

Monday Night Raw – December 1, 2014: It's A Long Way To The Top If You Want To Build A Show

Monday Night Raw

Date: December 1, 2014

Location: BOK Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield

The theme for tonight's show is Cyber Monday with guest host the Anonymous Raw GM as represented by the computer. The question now is whether this is permanent or if there's going to be a guest GM every week. Hopefully it's the latter, though I could see the Authority eventually being revealed as the new computer GM. Let's get to it.

We open with...the Authority! Well it's a recap about last week but it's still the first thing we see.

Cole opens us up with the computer but here's Cena to interrupt things. He starts running down the computer, saying he's just like Brock Lesnar who shows up once a year. Lesnar isn't here tonight but neither is the Authority because Team Cena won. He's about to tell us why his team fought harder when we have another e-mail. Cena stares Cole down and goes to the podium himself. He isn't going to let this happen and closes the computer, but here are Rollins and the Stooges to interrupt.

The two of them share some banter until Rollins says Cena is taking undue credit for the win at Survivor Series. Rollins remembers eliminating Cena at Survivor Series and only losing due to Sting. On the other hand, Cena remembers one man left on Team Cena eliminating three members of Team Authority, including Rollins himself. Seth: "You say Dolph, I say Sting. Whatever."

Seth wants to know who's next to take over Raw. Is it going to be JBL?

Cena hands JBL his hat but Rollins thinks it might be Batista, drawing more heat than Rollins has drawn all night. Maybe they could give Eric Bischoff a call? The point is there's going to be a different GM every week and the show is going to fall into chaos until Cena brings back the Authority.

Cena gets in the ring and rips on Rollins for being a normal guy in a lot of latex with two wannabe mall cops in his corner. He tells Seth to ask him to bring the Authority back nicely, including making Rollins get down on a knee. The e-mail goes off and we have a tables match set up between these two for TLC with Cena's #1 contendership at stake. Not that Rollins can win it mind you.

The brawl is on, including with Kane coming in for a chokeslam to Cena. Seth loads up a table but Ryback comes in for the save. Kane beats him down with a chair so Rowan comes in and kicks Kane down, only to have Big Show come in with a splash. Show loads up the steps so Ziggler comes out to post him and get a ladder, but Harper runs out and drives the ladder into Dolph. Cena loads Rollins up for an AA through the table but eats the KO Punch, setting up a TripleBomb through the table with Rollins playing Reigns.

Back with Cena and company slowly being helped out. A six man tag is announced for later.

Tag Team Turmoil

Winners get a Tag Team Title match at TLC. We start with Kofi/Big E. vs. Goldust/Stardust as Kofi throws Stardust around with ease. Big E. runs Stardust down and the Big Ending/Top rope DDT (the Midnight Hour) ends Stardust at 1:36. Tyson Kidd and Cesaro are the next team as we take a break. Back with Cesaro throwing Kofi around before bringing in Kidd for some choking on the ropes.

Off to a chinlock on Kofi for a bit before he elbows up, only to be slammed back down. Kingston rolls away and tags Big E. back in to clean house, only to have Cesaro break up the Big Ending. Kidd joins him and Big E. clotheslines both guys to the floor. Kofi gets launched over the top for a big dive, setting up a springboard shot to the face. The Dusts

come out for a distraction though, allowing Kidd to roll Kofi up for the pin at 8:11 total.

The Usos are in third (of five teams) but Jimmy walks into a suplex from Cesaro. There's almost no effect though as Jimmy comes back with the Umaga Attack in the corner before it's off to Jey to work on the arm. Kidd comes back in for a kick to the face but Cesaro makes a blind tag, setting up a release German suplex to drop Jey as we take another break.

Back with Jimmy fighting out of another chinlock. Jimmy fights up but has to suplex Kidd down. Tyson jumps into a superkick, setting up the tag to Jey for the Superfly Splash to get us down to one on one at 16:00. Finally we have Adam Rose/the Bunny vs. the Usos for the title shot. Rose starts fast with a pair of rollups on Jimmy but the Bunny tags himself in. Adam starts arguing as the Bunny goes up. Jimmy tries a superplex but gets caught in a sunset bomb for two. More arguing allows Jey to superkick Rose, setting up the Superfly Splash for the title shot at 19:10.

Rating: C. These matches always have the same complaint; why do they never win matches as fast as they do here? At least the middle part was long to prevent this from falling into the same pattern, but it says a lot that we only have five teams and two of them were thrown together.

Naomi is watching her husband (one of the Usos) in the back when Miz/Mizdow come in to say they'll keep the titles. Miz actually offers her a spot in a movie and gives her a card. Mizdow gives her an invisible card as Naomi rolls her eyes.

A long black limo brings Vince to the arena.

Seth Green is hosting next week.

Rowan fixes his Rubik's Cube and reiterates that Show is a bully.

Erick Rowan vs. Big Show

Show says he doesn't like being called a bully. Cole says Rowan has a genius IQ. Erick quickly knocks him to the floor but Show comes back in and drops Rowan with ease. He rips at Rowan's face and puts on a chinlock

to kill some time. Rowan fights up and heads outside, only to have Show nail him with the steps for the DQ at 4:22.

Rating: D+. Nothing to see here though the idea of Rowan being a genius is kind of interesting. There's some potential for some interesting bits there, though I'm not sure I have any confidence in WWE to pull it off. This is likely setting up a big match between the two at TLC, which should be interesting.

Vince is excited to be on Austin's podcast. He won't bring back the Authority though.

We recap the Bellas cheating to beat AJ last week. You can pick AJ's partner for a tag match later.

Fandango vs. Jack Swagger

And there's no Swagger. We cut to the back where Colter is down with a leg injury. Fandango wins via forfeit.

Here are Rusev and Lana to complain about the Pledge of Allegiance last week and brag about Rusev winning the battle royal on Friday. Rusev implies that he hurt Colter as the Russian flag comes down for Lana's pledge. Swagger charges out for the brawl but referees hold him back.

Damien Mizdow vs. Fernando

This is due to Torito stealing one of Mizdow's fake Tag Team Title belts. Feeling out process to start with Fernando easily taking him down and grabbing an armbar. Back up and Mizdow grabs a quick backdrop and hooks the Figure Four for the submission at 2:25.

Jimmy Uso, Naomi's real life husband, comes out and slaps Miz in the face, saying stay away from her.

Bray Wyatt vs. R-Truth

Bray throws him around with ease to start and shouts for Ambrose. Truth fights out of a cravate and avoids the running backplash. That just makes Bray mad but he takes a running kick to the face. The Lie Detector

puts Bray down but he avoids the ax kick and plants Truth with the release Rock Bottom. A modified DDT onto the apron knocks Truth silly and it's the Spider Walk into Sister Abigail for the pin at 4:22.

Rating: D+. Total squash here with Bray looking great most of the time. He's getting better at making his offense look more devastating, which is the kind of thing you need from a monster like him. I'm not sure where he goes at TLC, but that match could be one heck of a war.

Post match Bray starts throwing in chairs, still shouting for Dean. He wants the truth but pulls out a ladder as we take a break. We come back with Bray sitting in his rocking chair under a ladder with a table in the corner. Bray tells us the story of Jacob and his great ladder that the angels climbed up to Heaven and back. Wyatt dreams of a ladder where he ascends the ladder to praise no one. He looks down at his world and laughs at all the creatures that God has created and thinks they look like insects. In his dreams, he sees tables, ladders and chairs.

Cue Dean for a brawl and to put Bray on the table, only to have Wyatt escape as Dean climbs the ladder. Bray runs away as referees stop dean. Ambrose goes back inside where there are about ten chairs, two tables and a ladder. He shoves the ladder over and looks at Bray's rocking chair, eventually tossing it down and destroying it, infuriating Wyatt.

We recap the end of the opening segment with Cena going through the table after everyone came out.

Bella Twins vs. AJ Lee/???

Here are the poll results for AJ's partner:

Natalya – 32%

Naomi – 48%

Alicia Fox – 20%

Bella Twins vs. AJ Lee/Naomi

Brie jumps Naomi before the bell, allowing Nikki to get two off a suplex.

The Bellas take turns nailing Naomi in the face before Nikki hooks a chinlock. Naomi fights up and tags in AJ to clean house, including a tornado DDT to Nikki. Everything breaks down and it's AJ vs. Nikki with a Shining Wizard staggering the champ. The Black Widow makes Nikki tap at 3:25.

Rating: D+. Well that happened. As is the usual case with most Divas matches, there's almost nothing to see here and it sets up AJ vs. Nikki again. I'm sure Brie will get involved and AJ will need to find a friend to help her. Perhaps say, Paige? Either that or Charlotte comes in and takes the title. Neither does much for me but that's likely due to the Bellas trying to be all serious and important.

Mick Foley, in one of the best Santa Claus outfits I've ever seen, hypes up the big sale on WWEshop.com. I really wouldn't have recognized him if not for his voice and the cheap pop.

Paul Heyman is here via satellite to address the stipulation for Cena vs. Rollins. First up though, he wants to address what Cena said about Lesnar being here once a year. Would you have Christmas once a year? Of course not, because it would ruin the moment. Why not just have Wrestlemania every Monday night? Now if Cena comes out of TLC still #1 contender, he has to face a fresh Brock Lesnar.

However, what if he doesn't? Who becomes #1 contender? Would it be Rollins, who Curb Stomped Brock Lesnar but now can't hide behind the Authority? Maybe the Undertaker? That could be interesting, if you could find him. What about Sting? You wouldn't even have to advertise it as a retirement match, because Sting would retire after Lesnar got his hands on him. Let's just throw the entire WWE roster against Lesnar like throwing humans to the lions in the Roman Coliseum. Heyman says Brock Lesnar is the new authority in WWE because he's the can't miss, must see, undisputed WWE World Heavyweight Champion.

Ryback/John Cena/Dolph Ziggler vs. Luke Harper/Seth Rollins/Kane

They have a lot of time for this. Cena wants Rollins to start with him but gets Harper instead. That's fine with John who knocks Harper down and pulls in Rollins for the STF. Luke makes an early save, only to walk into

a belly to belly for two. Off to Ziggler for a double dropkick for two before it's off to Ryback vs. Kane for the big power showdown. Ryback takes over with the Thesz press and Warrior Splash.

Back to Harper to hammer away in the corner until Ryback scores with the Meat Hook. Rollins comes in and gets in some shots of his own before handing it back to Luke. Ryback fights him over a suplex before picking Luke up for a very delayed suplex as we go to a break. Back with Ryback dropping Harper with the suplex. If that was continuous (it wasn't), give Ryback the title like, now.

Off to Ziggler vs. Kane with Dolph grabbing a sleeper until Kane drives him into the corner. Kane knocks him out of the air for two and the heels take over again. Luke Gator Rolls him and we're in the chinlock. Kane comes in for a chinlock of his own before Rollins whips Ziggler hard into the corner. Back up and Seth misses a charge in the corner, setting up the hot tag to Cena. House is quickly cleaned with Lawler suddenly being a huge Cena cheerleader. Cena cleans house and double suplexes Kane with some help from Ryback. Mercury and Noble knock knock Cena silly as we take a break.

Back again with Cena fighting out of a Harper chinlock but eating a superkick from Harper for two. Rollins comes back in for a chinlock of his own but Cena suplexes him down to escape. The hot tag brings in Ziggler to face Harper with a neckbreaker and Fameasser getting two. Everything breaks down with Cena diving onto all five guys at once. Kane escapes the AA and kicks Cena down, only to take a powerslam from Ryback. Everyone hits their secondary finishers until Ziggler counters a Harper powerbomb into a sunset flip for the pin at 25:17.

Rating: C+. This was much more of a long match than a good one with FAR too many chinlocks than were necessary. Ziggler continuing to get a push is a good thing but there needed to be more stuff here than what we were given. Ryback continues to just kind of be there, which isn't what you want him to be doing at this point.

Post match Big Show comes in to clean house but Rowan comes out with the steps to destroy everyone. Cole seems to have officially dubbed Rowan Big

Red. Show grabs Ryback and Rowan for a double chokeslam but is nice enough to stick his chin out for a superkick from Ziggler. Cena AA's Show for Survivor Series, allowing Rowan to crush him with the steps to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. This was a bit more entertaining than last week but it still didn't do much for me. They've got most of the card set for TLC and hopefully it's Ambrose vs. Wyatt again in the main event. If nothing else it fits the name of the show and gives you a potential huge crash for the ending. This wasn't a great show or even very good, but it advanced some stories and got me more interested in the PPV, which is somehow less than two weeks away.

Results

Usos won tag team turmoil last eliminating Adam Rose/the Bunny – Superfly Splash to Rose

Erick Rowan b. Big Show via DQ when Show used the steps

Fandango b. Jack Swagger via forfeit

Damien Mizdow b. Fernando – Figure Four

Bray Wyatt b. R-Truth – Sister Abigail

AJ Lee/Naomi b. Bella Twins – Black Widow to Nikki

Dolph Ziggler/John Cena/Ryback b. Kane/Luke Harper/Seth Rollins – Sunset flip to Harper

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Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: November 24, 2014

Sting! The Stinger! The Man Called Sting! These are just a few of the nicknames of someone you won't be seeing on Raw this week. He debuted at Survivor Series to help end the Authority as he pulled Ziggler's body onto Rollins, who hadn't moved in about eight minutes and clearly needed to be resuscitated. Other than that...yeah there isn't much as Survivor Series was a one note show. Let's get to it.

We opened with the Authority because WWE likes to troll us. They were all sad about being thrown out of course but said we'd miss them later on. HHH babbled about business and how WWE will need them back in the future. For some reason he went into a nearly word for word speech from the end of A Few Good Men about how WWE needed them. If nothing else that's an awesome movie so I can't complain much there.

Daniel Bryan of all people cut them off to do the YES post in front of them. After a break, Bryan announced that he was in charge for the night. First up he brought out all five members of Team Authority from the night before to give them their assignments for the night. These segments took nearly half an hour in total, but Bryan's energy made them easier to sit through. I'll cover each member as their antics come up, starting with Henry getting beaten by Ryback in about a minute.

The Authority left with Vince while Stephanie begged Vince's forgiveness. The boss didn't seem to care and said the only thing he's sorry for is having to sit through Thanksgiving with these losers.

Next up was Luke Harper beating Ambrose via DQ when Harper shoved Dean into the referee. This wasn't a great match as you knew the ending was going to be screwy, but at least they didn't go with the obvious Bray interference. That would come after, as Bray jumped Dean on the floor and buried him under a bunch of chairs next to the announcers' table.

Santino Marella and Larry the Cable Guy showed up and weren't funny.

Miz/Mizdow beat Goldust/Stardust to retain the titles. The idea here was Miz stayed on the floor with an alleged injury for most of the match before coming in to hit a quick Skull Crushing Finale and steal the glory.

Kane is in charge of concessions tonight. This led to some unfunny bits of pouring mustard on Santino and getting in a fight with Ryback, likely setting up a match at TLC.

Lane and Rusev had to either say the Pledge of Allegiance to the American flag or have Rusev defend the title in a battle royal. Lana started to but Rusev stopped her, drawing out Sgt. Slaughter for a showdown. Naturally this went nowhere and Jack Swagger came out for the save. I really hope they're not going back to this feud because it's been done to death already.

Fandango beat Justin Gabriel in a copy of the Survivor Series pre-show match. Nothing to see here.

Big Show came out for his big speech and admits that it might have been a mistake, but thinks he's earned the benefit of the doubt after all his years in the company. We got the usual "I have bills to pay" speech, which I'd have more sympathy for if he hadn't used his one wish on a title shot last year. Eventually Rowan came down and called Show a bully before knocking him out of the ring with ease.

Brie Bella beat AJ via rollup when Nikki interfered. No sign of the Bellas splitting when the servant period was over.

Adam Rose and the Bunny lost to Kidd and Natalya in the same match they've been having for weeks.

Ziggler and Cena beat Rollins and the Stooges in the exact match you would expect them to have. The big deals here were that the Stooges could be selected by the fans via the App and the Anonymous Raw GM returned to end the show. In theory this is going to be a weekly deal.

Overall this show was about setting up the new world of Monday Night Raw after the Authority is gone. The show really wasn't all that good, but at least they set up something for the future. They only have a few weeks until TLC, but they already have the fallout from Survivor Series as a foundation for the matches there. It's not a good show but they had to take a breather after all the stuff they did last night.

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I'm Doing A Live Radio Show Tonight

I'll be back on the Mouth of the South Shore Radio Show at approximately 11:30pm EST tonight. The show is live so we'll have Raw to discuss plus of course the Punk interview. I've been on the show before and it's always a good talk, as hosted

by one of the commenters here on the site.

Check it out live here:

i95sportsnetwork.com

The show is going to run about 90 minutes and will be available to listen to on demand about 24 hours later. These shows are always fun and the host is a smart guy. Come check it out.

KB

Monday Night Raw – January 4, 2010: The Mediocrity Of Execution

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 4, 2010

Location: Nutter Center, Dayton, Ohio

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

A few weeks back I took another look at TNA's Monday night debut and figured I should do the same with this famous episode of Raw. Then it turned out that I never did this show in the first place so this is going to be completely fresh. This episode centers around Bret Hart returning for the first time since the Montreal Screwjob over twelve years ago, so I think the crowd might be a bit excited. Let's get to it.

We open with a long video on Bret's career, of course focusing on Montreal and the huge shock that he's actually back tonight.

We waste no time as here's Bret to open things up. Bret soaks it in for a bit before saying that a lot of people are surely wondering why he came back. He's been trying for years but every time Vince has told him it's not the right time. Bret is thrilled to be back to be able to talk to the WWE Universe, earning him a welcome back chant. Above all else, Bret wants to thank the people for never forgetting him. He owes every bit of his success to the fans and there are millions of memories coming back to him right here. Back in 1993 he won the first King of the Ring right here in this building....and then Jerry Lawler jumped him.

That's ok though, because there's something Bret needs to take care of. Therefore, he'd like Shawn Michaels to come out here right now. Shawn comes out looking very nervous. Bret wants to bury the hatchet though and call a truce to this whole thing. Shawn sounds a bit annoyed though and has something he's been waiting twelve years to say to Bret: he deserved what happened in Montreal. Bret disrespected him and the title so Vince did what he had to do that night.

There's a part of Shawn that doesn't regret it, but there's another part of him that knows a lot has changed in the last twelve years. Shawn always respected Bret, but he wasn't sure Bret respected him. He couldn't stand Bret at times, but when he thinks of him, he thinks of Anaheim and the 60 minute Iron Man match that they were told no one wanted to see. But the two of them redefined this industry and gave the fans something special.

Shawn is ready to move on too and asks Bret if he's ready. Bret thinks it's time to end this right here in Dayton and they finally shake hands. Shawn goes to leave but comes back and hugs Bret to a nice ovation. Now Shawn leaves but Bret isn't done yet. He wants Vince McMahon out here RIGHT NOW but there's no boss in sight. This was an historic moment but much more symbolic than anything else.

Josh Matthews is waiting outside Vince's office but the boss says no one calls him out. If Bret wants to have a public discussion, they can have

it on his terms later tonight.

Melina has torn her ACL and has to vacate the Divas Title. Tournament time!

Divas Title Tournament First Round: Maryse vs. Brie Bella

This is before Nikki's surgery so they're still identical. Maryse easily shoves her into the ropes to start and poses, only to have Brie toss her down by the hair. Back up and Brie hits a running dropkick to send Maryse outside, allowing Nikki to get in a few cheap shots. Maryse runs Brie over back inside but the Bellas switch, only to have Maryse plant her with the French Kiss DDT for a fast win.

Maryse leaves when US Champion Miz comes out to say if she wins the tournament, he might call her back. She's called this the year of Maryse but Miz declares this his decade. Maryse looks very pleased.

MVP vs. Jack Swagger vs. Carlito vs. Mark Henry

Winner gets a US Title shot and Miz is on commentary. We don't see Carlito or Henry's entrances as they come out during the break. The match is joined in progress with Henry down on the floor with Swagger suplexing Carlito for two. A belly to belly gets two on MVP with Carlito making the save.

Jack splashes Carlito in the corner but Henry comes back in to clean house. He slaps a bearhug on Carlito but Swagger makes a fast save. That's fine with Henry who puts Swagger in a fireman's carry rack (not all that effective) when MVP makes a save of his own. MVP sends Henry and Carlito outside, followed by the Playmaker on Swagger for the pin and the title shot.

Rating: D+. Not much to see here due to the time but they actually had a bit of a story going. MVP got the win far faster than he should have been able to but at least it wasn't horrible while it lasted. I'm still not sure how much the Playmaker would actually hurt though as it's basically just a swinging neckbreaker.

Jericho and Big Show have a meeting before their Tag Team Title shot. If

Jericho loses, he's off Raw but he has an idea for Bret.

After a break, Jericho comes in to see Bret and mentions learning the Walls by practicing on Bret's brother Keith. The big idea is that Bret should be the guest referee during the title match tonight when Jericho and Big Show challenge DX. Jericho thinks Bret can get his revenge on Shawn and call the bell in a hurry but Bret wants to keep the controversy behind him. Bret: "I don't want to be like you." Also, he remembers Jericho screaming louder than anyone else in the Dungeon.

Hornswoggle is with HHH and it's time to schill toys. Shawn comes in and says it's time for their match when Santino comes in dressed as Jericho, claiming a conspiracy. HHH has Horny attack Santino before talking with Shawn about the match as the two scream in the background. DX heads off for their match with HHH whistling like a dog to get Hornswoggle to come with him. Horny leaves for a cookie.

Tag Team Titles: D-Generation X vs. Chris Jericho/Big Show

DX is defending and Jericho's job is at stake. Horny is crawling around at ringside because he's a pest. Show tosses Shawn into the corner to start but Michaels ducks a chop and hits some of his own. HHH comes in but Show suplexes both of them with ease as we take an early break. Back with Jericho knocking HHH down and walking around a lot.

A side slam from Big Show drops HHH as well before he just walks over the Game's stomach. Now it's Show's turn to walk around and waste time before it's off to Jericho for the Hogan hand to the ear. Chris hooks a chinlock for a bit before HHH comes back with a spinebuster to put both guys down. Show comes in to break up the tag but misses a Vader Bomb. Now the hot tag brings in Shawn to hammer on Big Show, nip up a lot, then hammer on him again. He knocks Show down for the top rope elbow but Jericho crotches him down. Horny comes in to sit on Show, which thankfully has no effect.

Sweet Chin Music is countered into a chokeslam for two but Jericho comes in with the Walls, only to have Shawn kick away. The Pedigree plants Jericho but it's Show making a save. HHH breaks up another chokeslam attempt and dropping the big man with the Pedigree, only to have Big Show

roll outside. Jericho rolls up HHH for two before knocking him silly with a Codebreaker. A very delayed cover gets two but Hornswoggle comes in again, only to get kicked in the face by Jericho. The distraction lets Shawn superkick him down for the pin to retain.

Rating: B-. Good match here, especially due to having Hornswoggle get kicked in the face. Jericho losing the big one is as classic as you're going to get with him and there was no way DX was losing the titles just a month after winning them in the first place. Jericho and Big Show were never a long term thing anyway so splitting them here is fine.

HHH says that's bye bye for Jericho and if Chris isn't down with that, they have two words for him. Big Show walks off, leaving Jericho to face the Goodbye Song. He would be Smackdown Champion next month.

Orton comes in to see Vince and has a business deal for him. Vince isn't interested because of all the horrible things Orton did to his family, which he says were far worse than what Bret did in 1997. Orton's idea: he'll punt Bret in exchange for being #30 in the Royal Rumble. The boss isn't interested and throws Orton out. The camera stays on Randy when he runs into Legacy. If Orton loses tonight, they're going to throw him out and beat him up.

Mike Tyson is guest host next week.

We recap Sheamus getting himself disqualified to save his title against Cena last week.

Here's Sheamus with something to say. He talks about beating Cena last week when everyone said he couldn't, so his next title defense at the Royal Rumble will not be against Cena. Sheamus wants a new challenge so cue Evan Bourne who says he wants an opportunity. That's fine with Sheamus, who says if Evan wins here, he gets a title shot at the Rumble.

Evan Bourne vs. Sheamus

Bourne hammers away to start and nails a kick from the apron, followed by Air Bourne less than a minute in. Sheamus powers him out to the floor on the kickout and catches Evan in a fall away slam. The fans chant for Cena

but get a Brogue Kick to Evan's head, setting up the High Cross (Razor's Edge) for the pin.

We get a nice tribute to Dr. Death Steve Williams who recently passed away due to throat cancer at 49.

Same Bret video that opened the show.

Kofi Kingston vs. Randy Orton

This is the last match in a good feud between the two and Legacy is at ringside. Kofi is in the serious black attire here. An early headlock and shoulder give Orton an early advantage but he eats an elbow to the jaw. Kofi sends him outside for a baseball slide before countering the Elevated DDT into a backdrop to put Orton outside again as we take a break.

Back with Orton holding a chinlock before stomping on the ribs for good measure. He talks a lot of trash and stands around a bit more before sending Kofi chest first into the buckle. A catapult sends Kofi throat first into the bottom rope for two and it's back to the chinlock. Kofi finally comes back but a double cross body puts both guys down. It's Kingston up first and winning a brief slugout to set up the Boom Drop. A high cross body gets two and the SOS is good for the same. Trouble in Paradise is mostly blocked and a quick RKO gives Orton the pin.

Rating: C+. Another decent match between them but Kofi's big moment had already come and gone. He's never reached this high of a level again, even though he seemed ready to burst through the ceiling to the next level. Orton absorbing the kick and RKOing him for the pin pretty much killed him dead though.

Legacy doesn't seem to care.

Here's Vince to call out Bret. He wishes us a happy New Year but doesn't think he needs to call Hart out. The Montreal Screwjob is buried and he considers his issues with Bret to be the same. Vince hypes up Mike Tyson appearing next week when Bret comes out without music. The boss thinks the fans want Montreal to be forgotten, but Vince will never forget Bret

spitting on him and then disrespecting him when Bret was inducted into the Hall of Fame. He'd like to hear what Bret has to say, but it better start with "I'm sorry."

That's not what Bret has in mind though. He's here to bury the hatchet tonight and he's halfway there. Bret knows Vince wants this just as much as he does, but Vince says he wants to kick Bret in the guts. He remembers Bret in the Wrestlemania II battle royal and knew that he was going to be the future then and there.

That brings him to Bret's dad Stu, who brought a lot of people into the business. Vince wants to put Stu in the Hall of Fame and Bret likes the idea. He thanks Vince for it but Vince says it's time to thank Bret for everything he's done over the years. They shake hands and Vince kicks Bret low to end the show. This led to a Wrestlemania match that I still think was done well.

Overall Rating: C-. On the other hand, this show wasn't done all that well. They knew TNA was having their big night here so the reaction seemed to be to keep things the same other than Bret. There really wasn't anything important here aside from that, with even Cena not showing up. It's not the worst show ever but it comes and goes with nothing else standing out.

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Wrestler of the Day – November 27: Hector Guerrero

It's Turkey Day so here's the most famous wrestling turkey (?) of them all: the Gobbledy Gooker himself, Hector Guerrero.

Hector started off in regional promotions in California in 1973 but we'll pick things up when he's a bit more established in Memphis on January 18, 1981.

Gypsy Joe vs. Hector Guerrero

Joe is a legendary brawler who nails Hector before the bell. He rips Guerrero's ring jacket off and hammers him against the ropes as this is one sided so far. Choking in the corner has Hector in even more trouble and Joe keeps it up on the mat. All brawling so far. Hector is launched to the floor before he comes back in with a single right hand. That's the extent of his offense though as Joe pounds him down in the corner again before biting at Guerrero's head. Hector finally nails some chops but Joe plants him with a slam for two. Back up and Hector grabs a sunset flip out of nowhere for the surprise pin.

Rating: D. Total squash until the end here which isn't really surprising given that Joe never had much lasting success. I always like it when a wrestling surprises a brawler and wins in the end like he did here, especially with a move that catches the guy out of nowhere. Guerrero would have some success around here but didn't stay around long.

Off to Florida with a match in the CWF at some point in the first half of 1984.

Hector Guerrero/Chavo Guerrero vs. Barry Windham/Mike Rotundo

This could be good. Windham and Rotundo are the US Tag Team Champions but I think this is non-title. The Guerreros come out with mariachi music, sombreros and a big Mexican flag. Barry hammers on Chavo to start but Windham gets caught in a headlock. Off to Hector as Oliver Humperdink goes on a rant about the history of tag team matches originating in America.

Mike comes in and takes Hector down with a headlock but gets countered into a headscissors. Back to the much smaller Chavo for two off a snap suplex but everything breaks down for a minute. That goes nowhere as the Guerreros take over on Rotundo, only to have him cross body Hector for two. Mike finally gets over to Windham for a tag as the biggest man in the match takes over.

A suplex drops Hector for two before it's back to Chavo for some right hands. That's fine with Barry as he clotheslines both guys down to take over on Chavo again. They hit heads to put both guys down as everything breaks down again. Dick Slater sneaks in with a swinging neckbreaker to Windham on the floor. Another guy comes out to explain what happened and the match is thrown out.

Rating: C-. This wasn't bad as you had four guys that could work a solid match out there at the same time. Hector and Chavo were just so much faster than almost anyone else they fought and they became an attraction as a result. They would take the titles from Windham and Rotundo eventually, though I'm not sure if it was in this reign.

Off to Jim Crockett Promotions now with the team appearing in the 1986 Crockett Cup.

Crockett Cup First Round: Shepherders vs. Hector Guerrero/Chavo Guerrero

The Shepherders are the Bushwackers as CRAZY heels. Believe it or not there's a match later on with them in it that Meltzer gave five stars, so they weren't exactly the same team. Joined in progress with Butch pounding on Chavo but the guy with a famous brother escapes with speed moves. Off to Luke who pounds away even more but gets caught in a sunset flip for two.

Moderate tag brings in Hector and the announcer says we're at ten minutes in. Abdominal stretch goes on but the Herders won't quit cheating. Butch is knocked out of the ring as the flag bearer (Rip Morgan) is dropped for a BIG pop. Not that it matters as a double clothesline to Hector ends the Guerreros at just under three minutes shown of about 11. I'm sorry for the lack of ratings but at 15 minutes into the tape I've gotten through a two minute intro and five matches. What can I really do here?

Here's a one off tag match from Starrcade 1986.

Hector Guerrero/Baron Von Raschke vs. Shaska Whatley/Barbarian

Whatley and Barbarian are members of Paul Jones' Army while Guerrero and Raschke are kind of an oddball tag team. It's a big brawl to start with the Baron pairing off with Whatley as Hector sends Barbarian out to the floor. Hector and Shaska start things off with Guerrero hitting some fast paced offense for early control. It's off to Barbarian though to drop Hector throat first across the top rope, stopping his momentum cold.

Barbarian misses a running boot into the corner though and falls to the floor, allowing Hector to hit a BIG dive, taking out both Barbarian and Baron. That was a very big deal back then and still looks good even today. Whatley comes out to beat on Hector before throwing him inside for a gorilla press slam by Barbarian. A double backdrop puts Hector down for two and Whatley breaks up a potential hot tag to Baron.

Back to Barbarian for another near fall off a big boot followed by a backbreaker. Whatley sends him into the ropes and Hector spits right in his face, which is somehow enough for the hot tag off to the Baron. Raschke puts his Claw Hold on Shaska as everything breaks down. Barbarian breaks up the hold but gets pummeled in the corner by Hector. In the melee, Shaska misses a charge into the corner and Baron drops an elbow for the pin.

Rating: C. Just a basic tag match here which was fine for the most part. There was talk of a grudge coming in but there was not actual explanation given of what the feud was over or how everyone was involved. Baron

seemed much more angry than Hector but that's normal for the both of them. Nothing bad here but it's just a tag match.

From the 1987 Crockett Cup.

Crockett Cup First Round: Jimmy Valiant/Lazer Tron vs. Shaska Whatley/Teijho Khan

Tron is Hector Guerrero in a mask. Clipped to him working on Khan with a dropkick and it's off to Whatley. The ring is cleared so Tron and Valiant dance a bit. The heels collide as they look like idiots. Valiant comes in and the fun part goes away quickly. Valiant vibrates on the mat as he's beaten down and Whatley dances some more. Back to Tron who cleans house but the other guys brawl as he's covering Whatley. Whatley charges at Tron and Khan pulls the top rope down so his partner goes crashing, but it's a DQ win for them as the referee thinks it was intentional. Only a minute clipped here but not enough to grade.

Later in the 1980s, every promotion not called the WWF realized they were in big trouble. They banded together under the name of Pro Wrestling USA for a lot of supercards. Here's a match from one of their shows on March 5, 1988.

Hector Guerrero vs. Keith Hart

Hector is the heel here for a change and his partner Buddy Landel is on commentary. A quick headlock puts Keith down but it goes about as far as you would expect. Guerrero rides him on the mat before shoving him away, only to take his eyes with the boot. A shoulder drops Keith but Hector flips out of a backdrop as Landel makes racist jokes about Mexicans. Hector drops him with a vertical suplex but misses a splash.

Back up and Hector slowly punches him down before choking while holding a hammerlock. Keith comes back with a horrible looking back elbow so Hector takes him down again. Guerrero starts a Sharpshooter but leans forward for a cover instead. The referee isn't pleased with him being in the ropes though so we get a quick argument, followed by a flying forearm to

give Guerrero the pin.

Rating: D. Keith was worthless here and it was clear that Hector didn't have much to work with. Thankfully they kept this short with Hector just beating the tar out of him for the most part. It didn't help that Keith was botching stuff here while I had to listen to Landel's heel schtick.

Off to the AWA at SuperClash III.

Chavo Guerrero/Mando Guerrero/Hector Guerrero vs. Rock N Roll RPMs/Cactus Jack

WCCW vs. CWA. I'll list the companies for every match for the sake of sanity. Chavo is of course the senior version and Mando is the least known Guerrero. Hector is a dead ringer for Eddie and arguably better. The RPMs are the southern tag champions and are named Tommy Lane and Mike Davis. That Jack guy won't ever amount to anything. He was a total rookie at this point and almost the Abyss of his day: the guy that would take any bump asked of him so here he is as a result.

The Guerreros all have big sombreros and are about as stereotypical as you can get. Capetta (announcer) says this is AWA vs. CWA and that's just incorrect. Actually the Guerreros were in the AWA also so I guess it's correct. Granted both companies would be dead in a year so does it really matter? Hector starts and makes the RPMs look like idiots. Off to Jack and Mando (barely taller than the top rope) with the Guerreros being so much faster it's unreal.

They hit the floor and Jack actually gets beaten up even worse out there. Back to Hector and they work on the knee before Chavo, the oldest, comes in. Wait make that Mando. Oh and it's Cactus Jack Foley at this point. The Guerreros tag in and out about every 8 seconds. Jack wants out of there badly and brings in one of the RPMs who I don't think the announcers know the difference between.

The RPMs finally double team Chavo and that goes even worse

for them and it's off to Hector. The Guerreros get in a big pile on and clear the ring. Jack vs. Chavo now and Jack finally gets something together. Off to Davis as it's pretty clear the announcers don't know the RPMs' names. Off to Davis again and never mind as it's Jack now. Hot tag to Hector and everything breaks down again. There's some heel miscommunication and the camera misses the big dives but you can hear the crowd gasping. A moonsault press from Chavo ends Lane.

Rating: C+. Total squash here and a way to get the crowd fired up with the Guerreros doing stuff no one had ever seen before. The speed stuff was good as they looked like an awesome team out there. The dives were good and they made the fans get into the show, which is exactly what the point of an opener is.

After a run in Smoky Mountain and the infamous Gobbledy Gooker period, it was off to WCW for a quick run. Here he is on Nitro, November 4, 1996.

Hector Guerrero vs. Chris Benoit

Hector is Eddie's older brother and possibly even more talented. He's also a dead ringer for Eddie if you just glance at him. I've often gotten them confused until I took a good look. Flair has had his surgery and Anderson is out with a back injury. On Saturday, Benoit said Sullivan is no longer the man he used to be. Sullivan pops up and says he'll hurt Benoit in Baltimore. He's actually talking about a house show.

Hector speeds things up and hits almost a Vader Bomb from the top rope out to the floor onto a standing Benoit. Benoit's shoulder is still taped up. Hector works on the arm and mixes up the attack on it, because Hector Guerrero is smarter than most wrestlers. He goes to take the tape off and we take a break. After an NWO t-shirt ad, we come back to Benoit hitting a knee to put Guerrero down.

He draped Hector over the top rope with a release suplex and Guerrero is in trouble. Benoit works over the ribs and hooks an awkward abdominal stretch. Hector is basically crouched down and Benoit is bending over. Benoit hammers him down as Tony hypes up how amazing the second hour is.

There's the explosion. Hector grabs a small package for two. Guerrero speeds things up and uses a rolling tumbleweed style cradle for two. Woman breaks it up which isn't a DQ. Benoit grabs a rollup via the distraction and uses the ropes for the pin.

Rating: C+. Another long match which again works. Benoit could move better this week which is a nice perk. Hector wouldn't be around that much I don't think so this was really just to avenge Eddie I guess. Nothing that great but they were moving well out there and the psychology worked so big points for that.

Another Nitro match on July 22, 1997.

Eddie Guerrero vs. Hector Guerrero

Hector takes him down with a headscissors but a dropkick misses. Eddie starts stomping but we head to the floor for a chase. Back in and Hector uses a side roll to roll Eddie around the ring about four times for two. Eddie comes back with some biting but another headscissors sends him to the floor. Hector hits a big plancha on the floor but back inside, Eddie powerbombs him down and hits the Frog Splash for a fast pin.

Rating: C. This is the same problem I've mentioned before: Hector is a talented guy, but other than his name, he doesn't mean much to most WCW audiences. I get what they were going for here with the sibling rivalry thing but it's hard to care here because Hector isn't a guy we know as far as his stuff in WCW goes.

One more match on this show from Nitro, August 4, 1997.

Dean Malenko/Jeff Jarrett vs. Hector Guerrero/Chavo Guerrero

Malenko and Chavo start things off and we hit the mat very quickly. That doesn't last long so they run the ropes a bit until Dean gets taken down by a pair of dropkicks. Hector comes in to face Jeff and we have a strut vs. dance battle. A headscissors puts Jarrett down and frustrates him so he pounds away a bit. Hector makes a brief comeback but stops to jaw with Dean, letting Jeff take over again.

There's the running crotch attack to a 619'd Hector (I'm still looking

for a better name for that) before it's back to Malenko. Make that back to Jeff again and Hector gets two off a backslide. Chavo breaks up the Figure Four and Dean is rolled up for two. Hector won't tag and is caught in an electric chair. Dean hooks the Cloverleaf and we're done.

Rating: C. The idea here was that Hector wouldn't tag, presumably due to stubbornness, but it doesn't make Jeff any more interesting. The guy is just flat out not interesting no matter how you try to push or package him. Malenko was fine but he needs to get away from this stupid tag team thing.

One more WCW match from Saturday Night on October 4, 1997.

Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. Hector Guerrero

Eddie and Rey are feuding but Hector says he isn't his brother. Then he tries to pull Rey in to start before taking him down with a headscissors. A nice spinout armdrag sends Hector outside and Rey follows him with a suicide dive. Guerrero slams him down on the floor before working on Rey's back in the ring. A tilt-a-whirl backbreaker gets two but Mysterio grabs a victory roll for the same. Guerrero gets two more off a running splash but Rey fires off right hands to break up a superplex attempt. A top rope West Coast Pop is enough to pin Hector.

Rating: C-. This didn't have time to go anywhere but it worked well enough. You had Rey flying around like only Rey can do and Hector basically wrestling the same kind of style that Eddie was going to. This was a nice warmup for the masterpiece at Halloween Havoc a few weeks later.

We'll wrap it up with the only Gooker match, from Wrestlemania X7.

Gimmick Battle Royal

Luke, Butch, Duke Droese, Iron Sheik, Earthquake, The Goon, Doink, Kamala, Kimchee, Repo Man, Jim Cornette, Nikolai Volkoff, Michael Hayes, One Man Gang (He couldn't fit into the Akeem gear), Gobbledy Gooker (complete with video from Survivor Series 1990), Tugboat, Hillbilly Jim (biggest reaction of the entrants), Brother Love, Sgt. Slaughter

Take eighteen of the goofiest gimmicks of all time, throw them in a match, have fun. I thought this was awesome when I was 13 and it's still awesome to this day. The entrances take nearly three times longer than the match but that's beside the point. Repo Man is put out in about two seconds as is the Gooker. Quake puts Tugboat out before Kamala throws him out as well.

People are thrown out right and left with Doink being eliminated to a chorus of booing. The final four are Brother Love, Slaughter, Hillbilly Jim and the Sheik. Within about 12 seconds it's down to Sheik and Jim with Sheik winning because he can't go over the top to the floor. This was like three minutes long and it worked just fine all things considered. Slaughter puts Sheik in the Cobra Clutch post match.

Hector Guerrero is an incredibly talented guy who was overshadowed by his brother's success. That being said, Hector is still a guy who kept steady work for the better part of thirty years as an active competitor before joining TNA as a Spanish commentator. He's very smooth in the ring and you can see so much of Eddie in him and vice versa.

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Wrestler of the Day – November 26: Nikki Bella

Today we're looking at a chick who is now one of the focuses of the Divas division. If nothing else it shows you the power of sleeping with John Cena. Today is Nikki Bella.

The Bellas got started in developmental in 2007 and we'll pick things up on ECW on March 30, 2009 with their first showdown.

Nikki Bella vs. Brie Bella

Nikki comes out with Miz and Morrison but Brie counters with Carlito and Primo. Brie grabs a quick rollup for two before just hammering away at her sister's face. Some armdrags put Nikki down but she grabs a quick suplex for two. Brie hooks a bulldog but the tag teams get in a brawl, allowing Nikki to roll up Brie for the pin.

Rating: D. Somehow this is going to be even worse when we get the big showdown in a few months. The girls just aren't that good in the ring and it really shows in these matches. Nikki and Brie try out there but they seem to take things way more seriously than they should and it drags everything down. Just be good looking women and shake your hips.

Nikki didn't have a lot of success at first so we'll jump ahead to Raw on August 9, 2010.

Gail Kim/Eve Torres vs. Maryse/Jillian Hall vs. Bella Twins

This is a Summer Spectacular or something. They're all in swimsuits, but of course one pieces. Santino and Kozlov are here too and they come in on a water slide. This goes like 3 minutes and one of the Bellas hits a cross body to beat Jillian. Tamina comes out in a swimsuit as well and slaps Santino's tights. Yep it's Glamarella all over again.

Rating: N/A. The girls looked good at least. If you have a

thing for legs, FIND THIS MATCH IMMEDIATELY.

Off to Tribute to the Troops 2010, when it still meant something.

Bella Twins/Natalya/Kelly Kelly vs. Alicia Fox/Melina/Laycool

Not on the first show either. Yep the evil ones are definitely hotter. They're all in Santa outfits of course. Alicia vs. a Bella starts us off and Cole thinks it's Nikki. Since Cole is a very stupid man we'll call her Brie. Melina is working as a heel here to play up the whole turn on Raw two days ago. Kelly comes in and we get the headscissors to show off the underwear under her skirt. She beats the tar out of Michelle before Layla saves. Everyone gets in until Kelly hits K2 to beat Michelle. Another nothing match.

We'll head stateside again for Raw on March 7, 2011.

Women's Title: Eve Torres vs. Nikki Bella

The bell is after the break. Gail Kim is here with Eve. Eve starts all fired up and hammers away on Nikki including a bicycle kick. Cole talks about going to be on New Year's Eve and waking up on Christmas morning. That's how he feels about introducing his referee tonight. Cole literally gets up on the table and grabs a mic, saying we need to end this because he wants to announce his referee. Eve uses the bottom rope as a springboard to get an enziguri. Twin Magic gets caught and a spinning neckbreaker gives eve the win at 3:12.

Rating: C. Even with the Cole stuff in there the whole time this wasn't bad for the most part. Eve dominated and thankfully they didn't manage to make things look stupid with the Twin Magic getting by again. It makes the referee and wrestlers look stupid so I'm glad it failed here. Decent match here and pretty good for the most part. Should be interesting to see where it goes from here too.

Another year, another Tribute to the Troops, this time in 2011.

Bella Twins/Natalya/Beth Phoenix vs. Eve Torres/Kelly Kelly/Alicia Fox/Maria Menounos

Maria is the host of I think Extra. She was a guest host of Raw a few years ago. Eve vs. a Bella starts us off but it's off to Maria quickly. Off to Eve with the other Bella quickly and the standing moonsault gets two. Beth comes in but gets caught by an enziguri. Kelly comes in and everything breaks down with one from each side having the upper hand for about 3 seconds. Maria comes in against Beth and gets a pin off a sunset flip. This was what it was.

The Twins would go back to the only thing that worked for them on Raw, January 2, 2012.

Bella Twins vs. Eve Torres/Kelly Kelly

Kelly vs. let's say Brie to start and Kelly does her spanking and Stinkface to get on my nerves even more. Eve comes in and does her usual stuff. The moonsault is broken up and it's Nikki in now. Top rope moonsault gets two and it's Twin Magic for the pin on Eve at 2:04. Are we really back to this again?

Then things would change in a hurry on Raw, April 23, 2012.

Divas Title: Nikki Bella vs. Beth Phoenix

Before the match here's Eve to say that this is now a lumberjack match. Maxine is one of the divas here so I'm sure she'll be complaining about not being off NXT yet this week again. Nikki dropkicks Beth down and monkey flips her down. That results in her getting slammed into the corner and gorilla press dropped. Off to a chinlock followed by a backbreaker. Beth throws her to the floor and injures her knee. Brie goes after Beth and the lumberjacks jump on Beth in a dog pile. I think there was a switch in the pile but I'm not sure. Beth's ankle or leg is messed up, allowing Nikki to roll her up and win the title at 4:11.

Rating: D. The girls looked good, the match was the usual Diva stuff, the whole deal with the Bellas leaving soon is now up in the air, I still don't care about the Divas. Next. Oh and the leg injury appears to be real. This really was a surprise, mainly due to rumors that the Bellas were going to be leaving soon.

The title reign would last all of six days and the Bellas actually would leave the company for over a year. They would return in 2013 and pick up where they left off. From Raw on October 21, 2013.

Bella Twins vs. Tamina Snuka/AJ Lee

Brie takes Tamina down to start but the Twin is knocked to the floor with ease. Back in and a snap suplex gets two on Brie before we hit the cravate. Off to Nikki who is easily slammed down before it's off to AJ, who gets the biggest reaction of the match. Nikki fights out of a chinlock and makes the hot tag off to Brie, sending the fans back into their coma. Brie speeds things up and dropkicks Brie down, only to get caught in a half crab. Brie hits a bad looking knee to the ribs before accidentally kneeing Tamina in the head. Not that it matters though as the Bella Buster pins AJ at 5:27.

Rating: D. The Bellas look good in their outfits but man alive this face turn isn't working. The problem is the double turn by the Bellas and AJ depends on if you like Total Divas. If you like the show, you buy the double turn. If you don't like Total Divas, you side with AJ, even though there aren't any shades of gray in the story. AJ is meant to be the heel and Brie as the girl who is fighting for what she wants, even though no one seems to care.

Then came Total Divas, which basically starred the Bellas in the early days. This led to a long feud with the True Divas, including this match on Raw, December 2, 2013.

Summer Rae/Tamina Snuka/AJ Lee vs. Bella Twins/Natalya

The non-Total Divas are now the True Divas. AJ skips around the ring while Nikki gets two off a crucifix on Tamina to start. Brie comes in with a middle rope dropkick and a running knee to Snuka's chest. AJ is still skipping around the ring. Summer chokes Brie on the ropes and shows off her flexibility before getting a two count.

Brie finally fights out and makes the tag to Natalya who speeds things up a bit. Tamina is knocked off the apron so Summer shouts at AJ to stop skipping and make the tag. AJ finally comes in and nearly gets caught in

the Sharpshooter as everything breaks down. The distraction lets Natalya roll up AJ for the pin at 4:18.

Rating: D. Here's the problem with the Total Divas face push in a nutshell: we haven't been given a reason to care about them. There was never a moment where they were all turned face, other than AJ's promo from months ago which was all true stuff. WWE is assuming that fans like the Total Divas because they have a reality show and the Bellas date Cena and Bryan, though I don't think Cena and Nikki have ever been announced on WWE TV. Other than that, they just started being faces and the announcers started talking about AJ being mean. That's not enough to build a boring feud on and it's showing badly.

Off to the blue show on March 14, 2014.

Nikki Bella vs. Tamina Snuka

AJ sits in on commentary as Tamina takes Nikki down by the hair. Nikki is sent to the floor and holds her knee, prompting some amusing fake concern from the champ. Back in and Nikki gets slammed down but still avoids the Superfly Splash. AJ tries to figure out who the #1 contender is as Tamina kicks Nikki's head off for two. Tamina gets bored with Nikki and throws Brie into the barricade for fun. It doesn't pay off though as Nikki hits the Rack for the pin at 3:13.

Rating: D. Divas, regular match, Nikki's turn for a push. Next.

Nikki would get a big push over the summer and eventually turned heel on her sister, setting up this match at Hell in a Cell 2014.

Brie Bella vs. Nikki Bella

Loser is the winner's servant for 30 days. They lock up to start with Brie sending Nikki into the corner but missing a charge. Nikki runs her over for two and a facebuster gets the same. The fans start chanting JBL because NO ONE CARES ABOUT THIS STORY. Brie plants her face first for two before hitting a few dropkicks. A running knee to the face has Nikki in trouble but she misses a charge and falls out to the floor.

She comes up clutching her knee and heads back inside to take a missile

dropkick for two. Nikki pops back up and hooks the Rack for two. Brie slaps on the YES Lock but Nikki gets her feet on the ropes. Nikki comes back with a hard forearm to the face and a second Rack for the pin at 6:21.

Rating: D+. The worst part: the wrestling wasn't all that bad. The problem with this is it's one of the least interesting stories in years as I don't even remember why they're fighting. I get that it's about Brie quitting but are we really supposed to care that a woman is dating John Cena (wait, does that relationship exist in WWE?) and had to wrestle some handicap matches against some heels. Also, if Nikki hates her sister so much, why would she want her around for thirty more days?

We'll wrap it up with Nikki's title shot at Survivor Series 2014.

Divas Title: AJ Lee vs. Nikki Bella

AJ is defending and Nikki has her sister Brie as an assistant. We get big match intros and Brie gets up on the apron with title in her hand. She kisses AJ, allowing Nikki to get in a cheap shot and the Rack Attack gives us a new champ at 38 seconds in the Sheamus vs. Daniel Bryan ending from Wrestlemania XXVIII.

I've made no secret out of the fact that I really don't think much of Nikki Bella. She tries to be all serious and intense and it really doesn't work. At the end of the day, she's another Diva who is there because she looks good in tight outfits and has a twin. She's gotten better over the last year or so, but there's still just not enough there to warrant the push she gets. There are far worse Divas out there, but at the end of the day my reaction continues to be that I don't get why I'm supposed to care.

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Bash at the Beach 1999: When Greatness Isn't Enough

Bash at the Beach 1999

Date: July 11, 1999

Location: National Car Rental Center, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Attendance: 13,624

Commentators: Bobby Heenan, Tony Schiavone

We're going in a new direction at this point in WCW as the promotion has gone from really boring to freaking insane in the course of a few weeks. A good chunk of this show was booked within the last few weeks and knowing the stories isn't likely going to help me get through it. Let's get to it.

I've actually seen this show far more often than I should as I found it at a Blockbuster for \$2 when I was about thirteen. It took many years to suppress those memories but here we go again.

The opening video is a wordless montage about the four men in the main event. I mean, if there's one story that doesn't need a verbal explanation, it's one about Savage and Sid trying to kill Nash and then the heroic champion kidnapping and potentially raping Gorgeous George, causing Savage to throw her out of their dressing room with a side plot of Sting potentially driving the Hummer that nearly killed Nash and then Nash changing the rules of the tag match so that anyone, including his

partner, can pin him for the title. Also for some reason they air the video then show it about five more times as a very fast speed.

Tony says the tag match tonight started as a tag match. It was once going to be Sting/Nash vs. Savage/Sid in a tag team match, but it's now Sting/Nash vs. Savage/Sid in a tag team match. No that's not a misprint.

After those words of wisdom, Schiavone explains the junkyard match and the boxing match before throwing it to Gene for a Hotline ad.

Mike Tenay is at the junkyard, which he knows about because his sources told him where to go. Apparently there's going to be a ring of cars with a bunch of obstacles to get around and the first person to jump over a fence and escape wins. This company is rapidly becoming more of a parody of wrestling than an actual wrestling promotion.

Video on the Cat vs. Disco Inferno. Cat had a kickboxing match with Jerry Flynn and lost via DQ so Flynn took him down in a brawl after the match. He and Disco had a dance off a week earlier, making the kickboxing stuff completely pointless.

Disco Inferno vs. The Cat

The original stipulation was the loser could never dance again but that has since been dropped. The lawyers must be working overtime as the match was announced three days ago and the stipulation was never mentioned on Thunder. Miller rants before the match and wants another dance contest before we get going. He demands that the people all vote for him or else he'll beat them all up. Tony explains that he'll lose because he threatened the fans because WCW thinks we're rather thick headed. Disco dances for about two seconds before Cat goes after him and we're ready to go.

Inferno starts like a kitchen of fire (not enough for a whole house) and sends Miller sliding out to the floor. Back in and Cat nails a few kicks, so Disco just tackles him to the mat and hammers away. Some atomic drops from Disco set up some miscommunication on what looked to be his swinging neckbreaker.

Cat comes back with a kick to the head and walks around as Sonny gets in a few shots of his own. Those are as effective as you would expect since Sonny, a legitimately accomplished karate fighter, is a manager and therefore incapable of hurting anyone. Back in and Disco grabs a quick sunset flip for two but gets his head kicked off again.

Another kick misses though and Disco legsweeps him down, setting up a middle rope elbow for two. Cat rakes the eyes and puts on the shoe, only to have Disco take it away and blast him in the face. Sonny's distraction makes it only a two count though, allowing Cat to put the shoe back on and kick Disco for about the fifth time for the pin.

Rating: D. This really was the best thing they could think of to start a show? It's really hard to care about a match with no build, no value and nothing beyond basic moves. The fact that it had Ernest Miller in there made things even less interesting. It's not even a horrible match or anything, but there's just no reason to care about something like that.

Judge Mills Lane won't put up with any garbage tonight and will chase Bagwell or Piper if need be.

We recap the TV Title match. The video starts with Van Hammer surviving against Disco Inferno because the referee was down and a handful of tights. Then Flair saved Hammer from getting put through a table by banning hardcore matches, allowing Hammer to hit Hugh Morrus with a table and drive him through it. Somehow that earned him a TV Title shot here.

TV Title: Rick Steiner vs. Van Hammer

Keep in mind that there really isn't a face in this match as there's no reason to like either guy. Steiner comes out first for no apparent reason. They trade hard shots to the face to start and Steiner is knocked out to the floor. Steiner goes into his new standard of just driving someone down to the mat and ripping at their face a lot. Back up and Rick hammers away before taking Hammer outside to send him into the barricade.

Rick hits a horrible looking DDT on the exposed concrete and covers on the floor to continue getting on my nerves. Back in and Hammer hits him low, only to have Rick punch him in the face to take over again. They

head outside one more time with Hammer nailing him in the head with a chair before taking him back inside for the Alabama Slam for two. Steiner bites him between the legs, punts him in the same spot (referee just watches him) and hits the Steiner Bulldog to retain.

Rating: F. Rick Steiner has reached the point where he's an embarrassment. Between never selling anything from a chair shot to a low blow, there's just nothing Hammer (who isn't the guy you want carrying a bag of groceries, let alone a PPV title match) can do. What WCW saw in him other than name recognition I'll never know, but if someone thinks he's skilled in the ring, they have no business being in charge of a wrestling company.

We get an overhead view of the junkyard, which really just looks like a parking lot with a bunch of cars stacked up in a circle. The winner gets a trophy but Tenay can't answer who is going to be in the match because it's unsanctioned.

We recap David Flair being named US Champion, meaning we just see the segment again. Again, weren't the Flairs fighting months ago about David siding with Torrie and having his father hold him down? Now David has ten women around him (including Torrie) and his dad made him US Title. That's a big jump in the span of five months.

US Title: Dean Malenko vs. David Flair

David is defending of course and comes out with Torrie, in a very pushed up tied off top, shirt that might be nine inches long, and a black cowboy hat. Ric, Arn and Asya are here too but Johnny Boone is refereeing. Tony says David hasn't been impressive in all of his title defenses. You know, all one of them.

Dean of course throws him down with ease and stomps away in the corner before planting David with a suplex. Ric comes in but gets decked as Dean puts on the Cloverleaf. Anderson nails the referee with a spinebuster, allowing Robinson to take over as referee. Dean Cloverleafs Asya but Ric nails him with the US Title to give David the pin.

Rating: F. Dang it this was just long enough to grade. As I said in the

Nitro review, I get the idea they're going for here, but wasn't there another scrub you could put in there instead of Malenko? I know Dean isn't going to be headlining a PPV anytime soon, but he's the kind of guy that should actually be the US Champion. This kind of story is good in the right circumstances, but WCW isn't in a place where they can turn yet another title into a joke and keep beating their midcard guys into the ground, even in a match that doesn't end anywhere near clean.

Long recap of the Rednecks vs. the No Limit Soldiers, complete with the full I Hate Rap video. Barry Windham is such a talented drummer that he just scares the drums into playing themselves because he certainly isn't hitting them. This includes a lot of shouting HOOTY HOO, which amazingly enough didn't get the rappers over. Master P. is long gone, apparently saying that there weren't enough of "his people" in the audience for the night the angle took off. That would be in P.'s hometown in New Orleans if you aren't big on guys who shout like owls.

No Limit Soldiers vs. West Texas Rednecks

Swoll, B.A., Rey Mysterio Jr., Konnan

Curt Hennig, Barry Windham, Kendall Windham, Bobby Duncum Jr.

Elimination tag, which I believe is the first explanation of the rules for this match. The best part of this: the camera comes back to the arena early, showing ring announcer David Penzer counting the fans down on when to cheer. Tony fails at covering for him by saying that he was saying hi to his five family members in the audience. The levels that this company falls to when trying to cover their mistakes is astounding. Heenan redeems things a bit by saying that the Soldiers' problem could be solved if they just put a light in their closets. Rey and Konnan make sure to shout a lot before we're ready to go.

Mysterio and Barry get things going with the Cruiserweight Champion getting hammered down in the corner. Rey comes back by sending Barry into the corner and getting two off a split legged moonsault. Off to Hennig vs. B.A. with Armstrong nailing a dropkick before trying to talk some trash. Thankfully that goes nowhere as it's off to Duncum before the big Swoll comes in with a bad looking clothesline. Swoll hammers on Duncum

but Kendall comes in with a cheap shot to take over.

Kendall misses a charge into the post so Mysterio comes in without a tag. Naturally the referee is fine with this. Kendall tries to beat the rules into him but Rey nails him with a springboard seated senton to knock both Kendall and Duncum out to the floor. Back in and it's Konnan vs. Hennig before Rey hits another springboard seated senton on Hennig. Duncum and Hennig both get hammered in the corner until it's Swoll ducking Duncum's cross body for two in an awkward sequence. Rey adds a springboard legdrop and Swoll pins Bobby.

The other Soldiers, Chase and 4x4 (who makes Ezekiel Jackson look like David Flair) beat up Duncum in the aisle because they're heroes. Barry and Konnan hammer away on each other until Curt comes back in for a double clothesline. Off to BA as the Rednecks keep control with Curt nailing a quick HennigPlex to make it 3-3. Mysterio tried to dive in for a save but came in too fast and basically started crawling in slow motion for no logical reason.

So it's Konnan getting beaten down now with Kendall hitting a bad looking lariat and a slightly better looking slam. He misses a middle rope knee though and Konnan hits a rolling lariat of his own (called a DDT by Tony), followed by the facebuster for two. Rey dropkicks Kendall into a horrible "rollup" for the pin on Kendall. Barry DDTs Konnan for two as 4x4 and Chase beat up Kendall.

Everything breaks down with Barry going to the floor....and being carried off by Chase with Konnan following. For some reason this isn't a DQ and both guys are counted out. So it's Hennig vs. Swoll/Mysterio. Swoll comes in for some incredibly sloppy offense as Barry comes back in. Curt tries to bail but 4x4 stops him in his tracks. Back in and Swoll hits his stupid palm strike to the chest before bringing in Rey for the Jimmy Snuka/Andre the Giant big splash off the shoulders for the pin.

Rating: C-. Swoll is horrible. Like he's really, really bad, to the point that he can barely throw punches correctly. I understand that he was really new at this, but as WCW should have learned over the years, that's why he shouldn't be on a major show like this. The Soldiers continue to

act entirely like heels here, just like they have for most of this feud.

The announcers chat for a bit about the rest of the card.

We get Hak's challenge for the junkyard match.

Junkyard Invitational

Ciclope, Jerry Flynn, Johnny Grunge, Hak, Horace Hogan, Brian Knobs, Hugh Morrus, La Parka, Lord Steven Regal, Fit Finlay, Rocco Rock, Silver King, Squire David Taylor, and Mikey Whipwreck

They're in a junkyard, first person to climb over a fence wins. The place is huge so there's almost no way to see more than four or five people at once unless you go to a helicopter shots. Public Enemy (a surprise) flips a car over as I'm only going to be able to call big spots. There are barrels of fire everywhere. Jerry Flynn puts an electrical cord into an engine to make sparks fly out. Knobs dives off one car for an elbow onto King on the roof of a van.

Finlay hits la Parka in the ribs with a bumper as Dave Taylor hits Morrus in the head with a trashcan lid. The annoyed look on Morrus' face as he just keeps walking is rather amusing. The camera shots are only lasting about ten seconds at most so it's hard to call much of anything. Jimmy Hart is running around in a yellow shirt and a hard hat. Rocco Rock is thrown into the window of a van. Morrus dives off a car with an elbow onto Rock because they're already repeating spots.

I think Ciclope dives off a car onto about six guys before they start throwing things at each other instead of doing anything coherent. Finlay goes Captain America by blocking a punch with a trashcan lid and hitting Horace in the face with it. Brian wraps Taylor in a tire as we're waiting on someone to try and win. Rocco and Horace make the first trip over with Horace making a last second save to keep Rock from escaping.

Silver King is bleeding from the arm as this just keeps going. Taylor has to dance out of a tire before Knobs and Hak put Finlay in a car. A forklift pops up and takes the car over to the crusher but Finlay gets out to prevent death. Of course the forklift hasn't been seen all match

until this point. Then another car blows up and Finlay climbs over the fence to win.

Rating: N/A. This wasn't wrestling, and quite frankly I'm really not sure what it was. Why in the world WCW thought this was a good idea is beyond me and I'm sure the live audience is going to be THRILLED after having sat there for fifteen minutes waiting on this to end. On top of all that, Finlay would hurt his leg soon after this at a house show (in a hardcore match of course) and be out for months, making the whole thing worthless. I can't imagine he's the only one to get injured in this mess either.

We recap the Triad vs. Saturn/Benoit. They fought each other, then they fought each other some more, then they had some singles matches, now they're having a title match. For some reason we get a bunch of clips of the eight man tag from Nitro which doesn't seem to be going anywhere, other than a boxing match. They're trying to tie this into the old vs. new feud, which doesn't even seem to be a thing anymore.

Tag Team Titles: Chris Benoit/Perry Saturn vs. Jersey Triad

The Triad is defending. Kanyon starts on the floor as Saturn and Page slug it out in the middle. It's Saturn taking over with a bunch of right hands before knocking Bigelow and Kanyon off the apron for good measure. Off to Bigelow vs. Benoit as the announcers call Benoit an uncrowned champion. Hasn't he been a three time champion by this point? Bam Bam gets dropped into the middle buckle and sent out to the floor for a meeting with his partners.

Back in and Kanyon fights out of a suplex from Saturn and knees him down against the ropes. He grabs the referee to block a German attempt, only to have Benoit chop him into a t-bone. Back to Benoit for the decapitation clothesline followed by a Lontamer (which he used before Jericho). A double clothesline drops Kanyon for two more as the challengers stay in full control. Benoit stomps Kanyon down in the corner and starts in on his leg.

Saturn drops a top rope legdrop for two but Page comes in without a tag to take over, sending Saturn to the floor for a triple team to take over. Bigelow comes in for a big suplex and a falling headbutt for two. Back to

Kanyon after Bigelow uses Flair's "how much time is left" trick. Kanyon drops a leg for one of the slowest two counts I can remember in a long time. The fans get distracted by something in the crowd so Bigelow puts Saturn in a chinlock.

Kanyon comes back in but gets crotched on the top, setting up a belly to belly superplex from Saturn. Benoit gets the hot tag and goes after Bigelow, only to have Page take him down with a top rope clothesline. Page is VERY pleased with this move, running out to the floor and celebrating like a mad man, even climbing onto the barricade. Back in and Page gets two off an elbow drop before it's off to Bigelow for some fat man offense.

Page comes in again and runs Benoit over for two with Saturn making the save. We get a front chancery from Page but Benoit drives him into the corner for the hot tag, which of course the referee doesn't see. That wicked sitout powerbomb from Page is good for two. Benoit finally suplexes Kanyon down but Bigelow breaks up a hot tag attempt. Bam Bam misses the moonsault though and we FINALLY get the hot tag to Saturn (which the camera doesn't catch).

Saturn cleans house with suplexes and clotheslines Page and Kanyon out to the floor. Everything breaks down again and Saturn hits a top rope splash, followed by the Swan Dive from Benoit but Page comes in off the top for the save. Saturn loads Page up with the Death Valley Driver but Kanyon throws powder in his face, only to have it get in Page's eyes too, causing him to Diamond Cut Kanyon. Bigelow makes the save but Benoit Germans Page for a VERY close two. Page throws in a metal trashcan as the referee gets bumped. He hits Kanyon by mistake but Bigelow comes in for a 3D on Saturn to retain the titles.

Rating: B+. Give that match a less messy finish and it's a classic. There was a lot of good stuff in here and the majority of it was due to how much time they were given. Everyone was allowed to get in there for awhile and the fans bought into the idea of two guys trying to fight against the big cheating team. They gave it a great effort and the whole thing just worked. Really good stuff here, though not enough to save this disaster of the show.

Clip of Judge Mills Lane agreeing to referee the boxing match. That's all of the recap because there was no reason for this to be a boxing match other than Piper barely being a wrestler anymore.

Roddy Piper vs. Buff Bagwell

Big time boxing referee Mills Lane is referee here to try to make people care. In case you've never seen him, just picture Mr. Strickland from Back to the Future. Piper has Flair in his corner. Buff's gloves are actually labeled "Buff's Left" and "Buff's Right". Bagwell sees Flair in Piper's corner, so he has someone to have his back: HIS MOM, "Judge Judy" Bagwell. And I give up. Seriously it was bad enough when this was boxing instead of Piper just doing a freaking job for Bagwell like he should be doing, but now BUFF'S MOM IS HERE???

Flair gives Bagwell a chance to leave but Buff reminds him of the pin off the Blockbuster a few weeks back. You know, when Flair put Bagwell over in the middle of the ring in the whole point of this entire story. The rounds are two minutes long here. Piper sticks his chin out to start until Buff hammers him into the corner. The fans are dead at this point if you couldn't guess. Bagwell tees off on Piper (well, as much as he can BECAUSE HE ISN'T A BOXER) to end the first round.

Flair sprays something on Piper's gloves in between the rounds as this continues to fall apart. Piper hits a few jabs to the face and Bagwell's eyes are burning. He gets punched down in the corner as Judy brings over a sponge to try and clean Buff's eyes out. Back up and Piper wildly swings until Buff knocks Piper down in the corner in an identical sequence from Piper vs. Mr. T. thirteen years ago, because that's what this is supposed to be...a tribute to I suppose? Piper gets up as round two ends.

I'm going to pause for a second here and give you a bit of context to what is about to happen. Fifteen months ago, WCW was still in control of the Monday Night Wars and hadn't lost a night in the ratings in nearly two years. Their last win was about nine months before this. Yeah they were in trouble, but it's not like they were so desperate for something good to happen that they had to go insane. A few weeks back, Buff Bagwell

hit his finishing move and pinned Ric Flair in the middle of the ring on Nitro, which should have been the start of a huge push for him. After all that, I give you the third round of this boxing match.

Piper jumps Bagwell in the corner and attacks Bagwell early, so his mother Judy gets in the ring and bites Piper's ear. She then dumps the spit bucket over Piper's head as Buff punches Flair off the apron. Buff goes up and hits the Blockbuster on Piper as Judy holds Flair on the apron, allowing Buff to pin Piper for the win. Judy chases the President of WCW around the ring after the match.

Rating: G. As in below an F and for GOOD FREAKING GRIEF THEY REALLY COULDN'T COME UP WITH ANYTHING BETTER THAN THIS??? Piper wasn't capable of doing a five minute match and doing a job for Bagwell? Does WCW really think that it's important enough to protect him from taking a fall in a wrestling match that they'll let him take a fall in a boxing match? Read that sentence back and see how insane it sounds. Now throw in Judy Bagwell and more hijinks than an episode of Looney Tunes and you see what happened to WCW in the summer of 1999.

We recap Nash/Sting vs. Savage/Sid. Savage being a woman beater and Nash potentially raping George is glossed over. On the other hand, the Fake Sting attacking Nash, causing Nash to go after Sting, even though the real Sting came out to beat up the Fake Sting, is left out with only the Fake Sting beating Nash down being shown. For some reason Nash wanted this to be a tag team match where anyone, including his partner, could pin him for the title. Again, this isn't mentioned in the video. We'll also ignore Nash saying he saw Sting driving the Hummer before we see that happening in the package.

WCW World Title: Sid Vicious/Randy Savage vs. Kevin Nash/Sting

Nash is defending in what is more like a handicap fatal fourway than a tag match if that makes sense. In theory Sting can only pin Nash for the title, meaning it's basically one on one on two. Thankfully Tony mentions the whole Sting can pin Nash and the real Sting coming out during the entrances. Yes, we've reached the point where Tony Schiavone is having to cover for the production team's goofs.

George (living up to the gorgeous moniker tonight) comes out in sunglasses but takes them off to reveal a black eye as she goes to stand in Nash's corner. The reason for the black eye isn't explained because that really wasn't something that should have happened, nor is it even referenced by the announcers. Savage and Sting start but Randy sees George changing corners and freaks out. Sting uses the chance to deck Savage and the fight is slowly on.

Off to Sid to face Sting as Tony explains the rules, making this match even more confusing that it was in the first place. Sting quickly knocks Sid out to the floor but Nash isn't interested in tagging. So in theory, if Nash doesn't get pinned, he doesn't lose the title? It's not like we've ever gotten a clear answer to that, though to be fair I doubt WCW thought it that far through. Sid and Savage start double teaming Sting with the big man putting on a bad looking camel clutch.

Savage comes in and spits at the champ, but thankfully doesn't hit his hair. Sting finally rolls away and makes the tag to Nash for all the usual offense. He has Savage in trouble but gives Sting a very hard tag to get out. Sting takes it outside and splashes the barricade before Savage takes him back inside for some choking. Tony points out that almost no one has tries to pin Nash yet, making the whole stipulation rather pointless.

Sid hooks one of the lamest chinlocks I've ever seen on Sting, who is nice enough to go down to the mat in a heap. Granted he might have fainted after hearing some of the nonsense they actually aired on this show. Sting fights up again and does the falling low blow spot, allowing for the hot tag off to Nash.

Everything breaks down and the girls come in, only to have Sting splash both of them plus Sid. Savage and Nash get splashed at the same time, allowing Sid to plant Sting with a chokeslam. George gets in and low blows Nash (SHOCK AND AWE, SHOCK AND AWE), setting up the big elbow from Savage for the pin and the title.

Rating: D-. I wonder if they bothered to tell everyone else in the match about the whole Sting can pin Nash rule, because it was NEVER attempted

and was a complete non factor. George's face turn (can you even call it that?) lasted all of twelve minutes, meaning she's picking the woman beater over the kidnapper and potential rapist. I can't believe I just had to type that, so I'll wrap it up by saying it's a horrible match.

Overall Rating: F. The fact that a REALLY good twenty three minute Tag Team Title match is needed to bring this show up to a failure tells you all you need to know. This show had eight matches. One of them was a joke with David Flair needing an army to beat Malenko, one wasn't wrestling because it was a big fight in a junkyard, and one was a boxing match. Two of the others were matches that belonged on Thunder at best, another one was a boring elimination tag, and one MADE NO FREAKING SENSE.

This show blew my mind in ways that I honestly didn't think were possible. Just let some of this stuff sink in for a few minutes. Roddy Piper apparently can't be trusted in a five minute match, we can't have a DQ anymore because Rick Steiner wouldn't be able to have a match break 10 seconds if we did, and we have to drop stipulations that are made less than three days before the match. WCW is dying before our eyes and it's kind of amazing to see in a morbid way.

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Thunder – July 8, 1999: Remind Me Why This Show Exists

Thunder

Date: July 8, 1999

Location: Jefferson County Civic Center, Birmingham, Alabama

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Larry Zbyszko

It's the last show before Bash at the Beach and things have gone from boring to completely insane. Thankfully this is one of the live shows which are usually far better, especially than next week's episode where it will have been taped before the PPV, meaning they can't spoil anything. Let's get to it.

The announcers recap Sunday's main event tag match.

Clips of the main event stuff from Monday which is still disturbing.

Here's Big Kev with something to say. He's been looking at the video from Nitro and is now sure that Sting was in on it. Therefore, using his power as champ, he's making Sunday's tag match a title match, meaning anyone, including Sting, can pin him for the title. Why they don't just make it a four way is beyond me but seeing how much they can screw this up should be interesting.

Dean Malenko comes into the Oval Office and yells at Flair for breaking up their PPV match due to a bad back. Flair says it's from carrying this company for the last twelve years. Anderson and Malenko bicker for a bit before Flair says that Dean may be the Man of 1000 Holds, but he's not Ric Flair. Point to the Nature Boy.

Clip from Nitro of Eddie's hunt for a thief.

Lenny Lane vs. Eddie Guerrero

Lodi's sign: "If you can read this, you ARE NOT from Alabama." They lock up to start and Lenny bails to the corner for a hug. Back in and Eddie fires off punches and uppercuts followed by a pair of dropkicks. Eddie throws him into the corner but gets backdropped to the apron, kicking the referee down in the process. With the referee down, the luchadors Eddie forced to unmask on Monday come out to beat Eddie down, giving Lenny the fluke pin.

Rating: D+. Thank goodness this is for a story, but you can see that Guerrero isn't going to get any higher up the card than being the big star who is stuck in the Cruiserweight division. The story is interesting and ties back into the LWO stuff (in a way), but Eddie should be higher up the card than he is and that's just not happening.

Jimmy Hart is in the back and invites La Parka and Silver King to join the Hardcore Invitational on Sunday.

Disco is in the ring with Gene and talks about his match on Sunday with Ernest Miller. Why they're fighting isn't made clear but Disco makes Mr. Miyagi and Tae-Bo jokes before promising a Brooklyn, New York beating.

Van Hammer vs. Al Green

They fight into the corner to start until Green grabs a slap to take over. Hammer throws him across the ring in response and clotheslines him out to the floor. That goes nowhere so Hammer kicks him in the face for two. The Alabama Slam and cobra clutch slam is good for the pin on Green. This was nothing.

Rick Steiner runs in and beats Hammer down post match.

Jimmy Hart tries to get Horace into the junkyard as well.

We get the Bret video from Monday.

Most of Bret's promo from Monday.

Brian Knobbs vs. Fit Finlay

Finlay jumps him to start but is quickly sent to the floor and into the steps. Jimmy Hart (he's a busy guy tonight) gets in a few cheap shots of his own but Finlay is able to reverse a whip into the barricade. He sends Brian into the post and goes for a table, drawing in Hugh Morrus and Jerry Flynn for the DQ.

Regal, La Parka, Silver King, Horace and Dave Taylor all come out to brawl. Remember people, this is to preview a match in a junkyard. Like, a real junkyard.

Gene is in the ring with Flair and all of his associates. Piper talks about Peter McNeley (a guy Mike Tyson knocked out in 30 seconds) making Bagwell look good this coming Sunday. Buff asked for the match (no he didn't) because Piper would kill him in a wrestling match. Flair talks about his match with Dean being canceled (despite it never being announced on the main shows) so instead, Dean gets a US Title shot. That's quite the punishment. If Dean loses on Sunday, Gene gets a night with Asya. Ok then.

Rap Is Crap video.

This Week in WCW Motorsports, now with Ricky Rachman.

Disco Inferno vs. Kidman

Kidman scores with a quick dropkick and clothesline. His Fameasser is countered though and Disco nails a clothesline of his own. A wristlock goes nowhere so they head outside as we hear that Regal is now in the junkyard match. That match sounds like it could be so bad that it's amazing.

Kidman scores with a dive but Disco grabs an atomic drop back inside, only to charge into a boot. You know you would think a match with these two would be a bit more entertaining. Kidman hits a high cross body and the Low Down for two. Cue Sonny and the Cat as Kidman gets two off a top rope bulldog. Not that it matters as Cat kicks Kidman with the red shoe for the disqualification.

Rating: D+. Every time they get close to giving me something to care

about, we get something like Sonny Onoo to screw it up. What happened to Kidman anyway? Oh that's right: this company is more about screaming HOOTY HOO than having Rey and Kidman tear the house down every night. Also, can we get a match to break five minutes tonight?

Disco lays out Cat post match.

The Triad comes out and says they'll win on Sunday because Benoit and Saturn have never come close to beating them.

Chris Benoit vs. Kanyon

This HAS to be better. Kanyon goes after him in the corner but gets taken down with chops. Benoit runs him over again but Kanyon rakes him in the eyes. That's fine with Benoit who snaps off a suplex to send Kanyon rolling out to the floor. We get a chase around the ring with Kanyon getting in first and stomping on the Canadian, only to eat more chops as a result.

They head outside again but WAIT A MINUTE. Jimmy Hart has gotten Mikey Whipwreck into the junkyard match. We're still not done with anything but the match as Tenay talks about Team Madness going insane in the back because they can't be on camera. Kanyon suplexes Benoit on the floor and takes him back inside, only for Benoit to fire off more chops.

Back up and Kanyon headbutts him down, setting up a middle rope Fameasser for two. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Benoit fights up, only to have his powerbomb countered into a sitout version from Kanyon for another near fall. Kanyon heads up top, only to get caught in a superplex to put both guys down. Back up and Benoit starts rolling Germans, only to get drilled in the face with an elbow.

Cue Bigelow with a title belt but Benoit whips Kanyon into the big guy to knock him off the apron. Chris loads up the Swan Dive but gets shoved off by Bam Bam. Now Saturn comes out to even things up but gets whipped into the barricade. Benoit hooks the Crossface but has to avoid Bigelow's flying headbutt. A dropkick puts the big man outside again and the Crossface makes Kanyon tap.

Rating: B-. The interference was a bit much but they let two talented guys have a good match for about ten minutes. It's not the best match in the world or anything but after the hour and a half that I had to sit through put this just a step below Steamboat vs. Flair. Canyon hasn't been busting out much new stuff lately but he's still different enough to stand out in the sea of brawlers in WCW.

Page comes out and the Triad lays out Benoit and Saturn to make sure they don't lose any heat.

Here's Megadeth's performance from Monday to waste about five minutes.

Curt Hennig vs. Konnan

Konnan has to chase Bobby off the apron to start before kicking Curt in the ribs to break up a test of strength. A bulldog and dropkick put Hennig down as well, meaning we at least get some great selling. The less famous Windham interferes to give Curt control with all of his usual. Konnan comes back with the rolling clothesline and X Factor, only to have Hennig throw him outside. A huge brawl breaks out on the floor as Konnan hooks the Tequila Sunrise, only to have Barry come in with the cowbell to give Hennig a cheap win.

Overall Rating: D-. Well let's see. Eddie loses to Lenny Lane, one match broke five minutes, the show long story was Jimmy Hart adding people to the junkyard match, despite no affiliation with the guy running it, multiple matches for Sunday were either added or changed, and about a fourth of the show was spent on videos from Nitro. Someone remind me why this show exists.

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Lucha Underground – November 26, 2014: They're Slipping

Lucha Underground

Date: November 26, 2014

Location: Lucha Underground Arena, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

Finally caught up here with a show I'll probably keep reviewing weekly. The interesting story now is likely going to be Mundo wondering why Puma didn't come out to help him, putting a strain on their tentative partnership. Other than that we have a lot of masked guys running around and flipping a lot, which is perfectly fine for the most part. Let's get to it.

We open with the usual recap from last week.

Konnan comes in to see Cueto on Puma's behalf. He isn't pleased with Puma being attacked last week but Cueto says they were acting on Big Ryck's orders. Konnan isn't sure if he believes that but wants Puma vs. Ryck in a street fight tonight. Cueto says he'll drink to that but Konnan takes the glass from him and drinks it himself.

Drago vs. Mil Muertes

Drago has a big black tongue to go with the dragon motif. The announcers already screw up their own continuity by saying this is Mil's first real

test, despite his first match being against Blue Demon Jr., who they treated like the greatest thing ever. Muertes jumps Drago to start and tries a powerslam but drives Drago's shoulder into the mat instead. Now it's Drago being thrown out to the floor as King Cuerno is looking on from the entrance. Apparently he's stalking his latest prey.

Back in and Muertes stays in control with a real powerslam for two. He charges into a superkick though and Drago fires off more kicks for two. A springboard DDT gets the same on Muertes but he spears Drago out of the air in a great looking crash. The Downward Spiral ends Drago a few seconds later.

Rating: C-. This was just a step above a squash but that spear looked great. Drago comes off like a midcard guy who seems to be like a Kofi Kingston: capable of doing some impressive looking stuff but comes up short in the big matches. Cuerno vs. Muertes could be a very interesting feud depending on how it's built up.

Muertes and Catrina leave so Cuerno comes out to stalk Drago. So much for the more interesting feud. Cuerno lays out Drago with a fireman's carry into a Michinoku Driver.

Video on Johnny Mundo. He won't take nonsense from anyone and is here because he thinks he's the best. This is mostly stuff we already know but it's a good idea to fill people in who didn't see him in WWE.

Catrina and Muertes in to see Cueto. She grabs the key around Cueto's neck and says you can't keep darkness locked away forever. Interesting indeed.

Son of Havoc vs. Mascarita Sagrada

Havoc has Ivelisse with him. She takes too long getting out of the ring though so Sagrada goes after Havoc to start fast. An armdrag puts Havoc down on the floor and Sagrada teases a big dive but he settles for countering a chokeslam into a rollup for two back inside. Havoc is ticked off though and throws Sagrada into the air for a big crash. A gorilla press drop into a standing moonsault gets no cover as Havoc would rather ram Sagrada's head into the mat. Some good looking woman with long hair

is watching from the entrance.

The small guy dives into a kick to the ribs for two with Havoc pulling him up. Ivelisse gets in a kick to the head of her own, earning her a dive a few moments later. Striker: "Payback is an Ivelisse!" Good line, but explaining it to Vampiro a few seconds later made me shake my head. Havoc goes out to check on her and gets a dive of his own to put all three down. Back in and Sagrada does his spin around into a rollup for the pin.

Rating: D+. Other than Ivelisse looking great, this really didn't do much for me. Much like last week, you run the risk of the fans thinking Havoc is a joke because of the loss to a guy Sagrada's size. Nothing much to see here and the announcers barely acknowledged the girl watching from the entrance.

Chavo Guerrero Jr. vs. Sexy Star

This is the fallout from a few weeks back when Chavo nailed Star with a chair in a rather violent act. Star looks all ticked off and...shoves him. Chavo shoves her in the face and pulls Star down by the hair like the villain he is. He sends her into the corner before kissing Star, earning him a slap to the face. A nice hurricanrana sends Chavo out to the floor and Star grabs a chair of her own and kicks the referee low when he tries to break it up.

Post match Pentagon Jr. comes out and picks up the chair, seemingly to hit Star. Cue Fenix for the save, likely setting up a tag match.

Big Ryck vs. Prince Puma

Street fight and Ryck has Cortez and Cisco in his corner. Puma says it's 3-1 but the lackeys head to the floor. He goes right after Ryck with rights and lefts but Ryck just blasts him with forearms. Ryck pulls Puma away from the ropes for a crash but misses a charge into the post. Castro and Cisco are quickly dispatched but something like an F5 is countered into a DDT, sending Ryck out to the floor.

Puma hits a huge dive to take everyone down but Cortez offers a

distraction, allowing Ryck to nail a big running clothesline. Cortez is busted open as Ryck kicks Puma in the back over and over. Cisco throws in a trashcan to be wedged into the corner. Puma is whipped back first into the can and a gorilla press drops him face first onto the turnbuckle. The goons come in again and Ryck sits in a chair as they pick Puma apart.

Puma finally backflips out of a double belly to back suplex and takes the lackeys down with a DDT/Downward Spiral. That's not it though as Puma kicks Ryck out of the chair, leaving Puma to take the kendo stick away from Cortez. A shot to Ryck's back just gets on his nerves though and he swats away a shot to the head. Puma gets blasted in the face as Cortez and Cisco throw in a ladder.

Ryck adds a table as the goons tie Puma in a Tree of Woe in the ladder. Not that it matters as Johnny Mundo dives off the wall and into the ring for a save. That looked awesome, even though he landed next to Ryck. Mundo throws the ladder onto Cortez and Cisco before spearing Ryck down and hammering away. Johnny grabs a chair but hits Puma by mistake, allowing Cisco and Cortez to hit their flapjack Codebreaker. A release Rock Bottom through the table is enough to end Puma.

Rating: C. Eh I've seen better. This was just your standard set of weapons but with Puma fighting in a handicap match instead of anything normal. It's clear that they're setting Puma up as a big deal, which is interesting given that you would think Mundo would be the first top star. Not bad here but it just kind of came and went.

Mundo checks on Puma to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. This one didn't do much for me. It was much more about setting stuff up for the future than anything here and while that's good for down the line, it really doesn't do much at the present. The street fight was nothing of note and the rest of the matches were just kind of there. A lot of stuff has been set up for the future though and that's enough to keep me coming back.

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Thought of the Day: Reach Out And Touch No One

The other night I felt like watching Survivor Series 1989 for no apparent reason and something occurred to me when I watched the opening match. As the guys were coming out for the match, it's amazing how close the fans got to the wrestlers. They could often touch the guys on the back or high five them on the way to the ring. That still happens today, but it's when the wrestlers want to go over there due to how far away they are from the crowd. I understand why they do it now, but I miss having the wrestlers that close to the fans. It makes things so much more personable.