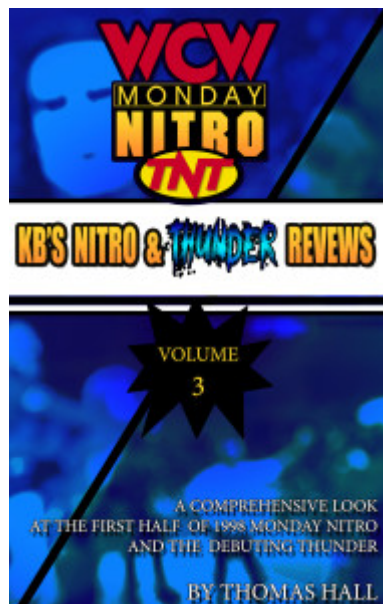


New E-Book: KB's History Of Monday Nitro Volume III (Including Thunder!)



When we last left WCW, they were the undisputed kings of the Monday Night Wars and that's certainly still the case as they come into 1998. Things were so good that they decided to more than double the amount of television they were airing per week. To say this might have been too much too soon is an understatement but WCW had done stupider stuff before.

In this book, I'll be looking at every episode of Monday Nitro and Thunder from January through June of 1998. This is the time where the Monday Night Wars finally started to get competitive again after nearly two years of being completely one sided. Having two shows a week was a fresh idea as well, making this a very important time in wrestling history. As usual I'll be providing play by play, historical context and analysis of every show.

Also remember that I've already covered 1995-1997 Monday Nitro in case you don't want to jump right into the later stuff. Both books are available from my Amazon author page.

The book runs over 300 pages on a Kindle and only costs \$3.99, or the equivalent in other currencies. If you don't have a Kindle or e-book reader, there are several **FREE** apps you can use to read it on pretty much any electronic device. You can find those from Amazon [here](#).

You can pick up the book from Amazon [here](#).

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Or if you're in another country with its own Amazon page, just search "KB Nitro 1998" and my book will be the first thing that pop up.

Also you can still get any of my previous books on the WWE Championship, Monday Night Raw from 1998 and 2001, Monday Nitro from 1995-97, In Your House, Summerslam, Starrcade, ECW Pay Per Views, Royal Rumble, Saturday Night's Main Event, the WWF and WCW pay per views from 1998 and Clash of the Champions at my author's page [here](#).

I hope you like it and shoot me any questions you might have.

KB

TNA One Night Only – X-

Travaganza III: What Do You Want Me To Say?

X-Travaganza III

Date: May 6, 2015

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Attendance: 1,100

Commentators: Josh Matthews, Jeremy Borash

I guess this is considered the beginning of a new season of these shows as the first X-Travaganza was the first ever One Night Only. Barring a big surprise, this is going to be a series of qualifying matches for an Ultimate X match for money later on in the night. These shows really are good illustrations of how far the division has fallen in recent years. Let's get to it.

We open with the standard speech about how important this division is to TNA's history. Notice that as the division has fallen into obscurity, the company's success has gone down as well. Of course there's a lot more to it than that, but once TNA stopped having something to focus on other than the main event division, things kept going south. As usual, this also shows us clips from later in the night.

All matches are qualifying matches for the Ultimate X main event with \$100,000 on the line unless noted otherwise.

Tigre Uno vs. Sonjay Dutt

Feeling out process to start with Sonjay taking him down with a quick armdrag before having to spin out of a wristlock. Some fast near falls get us nowhere but both guys collide to put them on the mat. Back up and Sonjay takes over with some chops and a running knee in the corner before stopping Tigre with a boot. Tigre comes back in with a dropkick for two as the announcers start talking about Twitter handles. I really hope this isn't a descent into the usual commentary madness on these shows.

Sonjay comes back with something like an Octopus Hold and a kick to the

head for two. This turns into a discussion of favorite submission holds, which is at least related to what we're watching. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Tigre fights back, only to miss a split legged moonsault. Dutt's standing moonsault gets two as the fans are really not all that interested here. Borash finally gets around to explaining the idea of the qualifying matches for Ultimate X later in the show. Tigre crotches himself on an attempted basement dropkick in the corner but comes right back with a rolling cradle for the fast pin (and maybe a four count).

Rating: C-. We're already seeing the issue with this show: there's no reason for these two to be fighting and that makes for a dull match as neither of these two did anything exciting enough to warrant having nine minutes. It's not a bad match or anything but it's just two guys doing moves to each other until one got a pin off a cradle.

Kenny King talks about surprising everyone by showing up in TNA and brags about all of his success. No matter what he did though, he never could get noticed until he joined up with the BDC. Tonight, we're calling this X-Travaganza Step Up, because he wants someone to step up to become the next Kenny King. Be careful though because he's going to knock them right back down.

Kenny King vs. Jay Rios vs. Pepper Parks

Parks wrestles all over the indies and seems to have a fitness gimmick. Rios is a lower level indy guy but he was recently on Impact as Tigre Uno's partner in the Tag Team Title tournament against Bram/Ethan Carter III. Josh asks the returning JB how he can get around the arena to announce everything so fast. Parks kicks Rios in the head to start and stomps him down as King stands back.

The fans chant for the BDC (the only people they might know in this match) as King backdrops Parks to the floor. Rios kicks both of them through the ropes and hits an Asai moonsault to drop both opponents. Back in and Parks gets two off a sitout powerbomb as King is still on the floor. Rios sidesteps Parks' spear to send him into King before hitting the springboard into an RK0 on Parks for two.

Pepper doesn't seem to mind as a double superkick puts King down, only to

have Rios hit running boots in the corner to both opponents. King suddenly realizes he's Kenny King and starts cleaning house but Rios shoves him off the top and hits a frog splash for two on Parks. Back up and Rios goes to the apron, only to springboard into the Royal Flush to give King the pin.

Rating: C. Better but it's the exact same problem from the first match: I have no real reason to see these guys fight and they're not doing anything worth seeing. In other words, these matches aren't very interesting and make me want to go watch some old TNA matches instead of these.

Here's a clip from Destination X 2013 where Manik won the X-Division Title in Ultimate X.

Manik vs. Mr. 450

450 is yet another indy guy who has been squashed in NXT a few times under the name Jesus de Leon. For some reason he comes out (after Manik) with a weird eyepiece that looks like something out of Star Trek (for your KB trivia: I've never seen a single movie or episode of Star Trek) and may supposed to be something from the future.

Wherever he's from (yes I know it's Puerto Rico), he grabs an armbar to start as the announcers talk about Google Glasses. They spin around a few times until 450 gets two off a springboard cross body. Manik sends him hard into the post though and things slow back down. Off to the floor now with Manik sending him into the post again as Josh laments the loss of Bernie Mac. He was in a movie called Mr. 3000 (Josh calls it Mr. 300) so it's connected you see.

Manik grabs a cross armbreaker (at least he's following up on the shoulder into the post, putting this match ahead of everything else on the show so far) before rolling some suplexes, capped off by a belly to back hammerlock suplex. We hit the chinlock with the arm trapped back for a bit to keep up the psychology.

450 comes back with another springboard cross body but Manik catches himself in the ropes instead of going out to the floor. He goes right

outside a few seconds later though, setting up 450's Asai moonsault. Josh clarifies that Pepper and Joseph Parks are not related before Manik hurricanranas 450 into the armbreaker for the submission.

Rating: C+. Best match of the night so far with the arm work actually playing through the match instead of just introducing it and then forgetting it just as fast. Again it's not a great match or anything like that, but at least it was a good way to kill seven minutes. Manik is an underrated talent in the company and unfortunately he's stuck in the lame Revolution for the time being.

Video on the Knockouts defying the limits just as well as the men do.

Taryn Terrell is in the five Knockouts ladder match later tonight and she can prove that she's more than just a pretty face.

Great Sanada vs. Jonathan Cruz vs. Crazy Steve

Cruz is Rios' partner in the indies. Steve pulls out a horn as Matthews thinks Cruz is Mr. 450. Ignore the fact that neither wears a mask so this shouldn't be too complicated. Steve goes out to the apron and waits for a tag because we're in a comedy match. Sanada cranks on Cruz's arm to start and they hit a nice spin out sequence for one of the few good reactions from the crowd all night long. Steve comes in with a crucifix and sunset flip for two each on Sanada before Sanada pulls on Cruz's face.

Now the announcers talk about the places Sanada has wrestled, including the hibachi place and Nakatomi Towers. Off to an abdominal stretch on Cruz until Steve makes the save. The serious guys finally get tired of the comedy and pound Steve down like anyone sensible would do. Steve comes back with cannonballs in the corner, only to have Sanada mist Cruz in the face. A moonsault gets two with Steve making the save, setting up a DDT on Cruz to send Steve to Ultimate X.

Rating: D. The announcers have gone from amusing to Tazz land as they spent the whole match making as many Japan jokes as they could squeeze into a short match. Steve is a generic "comedy" guy who gets annoying in a hurry with neither opponent being able to do much. Sanada really should have gone forward here as he's more than earned the spot in the last

year, especially on these shows.

Rockstar Spud says he's a great wrestler, even when he was just getting coffee for Dixie Carter. Tonight he can show why he's a great X-Division wrestler when he wins his first Ultimate X match.

And now, since they can't even get to 2:45 on their own, here's the X-Division Title match from Slammiversary 2014.

X-Division Title: Sanada vs. Tigre Uno vs. Davey Richards vs. Eddie Edwards vs. Crazy Steve vs. Manik

Sanada is defending and this is a ladder match. Also keep in mind that Destination X and Option C are coming up soon. Manik dives through the ropes to take out Sanada before the bell. The Wolves follow suit with stereo suicide dives and Steve has apparently knocked Tigre Uno down. Steve gets a ladder from under the ring and uses it to climb back to the apron. Tigre dropkicks him down and mostly misses a corkscrew dive to take everyone out.

Sanada and Manik fight over a ladder in the ring with the champion taking over via a springboard chop to the head. Tigre replaces Manik and kicks Sanada in the back of the head but the Wolves double team him into a German suplex onto the ladder in the corner. Edwards throws in a fresh ladder but Manik dropkicks both of them down. Steve (very popular tonight) comes in for the Terry Funk spinning ladder spot, taking down everyone that comes into the ring.

Manik makes a save but Steve shoves the ladder over, only to have Manik land on the top rope and dive out to knock out the Wolves. Steve goes up again and touches the belt but of course loses his hand eye coordination since this is a ladder match, allowing Sanada to make the save. The ladder is busted so Sanada slams Steve onto it to set up the moonsault. The fans think this is awesome as Tigre enziguris Sanada off a better ladder.

Tigre wedges the broken ladder into the standing one to form a bridge, but the Wolves catch him in a powerbomb/top rope Backstabber combo. The Wolves both go after the belt but Sanada makes the save. Edwards Sanada

clothesline each other to the floor and Eddie crashes into the barricade, leaving Davey on top. Manik makes the save and powerbombs Davey onto the bridged ladder in a SCARY landing. Sanada climbs up to retain at 9:40 before someone dies.

Rating: B-. The match was fun but some of those spots looked too dangerous for my taste. Richards getting powerbombed was way too scary looking and I didn't like how he landed. Hopefully everyone is fine, but I question having people go through a match like this without even giving the match hype on TV.

Rockstar Spud vs. Dalton Castle

Castle is basically a man in a peacock costume during his entrance with and some good looking valets to disrobe him. Naturally the announcers aren't going to explain who Castle is because they're too busy with their "witty banter." Castle puts his hands on his back and sticks his chest out so Spud imitates the look (one fan: "Spud's was better!"). The pose off continues as the announcers debate this year's Best Picture winner. They start shoving each other out of the way to pose before Spud gets one off a rollup over a minute in.

This sends Spud to the floor to call Castle a chicken. Time for a chase scene with Dalton getting taken down with a drop toehold. Matthews talks about being chased by a chicken as a kid as Spud knocks Dalton outside. Josh: "There was no choking of the chicken." Castle throws him down to the mat and struts a bit before covering for two. Josh: "New game! Every time you say Castle's full name, you have to give him a new middle name." Spud screams at a slap and hits some running forearms, followed by the Underdog for the pin.

Rating: D+. I love Spud but there was only so much you can do here when the announcers are making up games to get themselves through the show. Castle needs a straight man or partner in general to play off as he doesn't have the wrestling acumen to back him up out there. This was barely even a match after all the posing.

Matt Hardy is ready for his dream match against Austin Aries tonight. Who has been dreaming of that match? Matt talks about his career evolving all

the time and now he's going to give A Double a double dose of Mattitude.

Mikaze vs. DJZ

Mikaze had a pot of coffee back in ROH back in 2005-2006 and was squashed by Ryback one night. DJZ bails from the threat of a kick to the head and does a Karate Kid pose. Back up and Mikaze chases him out to the floor, only to have DJZ snap the back of his neck across the ropes. That's with Mikaze who skins the cat out to the floor and into a hurricanrana for a nice counter.

Back in and DJZ stomps him in the corner as we hear about Mikaze designing wrestling gear. Mikaze misses a springboard clothesline and a lot of choking ensues. The announcers count ropes (seriously) and laugh at the idea of Mike Tenay dying. Mikaze sends him to the floor and gets a running start before changing directions into a moonsault. That was awesome. Back in and Mikaze hits a springboard forearm (fans: "AJ STYLES!") and Trouble in Paradise, only to get caught in a bottom rope tornado DDT to send DJZ to the Ultimate X.

Rating: C. Mikaze looked cool but the idea of sending anyone but those already on the roster to the main event is a pipe dream. DJZ is trying but he's another example of someone who needs a partner to help him get through most of his matches. He's mainly a comedy guy and that doesn't translate well when he's trying to have a regular match like this one.

Madison Rayne vs. Gail Kim vs. Angelina Love vs. Brooke vs. Taryn Terrell

Ladder match for a future Knockouts Title match. I love that they can't say who the champion is at the moment as they have no idea who it will be when this airs. Everyone goes for the ladder to start but they just wind up knocking the thing over for a big crash. Madison suplexes Taryn on the floor (Josh: "That was violent!") and the announcers take shots at the Divas.

We get the first ladder brought in with Gail trying to get it straightened on the top rope for no apparent reason as everyone fights in the background. Angelina gets dropped face first onto the ladder but Gail and Brooke start fighting over who gets to use the ladder. Taryn is sent

face first into the ladder in the corner as Angelina sets up another between the barricade and the apron.

Everyone gets knocked down in the corner until Gail is dropkicked off the apron and onto the bridged ladder. We finally get a ladder set up in the middle of the ring but Brooke shoves it over, sending Angelina and Madison crashing down. Gail pulls Taryn down but both quickly climb up, only to have Brooke pull Gail through the rungs. Gail is dangling but stops Brooke from pulling the contract down. Not that it matters as the contract falls, allowing Taryn to dive onto it for the win.

Rating: D+. I've never been a fan of these short gimmick matches. What's the point in even bringing the ladders in if they're going to be done in less than seven minutes with five girls in there? You can barely get anything going and there's almost no drama, though Taryn winning is always a good thing.

The Wolves are ready to face each other and they're both coming at it hard. It's all cool though.

Package on the Wolves.

Davey Richards vs. Eddie Edwards

This is just a dream match instead of a qualifying match. They're in different tights tonight to make this feel a bit different. Feeling out process to start and both guys give a clean break in the corner. They point at the crowd and lock up against the ropes as this is totally even so far. Davey can't spin out of a wristlock but they both spin out of a hammerlock into a standoff. Now Josh talks about grilled cheese and his ability to map minds.

More technical stuff leads to a headscissors from Davey and they trade something like the surfboard's drunk cousins. The third standoff sets up Davey nailing a dropkick and putting on an Indian deathlock, complete with a Rude hip swivel. Edwards does the same (the swivel I mean) with the surfboard knee stomp as Josh is STILL going on about the mind map stuff. Davey is sent to the floor and both guys avoid dives, setting up Eddie's moonsault off the apron to break his heel and put him on the

shelf for three months. Back in and Davey hits a pair of Creeping Deaths (Eddie: "DO IT! DO IT!") for the pin.

Rating: C. This is a hard one to grade as it was just starting to get going when the injury took place. They didn't want to go after each other here but they were getting into the spirit of competition right before the ending. Good enough match though and the Wolves continue to be awesome on this show.

Austin Aries says he and Matt Hardy are good in any division. He has to talk over a match ending and it's really distracting. Isn't there like an office or locker room deep inside the building that they could do these in instead?

Clip of Aries beating Roode in the first Option C cash-in.

Austin Aries vs. Matt Hardy

Again, the winner doesn't go to Ultimate X. They fight into the corner to start as the fans aren't sure who to cheer for here. Matt scores a quick takedown and poses before doing it again and shouting 2-0. Aries takes him down twice in a row, lays on the ropes and says we're tied. They hit the mat with a headlock into a headscissors counter and it's already a standoff. Another mat sequence ends with Aries hitting a basement dropkick and a slingshot hilo for two.

The announcers ignore the match again but at least they talk about the main event. Well to be fair they make a bet on the main event but close enough. Aries dropkicks Matt out to the floor but his suicide dive hits a forearm. Matt fights back with a middle rope elbow to the back of the head but the Side Effect is blocked with an elbow to the head. The double underhook guillotine has Aries in trouble but he escapes and puts on the Last Chancery.

They fight over a suplex on the apron (of course the Last Chancery didn't work. It hasn't in years) and Matt is shoved to the floor for the suicide dive. Aries dives into a kick into the ribs though and eats a Twist of Fate on the floor. Austin barely beats the count back in and quickly drops Hardy, only to miss the 450. Matt misses the moonsault though and

they slug it out from their knees. The Side Effect gets two for Matt but Aries pops up with a pair of discus forearms, the running corner dropkick and the brainbuster for the pin.

Rating: B. Match of the night here by about a million miles but it's nothing worth going out of your way to see. This sounded like something that should be headlining an indy show and there's nothing wrong with it being the second biggest main event on a nothing show like this. To be fair, a big indy show probably has a better card than a lot of One Night Only shows.

Video on Ultimate X.

Kenny King vs. Tigre Uno vs. Rockstar Spud vs. DJZ vs. Crazy Steve vs. Manik

Ultimate X for \$100,000. Yeah not a title shot or anything, but money. It's a big brawl to start with Manik making the first failed attempt at the X. A limping Spud is down on the floor as Steve bites DJZ's head and hits him with a Cannonball in the corner. Tigre stops King from getting the X but gets pulled down by Manik. King superplexes Steve down and hammers away before everyone is down for a bit.

Spud pulls DJZ down and other combinations do the same thing as this is already starting to drag. We hit the parade of dives with Spud going last. It's clear that they're just killing time at this point, likely due to the Wolves match going short. They get back in (including Steve, who Josh keeps calling Steve of Crazy) for a Tower of Doom and the fans are barely reacting. King shoves DJZ through part of the structure before pulling Spud off the cables.

Tigre hits a Phoenix Splash to the floor onto DJZ for no apparent reason. King and Manik screw up an alliance and END THIS ALREADY! King is the only one left standing so he pulls out a ladder. Spud makes his comeback and hammers away on King but Kenny hits him with the ladder. The slowest climb of all time allows Spud to make the save and...have to deal with Manik who springboards onto the ladder. Thankfully it quickly falls over and Spud hangs on, pulling down the X to win.

Rating: D+. WAY too long here with nearly 18 minutes to this thing. The guys were trying hard but this shouldn't be more than about ten minutes at most. The lack of drama really hurt it too as the only two possible winners were King and Spud, and there was barely a single dramatic attempt at the X. Just too long here and it really dragged things down.

Overall Rating: D. Oh yeah this was dull. It went on too long (which says a lot as this wasn't even 2:45 long and it had about 15 minutes added with the Slammiversary match) and nothing here was worth seeing. In other words, it's basically the exact same thing that has plagued every One Night Only show, including the dreadful commentary. Matthews and Borash clearly didn't care and they knew they wouldn't get in trouble for it because no one watches these shows. Bad show, but the guys were indeed trying.

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Payback 2015 Preview

I know I'm not the biggest fan of the current product, but this show actually gives me hope. I didn't expect anything the first two years they ran this show and they were both excellent surprises. It's way too soon after Extreme Rules and way too close to Elimination Chamber, but maybe they can pull off something good for a good show. Let's get to it.

We'll start with the preshow and the match that makes me want to go on a

hatchet rampage: the Meta Powers (yes seriously) vs. Ascension. Now let's pause for a second here. I like to consider myself a patient man. I've sat through some of the dumbest ideas I've ever seen and managed to survive. I got through every original episode of Monday Nitro and Thunder (and now I'm doing it AGAIN). I even made it through the Ruthless Aggression Era on Monday Night Raw.

But now I think I've reached my breaking point (which may or may not include Randy Orton torture material). After a year of the Ascension being one of the coolest tag teams of the year in NXT and seeing them debut as a pretty cool throwback idea, I'm going to have to watch Curtis Axel and Damien Sandow imitate great wrestlers beat them in an unfunny comedy match because Vince and Dunn will laugh at it.

Ascension may be the greatest travesty in wrestling in years and now it's time to put this thrown together team over them for the sake of a lame comedy act. Remember when Charlie Haas did this and it got old in like two months? This isn't even getting two months, at least not from me. It's two guys with nothing better to do than imitate legends because WWE decided to have Miz win the blowoff and then run off to go make a movie, leaving Sandow around to flounder because they don't think more than an hour ahead at any given time. I can't stand this idea and it's going to make me want to hurt someone. Maybe Repo Man.

Oh yeah there's a full pay per view to go.

Cena over Rusev, even though Rusev somehow getting the title back would be more interesting. However, I'll take Cena retaining as we can get more of the Open Challenges, which are pretty easily what I look forward to the most on Raw every single week. Even the fans in the arena are catching on. Notice how strong a reaction Cena has been getting lately. Let a good wrestler have good matches and people will cheer. Yes, it really is that simple. What isn't simple is HOW HAVE THESE TWO NEVER HAD A FLAG MATCH? If there has ever been an easier layup for a gimmick I don't know what it is, but we've never seen one.

Rollins to reta....I'm sure about this aren't I? WWE has actually made me think about this one more than once and I can't believe I'm saying that.

The key here is Elimination Chamber, because there's the slightest chance they'll pull the trigger on a two week title reign for someone and then get it back on Rollins. Unfortunately I think they'll keep the title on Rollins here and set up his defense against Kane at the nothing pay per view. At least that keeps it quick I guess. Yeah Rollins to retain and no one turns.

I think they'll go with Barrett over Neville. Despite winning King of the Ring earlier this month, somehow he needs the win more. It's very sad to say but that's actually the truth. Neville is going to be over because of his awesome flips and the fact that he busts out a different move every now and then to keep things going. The fact that this guy debuted like six weeks ago and is basically a coin toss against the King of the Ring is astounding.

Sheamus beats Ziggler to even the series, setting up a blowoff at Money in the Bank because they'll both be inside the Chamber for the Intercontinental Title because WWE keeps the same people in the same spots on the card for like ever.

And now.....wait....I think I.....I THINK I CAN FEEL THE POWAH! Yeah I still love that intro. If this isn't the match of the night by about 18,000 miles, I'm going to be shocked. I think New Day holds the titles in the 2/3 falls match over Kidd/Cesaro and then drops them inside the chamber, which might be best as you don't want them to lose their heat. This is going to be amazing and I can't wait to see how they handle the Elimination Chamber match. I can't believe it but dang this is the best thing going today.

Ryback vs. Wyatt is happening too. That's about the extent of my thoughts about it at this point even though I think about it more than any feud going on right now. It's such a weird feud as they really don't have a reason to be fighting. Bray just picked Ryback and is feuding with him, but the match has the potential to be very entertaining with two guys beating the tar out of each other for about fifteen minutes. I'm actually not sure if this needs more development or not. Bray isn't the kind of guy that needs a reason to do anything and if the matches are good, who cares?

Tamina and Naomi to beat the Bella Twins so Naomi can get into the title hunt, whatever that means. You have like eight activeish Divas (Bellas, Naomi, Tamina, Fox, Cameron, Natalya and Summer. Yes I left off Rosa and if you can't figure out why, I've failed at educating you) including the champion and her partner. Who isn't in the title hunt?

Overall, I'm actually looking forward to this show. This has the potential to be a really, really strong card (when is the last time I didn't say that actually?) with only the Divas doing nothing for me. Yeah there's another show in two weeks, but this could be a really fun outing, especially with such low expectations.

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Lucha Underground – May 13, 2015: Fun Wrestling

Lucha Underground

Date: May 13, 2015

Location: Lucha Underground Arena, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Matt Striker, Vampiro

Another week, another awesome show from Lucha Underground. The big story here is Alberto vs. Hernandez with the winner getting an eventually title shot at Prince Puma. There's also the impending return of Mil Muertes, who is probably going to want to kill a few dozen people to make himself

feel better. In other words, this show should be great. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Patron beating Mundo last week for the right to face Hernandez tonight for the #1 contendership.

Cueto talks to his unseen brother about spending a fortune to find some medallions that will make a warrior stronger than a god. Tonight, the battles for the medallions begin.

The announcers mention a new superstar debuting tonight.

Aerostar vs. Jack Evans

Here's the debut and someone I'm really not a fan of. Evans is one of the cockiest wrestlers of all time and the king of the unnecessary flips. The fans are behind Aerostar as he dropkicks Evan in the back to start. He puts Evans on the middle rope for his completely unnecessary (common word in this match) run across the ropes into a hurricanrana. Evans backflips from the middle rope to the apron but gets knocked to the floor for a flip dive from Aerostar, who comes up holding his knee.

Back in and Evans flips some more before kicking Star in the neck. Off to an STF of all things, which is surprising as you almost never see a submission in this company outside of Pentagon Jr. A standing corkscrew moonsault (Striker: "Ode to Blitzkrieg!" Makes sense as Blitzkrieg gave Evans the gimmick) gets two for Evans and he drops Star on his head with a German suplex.

A big hiptoss sends Evans to the floor and Star throws him into the barricade for good measure. Jack pops back up for a 450 off the same barricade to pop the crowd. Back in and Evans misses another springboard splash but catches Star on top. Evans: "EL MEJOR LUCHADOR!" (the best luchador). Star will have none of this and channels his inner Canadian with a super Canadian Destroyer for the pin.

Rating: C+. This was fun but I can never ignore all the flips for the sake of flips. Evans is a really solid heel but it was the right call to have him lose here. They're getting somewhere with Aerostar and that's a very important key to a company like this. Good little match here, but

the flips made my eyes roll. The knee was forgotten as soon as it was introduced too.

The Mack is impressed by all the money Big Ryck has but Ryck is annoyed at their failure to win the Trios Titles. Ryck says this business is all about making money and for the right price, he'll beat up anyone.

Fenix vs. Sexy Star vs. The Mack vs. Killshot vs. Cage vs. King Cuerno vs. Pentagon Jr.

I'm assuming this is one fall to a finish. Cueto says the winner of this gets one of the seven Aztec medallions. It's a huge brawl to start until Fenix and Pentagon are the only to standing. Fenix takes over by bouncing to the top for a missile dropkick as everyone else fights on the floor. Pentagon comes back with a running tornado DDT before the two of them go outside as well.

Cuerno and Killshot head inside to replace them with Killshot taking him to the mat. That lasts as long as you would expect until Killshot dropkicks him down, only to eat a hard kick to the head of his own. Star comes in with a shot from behind on Cuerno and is quickly replaced by Killshot, who gets his head taken off by Cage. The Mack comes back in and kicks Cage to the floor, only to have him run right back in to help Cuerno with a double suplex on Mack and Killshot.

Almost everyone gets back in but Star's shots have no effect on Cage. Instead it's Fenix kicking Cage down until Mack takes Cage out to the floor. Pentagon gets back in for a few seconds before it's he and Fenix hitting top rope double stomps on Killshot and Mack before clotheslining each other to give Cage and Cuerno two each with Cage and Star making the saves. Got all that? Cuerno kicks Cage instead of Star, who then dives onto Pentagon on the floor.

Cage slams Mack down but gets nailed by Killshot. Star grabs a rollup on Fenix but Killshot blasts the girl to put everyone down. Mack gets two on Cage off a standing moonsault (that looked cool) before it's back to Fenix diving over the top to take Pentagon down again. Cage catches Fenix's suicide dive in a suplex but Killshot dives onto both of them to put everyone not named Cuerno down.

Cuerno's Arrow nails Killshot as Pentagon and Star get back in. Fenix runs in to save Star but Pentagon manages a modified Widow's Peak to Star and a package piledriver on Fenix AT THE SAME TIME. That looked awesome but Star stops him from breaking Fenix's arm. Fenix pops back up with a quick hurricanrana and most of a standing moonsault for the pin on Pentagon.

Rating: B. Fun match but that's the highest a match like this can go. It wasn't much from a quality standpoint but that's the fun part about Lucha Underground: they don't try to be anything more than a very fun show without the quality being all that strong. Fun stuff here and Fenix continues to look like something awesome out there.

Cueto says that the Crew is getting a shot at the Trios Titles for winning a regular tag match last week. Son of Havoc says that's not fair as Ivelisse has a broken leg but Cueto makes it a ladder match for fun.

Katrina (looking GOOD here) comes in to Fenix's locker room and says Muertes is even stronger than ever. He's coming for Fenix, and that makes Fenix a pawn of death. Katrina leaves and Fenix sees men in skull masks staring at him.

Hernandez vs. Alberto El Patron

#1 contenders match and you have to win by pinfall or submission, basically making this a street fight. Feeling out process to start with Patron accepting a test of strength for no logical reason. Hernandez drives him into the corner and knocks him out to the floor for some rams into the apron. They get inside again and Patron gets two off a quick Backstabber but Hernandez runs him over to block the low superkick.

Something like a DDT and the low superkick are good for two on Hernandez but here's Johnny Mundo to pull Alberto to the floor for a DDT before throwing him through a window and right into Cueto's office. The smile on Cueto's face is another great example of why he's awesome. Fans: "WHY JOHNNY WHY???" Hernandez pins the bloody Patron with ease.

Rating: C-. This didn't have time to get anywhere and it was all about the angle anyway. Mundo has the potential to be a really strong heel as

there hasn't been a big bad (wrestler at least) in Lucha Underground for a while now. Hernandez vs. Puma should be fun, as should Patron coming back to get revenge on Mundo.

Mundo says this is his world as Patron is taken out on a stretcher.

Overall Rating: B+. As usual, Lucha Underground is some of the most fun wrestling you'll see anywhere right now. They know exactly what they're going for here and that's one of the most important things you can have in a wrestling company. Really fun episode this week and they're going to be ready to knock it out of the park soon with their big shows.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of 1998 Pay Per View reviews at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

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Thunder – December 23, 1999: A New Breed Of Failing

Thunder

Date: December 23, 1999

Location: Wicomico Civic Center, Salisbury, Maryland

Attendance: 4,000

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Mike Tenay, Scott Hudson

On Monday, this company replaced wrestling with some weird shoot style which involves whatever Russo and Ferrara feeling like throwing out there

being presented as the new reality. The big story was the reformation of the NWO because...normally I would complain here but it was probably the most logical thing all night. I have no idea what I'm about to watch but let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Monday's main story. The two minute version doesn't make it any better than the three hour edition.

Tenay promises to prove that Thunder is special again.

Here's the NWO to open things up and Tony is RIGHT THERE to tell us how strong the NWO really is. Bret brags about all the gold and says they couldn't make this any more black and white. This has been in the works for over a month and the stupid wrestling fans never saw it coming. We see some clips of the Outsiders helping Bret out over the last few months with Bret conveniently never seeing a thing.

This is the one and only one thing I can give Russo some slack on: the big conspiracy stories don't hold up if you know what to look for, so tying all this together probably did work a lot better when this show was airing live. Basically the NWO lead Goldberg and Benoit along so the four of them wound up with all the belts and it was a big swerve all along. It still doesn't make up for Monday's debacle or the holes in the logic, but at least it's there. On the screwjob at Starrcade, Bret: "That was better than Shawn Michaels!"

Nash rips on the fans for only cheering the Outsiders because they wanted to be hip. They're a bunch of \$5 an hour workers who have no idea what it takes to be this great. They've never needed the people but they don't mind taking the money. Hall says a bunch of stuff that has to be censored but Jeff cleans it up by declaring this crowd the first annual slapnuts convention. Again he declares himself the chosen one, which makes me wonder why he isn't the World Champion.

Jeff: "No one saw it coming!" Hall: "I didn't know where we were half the time." This NWO is only going to be the elite, because once you've had the black, you never go back. That line is SO out of place from Jarrett. Cue Goldberg, who is quickly told he sucks. He's going to rip the NWO's hearts out and it's not going to be who's next but who's left.

The announcers eat up time by running down the card. Tenay is lead announcer and Tony is playing second fiddle. That's quite odd to see.

Token footage of Leia Meow stretching.

Two helmeted bikers arrive.

Benoit says he prefers life's hard decisions because they require sacrifice. He modeled himself after Bret for living his life the way he believed it should be lived. That ended Monday, so tonight he's taking Bret's heart.

PG-13 vs. Varsity Club

Steiner and Rotundo here but first, a rap from PG-13. Leia is forced to exercise before the match and I'm sure you get the idea here. PG-13 gets beaten down to start and Steiner runs over JC Ice. Sullivan says the Varsity Club is too smart to get conned like Goldberg. A combination of clotheslines and Steiner Lines knock PG-13 into oblivion but the referee throws it out. Tenay says it's a double DQ, even though PG-13 literally had no offense.

Wolfie D. is put in the Tree of Woe for a low blow from Meow. Who in the world thought these teams needed to be brought in?

David Flair beats up a fast food worker for not getting his order right.

Russo is yelling at Hennig in his office, which has been put back together but still has the damage from Piper. So they dragged the broken walls to the arena and set them back up? Hennig didn't seem to know what was going on in the big scheme but here are the bikers to interrupt. It's the Harris Twins who turn over Russo's table and yell at him for screwing with their lives.

Here are the Filthy Animals and Jim Duggan with something to say. Eddie says the Animals are a lot of things but above all else, they're Americans. The Revolution left them by the roadside but they're back to knock the Revolution down. Kidman and Konnan say the same thing as Eddie, albeit in very, very different methods of speaking. Rey promises to beat the Revolution like the dogs they are.

Duggan of course says H0 and USA. He wants to make the Revolution his personal H0 so here's the Revolution with Dean ranting about the flag of the Revelation (yes the Revelation because Dean doesn't even care what stable he's in). Saturn starts talking about Fred Flintstone never realizing that the rack of ribs is too big for his car, making him by far the most entertaining thing in this story. Shane wants to break Duggan's neck and complains about Americans. The fans are the ones that suck off the government programs and Duggan's comeback is just him being an idiot. Apparently there's a match tonight.

Russo sends Hennig and Jarrett after Creative Control.

Tank Abbott vs. La Parka

A right hand puts La Parka down and Tank hammers away in the corner. La Parka hits him with the chair and gets knocked out cold for a no contest.

Tank knocks Doug Dillinger out too.

Norman Smiley hides from Goldberg. Why is Goldberg having issues finding the NWO? Why didn't he just wait for them to come through the curtain earlier?

The Artist still has issues recording his music but still won't speak. Paisley gets on the producer for questioning the lyrics.

Hardcore Title: Fit Finlay vs. Norman Smiley

Smiley is defending but Finlay knocks him into the weapons cart to get things going. They fight into the crowd and into the back as we hit the hardcore requirement from the WWF. Knobbs shows up and helps beat Norman up in the concession stand. They lower a metal door and try to crush Norman but Meng makes the save. Norman is thrown on top of Finlay for the pin.

Meng gives Norman the Death Grip post "match".

Jeff Jarrett finds a paper.

Goldberg chokes Jarrett against a wall and says he's coming for the NWO

when they least expect it.

Creative Control comes out to say they're no longer Creative Control. Now they're Ron and Don Harris because I guess that's supposed to make us care about them. They and their country accents are coming for the Powers That Be. Side note: if they're the Powers That Be, why do we never hear another voice?

Ron Harris/Don Harris vs. Curt Hennig/Jeff Jarrett

And there's no Jarrett, so the heel is now in a handicap match. Hennig tries to fight back as Tony tries to keep the Twins straight. The Twins throw Hennig around and a side slam gives we'll say Ron the pin. Total squash in less than two minutes.

The NWO comes out gives the Harris the NWO treatment, complete with spray paint.

Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Maestro

Kanyon comes out to do commentary for reasons of storyline development and immediately starts a BRING BACK JUVY chant. Well it's a one man chant but you get the idea. Maestro goes right at Bigelow to start but gets thrown away when trying a bulldog. Symphony comes in to prevent the diving headbutt so Bigelow dives at her anyway, sending Symphony running away. The distraction lets Kanyon hit Bigelow with a champagne bucket to give Maestro the pin.

Diamond Dallas Page says there's nothing between Buff Bagwell and his wife. He's booked against the Wall but won't fight him until he gets a match with Bagwell.

Recap of Madusa and Karagias.

Evan is in the ring and YES! IT! IS! TIME! Evan says it's time for a comeback and introduces us to his friends Shannon Moore and Shane Helms. Their collective names: 3 Count. They may not be N'Sync or the Backstreet Boys but they'll charm the pants off everyone's girlfriend. Now hit the music. We get a music video for the yet to be named single, spliced together with the guys singing the song (I Can't Get You Out Of My

Heart). The tasteless fans hate the song and here's a now serious Chavo Guerrero to clean house with dropkicks.

I know they're not the best remembered team but I loved these guys and thought they were a great idea. Boy bands were huge back then so why not go with a gimmick based on them? It's certainly better than Evan being the schnook who keeps getting beaten up by women every other week.

David Flair shows up at a gas station and runs into a guy named Crowbar. The Misfits show up and beat the two of them down for no adequately explored reason.

Konnan/Kidman/Jim Duggan vs. Revolution

Saturn/Malenko/Asya here with Shane on commentary. Konnan hammers on Malenko to start and Kidman comes in with a slingshot legdrop. Off to Saturn who eats a Bodog and a high cross body for two. Asya gets knocked off the apron as well but Saturn suplexes Kidman in half.

Back to Malenko for two off a suplex, followed by Saturn's top rope elbow for the same. Duggan gets the hot tag and cleans house with his variety of right hands and slams. He goes to hit Asya but takes a low blow from Saturn. Shane wants Duggan to denounce America and everything breaks down. The hobbling Rey distracts Dean and Saturn, setting up a sloppy double sunset flip to give the Animals the pin.

Rating: D+. Boring match but somehow this was the first one tonight to break three minutes. Duggan (why is he still the janitor?) doesn't fit in this story and there's no reason for the Animals vs. the Revolution to keep going other than they have nothing else to do. At least they gave this match something close to time.

The Revolution gets in some crutches shots to make themselves feel better.

Kevin Nash vs. The Wall

It's Hall's turn to be on commentary. Nash takes him into the corner for some knees to the ribs to start but Wall comes back with right hands to the head. A clothesline and big boot put Nash down and it's Hall coming

in with the pipe for the DQ.

Wall gets spray painted and beaten up even more.

Post break, Wall gets off a stretcher.

As Nash gets in the shower, Hall finds Goldberg in his room. Back to the shower, where Nash doesn't seem to notice the camera, and Goldberg is there too. Is he multiplying or something? We see both Outsiders out cold. Is it possible to like, SLOW DOWN on having him go through the NWO?

WCW World Title: Bret Hart vs. Chris Benoit

Benoit is challenging of course and erupts on Hart in the corner to get things going. They fight over to the announcers' table with the champ getting control. Back inside with Bret dropping a leg and an elbow, followed by a DDT for two. Benoit fights back with a kick to the ribs and elbow to the jaw for two of his own. The champ nails a low blow as the fans are just silent. Benoit reverses him into the corner and grabs the Crossface, drawing in Jarrett for the DQ.

Rating: D. Just a punch and kick match until the finish with no one believing that Benoit was going over here. That silence for Bret tells you everything you need to know though: this storyline is just a disaster. Monday was too much for the fans to take and there's no reason to care. They weren't even booing, but rather just sitting there in silence. That's a bad sign after your big angle of the year.

Cue Goldberg to spear Jarrett and chase Bret to the back. Bret gets away in a car but Goldberg sees the Powers That Be's limo. One right hand through the window and see you in June Goldberg. By the way, for those of you that have never seen it, that injury is what Nash said killed the Fingerpoke of Doom fallout story with Goldberg rising up through the ranks to get Hogan. You read that right.

Overall Rating: F. You know the amazing thing about this show? That Bret vs. Benoit match took place after the show was supposed to end. Why is that amazing? That match (the longest of the night at 4:54) took us to our grand total of less than 21 minutes of wrestling. In other words, in

the two hours Thunder was scheduled to be on the air, the total time spent on wrestling (and that's including Norman vs. Finlay in the back) was 15:41. If you add in the World Title match, the total time was 20:35. It took overtime to break 20 minutes of wrestling on a two hour show. That is unacceptable.

Now onto the good. This show wasn't the abomination that we saw on Monday. It was a disaster and one of the worst wrestling shows I've ever seen with almost no action, mostly worthless matches and a story that ran in two hours instead of two to six months, but it was NOT this past Monday. They reigned things way back in tonight and it made the show tolerable, but that certainly doesn't mean it's good. I think I can live with it like this, but there are far more changes needed here than WCW has time for.

The show isn't airing next week due to a college football game so that's it for Thunder in 1999.

Impact Wrestling – May 15, 2015: Let That Be Enough

Impact Wrestling

Date: May 15, 2015

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Josh Matthews, Mike Tenay

We're coming off the big live show last week and rolling towards Slammiversary at the end of June. The big story at the end of last week's show was Angle making Eric Young tap to retain the title, presumably to end their feud. Other than that we have the continuing story of the Rising vs. the BDC as Drew Galloway was beaten down by a pipe last week. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Angle vs. Young, who tonight will lead two teams in a hardcore war. Good grief just get to Carter vs. Angle already.

Here are Angle and Chris Melendez to start things off. Angle talks about going to war with Young last week, but Eric sided with the BDC. Well now Kurt has backup of his own, including Chris Melendez. He needs a bit more though, so Angle would like the Rising to come out here right now. Kurt calls them a breath of fresh air in this company as they try to eliminate a cancer calling itself the BDC.

Galloway praises Angle a bit but likes the look of that World Title. Angle likes the idea but here's Eric Young to say he got ripped off last week. Kind of like we're getting ripped off from having a good World Title challenger. Young was ripped off by the guest referee so he's owed another title shot. He goes on and on until Angle tells him to shut up because the stupidity caught him last week.

Angle tells him to shut up again and offers Young a title shot in an I Quit match. That's for the future though because tonight is about hardcore. Cue the BDC to go after everyone in the ring. Young comes in to help with the beat down but Lashley comes out to complete Angle's team and make the save. So it's going to be a twelve man hardcore war later tonight? That's a bit excessive no?

Brooke/Rebel vs. Dollhouse

Marti/Jade here. Rebel is described as a former member of the Menagerie. The Dollhouse cleans house to start with Marti hammering on Rebel in the ring. It's quickly off to Jade for some knees to the head. The double teaming continues as Matthews confirms that the Menagerie is no more. Dang it I always like that act. Brooke comes in off the hot tag and fires off some forearms as everything breaks down. Rebel misses Christy's old Flying Firecrotch Guillotine (yep) and a double slam (think a chokeslam but lifting under the arms instead of by the throat) is enough to give the Dollhouse the pin at 3:57.

Rating: C-. The wrestling wasn't much but I'm digging the Dollhouse more and more every single week. Taryn is perfect as the borderline psycho leader, but the supporting cast is cool too as they can both go in the

ring. Rebel and Brooke are fine as the good looking jobbers for them and the match was fine for what it was.

Post match Taryn says she has play time scheduled with Gail Kim's family.

The BDC and Eric Young are texting Homicide but he won't be here tonight. MVP has a replacement but Young has someone better. King doesn't trust him but MVP wants the crazy man on his side instead of against him.

Here are Ethan Carter III and Tyrus with the former wondering how he isn't #1 contender after the former #1 contender lost to the champion last week. He wants answers but gets Mr. Anderson with a chair instead. Anderson is disappointed when they leave because he wants to fight someone tonight. They start to walk but Anderson suggests a match with Tyrus. If he wins, he gets Carter in the future. After some swearing insults at Tyrus, the big man says get a referee out there.

Mr. Anderson vs. Tyrus

Anderson hammers away to start but gets run over for two. A Big Ending gets two and Tyrus slams him down again for the same. Carter tries to bring in the chair but gets ejected, allowing Anderson to play possum and counter the spike into the Mic Check for the pin at 4:36.

Rating: D. Really, really dull match here and yet another instance of stretching out a feud before we get to the beyond obvious Angle vs. Carter feud for the title. This one is far more interesting than the Young version but it's clearly just filling time because having more than a month build to what is likely the Slammiversary main event doesn't work.

We take a quick look back at Magnus blasting Storm with the guitar last week.

Magnus wants Storm out here right now but gets Abyss instead. The monster says there are consequences for what you do and this week, Magnus' consequences are Abyss. It's a brawl at ringside instead of a match with Abyss taking over only to stop to throw in some barbecue equipment (cross promotion with a Destination America show about barbecuing). Abyss loads

up the chokeslam but takes some tongs to the crotch, only to have Manik try to come in. That earns him something like a brainbuster but Khoya comes in with a walking stick to lay Magnus out. Magnus eats a chokeslam for good measure.

Quick recap of the Tag Team Title situation with the Wolves and Hardys having to vacate the belts, setting up a best of five series between the Wolves and Dirty Heels (I'm really not sure how to feel about that name) for the belts.

Wolves vs. Dirty Heels

That's their official name now and this is match #1 in the best of five series. It's also Edwards' first match back from injury. Roode and Richards get things going and for some reason the camera is zoomed in on Roode as they get started. That goes nowhere so it's off to Richards vs. Aries with the Wolves taking over on Austin's arm. Aries is driven into Davey's knee but sends him into the corner, allowing for the tag off to Bobby.

A catapult sends Eddie into a forearm from Aries, followed by the slingshot elbow for two. The running dropkick in the corner is countered and Edwards hits a dropkick of his own to put Roode down. There's the hot tag to Richards for the "make your opponent DDT his partner" spot (one of the dumbest spots I've ever seen) before the powerbomb/Backstabber is countered with a hurricanrana. Aries takes out the Wolves with a suicide dive, followed by the corner dropkick to Richards. Davey is still in it though and counters Roode's spinebuster into a sunset flip for the pin and the first match at 8:26.

Rating: B. Good match here but they're still waiting to crank it up in the later matches. These are two of the better teams in wrestling at the moment and seeing them fight five times (perhaps with some gimmicks later on) is going to be really entertaining and likely blown off at Slammiversary.

Galloway picks Micah over Eli for the hardcore war tonight.

Taryn talks about going to see Gail Kim's stepdaughters earlier today.

She's also going to show us what she's wearing for Kim's husband Robert.

Storm yells at the Revolution for going after Magnus without permission. This is between him and Mickie James and no one else.

Here's the Dollhouse again with Taryn in a robe. Taryn makes fun of Gail for being so serious of a wrestler because the Dollhouse is making something special. She has pictures of her with Gail's stepdaughters who look borderline terrified. But now, here's what she's wearing for Gail's husband. It's some very revealing lingerie so here's Gail, but Marti asks why she's so serious. Gail wants a match with Taryn but Taryn brings up the husband again, meaning the fight is on with the Dollhouse running.

Jesse Godderz vs. Robbie E.

Robbie has straightened his hair a bit. This is fallout from their brawl a few weeks ago and they bump fists to start. That's the highest impact of the match though as Robbie grabs a rollup for the pin at 24 seconds.

Godderz wants to restart the match so here we go again.

Jesse Godderz vs. Robbie E.

Jesse throws him down with authority but a majestic cradle is good enough to make Robbie 2-0 at 31 seconds.

Godderz wasn't ready so let's do it one more time.

Jesse Godderz vs. Robbie E.

The fans count the seconds this time and Jesse celebrates a headlock. A dropkick gets two with Jesse driving his forearm into Robbie's face. Robbie comes right back with a crucifix for the pin at 1:10.

Godderz is livid so he hits Robbie in the head with the mic. He throws Robbie to the floor and puts a chair around Robbie's neck before driving it into the post.

Angle fires up his team for tonight. Eli Drake still doesn't look happy.

Eric Young has a fifth guy.

Mr. Anderson is having something built to help deal with Tyrus.

Team Angle vs. Team Young

Hardcore war, which apparently means a gauntlet match, which seems to be Lethal Lockdown minus the cage but with weapons. Low Ki with his pipe and Drew Galloway with a pipe of his own start things up. First fall wins with 90 second intervals and Team Young won the coin toss (duh) to have the advantage. Low Ki loses his pipe early and Drew takes him to the floor for some hard chops instead of laying pipe into him.

Kenny King is in next with a weapon that is knocked out of his hands too quickly to notice. Galloway eats some chops against the barricade as King pulls out a cane to nail him in the back. Micah and a nightstick even things up and the Rising takes over with the usual brawling. Eric Young is in next with a trashcan lid (that is one CRAZY trashcan lid. Like, you know your crazy Uncle Stu who thinks he's Catherine Zeta-Jones? It's crazier than him) and he quickly sets up a Tower of Doom, but Galloway sits up out of the Tree of Woe into a German suplex to take everyone down.

Kurt Angle comes in with what looks like another pipe but throws it down for a bunch of Germans. We take a break and come back with MVP (kendo stick) and Chris Melendez (another pipe) involved. Eric's mystery partner, with another kendo stick, is Bram. Team Young cleans house for a bit until Lashley completes the field, meaning it's now first fall wins. Lashley avoids all of King's kicks and plants him with a powerslam.

MVP's Playmaker is countered but Bram cracks Lashley in the head with a kendo stick, setting up the Brighter Side of Suffering. Micah hits a Big Ending (just like Tyrus earlier) but King springboards in to take him down. That's fine with Galloway who takes most of Team Young down with a big flip dive over the ropes. Angle dives on everyone not named Young or Melendez, leaving Eric to hit a quick piledriver for the pin on Chris at 17:21.

Rating: D+. Basically this existed so it could exist. There was no real need for this to be a gauntlet match or a hardcore match as a ten man tag would have accomplished exactly the same thing. That's the bad sign for a

gimmick: you can do the exact same thing without the gimmick being in place. The match was nothing special though and really could have done with being cut down to eight people.

Post match Young rips off Melendez's leg and chokes Angle out with it to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This show felt really rushed and packed full of stuff. It felt like they were cramming in as much stuff as they could and it brought down the good stuff they were doing. You can see most of Slammiversary from here, but some of it really isn't that interesting. I mean, the Rising vs. the BDC just keeps going with no real reason to exist. The tag team series is good, but it's not something that's going to blow the doors off the place until it gets closer to the end. The show should be good, but the build isn't great so far.

As for tonight....meh. The hardcore war didn't do anything for me as you have ten guys with weapons in a gauntlet format. Clearly that just needs 100 minutes of build. The battle of the BroMans could be good and they got through the whole thing in like eight minutes so points for that. The Anderson vs. Carter and Angle vs. Young feuds feel like they're just going for the sake of going, but Angle vs. Young seems to be moving towards wrapping up. It's a decent enough show, but they've cooled way off in recent weeks.

Results

Dollhouse b. Brooke/Rebel – Double lifting slam to Rebel

Mr. Anderson b. Tyrus – Mic Check

Wolves b. Dirty Heels – Sunset flip to Roode

Robbie E. b. Jesse Godderz – Rollup

Robbie E. b. Jesse Godderz – Majistral cradle

Robbie E. b. Jesse Godderz – Crucifix

Team Young b. Team Angle – Piledriver to Melendez

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Lucha Underground – May 6, 2015: Why I Love This Show

Lucha Underground

Date: May 6, 2015

Location: Lucha Underground Arena, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Matt Striker, Vampiro

We're getting closer to the season finale and a lot of these stories are starting to reach their peaks. The big story from last week was the elimination of Drago after he lost his Lucha Underground Title shot. Other than that we have Dario Cueto being all evil with the threat of his brother, whoever or whatever that may be. Let's get to it.

The standard recap (I like these things as I haven't watched the show in a few weeks) shows us Albert vs. Johnny Mundo being set up and Hernandez becoming #1 contender.

Johnny and Alberto pitch themselves as #1 contender but Cueto isn't sure. Mundo thinks they're both more worthy than Hernandez, even though he won the triple threat. Cueto sets up Alberto vs. Mundo with the winner facing Hernandez for the #1 contendership next week. Hernandez better be ticked over this.

The Crew vs. Son of Havoc/Angelico

Neither gets an entrance. Bael is the odd man out here, as if that matters. Havoc starts with I think Cisco (seriously people, get them a nametag or something) and takes him down before Angelico tags himself in for the rolling kicks to the head. Castro comes in (thankfully in a shirt so I can tell these two apart) and jumps over a legsweep, only to eat another kick. Ivelisse, with her bad leg, is sitting in the front row and barking orders as her partners.

The Crew tries to make some tags but Angelico comes back in and cleans house with those fast strikes of his. Castro (wait now he doesn't have a shirt. Either they're changing clothes or Striker is making up the names as he goes) gets rolled up for two and heads outside, only to have both champions "hit" big flip dives to take them out. Back in and Angelico gets a quick two on Castro but the fans want Havoc. That's exactly what they get as he tags himself in after Angelico flips out of a double belly to back suplex. Everything breaks down and the Crew hits the flapjack into the Codebreaker to pin Havoc.

Rating: C-. This was decent enough but my goodness I'm sick of the Crew being the same guy with three different names. The champions that can't get along idea has been covered, but this match continues to show the bigger issue: there aren't enough trios to validate having a whole division with titles. Decent match but I really don't care for the Crew.

Daivari tells Cueto he likes to inflict violence, so Dario gives him Texano next. Apparently Daivari's family owns a bunch of real estate in the area so he's a wealthy man. That's one of the things I love about Lucha Underground: they just make up characters and backstories, like you would see in the old days before everything had to be the truth. You don't have a story for someone? Just make one up. Why is that so complicated?

Konnan doesn't want Hernandez coming after Puma's title because of their friendship but Hernandez want to beat Puma for the belt. The chuckling Cueto comes in and tells Hernandez about the ruling he made earlier about Alberto and Mundo, which thankfully ticks him off. As for tonight, it's

Puma/Hernandez vs. Cage/Cuerno. Simple, effective, and it took about a minute. If this were WWE, it would be five minutes, boring, and predictable.

Delavar Daivari vs. Texano

Daivari has a drink during the entrances. Texano charges in and beats Daivari down, only to be called for the DQ maybe 15 seconds in.

Cage/King Cuerno vs. Hernandez/Prince Puma

Still no entrances. Cage and Hernandez get things going and trade shoulders with Cage getting the better of it until Hernandez hits a slingshot shoulder to take over. Off to the champ but he's quickly caught in a powerslam, only to break it up with a headscissors. Cuerno comes in but gets taken down just as quickly. The King kicks the Prince in the chest and nails a TKO (love that move), setting up a 619 of all things from Cage. That was really cool to see actually.

The squats into a Jackhammer gets two for Cage but Puma pops up (selling? What's that?) and hits a series of kicks to the face and a Blue Thunder Bomb on Cuerno. Back to Hernandez who cleans house and throws Cuerno over the top and onto Cage. The big SuperMex dive takes both guys down again and of course the fans are way into it. Puma loads up one of his own but Hernandez gets back on the apron to "accidentally" break it up.

Back in and Puma and Hernandez clean house on Cuerno but Cage takes Hernandez's head off with a clothesline. Hernandez runs Cuerno over but eats another clothesline from Cage. They head outside, where Hernandez pulls Puma right in the way of the suicide dive from Cuerno. Hernandez has had enough of this teaming up thing and powerbombs Puma on the apron, setting up Weapon X to give Cage the pin over the champ.

Rating: C. Storyline loss for Puma here and there's nothing wrong with that. Hernandez is a good choice for a big power guy who can put over someone like Puma in the future as he looks more and more like a giant killer every time he fights off someone like Hernandez or Cage. Good enough stuff here and that Arrow from Cuerno looked great.

Black Lotus' master says if she can beat him, she can go for her revenge. She tries to strike him and is easily blocked. The master tells him that she requires more training so she agrees to stay.

Alberto El Patron vs. Johnny Mundo

The winner faces Hernandez next week for a future title shot. They trade headlocks to start until Alberto sends him into the corner and hits a dropkick to the back of the head for two. Johnny gets all ticked off and hits those hard right hands of his to knock Alberto to the floor, only to get tied up in the ring apron. An enziguri knocks Mundo's block off and we hit the chinlock.

Patron misses a moonsault and Johnny starts slugging away, followed by the Flying Chuck for two. Mundo slaps on something like the cousin of a cobra clutch but Patron pops up for a backdrop over the top, sending Mundo onto the steps. A big suicide dive takes Mundo down again but Alberto can't follow up. Back in and they slug it out with Alberto taking over with clotheslines followed by the tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. That goes nowhere as Johnny knocks him outside for a big corkscrew plancha.

Back in again and Alberto nails a reverse superplex for two before finally taking his shirt off. Alberto starts going for the arm but eats a running knee to the head, setting up the End of the World for two. The armbreaker sends Mundo rolling to the ropes for a quick break. Patron misses a charge into the post and takes a top rope double stomp to the back for two more. Back up and a quick Codebreaker to the arm sets up the low superkick to give Patron the pin.

Rating: B+. I don't know if it was the dream match that the announcers were building it up to be but this was a very fun wrestling match, which is all it needed to be. Mundo can still more than go in the ring and Patron's style is so much better suited for a company like Lucha Underground than WWE. Good stuff here.

Catrina, with the magic rock, opens the casket to release Mil Muertes.

Overall Rating: B. Really fun show here and it set up the stories for the future. Alberto and Mundo are the kind of guys you need for the main

event scene to give Puma some serious competition as well as credibility. On top of that you have the continuing story of Black Lotus but I'm not sure where that's going and I'm not sure if I care. That being said, it's different enough to make me want to see where it goes and that's the point of a wrestling story. Good show here and I had fun watching it, as always.

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Thought of the Day: Wrestlemania XXXI Didn't Mean Much

Think about it: what from that show still matters less than two months removed?

Other than Rollins and Cena winning their titles, almost nothing that happened there matters.

Bryan – Vacated his title

Kidd/Cesaro – Lost the titles they were defending

Sting – Hasn't been mentioned

Lesnar – Appeared once

Undertaker – Hasn't been mentioned

Wyatt – Basically no sold the loss

AJ/Paige – Both gone

Bellas – Now faces

Big Show – Nothing changed after winning the battle royal

Cena is still feuding with Rusev and Rollins is still feuding with Orton. Other than that, it's almost like Wrestlemania just came and went.

Impact Wrestling Moving Back To Wednesdays Starting June 3

According to Dixie, though I'm sure you all know this as EVERYONE follows her on Twitter right? I'd much rather have three hours to do on Wednesdays (counting NXT) and have Friday night off. There's no way around the Friday night death slot, though I'm always curious to see TNA diehards' latest explanation for why the ratings still aren't great.

Smackdown – May 14, 2015: I

Need A New Watch

Smackdown

Date: May 14, 2015

Location: Ford Center, Evansville, Indiana

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Byron Saxton, Michael Cole

It's the final show before Payback and we're pretty much all set up. Raw ended with Ambrose standing tall over his three opponents, meaning tonight is likely going to end with one of the other three doing the same, albeit not over the other three people in the match. Raw has been good lately so Smackdown has a lot to live up to. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

We open with Bray Wyatt talking about Ryback coming face to face with him on Monday. Ryback is a very strong man, but he has an Achilles heel. Bray is going to prove that the Garden of Eden does exist and tonight he'll scratch an itch. Ryback's dreams will be turned into nightmares. Resist the itch and run. Why are these two even fighting?

Here's Dean Ambrose to get things going. Dean says he works best alone, fights alone and drinks alone. It felt good on Monday to stand alone because this Sunday it's every man for himself. You have Seth Rollins and his Lollipop Guild Goon Squad. Randy Orton was last seen eating a spear. That leaves Roman Reigns, who is Dean's only friend in the world. Dean has one thing to say to Roman, but he'll get to say it to his face as here comes Reigns.

Dean isn't going to apologize but Reigns wasn't expecting one. This past Monday, Dean hit him with Dirty Deeds and that's all he's going to get. There's no grudge between them because they're brothers but this Sunday, Reigns is bringing the big guns. They're about to shake hands when Kane comes out.

Dean should be less concerned with winning the Slammy Award for Bromance of the Year and be worried about what he has to do. Ambrose brings up HHH's decree that Kane is out of a job if Rollins doesn't win on Monday.

This might be the last night we see Corporate Kane. That's not cool with Kane, who makes Ambrose vs. Sheamus RIGHT NOW. Ambrose: "Is that the only time you know?"

Sheamus vs. Dean Ambrose

This match starts after a break. They fight up against the ropes with neither getting an advantage so it's time to go basic. Ambrose grabs a top wristlock but gets taken down with a headlock. Dean ties his legs up though and grabs the mohawk for a kick to the back. Sheamus gets a boot up in the corner but Dean bulldogs him down to take over again. The running dropkick against the ropes is countered and Sheamus knees him out to the floor.

We take a break and come back with Dean slugging away but getting caught in the Cloverleaf. Dean makes the ropes like any good rebellious hero should do, only to charge into White Noise. To be fair he deserves that after not selling the hold. The threat of the Brogue Kick sends Dean to the floor and he nails a hard clothesline to take over again.

Back in and it's a missed Brogue Kick, a clothesline to the floor and a suicide dive to take Sheamus out again. Back in again and Sheamus' tilt-a-whirl backbreaker gets two. He takes too long to follow up though and eats a clothesline, sending Dean to the top. Sheamus tries what looks to be a top rope powerslam (facing the floor instead of the ring though) but Dean slips out to avoid the whole broken back thing and sends Sheamus face first onto the post, followed by a rollup to give Dean the pin at 12:42.

Rating: B. This was the fun power brawl that you would expect between these two. Ambrose is one of those guys that can work well against anyone regardless of their size or style. Unfortunately it came at the expense of Sheamus, who has lost almost all of his momentum since returning with the really good bully character. Therefore, he's likely getting the title in the Chamber.

Rollins channels his inner Stephanie by repeating the stipulations of Sunday's match to Kane in a way that no normal person would ever actually speak. Kane says he's set for life and doesn't need the Authority's

money. Oh and Rollins gets Ryback tonight.

Here are Rusev and Lana with something to say. The fans chant USA but Rusev says the woman wants to talk. Lana reads a prepared statement, apologizing for Fandangoing on Raw last week. It should all be about Rusev, who shows us a clip from Raw where Rusev interrupted Neville vs. Cena and beat John up post match. I can't wait for this feud to be over already so the writers have to wake their lazy brains up for a change.

Rusev knows Cena was quitting in his head when he passed out, but this Sunday everyone will hear him quit. We get a loop of Cena saying he quits (out of context) from Raw and no big followup line to end this. Lawler however does think that video was doctored because Cena never gives up.

Ryback says he's no meat head. He saw fear in Wyatt's eyes on Monday but tonight, he's hungry.

Tough Enough videos, including one from Gabriel Iglesias.

Here's Rollins with something to say before his match with Ryback. He continues the trend of showing clips from Raw by giving us his big beatdown, but promises that's the last time anything like that will happen.

Ryback vs. Seth Rollins

Non-title but that might not matter as Wyatt jumps Ryback on his way to the ring. Back from a break and Ryback says he can go because he's tough that way and the idea of calling a DQ for someone attacking before the match is unheard of in this company. Ryback tries a suplex to start but Seth knees him in the head to escape and knocks Ryback out to the floor. He dives back in at nine and eats a DDT for two. We see a clip of Bray's attack, which was just a shoulder block. Ryback is that banged up off a single shoulder?

A neckbreaker gets two for Seth and he slaps on a front facelock. Ryback counters exactly how you would expect him to and plants Seth with a tilt-a-whirl powerslam to put both guys down. The big guy gets all fired up and nails a not great spinebuster for two. The Meat Hook connects but

Rollins rakes the eyes (a rare sight these days) to break up the Shell Shock. Seth hits the top rope knee to the head and the a pair of low superkicks for the pin at 8:23.

Rating: C. So to recap, a shoulder block is enough to knock Ryback silly and give him a huge disadvantage? I love the idea of not having Ryback lose clean, but couldn't they have had Bray send him into the steps or give him a big beatdown or something more than a simple shoulder? The match was fine and actually had a story to it of Rollins focusing on the head with the low superkicks getting the pin. It's not as good as the curb stomp but I'll take a high impact move over that lame falling DDT.

Here's what you missed on the WWE Network this week. So the news broke this week that the classic content wasn't getting a lot of views. Now I'm just thinking out loud but maybe people might watch it if it was advertised, say, once. That's just nutty though as WWE thinks eight minute interviews with the stars of a movie that is bombing or Wiz Khalifa is what really draws in the viewers.

It's the Bellas vs. Naomi/Tamina on Sunday. That makes sense but can we please stop finding ways to keep the title on Nikki? It's just not going to be seen as epic no matter how WWE tries to spin it.

Naomi brags about how strong Tamina is and says they're tired of walking around empty handed. The Bellas get all the opportunities around here, even though Nikki is overrated and Brie is more worthless than her quitting husband.

Tyson Kidd vs. Kofi Kingston

Before the match, Woods informs us that Cesaro/Kidd are cheaters but the New Day is giving them one more title shot on Payback. Big E. tells us just how bad Cesaro/Kidd are: they don't recycle, the double dip and they buy one ticket at the movies and go see two! The New Day is the change you need to see in this world and the fans should sing with them. Instead it's a siren and we're ready to go.

Kofi kicks him in the ribs to start as Woods is cheering even harder than usual this week. Tyson fights back and knocks Kofi to the floor for a big

flip dive (Woods: "KOFI MOVE!"). The New Day distraction prevents the Sharpshooter but Tyson gets it on a few seconds later for the submission at 2:06.

Elimination Chamber preview.

We see Bryan's speech from Raw as he vacates the title. This seems to be the promised health update.

Here's Bo Dallas with something to say. He saw Daniel Bryan vacate the title on Monday but he sees it as an opportunity. There are five stages of grief and Dallas can help you through them all. First up is denial, but there is no denying that Bryan let all the fans down. Next is anger, which the fans should feel towards Bryan for letting you down.

Third is bargaining. You'll get one heck of a bargain on those Daniel Bryan t-shirts now that he's gone. Depression is going to completely engulf Bryan when he realizes everyone has forgotten him. Finally there's acceptance and Dallas can help us all accept that Daniel is gone. All you have to do to accept it is Bo-lieve! Dallas will have a job for years with promos like this.

Neville vs. Bo Dallas

This is joined in progress after a break with King Barrett on commentary and Neville flipping forward out of the corner. Neville sends him to the floor but gets pulled down onto the apron to give Bo an opening. Back in and we hit the chinlock for a bit but Neville fights back with those running kicks to the head. A longer Red Arrow than usual is good for the pin at 2:17. I believe this is Neville's first match against anyone who has never held a WWE Title.

Post match Barrett mocks Neville for wearing a stupid costume every week. This Sunday Neville is in for some corporal punishment in the form of a royal Bull Hammer.

The Rosebuds ask Adam Rose when they're going to be paid. Rose doesn't take kindly to this and says they're just like the Bunny. The hot dog gets pushed down and the party is officially over. Rosa kisses him and

Kane walks by them on his way to the ring. So the Rosebuds are officially gone. That's probably for the best, but Rose really needs to get away from Rosa as she's possibly the most worthless Diva in years.

More Tough Enough hype.

Kane vs. Roman Reigns

Pin or submission only, making this a glorified street fight. Kane goes after Reigns during the entrance again and they slug it out on the floor before the bell. Neither guy can get the better of it until Kane sends him into the steps. We finally get a bell and Kane punches Reigns back to the floor, only to miss a stairs shot against the post.

It's kendo stick time (because there must be kendo sticks under the ring at all times for reasons that aren't entirely clear) but Kane takes it away from Roman and pounds him down. A kendo stick to the face gets two and we take a break. Back with Reigns taking a big boot to the face for two more before Kane throws him outside.

Kane loads up the table but Reigns punches him down and nails a clothesline off the table. It's time to bring the steps back in as Reigns drives them into Kane's head to put him down again. Roman throws in a pair of tables but Kane takes his head off with a big boot for two. The chokeslam through the table is blocked but Kane catches the Superman Punch in a chokeslam through the table for two. Thanks for coming Kane and if you would kindly stand in front of that table in the corner for the spear please. A Superman Punch puts Kane in perfect position and the spear through the wood is good for the pin at 11:16.

Rating: C. Decent enough brawl but it felt like they were filling in time until the obvious ending. Kane is still capable of having a power brawl but my limited interest in him is killed by the long promos with HHH and Rollins, plus a story that almost no one cares about. Good enough here though and Reigns kicking out of a big finisher keeps up the idea that he never quits.

Seth isn't worried about Reigns but it's going to take more than that to get this belt off him on Sunday. That's true for anyone that wants to

take the title off of him, including Ambrose....who is behind the Stooges. For some reason he has a plate of cookies to throw at them but the numbers catch up with him. This brings in Roman Reigns for the save and they stare each other down. The camera pans down to show the belt on the ground. Roman extends his hand but Dean reaches down and picks up the belt. He puts it on Reigns' shoulder, saying he'll take it back on Sunday.

Overall Rating: C-. How was this possibly a two hour show? It feels like we should just be at the halfway mark and somehow the whole thing is already done. This show did as well as it could have with what it had though, as Payback just isn't that interesting. I don't have much of a reason to care about seeing the same stuff that's been boring me for five hours a week for another three hours this Sunday. Passable episode this week but nothing past that.

Results

Dean Ambrose b. Sheamus – Rollup

Seth Rollins b. Ryback – Low superkick

Tyson Kidd b. Kofi Kingston – Sharpshooter

Roman Reigns b. Kane – Spear through a table

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