

Happy Anniversary Montreal Screwjob

Fifteen years ago (yesterday), the wrestling world was changed forever when Vince said ring the bell, screwing Bret out of the WWF Title and causing more talk and more conspiracy theories about a single subject than ever before or since in wrestling. My question to you all: has there ever been a more controversial single moment in wrestling? I can't think of one.

Themed WWE PPVs Possibly Ending

Word on the street is that Vince has finally caught up to reality and is realizing that the themed PPVs don't add much. So what does this mean? This can only be a good thing. At the end of the day, there's almost no reason to follow a calendar instead of following the logical progression of the stories. Look at Taker vs. HHH when the Cell was announced. It came out of nowhere and it worked really well. It wasn't what I was expecting but it also made sense while also making me want to see the match. That's a great thing which you can't get with the themed shows happening at the same time every year. Good call on this.

Thoughts?

Tribute to the Troops 2009 – It's Hard Not To Smile At These

Tribute to the Troops 2009

Date: December 4, 2009

Location: Holt Memorial Stadium, Balad Air Base, Iraq

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

So back in 2003, WWE started doing an annual Christmas show for the troops stationed in Iraq (why did they never go to Afghanistan?). This was an awesome idea and they've run the same idea every year until 2010 when they started having the shows in America so people didn't have to fly around the world for a few days. I've done a few of these so I figured I'd do the rest of them and since I can't find a full copy of the first one right now, here's the one from 2009. Let's get to it.

Oh and before I forget: not all of the card is televised. There were eight matches on the card but only three aired on the broadcast. That would be changed I think next year. Lawler and Cole did commentary on tape from Connecticut later on.

One other note: the matches here are going to be lower quality than usual and there is nothing wrong with that. I'm going to be very lenient with my ratings on this show because the wrestling isn't for the TV audience here.

The opening video talks about the USO's history of taking care of the troops in combat.

Rey Mysterio/Mark Henry vs. CM Punk/Carlito

The arena is unlike anything you'll ever see. It's outside and everyone is in camouflage. Punk and Rey start things off in a feeling out process. They go to a test of strength with Punk easily putting Rey on the mat. Rey fights up but can't hit the 619. Punk does the Hogan muscle pose so Rey tags in Henry. Mark runs him over a few times and drops him out of a gorilla press position. We get the Andre/Snuka splash but Carlito makes the save. Rey hits a double 619, followed by a World's Strongest Slam on Carlito and a springboard splash to Punk for the stereo pins. Carlito was never in and this was a squash.

We get photos of the WWE guys and Divas visiting troops set to a Bob Dylan song.

Here's Eve Torres to introduce R-Santa who introduces the Bellas, Layla, Alicia and Kelly in sexy Santa outfits to give gifts to the crowd.

Barack Obama thanks the troops for doing this.

More troop visits, including Morrison and Eve singing We Wish You A Merry Christmas. This runs for a LONG time but it's just wrestlers shaking hands with soldiers.

General David Petraeus thanks us some more and we hear about all the cool stuff the troops do in Iraq.

The Miz vs. John Morrison

Miz is US Champion and Morrison is IC Champion, although he's lost the title to Drew McIntyre since the show was taped. Morrison hits a fast dropkick to take over and get two as Cole talks about some commander who missed the show so he didn't miss his anniversary for the seventh straight year. Smart man. Miz sidesteps Morrison to send him to the floor

and the fans are all over Mikey. Back in and Miz goes up and gets crotched, giving Morrison a superplex for two. Starship Pain misses and Miz rolls him up for the pin with his feet on the ropes. Another short match but that's fine.

We get a speech from Cena from after the match that's up next. He talks about how he's been here six years now and everyone knows how he feels about the troops. We get a highlight package set to Never Gonna Be Alone by Nickelback.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. Chris Jericho

Cena is defending even though he already lost the title to Sheamus at TLC. Jericho would be a tag champion here (no belt for some reason) but he also lost at TLC. Bad show for champions that. We get some abbreviated big match intros and it's time to go. Jericho immediately takes him into the corner and pounds away but Cena comes back with a release fisherman's suplex for no cover.

Jericho gets in a kick to the face to knock Cena to the floor for the springboard dropkick. We take a break (with more videos of the soldiers) and come back with Jericho putting on the Walls. Cena finally rolls through into the STF but Jericho grabs the rope. While the hold is on we cut to a shot of the crowd and you see a fighter jet flying through the shot. That's awesome.

Cole thanks the staff here and apparently one of the big shots is named Ned Flanders. I played that back to see if it was right and that's the exact name he says. Jericho tries an AA off the middle rope but Jericho headbutts him down. Jericho tries a middle rope cross body but Cena rolls through into the AA to retain.

Rating: C. This was fine even though we barely saw most of the match. Jericho never beating Cena is almost a running joke at this point but I don't think it was ever brought up. This was a very quick match which

apparently ran less than eight minutes in full. To be fair though it's like 100 degrees so the lack of endurance is acceptable.

A three minute highlight package of the while trip ends the show.

Overall Rating: N/A. I know that's kind of cheap but we had one rateable match and a ton of the show was just clips of the guys with the troops. Still though, what in the world do you want me to say? This is about a special Christmas show and giving the troops who get shot at every day something fun. The full show versions of this we would get starting next year would be much easier to grade. It's really hard to not smile when you watch one of these though.

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Ever Wanted To Know How The Hierarchy In WWE Works?

http://www.wwe.com/f/doc/2012/11/20121102_642xvariable_higherarchy_AM.pdf

If the main shows were this entertaining, I'd have a lot less to say in the reviews. And since this is WWE.com, it's canonical, meaning I can point to this if I want to complain about bosses.

Thought of the Day: WWE Is Too Polished

I've noticed this a lot watching Raw's from the Attitude Era. Back in the day, Raw looked a bit more gritty and toned down. It wasn't the same set but with different colors on the tron. Things looked more bare and in a way, that's a nice change. Instead of having everything flashy and a big presentation, it was more about what you got in the ring and in the back. I'm not saying strip everything down, but stop making things look so big and polished. It might help a bit.

Thought of the Day: WWE Is Now Ripping Off TNA's Bad Ideas

I mentioned this in the review last night but it deserves its own mention here. Last night on Raw, we saw WWE rip off the Clair Lynch storyline that TNA ran a few months back. We have Cena in the role of AJ Styles, being accused of an affair and having a plausible excuse for every piece of evidence presented to him. Vickie is now playing the role of Kaz and Daniels as the accuser and AJ is playing a not-angry Clair Lynch. This is the consensual PG version, but it's the same story.

If this is the best they can come up with, they're in trouble.

ECW on Sci-Fi – October 31, 2006: The Chamber Is Coming

ECW on Sci-Fi

Date: October 31, 2006

Location: Bradley Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Commentators: Joey Styles, Tazz

It's Halloween (ish) and the main story is that Van Dam can challenge for the world title anytime he wants. Things are starting to pick up a bit around here, but the Test/Holly stuff is dragging it WAY down. Striker isn't much either but he's not terrible as a character. We're inching closer to December to Dismember and it's the go home show for Cyber Sunday 2006 as well. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of the main event from last week. Why would Heyman give ROB VAN DAM a LADDER match to get his world title shot?

Here's Heyman in the back with something to say. Apparently Van Dam has picked December To Dismember for his title shot, but Heyman says that the stipulations were never named. They'll be two of the six men in the first ever EXTREME ELIMINATION CHAMBER!!! Oh dear goodness....not that. Please?

Theme song.

Tonight it's Van Dam/Holly vs. Show/Test.

Extreme Elimination Chamber Qualifying Match: Sabu vs. Kevin Thorn

There are various people in Halloween costumes at ringside but they're no

one in particular. Sabu takes out the leg of Thorn and quickly knocks him out to the floor. Sabu hits part of a flip dive to the outside and a slingshot splash back into the ring. Thorn comes back with a sitout powerbomb and it's off to a chinlock. Sabu will have none of that and comes back with a pair of springboard elbows for two. An Ariel distraction allows Thorn to clothesline Sabu out of the air for two but Kevin walks into a springboard DDT for a delayed two. Another slingshot legdrop sets up the camel clutch to send Sabu to the Chamber.

Rating: C. This was a quick match to send Sabu to the Chamber. Thorn never quite worked and was never pushed as a top guy on ECW, so it's not like this is a big loss for him. For a TV opener though this was fine and the ECW fans still love Sabu, so there was never any doubt at all as to who was winning.

Sandman talks about how he's going to get the match against Umaga when a clown (not Doink) comes by and gets beaten up with some cane shots. Ok then.

The Marine stuff because we can't go a week without hearing about it. Now they're talking about the alligators in the movie, I kid you not.

Tazz gives Joey a noose for Halloween. This show is getting creepier every minute.

Daivari vs. Shannon Moore

This is Daivari and Khali returning after about three months off all WWE TV. Daivari cranks on the arm to start and gets two off a slam. They slug it out and after a quick burst of offense from Shannon, a DDT gets the pin for Daivari.

Khali destroys Shannon post match.

RVD isn't worried about the Chamber and isn't surprised that Heyman would pull this. He looks rather stoned here. Holly comes up and talks about the back injury he had a few weeks ago. They're partners tonight. He says he's got RVD's back tonight in a nice pun.

It's time for an ECW Diva Halloween Costume Contest. There are only three chicks in it: Kelly, Trinity and Ariel. Trinity is in her usual attire: a thong and topless other than caution tape in certain areas. Ariel is in her usual attire and admits it's not a costume. Kelly is...CM Punk? Yep that's apparently right. Since she's the only one in what you would call a costume, she should win but come on: Trinity is in caution tape and that's it. Thankfully, Trinity wins by a landslide. Apparently she's a crime scene. Ok then.

Post contest Mike Knox comes out to yell at Kelly. Punk makes the save and beats down Knox.

After a break Knox challenges Punk to a match next week.

We look at the people in costumes again. There are a few whose faces you can't see.

Rob Van Dam/Hardcore Holly vs. Big Show/Test

Test and Van Dam get things going with Test choking away in the corner via a boot. Van Dam avoids a charge in the corner but a middle rope cross body is caught. Rob escapes and kicks Test down but stops to jaw with Show. Another spin kick puts Test down and here's Holly. Holly chokes in the corner a bit and gets a boot up in the corner to stagger Test again.

The fans are all over Big Show and it's back to RVD. Test gets in a shot though and rams Van Dam into Show's foot. For some reason there's no tag though and Test is knocked to the outside. Rob charges into a forearm from the apron but cross bodies Test to the floor as we take a break.

Back with the same match we had before we left and Test clotheslining Van Dam down for no cover.

Test chokes away in the corner and it would be nice to see a tag. Instead Test does Van Dam's thumb point and gets caught with the stepover kick. There's the tag to Holly and now it's Big Show with the tag as well. After some basic kicks to the legs from Holly, Show goes into his usual offense, which means standing on Holly and doing basic moves that mean more because he's huge.

A headbutt puts Holly down and it's back to Test. Holly tries to fight out of an arm hold but Test runs him right back over. Show sits down on the arm Test was working over but misses a slow motion Vader Bomb. There's the hot tag to Van Dam who goes toe to toe with Show and takes out the leg with a reverse chopblock. Rolling Thunder gets two as everything breaks down. The referee goes down as Holly hits the Alabama Slam on Test, only to get kicked in the face. Van Dam and Big Show head to the floor and a gorilla hits Van Dam in the back with a pipe. That and the chokeslam get the pin for Show on RVD.

Rating: C-. This was a watchable main event tag, but it ran nearly twenty minutes, which is a lot for a match featuring the four guys in here. I believe all four of them would wind up in the Chamber so this was kind of a preview for that. The costume was a bit pointless but it was Halloween after all so it's understandable I guess.

Heyman is the gorilla.

Overall Rating: D+. This was all about starting the Chamber build which while sounding good on paper would wind up being a near disaster in execution. Either way, this wasn't a horrible show overall, but it was a pretty weak time for the show at this point. Things would change huge after the PPV though.

Here's Cyber Sunday if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2012/10/28/cyber-sunday-2006-a-moment-that-always-makes-me-laugh/>

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Thought of the Day: Lie To Me WWE! Lie To Me!

This is another sign of the times and it's something else where they need to take the lead from old school. So I'm watching Survivor Series 2002 and there's a backstory about Victoria vs. Trish. The story goes that they used to be fitness models together and Trish abandoned Victoria. This alone sets up a story for the PPV match. Notice what they did here: they MADE THE STORY UP. This is something you rarely see anymore. Today, most feuds are about wanting to challenge the champion and are very based in reality. I get enough real life in real life. When I watch wrestling, I like things being over the top instead of down to earth. Make up some stories. Tell me about Kane getting burned alive or Undertaker being a demon or something these guys did before they got to the WWE. In short, LIE TO ME.

ECW on Sci-Fi – October 24,

2006: Get Some New Heels. Please.

ECW on Sci-Fi

Date: October 24, 2006

Location: Scottrade Center, St. Louis, Missouri

Commentators: Joey Styles, Tazz

More ECW goodness here as we inch closer to Cyber Sunday and the Champion of Champions match which means we're inching closer to December to Dismember and the night ECW was thrown off a cliff. The main event tonight is a ladder match between Van Dam and Big Show, which may or may not be for a shot at Show's title. The only other thing I have to say is this is being written six years to the day of the show which isn't interesting but it fills in some lines. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap from last week with Van Dam pinning Big Show. During that match, Hardcore Holly saved Van Dam from an attack by Test.

Theme song.

Here's RVD to open things up. He brags about being the first guy to beat the Big Show and says he wants the world title shot now. Here's Heyman with his security who praises RVD and has a contract for a title match for RVD. But that contract is going to be held above the ring and must be retrieved using a ladder. Why would Heyman agree to give Van Dam his specialty match to get a title shot? Why not make it like a body slam challenge or something like that? Either way, the security jumps Van Dam but gets beaten up just as quickly.

CM Punk vs. Matt Striker

Punk immediately hits a kind of spinebuster to take Striker down and

Striker is in trouble on the mat. We get some chain wrestling before Punk sends him down to escape a cravate. They trade a series of hammerlocks but Striker finally grabs the rope to escape. Punk fires off knees to the head but gets sent shoulder first into the post. Striker works on the arm for a bit but Punk kicks him in the head to escape. The knee in the corner and the bulldog sets up Punk's finishing sequence but Mike Knox runs in for the DQ.

Rating: D+. This was a squash until we got to Punk getting beaten up for the DQ. Striker was a fine character as the whole teacher thing worked really well, but at the end of the day the guy was not any good in the ring at all. There are only so many ways you can get around that and Striker never found one. Punk vs. Knox hopefully will end soon.

We get a quick recap of Holly going after Heyman a few weeks ago which also sets up Holly vs. Test tonight.

Test vs. Hardcore Holly

Holly pounds away to start and Test is all BRING IT ON. Test drops to the floor and Holly is fine with taking it out there. He isn't however fine with being sent into the post and being sent back in for more pounding from Test. Holly comes back with a kick and a legdrop as the fans aren't thrilled with this match.

Test gets tied up in the ropes and Holly pounds away even more. That's what this whole match has been for about three minutes or so now: punching and occasional kicking. Holly suplexes Test over the top and out to the floor as we take a break. Back with Test with a body grip on the mat. During the break Test rammed Holly's back into the post three times. How nice of them to put that during the break and let us see this rest hold instead.

Test sends Holly into the corner for two and puts on a bearhug. Holly escapes and kicks a bent over Test in the face to put both guys down. A

big back elbow puts test down as does a clothesline. Holly hits a top rope clothesline for two but Test elbows him down and goes up, only to get crotched. Holly gets two off a middle rope legdrop before escaping the pumphandle slam. The Alabama Slam is countered too so Holly kicks Test in the very low abdomen. Test pokes him in the eye and sends him shoulder first into the post. That and a rollup with a handful of tights gets the pin.

Rating: D. There are multiple problems here. Problem #1: the match sucked. It was mainly punching and kicking and boring back work which didn't go anywhere. Second, at the end of the day this is Test vs. Hardcore Holly, the latter of which wrestling as a face. Holly, in this character at least, is one of the least likable guys in ECW. The other problem is the same one I've said many times: these guys are career midcarders in the WWE and it's really hard to care about the two of them fighting. They're on ECW because they're not good enough to make it on Raw or Smackdown, and the match is evidence of that.

Post match Test hits Holly in the back with a chair a few times.

More Marine nonsense.

We run down a few matches for Cyber Sunday, including picking Umaga's opponent. Sandman is an option, and Sandman says he thinks he's the best option because it'll be violent and bloody. Well Sandman never was much of a talker.

Rob Van Dam vs. Big Show

It's a ladder match and if Van Dam wins, he gets a title shot at Show at some point in the future. The bell rings after a break which is nice as we don't have to waste part of the match later. Van Dam immediately gets a ladder which is a smart move...I think. Show throws the ladder out so Van Dam starts firing off kicks. He hits a slingshot legdrop to the back of the head to take over and brings the ladder back in. Show comes back

with a headbutt and chop to take over.

Rob gets whipped into the ladder in the corner, sending him to the floor. Show tries a different approach, lifting the ladder in the air and swatting at the contract. Rob gets in a shot and brings in another ladder to blast Show in the head. Show is cut open and Van Dam leans a ladder against the corner. He shoves the ladder at Show and kicks said ladder against Show's head. Nice move.

Rolling Thunder hits the ladder which is on top of Show but Rob's back is hurt too. Rob goes up but Show shoves him onto the ropes to slow things down again. A ladder to the back keeps Show down and man is the champion bleeding badly. Show stands on a ladder on top of Van Dam and Rob is in trouble. Show spears Rob down to stop a comeback attempt and hits a simple punch to the head to take Rob down again.

Van Dam gets slammed down onto the ladder but Show's Vader Bomb misses....as always. Are heels that confident that they keep trying the same moves over and over again even though it's NEVER worked? There are big welts on Rob's sides. The left side of Show's face is COVERED in blood. He can see well enough to chokeslam Rob down but he's slow and fat so it takes him forever to go climb the ladder. Rob climbs up even faster and hits a seated senton into a rana over the top. Rob gets up and sprints up the ladder to get the contract for the win and the title shot. Apparently Van Dam gets to pick the time and place.

Rating: C+. The idea for a Big Show ladder match is to have the other guy use the ladder while Show uses his size and power with the ladder as the occasional prop. That worked here as it was Van Dam bouncing off Show the entire match and a high risk/leverage move that got the win for Van Dam. Good match here, especially for an ECW main event.

Overall Rating: C-. The main event was good, but the rest of the stuff here wasn't working. Guys like Test and Holly are not interesting, especially when they're the same guys they've been for years but on

Tuesdays instead of Mondays. The main event stuff is fine, but the heels on this show other than Big Show are horrible at this point. Good main event, but a weak show overall.

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“The First Time WWE Has Been In Egypt” WWE Lied To Us Tonight

Other than the time it was said that the Glamour Girls beat the Jumping Bomb Angels for the Women’s Tag Titles in Egypt. You can find the match on the same Coliseum Video as Patterson vs. whatever that South American Champion whose name I can’t remember was in Rio, but the official WWE line is that the tag title change was in Egypt back in the 80s.

And yes, I am that big of a wrestling geek.