his best. He'll see Strowman on Sunday in Suplex City.

Notice the difference between this and Reigns vs. Cena. Strowman has gotten one up on Lesnar and Brock seems like he has to go up a level on this one. It makes you wonder if Strowman's dominance will hold up or if Lesnar has that extra gear in him. That's an interesting story.

On the other hand you have Cena shutting Reigns down every time. Cena is the bigger star in the fans' eyes and hasn't seemed to break a sweat in this whole build. Reigns is completely overmatched by Cena on the mic but they've stuck him out there anyway. That's a very key difference and a rather dumb one at that.

Strowman can hang with Lesnar in the power/physical department so they've focused on that instead. Notice how short

Strowman's statements were here. They didn't have time to expose his weaknesses and the actions from last week (popping up from the suplex and laying out Lesnar) spoke for themselves. Reigns and Cena haven't gotten physical for the most part and that doesn't make sense. Reigns is capable of keeping up with Cena in the heavyweight slugfest but they've focused on Reigns' talking and charisma, where not only is he not great in the first place but he's completely outclassed by Cena.

It's a completely different way of presenting the feuds and one of them is working a lot better than the others because it's been crafted to the participants' strengths and weaknesses.

Bayley has been added to the four way on Sunday, which is now a fatal five way.

Here's Roman Reigns for a chat as this show is allergic to actual wrestling. Reigns gets booed but he thinks this should get booed anyway. Some people think Cena is the best talker of all time but sometimes he says some stupid s\*\*\*. People have been talking about Reigns being the next Cena but he's not a white guy with a military crew cut. If he was, he wouldn't have a job here. If you don't believe that, just ask Alex Riley.

Reigns calls Cena a fake guy and shows us a clip from five years ago with Cena talking about Rock being a part timer who keeps bailing to Hollywood. Reigns asks if Cena should come out here and brings up the loss to Rock at Wrestlemania. Roman will see San Jose next time and says he'll see Cena on Sunday, movie star. This was FAR better from Reigns as he actually made a point and told a story (Reigns is the guy that Cena claimed to be and actually backs it up by being here) while also not having Cena (a far better talker than Reigns could ever hope to be) cutting him down every few seconds.

The Hardys talk about fighting each other for years so tonight isn't the biggest change in the world. Some mild tension is teased but they're cool

with each other.

Asuka is coming.

### Bray Wyatt vs. Dustin Rhodes

Dustin cleans house to start and hammers away in the corner before taking him outside for some whips into various objects. A bulldog on the floor has Bray in more trouble but he headbutts his way out of trouble. Back in and Goldust kicks at the leg, only to charge into Sister Abigail for the pin at 2:36. Bray barely had any offense.

Finn Balor pops up on screen and talks about growing up reading stories. Finn grew up to become a man who created a Demon, just like the ones he grew up reading about. If the Demon is the creation of a man, how dangerous does that make the man? Bray is going to find out at No Mercy.

More Tweets on Heenan.

The announcers talk about Heenan's greatness and legacy.

We get the big tribute to Heenan, including material all the way back from his AWA days. Thankfully we get a long sequence on his stuff with Gorilla Monsoon from Prime Time Wrestling, which is still some of the funniest stuff you'll ever see. His timing was absolutely perfect and some of those jokes were WAY too funny to be on a wrestling show.

Here's Enzo Amore to talk about the upcoming Cruiserweight Title match but Strowman comes out to maul him. A chokeslam and the powerslam crush Enzo and make Strowman all the more popular. Strowman leaves and here's Neville to add the Red Arrow for good measure. Neville: "HOW YOU DOIN?????"

Post break Enzo says he can compete with Neville on Sunday and is taking that title.

### Neville vs. Gran Metalik

Cole: "Corey do you think Enzo has a chance on Sunday?" Graves: "Nope." Metalik gets in a dropkick to start and walks the ropes for a second one.

They head outside with Neville getting in a kick to the chest and RIPPING THE MASK apart, with Metalik's face being exposed for a few seconds. Back in and Metalik kicks him in the face, followed by another springboard dropkick. A running springboard flip dive takes Neville down and a rope walk splash (not a crossbody Cole) gets two. Metalik's moonsault hits knees though and the Rings of Saturn is good for the submission at 3:24.

**Rating:** C+. This worked quite well with Neville showing some viciousness but the Enzo match is like Shelton Benjamin diving into Shawn Michaels' superkick. If he really is the best thing they can do for the division, then just get rid of the thing already. Enzo is getting more annoying by the week (if that's possible) and I'm really not looking forward to hearing him brag about being champion for the next eight months.

It's Hispanic Heritage Month so here's a video on Jennifer Lopez.

Here's Elias to sing his song about how horrible his opponents are, just like everyone here in San Jose.

Elias vs. Jeff Hardy vs. Matt Hardy vs. Bo Dallas vs. Curtis Axel vs. Jason Jordan

One fall to a finish with Miz watching on the floor. It's a brawl to start with Jeff rolling Matt up for two to send us to an early break. Back with Elias in control until Jordan gets in a right hand. That's fine with Elias who jumps from the mat to the top, only to have the Miztourage shove him off. The Hardys come in for a Tower of Doom, drawing Elias back in to try and steal the pins.

Poetry in Motion hits Elias but Jeff walks into a Side Effect for two. Jordan starts cleaning house until Dallas sends him outside. Miz tosses Jordan over the barricade as the Hardys start working over Elias inside. Jeff's legdrop between the legs sets up the Swanon for two on Axel with Miz making the save. The distraction lets the Axhole plant Jeff, only to have Jordan come in with the wheelbarrow neckbreaker for the pin and the title shot at 11:46.

**Rating:** C. Total chaos for the most part here but it's amazing to see how much easier it is to sit through Jordan's super push than Reigns' was.

It's almost like giving him time to grow into his singles role instead of just throwing him into the World Title picture is a really good idea. Jordan's matches have been good so far and it's reasonable to see him winning the Intercontinental Title. Do that instead of pushing him to the moon and it might actually work.

Miz and the Miztourage destroy Jordan and call him out for his, shall we say, questionable parentage to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This show was kind of all over the place but they made do with what they could considering the lack of a live Lesnar or Cena in general. They did a good enough job at hyping up No Mercy, which is the entire point of this show. However, the wrestling wasn't exactly strong and that makes for a dull show. The first hour and a half was really weak but it picked up the pace a lot down the stretch, which was what mattered most. Not a terrible show, but it was dull for some long stretches.

### Results

Nia Jax b. Alexa Bliss – Samoan drop

Cesaro/Sheamus b. Anderson and Gallows and Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose – Dirty Deeds to Anderson

Apollo Crews b. Curt Hawkins – Toss powerbomb

Bray Wyatt b. Dustin Rhodes – Sister Abigail

Jason Jordan b. Bo Dallas, Curtis Axel, Jeff Hardy, Matt Hardy and Elias – Wheelbarrow neckbreaker to Axel

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# Monday Night Raw – April 14, 2003: The Frontlash

## Monday Night Raw

Date: April 14, 2003

Location: Richmond Coliseum, Richmond, Virginia

Commentators: Jonathan Coachman, Jerry Lawler

We're less than two weeks away from Backlash and we have the bigger stories already set up. Last week saw the return of Kevin Nash for reasons of general stupidity, along with more of Eric Bischoff being evil for preventing Steve Austin from wrecking his neck and back even worse. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Kevin Nash/Booker T./Shawn Michaels vs. HHH/Ric Flair/Chris Jericho is official for Backlash.

Here's Nash to open things up. Nine months is a long time off and he's been watching a lot of Raw. He's been seeing HHH and Shawn Michaels beat each other up even though they're all best friends. Now he's back and wants to know what's going on. Cue HHH to shake Nash's hand as everything seems happy. HHH says it's good to see him back and asks if Nash got his messages over the week. No matter what happens though, it's never going to be over between Shawn and HHH. He'd slap Shawn in the face if Shawn was here so cue Shawn to see if that's true.

Nash breaks it up and says he's sick of these two fighting. HHH says Nash has to make a choice because it's either him or me. Nash can join up with HHH but he's going to be one step behind the leader and the general. On the other hand, Shawn is going to be stealing the spotlight and undercutting Nash every chance he gets because that's what he does. Just understand that if you go with Shawn, you're part of the world that HHH is against. Nash doesn't make a decision because WWE wants us to think he won't be getting the title shot against HHH at some point.

Stacy Keibler is unpacking Test's stuff and finds lotion, a towel and Torrie's Playboy. I still have no idea who I'm supposed to cheer for in this story. There's an idea there with the Playboy thing (looking at Torrie is better than being with Stacy) but it's not exactly making me care about either of them.

### Test vs. Chris Jericho

Stacy turns around before getting into the ring to take away Test's view. Jericho jumps his fellow Canadian from behind to take over and hits some rather hard chops in the corner. That earns him a clothesline as Lawler talks about how frustrated a young man Test must be. Jericho skins the cat and sends Test shoulder first into the post to take over again. It's time to work on the arm as Stacy ignores the match to sign some autographs.

The arm is wrapped around the ropes before Jericho cranks on an armbar. Test finally comes back with a sidewalk slam but Stacy doesn't look impressed. Jericho's rollup with feet on the ropes gets two, only to have Stacy pull up her skirt for the fans. The pumphandle slam gives Test a near fall of his own but Stacy is doing the skirt thing again, this time with the camera on it to make Lawler rather happy. That's enough of a distraction for Jericho to hit the bulldog and Lionsault for the pin.

**Rating:** D+. So am I supposed to be cheering for the guy who isn't satisfied with Stacy Keibler or for Stacy, who apparently isn't satisfying Test for whatever reason. I'm pretty sure it's Stacy, though I have no idea how this is supposed to be interesting or make me care about the two of them. Torrie's Playboy seems to be the idea but it's only kind

of a detail in the story. The match wasn't too bad actually, though I'd put that success on Jericho with no hesitation.

Test beats up the fan who got the autograph.

Eric Bischoff says he's going to do what the fans want.

Stacy yells at Test for the Playboy so he compares the two and says stupid stuff, causing her to storm off.

### Trish Stratus/Ivory vs. Jazz/Victoria

Victoria pulls Ivory down by the hair to start as Teddy Long sits in on commentary. It's off to Trish for a hurricanrana on Victoria, followed by a Thesz press and some right hands. Jazz comes in to hammer Trish down, including a double chickenwing. Jerry and Long get in an argument over calling someone playa as Jazz's splash hits raised knees. The hot tag brings in Ivory for two off a faceplant before it's right back to Trish. Everything breaks down and Jazz throws Trish down on her face to set up the STF for the tap.

**Rating:** D+. Again not bad, though we need some fresh blood in the division. You had to have Jazz win here after she joined up with Teddy last week, even if it's a pretty low level story. Jazz vs. Trish can carry them for one more pay per view but after that they're in dire need of someone else.

Goldberg is told that a relative of his is here. It's Goldust and he has a wig for Goldberg, who doesn't know what to do with it. Goldust puts it on his head but Goldberg says it looks better on Goldust instead. Oh and don't ever put it on his head again. Goldust soils himself.

Here's Bischoff to Austin's music again. He laughs at the idea of bringing Austin back but he does have a special merchandising offer for all the Austin fans out there. You can get two shirts for \$39.95 and he'll even throw in the Wrestlemania XIX program! This is basically done as a Home Shopping Network pitch and is rather entertaining given how slimy Bischoff can be. For one final bonus, the first person to call in gets a bottle of JR's Barbecue Sauce! Cue Booker T. to say he wants a

title match tonight.

### Rob Van Dam/Kane vs. Lance Storm/Chief Morely

Van Dam and Kane are defending and this is No DQ. Kane throws Storm over the top to start and Van Dam does the same to Morely. We actually get things going with Storm being especially aggressive as he chokes Van Dam in the corner, only to get kicked away without much effort. It's off to Kane for some running clotheslines until Morely gets a boot up in the corner. A fisherman's suplex is easily blocked but Storm comes in with a dropkick to keep Kane in trouble.

Van Dam offers a kick from the apron though and it's a powerslam into a slingshot legdrop for two. Rob has to fight out of the corner as we're seven minutes in with the stipulations not being a factor whatsoever yet. As I say that, Storm hits a trashcan shot to Van Dam's back. Kane comes in before anything else can happen though and everything breaks down. The stairs get knocked into Kane's head though and we take a break.

Back with Van Dam fighting out of a chinlock and bringing in Kane via the hot tag. House is cleaned in a hurry with the top rope clothesline getting two. The evil foreigners are sent outside with Kane launching Van Dam onto them in a heap. Cue Bubba Ray Dudley to hit Rob with a Bubba Bomb but D-Von comes in to yell at him. Morely and D-Von go nose to nose so Bubba tosses Morely a chair for the Van Daminator. Kane chokeslams Storm and it's the Van Terminator to retain the titles.

**Rating:** D+. The length hurt this one and the No DQ stuff was barely used, though I'd prefer doing it this way instead of having a ref bump or a distraction. Van Dam and Kane really need some new challengers though as the Bischoff administration isn't doing it anymore, nor did they do it in the first place.

HHH and Ric Flair try to talk Bischoff out of giving Booker a title shot. Hurricane comes in to say there are three reasons. First, Booker pinned HHH last week. Second, Flair cost Booker T. the title at Wrestlemania. Third, WHATSUPWITDAT? HHH thinks Booker should have to earn the shot so Bischoff makes a tag match with Booker teaming up with Hurricane to face the two of them. If Booker's team wins, he gets a title shot. Flair says

they're a team of wheeling dealing, jet flying....but Hurricane cuts him off to say that some of us don't need jets to fly.

The APA visited soldiers in Washington DC over the weekend.

Rock joins us live via satellite from Hollywood and wishes he could be there live in West Virginia. He has a big announcement for us tonight: he's bought a new guitar! Rock: "ELVIS ATE PIE ON THIS GUITAR!" Next week though is going to be even more special with the Rock Concert II. That's going to be in Goldberg's hometown of Atlanta where Rock has turned down a match with Goldberg. It's not because he's scared of getting beaten though as he's willing to face Goldberg at Backlash. That night, Goldberg is next.

Christian calls Rock and says he's going to beat Goldust like Rock is going to beat Goldberg. His ribs are fine from the spear last week and he was holding them from laughing so hard at how much the spear didn't hurt.

#### Goldust vs. Christian

Goldust gets in a few shots but takes a low blow for the DQ less than a minute in.

Christian chairs him down and calls Goldberg out to prove something to Rock. Spear (good one too), Jackhammer, next segment.

And now, a debate between Scott Steiner and Christopher Nowinski on Operation Iraqi Freedom. Nowinski says America is bullying other countries and asks where it ends. Steiner goes on a rant about 9/11 and terrorism as this really has no business on a wrestling show. Oh and France sucks too. 3 Minute Warning finally comes in to beat Steiner down.

The French guys are still coming.

Bischoff won't let Lawler show a video of Jim Ross leaving.

Backlash card rundown.

#### HHH/Ric Flair vs. Hurricane/Booker T.

If Hurricane/Booker win, Booker gets a title shot. Booker and Flair get

things going with Booker chopping away in the corner. A thumb to the eye allows the tag to HHH but he charges right into a spinebuster. It's off to Hurricane to work on the arm and a neckbreaker gets two. A better spinebuster puts Hurricane down though and it's time for the villains to take over.

Hurricane gets chopped and stomped in the corner but HHH spends too much time mocking Booker, allowing the tag. A missile dropkick to HHH and the Shining Wizard to Flair has Evolution reeling until Hurricane misses the Blockbuster. HHH tries to get a chair but the distraction allows Shawn to come in and superkick Flair to give Hurricane the pin.

**Rating:** D. Hurricane getting the win is nice, though it would be nicer if he had any hope of getting something out of this stuff. Pinning Flair is a good thing but it's not like he's going anywhere else. Booker getting the title shot is fine, even if there's almost no chance of him winning with HHH vs. Nash pretty clearly the next big showdown.

Shawn goes after HHH until Jericho comes in for the save. It's sledgehammer time but Nash slowly walks down to the ring for the save. Nash takes the hammer away but forearms Booker by mistake. Booker shoves him away and hits Shawn by mistake, meaning there's EXTREME TENSION heading into the six man at Backlash.

**Overall Rating:** D-. This was pretty bad with no good matches all night and a pair of main event storylines that aren't doing anything for anyone. We're coming up on a six man tag where it probably should just be a three way between Nash, Michaels and HHH as the story is all about them with the other three just being details. Couple that with Goldberg vs. Rock going nowhere and the nonsense of Test vs. sexual frustration and what in the world is supposed to interest me in this whole show? Bad week again, which is becoming way too common of a trend.

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# Monday Night Raw – September 11, 2017: Punt Formation

## Monday Night Raw

Date: September 11, 2017

Location: Honda Center, Anaheim, California

Commentators: Booker T., Corey Graves, Michael Cole

As is the case so often anymore around WWE (and thank goodness for that), we have some big matches announced coming in. This time around that would be Braun Strowman vs. John Cena, which had better end in some kind of a screwy finish. I mean, WWE wouldn't possibly be stupid enough to do something else right? Let get to it.

As you might expect, we open with a moment of silence for the sixteenth anniversary of September 11. We also have a text crawl on the screen, talking about the importance of freedom.

Opening sequence.

## Roman Reigns vs. Jason Jordan

Reigns won't shake hands to start and John Cena is shown watching in the back. Feeling out process to start until Jordan charges into a right hand. The corner clotheslines are countered with the belly to belly and

Jordan has a breather. One heck of a running clothesline lets Reigns hit the corner clotheslines but the Superman Punch is countered into the Crossface.

Back from a break with a headbutt dropping Jordan again, followed by a suplex to do the same. We hit the chinlock for a bit before another suplex (granted a different variety) sends Reigns flying. That great dropkick puts Reigns down again and it's still another suplex for two more.

The running shoulder in the corner sets up some rolling northern lights suplexes for another near fall. We hit the Crossface but Reigns finally makes the rope (after nearly tapping on his face). Back up and Jordan's shoulder goes into the post, setting up the Superman Punch. The spear is enough to put Jordan away at 15:18.

**Rating:** B. Jordan is getting better and the more time he spends away from Kurt Angle, the better this push seems to be going. He just doesn't need the Angle connection and I'm glad that they're doing something like this instead of having them be paired on screen. Reigns looked good here too and is starting to look a bit more comfortable in recent weeks.

Reigns shakes his hand post match. Post break here's Cena to call out Reigns for almost losing. He'd like an explanation, but recommends that Reigns keep it at about one sentence in the form of a catchphrase. Roman says he was out here having a great match, which Cena can't do. Reigns has had more great matches in the last two years than Cena has had in his career. Reigns: "What do you think about that?" Cena: "You can't pin this one on me guys. Reigns is burying himself."

Cena talks about how Reigns has never been put in check before but Cena is going to show him what real failure is. The way things are going, No Mercy is going to be a cake walk. Cena goes to leave but Reigns calls him back in and says he finds it interesting that Cena wanted to fight him. The reason Cena is back is because Reigns is selling the tickets that Cena hasn't been able to sell in five years. It must be because he can't break into Hollywood. Reigns: "If you need help, I know a guy." Cena says No Mercy is going to be like a drug test: Reigns isn't passing.

## Sasha Banks vs. Emma

Alexa Bliss is on commentary as Emma gets an early two off a sunset flip. Sasha gets the same off a backslide but gets blasted with a hard clothesline. Cue Nia Jax to join commentary as we take a break. Back with Emma getting taken down by a headscissors but hiptossing Banks into the corner. The five person commentary booth (geez) laughs off the idea of Emma winning the title because of all the hashtags. Banks has had enough of this and grabs the Bank Statement for the tap at 7:21.

**Rating:** D. You know, if you actually have Emma win something, even via a fluke, some people might buy her as something more than the person in the match to take the fall. Then again, that might suggest that there are more than three people worth pushing in the entire division and that's just unacceptable for whatever reason.

Video on Strowman vs. Big Show from last week.

Here are Brock Lesnar and Paul Heyman for a chat. Heyman knows that we're coming up on a pay per view called No Mercy where Braun Strowman is going to have to do everything he can to take the title away from Brock. That's interesting though because Braun is reminding Heyman of what Lesnar did in 2002, when he beat people like the Rock, Hulk Hogan, Rob Van Dam and the Undertaker. So is Strowman going to be ready to cross the line from sports entertainment into Suplex City?

Heyman doesn't think so, but here's Braun to interrupt. The fight is on and Brock grabs a German suplex (I believe the first time he's ever done that to Strowman) but Braun no sells it, drawing a stunned look from Lesnar. That's a great spot, though ignore the fact that Cena did something similar in 2014. Strowman lays him out with a chokeslam and the running powerslam as Heyman is terrified.

The announcers talk about the recent hurricanes and how you can help. Nothing wrong with that.

## Goldust vs. Bray Wyatt

Bray comes up on screen to say that Goldust hides behind his paint but

now he needs to run. Goldust slugs away to start and sends Bray outside for a freaking flip dive off the apron (YOU'RE TOO OLD FOR THAT DUSTIN!). Back in and Bray runs him over, setting up Sister Abigail for the pin at 2:08.

Post match Bray wipes the paint off of Goldust's face, shouting that he's just a man. Finn Balor comes in for the save.

Sheamus and Cesaro are ready to face Dean Ambrose and Seth Rollins because as soon as adversity hits them, they're going to break up again. They are the bar, and that is still a stupid catchphrase.

#### Sheamus/Cesaro vs. Anderson and Gallows

Rollins and Ambrose are on commentary. Actually hang on as the champs start brawling with both teams. No match.

Post break Rollins and Ambrose say they want both of those teams tonight. Angle says find partners and the DELETE chants are already starting.

Asuka is coming soon.

Nia Jax doesn't seem pleased when Bliss comes up to say she doesn't like it either. She wants Jax to be best friends again so they can have a classic together. Jax says she'll think about it but that match is already made for next week. Bliss looks stunned.

#### Elias vs. Kalisto

Yes again. Elias sings about how Anaheim sucks and makes fun of the Mighty Ducks. Kalisto speeds things up to start but gets his shoulder wrenched, followed by a clothesline for two. We hit the armbar for a bit until Kalisto fights up for a tornado DDT. Kalisto misses a double knee shot off the top though and gets powerbombed in half. Drift Away is enough to give Elias the pin at 4:29.

**Rating:** D. NOW NEVER LET THEM FIGHT AGAIN! These two have fought probably five times in the last month or so (including a match on Main Event) and none of them have been anything interesting. Elias is in a weird place as it feels like they want to push him but they won't actually do much with

him. They're keep him warm though and that's better than leaving him off TV.

### John Cena vs. Braun Strowman

Graves says Cena is trying to take Strowman out like Reigns could never do. So Cena is out to put him on the shelf for several months now as Reigns already pinned Strowman and put him out for weeks. Cena gets thrown out to the floor to start and then whipped hard into the corner for good measure. Strowman hits a dropkick of all things and the announcers are stunned.

Cena's right hands have no effect but he gets the feet up in the corner. A fall away slam sends Cena flying and we take a break. Back with Strowman being sent outside but running Cena over again. They head back inside with Cena getting him up for the AA but falling forward from the weight.

The Shuffle is broken up just as easily with a spinebuster giving Strowman two. Cena manages an AA, only to have Braun roll out to the floor. A run around the ring is cut off with Strowman picking up the steps and bouncing them off Cena's head. That's not a DQ for no apparent reason so Strowman throws the steps inside for a powerslam, which is enough for the DQ at 13:58.

**Rating:** C. This was a squash with a screwy ending as Cena makes someone else look like a killer. You know, because he hasn't done it yet this month. Strowman looks like a monster and it was a heck of a performance. I'm actually believing he could win the title at No Mercy, only to lose it to Reigns before he beats Lesnar to retain at Wrestlemania.

Rollins and Ambrose are looking for partners and run into Dean Malenko and Jamie Noble. Dean says they're not dressed for it but the Hardys are. We have an eight man tag.

It's time for MizTV and Miz and Maryse have a major announcement: Maryse is pregnant! Miz is so happy and the fans actually seem to be happy for him. He rips on the fans of course and has a speech but here's Enzo Amore to interrupt. Miz goes on another heck of a rant, talking about how Enzo

and Big Cass were supposed to be the big deal around here and even wrestled with John Cena on a pay per view.

Now Enzo is getting kicked off a tour bus and has to cheat to win. Miz was treated like Enzo to start and then reinvented himself to turn into a star who has been here for over ten years. Now Enzo thinks he can beat Neville? The cruiserweights are some of the most athletically gifted stars in the world and do things off the top rope that brings the WWE Universe to their feet. When Enzo goes to the top, he falls on his face. They work every day to get better while all Enzo cares about is hanging out with third rate rappers.

Enzo says Miz is just a copy of Chris Jericho and Ric Flair while he's an original. He's going to No Mercy to become Cruiserweight Champion and then he'll come back to Raw and beat the paper Intercontinental Champion. That's enough for Miz, who is willing to fight right now. He even dedicates the match to his unborn child but Enzo calls him S-A-W-F-T anyway. Enzo was picked apart here but his retort was good.

#### Miz vs. Enzo Amore

Non-title. Enzo runs out to the floor to start and says Miz's wrestling abilities are heading straight to DVD. Miz chases him outside and rams Enzo's head into the mat over and over again. Miz: "Hey Enzo. How you doin?" Back in and Miz brags a bit more, earning himself a crotching on the top. Miz hammers away again so Enzo asks if Miz is really the father. That's enough for Miz, who beats on Enzo until the Miztourage joins in for the DQ at 3:07.

**Rating:** D. So uh, was there a point to this? Enzo gets ripped in half, runs his mouth some more, and then gets the fire beaten out of him in the match and post match. Miz continues to look like a star and as usual I'd love to see him move up the ranks after he finally drops the title.

Enzo gets destroyed even more post match.

Post break, Neville laughs at Enzo, who can barely move.

Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose/Hardy Boyz vs. Cesaro/Sheamus/Anderson and

## Gallows

It's a brawl to start (well duh) until the Hardys work on Cesaro's arm. That goes nowhere as it's off to Sheamus, who gets sent outside along with Cesaro. Back with Gallows kicking Ambrose out to the floor as the heat segment begins. A double clothesline from Cesaro and Sheamus gets two and it's off to a chinlock from Cesaro. Dean gets him down with a backslide, only to get caught with the assisted White Noise for two.

Matt comes in for the save and gets sent into the barricade for his efforts. Dean's swinging neckbreaker doesn't get him anywhere as he has to fight out of the Magic Killer. The rebound lariat drops Gallows but Sheamus cuts him off again. A backdrop is finally enough for the hot tag to Seth as things speed up. Everything breaks down and it's a double Twist of Fate to Anderson and Gallows. Sheamus and Cesaro walk away though, leaving Anderson to take the windup knee and Dirty Deeds for the pin at 13:02.

**Rating:** C-. In other words, Monday Night Football just kicked off (doubleheader on opening weekend) so there's no point in really trying to do anything interesting. Cesaro and Sheamus walking out is the right idea and it lets the champs look good. The problem continues to be that we've seen these teams for a long time now and none of them are very interesting. The matches are fine but the build to get there feels like nothing special whatsoever.

**Overall Rating:** C+. Good show here, completely worthless main event aside. As usual, this was a great example of why Raw only needs to be two hours as the show could have been outstanding with less time to fill but that's what you have to expect around here. It was more than watchable though and I'm interested in where No Mercy is going to go. Hopefully things pick up a bit next week with only one Monday Night Football game to deal with, though I wouldn't hold my breath.

## Results

Roman Reigns b. Jason Jordan – Spear

Sasha Banks b. Emma – Bank Statement

Bray Wyatt b. Goldust – Sister Abigail

Elias b. Kalisto – Drift Away

John Cena b. Braun Strowman via DQ when Strowman used the steps

Enzo Amore b. Miz via DQ when the Miztourage interfered

Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose/Hardy Boyz b. Cesaro/Sheamus/Anderson and Gallows – Dirty Deeds to Anderson

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# Monday Night Raw – April 7, 2003: Aloha Terrible Summer

## Monday Night Raw

Date: April 7, 2003

Location: Bradley Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're in a new era now as last week saw Goldberg debut to attack the Rock, likely setting up the main event of the upcoming Backlash. Other

than that we have a big tag match this week between Booker T./Shawn Michaels vs. HHH/Chris Jericho. Other than that we need to see what else is in the cards for the pay per view. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of Rock beating Austin at Wrestlemania and then getting speared the next night.

Opening sequence.

#### Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Jazz

Trish is defending and gets taken down without too much difficulty to start. There's a little too much trash talking though and Trish kicks her away for a breather. A Chick Kick sends Jazz outside for a Thesz press from the apron. Back in and an ax handle to the back drops Trish before the fisherman's buster (minus a lot of the busting) gets two. The STF sends Trish over to the ropes again and it's time to get fired up. Another Chick Kick is good for another two and the Stratusphere gets the same. Stratusfaction (with Jazz lifting Trish up) gets the pin though Jazz's foot is on the rope.

**Rating:** D. This is one of the better matches the division has at the moment (which isn't saying much given that the division is all of three people) so having them set up a rematch makes sense. The division is dying for some fresh talent at this point though and this feud is only going to get them so far without it.

Rock arrives and goes in to see Eric Bischoff. He doesn't want to talk about Wrestlemania though because his mind is on Goldberg spearing him last week. Goldberg is on his way here so Rock mocks the catchphrases and promises a beating later tonight.

Rob Van Dam and Kane are glad to have won the Tag Team Titles. Kane celebrated by taking a skunk into his basement...and I'm glad Rob cuts him off there.

Teddy Long and Rodney Mack (Jazz's real life husband) come up to Jazz and offer her a spot on the team. Jazz accepts and joins the battle against bigotry.

Rock runs into Trish (Rock: "Aloha mama.") and asks if she's sweaty and wet from thinking about him. It was just because of her match apparently and here's Jeff Hardy. Rock refuses him an autograph but Jeff would rather talk about Goldberg last week. Jeff vs. Rock is on for later in a match that would be incredibly different just a few years later.

### Chief Morely vs. Rob Van Dam

Part of Morely's video is Bischoff on the phone with Morely nowhere in sight. I get that it's Morely and no one is going to pay attention but that was approved by someone on the production team? Rob clotheslines him a few times to start and gets a great looking German suplex for two. Morely's neckbreaker gives him a breather though and he rolls some suplexes for a delayed near fall of his own.

That means it's time for a chinlock for a bit before Rob gets in some kicks and the monkey flip. Rolling Thunder connects but here's Lance Storm to put a foot on the rope. Rob kicks him down but decides to dive onto Storm instead, allowing Morely to get in a DDT for the pin. A DDT? On a new champion? It really is 2003.

**Rating:** D. I'm still trying to get over a DDT finishing Van Dam. The ending wasn't clean but Morely can't even hit his finisher to win? Anyway, on top of a stupid finish and an annoying loss that didn't need to happen so soon, it was made even worse by the fact that the match wasn't any good. Just bad in general here.

Van Dam cleans house with no real effort.

Booker is getting taped up when Shawn comes up to say nothing of note about tonight's main event.

Ivory and Shawn Michaels went to a Naval base.

### Scott Steiner vs. Christopher Nowinski

Before the match, Nowinski goes on a rant about patriotism making everyone blind to reality and how terrorism can't be stomped out by attacking sovereign nations. Steiner beats him up on the floor as the announcers distance themselves from Nowinski's comments as fast as they

can. Nowinski gets slammed on the ramp and put in the Recliner with Lawler calling Nowinski's comments anti-American. I'll let you make your own comments on that one.

Video on Goldberg.

Christian comes in to see Rock and tries to get a DVD autographed. That's all cool with Rock until he finds out it's for Christian. Not THAT Christian of course but rather a friend of his. Rock suggests some tips on owning the room (Rock: "Not this room. This is the Rock's room.") and Christian dubs himself Born Again. Uh, yeah. Anyway Christian thinks the people thinks the Rock is scared of Goldberg so Rock is going to show them next.

Trish kisses Jeff Hardy for luck.

### The Rock vs. Jeff Hardy

Rock doesn't think much of the paint job so he slugs away to take over. More right hands allow Rock to get in some dancing but he stops due to a ROCKY SUCKS chant. There's a Samoan drop to put Hardy down but Rock charges into a boot in the corner. Jeff scores with a middle rope dropkick as Lawler yells about Jeff wearing too much makeup.

Some clotheslines and lame forearms to the back look to set up the Whisper in the Wind but Rock is a bit too smart for that. Jeff falls down trying a reverse Twist of Fate but is able to hit his own People's Elbow. A DDT and the Rock Bottom end Jeff. Well to be fair, Rock is no Chief Morely.

**Rating:** D. Egads Jeff is actually getting worse. There's no energy or pop to the vast majority of his offense and the forearms to the back were a disaster. Thankfully Rock can basically do anything at this point so it could have been a lot worse. Still though, I have no idea who can think Jeff is any good at this point, save for the preteen girl audience.

Rock calls out Goldberg post match so here he is, walking through the pyro in a cool visual. Before any violence can break out, Rock turns down a match at Backlash and leaves. Christian tries to sneak in on Goldberg

but gets speared down to almost no reaction. Rock's cheap shot has even less effect and Rock bails again. Goldberg got almost no reaction at all here. JR: "I smell a chicken\*\*\*\*!" King: "JR!"

Rock leaves and yells at Terri for asking why he's gone. Actually hang on as he will give an answer. Rock: "You want to know why? Because."

### Kane vs. Dudley Boyz

Tagging is required here so Kane hammers on D-Von, then does the same to Bubba. D-Von crotches Kane from the floor but doesn't seem happy about having to do so. Kane fights back with some clotheslines and a backdrop. The top rope clothesline gets two on D-Von but the double chokeslam is countered into the 3D.

**Rating:** D. I can live with a great team beating a champion in a handicap match with their finisher but it still could have been done later. The match was as good as it was going to be for a three minute Dudleys vs. Kane match, though that doesn't make the story any more interesting. It's still just Val Venis/Lance Storm/the Dudleys vs. Van Dam/Kane. The division needs an interesting team and they need it in a hurry.

Van Dam comes out for the save but Storm and Morely cut him off, setting up the big beatdown with the aide of a chair. For people who are forced into being heels, Bubba and D-Von don't seem to mind the excessive violence.

Test yells at Goldust for screwing up with Stacy last week. He hasn't gotten any in a week so Goldust needs to HBO: help a brother out. Since when have Test and Goldust been brothers, or even distant cousins? Post break, Goldust tells Stacy that it was his Playboy and Test wasn't talking to Torrie. Test says he doesn't read those magazines but Goldust stooges him off again, this time about a magazine in Test's bag. This whole thing feels like a bad rib on someone that's only funny to the people writing it.

Here's Eric Bischoff coming out in Austin's truck to Austin's music. Eric, in Austin's vest, rips into Austin for hiding his medical condition and is very happy with the firing. Austin was a liability that Bischoff

couldn't risk and he doesn't feel bad about anything he did. This brings Bischoff to JR's rant from last week (including the stupid line of Bischoff not being able to find anyone who could beat Austin, the night after he lost to Rock) and Eric wants JR to come up to him man to man.

JR meant every word of what he said last week and quits. Eric yells that he's fired as he leaves to wrap this up. I'm still not angry at Bischoff for benching someone who admitted they had a bad neck and back. That doesn't make him a heel, no matter how much WWE seems to think that it does.

### Goldust vs. Steven Richards

Lawler is on commentary on his own so this could be interesting. Richards grabs a neckbreaker and it's a suplex into a chinlock. Thankfully Coach comes out to join commentary as Goldust fights back and gets two off something like a Sky High. The Curtain Call is broken up and Richards calls for a belt. Since she's no longer champion, Goldust uses the distraction to grab a powerslam for the fast pin. Just a match.

Ric Flair tells Chris Jericho and HHH to get along tonight.

La Resistance, the evil French team of Rene Dupree and Sylvan Grenier, are coming. This would be around the time France wouldn't fight in Iraq so FRANCE IS EVIL!

### HHH/Chris Jericho vs. Booker T./Shawn Michaels

HHH is going to put Booker over here isn't he? It's a brawl to start with HHH being knocked outside and Jericho being catapulted out next to him. We settle down to Booker elbowing HHH down for two before it's off to Shawn to work on the arm. Jericho comes in and gets armdragged down as well as things break down a bit. It's too early for Sweet Chin Music or a Pedigree but Flair low bridges Shawn to the floor. And now, to the parking lot where a limo arrives.

Back from a break with HHH getting two off the jumping knee to the face. Jericho comes in and does Shawn's pose bus misses an elbow. It's back to HHH for a sleeper, followed by Jericho's jumping back elbow to the jaw.

Shawn finally gets in a hard shot to the face to make the hot tag off to Booker.

House is cleaned in a hurry and a DDT gets two on HHH. There's the Spinarooni and a Bookend to Jericho but HHH gets in another knee, allowing Jericho to grab the Walls. Shawn makes the save with Sweet Chin Music but HHH clotheslines him to the floor. The Pedigree is countered into a jackknife cover to give Booker the pin.

**Rating:** D+. Nothing special here and, of course, HHH gives up the pin in a match that means nothing, despite the fact that he already beat Booker in the important match. There's just no reason for HHH to not drop the title to him at Wrestlemania, as it's not like HHH can't just get it back in April because he must be the champion long term no matter what.

Post match the beatdown is on with Shawn being tied to the top rope. Hurricane tries to make a save but the returning Kevin Nash makes the real save. HHH grabs the hammer but Nash's chair scares him away to end the show. So there's the reason Booker isn't likely getting a rematch at Backlash.

**Overall Rating:** D-. So to recap: Booker T. loses in the big match but gets to win a tag match while Goldberg and Kevin Nash are heading straight to the main event. Goldberg is at least a logical move but Nash? The guy who can't go two months without a career killing injury and draws no reaction the rare times he's healthy?

Couple that with the popular Tag Team Champions getting pinned a week after winning the belts, Test getting no sex because of Goldust and being told that if you don't completely support the military that you're a horrible person and there's not much to look forward to. It's going to be a very long summer and I have a bad feeling it's only going to get worse.

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# Monday Night Raw – September 4, 2017: A Labor of Like

## Monday Night Raw

Date: September 4, 2017

Location: CenturyLink Center, Omaha, Nebraska

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

As has been the case in recent weeks, we're coming in with a big match on the card. In this case it's Jeff Hardy making a return to singles action as he challenges Miz for the Intercontinental Title. Other than that we also have a showdown as Braun Strowman faces Big Show inside a steel cage. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of the John Cena vs. Roman Reigns promo last week. The more I think about it, the more I like it for Reigns. More on this later this week.

## John Cena vs. Jason Jordan

Before the match, we look at Cena answering an open challenge from Kurt Angle fifteen years ago in his debut match. The fans are actually behind Cena, which should tell you a lot about Jordan's future. Jason grabs an early takedown and grabs a waistlock. Cena can't do much with him to start until a hard clothesline drops Jason without much effort. A suplex

gets two on Jordan, followed by a hard whip into the corner for the same as we take a break.

Back with Jordan hitting his own suplexes and that's enough for Cena, who initiates the finishing sequence. Jordan's rollup is countered into the STF but he reverses into something like a Crossface. Cena powers out (because he's Cena) and reverses another suplex into a crossbody. That's enough for Cena though as he grabs the AA for the pin at 11:38.

**Rating:** B-. These performances make Jordan look like a star but the whole being Angle's son thing is really not doing him any favors. It's not an effective story and I think WWE is starting to get that. Hopefully they build Jordan up and then do something to get rid of the Angle connection because it's not doing much for him.

Post match Roman Reigns comes out for a chat. Back from a break with Roman asking why it took a veteran twenty minutes to beat a rookie. I don't think Reigns knows A, what a rookie is or B, how to tell time. Cena says Roman is starting to ask questions and that's the worst thing he could do. They're distracting him and he's out here with his zipper down. Reigns: "I busted it actually. Big dog."

Cena promises that Reigns will get his answers at No Mercy, either by a guy who has lost his steps or someone who has been stringing Roman along. Roman is going to learn that he's an entitled golden boy while people like Chad Gable, Jason Jordan and even the Miz have had to fight and claw their way to get where they are. Point being, Cena doesn't respect Reigns because Roman is the only one living a lie. Reigns wants to fight right now but Cena doesn't seem interested. That makes Roman think he's all talk, which is why Reigns doesn't respect him. More good stuff here as you can feel the personal issues, which is what this match needs.

#### Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Heath Slater/Rhyno

Dean Ambrose and Seth Rollins are on commentary. Slater rolls Cesaro up for a very early two and gets caught in the wrong corner for his efforts. It's off to Rhyno for the power, only to walk into the Brogue Kick for the fast pin at 2:17.

Matt Hardy thinks it's a WONDERFUL night for a new Intercontinental Champion. Jeff talks about wrestling each match like it's his first as well as his last. Tonight he's either going out in a blaze of glory or as the new Intercontinental Champion. Matt is ready for the Miztourage too.

### Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Jeff Hardy

Miz is defending. Jeff gets three near falls in the first minute before a clothesline puts Miz on the floor. A dive is teased but Jeff pulls back as Miz moves, sending us to a break. Back with Jeff getting two off his sitout gordbuster but mostly missing the Whisper in the Wind. Dallas offers a distraction so Axel can break up the Swanton, leaving Matt to take care of both of them. All three are ejected and it's Jeff grabbing a rollup for two.

Miz's DDT gets the same but he misses the running clothesline in the corner. Miz hits a running knee ala Daniel Bryan for two and we hit the YES Kicks. Jeff is right back with a dropkick but his dive off the apron is broken up. We hit the Figure Four for a bit with Jeff getting out without too much trouble.

The Twisting Stunner has Miz in trouble so he heads outside, only to get caught by Poetry in Motion against the barricade. Back in and the Swanton misses thanks to Maryse telling her husband it was coming. Another Twist of Fate is countered into the Skull Crushing Finale to retain the title at 13:02.

**Rating:** B. Better match than I was expecting and Miz retaining clean (the Maryse thing wasn't interference) is a good idea. The fact that they're pushing Miz's total days as champion is interesting too as he's only about six months away from setting the all time record for combined days with the title. That's easily something he could reach, along with most title reigns. They would be crazy not to push the heck out of that and it seems to have started.

We look back at last week's main event with Alexa Bliss winning the title but getting beaten down by Nia Jax.

Nia comes in to see Kurt Angle and wants to know why she's not in the

title match. Emma comes in to do her “I started the Women’s Revolution and it’s all over Twitter” stuff. Nia threatens to end her so Kurt makes a tag match with the two of them facing Bliss and Banks. If Nia and Emma win, they’re added to Bliss vs. Banks at No Mercy to make it a four way.

We look back at Big Show and Braun Strowman breaking the ring in April.

### Enzo Amore/Cedric Alexander/Gran Metalik vs. Tony Nese/Drew Gulak/Noam Dar

Rematch from 205 Live because that show needs to be made even less important. Enzo says it’s ok for him to cheat last week on 205 Live because it means he’s smart. He has nicknames for the other five people in the match, most of, all of which we heard on 205 Live. Joined in progress after a break with Nese and Alexander jumping over each other.

Nese gets sent into the corner so Enzo tags himself in, only to get dropped into the corner. Drew grabs a seated abdominal stretch until Enzo fights up to send all three villains to the floor. Back up and the hot tag brings in Cedric for the handspring enziguri to Gulak. Alexander and Metalik hit stereo dives but Enzo tags himself in again for a poke to the eye. The Jordunzo ends Gulak at 4:59.

**Rating:** D+. So yeah, this was just a shortened version of the 205 Live match, meaning it’s even more worthless than I was expecting. As is still the case, Enzo is the most over member of the roster and there isn’t another option to push on the show. No one else has gotten any traction and Enzo is popular so this makes sense, as annoying as it is.

Sasha Banks is getting ready when Alexa Bliss comes in. A shouting match ensues with Banks promising to make Bliss scream at No Mercy.

Here’s Finn Balor for a chat. He misses being Universal Champion and thinks the Intercontinental Title would have looked good around his waist, had it not been for Bray Wyatt. Just because he beat Bray at Summerslam, a monster like that never really goes away. Finn doesn’t run from his demons because sometimes he becomes them.

Bray pops up on screen to talk about Abigail taking him hunting. His

first kill was an exhilarating experience but one day it became too easy. Then he put his weapon down and began hunting with his hands. He showed them no mercy and it showed him his purpose. The Demon is Finn's bow and arrow so face Bray with his bare hands at No Mercy. Balor says he's made his choice so Bray tells him to run.

#### Nia Jax/Emma vs. Alexa Bliss/Sasha Banks

If Emma and Jax win, they're added to the No Mercy title match. Joined in progress with Sasha not being able to wristdrag Nia. Emma tags herself in and stomps away in the corner before grabbing a seated full nelson. It's off to Bliss for some kicks to Emma with Nia not even offering a tag.

Bliss and Banks take turns beating on her, even joining up for a double suplex. Twisted Bliss doesn't work and it's off to Nia for the Samoan drop on the champ. Sasha has to dive in for a save but can't get the Bank Statement on Nia. Jax plants Banks and drops the big leg but Emma runs in for the pin at 8:55.

**Rating:** D+. Well it's better than just having Banks vs. Bliss all over again. Emma's Women's Revolution thing is still annoying but at least she's not getting squashed in a minute anymore. The division needs all the fresh blood it can get and Emma is as good of an option as there is at the moment.

Nia Samoan drops Emma post match.

Strowman thinks tonight is a recipe for destruction and that's a message to Brock Lesnar.

Ambrose and Rollins run into Elias with Dean liking the music.

#### Dean Ambrose/Seth Rollins vs. Anderson and Gallows

Non-title with Sheamus and Cesaro at ringside. Seth stomps Anderson in the corner to start as Cole can't stop laughing for some reason. The champs knock Anderson and Gallows to the floor for stereo dives and we take a break. Back with Ambrose in a chinlock, followed by a chokebomb for two.

Rollins makes a quick save and Dean dropkicks his way to freedom. The hot tag brings in Seth to clean house with a suicide dive and a Sling Blade. Cesaro and Sheamus finally do something by offering a distraction, only to have Rollins grab a rollup on Anderson for the quick pin at 11:50.

**Rating:** C-. Another skippable match in a series of them tonight. The tag division continues to be weak due to having no depth but that's the problem with having so few people around here and the Revival on the shelf. The match wasn't bad but there's just no interest here and that's not surprising at all.

Cesaro and Sheamus beat up Anderson and Gallows to make the point clear.

Conor the Crusher video for pediatric cancer awareness month. Some other kids got to invent their own characters too in a nice touch. Nothing wrong with that.

Enzo is celebrating with Metalik and Alexander when Neville comes in. The three of them will be in a fatal five way elimination match tomorrow night on 205 Live with the winner getting the title shot at No Mercy.

The referee from the ring collapse match says he's going to let them fight tonight.

Big Show won't stand for this idea of being put out to pasture by Strowman because Braun doesn't know what a cage match is. There hasn't been anyone in twenty three years big enough or bad enough to break Big Show. This was one of Show's best promos in years, even though he was looking just slightly to the left for some reason.

Brian Kendrick and Tony Nese are the other two in the five way.

### Big Show vs. Braun Strowman

Inside a cage with pinfall/submission/escape to win. Strowman splashes him up against the cage to start but runs into the KO punch as we go to a break. Back with both guys down again until Show slams him into the cage over and over. Show tries to climb for some reason and gets crotched, only to shove Strowman off again.

That means a top rope elbow for two and a THIS IS AWESOME chant. Show goes for the door but gets pulled back, only to have Strowman get the door slammed on his head. A double shoulder puts both of them down but Show's chokeslam is countered into a DDT for two. The chokeslam is good for two and Show escapes the powerslam. Strowman misses a charge and goes into the cage wall but is still able to catch Big Show escaping. The big old superplex plants Show and it's the running powerslam for the pin at 16:58.

**Rating:** B. These two continue to surprise me as they haven't actually had a bad match. WWE has a bad tendency to turn these battles of the big men into really boring matches but this was another great power match with both guys looking good. It's also proof that having an obvious winner isn't the worst thing in the world. Strowman was obviously winning (Big Show isn't Kalisto after all) and it didn't make the match any less entertaining.

Post match Strowman says that's nothing compared to what he'll do to Lesnar. Now it's time to put Big Show out to pasture, so Strowman powerslams him through the cage (a section of which breaks and falls to the floor) to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This show flew by which is a major upgrade over what they do so often anymore. The main event was good enough, especially due to tying it to the ring collapse match throughout the night. Other than that, there wasn't a lot of great wrestling, but they're hyping the heck out of No Mercy for the sake of getting people to renew their Network subscriptions. If I just have to see a stacked pay per view, so be it. Good enough show this week and that's not the worst thing in the world.

### Results

John Cena b. Jason Jordan – Attitude Adjustment

Cesaro/Sheamus b. Heath Slater/Rhyno – Brogue Kick to Rhyno

Miz b. Jeff Hardy – Skull Crushing Finale

Enzo Amore/Cedric Alexander/Gran Metalik b. Tony Nese/Drew Gulak/Noam Dar

– Jordunzo to Gulak

Nia Jax/Emma b. Alexa Bliss/Sasha Banks – Legdrop to Banks

Dean Ambrose/Seth Rollins b. Anderson and Gallows – Rollup to Anderson

Braun Strowman b. Big Show – Running powerslam

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# Monday Night Raw – March 31, 2003: Who's Next? Eh It's Not That Hard To Figure Out.

## Monday Night Raw

Date: March 31, 2003

Location: Key Arena, Seattle, Washington

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's time for one of the biggest Raw's of the year and it should be interesting to see where things are going. HHH needs a new challenger

after he sent Booker packing from the main event scene and Rock finally vanquished Steve Austin at Wrestlemania. There's room for a lot of changes on the show at the moment so let's get to it.

We open with a nearly four minute highlight package of last night. Nothing wrong with that after the biggest show of the year.

Opening sequence.

Rock is looking in a mirror when a makeup guy comes up, only to annoy the Great One. Tonight is Rock Appreciation Night and he needs to look perfect.

Here's Austin to get things going in the arena. Austin says he's always been honest since he's been here and last night Rock was the better man. He'd like to have Rock come out here right now for a handshake but gets Eric Bischoff with some papers instead. Eric doesn't buy Austin wanting a handshake and thinks it's a ploy. The fact is Austin won't be beating anyone up anytime soon.

The night before Wrestlemania, Austin was in a hospital so Eric had his lawyers look into a few things. While Austin was in the hospital for an anxiety issue, there's a lot more to it than that. Bischoff reads off a bunch of neck and back issues that Austin is dealing with (apparently having stolen Austin's personal medical records) and he's not medically cleared to wrestle. Austin says he's going to do whatever he wants and that includes fighting against doctor's orders. That's fine with Bischoff, who fires him. The FedEx is on its way to Austin's home in Texas too.

### HHH vs. Hurricane

Non-title. During the entrances, JR and King say that Goldberg will be part of the upcoming Backlash pay per view. Hurricane gives his mask to a kid so Flair takes it away and breaks the thing. HHH jumps him on the floor and takes him down with a spinebuster back inside. A vertical suplex is broken up and Hurricane's jumping neckbreaker mostly connects.

Some jumping clotheslines and a Shining Wizard give Hurricane two but

Flair trips him up. It doesn't really matter as the chokeslam is good for two, followed by a high crossbody for a pretty good near fall. The Pedigree is broken up and the Eye of the Hurricane gets two more. The Blockbuster misses though and it's a Pedigree to put HHH away.

**Rating:** C-. This would also be known as a "take that Rock" match as Rock went out of his way to give Hurricane a rub and then HHH beats him clean in about four minutes. Hurricane's offense looked good and there's nothing wrong with the World Champion getting a clean win but did it just NEED to be Hurricane? Seems rather petty but that's how it goes.

Kane thinks he and Rob Van Dam should go their separate ways but Rob has already gotten them another Tag Team Title shot tonight. If they lose though, they have to join the Bischoff Administration. Kane is livid. Rob: "Dude.....we're gonna win."

Goldberg video. He'll be at Backlash.

#### Scott Steiner vs. Christopher Nowinski

Chris has a protective mask on his face and politely requests not to be hit in the face. Steiner threatens to make Nowinski floss with his shoelaces and Nowinski's running doesn't get him anywhere. Scott hammers him down and gets in a kick to the chest but Nowinski uses a headbutt with the mask to get a breather. Not that it matters as a belly to belly and the Steiner Recliner put Chris away in short order. Total squash.

Austin confirms that his neck is messed up.

Rock Appreciation Moment: a song montage. It really is amazing how much great stuff he packed into so little time.

JR goes on a heck of a rant against Bischoff for somehow getting Austin's medical records and getting rid of him this way. Heck yeah JR. Medical reasons like Austin having a horrible neck and back? What kind of problems could those ever cause? I get what they're going for with Bischoff finding a way to get rid of Austin but good luck getting me to take issue with protecting the neck/back of someone who already missed a year due to neck surgery.

The Dudleys aren't happy with Storm and Morely. Here's the Chief to tell them that they're in the Tag Team Title match tonight as well where their jobs will be to get rid of RVD and Kane before laying down to retain the titles.

Flair comes in to see Booker T., who is getting his knee taped up. Booker chokes Flair for being annoying and shows why he's one of the scariest men in wrestling. Seriously he was terrifying when he was shouting down at Flair.

Clip of Ashanti singing America the Beautiful.

### Rosey vs. Maven

Fallout from Maven pinning Rico a few weeks back and of course that requires another match. Maven kicks him in the ribs but gets his head taken off with a clothesline. King ignores the match to talk about being a celebrity photographer for Playboy, which doesn't cause nearly as much excitement as you would expect.

Rosey misses a charge in the corner and gets forearmed down, only to have Maven COMPLETELY miss a dropkick to Rosey's back. The idea was supposed to have Rosey get knocked into Rico on the apron, likely for a rollup pin. Rosey starts to go into Rico anyway but thankfully realizes how stupid that would be since he wasn't touched. They stumble around into an awful looking rollup to give Maven two, followed by a sunset flip to put Rosey away. This was terrible and made some of the Divas matches look horrible. By the way, Maven would have been a perfect choice (one of many) for HHH's squash earlier rather than Hurricane.

Here's Chris Jericho for a match but first he needs some respect. Jericho talks about having one of the best matches in Wrestlemania history last night and Shawn Michaels knows that he was bested. When people look back at the match, they'll remember Shawn writhing in pain while Jericho walked out with his head held high. Tonight, he'll take out his frustrations on Booker T.

### Chris Jericho vs. Booker T.

Booker has a bad leg so Jericho goes after it before the bell. Some kicks and elbow drops have the leg in trouble but Booker kicks him over the top for a breather. Back in and a flapjack drops Jericho as JR praises HHH's Indian Deathlock. There's a superkick but here's Flair for the DQ.

HHH comes out and it's a 3-1 beatdown until Shawn makes the save. Jericho breaks up Sweet Chin Music though and it's Shawn taking the beatdown, including the Walls. HHH gets the Indian Deathlock and the good guys tap. Yeah it's still just an Indian Deathlock dude. Try the sleeper again.

### Jeff Hardy vs. Steven Richards

Jeff is in all white, making him look like he's off to paint an apartment. Richards gets sent outside early on but Victoria pulls him away before Jeff's barricade running clothesline. Back in and a DDT on the arm gives Richards two and we hit the armbars as Jeff's blue arm paint is all over Richards. Jeff makes the comeback and gets two off the leg lariat in the corner. The Swanton is broken up by Victoria so here's Trish, who got out here WAY too fast, to kick her in the head. Now the Swanton can put Richards away.

**Rating:** D. The paint was the most interesting part of the match. This Jeff/Trish thing isn't doing anything for me but I can't imagine it's going to be anything long term. They also need some fresh talent for the women's division as Trish vs. Victoria all over again makes my head hurt.

Trish smiles at Jeff post match.

Austin says goodbye to the production staff and leaves.

Rock Appreciation Moment: Rock insults various crowds and people. "HE SAID TORONTO! THAT'S WHERE WE LIVE!" Still amazing.

Test calls Torrie Wilson because he's dumb enough to do this when his girlfriend is around. Speaking of the girlfriend, Stacy comes up and innocently asks who was on the phone. Test gets nervous and says it was a wrong number. He tries to get Goldust to lie for him but the Tourette's gets the better of him.

Rock finds the dejected production staff (who haven't moved since Austin

left) and says he's got a big party after Rock Appreciation Night. I mean, they can't come in or anything but the party will be happening.

Goldberg video.

Tag Team Titles: Dudley Boyz vs. Rob Van Dam/Kane vs. Lance Storm/Chief Morely

The graphic still shows the old title belt design. Morely and Storm are defending and this is elimination rules. Rob and Kane slug it out with the champs with Van Dam moonsaulting to the floor to take out the two of them plus Bubba as a bonus. Kane dives onto all of them and the fans are way into Van Dam, as is usually the case. We really get things going with Rob and D-Von as the fans want tables.

Bubba comes in to club Kane in the chest but takes a jumping clothesline for his efforts. A quick What's Up slows Kane down but it's right back to Rob for a bunch of kicks to the face. Everything breaks until it's Bubba and Van Dam alone in the ring where Rob misses the Five Star. Storm tries to bring in a chair but D-Von takes it away and misses a swing, setting up the Van Daminator to get rid of the Dudleys.

Back from a break with Morely suplexing Van Dam and Kane making a save. Storm comes in and grabs a half crab, which isn't even treated as a finisher anymore. To be fair, did anyone outside of WCW ever buy that as a good move? The hot tag brings in Kane as everything breaks down.

A really bad camera shot shows Van Dam's top rope kick not coming close to Storm (which the announcers didn't acknowledge, making it a bit less bad than Maven's disaster earlier). There's the double chokeslam on the champs and the Five Star to Morely gives Rob and Kane the titles.

**Rating:** D+. Kind of slow here but the ending was the only important part. Kane and Van Dam should have won the titles last night but the extra emotion here did make things a little better. At least the titles are off of Storm and Regal as they were setting new standards for uninteresting champions. The Dudleys didn't really need to be there either but they didn't hurt anything.

Bischoff has a contract of some kind and promises a big surprise.

Here's Rock for Rock Appreciation Night/the most obvious debut ever. Rock has FINALLY come back to sea...all you jabronis appreciate him. The ROCKY chant breaks out and Rock says he doesn't care for what happened to Austin earlier tonight. If Austin just had to get beaten last night, at least it was by the best. Rock brags about all the Rock Bottoms last night and the fans keep cheering him.

We get another montage of awesome Rock moments (edited off the Network due to the music), which still doesn't get them to boo. He talks about going to Hollywood and coming back to boos as the fans FINALLY catch on...by chanting for Goldberg. Rock: "Don't think you're cool just because you know Rock's accountant Ira Goldberg!"

Rock is out of people to beat though so this is the last time you'll ever see him. He tells them what they can do with their booing...and here's Goldberg. This would have been a heck of a surprise if they hadn't said he would be at Backlash and then had Bischoff do the contract thing. Goldberg says Rock is next and a spear ends the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. This definitely felt like the post-Wrestlemania show with very little wrestling throughout and one match with any significant time. They set up a few things going forward but a lot of this show was about taking a breath after the hard push towards Wrestlemania. There's nothing wrong with that and the Goldberg debut, while highly telegraphed, did feel like a big moment. Not a bad show, but it's not the place to look if you want a lot of action.

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# Monday Night Raw – August 28, 2017: Stick to the Plan

## Monday Night Raw

Date: August 28, 2017

Location: FedEx Forum, Memphis, Tennessee

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Corey Graves

We're less than a month away from No Mercy and the show is already looking big. With Braun Strowman vs. Brock Lesnar already on the card and some more potentially huge matches being added, this show has suddenly gone from a nothing pay per view to something pretty big. Let's get to it.

The Miztourage is in the ring to open things up. Before Miz can get a single word out though, here's Kurt Angle to interrupt. Angle talks about how the Intercontinental Title has been taking some hits as of late, there's going to be a title match soon. Miz cuts him off to yell about the lack of respect the title has been shown as of late. It's going to be fixed soon though as we're going to have a battle royal right now with the winner facing Miz for the title next week.

## Battle Royal

Big Show, Curtis Axel, Bo Dallas, Jeff Hardy, Matt Hardy, Finn Balor, Jason Jordan, Curt Hawkins, R-Truth, Kalisto, Goldust, Apollo Crews, Luke Gallows, Karl Anderson, Elias

Big Show is now clean shaven. Hawkins (listed as Curtis) is put out at

the bell and everyone else turns their attention to Big Show. That goes poorly for everyone else as Show cleans house and things spread out a bit. Kalisto is put out and the Hardys feed Elias to Show for some loud chops. Cole: "That's music to Big Show's ears."

Anderson and Gallows get together to try and get rid of Show but it's Balor's assistance that finally gets rid of the giant. Elias (called Samson by Cole in what might be a mistake) decks Balor from behind and things break up again. The Miztourage gets rid of Truth and Goldust is put out as well at the hands of Anderson and Gallows.

Back from a break with Crews having been eliminated. Matt gets rid of Gallows and pulls Anderson to the apron for another elimination, only to have Gallows pull Matt out for the elimination. Miz saves Dallas as the referees are distracted and things settle down again. We've got Balor, Jordan, Dallas, Axel, Jeff Hardy and Elias to go.

Balor starts cleaning house but gets into a staredown with Jeff that gets the fans' attention. Some running dropkicks in the corner have people in trouble, but here's Bray Wyatt to eliminate Balor and then disappear again. Jordan starts throwing suplexes and gets rid of the Miztourage. There goes Elias, followed by Jordan at Jeff's hands to give Hardy the win at 16:17.

**Rating:** D+. I like the choice of a winner there as Jeff is someone who can easily get a spot like this and even win the title. While I still think we're heading for a Jordan title match at No Mercy, it's nice to see someone get a surprise shot in the middle. Hardy winning the title wouldn't be the worst idea in the world, but either way it's a good idea to see him getting more of a singles push.

We look back at Braun Strowman laying out Brock Lesnar last week.

Alexa Bliss promises to regain the title tonight. Tonight, the goddess reclaims her throne.

Here's Enzo Amore to talk about beating a giant like Big Cass last week. Not only can he hang with bigger men like him, he can also compete in the fast paced, high flying cruiserweight division. After bragging about

winning money on Saturday's fight, he dances around and announces his opponent.

#### Enzo Amore vs. Noam Dar

Amore spins out of a wristlock to start but gets kneed hard in the ribs. Dar pulls at the hair and knees away in the corner before being sent face first into the middle buckle. Enzo pops right back up and grabs Eat Defeat for the pin at 2:55.

Neville says if Enzo is his competition, he'll be Cruiserweight Champion forever.

Here are Brock Lesnar and Paul Heyman for a chat. Heyman talks about what happened last week with Braun Strowman, who is the kind of monster that his parents warned him about. Strowman had an historic night at Summerslam when he, as Corey Graves said, monster handled Lesnar by powerslamming him through two tables. We see a clip of last week's attack on Lesnar, which Heyman says made him know Strowman is a monster. At No Mercy, Lesnar is going to be ready for Strowman. Heyman explains what's going to happen but Brock takes the mic. Brock: "What he's trying to say is Suplex City b\*\*\*\*."

Long recap of last week's segment with Miz, John Cena, Samoa Joe and Roman Reigns, including their tag match. Cena vs. Reigns is confirmed for No Mercy and their contract signing is tonight.

#### Cesaro vs. Seth Rollins

Rollins and Ambrose did their entrances before the commercial and before the package. That seems like some mistiming, which you don't see around here too often. Seth starts fast by sending Cesaro outside where he comes up holding his back. Back in and a standing moonsault gives Seth two but he's sent outside as well. Ambrose and Sheamus have the staredown but Rollins catches Cesaro diving off the apron. A tilt-a-whirl backbreaker cuts Rollins off though and we take a break.

Back with Cesaro dropping him with a gorilla press and rolling some gutwrench suplexes. A slam sets up Cesaro's high crossbody but Seth rolls

through for two. There's the Sling Blade and a Blockbuster but Cesaro catches him on the top. Sheamus and Ambrose get into it on the floor and the distraction lets Cesaro hit a European uppercut for the pin at 10:19.

**Rating:** C+. I'm already over these teams fighting but that's no excuse to not have the same singles matches over and over on Raw. Can't someone just ask Paul Heyman for 842 ways to advance a feud without doing anything else? This seems to be the only idea they know and since there are almost no other teams, this is what we're stuck watching.

Sheamus says he and Ambrose are up next.

### Sheamus vs. Dean Ambrose

They fight to the floor to start and it's off to an early break. Back with Sheamus getting two off a top rope superplex and grabbing a Stretch Muffler (Brock Lock). That goes nowhere so it's off to a Texas Cloverleaf instead. The ten forearms to the chest keep Dean in trouble and he hobbles into a boot in the corner.

Dean grabs a swinging neckbreaker for two but gets caught on top, setting up a super Regal Roll. The Brogue Kick misses but Dean can't hit Dirty Deeds. Cesaro and Rollins get into another argument and the chase is on through the ring. The referee deals with Cesaro, allowing Seth to knee Sheamus in the face. Dirty Deeds is good for the pin on Sheamus at 10:45.

**Rating:** C+. Well at least they got it out of the way in a hurry. This was the obvious next match but please tell me they're not just going to switch the opponents next week. The division feels completely depleted at this point and having these teams feud over and over again really doesn't prove otherwise.

Emma is complaining about the whole Twitter thing again because she started the Women's Revolution. Mickie James is sick of hearing about it (preach it) and has an idea: if Emma beats her tonight, she'll Tweet anything Emma wants. If Mickie wins, Emma can't say she started the Women's Revolution again.

### Mickie James vs. Emma

Emma has new music and they're fighting over hashtags. Mickie kicks her down a few times but gets caught in a quick rollup to give Emma the pin at 1:42.

Emma grabs the mic and says she started the Women's Revolution all the way to the back.

Kurt Angle is in the ring for the contract signing between Cena and Reigns. Cena is out first to say that he's on Raw to face one man and Angle has made that happen for No Mercy. He's seen Reigns being treated as the untouchable star and we'll see how he can hang at No Mercy. Cena signs and here's Reigns. Roman says that as great as Cena is, there's one thing that he's done that Cena can never do: retire the Undertaker at Wrestlemania.

Cena kneels before him and says some people are still trying to figure Reigns out. We hear about the fans wanting to see Cena change his ways (with the term heel turn being dropped in a rare moment) before Cena says Reigns is just a guy trying to fill shoes he can never fill. Cena isn't a man at the end of his career with a bad hip. The reason Reigns won't sign that is because the Roman Empire is done if he does.

Reigns says Cena sucks so Cena puts his arm around Angle and says the fans think he does too but he won a gold medal. Roman seems a bit shaken and lost for what to say. Cena: "Go ahead find it. I'll wait. It's called a promo and if you want to be the big dog you're going to have to learn how to do it. SEE YOU FOURTH WALL!" Reigns gets fired up and goes on a rant that sounds straight off a message board, talking about how hard he works on the weekend so Cena can be on the Today Show.

Then Cena gets on his tour bus and shows up at a show if they pay him enough with the big shovel to bury people around him. Reigns is the one guy he can't bury or see. Cena calls him out for being repetitive and says "it took you five years to cut a halfway decent promo but now I'm about to cut you down to size." He talks about the mythical golden shovel but it's always the fans who hold the keys and they always will.

Cena is tired of hearing the same thing for ten years by a lot tougher people. Here's the thing: Cena hasn't main evented Wrestlemania in five

years and he was the opening match at Summerslam. He won the US Title and used it to introduce new stars to the WWE including Kevin Owens and AJ Styles (I believe he means Sami Zayn as AJ debuted way later). Reigns took the US Title as a demotion and now stands there blaming Cena for not being able to hang with him.

Cena has seen a lot of people trying to hang at this level and he's heard about one guy getting to do it. Now he sees Roman face to face and gets the line of the night: "You're lucky I'm a part timer because I can do this part time way better than you ever could full time." Reigns signs and turns over the table...and here are Anderson and Gallows to make it a tag match in the most ridiculous ending to an amazing promo I can remember in a long time.

Cena DESTROYED Reigns here, making him sound like every other heel. Now if Reigns wins at No Mercy (which he probably will), everything will be fine for him but at the end of the day, almost no one ever can hang with Cena on the mic and he picked Reigns apart the entire time. If nothing else the lines about Reigns needing to learn promos and the fourth wall thing were outstanding. Now let's get to this ridiculous tag match.

#### Anderson and Gallows vs. John Cena/Roman Reigns

Joined in progress with Cena in trouble in the corner as Gallows grabs a headlock. Anderson comes in for a chinlock as the announcers rave about everything Cena was saying. Gallows misses an elbow and the hot tag brings in Reigns. Roman cleans house and you can tell Reigns is ticked off here. The Superman Punch connects to both guys and it's an AA and spear at the same time to give Reigns the pin on Anderson at 6:02.

**Rating:** D+. While I still have no idea what the point of this was, Reigns vs. Cena is going to be a huge match when we get to No Mercy. Cena's promo is going to be talked about for a few weeks as he made the match feel even more awesome than it's likely to be. If Reigns wins he'll be fine, but he has a lot to make up for at this point. Now can someone explain to me why this match happened? I really don't get it.

Here's Elias to sing a song to the tune of Hound Dog about how much he hates Memphis. This brings Jerry Lawler out of his seat to say that Elias

has a good voice but he's missing his audience. While the people of Memphis might not appreciate what Elias is saying, they might appreciate this man: Southpaw Regional Wrestling's own Pelvis Wesley (Heath Slater). Elias beats him up without too much effort. Cole: "I guess he didn't want to walk with Elias."

Miz and Maryse are annoyed at Jeff Hardy getting a shot by just winning a battle royal.

Sasha Banks is ready to beat Alexa.

#### Women's Title: Alexa Bliss vs. Sasha Banks

Banks is defending and gets rolled up for an early two. Sasha sends her hard into the corner and grabs an armbar. They're starting with a slow pace and Bliss bails to the floor for a breather. There are the double knees from the apron and we take a break. Back with Bliss holding an armbar of her own before starting in on the back.

It's off to a bow and arrow hold but Banks fights up without too much effort. The Bank Statement doesn't work so Sasha goes with the running knees in the corner, only to miss a second attempt. Bliss goes with a hard right hand and a Code Red for a pretty close two. Banks gets in a few more knees and some aggressive forearms in the corner.

Back up and Alexa catches her in the corner by sending her face first into a buckle. A top rope superplex connects to bust up the back even more. Bliss is slow to cover and gets caught in the Bank Statement. That's reversed into a rollup for two and there's the DDT to give Bliss the title back at 15:00.

**Rating:** B. I'm really not getting the lack of successful title defenses for Banks. That makes four reigns and she's lost the title in her first defense every time. As for the match itself, Bliss winning clean is an interesting call and the right one if you have to change the title. She looked better than she has before in the ring and is getting to the point where she can hang with the better workers. Couple that with the insane charisma and persona and she's quite the force.

Post match Nia Jax comes out and destroys Sasha before putting Bliss on her shoulders. One electric chair later and Jax holds up the title over the new champ to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B. The wrestling was good, the hype for the pay per view was solid and the Cena promo was outstanding. It might not have been a perfect show or anything really close but they felt like they were executing a plan tonight. Raw is smoking Smackdown at the moment and it's really not even close. Good show this week and one of their best in a long time.

### Results

Jeff Hardy won a battle royal last eliminating Jason Jordan

Enzo Amore b. Noam Dar – Eat Defeat

Cesaro b. Seth Rollins – European uppercut

Dean Ambrose b. Sheamus – Dirty Deeds

Emma b. Mickie James – Rollup

Roman Reigns/John Cena b. Anderson and Gallows – Spear to Anderson

Alexa Bliss b. Sasha Banks – DDT

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# Monday Night Raw – March 24, 2003: Overtime with Recaps

## Monday Night Raw

Date: March 24, 2003

Location: ARCO Arena, Sacramento, California

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the go home show for Wrestlemania but more importantly we'll be seeing the first ever Rock Concert with Rock giving us a performance for the ages. Other than that though it's time for the final push towards Seattle, which likely means we won't be seeing a lot of wrestling around here for the sake of avoiding a last minute injury. Let's get to it.

Lillian Garcia sings the National Anthem. That's quite the celebration for the twelve year anniversary of Wrestlemania VII: Stars and Strikes Forever.

Opening sequence.

Here's the unscheduled Steve Austin with something to say. He's really not cool with Rock coming out here last week and giving him a Stone Cold Stunner and a Rock Bottom. Austin isn't going anywhere until the Rock comes out here (down an aisle as there's no ramp this week) for a beating. Cue Test and Stacy Keibler with the former saying he just wants to have a match tonight. It's a Stunner for Test and Stacy runs off as Austin has a seat at ringside.

Lance Storm, who is scheduled to face Test tonight, comes in and covers with Austin counting the two. That means a Stunner for Storm so here's Eric Bischoff, flanked by cops, to issue a restraining order. After a fairly long time and threats of being shot, Austin finally leaves so Bischoff can plug the Rock Concert.

## Jeff Hardy/Trish Stratus vs. Victoria/Steven Richards

The genders have to match. The guys start things off with Richards taking him into the corner, only to get shoved right back out for the legdrop between Steven's legs. Jeff's slingshot dropkick sends Richards over to Victoria, meaning it's off to Trish for the first time. Jeff dives onto Richards, leaving Victoria to hit her spinning side slam. The Stratusphere sets up the Stratusfaction off Richards' chest for the pin.

Jeff and Trish are about to kiss again when Jazz jumps her from behind.

Coach tells Bischoff that there's a security issue that needs to be taken care of right now.

Goldust is ready to fight in the tag match tonight and says HHH sounds like a dic...dic...dic...dictator! This STILL isn't funny.

The security issue is that Austin is still in the parking lot because the restraining order only covers the arena. Bischoff has plans for Austin and threatens to fire Coach if he doesn't go deal with this.

## Scott Steiner vs. Christian

Christian's gear is extra neon green here, meaning it shines rather brightly when Steiner throws him outside. Back in and it's the clothesline into the push-ups, followed by multiple reps on a gorilla press. A reverse DDT puts Steiner down for two with the kickout sending Christian flying. Christian gets in a neckbreaker and some choking until Steiner hits the first suplex. Steiner catches him on top with something like a super Angle Slam for the pin.

**Rating:** D. It's amazing that Steiner has nothing to do at Wrestlemania but it's really not surprising. Steiner has become as generic and slow of a power wrestler as you'll ever find and now he's going over perfectly acceptable wrestlers like Christian. Thankfully Christian has settled into a fine role as an upscale lackey like Jericho.

Coach tells Austin about Bischoff's threats but Austin doesn't say a word. I'm sure the fans who were waiting for Austin to come back are thrilled by watching him sit there stoically.

Wrestlemania Moment: Shawn wins the title.

Morely says that William Regal can't wrestle at the moment so Morely and Storm are the new champions. It's about time. WWE officially recognizes this as two reigns for Storm, which is yet another stretch for the titles' history. Kane and Rob Van Dam come up and want a title shot at Wrestlemania. Morely backs away but agrees to make Van Dam and Kane vs. the Dudleys in a #1 contenders match for later tonight.

Remember when Austin was sitting outside doing nothing? Well now he's sitting outside and playing with his windshield wipers.

HHH/Ric Flair vs. Goldust/Booker T.

All four get their own entrances to really stretch things out. Goldust, still with the bad arm, start things off and we get the traditional exchange of WOO's. Some right hands puts Flair down as JR and Lawler go over the history of the Rhodes Family. HHH comes in but Booker does the same, meaning it's time to slow things way down. A leapfrog into a hiptoss sends HHH into the corner and Lawler is panicking.

Booker kicks him into the other corner so it's off to Flair, whose chops have no effect again. HHH offers a distraction though and it's a chop block to put Booker down. Back from a break with Booker reversing Flair's Figure Four and hitting a few chops to set up the hot tag. Goldust fires away, only to have the bad arm flare up again.

A missed crossbody sends Goldust outside so HHH can send him into the steps and the fresh heat segment begins. HHH offers a distraction so Flair can get in a good low blow and choking as only Ric can do. A neckbreaker gives HHH two and it's back to Flair, who allows the tag. The referee doesn't see it of course so HHH has to charge into a boot in the corner for the real hot tag.

Booker comes in to take over, including the hard whip to send HHH sailing over the corner to the floor. Goldust and Flair fight into the crowd as Booker busts HHH open. Flair comes back in and gets caught with a spinebuster for no count as the referee actually remembers who was legal. Get that man a raise! The Pedigree is broken up and it's a catapult into

the post, followed by the scissors kick for the pin.

**Rating:** C+. The match was long but had the right ending. Unfortunately it's also the WWE way of saying HHH is going to retain on Sunday, which would be the dumbest idea that WWE could possibly have. I'm sure this now qualifies as HHH putting someone over though, and that's all he needs to do to be the best of all time right?

Post break HHH is staring at the title while Flair gives him a pep talk.

Here's Chris Jericho for a chat. Jericho is ready to face Shawn Michaels at Wrestlemania but needs to say something to his face right now. This brings out Shawn, with Jericho saying he modeled himself after Michaels for years. Jericho has a video of the two of them side by side, showing how similar they are due to Jericho imitating him.

After all those years of being talked up as the next Shawn Michaels, he wanted to be the first Chris Jericho because he was better than Shawn. Then Shawn left in 1998 and Jericho became the workhorse and backbone of the company. Jericho is ready for Wrestlemania and slaps Shawn in the face. Shawn slaps him back and...that's it as we cut to a break.

Rock comes in to see Bischoff and has an idea for tonight: put speakers in the parking lot so he can listen to the Rock Concert.

We run down the Wrestlemania card. For some reason this isn't on the Network version.

### Rob Van Dam/Kane vs. Dudley Boyz

The winners get Storm/Morely at Wrestlemania. It's a brawl to start with Kane taking Bubba into the corner for some right hands. A German suplex puts Kane down and D-Von adds a jumping clothesline, which only seems to annoy the monster. It's off to Van Dam for Rolling Thunder but D-Von comes right back with a neckbreaker to put both of them down.

The spinning kick to the head drops Bubba and it's back to Kane and D-Von. Everything breaks down and Bubba hiptosses Van Dam into a neckbreaker (cool spot). Cue Storm to kick D-Von by mistake before being chased off by Bubba. The chokeslam and Five Star send Kane and Van Dam to

Wrestlemania.

**Rating:** D. Nothing match here but they went with the logical ending which should have been obvious the whole time. The ending just makes you think that Bubba and D-Von are about to be back to normal almost immediately, making the last few weeks even more uninteresting and a waste of time than I had previously thought. At least they got to the right ending though.

The speakers are set up next to Austin's truck.

Here's Rock for the Concert. Rock has a chair, a music stand and some fancy looking bottled water on a table next to him. He's glad to be in Sacramento because it means he can be out of here in about an hour. Rock sings about how hideous the women here are and how bad it is to live here. Eh I think I prefer Elias. We see Austin sitting in his truck and shaking his head as Rock makes jokes about the Sacramento Kings.

Now it's time to sing an Austin version of Hound Dog before suggesting that Austin smokes something funny to go with the beer. Next up it's a Willie Nelson song about beating Austin up before finishing off with some Frank Sinatra about how much pie he can get. Outside, an ambulance drives in and Austin drives the truck in to follow. Rock panics and demands the security come to the ring, followed by Austin's truck.

It's driven by Hurricane though, with Austin hiding in the back of the truck. Rock goes back to singing, allowing Austin to come in and beat up Rock as you knew he was going to do. Austin destroys the guitar as security just stands around watching. This is edited WAY down on the Network, cutting out the better part of five minutes (meaning every time Rock sang anything).

And now, here's Vince to show us the whole contract signing from Smackdown.

Since this show hasn't gone on long enough (and it's already in overtime), we go back to Smackdown to see the Angle brothers demand an apology from Brock Lesnar, resulting in Kurt injuring Brock's ribs to FINALLY end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. There's not much to talk about here save for the extra stuff at the end, which was just a commercial for the Smackdown side of things. The few matches we got were nothing special though at least one match was added to the card. As has been the case throughout the build to the pay per view, there's nothing going on to make me want to see the show. It's just not good TV building stories that aren't great either. It could be worse but the HHH vs. Booker stuff has been a horrible second level story for the red show. Another weak show here but that's normal around here anymore.

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# Monday Night Raw – August 21, 2017: Can Brock Smash A Beach Ball Please?

## Monday Night Raw

Date: August 21, 2017

Location: Barclays Center, New York City, New York

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T., Corey Graves

With Summerslam behind us, it's time to start heading towards No Mercy, which ultimately leads us to Survivor Series. The big story is a combination of Brock Lesnar retaining the Universal Title and Braun Strowman arriving as the new monster as he manhandled Lesnar last night. If that's not a title program at some point in the near future, I have no idea where WWE's head is. Let's get to it.

Here are Lesnar and Paul Heyman to open things up. Heyman says this isn't a tape delay because we're live with Brock Lesnar still your reigning and defending Universal Champion. He talks about the conspiracy against Lesnar, who fought off everyone else last night to keep his title. For the first time in his life, Lesnar was taken off the battlefield in an attempt to get rid of him without having to pin him or make him submit. But Lesnar wouldn't have any of that and marched back down the aisle so conquering could ensue. As for tonight, there is no one in WWE or UFC history, like Lesnar himself.

Cue Braun Strowman and you can see Lesnar wince a bit. The fans cheer for Strowman as Brock gets in his face. A chokeslam is countered but Braun kicks him in the face and hits a powerslam to put Lesnar down. He starts to get up so it's another powerslam, leaving Strowman to hold up the title. Strowman is the only person who should be challenging Brock right now and they would be crazy to wait any longer than Survivor Series (and even that's a stretch) to do this match.

### Enzo Amore vs. Big Cass

Street fight as this feud MUST continue. Before the match, Enzo talks about his history with Cass, including the two of them breaking bread together as his family's house. Enzo grabs a shopping cart full of weapons, which he throws at Cass, who easily dodges and clotheslines Enzo down. A shopping cart shot to the ribs drops Enzo and they head inside with Cass throwing Enzo a chair.

That just earns Enzo a big boot to the face and we take a break. Back with Enzo hitting a jawbreaker but getting crushed in the corner again. A big boot misses though and Cass falls out to the floor. Cass kicks the chair away from Enzo again but seems to have hurt his knee on the fall.

The knee gives out and the referee throws up the X and stops the match at 8:55.

**Rating:** D-. In a way I hope that was legit as I really, REALLY don't need this feud to continue. Enzo has gone from being entertaining to one of the most annoying people I've seen in years as there's just no point to have him fight Cass over and over again. The match was a squash anyway with Cass losing via basically slipping on a banana peel. He deserves better than that while Enzo deserves a root canal with no medication.

Emma is annoyed at Sasha Banks getting all this attention and complains to Dana Brooke about it. She runs her mouth about Nia Jax as well, who just happens to be standing right behind her. I think you know where this is going.

#### Nia Jax vs. Emma

Emma goes after her to start but gets run over and crushed with some elbow drops. A dropkick has no effect and it's the Samoan drop for the pin on Emma at 1:14. So yeah, the division has three active wrestlers of any value but let's make sure to squash Emma over and over and over to punish her for daring to question the company's oh so brilliant planning. As usual, WWE would rather cut off its nose to spite its face and then wonder why people stopped caring about the division.

Here's Elias for a song. He teases singing R-Truth's song but says he's kidding and it's time for some real music. The song mocks Truth so here he is to interrupt.

#### R-Truth vs. Elias

Truth takes him down to start but runs into an elbow as Booker's microphone isn't working properly. Drift Away ends Truth at 1:22.

Here's Kurt Angle to announce a new surprise: John Cena, who is now back on Raw. Cena isn't sure why he's here before saying he was asked to come here by Angle himself. That's what Cena wanted because he wanted to go face to face with a certain superstar. Cue Roman Reigns and I'm rather curious to see who the fans will boo more. Cena says that's the man he

was looking for but Reigns says Cena has only been running his mouth on Twitter.

Reigns wants to know if Cena will run his mouth to his face. The fans chant for Undertaker, which Cena says is them holding a bit of a grudge. Cena didn't come here to talk though and the mic's are dropped. The fight is teased but here are Miz and the Miztourage to interrupt. Miz: "So this is what a sold out Barclays looks like. I wouldn't know." He asks how many moments Cena and Reigns get, earning himself a round of applause.

Miz wants to know why the two of them get this time while he was stuck on the Kickoff Show last night. A quick fan poll says Cena isn't welcome here so Miz says there are 18,000 people wanting him to leave. Cena goes to leave but Miz spins him around and says he's not done yet. Miz rants about how no one knows what to do with Cena or Reigns and that hurts him, the only champion in this ring. He wants to know when he gets his moment because he's spent twelve years earning it.

Cena suggests he team up with Reigns to face Miz and either of Miz's lackeys. Miz says no because that would be a moment for Cena and not him. This brings out Samoa Joe of all people to say that he's going to be Miz's partner whether Miz likes it or not. Joe doesn't want to waste his time on Reigns because he owns Roman one on one.

Instead he slugs away at Cena as Reigns beats up Miz and the Miztourage. The AA is countered into the Koquina Clutch with Reigns making the save via a Superman Punch. Roman and Cena are left alone and the fans tell them that they both suck. I fully support these two singles matches, especially at No Mercy.

Drew Gulak/Noam Dar/Tony Nese/Ariya Daivari vs. Rich Swan/Mustafa Ali/Gran Metalik/Cedric Alexander

No one gets an entrance and it's Metalik walking the ropes to dropkick Gulak down. It's quickly off to Ali vs. Daivari for a quick strike exchange. Swann comes in for the threat of a spinning kick to Daivari, which sends him over to the corner. Dar won't tag in so Nese does it instead, earning himself a dropkick.

Nese runs Swann over though and we take a break. Back with Swann slugging away at Dar but not being able to get over for a tag. The fans are doing the wave as Cedric gets the hot tag and starts cleaning house with kicks to the head. Everything breaks down and Metalik moonsaults out to the floor, leaving Cedric to Lumbar Check Nese for the pin at 8:45.

**Rating:** D+. So that's a thing that existed and that's about all I can say about it. Really, the cruiserweight division is a big waste of time save for maybe the champion and his top challenger, which makes 205 Live an even bigger waste of time. It's not even an entertaining match where most people didn't even get involved. Just nothing to say here.

Neville is in the back and says the fans are hilarious for wanting someone else as champion. Cue Titus O'Neil and Akira Tozawa to say Daivari gets his rematch tomorrow night on 205 Live.

Jason Jordan comes in to see Angle and says he wants Finn Balor tonight. Kurt reluctantly agrees.

Here are Seth Rollins and Dean Ambrose for a chat. Rollins is glad that they got back together and now they're champions. Dean says he slept with the title under his pillow last night, which confuses Seth for a second until he says this is one big party. Seth says he wants to get the rematch with Cesaro and Sheamus out of the way but here are the Hardys to interrupt instead. Matt understands that brothers fight and thinks it's time to make things wonderful. They've revolutionized tag team wrestling for twenty five years and it's time to do it again in Brooklyn. Here's a referee and we're ready to go after a break.

#### Dean Ambrose/Seth Rollins vs. Hardy Boyz

Non-title. Dean headlocks Matt to start but an early double team slows Ambrose down. It's quickly off to Rollins for a kick to Jeff's chest for two. The Spin Cycle gets two on Rollins but he drop toeholds Matt into a knee drop from Ambrose for two more. Neither finisher can hit though and it's off to a stalemate.

A big slugout takes us to a break and we come back with Rollins enziguring Jeff. Matt and Dean come in with both champs being sent

outside. Jeff nails Poetry in Motion over the top to drop them both again. Back in and Seth pulls Dean out of the way of the Whisper in the Wind before grabbing a front facelock. We hit the chinlock for a bit until Jeff dropkicks both of them down.

It's back to Matt as everything breaks down. A Sling Blade drops Matt so Dean can get two before the Hardys are sent outside. There's the double suicide dive but Matt hits a Side Effect on Rollins on the apron. Another Side Effect gets two on Dean but he comes back with an attempt at a super Dirty Deeds. That doesn't work of course so it's the Twist of Fate to set up the Swanton, which hits raised knees. The wind-up jumping knee to the face sets up Dirty Deeds to end Jeff at 17:45.

**Rating:** B. Good, long match here with Seth and Dean getting a big win over a much more high profile team. They've got something with that jumping knee into Dirty Deeds too, which is a lot more than a lot of teams can say. The Hardys definitely seem to be shifting into the role of putting other teams over and there's nothing wrong with that for them, especially at this point in their careers.

We look at the opening sequence again.

Here's Sasha Banks for her first comments after winning the title. She may be from Boston but she's always left her heart right here in Brooklyn. Like when she and Charlotte tore the house down last year at Summerslam, which allows her to wish Ric Flair well. Sasha plans on defending the title the right way but here's Alexa Bliss to interrupt. She laughs off the idea of Sasha being the right kind of champion but wants nothing to do with a rematch tonight in front of these Brooklyn fanboys. They'll fight soon enough but for now, Bliss is fine making Sasha wait.

### Jason Jordan vs. Finn Balor

Jordan takes him down to the mat to start and a rollup gets two, earning Balor a quick smile. Another technical sequence puts Jordan down, only to have Finn hit a dropkick to stagger Jason. Balor wants nothing to do with a handshake and snapmares him down instead. A leapfrog is countered into a powerslam to give Finn two and we take a break.

Back with Jordan putting him down again and dropping an elbow to the ribs. They fight over a butterfly suplex with the fans very upset about something that seems to be off camera. Balor stops a charge with a boot in the corner before sending Jordan to the floor for a baseball slide. The running apron kick has Jordan in more trouble but Jason comes back with the belly to belly.

The shoulder in the corner looks to set up the wheelbarrow neckbreaker, only to have Finn counter into a crossbody. A Pele drops Jordan again and both guys are down. Jordan drives him into the corner but gets caught with a Sling Blade. The shotgun dropkick puts Jordan in the corner and it's the Coup de Grace for the pin at 11:45.

**Rating:** B. Definitely Jordan's best singles match to date and it made him look like a bigger deal. Balor winning was the right call as Jordan shouldn't be beating a former World Champion just yet. It was a good, competitive match though and that's much better than what you usually get from Jordan at this point.

Alexa gets her title rematch next week.

#### Miz/Samoa Joe vs. Roman Reigns/John Cena

Cena bulldogs Miz to start and the fans are very pleased as it's already off to Joe. The fans go nuts over something and Cena actually pauses to look at it....because it's a freaking beach ball. It seems that the ball is taken away with Cena looking annoyed, earning himself a beating from Joe. Miz comes in to stomp away and it's time for the wave again. Now Cena joins in the wave, earning himself a quick DDT for two.

The cheering and booing continues as a beach ball is put into play and confiscated as the match continues to be ignored. Cena gets ax handled for two as Miz stops to tell the fans to pay attention. Miz misses a charge and it's off to Reigns to clean house with clotheslines to no reaction. Roman gets taken down as well for the YES Kicks. The last one is countered into a powerbomb though and both guys are down again.

Joe Rock Bottoms Roman but Reigns heads outside to beat up the Miztourage. Back in and the hot tag brings in Cena for the finishing

sequence. Joe cuts off the Shuffle though and it's off to the Koquina Clutch. Reigns tries a save with the Superman Punch but Joe sidesteps it, causing Cena to get hit instead. The second Superman Punch hits Joe but Cena pops up and grabs the AA to pin Miz at 13:03.

**Rating:** C+. I hate beach balls, I hate beach balls, I hate beach balls. As usual, whenever you ask a crowd to pay attention for this long (to something they paid for of course), it's bound to cause them to lose their interest and set off something like this. Naturally their response is screw anyone who doesn't like it, because wrestling fans are selfish creatures by definition. I couldn't stand this stuff in Orlando and it's really annoying now, much like WWE encouraging this nonsense. As for the match, it was exactly what you would expect though Cena pinning Miz made me roll my eyes.

**Overall Rating:** B-. The wrestling was much better tonight with two very good matches but there was also a lot of stuff that felt like filler. As usual, if you cut out an hour of this show, it gets far better in a hurry, though at least the stuff that was good was very good. Strowman vs. Lesnar should be amazing and it would be even better if Cass' legitimate knee injury isn't serious. Good show tonight, which is a positive sign after last night's hit and miss effort.

### Results

Enzo Amore b. Big Cass via referee stoppage

Nia Jax b. Emma – Samoan drop

Elias b. R-Truth – Drift Away

Rich Swan/Mustafa Ali/Gran Metalik/Cedric Alexander b. Noam Dar/Tony Nese/Ariya Daivari/Drew Gulak – Lumbar Check to Nese

Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose b. Hardy Boyz – Dirty Deeds to Jeff

Finn Balor b. Jason Jordan – Coup de Grace

John Cena/Roman Reigns b. Miz/Samoa Joe – Attitude Adjustment to Miz

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