

205 Live – December 5, 2017: Drewtopia!

205 Live

Date: December 5, 2017

Location: Valley View Casino Center, San Diego, California

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Nigel McGuinness

We're in a weird place with this show as the big #1 contenders match is coming up on Raw, making this show all the less important. On top of that, Enzo Amore is out of the country this week and has put Drew Gulak in charge. I'm sure nothing bad will come of this whatsoever. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Gulak becoming the second entrant in the #1 contender match by winning a four way last night on Raw.

Opening sequence.

Here's Gulak to open things up by asking how we are all doing. His mentor has appointed him as the leader of the Zo Train but this Monday, Drew is going to become the new #1 contender and face Enzo to become the new Cruiserweight Champion. It's PowerPoint time but Cedric Alexander comes out to cut him off for their match. Hang on a second though, as Drew is using his new authority to delegate matches. Therefore, Cedric will be facing someone else tonight. Someone who has been S-O-F-T as of late.

Cedric Alexander vs. Noam Dar

Gulak sits in on commentary. Dar cranks on a headlock to start but Cedric nips up and scores with a good looking dropkick. He stops to glare at Gulak though, allowing Dar to kick out at two. Dar gets sent outside where Gulak points out an incoming dive, allowing Gulak to kick Cedric down to take over.

Back in and Dar works on the arm until he realizes that isn't getting him anywhere. Instead he kicks Cedric in the face, only to be kicked away.

The springboard clothesline gets two but another kick cuts Cedric down. Dar goes up but Gulak freaks out, saying they talked about this. He comes back down and walks into the Neuralizer, followed by the Lumbar Check for the pin at 5:44.

Rating: D+. Nothing special here, aside from Gulak getting to show off some more of his entertaining personality. Dar is still one of the least interesting performers on the roster and Enzo looking down on him isn't doing him much good. I have no idea why Swann is in the title picture instead of Cedric but I'd bet on WWE not paying much attention.

205 Live is running some house shows next month.

Swann, Mustafa Ali and Akira Tozawa are fired up for the tour. Ali switches over to Gulak, who made him miss Enzo. The interviewer comes up to ask Swann about Gulak being in charge of the Zo Train. Swann doesn't mind though as he's going to go out and stay classy San Diego.

Brian Kendrick vs. Gran Metalik

Kendrick has Jack Gallagher with him. Earlier today, the two of them talked about being glad Kalisto is gone tonight. Metalik grabs an early springboard wristdrag to start and Kendrick needs a breather. Back up and Metalik runs the ropes into a middle rope dropkick, followed by a dive onto Gallagher. A springboard missile dropkick takes Kendrick down again but Metalik heads into the crowd.

With a running start, Metalik drives over the barricade for a hurricanrana to keep Kendrick in trouble. Gallagher grabs Metalik's leg though and Brian gets in a few shots to take over. Back in and we hit the choke on the ropes but it's too early for Sliced Bread. Instead it's a knee to the face and the Captain's Hook to give Kendrick the win at 5:48.

Rating: C+. This was a tale of two halves with Metalik dominating the early part but getting completely destroyed in the end. I'm still a fan of Metalik but it's pretty clear that he's only going to be there to put others over. It was more entertaining than I was expecting, even if Kendrick vs. Kalisto is little more than a way to get Kalisto back on track.

We look back at Nia Jax having a thing for Enzo.

Gulak yells at the Zo Train, again comparing the team to the Justice League. The thing is Ariya Daivari is Wonder Woman: a fierce warrior with a great sense of fashion.

Hideo Itami is still coming. We get some tweets from some members of the roster, who are excited to have him around.

Tony Nese vs. Rich Swann

Gulak is in Nese's corner so Swann brings Cedric with him. Nese wastes no time in kicking Swann down into the corner and then sweeping the leg to put him on the floor. That's fine with Swann who pops up for a middle rope flip dive to take Nese down as well. Back in and Nese takes over again, this time slapping on a bodyscissors.

The situp kicks to the ribs keep Swann in trouble but Nese misses a Lionsault. He's fine enough for a sitout pumphandle powerslam though and Swann is right back in trouble. Said trouble only lasts a few seconds though as Swann is right back up with a spinning kick to the head, followed by the Phoenix splash for the pin at 7:59.

Rating: C-. Another rather dull match to end a rather dull show. Swann winning was obvious and it's not a good sign when Gulak being upset at not wanting to upset Enzo was the most entertaining part. You could have had any member of the team out there and it wouldn't have changed a thing, which isn't the best sign in the world.

Post match Gulak calls in the Zo Train but the villains take forever just standing there, allowing Tozawa and Ali to come in for the save to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. This is a tricky one to grade as it was built around Drew Gulak, who was rather entertaining. The problem is the show itself didn't work, mainly because none of this matters. We're building towards Swann vs. Gulak for the title shot but with that match already set up and Enzo not here, none of this really matters. It made the show feel like a waste of time, which is what happens when you focus so much of your

storytelling on one idea. The wrestling was really lackluster though and it made for a dull night, which isn't a good sign when things need to be picking up.

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Main Event – November 30, 2017: The New Normal

Main Event

Date: November 30, 2017

Location: Thompson-Boling Arena, Knoxville, Tennessee

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Nigel McGuinness

Things have been changing around here lately with both Raw and Smackdown clips airing instead of just the ones from the red show that had been the case for so long. We're also back to a normal week in WWE after the huge Survivor Series weekend last time around. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

[Apollo Crews vs. Curt Hawkins](#)

Crews shoves him down a few times to start and grabs a headlock takeover for good measure. A slingshot hilo gets two but Hawkins sends him throat first into the ropes. We hit the reverse chinlock with a knee in the back until Hawkins heads outside to yell at Titus O'Neil. Hawkins gets two off a top rope elbow, only to get caught with an enziguri. The Toss Powerbomb gives Apollo the pin at 5:15.

Rating: D. I'm not sure how many times you can watch this match and still get anything out of it. We get the idea already but that's not going to stop WWE from running the thing over and over again around here. Now that being said, it's just Hawkins so does it really matter that much? I can't imagine there was that much thought put into the thing, which should be the case.

From Raw.

Here's Reigns to open things up. Last week was a big week for him as he and the Shield beat up New Day. Then he had an opportunity and we see a clip of him winning the Intercontinental Title. After the show was over, Shield came back out and put Miz through a table. This is his yard and this is the title so if you want it, come get it. Cue the Miztourage to say they know someone who wants the title. This brings out Elias of all people to say he wants the title. Reigns thinks it sounds like Elias wants to walk with the big dog, but after tonight he might have a neck brace like Curtis Axel.

And from later in the night.

Intercontinental Title: Roman Reigns vs. Elias

Elias is challenging. They trade shoulders to start with Elias getting the better of it and slapping on a reverse chinlock. Elias gets two off a clothesline and we hit a regular chinlock. Back up and the Miztourage offers a distraction so Elias can get in a hard knee for a near fall.

We come back from a break with Elias getting kicked in the face, only to have Reigns stop and take out the Miztourage instead of following up. The distraction lets Elias take Reigns down and drop a top rope elbow for a rather near fall. A sitout powerbomb gets the same but Reigns is right

back with a Superman Punch for two of his own. Back up and the spear retains the title at 14:48.

Rating: B-. While the ending wasn't exactly in doubt here, it was still a good, hard hitting match. They're certainly protecting Elias at the moment and I'm not sure what to make of that. It would be nice if they had him actually win something but with the Intercontinental Title now basically the show's World Title, he's kind of stuck. But at least it was a good match.

Post match Samoa Joe sneaks in and chokes Reigns out. No Rollins for the save either, mainly because this was a Reigns singles match and not a Shield match. That determines who comes out for a save you see.

And again from Raw.

Paige/Mandy Rose/Sonya DeVille vs. Bayley/Sasha Banks/Mickie James

Alexa Bliss is on commentary.....and there's no Mickie or Bayley. Paige and company come out and laugh off the idea of Sasha having no partners. We cut to the back where Mickie is holding her shin and Bayley is holding her neck. Paige laughs this off and says she's tired of hearing about her interfering last week. Last year, she was THE woman in WWE and helped erase the word Diva from WWE (we could have a tournament for everyone who takes credit for anything like this).

Now she and her friends, named Absolution (sounds like a bad perfume) are here to take things back. Rose and DeVille talk about how everyone has tried to be the next big thing but they remember how Paige started all of this. Paige offers Sasha a spot on the team but she forearm's Paige off the apron. The beatdown is on in a hurry with everyone hitting a finisher. No match of course.

Now from the Smackdown counterparts.

Charlotte/Natalya/Naomi vs. Riott Squad

Yes Riott and no I don't know why. During Charlotte's entrance we see clips from Starrcade, WHICH SHOULD HAVE BEEN FREAKING BROADCAST ON THE NETWORK! Logan takes Natalya into the corner to start and scores with a

clothesline. It's off to Charlotte but that's enough for Natalya, who walks out on the match less than a minute in. Back from a break with Charlotte fighting off the trio but getting caught by the numbers game on the floor. Morgan gets two off a floatover suplex and it's off to Ruby for a chinlock. That leaves the other two Squad members to take Naomi down on the floor.

They send her hard into the steps and then bridge them over the barricade, catapulting Naomi face first into the steel. The best the referee can do is glare at them, making me wonder HOW IN THE WORLD THIS ISN'T A DQ. Seriously do they need to break out a pair of nunchuks and beat the stuffing out of Naomi before the match is called off? So it's now three on one with Charlotte actually managing to fight them off for a bit. A spear hits Morgan in those impressive abs but Logan hits a knee from the apron, setting up the Riot Kick to the face for the pin at 9:12.

Rating: D+. The beatdown was impressive enough though none of them seemed capable of hanging with Charlotte or Naomi on their own. That already puts them a few steps back of Absolution (I can feel my brain melting as I write these names over and over) but at least they're looking a bit more polished than people like Mandy Rose. Not a great match or anything but the divide and conquer strategy worked just fine.

Kalisto/Gran Metalik vs. Brian Kendrick/Jack Gallagher

Metalik headlocks Kendrick to start but gets kicked in the face for his efforts. Kalisto comes in and cranks on the arm so it's off to Gallagher. A whip sends Metalik outside in a heap and we take a break. Back with Metalik breaking away for the hot tag as everything breaks down. The Salida Del Sol is broken up but Metalik tags himself in and kicks Gallagher in the head. The rope walk elbow is enough to end Jack at 3:34.

Rating: D+. There's not much to say about these things, though I still like Metalik more often than not. They have entertaining matches, even if it's a match you can write out before it even starts. It's also the standard Main Event idea: Gallagher and Kendrick would win this 9/10 times on 205 Live but they're dead in the water on this show. Again it's predictable but not the worst thing in the world.

Back to Smackdown.

Singh Brothers vs. AJ Styles

Before the match, Jinder Mahal attacks AJ, sending him ribs first into the post. After a break (and Mahal doing his standard promo), the match is on with AJ getting double teamed. The Brothers get in some shoulders to the ribs in the corner but AJ kicks them away without much effort. AJ knocks the two off them off the top, kicks Mahal in the face, and blocks a super hurricanrana attempt. He's not done yet though as it's a SUPER STYLES CLASH with one Singh landing on the other for the easy pin at 3:56.

Rating: D. This wasn't much to see but it was exactly what it needed to be, especially with an awesome ending like that. Really, what else was AJ supposed to do against a couple of goons like this? Styles vs. Mahal isn't an interesting story but at least Mahal has goons to send out there instead of having us watch the same match over and over.

Post match Mahal lays out the Singh's, including a TERRIBLE looking Khallas to the second one. The guy's head and back never came close to the mat as he basically bounced off his elbow (it looked even worse in slow motion). As I've said many times: Mahal just isn't very good and that finisher makes things even worse.

And then to Raw to wrap things up.

Jason Jordan vs. Kane

Before the match, Jordan talks about how he's an athlete and knew his knee was banged up last week. Kane actually gets powered into the corner a few times to start but the suplex is broken up. A hard toss sends Jordan outside where he comes up holding the knee again. That's enough for a countout at 1:42.

Post match Kane stays on the knee until Finn Balor comes out for the save. They stare each other down and we take a break.

Finn Balor vs. Kane

Kane wastes no time in whipping Balor into the corner and we're into an early chinlock. Balor dropkicks him outside and hits a dive as the announcers talk about what a big deal a win over Kane would be. Kane hits him in the ribs with a chair for the DQ at 2:44.

Kane beats on him with the chair and wraps it around Balor's throat until Braun Strowman comes out for the save. A chair to the back has no effect on Strowman and the beatdown is on. Strowman destroys him with the steps and a chair, including a powerslam onto the steps. Kane gets his throat crushed on the chair and staggers into the crowd (probably looking for registered voters) to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. All this show did was make you remember how hit and miss some of these shows can be. Raw and Smackdown weren't exactly great this week and cutting them down to the clipped versions of the matches and ignoring some of the better stuff (Rollins vs. Cesaro from Raw for instance) isn't the best idea. I do like them adding in more stories though as it makes the show feel more like a full on recap than anything else, which is a good idea. It really might be better to cut out one of the original matches though, just so the recaps don't feel as crammed together.

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205 Live – November 28, 2017: A Very 205 Live Anniversary

205 Live

Date: November 28, 2017

Location: Rupp Arena, Lexington, Kentucky

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Vic Joseph

The show is in a weird place for the next few weeks at the moment as they're setting up a new #1 contender but it's going to take a little while to get there. We have one member of the #1 contenders match but since the matches are taking place on Raw, there's only so much need for this show to even exist right now. Let's get to it.

Of note: I was in the arena for this show so it's my second time seeing it.

The opening recap looks at last night's fatal four way with Rich Swann qualifying for the #1 contenders match in two weeks.

Opening sequence.

The announcers thank us for watching 205 Live for one year now. Sweet goodness how low does the viewership have to be for us to not thank us?

Here are Enzo Amore and Noam Dar for an opening chat. Enzo's mic doesn't seem to work on the way to the ring so he waits until he gets inside to talk about having the Zo Train getting to the top of the cruiserweight Mount Rushmore. Last week the Zo Train got a little derailed because someone thought we were playing Mario Kart and slipped on a banana peel. That would be Dar, who needs to TOTALLY redeem himself tonight.

Rich Swann vs. Noam Dar

Before the match, Swann says he hasn't been Cruiserweight Champion in

about a year (closer to ten months actually) but he's getting closer every day. Not much to say there Swann. Dar hits the floor at the bell (must be a Kevin Owens fan) before heading back in to crank on a wristlock. That's reversed into another wristlock, sending Dar back outside.

Swann isn't waiting this time and takes Dar out with a flip dive from the apron, much to Enzo's chagrin. Swann's Rolling Thunder gets two but an Enzo distraction lets Dar get in a kick to the knee. A clothesline to the back of the head gives Dar two but he keeps holding his knee. Enzo: "What are you, Big Cass? GET THE JOB DONE!" Back up and Swann kicks him in the head, setting up the Phoenix splash for the pin at 4:42.

Rating: D+. Dar continues to do nothing for me and Swann winning here was hardly a surprise. The problem here is the continuing story of the Zo Train: how much difference does it make to have Swann win here? Enzo will just talk a lot and the wins will be traded over and over until no one but Enzo and the eventual #1 contender gets anywhere.

Enzo threatens to fire Dar if he keeps screwing up.

Kalisto is ready to start his comeback against Jack Gallagher.

Kalisto vs. Jack Gallagher

Brian Kendrick is in Gallagher's corner. Gallagher works on the arm to start but is quickly taken down into a wristlock. They fight over the same hold until Kalisto realizes that's not the best idea against Gallagher. Instead he fires off the kicks, only to have a Kendrick distraction let Jack take over again.

There's a knee to the gut to cut Kalisto off again and Gallagher stays on the ribs like an evil Englishman should. We hit the cross arm choke with Gallagher bending him back onto the knees. That goes nowhere so Kalisto hits his rolling kick to the head, followed by the springboard seated senton. A quick Salida Del Sol drops Gallagher but Kendrick comes in for the DQ at 6:23.

Rating: C. Kalisto vs. Kendrick/Gallagher could be fun, though I'm not

sure how many times you can trot the two of them out there for pretty much the same feud. At least Kalisto is entertaining and fast paced enough to keep up the entertainment, which should make for a nice dynamic. He'll need a partner though, which hopefully means more Gran Metalik.

Hideo Itami is coming.

Rich Swann, Cedric Alexander and Mustafa Ali are watching the Itami video in the back and say they're worried about those strikes. It turns into a discussion of who will be facing Swann but everything is cool.

Mustafa Ali/Cedric Alexander vs. Drew Gulak/Tony Nese

These four will be in the other four way on Monday. Before the match, Gulak praises Nese's physique and says Enzo has dubbed them Team Power Point. See, Nese has power and Gulak always gets straight to the point. Drew thinks the Zo Train is like the Justice League with Enzo acting as their Superman. As a bonus though, Drew has a POWERPOINT PRESENTATION! I never would have believed it but he's got something with that bit. As usual, entrance music cuts him off and we're ready to go.

Drew gets annoyed at the POWERPOINT chants, allowing Cedric to get the better of a wristlock. It's off to Nese vs. Ali for some more wristlockery, which has been really common tonight. Nese gets armdragged into an armbar but Cedric goes over to yell at Gulak, meaning he's not there for a tag. The tag works a few seconds later but Cedric walks into one of the loudest chops I've ever heard.

Throw in a running elbow to the jaw and Alexander is in some quick trouble. Back in and Nese hits the ab crunch kicks to the ribs. Gulak grabs something like half an STF before switching to a regular chinlock. Cedric makes the expected escape and the hot tag brings in Ali for the comeback. The rolling X Factor gets two and a Doomsday Device with a high crossbody instead of a clothesline is good for the same. Face miscommunication sends Cedric outside though and Nese gets a rollup for the pin at 9:31.

Rating: C-. This was a lifeless match and it was clearly just there to

help set up Monday's match. That's not the most thrilling thing in the world and the time didn't make things any better. Gulak is getting more entertaining now that he's found his personality niche but the story still isn't much.

Overall Rating: D+. As usual, the wrestling is passable for the most part but the storytelling is just dreadful for the most part. Everything is setting up the title shot against Enzo but why should I believe that would be anything more than Enzo cheating to retain the title all over again? At least there's something else now in the form of Kalisto vs. Gallagher, which is a necessary update.

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Main Event – November 24, 2017: A Thankful Change

Main Event

Date: November 23, 2017

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Nigel McGuinness

Now aren't you all thankful for this? We're still in Houston because that's where we have to be for every show for the better part of a week. This was a bit delayed due to the holidays and I was really missing it. Where else am I going to get Curt Hawkins losing another match and a cruiserweight match? Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Brian Kendrick vs. Gran Metalik

Kendrick grabs a headlock to start but gets taken outside with a springboard armdrag. Of course that means a suicide dive, followed by a springboard splash for two. Another dive misses though and Kendrick sends him ribs first into the apron to take over. We hit the chinlock for a few seconds before Metalik rolls him up for two more. A rope walk elbow drop gets the same and the Captain's Hook is reversed into the Metalik Driver for the pin at 5:42.

Rating: C-. Completely paint by numbers cruiserweight match here, meaning it wasn't all that bad. That being said, I do get a chuckle out of the almost certainty that the faces will always win these matches. Kendrick is miles ahead of Metalik most of the time but you put him on Main Event and he loses clean. It's kind of amazing really.

Stills of Sunday's main event.

From Raw.

Here's a happy, dancing Stephanie to open things up. Graves: "At least she's humble too." She recaps the siege and says Kurt Angle's job as GM is secure. With that, she brings out the man who lead the team to their win last night: HHH! Before HHH can say anything though, here's a livid Kurt Angle to interrupt. He's not talking as the General Manager but the man who can beat HHH up. Stephanie gets all serious and reminds HHH that he's talking to the COO.

The staredown continues and here's Jason Jordan to interrupt as well. Booker: "Oh come on." Jordan gets in HHH's face but Angle holds him back. Jason wants to face HHH tonight but Stephanie warns Jordan that he'd get

killed in a match like this. Stephanie: "HHH isn't afraid of anyone in that locker room." This of course brings out Braun Strowman to get right in HHH's face as well. HHH stares him down but backs off and leaves. Stephanie makes Jordan vs. Strowman for later. She didn't cut Braun's balls off here and at least they kept this relatively short, even if Stephanie didn't need to be out there.

From later in the show.

Jason Jordan vs. Braun Strowman

Jordan tries to go with the wrestling stuff to start but gets caught without too much effort. He manages to lift Strowman off his feet but Strowman takes him down and tosses him outside. Jordan's knee is banged up again...and here's Kane to go after Strowman for the DQ at 1:44.

Kane destroys him with a chair and crushed Strowman's throat with it. Strowman can't breathe but walks off under his own power.

From Raw again.

Alicia Fox vs. Bayley vs. Sasha Banks vs. Mickie James

One fall to a finish and the winner gets a title shot at some point. Joined in progress with Fox running Bayley over but getting caught in the Bank Statement. Bayley makes the save...and PAIGE IS BACK. She says she's not here to interrupt (Then what was she doing???) but she's not alone. Cue Sonya DeVille and Mandy Rose from NXT to interrupt and jump Bayley, drawing the no contest at around six minutes. There was barely two minutes of action though so no rating, but this was a heck of a debut and a MUCH needed face lift for the division.

The villains clean house with ease as Fox bails.

Post break Paige introduces us to her new friends. Alexa Bliss comes up, says a nervous hello, and gets destroyed.

And from Smackdown.

Naomi is getting her makeup done when NXT's Ruby Riot comes up. She's

with Liv Morgan and Sarah Logan, all of whom beat the heck out of Naomi. Becky Lynch comes in for the save and gets beaten down as well.

From later on Smackdown.

Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Natalya

Charlotte is defending after having won last week. Natalya jumps at her to start but gets elbowed in the jaw. That earns her a face first toss into the middle buckle and we take a break. Back with Natalya getting two off a Batista Bomb and grabbing the Sharpshooter. Charlotte makes the rope for the break but Natalya is right back on her with right hands. A whip into the corner lets Charlotte try the moonsault, only to land on the knees. The spear connects but here are Logan, Riot and Morgan to jump Natalya for the DQ at 6:43.

Rating: C+. They were rolling until the interference here with Natalya showing more fire than she has in a long time. Charlotte looked like she was in a fight and that's not something you see from her too often. I can go for the trio interfering, though I would have liked to see Charlotte get the win first.

Charlotte gets beaten down as well as the trio poses.

Apollo Crews vs. Curt Hawkins

Hawkins bails to the ropes to start, only to come back in and eat a dropkick. Another dropkick actually sends Crews outside and it's off to a chinlock back inside. Even Nigel is saying that's not going to be enough to make this work. Instead Hawkins stomps away in the corner, followed by a Downward Spiral for two. Not that it matters as the enziguri and a Toss Powerbomb extend Hawkins' losing streak at 3:45.

Rating: D. This is one of those standard things you just know you're getting on this show, which really isn't the most thrilling thing in the world. I'm not sure if they're going anywhere with Hawkins' losing streak but it wouldn't surprise me to see him win a big match at some point on a complete fluke. I mean, it wouldn't do anyone any good but why let that stop you?

From Smackdown again.

Here's Styles for a chat, but first we see a post-match video from Paul Heyman, saying Styles is the best in-ring performer he's ever seen. AJ wishes he could celebrate with all the fans but it didn't go as well as he thought it would. He'd love to face Lesnar again though because in the sequel, Rocky wins.

That brings him to Jinder Mahal, who says he's taking the title back tonight. AJ takes off the jacket and the belt, saying come get it. Mahal pops up on screen to say it's his time instead of AJ's. If Mahal had faces Brock, he would be hailed as the Beastmaster. AJ says bring it on because Mahal should be well rested after not doing anything on Sunday. Mahal will take his rematch at Clash of Champions. Cue the Singh Brothers from behind to jump AJ, who cleans house without any trouble.

And from Raw one more time.

Intercontinental Title: Roman Reigns vs. The Miz

Miz is defending and seems willing to take an early countout. That's not cool with Reigns, who chases him to the floor and hits an uppercut to the jaw. A Batista Bomb gets two on the champ and we take an early break. Back with Reigns hitting his running clothesline, followed by a big boot to the jaw. Miz is smart enough to bail again and catches Reigns diving off the steps.

A DDT on the floor is nearly good enough for a countout but Reigns dives back in. We hit the chinlock for a good while until Miz hits a corner dropkick. Another is countered with a big boot, only to have Miz knock him down a few more times. It's off to the YES Kicks until Reigns fights up without much effort. The Superman Punch is countered into the Skull Crushing Finale but Reigns slips out.

Miz sweeps the leg for two though and Reigns is favoring his knee. The Superman Punch knocks Miz out of the air for a VERY close two though as the fans are impressed with the kickout. The spear is loaded up but cue the Bar for a distraction, allowing the Skull Crushing Finale to connect...for two. Ambrose and Rollins run out to even things up, allowing

Reigns to hit a spear for the pin and the title at 16:26.

Rating: B-. They were doing some good stuff out there and I like Reigns winning the title. Earlier on I mentioned people like Balor and Joe having nothing to do because they were bigger than the Intercontinental Title. They're not bigger than Reigns though and that gives them a bigger target to go after. Good move here, even if it's two to three years after Reigns should have won the thing in the first place.

Overall Rating: C-. Well that was certainly a packed show. I can go for this idea of putting both Raw and Smackdown clips into the same hour as it's not like there's a Raw monopoly on clips. There's important stuff happening on Smackdown and there's no reason to leave them out on a nothing recap show. I like this as the new direction and while the show wasn't thrilling, it makes more sense now.

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205 Live – November 21, 2017:

Always Leave On A Dance

205 Live

Date: November 21, 2017

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Nigel McGuinness

It's one of the final shows from Houston as we hit the cruiserweight division. Enzo Amore is still Cruiserweight Champion and the question now is who comes next. Kalisto has been dispatched (again) and it's not clear who will be going after the title again. The show is being turned into a faction warfare and that could go multiple ways. Let's get to it.

The Zo Train (minus Drew Gulak) has a Thanksgiving dinner prepared in the back. Enzo (in a Randy Savage shirt) says he's now 5G and therefore they're all connected. He's gotten them all matches tonight but they better rep to Enzo brand like a barbell. If they do well, Christmas could come early in the form of a recommendation for a Cruiserweight Title shot. Enzo wants to know where Gulak is but here's the Gobbledy Gooker. Naturally that's Gulak, who says he's the Gobbledy Gulaker. Gulak: "You told me to loosen up!" Enzo is disappointed.

Opening sequence.

The announcers chat for a bit.

Drew Gulak vs. Akira Tozawa

Street fight. Gulak comes out in jeans, which is a really odd look for him. Drew isn't usually into this but if Enzo is from the streets, Drew needs to help clean them up. However, that might get his hands dirty so it's time for a very special POWERPOINT PRESENTATION! Or not as Tozawa cuts him off, sending Drew into a near fit. Gulak bails to the floor with his hands covering his ears as the chanting starts early this week.

Back in and Tozawa kicks him in the chest, setting up some screaming. Tozawa kicks him outside again but the suicide dive is countered into a suplex onto the ramp. A clothesline messes with Tozawa's throat, meaning

no more chanting. That's rather evil and something you wouldn't have expected from a show like this.

Some chairs are thrown in but Gulak would rather slap him in the face for two instead. Drew puts the No Chants sign in the corner but gets suplexed through the handle, which has to be rather painful to at least a few inches of skin. The fans want tables so Tozawa pulls one out, only to get suplexed into the corner as well.

The table is set up in the corner but have to settle for Tozawa throwing Drew over the announcers' table instead. A good looking flip dive off said table has Gulak in even more trouble and it's time for more weapons. Tozawa puts a trashcan over him and swings away with a kendo stick. The top rope backslash through the table ends Gulak at 11:12.

Rating: B. They were getting close to that next level here but they never could flip the switch on. Tozawa is good for a hardcore brawler and it was cool to see Gulak move up to another level of violence every now and then. Good, hard hitting brawl here that needed a little more to become great.

Hideo Itami is coming to 205 Live. Well it's not like he's going to do much in NXT so get him up here while he's healthy.

Tony Nese doesn't think much of Itami but Amore seems nervous. If Nese doesn't get, better, he won't be on the Zo Train much longer. Rich Swann, Cedric Alexander and Mustafa Ali come in and trade some insults.

Tony Nese vs. Mustafa Ali

Hang on a second as Nese needs to show off the abs. That just earns him a wristlock though and even a slam won't break it up. Now that's some dedication. Nese goes with some stomping but gets sent outside for a heck of a flip dive from the top. Ali might not have the best charisma in the world but he can throw some pretty dives.

Back in and Nese grabs a chinlock to slow things down, only to miss a charge into the corner. Ali switches things up a bit with a rolling X Factor instead of the rolling neckbreaker but he can't follow up. The 054

takes way too long though and Nese sends him HARD into the post. The running knee in the corner ends Ali at 7:05.

Rating: C. Just a quick match here with Nese giving the Zo Train what is likely its only win tonight. This feels like the kind of show designed to give the fans a lot of stuff to cheer for and Nese winning should keep it from being a clean sweep. It helps that Nese is a simple character who does his thing quite well. I mean, it's hard to argue with someone being in that kind of shape.

Daivari and Dar are ready to impress Enzo too. Enzo will be in the front row, but Gulak, back in the turkey suit, is stuck in time out.

Ariya Daivari/Noam Dar vs. Rich Swann/Cedric Alexander

Enzo is at ringside. Daivari and Cedric start things off with a rather long feeling out process until Cedric scores with a dropkick. Swann comes in for the Rolling Thunder as Enzo is talking to the fans. It's off to Dar, who gets caught with a good looking springboard clothesline. Cedric's ankle scissors is countered with a kick to the ribs though and it's time for some villainous control.

Both guys take turns kicking away as Enzo continues to talk trash from the floor. Alexander finally rolls away and makes the diving tag off to Swann for almost no reaction. Enzo breaks up the Phoenix splash though and Daivari's frog splash gets a rather close two. If back to Dar who gets kicked in the head but Cedric goes after Enzo, earning himself a baseball slide from Dar. Back in and Swann kicks Dar in the head again, setting up the Phoenix splash for the pin at 8:07.

Rating: C+. The energy was there, even if the fans weren't exactly thrilled. Swann and Alexander are a good tag team and every time they're out there, I can't help but wonder why they're not a midcard team on the main roster. It's not like the shows have anything better at the moment.

Post match Enzo comes in to beat on Swann until Tozawa and Ali come down. Cue Nese and Gulak to cut them off though and the big beatdown ensues. Enzo hits a top rope splash onto both guys and it's a group dance to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This was a strong show by 205 Live's standards and I'm glad to see them having a little more energy. That being said, I'm rarely a fan of having one storyline completely dominate the show like this. If you're not a fan of the good guys vs. the Zo Train, there's no reason to watch the show. In theory this sets up Itami as the next star, but it wouldn't shock me to have him just be another name on Amore's list. If nothing else I'd love to see Cedric get the title at some point, as he's certainly earned it. Good show this week.

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WWF Los Angeles House Show – August 13, 1988: I Don't Think You Can Say That In 1988

WWF House Show

Date: August 13, 1988

Location: Los Angeles Sports Arena, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Gorilla Monsoon, Superstar Billy Graham

It's another show that was recently added to the Network and it's from my favorite era so let's take a look. Randy Savage is the World Champion here and defending against Andre the Giant while Hulk Hogan is taking a bit of a break. We're also coming up on Summerslam so you can expect to hear quite a bit about the show. Let's get to it.

The announcers talk about the World Title match a bit with Graham thinking Miss Elizabeth made a mistake by signing Savage to the contract. Since when can she do that?

Sam Houston vs. Black Jack

From what I can find, Jack is a local wrestler whose career started back in 1963. No wonder he's under a mask. Graham thinks Houston needs to put on some weight, which likely means doing some steroids. To be fair he said the same thing about Elizabeth so the guy isn't all there sometimes. Sam dances around the ring as is his custom but Jack bails to the apron. It works so well that they do it again as the announcers keep talking about Houston needing to gain weight.

Some hiptosses have Jack down and of course he's complaining about a mask pull. A headlock slows Jack down again as the fans aren't exactly thrilled with this. The solution? Talk about Jack's beard. Back up and Sam slugs away but we'll hit another headlock instead. A bad looking slam puts Sam down but he avoids an elbow. Even the announcers point out how many times Houston is using a headlock. Not that it matters as Jack sends him in but walks into the bulldog to give Sam the pin at 5:48.

Rating: D-. Terribly boring match here with most of it spent on a headlock. That's a very poor choice for an opener too as the fans didn't care and the whole thing felt like an exhibition in how to do a headlock. You can always tell when the announcers are bored and it's not good when that's the case less than ten minutes in.

Blue Angel vs. Barry Horowitz

Horowitz isn't as big of a loser as he would become just yet. Angel is of

course Owen Hart underneath a mask. Graham's guess on why everyone is wearing masks: they owe back child support. Yeah Graham was kind of the Booker T. of his commentary of his day. Angel does his traditional spin out of a wristlock before bouncing all over the place for a wristdrag. It's off to the hammerlock for a bit before Angel gets shouldered down, right into a nip up.

The armbars keep Barry in trouble and Angel works on a series of arm locks. Barry finally gets up and chills in the corner for a bit, drawing a count for some reason. Billy says he can go to the ring for a twenty count if he needs. Since when is this Ring of Honor? A hammerlock slam sets up another armbars on Horowitz but a superkick of all things gets him out of trouble.

Instead of following up though, it's time to pat himself on the back. Barry drives Angel's head into a boot before poking through the mask to the eye. A butterfly suplex gives Barry two as the fans are trying to stay with this one (as they should be able to do). Another comeback is cut off by a kneelift, which continues Barry's strategy of keeping things simple. The announcers aren't even sure if Barry knows any more moves, which is about as condescending as you can get, especially from Graham.

Angel manages a sunset flip for two, which of course has Horowitz complaining about a pull of the trunks. Horowitz takes WAY too long going up and it's a nip up into a missile dropkick to have Barry in some real trouble. A belly to belly (Gorilla: "Suplex City coming up.") gives Angel two but he finishes with a decent looking moonsault at 14:36.

Rating: B-. Well that worked. Owen was clearly miles ahead of most wrestlers of this time, which is even sadder when you consider how long it took the company to figure out how good he was. Keep in mind that this was 1988 and he just did a MOONSAULT. That was insane back then (just look at Great Muta in the NWA) and something you just didn't see around then. Horowitz looked good too, which isn't surprising given how solid he really was. You don't keep a job that long by being horrible.

Powers of Pain vs. Bolsheviks

This is during that weird face run for the Powers of Pain before the

company realized the obvious. The Bolsheviks do their Russian national anthem until the Powers jump them from behind (capitalist jerks) to clear the ring in a hurry. The bell rings for a second time as it rang once during the blindsides attack and again when the Bolsheviks got back in, making me wonder how incompetent this Hebner guy is.

Nikolai and Barbarian shove each other around to start as the announcers talk about the size of Boris' head. Neither Russian can move Barbarian so it's a powerslam for two on Boris. Nikolai makes the save and is smart enough to pull Boris over to his corner. Score one for the Russian school system. It's off to Warlord for a test of strength and more cheating takes Warlord down. They try the same thing again but Warlord is ready for them this time (because Warlord is suddenly intelligent).

It's off to Barbarian as the arm work begins, leaving the announcers to compare American and Russian athletes. A big boot gives Barbarian two but Warlord misses a charge, allowing the Russians to get in some token shots. All it takes is a double clothesline to put them both down though and it's a hot tag to Barbarian. Everything breaks down and a powerslam into a flying headbutt is enough for the pin on Boris at 9:12.

Rating: D. Long and boring here with the Powers of Pain winning a match just a step above a squash. That being said, who in the world looks at the POWERS OF PAIN and thinks they should be a face team? The match was boring of course, mainly because there was no doubt over who was going to win the thing. Then again, the Bolsheviks are hardly worth anything in the first place.

Jesse Ventura comes out for commentary.

SD Jones vs. Curt Hennig

Hennig has only been around for a few weeks here. Feeling out process to start with pretty much nothing going on in the first minute. At least Jones lasted longer than the "eight seconds" at Wrestlemania. Jones cranks on a headlock as it's pretty easy to see why he wasn't exactly a top star around this point. It's off to a hammerlock while Graham talks about Ventura wanting to be a lover in Hollywood. Hennig finally takes him down and drops some knees (albeit not perfectly).

We hit the Boston crab with Curt grabbing a rope, sending Jesse and Gorilla into an argument over breaking rules. I'll let you figure out who is on which side. A bad looking backbreaker gives Hennig two as this is hardly lighting up the world. Instead, Graham asks Jesse some annoying questions about Hollywood that you can tell he doesn't feel like answering. Jones fights back with some left hands and a headbutt as the fans just do not care.

The comeback seems to be in slow motion so let's compare Hollywood to being a Navy SEAL. A powerslam gives Jones two (with one of the worst covers I've seen in a long time) and is nice enough to stand there while Hennig hammers away. Back to the Hollywood discussion as this match just won't freaking end. Some right hands in the corner don't do much on Hennig so he pops out of the corner with a hard forearm (one of his dad's old finishers) for the pin at 13:08.

Rating: F+. I like Hennig but MY GOODNESS Jones was dragging this through the floor. This was one of the most uninteresting, dull matches I've seen in a good while as neither guy seemed interested in being out there and Jones looked to be about 59 years old. There was no fire or even energy here and it felt like it should have been about ten minutes shorter. Just awful stuff.

That's it for Jesse. Thank goodness as I don't think he could have handled any more movie questions.

WWF World Title: Andre the Giant vs. Randy Savage

Savage is defending of course and this should wake the fans up a bit. Actually hang on a second as the referee ejects Bobby Heenan before we're ready to go. Liz gets to stay of course though because the referee is rather sexist. Andre isn't pleased and if there's one thing I've learned in wrestling, it's that you don't want a 7' 500lb giant ticked off at you. Savage charges into a headbutt and falls outside in a heap.

Back in and we hit the choke as this is already looking like a squash. Andre chokes with his strap so Liz gets on the apron, allowing Andre to choke even more. Thanks a lot Liz. Another headbutt sends Savage outside but thankfully Andre doesn't follow. Back in and Andre charges into a

knee so Savage can get in some right hands, only to get dropped with another headbutt. I love how simple Andre's offense was, because really what else did he need to do?

We hit the bearhug for a bit until Savage clotheslines him into the ropes, meaning Andre is tied up. Savage rips at the nose like a...well like a savage actually, until Andre gets an arm loose. More choking in the corner have Savage in trouble and Andre makes it worse by taking off a turnbuckle pad.

Naturally Andre headbutts it by mistake and Savage rams it in again a few more times. About five rams in a row FINALLY put Andre down and the flying elbow gets two. Andre is basically out on his feet so they fall outside with Savage ramming him into the steps. For some reason Andre grabs Liz by the leg, sending Savage outside after him for a double countout at 10:25.

Rating: C+. They were close here and if Savage had pinned Andre it would have blown the roof off the place. Andre was trying out there but there was only so much he could do by this point. I had a lot of fun with this one though and that's more than I was expecting given how dull so much of this card has been.

Savage carries Liz to the back so Andre throws the title over his shoulder.

Earlier today, Rick Rude didn't like Gorilla Monsoon calling Bobby Heenan a snake. Heenan calls Jake Roberts' wife a slimy snake and Rude talks about being ready to take care of Roberts tonight. Just a quick filler as we're probably on intermission.

The Fabulous Rougeau Brothers love America and can't wait to move here.

Fabulous Rougeau Brothers vs. Hart Foundation

This should be good. Raymond starts with Neidhart and uses the referee to flip out of a wristlock. Well he's resourceful. A shoulder block doesn't go as well as Raymond is sent into the corner. Graham: "Neidhart reminds me of a block of granite." A joke like that writes itself. Raymond flips

out of a powerslam attempt and hits a dropkick to little avail, though he does get a hug from Jacques.

Neidhart is right back with a dropkick of his own to send Raymond outside and it's off to Bret. The fans give quite the notable reaction when he comes in, which Monsoon ties back into the battle royal at Wrestlemania IV. Back in and Jacques keeps offering a left handed handshake, with even Gorilla seeing what's coming. Bret reverses the ensuing Irish whip but Jacques flips over him to....do nothing.

That's enough for some stalling, including a chest massage for Jacques. The Harts are sick of waiting around though and take Raymond into the corner for a hard stomping. A backbreaker gets two on Raymond and we hit a rare face chinlock. Thankfully Graham gets the chance to mention talking to his opponents while holding a chinlock as a way to explain spot calling. Fair enough really.

Back up and Bret gets sent back first into the corner so we can have a target. It's off to the reverse chinlock with the Brothers doing the behind the back switch. I know it's a really common spot but that doesn't mean it's a bad one. Jacques gets two off a splash and it's right back to the reverse chinlock. As usual, we get the hot tag but the referee doesn't see it (still a classic).

We hit the abdominal stretch with Gorilla being RIGHT THERE to complain about Jacques' form. The villains cheat and Gorilla is saying Neidhart should use his five seconds to come in for the save. Sweet goodness why did Ventura have to leave??? That would have been a field day. Bret finally reverses an Irish whip but still can't make the hot tag. Therefore, let's hit the FOURTH reverse chinlock. Come on people: come up with something else already.

With nothing else working, Bret rams Raymond face first into the mat. An atomic drop FINALLY allows the hot tag to Neidhart and the fans are right back into this. Neidhart whips them into each other but there's no referee to count. Egads these Los Angeles referees are getting dumber by the match. The Harts hit something like a Demolition Decapitator (not mentioned by commentary) for two, followed by Bret planting Jacques with

a piledriver. Raymond makes the save with a middle rope ax handle though and steals the pin at 17:43.

Rating: B-. This was more long than good with the never ending reverse chinlocks bringing it down a lot. That being said, it's also rather entertaining at times with the Harts picking the Rougeaus apart and beating the heck out of them for awhile until they got to the second phase of the match. It was good stuff though as the tag division was at its peak around this time.

At this point, there was a Ron Bass vs. DJ Peterson match. Bass won, but more importantly before the match he challenged Monsoon to a fight. Monsoon got up and was ready to go, even taking off his sunglasses. Graham calmed him down, though that was a rather interesting idea that I'm sure they did multiple times. This was cut from the WWE Network version and might not have been filmed.

Before the main event, here's Savage again to say that Elizabeth is injured really bad. And Savage just left her back there with Andre presumably back there as well? Anyway he has an open contract for the next time they're in Los Angeles and he'll kick Andre's....I didn't think you could say that in 1988. They would have a rematch next month with Savage winning via DQ.

Rick Rude vs. Jake Roberts

Big time feud at this point (Rude had offered a fan a chance to kiss him before the match, as was his custom. It just happened to be Jake's wife and that's not cool.) and a rematch from last month when Rude won via countout. No Heenan here for some reason, likely another pesky referee. We do the customary shots of women as Rude comes in and one is KNITTING. Well to be fair you can do it and watch the show at the same time so it's not the worst thing I've ever see.

Jake starts fast with a knee lift but the threat of a DDT sends Rude bailing to the floor. Back in and Rude misses an ax handle, banging up his arm in the process. Gorilla uses the break to recap the feud because he's a good announcer who knows how to do his job. Back in and Jake cranks on the arm with Rude's hilarious selling ensuing. Rude gets lifted

up by the bad arm and we hit the armbars. An attempt at a breather goes badly for Rude as well with Jake sending the bad arm into the post.

Back in and Rude tries for the snake bag but the referee throws it away as fast as he can. We hit something like an abdominal stretch on the mat with Graham thinking it's over. The short clothesline misses and Rude hits a regular one of his own, albeit with the bad arm. Rude is good enough to take him outside for another posting.

Back in and we hit a one arm hip swivel as someone says one minute. We hit the reverse chinlock for a bit before Jake fights up for a hard whip into the corner. Jake can't get the DDT so Rude throws him over the top and gets in another posting. Rude tries a slam back in but Jake grabs the rope...and falls on top for the very fast pin at 13:24.

Rating: B-. Well it was better than their mess at Wrestlemania IV. This was a bit rushed (especially the ending), though it felt like a teaser for a third match instead of the blowoff. These two had a long running feud and having them do this around the house show circuit made a lot of sense for the two of them. Good match, though nothing great.

We're off the air maybe thirty seconds after the show, which makes me think they cut something off the end.

Overall Rating: C. This got much, much better in the second half but there was some awful stuff on here to cut it down. It's not the biggest house show in the world but it's cool to see a show with some continuity from month to month. The fans seemed to like it and really, as long as they keep buying a ticket for the next show, you can't ask for much more. Not bad, though pretty standard for its time.

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Tuesday Night Titans – November 13, 1984: If You Put This Show Into a Bird's Brain, It Would Turn Into a Human and Change the Channel

Tuesday Night Titans

Date: November 13, 1984

Location: Video One Studios, Owings Mills, Maryland

Hosts: Vince McMahon, Lord Alfred Hayes

Another request here, partially so I can say I've done an episode of this show. This is a bit of a different show as it's mainly a talk show with wrestling guests. There would be matches included, though this isn't exactly the best time period from a quality standpoint. I'm not entirely sure what to expect here but that's the kind of show Tuesday Night Titans was. Let's get to it.

I'm going to do my best on the dates/locations of the matches but it's one of those shows that throws them together from other TV tapings.

I can barely hear Hayes' introduction over the REALLY loud intro music.

Vince and Hayes are on the talk show set to intro the show. We talk about Thanksgiving (this is being written two days before his year's holiday so

it's kind of appropriate) with Vince promising to deliver a turkey in the form of first guest in Captain Lou Albano. Lou immediately lists off all of his accomplishments as a manager, which has to be some kind of a record (fourteen Tag Team Champions is pretty crazy).

He goes on a rant about how amazing athletes wrestlers are, even talking about Vince's amateur wrestling credentials. Albano brags about his IQ of 901.73 back in his medulla ob-long-gata which makes him a linguist and a bi-linguist. Vince FINALLY cuts off this rather hilarious speech and throws us to a match.

From Hamilton, Ontario, Canada – October 29/30, 1984

Nick DeCarlo vs. The Spoiler

Spoiler, a big masked guy (I won't say who he is in case you haven't seen him before) has Albano in his corner. Before we get going, here's Intercontinental Champion Greg Valentine (also Albano's client) to say he doesn't have any competition. Albano goes into a rant about how awesome Valentine is as the match starts. Valentine goes over to commentary to talk about how he wants respect as Spoiler throws DeCarlo into the corner. DeCarlo gets knocked outside, followed by a top rope clothesline back inside. A knee lift sets up the Claw to put DeCarlo away in a hurry.

Back in the studio, Albano apologizes to Hayes for not being a gentleman. Then he goes into a rant about Spoiler squeezing a ball in his hand until he got strong enough to break a pair of pliers. Now he can squash any wrestler's skull. Vince: "Some skulls are softer than others." As for Valentine, they might just retire the title. For now though, he'll face any contender around.

Back from a break with Albano laid out on the couch with his shirt open as we get to our second guest: Barry Windham. Barry is a standard face but Albano laughs at him and talks about his own training style. Albano's various stomach issues take us to the next match.

From Salisbury, Maryland – November 7, 1984.

Barry Windham vs. Charlie Fulton

An unnamed hillbilly is in the crowd. We'll call him Jim and move on. Barry takes him down with a top wristlock before grabbing an armdrag into an armbar. That's enough wrestling as Barry forearmlocks him down and drops a knee for two. More right hands drop Fulton and a bulldog is good for the pin.

Rating: D. Nothing to see here as Windham never felt right in the WWF. It was clear that he wasn't exactly happy there as he would eventually self destruct, though at least he did have a nice run in the US Express. Fulton was a jobber to the stars around this point and that's exactly what he was doing here.

Back in the studio, Albano makes more fun of Windham and eventually gives him some dieting advice. Oh and watch any match you're not involved in. Windham calls him a slob so Albano calls him dehydrated and says if you put Windham's brain in a parakeet, it would fly backwards.

We take a break and come back with Mike Rotundo as the third guest. Albano: "Take your hat off! You're not in the barn!" Vince talks about Rotundo's athletic accomplishments and again, Albano talks over him in a rather heelish way.

From the Hamilton, Ontario, Canada – October 29, 1984.

Barry Windham/Mike Rotundo vs. Mohammad Saad/Bobby Bass

Not quite the US Express just yet. Windham knocks Saad out to the floor to start as we hear about Windham and Rotundo's background. Rotundo comes in for an armbar and Bass gets forearmlocked into the corner for his cheating efforts. The good guys start their fast tagging and work over Saad's arm until a bulldog is good for the pin. Total squash.

Back in the studio, Rotundo threatens to shut Albano up. Windham and Rotundo talk about the various regional Tag Team Titles they've won, which you don't hear about very often. Albano has been advising the current World Tag Team Champions (Dick Murdoch/Adrian Adonis) but Rotundo doesn't think they need a manager at this point. Albano rants us to a break.

I'm not sure where the next match takes place. Vince says it's from the Meadowlands in East Rutherford, New Jersey but I can't find any record of these two ever having a match there. I can however find one from around this time in Toronto, which would make a lot more sense.

Nikolai Volkoff vs. Rocky Johnson

Joined in progress with the announcers saying it's in the Toronto area, meaning we're in the Maple Leaf Gardens on October 21, 1984. Thanks for that, commentators. Johnson punches him in the jaw but doesn't follow up. Well he's never been the brightest guy in the world. A nerve hold (I think) takes Johnson down but some gyrating gets him back to his feet. Back up and a double shoulder puts them both down for a breather. Volkoff wins a test of strength and of course cheats as soon as Johnson starts coming back. A kick to the ribs sends Volkoff outside but he's right back in with a hard forearm to the back. Johnson hits some of his always weird looking (though still fine) dropkicks, only to get dropped throat first across the top rope for the fast pin.

Rating: D+. Not a terrible power vs. speed match here with Johnson being more about charisma than his in-ring abilities. This was also back when Volkoff was looking like a powerhouse rather than the much bigger version that most people remember him as. It was easy to see why they ran Volkoff vs. Hogan so many times as this was during a big time in the Cold War and it was kind of a perfect matchup.

And now, COMEDY! Hayes brings out the world's oldest wrestling fan, a man who appears to be about 94 years old (or about 40 and in bad makeup and a horrible wig) named Lloyd Lynch. He talks about his hometown of Cut and Shoot, Texas before nodding off for a second. His favorite wrestler was the Swedish Angel, a 300lb guy with a big bearhug that everyone loved. Vince has such an awkward look on his face and Lloyd makes it worse by talking about seeing the Angel in Madison Square Garden and squeezing a man's hair off. That man turned into Gorgeous George and that's how he got his start.

After talking a bit about meeting Vince's grandfather and an award Vince's father just received, it's time to talk about women's wrestling

and Lloyd is already laughing. Apparently Lloyd remembers a women's wrestling match from 1834 with Millie Lang Tree. He also knew some woman from Boston who defeated a 412lb wolf with a Boston crab in the back of a pickup truck at a drive-in movie in San Antonio.

As for Millie though, she used a double toe half nelson, which of course Lynch agrees to demonstrate. He pulls his leg up into the air...and hurts himself in the process. Thankfully that's it and hopefully we never have to sit through something like this again. It was about as funny as being hit in the head with a box of hammers as they weren't trying for anything more than redneck hillbilly humor with Lynch apparently being at least 110 years old. Just bad stuff here and something beneath even the WWF's standards.

Thankfully we move on to the next guest: David Bruno Sammartino, who would later drop the Bruno and then realize that no one cared about Bruno's really boring son. We hear about Bruno trying to keep David out of wrestling but David knew it was all he wanted to do. The Sammartino name isn't a burden because it's like being Rocky Marciano's son. And now, a match.

From (I believe) the East Rutherford, New Jersey – October 14, 1984.

David Sammartino vs. Mr. Fuji

Joined in progress with David working on an armbar in front of a silent crowd. Gorilla calls a shoulder block beautiful and it's right back to the armbar. Fuji comes back with a falling headbutt to the ribs and the slow motion continues with the fans still not caring. A stomach claw continues to be one of the dumbest moves of all time until Sammartino grabs the leg to escape. Fuji's slow motion offense continues but David slugs away like his dad to the only reaction of the match. A kick to the ribs and a knee drop give David two and a small package puts Fuji away.

Rating: D-. The match was bad but I always feel bad for Sammartino. He always looked like he was trying but there's just nothing there. Other than being Bruno's son, there's nothing about him that stands out. It's not really surprising that he never went anywhere in wrestling and a lot of it probably comes from the pressure of being Bruno's son. Really

boring match here, which was common for David.

Back in the studio and thankfully Albano is back to talk about David's physique. He likes what he sees in Sammartino and suggests that he eat lots of protein, including unborn virgin goat's milk. Oh and change your name. Not bad advice actually.

We come back with our next guest: the huge Blackjack Mulligan, who brought the house band with him. He's here to stand up for AMERICA and doesn't want to hear about people like the Iron Sheik who doesn't stand for AMERICA. Then you have people like Big John Studd, who just isn't nice in general. After listing off a few more villains, it's off to a match.

From Hamilton, Ontario, Canada – October 29, 1984.

Blackjack Mulligan vs. Ted Grizzly

Grizzly is billed from Morgan's Corner, Arkansas, which was the hometown of Haystacks Calhoun. Mulligan shoves him down with almost no effort and forearms him in the chest. A drop toehold has Grizzly tapping but that wouldn't mean anything for a good ten years. Grizzly's right hands have no effect and a jumping back elbow to the jaw puts Grizzly away with almost no effort. The fans stand up and look at something in the aisle but we don't get to see what it is. That might be a bit too interesting you see.

Back in the studio, Mulligan says he's ready to face anyone, anytime. For tonight though, let's bring out some square dancers! Seriously they come out and dance and time is devoured. Vince FINALLY throws it to commercial...but first we see a mechanical bull. Oh jeez here we go.

Back with Vince, Hayes and Mulligan standing next to the mechanical bull called Mr. Black. Mulligan doesn't think much of Roddy Piper, who can't shut up long enough to have a real talk. Blackjack doesn't quite get how this wrestling thing works does he? Anyway he'll be having his own talk show called Blackjack's Barbecue where we can ask the real questions.

We go to Piper's Pit where Piper mocks a rather muscular wrestler until

Mulligan shows up and gets in Piper's face. Mulligan calls him a pole cat (skunk for you city folk) and says he's proud of his heritage...and that's it.

Back in the studio, Mulligan talks about the use for mechanical bulls, which Hayes says he's heard of being inside medieval dungeons. Vince is talked into getting on the thing and lasts a few seconds before falling off. And now, more from the band as this segment just keeps going for no logical reason. Hayes is put on the thing...and doesn't ride because we go to a break.

After another break, Albano is going to answer some letters to give fans advice. First up, a woman whose husband won't use modern hygiene products. Albano lists off a few ingredients to mix together, including olive oil and witch hazel, to put on him instead. It turns out that Albano doesn't use such products either and Vince is disturbed.

The second question is from a woman with an obese husband who has heard of a book called the Fat Person's Guide to Ecstasy. Albano has never heard of such a book and says the husband should lose weight. Then he lists off the book's authors and thinks the husband should be on a low carbohydrate diet. There are fat people who are ok though, including the fat mamas who love him. You can eat anything you want, but only swallow half.

Third up is a wife with a husband who never takes off his cowboy boots. Albano thinks the husband has a bad smell and needs to lose weight. Maybe he should fill a bathtub with alcohol and walk into the thing. Albano is worried about what will happen when the guy dies and they have to take the boots off. That's enough for Vince and we're finally done. Another unfunny segment, though Albano's insane charisma carried it as far as it could.

Back from a break with Vince and Hayes talking about the awesomeness that is Paul Orndorff. We get a highlight package on Orndorff's career (despite him not being in the WWF for very long at this point), meaning some long clips of matches showcasing Orndorff's strength. I was never a big Orndorff fan but he did have a great piledriver.

After a final break (thank goodness), it's time for more Mulligan for more music and dancing, this time with Vince, Mulligan, and the rest of the guests joining in. Rotundo looks so out of place out there and it's kind of funny.

Overall Rating: D-. Oh just no. I get the idea they were going for here but sweet goodness it wasn't entertaining. The wrestling was a bunch of lame squashes and the "comedy" was somewhere between torture and just not funny. It's a weird time for the company and while there was talent around, most of it wasn't on display here. Albano was funny due to sheer willpower but you can only do the same jokes so many times. This was horribly unentertaining and I'm kind of shocked this show got to 100 episodes.

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Main Event – November 16, 2017: The Smart Choice

Main Event

Date: November 16, 2017

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Vic Joseph

It's the go home show for Survivor Series and I'm not sure if that's going to mean anything around here. The best hope I have here though is last week's episode containing a clip from Smackdown, which you never see around here. It would make sense again this week and would help set up Survivor Series. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Heath Slater vs. Curt Hawkins

Slater pauses to start and throws Curt the I'VE GOT KIDS shirt. That's fine with Curt, who sends him shoulder first into the post. Some stomping sets up a chinlock before a quick leg trip keeps Heath down. Back up and Slater avoids a charge into the corner, setting up Sweetness for two. Hawkins can't hit a superplex so Slater grabs a top rope sunset flip for the pin at 4:49.

Rating: D+. Just a match that you would expect these two to have, though the switched up finish worked as a nice change of pace. Slater is a perfect choice to open something up as you're going to get an entertaining little match and the fans are always going to cheer for him. Nothing to see of course but at least the reaction worked.

We look at Jason Jordan defeating Bray Wyatt on Raw but getting beaten up soon after.

From Raw.

Here's Angle to announce that Jordan is off the team due to injury. Before he can name it though, Jordan comes out and begs Angle to let him do it. He'll be fine by Sunday and he's seen Angle fight injured so many times. Jordan says Angle picked him because he was the best option and it wasn't favoritism. He won't get another chance like this because he's worked his whole life to get here and wants to represent Raw. Stephanie comes out and tells Kurt to make the decision but HHH comes out as well. HHH gets right to the chase: Jordan is out and he's in instead. A

Pedigree plants Jordan and that's that.

From Raw again.

Kane vs. Braun Strowman

Strowman jumps Kane and I don't think we had an opening bell. They head outside with Strowman driving him face first into the barricade but getting whipped into the steps. Kane pulls out a table as the referee isn't even trying to tell them to get in the ring. Smart move actually. Some chair shots to the back just annoy Strowman, who takes the chair away and lights Kane up with it instead.

With the table set up at ringside, Strowman loads up a superplex, only to have Kane punch his way out to avoid a bad case of death. Kane gets knocked inside but can't chokeslam him down. Instead it's a middle rope ax handle and the running powerslam through the ring (that made me jump). The bell never rang so no match but that was quite the finish.

Very quick clip of Paul Heyman's promo on Raw.

Tony Nese vs. Gran Metalik

Nese poses to start and runs Metalik over with a clothesline for an early two. Tony misses a charge though and gets caught with a dive as we take a break. Back with Nese getting caught on top, allowing Nese to get two off a gutbuster. A superkick cuts Nese off though and it's the Metalik Driver for the pin at 6:15. Not enough shown to rate but it was exactly what you would expect.

Pay per view rundown.

Clip of AJ Styles' promo from Tuesday.

And again, from Smackdown to close the show. New Day vs. Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens ended when Shield came down and then everything went nuts.

Sami and Owens bail to the floor, leaving New Day to get beaten down. The Usos come in but the Bar cuts them off. We see the Raw women's team invading the Smackdown women's locker room for the big brawl with

Charlotte taking the big beating. Back in the arena, Samoa Joe and Finn Balor run in along with others, only to have Shane lead some reinforcements. Shinsuke Nakamura starts striking away but Kurt Angle shows up to bring out Braun Strowman for the real house cleaning.

Everyone brawls to the floor where Shield surrounds Shane McMahon. Shane has to watch as Smackdown is decimated on the floor, including Samoa Joe breaking the trombone over Big E.'s back. Angle gets in the ring and asks Shane how this feels before a TripleBomb plants the boss. Angle takes off his jacket and gives Shane an Angle Slam. Strowman watches as it's a second TripleBomb to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. The ending helps this one (again) and the HHH stuff helped a lot too. They were smart to go with the Smackdown stuff here again as that's far more interesting than most of the stuff on Raw. I'll be glad when the Raw vs. Smackdown stuff is done but at least it's been entertaining while it's lasted.

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205 Live – November 14, 2017: Happy (Kind Of) Birthday

205 Live

Date: November 14, 2017

Location: Spectrum Center, Charlotte, North Carolina

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Vic Joseph

We're back stateside now and as luck would have it, today is Kalisto's birthday. I'm thinking that means cake and of course you know what that means. In this case it's also the go home show for Survivor Series, meaning we'll be getting what is hopefully the final build between Kalisto and Enzo Amore. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Kalisto says he's going to celebrate his birthday by beating down Drew Gulak before he wins the Cruiserweight Title back on Sunday.

Gulak and Amore are next to a massive birthday cake with Enzo talking about the Zo Train ending if he loses the title. Tonight, he needs Drew to make this a better 205 Live.

The announcers preview the show as the opening stall continues.

Jack Gallagher/Brian Kendrick vs. Rich Swann/Cedric Alexander

Tornado rules with Cedric as the hometown boy, meaning there's quite the chant to start things off. It's a brawl to start before all four head outside with Swann being sent into the barricade. That's fine with Cedric who pops Kendrick in the jaw to take over again. Gallagher hits a heck of a dropkick to knock Cedric over the announcers' table leaving Swann to get beaten down in the ring.

The villains take turns knocking them off the apron until Alexander finally gets in a dropkick on Kendrick. One heck of an elbow to the jaw staggers Gallagher for a great visual and a Spanish Fly gives Cedric two. Kendrick comes back in to take Cedric down and the Captain's Hook goes

on. Swann's save attempt is countered into a Fujiwara armbars but he's still able to catch Cedric's tap attempt.

Cedric has to break up a double submission on Swann, basically guaranteeing the end of the match. Sliced Bread #2 gets two on Cedric but it's Swann coming back in with some superkicks. Kendrick crotches him on top though and a double super hiptoss drops Rich for a rather close two. It's Cedric right back in with the springboard clothesline but Gallagher breaks up the Lumbar Check by dropkicking the knee out. Swann superkicks the heck out of Gallagher and hits a diving tornado DDT onto the floor. Back in and the Lumbar Check puts Kendrick away at 10:55.

Rating: B. These guys had a heck of a match here and that's exactly what it needed to be, especially in what should blow off the feud. They've been feuding for way too long now and needed a gimmick match to really wrap things up. It's a good match though and one of the better things this show has had in a long time.

Ariya Daivari comes out and says this might be the last episode of the Zo Show. The show isn't being canceled or anything (Are we sure about that?) but it might as well be if Kalisto wins the title on Sunday. Mustafa Ali comes out and doesn't think much of Daivari sucking up to Enzo so much, but maybe it has to do with all the cake. On top of that though, Daivari looks stupid.

Ariya Daivari vs. Mustafa Ali

Ali starts fast with a superkick and steals Daivari's jacket before hitting a high crossbody for two. The springboard is broken up though and Ali crashes out to the floor. Back in and Daivari gets two off a clothesline, followed by a chinlock. I'll take this time to do anything else as my interest is rapidly draining.

Since it's just a chinlock, it's a spinebuster for two on Ali as we're firmly in the lack of charisma period that Daivari constantly has going on. Ali fights back up and scores with a dropkick, only to get caught in a reverse DDT. The frog splash gets two but Ali is right back up with a super hurricanrana. Since this is an Ali match, that sets up the 054 for the pin at 7:13.

Rating: D+. The wrestling was fine but egads how many times can we watch these two have the same match? Ali is better in the ring but if you've seen one of his matches, you've seen all of them. Daivari on the other hand is a charisma vacuum who drives any interest he could possibly have out of the matches. Watchable match but better suited for the insomnia cure than anything else.

Akira Tozawa comes in to wish Kalisto a happy birthday and good luck.

Kalisto vs. Drew Gulak

There are balloons and cake at ringside so you know the ending from here. Before the match, Enzo says Kalisto is going to get a beating for a birthday gift. Since it's Enzo, that takes a few minutes to actually say. Gulak slams Kalisto down to start but gets caught in a quick headscissors. They head outside with Enzo running his mouth (shocking) to allow Gulak some cheap shots.

Back in and we hit the neck crank, meaning it's time for the fans to sing HAPPY BIRTHDAY. A slam sends Kalisto into the ropes and we've got a bad knee. They tease going into the cake before Drew wisely goes back to the knees with a surfboard. Kalisto rolls away into the hurricanrana driver, followed by a suicide dive. Enzo kicks the knee out though and Drew belts out some Happy Birthday. The dragon sleeper takes too long though and it's the Salida Del Sol to give Kalisto the pin at 7:52.

Rating: C. This was all you could have expected it to be and Kalisto winning was the only possible ending. Gulak is fine as a lackey for Enzo, though I'm not sure how much longer we can keep going with this stuff. The match was acceptable enough and Kalisto getting a win hopefully means he wins the title on Sunday (though it won't).

Post match Enzo goes after Kalisto but has to kick Gulak in the head. Enzo bails but Kalisto chases him down and sends him into the cake (the one in the back, as opposed to the one in the arena) to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. Aside from the opener, this was a completely run of the mill show here as we're getting ready to finally wrap up Enzo vs. Kalisto, meaning it's finally time to get someone fresh challenging for

the title. The show is still watchable but there's nothing here that you haven't seen before. The cake stuff was fine, though completely standard stuff for a not very interesting title match on Sunday.

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Took in the Ric Flair 30 For 30 Documentary

I just finished watching the ESPN 30 For 30 documentary on Ric Flair and....I have no idea where to start. The more I think about it, the more appropriate that seems. If there a one line that sums up the entire film, it's Ric Flair doesn't know who Ric Fliehr is. The crux of the film is about Flair's Nature Boy persona, but the underlying theme throughout is Flair not knowing who he was because he spent so much time living his gimmick. There's a lot to get through though.

The film goes through the life and career of Flair, looking at everything from his childhood to his training to the NWA to the WWF to WCW to TNA and most points in between. The thing

is, it doesn't really go into depth about a lot of what was going on. It's understandable when he was an active or semi-active wrestler for forty years, but it always seems like he's getting interested in talking about something and then cuts it off because we need to move on to something else.

Unfortunately this leaves you wanting more, which is one of the flaws of the movie: I wanted to see more. This easily could have gone on for another hour or more and it wouldn't have gotten dull. If nothing else just more stories of Flair's life and career with all of the insanity that came with it. That's what a lot of the focus is on though, and it's not always in the best way.

The main word for the film is excess. As you probably know, Flair lives every day of his life to the hardest degree and didn't seem to look back a single day. While Flair talked about his life though, it seemed that he knew he missed a lot of things and it bothered him. However, that was just another day of drinking and partying to make his troubles go away. Flair talks about the worst days of his drinking, which saw him drink ten beers and five mixed drinks a day, every day, for SEVENTEEN YEARS. While that's probably an exaggeration, you kind of have to wonder how much of one it really is.

Over the course of an hour and a half, we see that there are clearly two sides to Flair: the Nature Boy and the man himself. While Flair is an incredible performer and one of the biggest stars in wrestling history. However, at the same time, his personal life is often in shambles, including the gut wrenching story of the death of his son Reid. It's a story that can't be done justice but some of the details will make your head spin.

On a brighter front, the film also has interviews from a ton of people who have played a part in or been along for the ride for Flair's career (though unless I missed him, there was no Vince McMahon for reasons unclear. Of all people, Hulk Hogan

had some of the greatest praise for Flair, which is one of the last things you would have expected given some of their previous issues. As a bonus, you even get an ultra rare out of character interview from Undertaker, who seems to be a big fan as well. It's worth seeing the whole thing just for the sake of hearing so many takes on Flair.

Overall, the film is definitely worth checking out. It might not offer anything hardcore fans haven't heard before but it's incredibly well put together (with some animations of a lot of Flair's stories) with Flair front and center the whole time. There are a lot of lessons to be learned from Flair's often tragic stories, but at the same time there is so much to celebrate about him that it almost makes you forget about a lot of the things he's gone through (often brought onto himself). That's what the whole thing comes down to in the end: there are two parts of Flair's life. One of them is a lot of fun, but the other is a very dark and scary place.