

Smackdown – January 2, 2003: I Long For Uncle Elmer

Smackdown

Date: January 2, 2003

Location: Tingley Coliseum, Albuquerque, New Mexico

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

It's time for a new year with a special live show. The big deal tonight is the wedding between Al Wilson and Dawn Marie, which should hopefully be a big step towards finally ending this stupid storyline. The thing won't go away and unfortunately it's going towards another Torrie vs. Dawn match. Let's get to it.

A narrated opening video talks about Brock Lesnar making his return to the ring tonight. Another voice talks about the wedding, which really does seem to be the bigger deal.

Opening sequence, which includes several shots of Stephanie.

Here are John Cena and Bull Buchanan to rap about Rikishi being fat.

John Cena vs. Rikishi

Rikishi punches him down to start as it's very weird to see Cena in wrestling boots with the (khaki) shorts. Cena gets thrown outside for a bit, followed by a legdrop for two back inside. Buchanan offers a cheap shot on the floor and Cena takes over as Cole says we'll start the Royal Rumble participants next week. Those are always fun, even if the show is old. We hit the chinlock for a bit until Rikishi fights up with a Faarooq spinebuster. The referee is with Buchanan though, meaning Rikishi has to beat him up too. Cena shoves the referee away and rolls Rikishi up (with Rikishi's feet in the ropes) for the pin.

Rating: D. The match was nothing to see but the result is the right call. I've complained for months about Rikishi being pushed far too

strong so it's nice to see him finally lose a match to someone, even in a bit of a weak finish. Either way, it's a good thing to see Cena getting a win as the raps are getting more entertaining week after week.

Rikishi beats them up post match.

Here's Dawn Marie, in her wedding dress, with something to say. She's going to be getting married tonight because she's such a beautiful bride. Oh and she'll do it without clothes. No, she won't.

Stephanie is in the back and goes into Dawn's locker room to say she can't be married without any clothes on. So she's stopping a woman from taking off her clothes but is also stopping a heel from doing what she wants. As usual, I have no idea what Stephanie is supposed to be. Repercussions are promised but Dawn hints that she'll do it anyway.

Chuck Palumbo vs. Bill DeMott

DeMott runs him over to start and shrugs off a clothesline. A screaming splash in the corner keeps Palumbo in trouble as Cole talks about Bill wanting to step up in WWE. Chuck's comeback is cut off by a shot to the back of the head. That goes so well that they do the same thing again, followed by DeMott hitting a reverse DDT for the pin. Was there really anything wrong with the powerbomb or moonsault?

Rating: D. So is this DeMott push going anywhere? I mean, I can't imagine that it will but it would be nice to tease that it's going to instead of just doing the squash matches over and over. At least they let him stop beating up cruiserweights and went with someone who wasn't going to be hurt by the loss.

Undertaker is coming back at the Royal Rumble. Every clip of him in this video is the Deadman version.

Billy Kidman (who I had almost forgotten was Cruiserweight Champion) runs into Torrie Wilson for the patented awkward conversation. They talk about the wedding and Kidman acts it out for some reason. So he's making fun of her father and reminding Torrie that her dad is

marrying someone she hates.

Kurt Angle isn't worried about who Chris Benoit picks to face Team Angle tonight because he'll still be champion after the Royal Rumble. This place is about wrestling and the three of them are the best in the world. If Benoit ever did wrestle in college, it was probably at the University of Saskatchewan and he couldn't even make the practice squad.

Eddie Guerrero vs. Billy Kidman

Non-title again and Eddie has gotten one heck of a haircut. Eddie gets monkey flipped to start so he snaps off a fall away slam into a bridge for two. We hit an armbar as Cena and Buchanan come out to say he's about to crack the Guerreros and make huevos rancheros. After a few Taco Bell jokes, Chavo goes after Buchanan in the ring and a fight breaks out.

Rikishi comes in for the save and is taken away as we take a break. Back with Rikishi still being held back, Chavo and Buchanan ejected, Cena on commentary talking about how he's harder than ring tones and Eddie hitting a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. A Gory Stretch into a spinning powerbomb gets two and it's off to a chinlock. Eddie backdrops him to the floor and Cena threatens to hit Cole in, what sounded like, his foolbox.

Kidman fights out of a sleeper but takes too long going up top and gets superplexed right back down. The Frog Splash misses though and Kidman hits the BK Bomb for two. A high crossbody gives Kidman two but they ram heads in the corner, allowing Cena to hit Eddie in the head with the chain. Kidman didn't see it and hits the Shooting Star for the pin.

Rating: B-. It looks like they're trying to turn Los Guerreros face, which they would be due to how strong they've been recently anyway, but I'm not sure if it's the best move to just change them up this fast. At least Kidman finally won something, even though that Cruiserweight Title means less and less every single week. As usual, Kidman has shown he can hang with heavyweights but is apparently on top of the nothing division an in way over his head anywhere else.

Video on Brock Lesnar.

WAY too long package on the buildup to the wedding. As I've mentioned many times, I still have no idea why this is a bad thing for Al.

It's wedding time. Al comes out looking like he's trying to look classy in Hawaii, Dawn is in her dress and the minister sounds like Slick. We hit the objection line and Dawn does indeed object. She wanted to take everything off but instead strips to her underwear. The thing is no one ever said AL couldn't be married sans clothing so let's take a long time stripping him as well. With a straight on camera shot of Al in briefs, they're married and Al is kissed to the ground. That's it. No angle, no Torrie, no interruption. Just a wedding and that's it. This has been a major waste of your time.

Chris Benoit/??? vs. Team Angle

Benoit can pick any partner he wants and one of the big drawing points of this show has been the return of Brock Lesnar. We also saw a video on Lesnar and Brock has issues with Angle. Therefore, the partner is Edge. Not a bad choice but not exactly where the signs were pointing.

Benoit and Haas get things going with Chris running him over a few times and handing it off to Shelton. That means a quick Crossface before it's off to Edge to stomp away in the corner. Haas offers a distraction from the apron though and Team Angle takes over for the first time....in their careers I guess.

Shelton gets two off a suplex and it's off to the chinlock. A cheap shot from Angle sets up the first suplex from Haas for two. Charlie drapes Edge over the ropes so Shelton can jump over his back and land on Edge. Eh the Beverly Brothers already did it. We hit the Haas of Pain but Benoit makes a quick save.

The half nelson faceplant drops Shelton and the hot tag brings in Benoit to clean house. The suplexes are unleashed and Benoit nails the Swan Dive to Shelton for two. Everything breaks down with Team Angle taking stereo rolling German suplexes until Angle pulls Edge

outside. Benoit Crossfaces Shelton, drawing Angle in for the DQ.

Rating: C+. I would have given Team Angle some more offense though they certainly didn't look weak. The DQ finish protects Benoit and keeps the new team looking strong enough. All that matters here is that Angle now has some backup and hopefully we can keep him FAR away from Big Show.

Angle beats up Tony Chimmel until he announces Team Angle as the winners.

Post break, Paul Heyman is in the ring to brag about how awesome his clients are. That brings him to Lesnar, and it's time for Big Show. Heyman gets right to the point: he wants Big Show vs. Lesnar with the winner going into the Royal Rumble and the loser being left out. Since it's Heyman, this takes a lot longer than it needs to. Cue Lesnar but Matt Hardy and Shannon Moore jump him from behind with a chair. One shot busts Brock open BAD from the back of his head as the villains run off.

Dawn and Al, still in their underwear, go to the limo. You mean they haven't left yet? Anyway, they have a camera to film their honeymoon.

Crash vs. Nunzio

Josh Matthews has replaced Chimmel as ring announcer and looks even dumber than usual. Crash comes in with a high crossbody for two and then the opening bell rings. That's not the most competent referee. Nunzio goes after the arm with a quick armbar and something like a Stunner onto the arm. A rollup gives Crash two but the kickout sends his shoulder into the post. The DDT on the arm (flying armbar) is good enough to give Nunzio the pin.

Matt gives Shannon a pep talk.

Matt Hardy vs. Brock Lesnar

Brock is in a t-shirt and workout pants. Matt, who always stays awake until sunrise on New Year's Eve, tries to have Shannon get in some cheap shots but the still bloody Brock cleans house anyway. A great looking backbreaker sets up a belly to belly, followed by some

powerslams into the corner. Shannon's distraction works as well as you would expect though it does allow Matt to hit a Side Effect. That just earns him a belly to belly, followed by Shannon being thrown on top of Matt. A release F5 plants Moore but Brock walks into the Twist of Fate for two. The F5 finishes Matt a few seconds later.

Rating: D+. It's very fun to watch Lesnar destroy people like they're not even there and if he can do two at once, that's even better. It was entertaining and a good use of Matt and Shannon, both of whom will be over again as soon as Matt does another over the top promo about how awesome Mattitude really is.

Show comes out for the staredown, earning Matt another F5 to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. The wrestling in the middle helps but so much of this show was dominated by the wedding nonsense. Dawn Marie is good looking but she is nowhere near enough to save this story. I still don't know why it's still going but I'm sure we'll be seeing another big part of it next week, eventually leading to Dawn vs. Torrie again.

Other than that we had Bill DeMott and Rikishi getting featured spots. They're building some acts up (Los Guerreros, Cena, Team Angle) and that can lead them to a lot of good places in the future. This wasn't a horrible show but there's no way around that wedding, which ate up more than almost any given match. I'm sure it's a Vince thing but this is the funniest thing he can get behind?

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Histories of Saturday Night's Main Event and Clash of the Champions, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/05/19/history-of-saturday-nights-main-event-and-clash-of-the-champions-now-in-paperback-plus-price-drops/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling

books at:

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

Smackdown – May 30, 2017: Back in the Fall

Smackdown

Date: May 30, 2017

Location: Philips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Tom Phillips, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

You might have heard about this one before but tonight has a Fatal Five Way for a future title shot. In this case it's the Smackdown Women's Title as Charlotte, Becky Lynch and the Welcoming Committee will go at it for a shot at Naomi at the upcoming Money in the Bank pay per view. Let's get to it.

Charlotte says she's ready to face anyone.

Carmella will make a fabulous champion.

Natalya says her one and only catchphrase which isn't even hers.

Becky Lynch doesn't need the luck of the Irish to win.

Tamina says she'll win.

Opening sequence.

We open with Kevin Owens' Highlight Reel with Owens talking about how he's going to climb the ladder for the briefcase. After winning that, it's one step away from the Smackdown World Title, which will make him the face of the entire WWE. One thing he needs to step on before he gets there is his guest tonight: Shinsuke Nakamura. Owens calls Shinsuke a rock star and you remember what happened to the last rock star around here. If Nakamura shows up at Money in the

Bank with the fans singing his song, it's going to be the day the music died.

This brings out Baron Corbin to show a clip of his beatdown of Sami Zayn. Owens: "I've been beating up Sami Zayn for fifteen years so you've got nothing to brag about." Nakamura says he pinned Owens last week and Corbin has lost to Sami twice in a row. The brawl is on with Sami coming in for the save. A challenge is issued and the tag match is on after the break.

Sami Zayn/Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Baron Corbin/Kevin Owens

Nakamura sends Corbin into the corner to start and tells him to bring it. That earns Corbin some Good Vibrations in the corner before it's off to both partners. Sami sends Owens outside so it's back to Corbin to hammer away in the corner. Owens adds a kick to the head and Baron grabs a powerslam as we take a break.

Back with Sami fighting out of Owens' chinlock and hitting the Blue Thunder Bomb. Corbin gets dropped as well and the hot tag brings in Nakamura. Everything breaks down and we get some heel miscommunication, causing Corbin to deck Owens with a right hand. Kinshasa makes things even worse for Owens and is good for the pin at 11:10.

Rating: C+. At least there were extenuating circumstances this time. You really don't need to have the US Champion losing so often but you know full well that everything is going to be sacrificed for the sake of building to the Money in the Bank ladder match in the only way this company knows how to do it.

Here are the Usos to brag about beating American Alpha and Breezango so no one is left. As you might expect (or should expect if you've been paying attention), heeere's New Day. Jey: "Did you three get lost skipping down the Yellow Brick Road?" Kofi: "It's more of a skip clap." Big E. gets right to the point: they want the titles. The Usos threaten to shoot New Day so Kofi brings up Shane McMahon, who has granted them a title shot at Money in the Bank. The Usos leave as Big E. and Woods carry Kofi around. This did exactly what it needed to do.

Long recap of Jinder Mahal winning the title and all the fallout that ensued.

It's Fashion Files time with Fandango as a film noir style gumshoe saying that it might be time to go back to the discount rack. He finds the fashion police department ransacked so he pulls out his price tag gun, only to find a woman's silhouette. It's Breeze in a wig and dress for some reason and, after realizing they can hear each others thoughts, they find a bottle containing ethanol alcohol, tree frog excrement and hibiscus. They have a new case.

Charlotte vs. Becky Lynch vs. Carmella vs. Natalya vs. Tamina

Elimination rules and the winner gets Naomi at the pay per view. The brawl starts before the bell with Tamina hitting a Samoan drop on Charlotte. Becky beats up Carmella in the timekeeper's area and Charlotte hits the moonsault onto Tamina and Natalya. Charlotte powerbombs Natalya through the table and everyone is down with the match never starting.

Cue Shane to say let's do something big, like the first ever women's Money in the Bank ladder match. In other words, we have no idea how to book a solo feud so let's just throw everyone into one match and put our feet up while saying the big matches are coming later on. That's the writers' solution instead of, you know, WRITING SOMETHING ELSE.

Breezango vs. Colons

Breezango is still wearing the same stuff from the film noir bit, including Breeze in the dress. Primo rips off the dress and the wig (because of course there's a wig) but Fandango squirts Primo with the water gun. Back from a break with Fandango in a chinlock, followed by Epico getting two off a Downward Spiral. Epico pulls Breeze off the apron so he bails under the ropes, only to come back as the janitor. Fandango and Epico fight over the mop, allowing Breeze to grab the Unprettier for the pin at 8:04.

Rating: C-. Just a quick match to keep Breezango going strong. I know the comedy isn't the best stuff in the world but the division

is REALLY weak on teams at this point so putting a gimmick on two guys is one of the best things they could do. It's not brilliant or anything but at least they're doing something. If it gets over, sweet.

AJ Styles and Dolph Ziggler are ready to fight tonight.

Here's Randy Orton to talk about Jinder Mahal. His family is full of wrestlers and if his grandfather was still alive, he wouldn't say anything to Randy. Instead he'd just smack Orton for losing a title to someone like Mahal. At Money in the Bank, Orton is going to take a lesson from his grandfather and smack some sense into Mahal. Cue Mahal on the screen to say he's champion and Orton isn't. Orton poses like it doesn't mean anything.

Dolph Ziggler vs. AJ Styles

Feeling out process to start with AJ scoring off a great looking dropkick to take over. Ziggler sends him outside though and we take a break. Back with AJ hitting his seated forearm and a Teshhocker for two. Ziggler knees him in the head, only to get suplexed hard into the corner. AJ gets in a backbreaker but Ziggler hits him in the back of the head for something you don't see too often.

A running knee to the jaw drops AJ again but he comes right back with the Calf Crusher. Ziggler rakes the eyes (like a true heel should) for the break, followed by the Zig Zag for a delayed two. AJ gets back up and tries a springboard, only to get pulled down for a crash. The superkick is good for the pin on AJ at 12:13. Did I mention that AJ was billed as the hometown boy here?

Rating: C+. Standard Smackdown main event as they try to push Ziggler for some momentum. I'm still not sure how winning a match via pinfall gives you the momentum necessary to climb a ladder but then again I've never been the biggest fan of this time of the year in the first place.

Overall Rating: D+. Yep it's Money in the Bank time, meaning we can stop pretending that ANY of this matters because the writers have come up with their group of names, thrown them into a random match

generator and put their feet up until the end of June. We're currently looking at THREE multi-person matches, none of which are for anything more than a future shot at a title. In other words, absolutely none of this matters so check back again in July so you can see them stall even more until Summerslam rolls around.

Results

Sami Zayn/Shinsuke Nakamura b. Kevin Owens/Baron Corbin – Kinshasa to Owens

Breezango b. Colons – Unprettier to Primo

Dolph Ziggler b. AJ Styles – Superkick

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Histories of Saturday Night's Main Event and Clash of the Champions, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/05/19/history-of-saturday-nights-main-event-and-clash-of-the-champions-now-in-paperback-plus-price-drops/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

Smackdown – December 26, 2002: He's Got Guys

Smackdown

Date: December 26, 2002

Location: Tulsa Convention Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

It's the final show of the year as we're getting ready to start the build towards the Royal Rumble. We also have Brock Lesnar vs. Paul Heyman/Big Show/Kurt Angle in a feud that is likely to lead to a major feud down the line, though Lesnar is likely going to need some help along the way. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's Angle heel turn and the announcement of Angle vs. Big Show for the title this week.

Opening sequence.

Here's Stephanie, who seems to be a face again, to open the show. She's not going to lie to us and say the World Title match is going to happen because it's been canceled. Last week, after Smackdown went off the air, Brock did something to Angle and now Kurt is out of action for a good while, potentially all the way until the Rumble. She won't tell us what happened but she'll show us later tonight. Since there's no reason given for the delay, here's Big Show to interrupt.

He's not happy with the idea of waiting until Royal Rumble but he's even more annoyed at the fact that Stephanie didn't name him #1 contender. She was just about to make that match though, RIGHT? Show tries to intimidate her and for once, Stephanie actually sounds scared as she threatens to suspend him. He'll have a chance to be #1 contender when he faces Chris Benoit in the main event. That's not cool with Show either but here's Benoit to interrupt. Benoit says he'll break Show's neck later tonight but Show plays the size card. That just earns him a low blow and Benoit leaves with a smile on his face.

Crash vs. Bill DeMott

DeMott is now all mean and angry, which the announcers tell you as often as they can. He works on Crash's arm before the match and sends it into the post but of course the referee starts the match anyway. DeMott slaps on an armbar as Tazz praises his psychology. A powerbomb and the moonsault finish Crash in a hurry.

Al Wilson and Dawn Marie exchange gifts: a bottle of Viagra and a camera. Both are for the honeymoon. Again: why is this such a bad thing for Al? Can I get some clarification on that?

Here are Matt Hardy, who was MVP in the 1999 No Mercy ladder match

and always sticks to his New Year's resolution, and a badly damaged Shannon Moore with something to say. They want to talk about something destroying WWE: Brock Lesnar. After that belly to belly injured Moore last week, Shannon didn't stop but someone must stop Lesnar. Next week, Hardy wants Brock one on one and has a special plan for him. Matt beats Shannon down, though it feels like a lesson instead of a turn.

Heyman and Angle arrive with the latter on crutches and with a big cast around his leg.

Tag Team Titles: Los Guerreros vs. Edge/Billy Kidman

Edge and Kidman, who seems to get a shot at these titles every other week, are challenging. Kidman hiptosses both champs to start before snapping off a headscissors on Chavo. The champs take over with some chicanery and it's Kidman in early trouble. Eddie's slingshot hilo connects but so does an enziguri, allowing the tag to Edge. A double missile dropkick puts both champs down and a flapjack to Chavo makes things even worse.

As usual though, Eddie is smart enough to go after the bad knee but Kidman breaks up the Lasso From El Paso. A quick spear gets two on Eddie and the champs tease leaving, only to have the referee say a countout will give us new champions. Back from a break with Edge missing a charge into the corner to put the champs back in control. Chavo's chinlock works as well as any other chinlock (aside from Kevin Owens' of course) and the Edge-O-Matic gets Edge out of trouble.

A double flapjack really gets him out of trouble and it's off to Kidman, who is suplexed down almost immediately. Eddie misses the Frog Splash and Kidman drops the shooting star on Chavo, only to have Eddie pull the referee out for the DQ. And again never mind as the referee is restarting this as a No DQ match.

Chavo is in trouble to start the second fall but Eddie breaks up another shooting star attempt. Edge hits Chavo with the belt (which Chavo brought in) for two and heads to the apron for a tag for some reason. Cue A-Train with the backbreaker on Edge though, allowing Eddie to Frog Splash Kidman to retain.

Rating: B. Gah they were rolling here until the A-Train interference. Edge vs. A-Train isn't interesting but these four going on for nearly twenty minutes certainly was with Los Guerreros'

cheating not working for a change. I was digging this match as Kidman continues to show that cruiserweights are more than capable of hanging with the big guys, making the division kind of a waste of time.

Here's the footage from after last week's Smackdown. Angle talks trash and beat on Brock bit more until Lesnar fought back and beat up Kurt and Big Show. Kurt took a chair to the head and back to back F5's on the floor with his knee hitting the post both times. Trainers came out but Lesnar dropped Angle's knee onto the barricade just to be sure. This would be a way to write Angle off for knee surgery, which makes you wonder why they put the title on him in the first place. Then again, an injured Angle is probably worth more than Big Show at this point.

Back from a break with Heyman in the ring to blame Stephanie for Kurt's injuries. This brings out Angle on crutches to compare his rookie year to Lesnar. They both won the World Title in their first year but Angle did it without Heyman helping him out. Kurt: "AND I'M AN OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST! WHO SUCKS NOW???" Fans: "YOU SUCK!" Angle has an agent because he's a very important person. More importantly though, he's the kind of man that Lesnar could never be. He'll defend the title at the Royal Rumble and then he'll take Lesnar down like the punk that he is.

Heyman agrees, but he has a surprise for Kurt: Team Angle. That would be Charlie Haas and Shelton Benjamin, a pair of All-American wrestlers, with Shelton being Brock's former roommate at the University of Minnesota. Angle tells Lesnar that's checkmate. This is a great idea and something that could do a lot of good. If Team Angle is kept strong, they could be a great addition to the tag division, which suddenly needs a burst of energy. The segment was long but it did its job, which is far more important.

B-2 vs. Rikishi

Cena's rap says that B-2 is the physical version of R2-D2. Rikishi sends B-2 into the steps before the bell as Cena sits in on commentary. That lasts all of ten seconds until he gets up to break up the Stinkface. Back in and Buchanan (mostly) hits his top rope spinning clothesline. Cena tries to bring in a chair but uses the distraction to throw B-2 the chain. That just earns B-2 a superkick and the Rump Shaker for the pin.

Torrie Wilson isn't sure she'll be here for the wedding. Her dad comes up to yell at her for being selfish and says he's getting married next week no matter what. After the wedding, he and Dawn are going to have a child and he hopes it won't be a disappointment like her.

Los Guerreros celebrate their win when they run into Cena and B-2. Eddie and Chavo speak Spanish but Cena goes into a rap. Eddie mocks Cena's voice and says they still have the title. This was completely bizarre and yet still rather funny.

Benoit says he'll win and then go on to win the World Title that has always eluded him.

Angle fires Big Show up.

Chris Benoit vs. Big Show

The winner gets Angle at the Rumble. Show doesn't waste time by throwing Benoit into the corner, followed by a big boot to make things even worse. Benoit chops away and tries the Crossface but gets tossed away with ease. More power offense sends Benoit flying into the corner before Show pulls off a turnbuckle pad. Benoit goes for the knee for a breather, followed by muscling Show up for a German suplex. The Swan Dive (a splash this time as Show is too close to the corner) gets two but the chokeslam is countered into a rollup (with feet on the ropes, though it might not have been intentional) for the pin.

Rating: D+. This was as good as Big Show throwing Benoit around for a few minutes before getting caught at the end was going to be. Benoit as the #1 contender is a great thing and the story of him never winning the title is a strong story. The match wasn't bad and they made sure to keep it short to make sure Big Show didn't mess anything up.

Show tries a chokeslam but gets countered into the Crossface (I always love that counter). Cue Team Angle for the superkick into a German suplex and the debut of the Haas of Pain (kind of a Liontamer/Indian deathlock combo). Show adds a chokeslam as the fans don't get their requested Brock. Angle comes out to talk trash and chokes Benoit with a crutch to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. They were very heavy on the storylines this week with several long explanations about what's going on in the main

event. However, we also got a long title match, a World Title match set up for a month away and the debut of a new team. They covered a lot of stuff tonight and that's the best thing you could have after the mess that Raw has become.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Histories of Saturday Night's Main Event and Clash of the Champions, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/05/19/history-of-saturday-nights-main-event-and-clash-of-the-champions-now-in-paperback-plus-price-drops/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

Smackdown – May 23, 2017: Do You Know the Way to St. Louis?

Smackdown

Date: May 23, 2017

Location: Huntington Center, Toledo, Ohio

Commentators: Tom Phillips, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

Somehow we're living in Jinder Mahal's WWE, which could mean several things. First of all, we're in for a Punjabi celebration tonight, which could mean a good number of possibilities. On top of that Mahal needs a challenger, who is likely to be Randy Orton in a rematch. We're also about a month away from Money in the Bank so it

could be time to set up the ladder match. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the end of Backlash with Mahal winning the title.

Mahal and the Singh Brothers arrive with a police escort and the champ having a rug laid out for him. So....yeah he really is the new JBL, complete with his own Bashams.

Here's Shane McMahon to open things up. He's impressed that Mahal won the title but we need to move forward. First of all, Randy Orton is cashing in his rematch contract at Money in the Bank in his hometown of St. Louis, Missouri. On that same show we'll be having the Money in the Bank ladder match and it's already time to announce the five (SWEET) competitors: AJ Styles, Baron Corbin, Sami Zayn, Dolph Ziggler and....someone other than Kevin Owens, who comes out here despite Shane saying he's not in the match.

The actual fifth entrant is Shinsuke Nakamura but Owens isn't cool with being left out because he beat Styles at Backlash and AJ is in the field. Maybe he's not in there because Shane is jealous of Owens beating AJ when Shane couldn't do it. Shane actually agrees and makes Owens the sixth entrant. Corbin tells Owens to stop talking and promises to win. AJ says his catchphrase because this house isn't being blown down by a lone wolf. He calls Owens WWE's Eric Cartman and says he doesn't care who he has to beat.

Sami can't say much as Corbin cuts him off and calls him the Rudy of Smackdown Live. That sounds like Corbin wants a rematch but Owens and Ziggler get in an argument before anything can happen. Dolph promises to win again but Nakamura introduces himself as Mr. Money in the Bank. Shane makes AJ/Nakamura vs. Owens/Ziggler and Zayn vs. Corbin for tonight.

Natalya/Carmella vs. Becky Lynch/Charlotte

Carmella headlocks Becky to start but a dropkick sends Carmella outside for a break. Back with Charlotte coming in off the hot tag and cleaning house, only to get dropped by some double teaming. Naomi dives onto Tamina and it's back to Becky for a quick Disarm-

Her and the tap at 7:40.

Rating: D+. Some might call this fine, but I'd like to think I can come up with something a little better than that. If nothing else it seems like a waste of time as they might as well have just done this on Sunday if they're going to beat the Welcoming Committee this easily. The stable (if you can call it that) continues to be nothing more than a way to fill in time and the alliance of heroes is pretty clearly only there for the sake of waiting around until they all fight each other.

Sami Zayn vs. Baron Corbin

Neither gets an entrance....and Sami rolls him up for the pin at 21 seconds. They were on a roll for the first half and it was looking like it had serious potential but that next six seconds just fell apart. At least they fixed it in the end.

Corbin beats the heck out of him after the match, including crushing his head against the top of the barricade with a series of elbows. Sami does a stretcher job.

AJ thanks Nakamura for what he taught him in Japan but now they're both going after the same thing. At Money in the Bank, Nakamura is going to turn AJ's house into his playground.

It's time for the final Fashion Files, which takes place in Shane's office (including a wanted poster, accusing the Mean Street Posse of gang activity). Breeze brings in his stuff and thinks they're fired. They even turn in their (squirt) guns and a bunch of cleaning supplies. Shane: "You do know that you're not real cops right?" Fandango: "That's what my dad tells me." Breeze takes his pants off but Shane says they're having singles matches against the Usos tonight. They're back on the case and Fandango takes a doughnut.

Here's the Punjabi celebration, complete with a band and dancers. Mahal says 1.3 billion people are celebrating the new champion and the Americans hate him because he's different. He's proven everyone wrong and showed that India is on the rise while America is in decline. We hear some Punjabi and fireworks go off with no one

interfering to wrap it up.

Lana is still coming.

Jey Uso vs. Tyler Breeze

Tyler still has his bag of stuff....and rolls Jey up for the pin at 23 seconds after spraying him with the squirt gun. So he shot on Jey?

Jimmy Uso vs. Fandango

Breeze puts on a wig and gets Jey to chase him into the ring, allowing Fandango to roll Jimmy up for the pin at 44 seconds.

Fandango: "You Usos look like you just got caught wearing white after Labor Day." Breeze wants a rematch for the titles, which is actually on right now.

Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. Breezango

The Usos are defending and we're joined in progress with Fandango coming in off the hot tag. A tornado DDT/dropkick combination gets two on Jey but it's quadruple superkicks to set up the Superfly Splash, only to hit Fandango's knees. Jey gets small packaged for two and the Last Dance crushes Jimmy, only to have Jey hit the Superfly splash for the pin to retain at 2:48 shown. So to recap, the champs lose on joke finishes and then the popular act loses a short match after losing their big title shot two days ago. Yeah I'm sure this kind of booking has nothing to do with the ratings being so bad. Clearly just the NBA.

Natalya comes in to Shane's office and demands a title shot. The rest of the Welcoming Committee, Becky and Charlotte come in with the same demands. A big argument breaks out (because that's what women do, at least in WWE's eyes) so Shane makes a fatal five way #1 contenders match for next week.

Kevin Owens/Dolph Ziggler vs. AJ Styles/Shinsuke Nakamura

That argument cost us AJ/Nakamura's entrances. AJ shoves Ziggler around to start before it's off to Nakamura vs. Owens, which the fans certainly seem to enjoy. Some early strikes put Owens on the

floor but the threat of a Kinshasa sends him bailing to the floor. Back from an early break with Ziggler raking Nakamura's eyes across the top rope before grabbing a headscissors to keep him on the mat. We hit the chinlock (required in an Owens match) for a long bit until Nakamura fights up, only to be taken back down until we take a second break. Back again with Nakamura getting over for the hot tag to AJ, who immediately brings the strikes. A good series of them sends Owens to the floor but he drops AJ again and we're back to the chinlock.

AJ fights up again and kicks his way to freedom, allowing the hot tag off to Nakamura. House is cleaned again with a series of kicks but Ziggler grabs a Fameasser for two. Everything breaks down and Ziggler saves Owens from the Styles Clash, only to eat a running knee from Nakamura. The Kinshasa ends Owens at 24:33.

Rating: B. Insert your own complaint about the champ taking a fall when Ziggler is right there. This felt like a bit match and a lot of that is due to having an actual dream team for the face side. I can live with this kind of a match instead of the normal ten minute trading wins between the ladder match participants. It's always nice to have the main event feel important and that's what this did.

Overall Rating: C-. The main event was good but I don't think it's enough to make up for the rapid fire matches we had in the middle of the show. Was there really a need for three matches in a row to have a rollup finish in less than a minute? Is that really the best possible option? They kept Mahal short, which is probably best for everyone involved. He's not the worst idea in the world but we're certainly at the point where the less of him we see, the better. We're firmly on the way to Money in the Bank though and that can make for some dull shows, which hopefully isn't the case this year.

Results

Becky Lynch/Charlotte b. Carmella/Natalya – Disarm-Her to Carmella

Sami Zayn b. Baron Corbin – Rollup

Tyler Breeze b. Jey Uso – Rollup

Fandango b. Jimmy Uso – Rollup

Usos b. Breezango – Superfly splash to Fandango

AJ Styles/Shinsuke Nakamura b. Kevin Owens/Dolph Ziggler – Kinshasa to Owens

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Histories of Saturday Night's Main Event and Clash of the Champions, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/05/19/history-of-saturday-nights-main-event-and-clash-of-the-champions-now-in-paperback-plus-price-drops/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

Smackdown – December 19, 2002: They're Better Than This

Smackdown

Date: December 19, 2002

Location: St. Pete Times Forum, Tampa, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

We're past the last pay per view of the year and that means we only have two Smackdowns left. The big story on the Smackdown side is Kurt Angle becoming the new Smackdown World Champion, having defeated Big Show in a match that was way better than it had any

right to be. That puts us on the road to the Royal Rumble, where Chris Benoit might be the new #1 contender. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's tag match with Big Show pinning Angle and then Angle winning the title thanks to Brock Lesnar's help. This eats up over three minutes.

Opening sequence.

Here's Angle, with a belt that still says Big Show, to open things up. He lists off his accomplishments but this title win was different. Angle isn't sure if he could have won the title without Lesnar so he'd like Brock out here now. Cue Brock to one heck of a reaction. Angle agrees to give him a shot at the title anytime, any place. That's what Brock wanted to hear because he wants his shot tonight. Actually that doesn't work for Kurt though because he has a non-title match with Chris Benoit. Lesnar will get his title shot next week though, which Lesnar begrudgingly accepts.

Big Show is livid about Lesnar getting the first shot and rants to Paul Heyman about it. Don't worry though because Heyman has a fan. Again, this takes way too long to accomplish something very simple.

Eddie Guerrero vs. Billy Kidman

Non-title. Eddie goes right for him and grabs a belly to back suplex to take over. A very fast tilt-a-whirl backbreaker looks to set up the frog splash but Kidman bails away and hits an enziguri. The BK Bomb gets two and the shooting star connects, only to have Chavo pull Kidman away. That's not a DQ for no apparent reason though and Eddie grabs a Gory Bomb for the pin.

Matt Hardy walks into Stephanie's office to explain the concept of MF'ers (Mattitude Followers). She's worried that he won't be able to face Lesnar tonight but Matt is ready to go.

John Cena vs. Chuck Palumbo

Cena's rap calls the Buccaneers a rather surprising slur which rhymes with beers. The announcers start talking about the Torrie/Dawn Marie footage as "Bling Bling Buchanan" gets in a few shots on the floor. Cena grabs a seated full nelson (it's better

than the same old chinlock over and over) but Palumbo fights up for the comeback. A belly to belly sets up the discus punch and Chuck heads to the top, only to have Cena roll through a high crossbody and grab the trunks for the pin.

Chuck punches Cena out but gets hit by Buchanan's change. Cue Rikishi for the save because THIS STORY IS STILL GOING!

We get a long, LONG recap of the build to Torrie/Dawn in the hotel room (same as the one from Sunday I believe) and then see about ten seconds, all of which we saw at the pay per view.

We get a sitdown interview with Torrie at her mom's house in Idaho where she says she's more proud than anything else. She's willing to do anything for her father but he's the one person she's embarrassed her. As for being a sexual predator, she's certainly a sexual person, but Dawn is going to find out what kind of a predator she can be. Cue Dawn and Al as Cole suggests that Al has no idea what's going on. You mean getting to be with a woman WAY out of his league who doesn't seem to mind being with him in exchange for tormenting his daughter? I still don't quite get how Al is hurt in all this.

Anyway Dawn calls Torrie a nymphomaniac and says her relationship with Al is sacred. They never run out of things to say and enjoy their late night encounters. She's never seen a more handsome and virile man than her "Al-sy Wal-sy." The wedding will be here on Smackdown in two weeks. Torrie storms off because they deserve each other.

Raw Retro: Rock challenges Hogan. That's one heck of a moment.

Brock Lesnar vs. Matt Hardy

This is over Brock throwing Matt, who has wrestled in 44 states, through a wall. However, Matt comes out holding his good eye and has Shannon Moore tagging along. We've got a substitution due to Matt getting something in his good eye, rendering him temporarily blind.

Brock Lesnar vs. Shannon Moore

Brock wastes no time in belly to bellying Shannon OVER THE TOP AND DOWN ONTO THE FLOOR in one of the sickest landings you'll ever see.

Moore somehow doesn't have a broken leg as he takes the F5 for the pin in less than a minute. Great bump to go with the complete destruction.

Blind Matt gets beaten down as well.

Stephanie tells Angle to clear this up or she'll do it herself.

Here's Angle to explain whatever it is that Stephanie was talking about. Angle talks about having integrity and if it were up to him, he'd face Angle and Benoit in the same night. He has a lot on his plate though and he needs good representation. That's why he's now represented by.....Paul Heyman.

Paul comes out for a hug and says no one should be surprised by this. There was no way Lesnar was ever getting close to the title again and Heyman made sure of it. The plan started when Angle suggested he could get Lesnar's suspension lifted and Heyman convinced Stephanie to let Brock come back. Angle played Lesnar like a violin (How?) and now the Angle vs. Lesnar match is postponed indefinitely.

Cue a livid Big Show to yell at Heyman and glare at Angle. Heyman says Show isn't dumped because Show is still his favorite client. To make it up to him, Show can have a shot next week. Kurt isn't happy but Heyman says it's cool as long as either of them is champion. Just keep it away from Lesnar you see.

Ok.....I need a minute on this one. So Heyman worked together with Show to get the title off of Lesnar and then signed Angle as an insurance policy to give him more leverage to keep the title away from Brock? Ok, fine. And Angle had to get Lesnar's suspension lifted because Angle couldn't beat Show on his own? If that's not it, I have no idea why Lesnar had to be reinstated. Why would Heyman want him back in the first place?

I'm not really sure I get the idea. I guess Heyman thought Angle could beat Big Show so he bought Kurt off before he could, but Angle could only do it with Lesnar's help? Show can beat an injured Lesnar with Heyman's help but it takes Angle/Lesnar to beat Big Show? I'm

probably missing something in there because this is already far beyond how complicated it needs to be. Just have Show vs. Lesnar go to a double DQ at Survivor Series and then do a triple threat so Angle can take the title from Show and announce Heyman's plan after. Either way, it sets up an eventual Angle vs. Lesnar match and that's just glorious sounding.

Bill DeMott/Crash vs. Jamie Noble/Nunzio

DeMott is teaming with Crash because he respects Hardcore Holly. Bill beats on Nunzio and then pulls Jamie in to beat on him as well. A release German suplex sends Noble flying and DeMott makes him tag Nunzio back in. Noble is thrown into Nunzio in the corner and a powerbomb sets up the moonsault to put Jamie away. Crash was never in. So Nunzio debuts one week and gets squashed the next by BILL DEMOTT. I'm so glad to know this show has a plan for everyone.

DeMott beats Crash down as well.

Edge is ready to beat up A-Train again tonight.

Edge vs. A-Train

A-Train charges straight at him to start but Edge slips out of a gorilla press. It's already time to go after the knee though as A-Train lays on it and then grabs a half crab. Back up and Edge hits an enziguri followed by a missile dropkick due to the bad knee. The bicycle kick gives A-Train two and it's right back to the half crab. The chokebomb is broken up and Edge spears him for the pin.

Rating: D. This was as good as A-Train doing half crabs for five minutes was going to be. I still don't get the idea behind pushing him like this but it seems to be time for the big guys to get their pushes. Edge sold the leg well enough but there's only so much he can do in a story like this.

Josh Matthews recaps Angle vs. Lesnar and it still doesn't make a lot of sense. Lesnar comes in and says his state of mind is a good question.

Kurt Angle vs. Chris Benoit

Non-title. Benoit takes him to the mat for an early hammerlock and a

very fast armdrag. They head outside with Benoit chasing him back inside for the first suplex. Angle gets in his own overhead belly to belly as the announcers marvel at Heyman's brainwashing abilities. Heyman even gets in a belt shot to Benoit for two and it's time to trade some chops. A chinlock keeps Benoit down for a bit and a release German suplex drops him again.

Angle is right backup but a double clothesline puts both guys down. It's Benoit up first with the seven rolling German suplexes, causing Heyman to put his head in his hand, as if he knows there's nothing that can be done at this point. The Swan Dive sets up the Crossface but Big Show lumbers down for the DQ.

Rating: C+. Good match as usual but you could see the ending coming from a mile away. They've done this match too often lately though and it's starting to get tiresome. It's still entertaining but there are other options out there. Put Angle in there with Edge (because Heaven forbid we don't get the A-Train match in there) or anyone else to save Benoit for later.

Lesnar runs in for some suplexes but gets beaten down as well to end the show. My only other thought here: Heyman reminds me of Louie De Palma in far too many ways.

Overall Rating: D. Really big step down here as this whole thing was about two stories with a few other matches filling in the rest of the time. The Heyman stuff is more complicated than it needs to be and the Dawn/Torrie stuff is clearly going nowhere. If you're over fourteen years old here, you know you're never going to see more than you saw at the pay per view and after that you have whatever disaster the wedding and ensuing match are going to be. This really wasn't a good show and Smackdown should be better than what they did here.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Histories of Saturday Night's Main Event and Clash of the Champions, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/05/19/history-of-saturday-nights-main-event-and-clash-of-the-champions-now-in-paperback-plus-price-drops/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

Smackdown – May 16, 2017: Why Can't I Remember This Show?

Smackdown

Date: May 16, 2017

Location: SNHU Arena, Manchester, New Hampshire

Commentators: Tom Phillips, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

We're back stateside with the go home show for Sunday's Backlash. We have a few matches announced as it's Baron Corbin vs. Randy Orton and a "first time ever" match between Jinder Mahal and AJ Styles. I put it in the quotes because while it's the first time the match has ever happened, I really don't know if that's worthy of mention it never happening before. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

We open with Kevin Owens' Highlight Reel with Kevin emphasizing that the original host will NEVER, EVER be seen here again. After a clip of the Chris Jericho beatdown, Owens introduces his guest in French, only to have AJ Styles (not the guest) interrupt on his own. He never did well in French class but on Sunday, he's taking the US Title and bringing it back to the USA. Styles is ready to fight not

but here are Jinder Mahal and the Singh Brothers to interrupt. Mahal is supposed to be the guest and doesn't seem pleased. The three all talk trash but Owens runs from AJ.

AJ Styles vs. Jinder Mahal

Owens is on commentary. Feeling out process to start without much of note to start. Jinder sends him to the apron though and AJ scores with a slingshot forearm to a kneeling Mahal. Some kicks to the chest have Mahal rocked and AJ follows up with a shortened Phenomenal Rush. A hard knee drops AJ though and we take a break.

Back with Jinder working on a chinlock for a good while. AJ fights up and crotches him on the top before dropkicking Jinder out of the air. Another forearm has Jinder in trouble but he kicks AJ in the face for two. Owens keeps cheering for Mahal but shouldn't he want the match to go on as long as possible so AJ can be hurt even more?

The fireman's carry into the flip neckbreaker gives AJ two but the Singh Brothers offer a distraction, allowing Owens to hit AJ in the knee with the belt. Somehow the referee doesn't wonder why AJ has down and hurt his knee. The cobra clutch slam (the Kalas, Punjab for finish) gives Mahal the pin at 15:45.

Rating: C. Better than I was expecting here with the only logical ending and there's nothing wrong with that. Mahal needed this win and it advances Styles vs. Owens at the same time. That's one of the best things they can do at the moment as it accomplishes everything at once. Mahal is still passable in the ring but that's about all you can give him, which isn't enough for the spot they want him in.

It's Fashion Files time with more pictures and Post-It notes stuck to the walls. Breeze comes in with a blond wig and taped on mustache, whom Fandango praises for his expertise as a master of disguise. Tyler has found a number of fashion felonies, including EVERY BARON CORBIN shirt being a wolf design. The Usos are scary but their hair is like a mop. Breeze takes off the mustache, asking what in Versace's name is he wearing. They load up a high five but Breeze says freeze frame, leaving them both hanging in the air.

Randy Orton is ready for Mahal.

Breezango vs. Colons

Joined in progress with Breeze fighting out of some trouble and getting two on Epico. The cousins keep him in trouble though and Primo grabs an armbar. Breeze avoids a charge though and the hot tag brings in Fandango to clean house. Everything breaks down and the Falcon Arrow gives Fandango the pin at 3:18.

Rating: D+. Just another match here but it's nice to have Breezango on a roll heading into the pay per view. I doubt they win the belts but I could go for a title change. The Usos are barely doing anything with the belts (not to say Breezango would) but it would be nice to switch things up for a little bit.

Post match the Usos come out to say they'll win on Sunday because this is the Uso penitentiary. They'll remain vicious and give you stitches and that's not paranoia.

Here's Shane McMahon for a contract signing for Sunday's six woman tag. Natalya uses her uncle's catchphrase and signs while Tamina and Carmella sign without saying anything. Becky laughs off the idea of being offered a spot on the team and can't wait to slap all three of them. Naomi tries to dub the team Royal Glow Fire and threatens to snatch them bald. Charlotte promises a win but after that she's coming for the crown.

Ellsworth cuts Shane off and says he can take care of himself. Shane has no idea what he's talking about but it's clear that Becky is staring at Ellsworth. Neither Charlotte nor Becky has a shot him though and Carmella is coming for his title. A fight nearly breaks out so Shane makes Carmella vs. Naomi for right now.

Carmella vs. Naomi

Non-title. Joined in progress with Naomi hitting a Thesz press and a running forearm in the corner. Naomi misses a knee drop though and gets sent face first into the mat. The threat of the Rear View sends Carmella outside and Ellsworth gets ejected. We take a break and come back with Carmella running away from some kicks and screaming a

lot.

Naomi shuts her up with a dropkick, only to have Carmella kick her in the face and send her outside. The champ fights up again and hits a jawbreaker but Tamina and Natalya break up a cover, meaning it's a double ejection. Charlotte and Natalya get in a fight with them first though and Naomi goes over to kick Tamina in the back. The distraction lets Carmella grab a rollup for the pin at 11:21.

Rating: D+. I'm still trying to get past Naomi's attempts to get "I'm gonna snatch you bald!" over as a threat/catchphrase. She can't threaten to beat them up or hurt them but rather take their hair? Is she a reincarnation of Brutus Beefcake? Anyway not a great match or anything but it did well enough to st up the match on Sunday.

Dolph Ziggler has been watching all the Shinsuke Nakamura footage he can find in WWE but there's nothing to see. Instead, here's a Ziggler highlight package. Ziggler can't wait to beat Nakamura.

Sami Zayn has been granted a match with Baron Corbin for Backlash (That wasn't official yet?) because he thinks Corbin feels threatened by him. Corbin jumps him from behind and says stay down.

Randy Orton vs. Baron Corbin

Non-title. They shove each other around to start with Corbin popping Orton in the jaw to take over for the first time. One heck of a clothesline gives Baron two and we take a break. Back with Orton missing a middle rope knee drop and getting caught in a chinlock. Corbin hammers him down again and some posing gets quite the negative reaction from the fans.

Baron says the people's reaction is why he's hurting Orton but he misses a charge into the corner. JBL keeps calling both of them great closers as Orton hits the hanging DDT. The RK0 is broken up and Deep Six gives Baron a close two. Back up and the RK0 gives Orton the pin at 13:20.

Rating: C. Corbin took WAY too clean of a loss here when he's supposed to be a big deal going forward. I'd bet on him getting a title shot in the near future but why should I care about him if he

just lost clean here? I'm fine with Orton winning a match but the booking here is a bit questionable.

Post match Mahal comes out for a distraction so the Singh Brothers can come in for the attack. Mahal holds up the title to end the show.

Rusev never appeared despite being advertised.

Opinion: C-. This was a rather flat show heading into what feels like a flat pay per view. I'm interested in Styles vs. Owens and that's really about it on the entire card. What am I supposed to care about other than that match? Breezango? The six woman tag? Jinder Mahal? They're fine for a big Smackdown but it doesn't quite work that well on a pay per view. The show was good enough but nothing I'll remember in a day or two.

Results

Jinder Mahal b. AJ Styles – Kalas

Breezango b. Colons – Falcon Arrow to Primo

Carmella b. Naomi – Rollup

Randy Orton b. Baron Corbin – RK0

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the NXT: The Full Sail Years Volumes I and II, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/03/24/kbs-history-of-nxt-volumes-1-and-2-now-available-in-paperback/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

Armageddon 2002: Nine H's and a Not So Secret Video

Armageddon 2002

Date: December 15, 2002

Location: National Car Rental Center, Sunrise, Florida

Attendance: 9,000

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz, Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

In case you didn't get this from the Raw's leading up to this show, this is ALL about HHH vs. Shawn Michaels. It's so much about them that we're seeing them fight three times so HHH can win the title for the second time in just over three months. Oh and we might see Torrie Wilson and Dawn Marie's, ahem, home movie. Let's get to it.

The opening video has Freddie Blassie quoting the Bible about Armageddon, followed by The End Is Here playing over shots of bombs and missiles. And various wrestlers of course. That's not disturbing whatsoever.

Raw Tag Team Titles: Dudley Boyz vs. William Regal/Lance Storm vs. Goldust/Booker T. vs. Chris Jericho/Christian

Jericho and Christian are defending, Booker/Goldust are having issues believing they should keep teaming, the Dudleys are REALLY fired up to be here, Regal and Storm are on a roll and this is under elimination rules. Got all that? Storm forearms Bubba down and actually gets the better of a quick slugout, only to have Bubba shout DIE CANADIAN SCUM and hit a corner splash.

Goldust comes in to uppercut Regal but the champs take over in the corner. That goes nowhere either so Bubba comes in for some stereo Flip Flop and Flying into the Bionic elbows in a somewhat odd visual. Everything breaks down and Christian eats 3D but Regal tags himself in. A small package (and an ugly one at that) gets rid of the Dudleys (with JR not being clear on what happened), followed by a Goldust rollup to get rid of Storm and Regal to put us down to two. Or what it should have been in the first place without the

extra five minutes being a waste of time.

The Hart Attack with the side kick instead of a clothesline drops Jericho with Christian making the save. Goldust misses a crossbody and falls to the floor, where Jericho sends him into the steps. We settle into the regular tag formula with Christian putting on an abdominal stretch, followed by a double stomping in the corner. JR explains the concept of cutting the ring off, which isn't something you hear explained that often. Perhaps because it's rarely done outside of a Revival match anymore.

Goldust finally catches christian in a sidewalk slam and it's off to Booker with a very nice pop. The Walls are countered into a small package for two but the second attempt works better with Booker in a lot of trouble. Goldust comes in with a bulldog for the save, followed by crotching Christian on the top. A missile dropkick gives Booker two but Jericho gets in a belt shot. The Lionsault is good for two but Booker grabs the Book End for the pin and the titles.

Rating: B-. So the first two eliminations really didn't need to happen and those teams could have been added to the show in their own match. Goldust and Booker FINALLY winning the titles is the right call and they went about as far as they could before getting the belts. I would have had Goldust get the win to prove he's not the weak link but just getting the win is all they needed to do.

Booker tells Goldust that he's not a weak link.

Brock Lesnar asks Josh Matthews who he is and says he'll make an impact in the Big Show vs. Kurt Angle match.

Edge vs. A-Train

Edge has a bad knee coming in and is here to defend Rey Mysterio's honor. A-Train shoves him into the corner to start before catching a crossbody with ease. Thankfully Edge tries to speed things up, only to get shoved into the barricade for his efforts. A charge only hits post though as the fast start continues. Back in and A-Train gets two off a powerslam before it's off to the chinlock less than four minutes in. Edge makes his comeback as this is feeling more and more

like a TV match every second.

The half nelson faceplant gives Edge two and the announcers keep calling A-Train Albert. A super spinning Edge-o-Matic gets two (with Edge pulling the trunks WAY too far up in the front) but A-Train bicycle kicks him out of the air for two. It's chair time but Edge gets in a baseball slide to knock it away. The chokebomb gives A-Train two and the spear gives Edge the same, only to have A-Train chair Edge in the knee for the pitiful DQ.

Rating: D-. I really need more from this on a pay per view as this felt like the match to set up the pay per view rematch. A-Train just hitting him in the knee for the ending doesn't work and certainly doesn't help him. Unless Edge is taking time off thanks to a big post match attack, I really don't get this one.

There's a post match attack, but it's Edge unloading on A-Train with the chair as his knee looks fine. What in the world was the point of this?

Big Show wants to go yell at Stephanie but Heyman talks him out of it, making Stephanie sound like a mob boss who would have Show sleeping with the fishes if he dared cross her. Heyman promises to take care of things.

Eddie Guerrero vs. Chris Benoit

The announcers basically call this a #1 contenders match though that's not official. Eddie takes him to the mat and works on the leg as we hear about their very long history together. It's off to a headlock on Benoit, who manages to tie their legs together to keep Eddie in check. A suplex sets up a chinlock on Guerrero but he reverses into a shortarm scissors as they're keeping it on the mat so far.

Benoit powers out in that Bob Backlund display that looks less impressive every time a smaller guy does it. Eddie keeps it on the mat with a headscissors and the fans think it's boring. I'm sorry they're not big, bald and hairy but try to let something fresh into your wrestling minds people. Eddie sends him outside for a good

looking dive before working on Benoit's knee back inside.

A variety of leglocks have Benoit screaming in pain but he finally pops up for the rolling German suplexes. Benoit gets all the way to seven before Eddie reverses into four German suplexes of his own. The frog splash is good for two and Eddie gives a great stunned look. They both fall out to the floor with Eddie getting back in first, allowing Chavo to run out with a belt shot to the back of Benoit's head. That's only good for two as well, more or less guaranteeing that Benoit is winning here.

A modified Lasso From El Paso sends Benoit straight to the ropes, allowing him to pop up with a heck of a powerbomb. More Chavo interference fails and Benoit hits the Swan Dive, which Eddie mostly no sells for another Lasso. Benoit will have none of that though and reverses into the Crossface. Eddie goes for the ropes so Benoit switches arms and rolls into the middle of the ring to make Guerrero tap.

Rating: A-. Were you expecting this to be anything other than great? You have two guys this talented and this familiar with each other with over sixteen minutes on pay per view so of course it's the likely match of the night. I know they can do this stuff in tag matches but it's refreshing to have them just do a great singles match. Benoit was the pretty clear winner here but Eddie was more than up to the task here. That switching of arms at the end made Benoit look even better though and he more than deserves a title shot at this point.

Paul Heyman comes in to Stephanie's office and talks about how much he'd love to sign Benoit. Stephanie doesn't want to hear it because Lesnar's suspension is already lifted. They talk about the integrity of the title with Stephanie saying we'll have to wait and see what Lesnar does tonight. This has been a commercial for the show you've already paid for.

Long recap of Dawn Marie vs. Torrie Wilson. Dawn decided to marry Torrie's dad, presumably to get to Torrie. It turned out that she just wanted to sleep with Torrie so she offered to call off the

marriage for one night for her. Of course it was filmed and Dawn is threatening to show the tape tonight because Torrie enjoyed it. That would be the worst thing ever for some reason you see.

Here are Dawn and Al, who has no issue with any of this for some reason. Or maybe he's miserable. You never can tell with him. Anyway Dawn recaps things again and says Torrie isn't here tonight before showing the footage. After seeing everything we saw on Smackdown (twice now) before we get to the new stuff. Dawn gives her champagne and eats a strawberry before unzipping Torrie's leather jacket revealing....pretty much the same kind of outfit Torrie would wrestle in.

Dawn takes off Torrie's skirt to leave Torrie in her lingerie before taking off her own robe. She whispers that men can't give Torrie what she can. They kiss and Torrie seems to be getting into it but Dawn says freeze the footage. She tells Al that we're going to keep going so we see more kissing before Al stops it for good. Dawn promises they can make their own tape to make up for it and we're done. This ate up about ten minutes and was every bit the waste of time you would expect it to be.

Kane vs. Batista

Batista has Ric Flair in his corner but gets dropped by an early neckbreaker. An elbow gives Kane two but Batista hot shots him onto the ropes. Kane fights back but gets sent outside where he beats up Flair for fun. Back in and Kane boots the rookie down but the top rope clothesline misses. The Batista Bomb doesn't work though and Kane hits him low for a rather heelish move. The spinebuster gives Batista two but he walks into a chokeslam. Flair comes in for a distraction though, allowing the Batista Bomb to put Kane away.

Rating: D-. This wasn't just a bad match but it felt like it belonged on a TV show instead of a pay per view. Batista looked lost for the most part with the fans giving up on the match after he couldn't pick Kane up for the powerbomb. On top of that it was basically a handicap match with Flair involved, which makes for a really bad use of time.

Here are John Cena and B Squared (yes Squared again instead of Two) to rap about how awesome they are and how it doesn't matter who they tick off. Marcia Brady is mentioned as well. This took less than two minutes.

We recap the women's triple threat match. Victoria took the title from Trish Stratus at Survivor Series and then Jacqueline beat Victoria in a non-title match on Raw because SHE'S FROM TEXAS AND ALL TOUGH AND STUFF LIKE THAT. Now we're having a triple threat for the title.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Jacqueline vs. Victoria

Victoria is defending. It's a brawl to start with Jackie being sent outside as Jerry wonders if Victoria is horizontally accessible. A superplex drops Trish with Jackie stealing two as you can hear JR getting annoyed at Lawler's jokes. The challengers make a wish on Victoria's legs and send her outside, leaving Trish to hit a neckbreaker on Jackie. The Chick Kick drops Jackie again but Trish takes WAY too long covering, followed by a slow count, which really screams blown save. Victoria grabs the title and hits Trish, setting up the pin on Jackie to retain.

Rating: D+. They were trying here but Jackie didn't need to be involved and the timing really hurt things here. Trish vs. Victoria is one of the better feuds they've had in a long time but they've pretty much reached the peak of the feud. We're pretty much just waiting for Lita to come back at this point and that makes things a bit hard to sit through.

Victoria steals Trish's hat.

Angle keeps trying to convince Lesnar to be in his corner, including promising him retribution if Brock joins him. We see the end of the Survivor Series title match but Lesnar still won't say anything.

We recap Big Show vs. Kurt Angle. There isn't much to talk about though as Show won the title four weeks ago and Angle won a four way to earn the title shot. Lesnar was suspended for a few weeks in a side angle that added absolutely nothing to this, aside from giving

us more Stephanie TV time.

Smackdown World Title: Kurt Angle vs. Big Show

Angle is challenging and there's no Brock to start, meaning he'll be the official run-in. Show easily tosses him down to start so Angle tries a front facelock. That just earns him a toss over the top and right onto Heyman, but the distraction allows Angle to dump Show out to the floor. Back in and Show continues his dominance with a clothesline and suplex as Angle can't get anything going so far.

The match is so one sided that Cole gets to list off all of Big Show's measurements that you've probably memorized over the years. The Final Cut gets two as the fans chant USA with Tazz pointing out that Big Show is an American too. We hit the bearhug that you knew was coming until Angle bites his way out. Angle chokes him down and gets most of a tornado DDT to put both guys down. Tazz: "Big Show is the same size as Kurt Angle right now!". That line still drives me crazy and it's even worse when they're both down.

Angle dropkicks the leg out and a good looking missile dropkick gives Kurt two. The moonsault press only has Angle's feet hit Show in the head and the Angle Slam is good for two. The ankle lock goes on in the middle of the ring and the kickoff sends Angle into the referee. You can see a lot of the crowd looking towards the entrance as the Brock chants start up. Heyman throws in a chair which goes upside Show's head for two with the kickout wiping the referee out again. Cue A-Train to break up the ankle lock but here's Brock to F5 Show to give Angle the pin and the title.

Rating: D+. This was watchable because they had Big Show laying around for about a third of the match but it could have been FAR worse. At least they did the smart thing by giving the title to one of the hot acts who can have a great match with just about anyone, thereby opening the doors to a ton of fresh opponents, including Lesnar down the line. It's not good but this could have been a disaster, so we'll call this a success.

Rob Van Dam is at the World and picks Shawn to win.

Long recap of HHH vs. Shawn Michaels. They hate each other, they beat each other up, now it's three matches for the price of one because we need that much HHH in our lives. This is 2/3 falls with the first fall being a street fight, the second being a cage match and the third being a ladder match.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Shawn Michaels

Michaels is defending and HHH's right quad, as in the leg that he didn't tear, is taped up. Shawn has that weird sleeves made of mirrors thing that he wore at the 1997 Royal Rumble. To be fair he's the only one who could pull that off. Before the bell, the referee ejects Flair because THIS IS THE KIND OF IMPORTANT MATCH THAT NEEDS TO BE FAIR!

Shawn hammers away to start and skins the cat before baseball sliding HHH into the barricade. A plancha misses though (with HHH not really moving so I'm not sure what Shawn was aiming at, save for maybe a trashcan that HHH had pulled out) and HHH is limping less than two minutes in. Shawn's second dive hits the trashcan (at least it was from the ropes instead of over them so it was a different spot) but HHH can't follow up.

Instead Shawn grabs a table but has a trashcan kicked into his face. HHH's limping is getting worse and since this is getting AT LEAST half an hour, we could be in for a very long night. HHH sets up a second table next to the one Shawn loaded up but gets suplexed back inside for two. The jumping knee with the bad leg knocks HHH down as well and I get more and more worried about how bad this could get.

It's time to start in on Shawn's back but Shawn gets in a side slam to drive HHH through the chair in a smart counter. They head outside again with Shawn working on the back despite THE BIG BANDAGE ON HHH'S LEG. Even Lawler is pointing out the lapse in thinking so you know it's bad. HHH blocks the superkick and twists the knee around, meaning they're both working on the others injured body part. A chop block sets up the standing Flair working on the leg package, capped off by the Figure Four.

Shawn turns it over after nearly two minutes in the hold so HHH goes

with a trashcan lid to the head for two instead. They head up the aisle with HHH sending him into the set before finding the barbed wire 2x4. HHH isn't done though as he lights it on fire first. Shawn takes it away though and hits HHH with it, drawing some blood. It had better given that it's a flaming 2x4 wrapped in barbed wire.

Back to the ring with HHH on his feet despite being hit in the head with something that should have killed him. HHH plays Raven with a drop toehold to send Shawn into an open chair but the Pedigree is countered with a low blow. Not that it matters as HHH hits the bad knee and gets the Pedigree for the first fall.

The cage is lowered and it's pinfall or escape (I'm assuming Fink forgot to say submission but JR doesn't say it either). Before the cage is all the way down, HHH throws in some more weapons, including a table and chair. One heck of a chair shot knocks Shawn sillier and the table is set up in the corner. Shawn gets catapulted into the cage and both guys are busted. The pace gets even slower and Shawn hammers away with right hands. They fight up to the top of the cage and here's Flair back at ringside because why not.

Ric sets up two more tables on top of the original two as they slug it out on the top without much going on. There's no big crash though as they go back inside with HHH getting crotched on the ropes. The top rope elbow seems to suggest that Shawn's knee is much better in a hurry....and Flair is in the cage because the referee is incompetent. Shawn cuts him off and chairs both guys in the head, naturally making Flair bleed as well.

With Shawn beating up Flair, HHH walks away from the open door (some cerebral assassin) and it's back to back superkicks to drop the villains. The stupidity continues as Shawn doesn't cover or run out of the cage but rather sets up another table (that would be five I believe). A splash off the top of the cage drives HHH through the wood and ties things up. So now it's a ladder match with both guys basically dead.

A very bloody Flair is helped out as the cage is raised and Shawn gets a ladder. Various ladder shots (which Lawler says is like being

hit by a car) have HHH in even more trouble and Shawn suplexes him onto the ladder for good measure. The ladder is set up in the corner but Shawn misses the huge splash, landing right on his face.

HHH gets in a weird Pedigree as he has to stretch the bad leg out so it doesn't slam into the mat. The fans are busy looking at something in the crowd as HHH makes the slow climb. That's broken up but Shawn's slow climb is countered with a shove through the tables, allowing HHH to climb up and regain the title.

Rating: C-. This is a really, really hard one to grade but let's get the big problem out of the way first: there was no reason to have this be more than one fall. Either do a street fight (which was boring but watchable) or one of the other two but the whole three falls thing was ridiculous with the ladder match not even breaking eight minutes. The cage match was basically a continuation of the street fight with just one attempt at escaping, plus Flair just walking into the cage, making it a complete waste of time. HHH looked horrible out there but Heaven forbid we don't cater to him, bad leg or not.

There's a good match in there somewhere, but it only works with HHH on two good legs. On top of that, this needed to be cut in half. It's just under forty minutes total and easily could have been about twenty with every bit as much effect. Shawn looked passable but old, which isn't exactly the best combination in the world. The match could have been better but with what they were going for here, it's a pretty hard disappointment. In other words, cut out HHH's ego and it's probably far better.

Overall Rating: C-. This was a pretty solid surprise with a few good matches (and one great one) but there's also a lot of really bad stuff dragging that right back down. The Dawn and Torrie stuff really started bringing the show down as it's not only stupid but fairly worthless to anyone with the internet at that point. You can see almost anything you want so two women in lingerie isn't quite enough.

The problem is the rest of the show takes a big dip after that with

the best match probably being Angle vs. Big Show, mainly due to it not being forty five minutes counting intros. The first half of the show is better but it hits a hard wall and there's really no recovering from that point on. I was expecting a disaster though so this was a good bit better than I thought I'd get.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the NXT: The Full Sail Years Volumes I and II, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/03/24/kbs-history-of-nxt-volumes-1-and-2-now-available-in-paperback/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

Smackdown – December 12, 2002: It's Like NXT But Not

Smackdown

Date: December 12, 2002

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

It's the final stop before the final pay per view of the year and there are two major stories at the moment. First up we have Kurt Angle becoming the new #1 contender to Big Show's Smackdown World Title, meaning the hopes of most of the fans are on his Olympic shoulders. Other than that we have the sports entertainment shock value of Dawn Marie and Torrie Wilson. Let's get to it.

The opening video recaps the Torrie/Dawn stuff from last week with Torrie agreeing to spend a night with Dawn to keep Dawn from

marrying her dad. They're really not hiding the soap opera nonsense are they?

Opening sequence.

Rikishi vs. B2

Now it's B Two instead of B Squared. Sounds like a vitamin. Either way he poses at Rikishi and gets punched in the face but it's way too early for the Stinkface. Bull's chinlock doesn't go anywhere but Cena offers a distraction and gets kicked in the face. The second distraction works a bit better though as Bull hits him low, allowing Cena to chain Rikishi in the head for the cheap pin.

Torrie Wilson arrives and Jan the Makeup Lady says she's been hearing rumors about what happened in the hotel room last week. I thought it was pretty obvious given how things started but maybe we need to spell it out: they did a Jungle Book jigsaw puzzle and watched the Facts of Life.

Earlier today, Kurt Angle interrupted a Brock Lesnar autograph signing and offered to get the suspension lifted in exchange for Lesnar being in his corner on Sunday. If Brock helps him, he'll get the first title shot. Lesnar says if the suspension is lifted, he'll think about it.

Big Show is with Albert, who is now named A-Train (certainly an improvement), and Paul Heyman. New interviewer Josh Matthews (shoot me now) comes in to ask about the Lesnar/Angle situation and the champ is livid. For reasons that I don't even want to be able to fathom, these two segments were edited off the WWE Network version. The only way to know about them is Cole's recap in the next match.

Show and Heyman yell at Stephanie, who throws them out.

Bill DeMott vs. Shannon Moore

DeMott is now an official bully, meaning he and Ryback should go out for soup and grape juice. Moore tries to hammer away but gets thrown around and smashed with a clothesline. A powerslam sets up a heck of a moonsault to give Bill the pin.

Now Stephanie will hear from Heyman and Show, the former of whom doesn't want to hear about Scott Steiner. As for Lesnar, he makes Smackdown money so the suspension is lifted. Then why did she suspend him in the first place? To prove that he'll get a week off if he breaks the rules? This was Stephanie showing off her power

side with the hands on the hips and lethal sneer. To be fair the look works for her.

Tag Team Titles: Los Guerreros vs. Billy Kidman/Chris Benoit

Eddie and Chavo are defending and it's Benoit vs. Eddie to start in a preview of their match on Sunday. An early Crossface attempt doesn't work but a backdrop has Eddie in trouble. It's a double tag to bring in Kidman, only to have Eddie cheap shot him a few times to take over. The slow stomping begins and a spinebuster gives Chavo two.

Even Eddie can't powerbomb Kidman but it's still not enough for the hot tag. Kidman starts wildly swinging to slow Eddie down and a powerbomb is enough for the hot tag to Benoit. Eddie gets caught in the Crossface and we take an abrupt break (just like on Raw). We come back with Kidman holding Chavo in a chinlock as we see Eddie tapping during the break, albeit behind the referee's back.

The champs take over with Eddie legbarring Kidman very close to the corner. He really should know better than that and I don't have much sympathy for him when Benoit comes in and kicks Eddie in the head. Eddie blocks the tag though and grabs a keylock. Some good old fashioned cheating sees Chavo switch places for a keylock of his own. Chavo decks Benoit off the apron but Kidman gets in an ankle scissors.

The referee doesn't see a tag but Benoit comes in with the rolling German suplexes anyway. Chris Swan Dives onto Eddie for two (with Cole asking why there's a count) as everything breaks down. Benoit Crossfaces Chavo for the tap but the referee is looking at Kidman, who misses the Shooting Star. Eddie grabs a rollup and puts his feet on the ropes to retain. So he watches Benoit cover but not when he has the Crossface? Biased jerk.

Rating: B. It's almost like the tag team formula works very well when you let it have the time to go somewhere. These four work very well together and, as usual, Kidman proves that the cruiserweights can easily hang with the heavyweights, thereby proving that the weight divisions are stupid in wrestling. Great match, as you would expect.

Torrie goes to yell at Dawn and says what happened in the hotel room was personal and just between them. Dawn can't believe what she's hearing and takes off her robe to reveal lingerie. Torrie doesn't

seem to mind it at first before yelling at Dawn to cut it out. There hasn't been one lie though and Torrie doesn't deny it. She does however demand that the wedding be called off tonight. Torrie leaves and Dawn smiles.

Raw Retro: HHH interrupts Stephanie and Test's wedding. Again, edited off the Network but it could be because the Motorhead theme is edited over My Time.

Here's Dawn, after the fastest change into a dress in recorded history, for a chat. She asks Al to come out here and confirms that everything he's heard about her and Torrie is true. Al doesn't seem to care so Dawn talks about looking into Torrie's eyes and seeing Al in them. If that's not creepy enough, every time she kissed Torrie's lips, it was like she was kissing him.

Dawn knows Al will never find a woman like her and he wants to marry her anyway. Torrie comes out for some of the most violent slapping you'll ever see so Dawn promises to show the full tape on Sunday to prove how much Torrie enjoyed it. This is pure trash but Al's "acting" is so bad that it's hard not to laugh. He just stands there with no reactions, even to the fact that his fiance slept with his daughter and they kiss alike.

Tazz immediately starts basically promising various adult material on Sunday as we look at replays. This really is the second biggest Smackdown story (and not that far from first). On a show with the Smackdown Six mind you.

Jamie Noble vs. Crash

Tazz thinks Jamie's cousin Nunzio is 6'11 and 320lbs and works for the mob. Jamie elbows Crash in the face to start and they slug it out with Crash getting the better of it. A faceplant gives Crash two and it's Crash Landing time, only to have Nunzio (ECW's Little Guido, who Tazz suddenly doesn't recognize despite the ECW chants) come in for the DQ.

The double beatdown ensues but Nidia doesn't look pleased.

Scott Steiner arrives.

Stephanie comes to the ring to sign Steiner as Tazz and Cole look at WWE Magazine, naturally featuring their boss. Steiner takes the pen but won't sign because last week, after the cameras stopped rolling in the limo, nothing happened. See, Stephanie didn't put out for him

because she's wholesome, unlike that Torrie Wilson. Now why would you think Stephanie was on her level in the second story based on sex in exchange for a deal on this show?

Anyway, Stephanie suggests that she'll do it if he signs so Scott puts her on the table and wants to go right now. Stephanie goes on a rant about her moral standards but Scott doesn't want to hear it. If he can't trust her in his personal life, he can't trust her in his business life. Therefore, he's signing with Raw. Eric Bischoff comes out to gloat and Stephanie throws a fit.

We get an update on Rey Mysterio's knee injury, which is worse than they thought. There's no word on his return time.

Edge has a knee injury of his own but he's ready to focus on his tag match tonight. Angle comes in and agrees to have Edge's back in the tag.

PPV rundown. Tazz says Eddie vs. Benoit has five stars written all over it.

Edge/Kurt Angle vs. Big Show/A-Train

Good thing the production team had a new song with a train whistle ready in case someone changed their name. Edge and Big Show start things off as Cole goes over Angle and Edge's history together. A chop staggers the Canadian so it's off to Angle, who gets A-Train. One heck of a shoulder drops Kurt and it's back to Edge, who unloads on A-Train in the corner.

A-Train throws Edge hard into the corner and it's time for Heyman to start the trash talk. For reasons of general large headedness, A-Train takes his sweet time getting around to Edge's bad knee before handing it off to Big Show for some knee work of his own. The slow beating begins with Show laying on the leg.

After more lifeless offense from the giants, Edge gets in a tornado DDT to stun A-Train and the hot tag brings in Angle. A German suplex actually sends A-Train flying as everything breaks down. Edge spears A-Train down instead of Big Show but the big bald pops up and chairs Edge in the back. The Angle Slam drops both monsters but a Heyman distraction lets Show chokeslam Kurt for the pin.

Rating: D+. They did what they could here but with Edge on a bad wheel and Big Show/A-Train as the heel team, you're only going to get so far. The match wasn't bad but this better lead to Angle

winning the title on Sunday as it's clear Show can only do the bare basics at this point. A-Train was trying but calling him limited would be an understatement.

Overall Rating: C-. You know what this felt like? An early 2017 episode of NXT. You know there's talent there and the people behind the scenes know what they're doing but there's only so much you can do when you're this limited. We've done the Smackdown Six matches so many times and since Lesnar is suspended, you have to come up with something fresh.

That means you're pretty much stuck with short matches to build up new talent without exposing how bad they really are. This show wasn't the worst but it's clear that they're trying something new, which isn't the easiest thing in the world. They need more time and better talent but things could be rough for the time being.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the NXT: The Full Sail Years Volumes I and II, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/03/24/kbs-history-of-nxt-volumes-1-and-2-now-available-in-paperback/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

Smackdown – May 9, 2017: The British Curse Turns Blue

Smackdown

Date: May 9, 2017

Location: 02 Arena, London, England

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're taped tonight from London as we have less than two weeks before Backlash. That means it's Jinder Mahal time tonight and we get to see more of his rapid fire build towards being a main eventer. Other than that we might get more of the Welcoming Committee, which is turning into one of the worst heel stables I can remember in years. Let's get to it.

We open with a clip of last month's Six Pack Challenge where Mahal became #1 contender. Has Mojo Rawley had a match since then? Mahal then cost Randy Orton the House of Horrors match and stole the title belt.

Opening sequence.

Here's Orton to get things going and he has the title back, thanks to Shane McMahon taking it from Jinder last week. Orton says he lost because of Mahal, not because of Wyatt or that refrigerator. Before Orton can get too far, here's Mahal to show off his promotional pictures with the title. Mahal promises to begin a new age at Backlash before speaking I believe Punjab.

Cue Kevin Owens to say no one cares about anything but him. Owens brags about ending Chris Jericho's career and, after he gets rid of AJ Styles, he wants the World Title. Now it's AJ coming out to quite the reaction to say he's the face that runs the place. Cue Baron Corbin but Sami Zayn jumps him from behind and the fights are on with the good guys cleaning house.

Becky Lynch vs. Natalya

Before the match, we get some generic "British people have bad teeth" jokes from James Ellsworth and Carmella. Naomi and Charlotte are here as Becky's seconds. The Welcoming Committee offers an early distraction so Natalya can send Becky to the floor and take over. We hit the abdominal stretch for a bit before the STRAIGHT FIRE forearm has Natalya reeling. The Bexploder looks to set up something on the top but the other women get in a fight, allowing Natalya to pull

Becky off the top for the pin at 3:02. That's almost the same ending as Alexa Bliss vs. Mickie James from last night.

Rating: D+. The time and the familiar ending hut this one but real problem was taking fifteen minutes to introduce everyone and start the match. I'm sure this sets up a six woman tag for the pay per view, which should be a good place for either someone to turn heel or at least for the Welcoming Committee to get a win. Therefore, look for Charlotte to pin Carmella.

Lana is coming soon.

Charlotte blames Naomi for Becky's loss but Lynch comes in to cool them down. A six woman tag is set for the pay per view.

It's Fashion Files time! They're at the 02 Arena this week and Fandango is dressed as Sherlock Holmes while Breeze is a standard British cop. Fandango: "Cheerio." Breeze: "No thanks. I've already had my breakfast." They find some spilled lead paint that would only be worn by Uggs. That must be a ruse so Breezango can't tell them apart but it doesn't really matter. The paint leads to a room where roaring is heard. They think something nefarious is going on in there but it's just the Ascension warming themselves up. Breeze: "I'm getting too old for this s***e." More funny stuff here as Breezango continues to look good.

Luke Harper vs. Erick Rowan

Rowan throws him to the floor to start as the announcers talk about how these two are running amuck with no one to guide them. Back in and Rowan scores with a spinning kick to the face and a splash for two. Harper suplexes his way out of the head vice but the discus lariat is blocked. Instead Erick gets two off a Side Effect and grabs the mask. The distraction (as the referee tries to figure out what the mask is supposed to look like) allows Rowan to poke Harper in the eye and grab a reverse spinning powerslam for the pin at 4:23.

Rating: D. Just a power match here but they really need to either stop pushing Harper for a few weeks and then having him lose over

and over again. I mean, do they really think there's value in Erick Rowan winning with a lame powerslam? This didn't work and the booking makes my head hurt so we'll move on.

Here's Dolph Ziggler to call out Shinsuke Nakamura. He's been here for eight years (How has it only been that long?) but the fans treat him like a disease. Who do the people cheer for now? That starts a Nakamura chant as this is starting to sound like Chris Jericho vs. AJ Styles last year.

Now people are calling Nakamura an artist but Ziggler is the strongest man in WWE because he never needed the people. This brings out Nakamura to tell Ziggler to shut up. Nakamura is ready to show him so here's a referee but Ziggler says nope. Dolph says we do this on his time and wants the match at Backlash. The sneak attack earns Dolph a beating.

Sami is fired up to team with Orton and Styles. Zayn tries to run a strategy session but seems to just annoy his partners. By the time he announces their team as the winners, they've both left.

New Day is coming and we get a video game themed promo with every other team being listed on a character select screen.

Breezango vs. Ascension

Fandango chops at Konnor to start but it's off to Viktor who runs him over. A chinlock doesn't last long and it's off to Breeze for some house cleaning. Fandango makes a blind tag and it's an atomic drop into the Last Dance for the in at 2:39.

Post match the Usos come out to say twelve days over and over while listing off various things that Breezango can do to each others' backs (with Jimmy clearly trying not to crack up).

Mojo Rawley is giving some kids a tour of the backstage area but stops to tell them a story about Andre the Giant. Andre did a lot of things but Mojo switches to a story about a boy who was different growing up. He was bullied as a kid but then he used it as motivation to become a legend. Mojo pulls out the trophy and the kids are amazed. I've started to like Mojo more and more lately and

I'd love to see him get some more TV time.

Rusev hasn't heard about his demand for a World Title shot but he'll be here next week to get an answer.

Randy Orton/Sami Zayn/AJ Styles vs. Jinder Mahal/Baron Corbin/Kevin Owens

Sami and Corbin get things started but a quick tag brings in Owens. There's no contact though as it's off to Mahal for some kicks to the chest. Sami grabs a headscissors and brings in Orton so Mahal tags out to Owens. The threat of an RK0 sends Owens out to the floor and we take a break.

Back with Corbin working over Sami and handing it off to Owens as the eternal feud continues. Sami is tossed outside for a stomping from Mahal, drawing AJ over to stare him down. Corbin's chinlock keeps things slow so Jinder comes in for one of his own. The stomping keeps going and we take a break.

Back with AJ getting the hot tag to come in and clean house as everything breaks down. The running forearm drops a seated Corbin and Sami hits a big flip dive onto all three villains. Owens breaks up the Phenomenal Forearm though and Styles and Corbin are down. It's Mahal breaking up the tag though and dropping a knee for two on Styles.

Owens comes back in for some very aggressive stomping and a chinlock of his own. That's quite the popular move tonight and in no way a method to stretch out a long main event. The backsplash hits knees though and the hot tag brings in Orton. Everything breaks down and Owens eats the RK0, only to have Jinder's cobra clutch slam put Orton away at 22:14.

Rating: C+. The match was more long than good and the ending extended the Mahal vs. Orton feud but this felt like a way to fill in TV time instead of a match that needed to go this long. I'm not sure how much people are going to buy Mahal's cobra clutch slam as a threat to beat Orton but at least they're setting it up as a possibility.

Overall Rating: D+. This was a rough one as it felt like a shortened version of Raw. The problem is I don't watch Smackdown for a shortened version of Raw but rather something far more interesting and exciting. To be fair though, I think we can blame that on the UK tour as those shows are almost always lifeless. Some stuff was set up for the pay per view though and that's important with just a show left beforehand.

Results

Natalya b. Becky Lynch – Natalya pulled her off the top rope

Erick Rowan b. Luke Harper – Spinning reverse powerslam

Breezango b. Ascension – Last Dance to Viktor

Jinder Mahal/Kevin Owens/Baron Corbin b. Sami Zayn/Randy Orton/AJ Styles – Cobra clutch slam to Orton

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the NXT: The Full Sail Years Volumes I and II, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/03/24/kbs-history-of-nxt-volumes-1-and-2-now-available-in-paperback/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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

Smackdown – December 5, 2002: One of My Favorite

Matches

Smackdown

Date: December 5, 2002

Location: American Airlines Center, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

We're getting close to the end of the year and thankfully there are no turkeys involved this week. However there's still Big Show, who can indeed be put in the F5 and chokeslams people through tables. Hopefully we get to see some more of the young guys being pushed, which would do Smackdown a lot of good. Let's get to it.

The opening video points out that Stephanie McMahon is in charge and you better understand that. She suspended Brock Lesnar last week but he screwed himself you see.

Opening sequence.

Albert vs. Rey Mysterio

Albert has been stuck on Velocity lately and is ready to turn some heads. Fair enough, but will those heads be 8 3/8 inches? Mysterio kicks at the leg to start but gets caught in a good looking sitout gorilla press slam. Back up and Albert charges into a boot, followed by a springboard bulldog for two. The 619 connects but the West Coast Pop is countered into an over the shoulder backbreaker to give Albert the huge upset. Well....I know they need new stars but ALBERT? They couldn't have Benoit or Angle do this and then move on to face Lesnar? They use Albert for it instead? Uh....yeah.

Post match Alberto beats Rey's knee with chair, likely writing him off TV to repair an injury, until Edge makes a save.

Bill DeMott rants about being interviewed by Funaki, who can barely speak English.

Edge yells at the medics for not taking care of Mysterio fast enough.

Here's Stephanie to brag about throwing herself at Scott Steiner in

the name of getting him to sign with Smackdown. It's worked though as Steiner will be here next week to sign. As for tonight, Lesnar is still suspended but he'll get to appear via satellite to give his side of the story. At least Stephanie is now a heel and supposed to be obnoxious and mean.

Jamie Noble vs. Crash

Nidia jumps in on commentary as Jamie takes Crash down for an early two. Noble works him over in the corner and Nidia doesn't want to talk about Jamie's cousin Nunzio. Crash comes back with a clothesline and Bodog but stops to kiss Nidia. The distraction lets Jamie load up the Tiger Bomb, only to be reversed into the Crash Landing (Styles Clash) for the pin. Now that's how you make a losing streak stick: a clean loss to a low level contender.

Jamie says Nunzio gets here next week.

Chris Benoit gives one heck of an interview about how his whole life has been about becoming World Champion but the broken neck held him back. This is edited off the Network, which is understandable, though annoying if you really want everything.

Dawn Marie comes up to Torrie and gets straight to the point: she wants Torrie instead of her dad. If she comes to Dawn's hotel room tonight, the wedding is over. Torrie looks disturbed and says no way. Dawn asks how much Torrie loves her father and the wheels seem to be turning. This would have worked better if the acting was a bit higher and if it came off as sexy rather than stalkerish.

One thing here: what exactly is hurt by Al marrying Dawn? He'll be with someone WAY out of his league and seems to be happy. Is she going to take what is likely very limited money? Or just leave him? Or is it just to torment Torrie into sleeping with her? I really don't see how Al is hurt in this whole thing, assuming Dawn doesn't try to swindle him somehow.

Funaki vs. Bill DeMott

DeMott has Marc Mero's music. Funaki gets taken down and stomped a lot as the announcers recap how horrible DeMott's career has been.

Choking with some screaming has Funaki in trouble, followed by a powerslam and the moonsault for the pin. Just a squash with DeMott basically having the same character and motivation as Albert.

Los Guerreros are ready to win their matches tonight and make Grandma Guerrero proud. That should be everyone's mission in life really.

We get the Lesnar sitdown interview and he got what he deserved for working with Paul Heyman. He heard Stephanie say that Lesnar screwed himself....and here are Heyman and Big Show to interrupt. Heyman compares Lesnar to a child that needed a spanking and who better than Big Show to administer one? The two of them screwed Lesnar and loved it. If they could go back in time to the week before Survivor Series, they would do it all over again. After some plugs of tonight's four way #1 contenders match, Lesnar promises to be at Armageddon.

Cruiserweight Title: Billy Kidman vs. Chavo Guerrero

Kidman is defending. A fan in the crowd has a sign saying the Guerreros will mow your lawn for a green card. As stupid as that is, Cole tops it by saying "Brock Lesnar has said he'll be at Armageddon in person, whatever that means." Kidman grabs a hurricanrana to start but gets caught in a gutbuster to give Chavo the real early control. Some shots to the kidneys set up an abdominal stretch but a Gory Bomb is countered into a rollup.

Kidman's fireman's carry into a backbreaker gets two and the BK Bomb is good for the same. They head up top at the same time for the big crash out to the floor and we have a bit of a breather. Back in and Kidman misses the Shooting Star, setting up the Gory Bomb to give Chavo two. Kidman comes right back with something like a reverse implant DDT, followed by the Shooting Star to retain.

Rating: C+. The rib work didn't go anywhere but it was nice to see Kidman getting some time instead of being thrown out there for three minutes before finishing with his one big move. Kidman can be a fine champion and a good choice for someone to take the title from later on so this is the right way to build him up.

Edge wants to become #1 contender but wants to get his hands on Albert too. He's not entirely focused you see. Edge charges across the backstage and goes after Albert until referees break it up.

And now, a hip hop challenge between John Cena and Rikishi. They both rap and Rikishi wins the fan vote. An attack ensues but Rikishi and Tazz (hosting) easily fight off Cena and B Two. Dancing ensues and I have no idea how this helps anyone other than Rikishi.

Angle is ready for the main event.

Edge vs. Chris Benoit vs. Kurt Angle vs. Eddie Guerrero

Elimination rules and the winner gets Big Show at Armageddon. Before we're ready to go though, Albert jumps Edge and takes out his knee. After everyone else is ready to go, Edge slowly limps down to the ring to have all four in the ring at once. The match is joined in progress after a break with Edge backdropping and flapjacking anyone he sees (save for the referee, commentators and fans of course) until Benoit and Angle start going after the leg.

Angle and Eddie head outside, leaving Benoit to stay on the bad knee. The half nelson faceplant gives Edge a breather but Eddie throws both of them outside. Eddie misses the frog splash and gets hit by the Swan Dive for two. The Edgecution gets two on Benoit, who pops up and Crossfaces Eddie for the elimination.

Angle is right there with the rolling German suplexes on Benoit but Edge comes back with the missile dropkick on Kurt. The knee is banged up again though and it's Angle on his feet first. The Angle Slam is countered into an Edge-0-Matic but Benoit breaks it up with a Crossface on Edge which is broken up by an ankle lock. We get a ref bump so here's Eddie with a belt shot to Benoit. Edge adds a spear to get rid of Chris and we're down to two.

Kurt is right back up with the ankle lock though and Edge somehow lasts the better part of a minute. They both fall to the floor in a crash and we take a break. Back with Angle clotheslining a bloody Edge, who hammers away with right hands in the corner. That just earns him an overhead belly to belly as Angle turns it up one more

notch. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Edge comes back with his own belly to belly.

Another Edge-O-Matic gets two as the announcers are selling the heck out of that bad knee. Angle rolls some more German suplexes but Edge, with his thong sticking out, gets a spear for two more. The Edgecution gets another near fall as the fans are losing their minds on these kickouts.

Edge actually blocks the corner running superplex and hits another missile dropkick. The Angle Slam gets two and the kickout only makes Kurt more angry. Edge rolls through the ankle lock for a hot two and it's right back to the ankle lock. A rope is finally grabbed and Edge hits his own Angle Slam for two more. He takes too long getting up top though and the running Angle Slam FINALLY puts Edge away to give Angle the title shot.

Rating: A. I remember watching this match when it aired live and thinking it was amazing. While I remember it differently (I would have sworn that Edge came out halfway through the match and that the first two eliminations took the better part of fifteen minutes), it's still an outstanding back and forth battle with the last seven or eight minutes being incredible. Angle and Edge were trading bomb after bomb with Edge finally getting caught at the end. Edge looked like a star here and....is going to be facing Albert at the pay per view. But that's for another time as this was a great match and well worth checking out.

Big Show is IMMEDIATELY there to chokeslam Angle and stand tall.

We cut to Torrie going into Dawn's hotel room. Dawn is waiting on her wearing a robe and sipping a glass of wine. Torrie looks very uncomfortable as Dawn tucks back her hair and says how much Torrie must love her father. If Torrie does everything Dawn wants, the wedding is off. Torrie goes to leave but Dawn says that means Torrie doesn't love her father. That's enough to get Torrie to stay and we're out. I was rather intrigued by this when I was younger for obvious reasons but now....egads. The fact that you know nothing is going to make TV and the payoff is Dawn vs. Torrie tells you

everything you need to know.

Overall Rating: B-. The main event more than carries the week but we're looking down the barrel of Albert, Rikishi, Bill DeMott and Big Show as some of the top stars of this show. I'm not sure why they would go that route when they have Edge, Benoit and Los Guerreros sitting there but WWE never was one to go with what people seemed interested in seeing. Above all else though, this show toned the Stephanie stuff down by a few thousand notches and it was much easier watch as a result. Good show this week but the future is looking scary.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the NXT: The Full Sail Years Volumes I and II, now in PAPERBACK. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/03/24/kbs-history-of-nxt-volumes-1-and-2-now-available-in-paperback/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

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