

NXT – January 9, 2013: Five Is Greater Than Three

NXT

Date: January 9, 2013

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: William Rega, Tom Phillips

The main story tonight is Seth Rollins of the Shield defending the title against Big E. Langston, the unstoppable monster that seemed to scare the Shield away last week. That's the kind of basic yet logical storytelling you don't get on the main shows anymore. It should be interesting to see where they go with this, especially with Langston playing a heel on Raw now. Let's get to it.

The opening video recaps the title match. It's No DQ tonight apparently.

Yoshi Tatsu/Percy Watson vs. Wyatt Family

We get to hear Bray cut one of his awesome promos, talking about how he'll bite the head off a snake just to taste its poisons. He tells his family to make him proud and the visual of the three of them together is pretty awesome looking. The Family is Erick Rowan and Luke Harper in case you've forgotten. Wyatt sits down in his rocking chair on the stage and we're ready go to.

Yoshi and Harper start but Luke beats him down very quickly and brings in Rowan. Off to Watson who fires off some clotheslines and a dropkick to knock Erick to a knee. That's about the extent of his luck though as Erick chokes away and Harper cheats a bit as well. Back to Harper who pounds away on Watson's back and tags in Rowan for a neck crank.

Percy finally fights out and tags out to Tatsu for the comeback. Yoshi

fires off kicks and chops to Harper and a Shining Wizard for two. Harper drills Watson again but gets kicked in the head by Tatsu. Yoshi misses a top rope spinwheel kick and a discus lariat gets the pin for Harper at 4:12.

Rating: C-. Just an extended squash here but the Wyatt Family plays these characters so well that it's hard to not enjoy these matches. Watson and Tatsu seemed to have some potential back in the day but now they're the jobbiest jobbers that ever lived. Ok maybe that's a bit extreme but they're lucky to even get spots like these.

Emma vs. Paige

Emma is Australian and dances a lot. Paige gets a HUGE pop, easily the loudest I've heard for a Diva in years. A Paige chant starts things up and Emma gets thrown down by the hair. Emma comes back with a low dropkick for a delayed two as Regal sings Paige's praises. The dropkick might have hurt Paige's knee and thankfully Emma works it over a bit. Back to the dancing as Regal continues to be confused by it. Off to a half crab which makes sense as Emma is a Lance Storm student. Paige kicks away and hits the Paige Turner out of nowhere for the pin at 2:42. Her popularity continues to impress me.

Epico/Primo vs. Michael McGillicutty/Bo Dallas

Set it up last week, pay it off this week. Michael saved Bo last week from a double beatdown in case you're new around here. McGillicutty and Primo start things off and it's a quick standoff. The fans want Rosa who is absent tonight. Michael easily takes it to the mat and cranks on a headlock. Primo fights out and tags in Epico who immediately gets put in a headlock of his own. Back to Primo and he gets headlocked down as well. Primo fights up and is almost immediately puts in a third headlock. Well you can't say they're inconsistent.

Regal says that Bo and Michael could become "one of the greatest tag

teams of all time." I know I ask for less realism in wrestling but that's a stretch even for me. We take a break and come back with Dallas holding Epico in a chinlock. Dallas pounds away in the corner but Epico finally escapes and gets Bo in trouble in the corner. Primo hits a running crotch attack to Dallas in a 619 position for two before it's off to Epico for a chinlock.

Dallas fights out but gets rammed right back into the heel corner for more of the beating he's taking. The cousins hit a Russian legsweep/spinning leg sweep (Saturn's half of Total Elimination) for no cover before it's back to Epico for more stomping. Primo accidentally dropkicks his cousin and there's the hot tag to McGillicutty. A lariat and Saito Suplex put Primo down as everything breaks down. In the confusion, Primo hits a Backstabber on McGillicutty for the pin at 9:48 shown of 13:18.

Rating: C-. Again not a great match but it certainly wasn't that bad. McGillicutty continues to be a guy that should be getting bigger spots than he's in at the moment, but as long as his name is Michael McGillicutty, that's simply not going to happen. I don't get the need to have him pinned here, especially given how much Regal puts him over on commentary.

NXT Title: Seth Rollins vs. Big E. Langston

No DQ and Rollins is defending. Rollins doesn't have music yet. After the big match intros we're ready to go. Langston grabs a kick and shoves Rollins down to start, freaking Seth out. The champion grabs a front facelock and gets shoved into the corner for some shoulder blocks. Langston misses a charge into the corner and hits the post, but immediately comes back with a gorilla press to send Rollins to the floor.

Langston goes after him but here are Reigns and Ambrose for the triple beatdown. Big E. gets sent into the steps as we take a break. Back with both guys in the ring again with Rollins firing off kicks to the ribs.

Rollins hooks a triangle choke but Langston fights up and hits an electric chair drop to escape. The crowd is ENTIRELY behind Langston here as he fires off clotheslines. A double clothesline takes down Ambrose and Reigns but they run in again to break up the Big Ending.

Some guys from the locker room come out to try to stop the non-champions of the Shield but are quickly dispatched. Eventually about 15 guys come out and FINALLY clear them out, leaving it one on one. Rollins hits the standing Sliced Bread for two and the kickout scares him to death. He loads it up again, but Langston catches him on his shoulder and the Big Ending gives Langston the title at 6:38 shown of 10:08.

Rating: C+. The match itself wasn't much, but the run-ins were handled perfectly, making this feel like a huge moment and a nearly Attitude Era style main event. I also really like the idea of not having Langston beat up the Shield on his own as it keeps things a bit more realistic given how strong Shield has been pushed. Not a great match, but really good booking of a title change.

The locker room comes to the ring to celebrate with Langston.

Overall Rating: B-. This is one of those shows where the earlier stuff wasn't that great, but at the end of the day it doesn't really matter. This was all about Langston winning the title and they pulled that part off quite well. I'm pretty sure this was the last episode in this batch of tapings, so starting next week we should be able to see where things are headed. Good show this week, as usual.

Results

Wyatt Family b. Yoshi Tatsu/Percy Watson – Discus Lariat to Tatsu

Paige b. Emma – Paige Turner

Primo/Epico b. Michael McGillicutty/Bo Dallas – Backstabber to McGillicutty

Big E. Langston b. Seth Rollins – Big Ending

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Monday Night Raw – January 13, 1997: Maybe It's Good That No One Was Watching

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 13, 1997

Location: Knickerbocker Arena, Albany, New York

Attendance: 6,855

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Honky Tonk Man

We're six days away from the Rumble and the one clear thing is that a few people could win it. The main picks would be Austin or Hart but there are enough people that could possibly win to make it interesting. Other than that we've got Sid vs. Shawn II building up to Shawn's return home. Do you really not get who is leaving the PPV with the title? Let's get to it.

Shawn is in San Antonio before the Rumble on Sunday.

Jerry Lawler/Hunter Hearst Helmsley vs. Marc Mero/Goldust

Goldust is here to get revenge on HHH for hurting Marlena while Lawler and Mero are there to make it a tag match. Brawl to start and the regal team is knocked to the floor. Goldust and Lawler start things off but it's quickly off to Mero who sends Lawler into hiding. The fans chant

BURGER KING which sounds good at the moment as I haven't had lunch yet. Lawler tries to get in a punch out with a former Golden Gloves champion, earning himself a right cross to take him down.

Things break down for a bit and Lawler gets punched some more, sending him to the outside. Off to HHH as more stalling ensues. We also hear about the upcoming matches on the show for the second time in about three minutes. Mero backdrops HHH down and brings in Goldie, sending Helmsley running in fear. Back to Lawler who gets in a few punches before being knocked to the floor.

Mero comes back in and gets decked from behind by HHH. This match is having a hard time getting any kind of rhythm going at all. Mero gets worked over with really basic stuff from both guys, such as Lawler suplexing him down. Apparently next week the winner of the Rumble will face the loser of the WWF Title match. That's not a terrible idea. Mero tags in Goldust who causes HHH to run away again as this is getting really repetitive.

Lawler gets a foreign and likely invisible object as Mero goes to the floor. We take a break and come back with HHH charging into Mero's boot in the corner. A headscissors put HHH down and FINALLY we get Goldust vs. Helmsley. Goldie explodes on HHH, pounding away as hard and fast as he can with clotheslines and uppercuts. HHH gets caught in the ropes and Goldust pounds away until he gets disqualified.

Rating: F. This was AWFUL. I have no idea why they let this go nearly FIFTEEN FREAKING MINUETS but it had no business lasting longer than about two. There was no flow to it at all and it was just waiting until we got to the stupid ending. On top of that, Mero and Lawler had no reason to be in the match at all, other than keeping this from being the same one on one match we would see on Sunday with Goldust vs. HHH.

Shawn is in San Antonio and watches a promo from Sid in the Alamodome, saying that he's going to be a monster against Shawn on Sunday. Sid is

going to make sure to humiliate Shawn in front of his friends and family. It's probably the most coherent and best Sid promo I've ever heard. We also get a recap of Sid attacking the Lotharios. Shawn says that he and the people of San Antonio are going to kick Sid in the teeth. He isn't defenseless like the Lotharios (nice show of respect there Shawn) and on Sunday, Sid is going to fall.

Here's Bret with something to say. Yesterday Austin attacked Hart on Superstars and injured his ankle before the Rumble. Oh apparently Bret is going to sit in on commentary.

Shawn is STILL in San Antonio.

Rocky Maivia vs. British Bulldog

Bret praises Rocky as he comes to the ring. The guy has an eye for talent if nothing else. Rocky also might be having eyes for Sable but it doesn't seem to be for sure. Bret describes the WWF as a lawless land and says he'll take care of Austin if they wind up in the ring together. Feeling out process in the match with Rocky taking over via an armdrag. Honky asks Bret if he'd consider being Honky's protege but Bret laughs it off.

Bulldog gets sent to the floor and things stall a for a bit. Back in and it's time for more arm cranking as Owen comes out to ringside. Rocky gets sent to the outside as well just before Owen stares down Bret. We take a break as Bret takes off his sunglasses. Back with Davey pounding on Rocky as the Hart staredown continues.

We hit a chinlock on Rocky for a bit before Maivia fights back up with a cross body for two. The delayed vertical suplex puts Rocky down again and a legdrop gets two. Back to the chinlock due to a lack of anything better to do. Rocky fights back up and they collide to put both guys down again. Maivia fights back with a bunch of clotheslines including one that puts both guys on the floor. Cue Austin to take out the knee and Stun Bulldog for the countout. Bret couldn't make the save because Owen wouldn't let

him get up.

Rating: C-. Better match than you would expect given the experience of Rocky at this point, but it was a cool sight to see Rocky hang in there as long as he did and even win the match. He was about to get booed harder than anyone would ever believe possible in this day and age, but at this point there wasn't much to him.

The Nation says they're united at the Rumble.

Undertaker vs. Crush

Crush is part of the Nation here so Taker goes into the aisle to fight them all at once. We head inside for the bell with Taker slamming Crush down and dropping a leg for no cover. Taker loads up Old School but Faarooq crotches him to give Crush control for a good three seconds. Taker sends him to the floor but gets guillotined as Crush comes back in. We continue the punch off until Crush hits a piledriver to put Taker on the floor.

Taker gets rammed into the steps and punched even more before we head back inside. Vader is standing at the entrance to the arena as we take a break. Back with Crush choking away and getting two off a clothesline. Back to the chinlock as this match continues to be slow. Taker hits a clothesline of his own but gets taken down by a belly to belly suplex. Crush loads up his Heart Punch (exactly what it sounds like) but gets caught in a chokeslam. Faarooq and Vader run in for the DQ before a cover can happen though.

Rating: D. Nothing to see here which is a running theme tonight. Crush was there as a warm body and little more, which would be the case until he was thrown out of the Nation, which led to him being a warm body in the DOA. Taker would continue to flail around for a few weeks until he wound up winning the world title at Wrestlemania because why not.

Vader and Faarooq beat down Taker until Ahmed Johnson comes out for the save, only to get beaten down as well to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. This really didn't work for me. The opening match was terrible, the middle match was just ok, and the last match was bad. Sid vs. Shawn is set up pretty well, but rather than Austin vs. Hart, the real battle of the Rumble, was made secondary to the Harts feuding, which wasn't even a thing for Sunday. Just an odd episode all around that didn't make me want to see Sunday's show.

Here's the Rumble if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/17/royal-rumble-count-up-1997-bret-hart-uh-make-that-austin/>

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Rosita and Sarita Gone From TNA As Well

So I don't have to put up with schmucks saying I don't care about women's wrestling.

I have no idea why many people would care about this, but apparently it's a story.

El Generico Reportedly Signs With WWE

<http://www.411mania.com/wrestling/news/269182/UPDATED:-El-Generico-Reportedly-Signs-With-WWE.htm>

I'm not a big fan of the guy but apparently he's got a decent following online. This is more of the international push that WWE is on which isn't a bad idea at all. I see no issue with this signing.

Thoughts?

On This Day: January 9, 2005 – New Year's Revolution 2005: The Perils Of Single Brand Pay Per Views

New Year's Revolution 2005

Date: January 9, 2005

Location: Coliseo de Puerto Rico, San Juan, Puerto Rico

Attendance: 15, 764

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

So for no apparent reason, we're in Puerto Rico for this one. This is more or less all about one match: the Elimination

Chamber. The title has been vacated (a Puerto Rican tradition) because there had been a double pin in a match with HHH, Edge and Benoit.

Jericho, Orton and Batista are being thrown in there because we need six people and they're the other three big guys on Raw at the moment. Shawn is guest referee for no apparent reason. Other than that the big match is Kane vs. Snitsky. See what I mean when I say it's about one match? Let's get to it.

The opening video is the epitome of generic. It just says that the Chamber is big and bad and all that. There's nothing else mentioned about the rest of the card at all which isn't likely a good sign.

Raw Tag Titles: Eugene/William Regal vs. Christian/Tyson Tomko

Regal and Eugene are past their peak of intrigue but at least it's about to end. However it's because Eugene destroys his knee in this and is out for about 6 months because of it. For once the Spanish announce team serves a perfect function. I have no idea what I mean by that either. Christian is completely lacking credibility at this point but he'll be heading to TNA later in the year.

Eugene is wearing a Hogan shirt for no apparent reason. It's a comedy match in case you didn't get it. This is where the Eugene character needed to go away. Good night Christian deserves better than this. And Eugene hits the floor and slaps hands with the fans for no apparent reason. He follows this up to dive under the ring. I already hate this match. We get an airplane spin as I would love to hear Gorilla and Jesse argue over Eugene.

The intellectually challenged one Hulks Up and tags Regal in. Well at least he's willing to let someone else in for the glory part. Oh man Christian gets a shot in on the nose and Regal is bleeding badly. Too much cocaine I guess. Christian pulls Eugene off the apron and Regal gets there for a tag but

there's no partner. Can I get some Wah Wah Wah music? This is running way too long at this point.

Eugene gets a big old pop for the hot tag. He cleans house but lands totally on his knee, ripping it to pieces and putting him on the shelf for six months. He's more or less dead weight now and I don't think the others know it yet. To his credit though he hobbles up and gets a bad rollup on Tomko whose shoulder was up but to be fair he did what he could. He gets taken out on a stretcher.

Rating: B-. It was a formula tag match but the ending changes the whole thing. It's fairly clear that the champions retained here, but I'll give them the benefit of the doubt and say B-. It wasn't terrible but it wasn't great either. Eugene gets bonus points for finishing the match though so there we are.

In the back, Christian and Tomko run into Edge. Edge says he has an idea.

We recap Trish and Lita, which makes me think I have to give them credit for coming up with a story rather than saying we know we've got nothing else so here you go. Trish is the heel here and had been all evil when Lita lost her baby. She responded by breaking Trish's nose.

Trish says she's ready.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Lita

How many times did these two fight, about a million? Ross calls it a tag title for no apparent reason. I love her theme song actually. Trish's cleavage is big enough to hide a small country in. They fight for a bit before Trish goes to the floor. Lita goes to the apron and throws a Thesz Press at Trish, and rips HER knee to shreds.

Literally, two matches and two torn knees. She would be out for a few months also as she ripped her ACL. They actually

continue the match though for about another three minutes before Lita just has nothing left and the Chick Kick gives Trish another title.

Rating: N/A. Not fair to grade them on this at all. As for a grade, I'd go with DD. That's of course for Dogma and Dreams, which was my textbook in my political theory class. What did you think it was for?

Edge wants out of the Chamber and offers his spot to Christian, Bischoff says no and Shawn shows up to say he'll call it fairly. Thanks for your presence here Shawn. Again, why aren't you in the actual match?

Intercontinental Title: Shelton Benjamin vs. Maven

No backstory here at all as it's more or less just a random title match. This was more or less the last ditch effort to make Maven mean a thing. Amazingly enough it didn't work at all. Shelton is WAY over here as this was right before the hottest period of his career and four months before the match with Shawn that made him the hottest thing on the planet and is still his career highlight.

The heat on Maven is excellent. He cuts a promo in the middle of the match, saying that he doesn't know how many people here speak English. He's getting some very decent heat here. I'm almost impressed. He throws in a little Spanish, telling the fans to shut their mouths. This is a fine idea but this has gone on five minutes.

And now he's leaving. He changes his mind at 9 and turns back to the ring. Literally 5 seconds after he gets in he gets rolled up for a pin. He gets on the mic and says he wants another match because that didn't count. Shelton comes in, the bell rings, he hits the Exploder Suplex and it's over in 5 seconds.

Rating: N/A. WHAT WAS THE FREAKING POINT OF THIS??? Literally

this was ten minutes that just made no sense at all and there were two "matches". What in the heck was going on here? I flat out do not get this, but if it was an actual match it would fail and fail hard.

Hassan says that Ross and Lawler are in trouble and that he's not nervous. He calls Puerto Rico second rate. The crowd has been white hot all night so this gets them really going.

Muhammad Hassan vs. Jerry Lawler

To say Hassan was hated is an understatement. He actually was considered for a run with a world title and I was fine with that. The bell sounds really weird for some reason. And Ross goes with Lawler to the ring so there is zero commentary for this match. Um, ok? Lawler is of course completely over here and this is just a basic storyline to get Hassan over. The lack of commentary is just weird to see in a match.

It's like watching the match in the arena which is kind of cool actually but it's leaving me with far less material to go with. Daivari tries to steal Ross' hat. Lawler gets in some basic stuff here but it's more or less a total squash here and that's just fine. This match does get some time and the best thing with that is they have Lawler get in some offense to keep Hassan from just dominating the entire time.

This is where Lawler is incredibly valuable: he's still loved enough and in good enough shape that you can throw him in a match when you need to in order to put someone over or make someone seem evil. The fans however aren't as enthralled by this as a boring chant starts.

I mean really, that chant is boring. Can't they be the slightest bit original? Lawler survives the cobra clutch and we get the showdown with Lawler and Daivari. It winds up with Lawler walking into a downward spiral for the win though.

Rating: C-. The match should have gone a bit shorter but this

was fine. It gave Hassan the win he needed and blew off the storyline so that's all you can ask for I guess. This was fine I guess but it was really nothing special at the end of the day. The commentary thing really was weird and hurt it I think.

Orton and Batista have a really badly acted showdown. Orton wants to know if Batista is going to beat up HHH or kiss up to him. Why do I picture Vince drooling over the second possibility?

Wrestlemania Recall: Mania 12 and the iron man. I guess this was a way to let Ross get back to the announce booth.

Coach joins Ross for commentary until King gets back. I guess Ross is no Joey Styles.

We recap Kane vs. Snitsky. More or less Lita was Kane's wife and was pregnant and in a match vs. a jobber named Gene Snitsky, Kane was pushed onto Lita and she lost her baby. Snitsky and Kane feuded, and Kane jobbed. And people wonder why no one takes him seriously.

Kane vs. Gene Snitsky

We get the Ross lingo of bowling shoe ugly, translating into we know it's going to suck but it's all we've got. And yeah it's crap. The problem here is that no one cares about Gene at all and he and Kane are more or less the exact same style. When it's Taker there's at least the chance that he can shift things up a bit. Here that just isn't going to happen as it's nothing but big men using power moves and the occasional work with weapons even though there are disqualifications in this match.

There's at least a reason this is happening but we're at 8 minutes here and this is showing no signs of actually ending anytime soon. These guys should have no more than like 10 at the very most. And now we're at 10 or so. Oh joy indeed. It's

the same exact stuff going on all day here too: power moves from both guys, one guy hits two power moves in a row, resthold, start it all over again.

Snitsky bites Kane's ear in there somewhere for a reference to a boxing match nearly 8 years old. Oh and they've also managed to kill the best crowd I can remember in awhile. This is just boring. FINALLY Kane hits a tombstone to no pop to get the pin.

Rating: D-. Seriously, 12 minutes for these two? Are you freaking KIDDING me? Against a small guy, Kane might have maybe been able to make this passable. This was just freaking stupid though and it was painful to watch.

We get the ad for the 2005 Rumble: West Side Story version. For the life of me, someone made money for coming up with this. That blows my mind to this day. "We'll step into the ring and reach an understanding. When the smoke has cleared I'll be the last man standing." I wonder why no one was watching back then.

Lawler is back.

We go poolside for some reason to see the Divas and Simon Dean from earlier in the day. Maria and Christy...wow. For no apparent reason Val Venis, Rosey, Hurricane and a guy I couldn't see get a Diva on all of their shoulders and we have a big chicken fight. Christy wins by pulling Maria's top off and shoving her in the water. They looked great, but what the heck was the point of this?

We go from that to a statue of the Virgin Mary. The irony here kills me as 3 of the 4 girls in there were in Playboy at one time or another. Oh never mind it's Christopher Columbus. I'm a Protestant so there you are.

We recap the chamber which more or less is Benoit and HHH both pinned Edge so the title was held up. The other three were

just thrown in so we could have a major gimmick match.

Raw World Title: Chris Jericho vs. HHH vs. Edge vs. Batista vs. Chris Benoit vs. Randy Orton

The order of the people coming in was preset through a Beat the Clock challenge. Not wild on that but I can certainly live with it as it's not a terribly huge deal. HHH and Batista have been arguing as HHH thinks it's about him and Batista is more or less the hottest thing on the freaking planet at this point with no one being able to even come close to touching him.

There was no way he was winning here though as that was clearly being saved for Mania. Ross is WAY too excited for this. Evolution argues a bit in the back before the match as we're just killing time now. Bischoff does a big long intro as they might as well have him saying I'm stalling here. A LONG explanation of the rules from Lillian follows as at least she's something to look at.

Shawn is the referee here and gets a great pop. Edge, HHH, Orton and Batista who is coming in last are all in pods. We're at about 15 minutes since the last match ended and we're not only halfway through the intros yet. Ok so 23 minutes after the Kane match ends, Benoit and Jericho get going. Good to see that they're going fast here. Any combination of these two and Angle means entertainment so I can't complain at all here.

With Shawn in there also, you're looking at over 15 IC Title reigns if my math is right. Yep this is still awesome. Like I said, these two are really hard to mess up. I did say that didn't I? Oh ok. Well this pairing is hard to mess up. So now, like I said, these two are really hard to mess up. Benoit gets the top rope suplex and lands on his head. That simply can't be good. The chamber really is an awesome sight.

Oh I think the chamber order is random other than Batista. HHH is in third. Good night that's a lot of IC Title reigns. He more or less destroys both Canadians as they can't look good

in the same match as HHH right? Well to be fair they're both worn down so that's fine. Benoit has a DEEP cut on his forehead. Jericho blocks a Pedigree to put HHH on the cage outside the ring. The Chamber really is an amazing spectacle.

Everyone is down and it's Edge. Yeah it is random other than the final spot. I like that actually. He spears or hits Edgecutions on everyone. He needs to go back to that when he returns. Edge breaks out a belly to belly. That's a new one on me from him. Jericho is having the tar beaten out of him by everyone but somehow HHH is standing tall. Who would have seen that? He gets another Pedigree countered and he hits the steal again.

Jericho gets busted open but it's a girly man cut. Edge avoids the crossface. HHH is bleeding on the nose. He's also managing to control more of this match than everyone else is somehow. Now who would have predicted something like THAT? Jericho takes a Pedigree just in time for Orton to come in with everyone down. Orton had been hot as all goodness about 4 months ago so he was promptly given a one month reign to get the belt off Benoit to put it back on HHH.

Orton never beat him again in that run and he hasn't been that hot since. But hey, HHH got another title reign out of it right? The fans are chanting RK0. See what I mean? More or less everyone in this whole match is over as free beer in a frat house other than HHH but whatever. Jericho gets an RK0 as he's just not having a good night.

Benoit gets a diseased crossface on Orton. He's up on one knee and it's really just a chinlock with the arm down. Benoit puts HHH in the Sharpshooter but Orton hits an RK0 on him. Why he wouldn't wait until HHH tapped is beyond me but whatever. Edge accidentally spears Shawn and then Orton but there's no referee. He yells at Shawn and suddenly is out cold and Jericho hits a Lionsault after the chin music to put Edge out.

Jericho gets out of his second Pedigree. That's three times he's been set up for it. Dang does HHH just like having Canadians between his legs? Benoit hits a MASSIVE swandive headbutt from the top of the pod before being put in both the Walls of Jericho AND THE CROSSFACE. He hangs on FOR THIRTY SECONDS before Batista comes in for the save. Yeah, that's not completely insane or ridiculous or anything like that.

He's just been in a 15 minute mega cage match and then taken a former world champion's finisher after being in the Sharpshooter for a decent while earlier and now has two MORE world champion finishing moves on him, but he can hang on for 30 seconds. Do you see why he's so freaking hated? It's ALL Batista here and the crowd is way into him. Oh and HHH is back up 30 seconds later. That is just freaking stupid on so many levels.

Batista throws Jericho into a cameraman to give us a cool camera shot. In a cool looking spot, Batista spinebusters Benoit and then spinebusters (spinebusts?) Jericho on top of him. That's followed by an AWESOME Batista Bomb to eliminate Jericho and it's an all Evolution final. Why my stars and garter belts, who would have seen this coming? So more or less it's now Orton vs. the world. The crowd is relatively quiet but they're popping at various times to make sure they're still alive.

Orton stays alive and manages to get a low blow and an RK0 to end Batista. HHH sits back and lets him get pinned which would become an issue on Raw later on. Orton gets the RK0 but Batista stayed in and Flair gets in somehow so Batista can more or less end Orton with a clothesline that was a secondary finisher back in the day. Why did we need Flair to stop him? I mean it's not like Shawn can do anything about Batista. Also why are referees so freaking dumb?

He saw the RK0 and then Batista is behind him and all of a sudden Orton is down and HHH is in the same spot. How dumb are

you man? The Pedigree ends this. A massive HHH worshipping festival takes us out.

Rating: B. Once Jericho was out, there might as well have just been a big celebration for HHH then as it was obvious he was going to win the whole thing. The drama was lacking badly for a long time here and in the end it was little more than a cheap way to get HHH his tenth title reign.

Edge, Benoit and Jericho had little purpose in this at all as it was always going to come down to those three. This was good though as the violence was all there and the gimmick is always cool. Not terrible but not epic like some others. The time here, 35 minutes, is about perfect though for one of these things.

Overall Rating: D+. This was just not a very good show at all. There is just nothing at all to talk about on it as it felt like something between a Raw and a PPV. The wrestling is ok at best and other than HHH getting his title back that he had already, nothing really happened here.

Hassan winning shocks no one, Trish gets another meaningless title reign and Eugene is hurt so the tag titles are changed soon after this. I mean, I don't get it. What's the appeal of this? The main event is good but by no means required viewing.

Other than that, take a rather large pass on this one. It's not terrible, but it's just not good. As much as people are going to get on me, it reminded me of Genesis a lot: decent wrestling throughout, but nothing at all that makes you really have to see the show.

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Rank These Competitors

I'm watching the 2005 Rumble and there's a stretch in the early part with an amazing group of talent coming in one after another. My task for you all: rank the talent in the ring at the moment. The guys in the match currently are: Guerrero, Benoit, Mysterio, Benjamin, Edge, Booker T and Chris Jericho. I'm looking for what order you think they have in overall talent, not prestige or accomplishments. My order: 1. Chris Jericho

2. Chris Benoit

3. Edge

4. Shelton Benjamin

5. Rey Mysterio

6. Eddie Guerrero

7. Booker T

At the end of the day, there isn't a wrong answer to this question.

Give me lists. NOW!

Thank You Again

Yesterday (Tuesday) saw a new record for most views to my site in a single day. The old record took about nine months to break. This one took three weeks. Thank you all for continuously showing up and reading my rambling thoughts. I can't say enough how much I appreciate it.

KB

Had To Make A Few Adjustments

I had some technical issues so I had to tweek a few things on the All Reviews page. Everything should be the same but if you find a problem with it or any of the other pages listed along the top of the site or on any other other lists of reviews, please let me know.

KB

**MAJOR Spoiler From 1/11
Smackdown Tapings – DO NOT**

Read If You Want To Be Surprised

As confirmed by WWE.com Alberto Del Rio beat Big Show in a last man standing match to win the World Heavyweight Title. I'm very surprised by this and the field is now open for guesses on what it means for the Rumble and Mania, but I can't imagine Del Rio holding the title until then. Also for you trivia people, this is the first time the title has changed hands on Smackdown since 2011.

Thoughts/predictions?

Monday Night Raw – January 6, 1997: You Can See The Talent Mounting Up

I spend so much time talking about how awesome 1997 was that I might as well watch all of the Raws from that year. This is the year where the WWF was completely destroyed by WCW, but they were planting the seeds for their return to glory. This year includes the Border War storyline which was the setup for Austin's rise to the top of the wrestling world. I'll be doing two episodes at a time of this year followed by two each from 2003, as that way I can have everything from 1997-2003. Let's get to it.

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 6, 1997

Location: Knickerbocker Arena, Albany, New York

Attendance: 6,855

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jerry Lawler, Jim Ross

We're less than two weeks away from the Rumble, which means a lot of stuff is going to start happening on raw in a hurry. Sid is currently world champion, having taken the title from Shawn in MSG at Survivor Series. He then beat Bret at IYH 15 to do what likely no one else did in this era: beat Bret and Shawn in PPV title matches. Like I said though, the focus at the moment is the Rumble so let's get to it.

Also for the next few weeks, the show is still just one hour. That would change in February.

Vader wants a piece of Bret Hart.

We recap the debut of Shotgun Saturday Night, which arguably is the start of the Attitude Era.

Old school opening sequence still rocks.

Mankind vs. Owen Hart

Both guys are heels here and Owen is a tag champion. It's amazing how different things look here with the set just being the big RAW letters. Owen takes him down almost immediately and tries the Sharpshooter but Mankind makes the rope. Mankind, who is looking SLIM here, jabs Owen in the throat to take over. There's the running knee in the corner and Mankind screams in his face a lot.

Owen grabs the arm but has to fight off the Claw to slow him down all over again. Hart bites down on the leather thing Mankind uses for said Claw before punching him in the face some more. A Cactus Clothesline puts both guys on the floor where Owen blasts Mankind in the ribs with a Slammy and drops him over the barricade stomach first. Back in and Owen

stays on the ribs to knock Mankind to the mat.

Off to an abdominal stretch from Owen as we get some good psychology from a Stu Hart student. Who would have seen that coming? Mankind escapes the hold but gets taken down by an enziguri, sending him back out to the floor. Mankind finds something like a drink tray to blast Owen in the head as we take a break. Back with Mankind in control but having a neckbreaker reversed into a DDT for no cover. Hart goes up but jumps into the Claw which he rolls through out of nowhere to escape. Owen is sent shoulder first into the post and walks into a piledriver out of nowhere for the pin.

Rating: B. Good solid wrestling match here with both guys working well together. That's no surprise as these two are wrestlers who seem to fit together with anyone. Mankind was still pretty new here and was viewed as incredibly bizarre, which would be the case for most of 1997 until he became more of a strange tough guy.

Shawn and the Lotharios are looking forward to Sid's interview later.

More from Shotgun with Ahmed beating up D'Lo Brown on the streets of New York. Literally.

Here are Fake Razor and Fake Diesel as Honky Tonk Man is now on commentary. He's looking for a new protege at the moment.

Razor Ramon/Diesel vs. Doug Furnas/Phillip LaFon

Diesel and LaFaon start. Ok so LaFon has the short hair. Got it. Kane had one thing going for him in this angle: he actually looked like Diesel. Razor on the other hand looks like he's wearing a homemade Halloween costume. Off to Razor for a fallaway slam before he misses a charge. Tag off to Furnas for a quick headlock before Razor cranks on the arm for a bit. The announcers talk about the main event until it's off to Diesel.

We get some classic big man clubbing before Razor hooks an abdominal stretch. We take a break and come back with Diesel hitting a side slam for two. Furnas can't fight out of the corner and we stay in the slow beatdown segment. Furnas finally escapes and makes the tag to LaFaon who fires off forearms and kicks to take the imposters down. A dropkick gets two on Diesel and things break down again. A Frankensteiner gets two on Ramon and a middle rope Hart Attack gets the pin on Diesel.

Rating: D+. This wasn't bad but it went on WAY too long. It felt like it was supposed to be a squash but it wound up being a long match which didn't make any of these guys look any good. Fake Razor and Diesel didn't work at all and I don't think anyone was actually entertained by them. Does it seem like I have nothing at all to say here?

We recap Goldust and HHH last week where Marlana was injured.

More Shotgun with Marlana flashing Sultan to save Goldust.

Bret wants Shawn to interfere in his match tonight. He isn't worried about Vader either.

Here's Sid for a chat. Sid goes on a rant about how he's going to destroy Shawn in San Antonio. I think that's what he's talking about at least, as Sid isn't the easiest guy in the world to understand. He might have been wishing Shawn a spicy pasta. Shawn comes out to do commentary and some stripping.

Bret Hart vs. Vader

Not bad for a main event. Vader is feuding with Taker at this point and yesterday, Vader's manager Jim Cornette got destroyed on Superstars. Vader pounds Hart in the corner and sends him to the floor but Hart sends him into the steps to reverse control. Back in and Bret works on the arm on the mat but it doesn't last long due to Vader running Bret over. A

middle rope clothesline puts Bret down again and Austin is watching in the back as we take a break.

Back with Vader running over Bret again for no cover. A HUGE middle rope splash gets two but the moonsault takes WAY too long to set up. Bret starts in on the Five Moves of Doom which has Shawn cracking some very funny lines about how Bret is repetitive. Bret goes up for the middle rope elbow but gets shoved to the floor instead. Sid comes in out of nowhere and steals a cameraman. During the distraction, Austin comes out and Stuns Bret on the floor. That and a Vader Bomb are enough for the kind of upset pin on the Hitman.

Rating: C+. This was Bret's bread and butter: beating on guys bigger than he was. The interference was a bit much but the matches these four would combine to have over the upcoming weeks would be more than worth it. Bret getting screwed again would be a major factor in the coming weeks and months, which made things very awesome.

Sid powerbombs Jose Lothario's (Shawn's manager and mentor) son in the back. Shawn runs to the back to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. Long matches aside, you could see the pure talent in this company that would wind up saving the company in the long run. WCW had the star power, but at the end of the day this is wrestling, and if you can't deliver a decent match, you're going to lose some fans. It would take time, but eventually it would work out in the end.

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