

I Want To Talk A Little Bit About The WWE Gimmick Assembly Line

Back in 1908, the Ford Motor Company began manufacturing a car called the Model T. The idea behind it was simple: use the same format on an assembly line to mass produce affordable automobiles. It was a smash hit and became the standard method used for designing cars that is still used today. All of a sudden everyone had the same kind of car, but a lot more people could get their hands on one. The idea was that if you take away the uniqueness of cars, you could get them out faster, cheaper, and sell a lot more.

Now the problem with this method is just as I said: it takes away the uniqueness of the cars being released. Basically the Model T was one size fits all and everyone got basically the same thing. This brings us to the modern WWE and one of the many (among other) problems the company is facing at the moment: a large portion of the roster could be interchangeable with anyone else on the roster and it would make almost no difference. Let's take a look at a few examples.

Before I get into this: note that I am talking about characters only. Their in ring work isn't being considered a factor here.

Let's take a look at Randy Orton. Orton's character is that he snaps quickly and has anger issues. Here's where we get to the problem: practically anyone on the roster is perfectly capable of handling that part. Orton is someone that is going to be over no matter what he does because of his reputation and the RKO. However, his character has nothing unique about it and there's almost no depth to it.

As for someone who doesn't have a big finishing move to fall back on, let's look at say Heath Slater. Slater is a guy who came out week after week and got beaten up by various legends. He ran his mouth and talked about being a one man band, but there's nothing to him. Slater has won some matches and even a few titles, but at the end of the day he hasn't done anything of note in years and almost anyone could play his part. The titles that he won don't mean anything for the most part as so many people have won championships, but that's a discussion for another time.

I could go on and on with names like that, but there's a name in particular that explains things far better than anyone else I could talk about: Cody Rhodes. Cody has had an evolution to his character over the last few years. In June of 2010, Rhodes won a poll of the WWE Divas, naming him the best looking male wrestler in the company. This led to him becoming Dashing Cody Rhodes, a man obsessed with his looks and grooming.

Up to this point, almost anyone could have portrayed the character. However, all of that was groundwork for his next feud. After about six months of this gimmick, Rhodes faced Rey Mysterio where Mysterio's knee brace smashed into Rhodes' face. For the next few weeks, Rhodes refused to let his face be seen as he required facial reconstruction surgery to repair the damages.

After staying off of TV for about six weeks, Rhodes returned while wearing a mask. He claimed to be scarred under the mask, but due to it being clear, we could see that no scars were there and the damage was all in his mind. He basically turned into Dr. Doom from Marvel Comics, as he hid his face as much as he could due to the fear of what people would think of him. This is where things get important.

After spending months caring only about his looks, Rhodes was now ashamed of them due to the severe damage he had suffered. The six months beforehand had laid the groundwork for the character that he had become, and the new character only would have this kind of impact with Cody portraying it. In short, it was a unique character that we had watched evolve over the previous few months into the person that we saw before us. These things combined to make Cody a successful and interesting character, as opposed to just being the son of Dusty Rhodes.

Then it stopped. Rhodes still wore the mask but wasn't as insane as he had been before. Rhodes did little of note before winning the Intercontinental Title in August of 2011. A few months later, Rhodes began feuding with Randy Orton, eventually resulting in him losing his mask and having it broken.

Since then, Cody Rhodes has been Cody Rhodes. He's a guy in trunks that comes out, has the occasional match, and then goes to the back again. Nothing of note happens, his matches are about the same every week, and he only occasionally has a feud. At the moment, he's feuding with Sin Cara because he wants to take Cara's mask. Why does he want to do that? No apparent reason. No mention of Cody's time in a mask. No mention of anything unique at all.

Today, Rhodes is lucky to get on Smackdown for two straight weeks most of the time. He's lost most of the intriguing characteristics and traits that he had going for him before and is now little more than a cocky heel who says he's better than everyone else. That would be basically the same exact gimmick as Miz and Ziggler, as well as the same as guys like Del Rio and Mahal, although minus the ability to be able to say it in other languages. It's hardly a gimmick at all other than someone being cocky.

For a contrast, let's take a look at a few of the people who are freshly coming up on the roster. Instead of talking about various people and listing their personality traits, we'll focus on one: Damien Sandow. Yes he says that he's better than you, but he has a unique spin on it. Instead of just saying how great he is, Sandow says that he's smarter than you. He talks about how bad society is with the obsession with celebrities and pushes the idea of intellectualism.

If that doesn't work for you, let's take a look at David Otunga. Again just looking at his character, there is no one else on the roster that could play his character of a smug lawyer as well as he could. This is the case for one simple reason: Otunga IS a smug lawyer. He doesn't have to try to figure out what a Harvard educated lawyer would say because he just has to say what comes naturally to him. This is where you can solve a lot of the issues I'm mentioning here.

It makes little sense to take the gimmicks of people that aren't right for a part and trying to make them into that. The most successful wrestlers of all time are the ones who live the gimmick they have and see it as an extension of their own personalities. People like Undertaker, Savage, Flair, Austin and Rock all have been described as portraying themselves with more intensity than they would have in real life. It makes for a more believable performance and the characters are more successful.

If this doesn't make sense, think back to the Attitude Era. Just a quick look at the roster shows the following gimmicks: a redneck, a jock, an outcast who hangs out in boiler rooms and is craving acceptance while suffering from multiple personalities, a burn victim, a man who may or may not be dead, a pimp, a group of degenerates, a group of oddities, a group of vampires, a guy who looks like an Academy Award, a mixed martial artist, a superhero, an outdoorsman, a sex obsessed powerlifter and a security guard. For the most part, there is almost no overlap to any of

those things and they're all unique characters. You could say the same thing about a lot of people in the 80s as well.

In short, the problem that I see with a lot of the gimmicks in modern WWE is that there's nothing really specific about a lot of the characters. You could easily replace almost anyone with anyone else and you would have the same thing all over again. That doesn't make for interesting television and you have to rely on in ring talent to make up the difference. When you have almost everyone trained by the same training staff, you're not likely to see anyone break out in the ring with a different style that is going to set the world on fire. Mix it up and things will improve a lot.

Monday Night Raw – November 16, 1998: Austin vs. Rock For The Title

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 16, 1998

Location: Rupp Arena, Lexington, Kentucky

Attendance: 17,610

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

So the YouTube channel I use to get house shows from has been shut down by the user so it's back to Raw for me. On top of that, this is the show that I had a chance to go to but didn't for some reason. The main event:

Steve Austin vs. The Rock, the latter of whom has won the WWF Title last night at Survivor Series after turning heel and being revealed as the Corporate Champion. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last night with Shane screwing Austin out of the tournament and joining up with Vince.

I believe there's a new intro sequence now.

You can see the sign (Sable is the Bomb) my uncle and cousins were holding across from the camera.

Here are Vince, Shane and company to open the show. Vince says that whoever said you can't fool all of the people all of the time was a fool. He says that Austin was a fool for not sucking up to the boss, but here's someone that does: the Corporate Champion, the Rock. Rock says he didn't sell out but rather he got ahead. He calls all of the fans trailer park trash and says he plans on raising the Corporate Eyebrow and dropping the Corporate Elbow. Rock says he would rather kiss up to Vince than the people which doesn't please the people at all.

Vince wants to know what it's like to kiss up to him. Ask Regal I guess. Shane says he kind of likes doing it and Rock seems very happy. Vince wants to show us something on the Tron but we see Austin arriving instead. Anyway, now we get a video package of the stuff Shane has done to convince Austin that Shane was on his side. Rock's attack from last week was fake too. Of course this all begs the question: why would Shane have ever hired Austin back in the first place? He was gone completely legally, so why bring him back at all? Was it all just to mess with Austin? That's a bit risky.

Not that it matters as here's Austin to a BIG ovation. Vince reminds him that Austin can't touch a McMahon unless physically provoked. Austin has a clip of Shane saying that Austin would get his title match the night after Survivor Series. Again, WHY WOULD SHANE EVER SAY THAT IN THE FIRST

PLACE??? Vince says he overruled that but Austin pulls out a signed contract, apparently signed by Shane. Again, WHY WOULD SHANE EVER DO THAT IN THE FIRST PLACE??? Vince says it's worthless, so Austin has a video of Judge Mills Lane (former TV judge) saying that it's a legal document and Austin gets a title shot tonight.

New Age Outlaws/X-Pac vs. Oddities

Billy and Kurrgan start us off and it's time to dance for the big man. A big boot to Billy's "face" puts Billy down but a chop block does the same to Kurrgan. Off to Roadie and the place erupts. Kurrgan grabs a bearhug and slams Road Dogg down before bringing in Golga for some fat man power moves. A corner splash hits but a middle rope one does as well. Billy comes in with the Fameasser for two and everything breaks down. Shaggy, one of the Insane clown Posse, comes off the top but lands on Golga, giving Billy the pin. This was nothing.

The Oddities yell at the Clowns and the Headbangers run in to beat up Road Dogg.

Mankind is here and is very mad over last night.

Vince sends Patterson to find Mankind.

Here's Shamrock with something to say. He isn't pleased with last night and he'd rather fight than talk. Shamrock calls out Boss Man for a match later tonight and throws in the IC Title to sweeten the pot. That's it. This took less than two minutes and got the point across. See how easy it can be?

Val Venis vs. Mark Henry

Val pounds away (get your minds out of the gutter) to start but walks into a forearm. A belly to belly puts Val on the floor and Henry rams him

into the post a few times. Back in and Val makes a comeback, hitting a Russian legsweep followed by some right hands. That's about the extent of it though as Mark launches him into the air. Here's Chyna, fresh back from breast implant surgery I believe. The distraction lets Val roll up Mark for the fast pin. Another nothing match.

Henry asks Chyna out to dinner and reads her a poem. Chyna walks away. Gee she's rude.

Vince yells at Patterson for not finding Mankind. Vince: "You couldn't find your butt!" Brisco: "I know where that is Mr. McMahon." Brisco gets the assignment to find Mankind now.

Goldust/Steve Blackman vs. Blue Blazer/Jeff Jarrett

Goldust and Jarrett get us going in a match that would seem to be better suited in another company. Goldie gets in some right hands and it's off to Blackman who is dropkicked down. Off to the Blazer, complete with cape. Jarrett and Goldust fight on the floor as Blackman hits the bicycle kick on Blazer for another fast pin.

Blackman goes for Blazer's mask but Jarrett and Owen Hart come in for the save. Remember the idea was that Owen was the Blazer but he kept popping up by the Blazer at other times.

Brisco found the boiler room that Mankind was in but "there were weird noises in there." Now Slaughter is sent to capture Mankind. Vince wants to talk to Rock in private.

Slaughter didn't find Mankind so Vince sends all three of them to get Mankind.

Steven Regal vs. Godfather

No match as Regal takes the offer of the women instead of the match.
Regal: "My name is Steven Regal, not Elton John. I'll take the broads."
Regal wouldn't appear on Raw for almost two more years.

Godfather makes fun of Regal and calls him a fag. His word, not mine. A brawl breaks out Godfather gets the better of it.

Kane beats up some production guys near the trucks.

Vince fires up Boss Man.

Intercontinental Title: Ken Shamrock vs. Big Boss Man

Shamrock misses a high kick to start but elbows Boss Man into the ropes. The nightstick is grabbed by Ken but the referee takes it away. Spoilsport. The challenger (Boss Man) gets in a shot and takes it to the floor. Nothing happens there so we go back in for more punching. A kind of spinebuster gets two for Boss Man but he misses a charge into the corner. Shamrock comes back with right hands but as the referee pulls him off, both guys slug the ref down for the double DQ.

Rating: D. This is the longest match of the night and it didn't even break four minutes. I guess the idea here was to set up another match and these two had been feuding lately, but it's getting a bit annoying in that we're over two thirds of the way done with this show and we've had barely ten minutes of wrestling.

Referees finally split them up and here are the McMahons. Vince talks to Shamrock and offers him a spot in the Corporation, which is accepted.

Kane is still beating people up when police sirens are heard.

Edge/Gangrel vs. Droz/Animal

Edge gets knocked to the floor very quickly and Gangrel is double backdropped. Droz and Gangrel (what great names there were back then) start us off and it's off to Edge for a dropkick to the back. A move that would be tweaked and called Poetry in Motion by the Hardys keeps Droz in trouble but he pulls out a powerslam for two. Here's Hawk on the stage and he climbs the Titantron. Animal and Droz go out to get him and it's a countout.

After a break Animal and Droz are trying to talk Hawk down. Hawk yells about Droz and even Paul Ellering is out here to talk him down. Ellering tells a story about Hawk's mother and Hawk tells him to shut up. Droz goes up after Hawk and appears to shove him off the Tron. This would lead to an angle that would somehow get more uncomfortable later on.

After that apparent nearly deadly plunge, here's Sable who won the Women's Title last night. She doesn't have the belt here but I think people prefer her with less clothing. Oh Cole has the title in the ring. It's a nice fit on him. She dedicates the title to the fans who made her but here's Shane with a rebuttal. He says that Vince made Sable which she disagrees with. Sable declares herself not for sale and that's that.

Hawk has been taken to a hospital.

Patterson and Brisco, in Kentucky Wildcat (WOO!) football uniforms go into the boiler room. Slaughter is in riot gear. All three are destroyed by Foley.

Here are the McMahons, Shamrock and Boss Man to complain about Austin having a contract for tonight. Tonight is Austin's last shot.

WWF World Title: The Rock vs. Steve Austin

Rock misses a punch as Austin gets in and the fight is on. Some more punches miss Rock and the champ bails to the floor. Rock tries to head up

the ramp so Austin jumps him and drops the middle finger elbow back inside for two. Another one from the middle rope gets two. All Austin for the first two minutes or so. Just as I say that, Rock comes back with a swinging neckbreaker to take over.

They head to the floor again and Austin is knocked into the crowd which apparently energizes him like a six pack. A chair is knocked away from Austin's hands and Rock stomps away. Austin fights back but can't piledrive the champ on the floor. We head back inside and Austin breaks up a sleeper, only to get elbowed down.

The Corporate Elbow debuts and it's off to a chinlock. Here's Mankind trying to get to Vince but he only gets Boss Man. Shamrock and Boss Man beat Foley down as Austin fights up. Both finishers are countered before the Stunner hits, but Shamrock pulls the referee out. Here's Undertaker with a shovel and he blasts Austin in the head with it for the DQ and the end of the show.

Rating: C+. It's Austin vs. Rock so you have to give them the benefit of the doubt here. The match was hardly a classic and was pretty boring for the most part, but they only had six minutes and a screwy finish to work with. Nothing to see here but like I said, it's Rock vs. Austin so you have to take a quick look at least.

Overall Rating: C+. This show was all about building to a later show and there's nothing wrong with that. The short matches really hurt and the explanation was stupid with Shane revealing multiple plot holes, but you can't say this was dull. We also have a new opponent for Austin, but unfortunately it's also the beginning of the beginning of the insane Undertaker period, which is bad all around.

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Smackdown – August 24, 2012: Smackdown Is Actually Worse Than Raw Right Now

Smackdown

Date: August 24, 2012

Location: Rabobank Arena, Bakersfield, California

Commentator: Michael Cole

We're past Summerslam and Sheamus is still the champion. He kept the title by pinning Del Rio, but there was some controversy at the end as Del Rio had his foot on the ropes. Then on Raw, Alberto got pinned by Orton, so I think we might be seeing another triple threat in the near future. Well to be fair we haven't had one in almost five days so it's high time for one. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the title match at Summerslam.

Here's Orton to open things up. He says that he's never been a glass half full kind of guy. He's the kind of guy that would like to shatter the glass (again with the Austin motif) and beat up the guy that came up with that stupid expression. Randy says he deserves the world title shot after beating Del Rio on Monday. However, there are probably some people that disagree with him in the back, so he invites them to come out here right now.

Instead he gets Sheamus which isn't the result he was expecting. Sheamus talks about how Alberto has lost every chance he's had at the title and he's lost twice in a row now "fair and square". Sheamus wants to defend the title against Orton but here's Booker with a rebuttal. He asks the

fans if they're interested in seeing Orton vs. Sheamus....but here's Alberto to interrupt.

Del Rio says that Sheamus is a cheater and Orton is an animal. He whines and whines about how unfair everything is and Booker caves and makes him #1 contender. Actually scratch that because the whining has made Booker change his mind. Tonight it's Del Rio vs. Orton for the title shot at Night of Champions.

We get a recap of Josh Matthews getting injured by Kane at Summerslam. Teddy Long is filling in for him tonight. Apparently there's going to be a different commentator filling in on each match.

Ryback vs. Jinder Mahal

Ryback pounds Mahal in the face as Cole talks about how Teddy should be upset that he's not the boss anymore. Mahal escapes a powerslam and sends Ryback into the corner to take over. The running knee to the face gets one but an attempted seated boot at the face is caught by Ryback. The fans chant FEED ME MORE as Ryback hits a powerslam. The clothesline and Shell Shock end this at 2:53. Now move Ryback up the card already.

Layla vs. Alicia Fox

Kaitlyn is guest commentator. Tiffany's song does not work well at all for Layla. Now I'm not one to usually notice crowd noise being piped in, but when Layla gets a pop as she holds up the belt and a wide shot shows almost no one moving, I think there's something fake there. Layla hits her double jump springboard cross body for two. Kaitlyn talks about Natalya complaining about being eliminated from the battle royal "last night". Layla gets kicked off the ropes and Alicia goes after the knee. A half crab is broken up and Layla hits a high kick for the pin at 2:04. Nothing to see here.

Eve comes out post match and raises both of their hands.

Raw ReBound talks about the end of the show.

Ziggler brags to Vickie about getting rid of Jericho on Monday. Sheamus pops in and says there's no time like the present, so why not have a match tonight? Ziggler says no but Teddy comes up and says yes.

Sin Cara vs. Heath Slater

Cody is the guest commentator. Cara takes him down with a snapmare to start and a dropkick puts Slater into the corner. Slater knocks him to the floor with a shoulder to the ribs to take over and it's off to the chinlock. Cody gets in a backhanded compliment to Slater by saying that this is the only match he has a chance to win this year. Cara does the corner rope walk into the armdrag to send Slater out to the floor before hitting a dive over the top. They head back in but Cody turns Cara's mask around, allowing Slater to hit a reverse DDT for the pin at 2:35. This was angle advancement.

Cody goes for the mask again but referees stop him.

Sheamus vs. Dolph Ziggler

No entrance for the champ. Vickie does commentary of course. Ziggler bails to the floor to start before charging back into a headlock takeover. Dolph comes back with a chinlock as Vickie runs down AJ. Sheamus comes back and tries White Noise but Ziggler bails to the apron. Ziggler trips him up and drops Sheamus onto the apron with a DDT for two.

Back to the chinlock followed by a failed sleeper attempt. Sheamus hits some power strikes followed by the ten forearms in the ropes. White Noise looks to set up the Brogue Kick but Ziggler bails to the corner. Vickie slips him the case and he blasts Sheamus with it for the DQ at 4:55.

Rating: C-. The match wasn't great but how much can you do in five minutes with a DQ ending? These two have the chemistry together which is a good thing and I liked that they didn't have Ziggler about to lose. He was in trouble but he avoided the kick and things would have been almost at a standoff after that.

Ziggler hits Sheamus again with the case and looks to cash in but Sheamus gets up and stares him down so Ziggler takes the case back and runs.

Wade Barrett is still coming back.

Here's Santino with something to say. Santino talks about how long he was US Champion and how he doesn't feel like an American anymore. Then he ate apple pie and felt better. No seriously, that's what he said. Santino isn't sure if he can talk to the Cobra anymore so he puts it on and sees if things are ok.

He remembers the good times with the Cobra but on Sunday, the Cobra cost him the title because of its attraction to Aksana. Santino quotes Roberto De Niro and asks if you can milk him because he has nipples. Oh wait he meant to quote Rocky Balboa and says if he can change everybody can change. That fires the Cobra up and he says they can win the title again.

Thankfully Cesaro comes out to interrupt with new music. Cesaro does the five languages thing with the word this week being winner. He says that unlike Santino, he's a winner. That fires Santino up and they brawl on the stage with Santino loading up the Cobra, only to be distracted by Aksana. The Cobra, not Santino. The distraction lets Cesaro deck him and leave Santino laying. This is modern WWE for you: we finally get a young talent like Cesaro pushed to a title and he feuds with a guy over a sock on the challenger's hand being attracted to Cesaro's girlfriend.

Primo/Epico vs. Kofi Kingston/R-Truth

Non-title here. The Prime Time Players are the guest commentators. Cole suggests the tag champions have the Players' number. Titus: "You mean our phone number?" Kofi and Epico start things off and it's a standoff with both guys trying dropkicks. Epico pounds away on him in the corner and it's off to Primo. Cole tries to learn the bark as Epico hits a slingshot hilo for two. Titus does a Booker imitation as the commentary continues to move further and further away from the match. Off to Truth who cleans house and hits a gordbuster on Epico. Everything breaks down and Little Jimmy gets the pin on Primo at 2:17.

Video on the Japan tour.

Kofi and Truth say they'll fight anyone. Little Jimmy thinks there's a lot of good competition around here. The Players come in and say they deserve the shot. The Usos, Kidd/Gabriel and Epico/Primo all come in and it's a big brawl.

Teddy tells Booker the brawl has been broken up. Booker asks Teddy who deserves the shot. Teddy isn't sure so Eve comes in and has a win/loss chart for the teams over the last six months. She's also organized his schedule for the next six weeks. Booker is pleased and Teddy isn't sure what to think.

Recap video on Kane vs. Bryan.

Since this show isn't boring enough already, here's a long recap of HHH/Lesnar/HBK from Raw. Seriously that speech made you think HHH died.

Randy Orton vs. Alberto Del Rio

Winner gets Sheamus presumably at Night of Champions so he's on commentary here. They fight for control to start but Randy hits a slingshot suplex of all things for two and takes over. He hits the slingshot into the bottom rope but Del Rio comes back with a quick armbar

attempt. That gets countered into a neckbreaker to send Del Rio to the outside as we take a break.

Back with Del Rio holding a chinlock. During the break Orton's arm was sent into the steps so the arm is hurt as usual. A knee to the ribs stops Orton's attempt at a comeback and Alberto pounds away on the arm. The running enziguri in the corner misses and Orton gets fired up. Well, as fired up as Orton can get. Orton's clotheslines set up the powerslam but the elevated DDT is countered by Del Rio pulling on Randy's arm.

That's the extent of his offense though as Orton hits the backbreaker for two. Del Rio hits the Codebreaker on the arm out of nowhere for two and Randy is in trouble again. The armbreaker is countered and a dropkick puts Del Rio down and gets a delayed two. Elevated DDT looks to set up the RK0 but Del Rio hangs onto the ropes, sending Orton's arm into the mat again. There's the armbreaker and in what has to be a surprise, Orton taps clean at 6:46 shown of 10:16.

Rating: C. The ending was a nice surprise but at the end of the day, it means Del Rio vs. Sheamus for the third month in a row with nothing changing at this point. All of the hope that I had for something new at Night of Champions are gone, presumably because Orton needs to go film a movie that about 8 people will admit to seeing. It does at least give Del Rio a clean win over someone which he's needed for a long time.

Post match Del Rio throws a shoe at Sheamus to draw the champ in, allowing Ricardo and Alberto to beat Sheamus down. With Sheamus down, here's Zigler to cash in but Orton hits an RK0 on Dolph for no apparent reason other than I guess Dolph needs someone new to feud with. Someone must have landed on the case because there's a big dent in it now.

Overall Rating: D. Smackdown is such a mess anymore. We had a bunch of short matches tonight and a bunch of nonsense. First and foremost, why in the world are there three people in charge on this show? They're wasting time on a feud between Teddy Long vs. Eve Torres. Think about that for a

minute. Other than that, we have Del Rio vs. Sheamus AGAIN, which was dull the first time, stupid and dull the second time, and grounds for an insanity defense this time.

We have a tag title feud with a bunch of teams and I'd almost bet money on the Prime Time Players getting the titles after having lost clean TWICE now to Kofi and Truth, because you couldn't just put the freaking belts on them in the first place because...because...oh like WWE has any clue why they do what they do with those belts. Oh and don't forget the US Title, the same title (in name only) that saw Tully Blanchard vs. Magnum TA in one of the greatest matches ever, being fought over because of a sock that has a mind of its own. This show is a disaster and it's clear that no one behind the scenes cares about it at all.

Results

Ryback b. Jinder Mahal – Shell Shock

Layla b. Alicia Fox – High Kick to the head

Heath Slater b. Sin Cara – Reverse DDT

Sheamus b. Dolph Ziggler via DQ when Ziggler used the MITB briefcase

R-Truth/Kofi Kingston b. Epico/Primo – Little Jimmy to Primo

Alberto Del Rio b. Randy Orton – Cross Armbreaker

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Thought of The Day: The Times They Are A Escalating

In the fall, WWE is going to be debuting a new weekly TV show called The Main Event. When that happens, there are going to be 8 and a half hours of free TV from WWE every week. On that scale, WWE would have more TV aired on free TV in approximately five weeks than there was on WWF PPV in all of the 1980s combined.

And people wonder why the shows are getting watered down.

Impact Wrestling – August 23, 2012: Man There's Just No End To These Guys

Impact Wrestling

Date: August 23, 2012

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Tazz

Tonight is another Open Fight Night and the main draw of the show is that at the beginning, we're going to have Aces and 8's vs. Sting and company. Other than that we're likely to have a title match as we have on all other Open Fight Nights. There's also another Gut Check tonight, which again makes the card too crowded. Oh and there's the Styles/Lynch paternity test thing. Let's get to it.

After the usual recap, here are Sting, Angle, Styles, Roode, Aries,

Hardy, Anderson and the Dudleys. There are some more guys on the floor on top of that. Sting says they're ready for us and we get some stills of the attacks. There's no Hogan but the fans want him. Sting calls out Storm who has been cleared of his charges as of last week. Storm is all fired up and wants to go hunting. Sting says Hogan is here and here are two members of Aces and 8's at ringside.

Sting lets them come into the ring and it's Angle and Storm to beat them down. Storm hits one guy with a weapon of some sort as Angle destroys the other in the corner. One guy is revealed to be....someone that doesn't seem to be anyone of note. Sting interrogates him and the guy says everyone here is in for a long and painful night. Sting kicks him to the floor and we take a break.

Here's Tessmacher who thanks Brooke for making things right. She wants to know if she can beat Tara and since it's Open Fight Night, let's find out.

Tara vs. Miss Tessmacher

Non-title here. Taryn Terrell is the referee again which apparently is a regular thing for the knockouts. Tara takes over with the power stuff to start as Tessmacher barely can get over here in a leapfrog. A slam gets two for Tara and she easily wins a slugout. Tessmacher clotheslines her down and does Tara's shake at her, but takes too long going up. A superplex gets the pin for Tara at 2:50. There's your next title program I'm guessing.

The Pope is out of the BFG Series with a broken collar bone.

Sting talks to Robbie E, AJ and RVD, all of whom still had to face Pope in the Series. There's going to be a three way instead and it's winner take all. Robbie T is banned from ringside.

Bound For Glory Series Leaderboard

James Storm 66

Samoa Joe 61

Rob Van Dam 55

AJ Styles 50

Kurt Angle 48

Bully Ray 48

Jeff Hardy 42

Mr. Anderson 40

Christopher Daniels 33

Magnus 28

D'Angelo Dinero 7 (Injured)

Robbie E 5

Bound For Glory Series: AJ Styles vs. Rob Van Dam vs. Robbie E

Van Dam and Styles throw Robbie to the floor so we can get down to the important guys. Van Dam fires off some kicks to start and a rollup gets two. It's a standoff and Robbie is back in. he charges into a double hip toss and a suplex from Styles sends him to the outside again. AJ hits the drop down/kick to send Van Dam to the floor but Robbie sneaks in and clotheslines Styles down for tow.

Van Dam is kicked to the floor before he can do anything and we take a break. Back with AJ trying to speed things up but missing a forearm in the corner. Robbie knocks Van Dam to the floor again and AJ gets put in a chinlock. Van Dam pulls Robbie to the floor and beats him up but Styles dives on both of them to put both guys down. He may have hurt his leg in the landing though.

Back in and AJ hits the fireman's carry into the backbreaker for two. The leg seems to be ok. Robbie can't get past the apron and Van Dam kicks AJ down. Rolling Thunder hits and Robbie takes a kick to the face as well. Standing moonsault gets two on Robbie and he gets sent to the floor. AJ botches the moonsault into the reverse DDT but gets two off of it anyway.

Styles loads up a superplex on RVD but gets knocked back down. The Five Star hits but Robbie runs in and rolls up Van Dam for the pin at 12:53.

Rating: C+. This was a pretty fun match although the way the match was going, it became clear there was going to be a surprise ending. I guess they wanted to avoid Styles or RVD from getting some breathing room in the standings which isn't a bad idea. The match was pretty good for the most part though and it was a nice surprise all things considered.

Jeff Hardy is here and he calls out Robbie T. I won't bother listing the call outs unless they're anything of note.

Jeff Hardy vs. Robbie T

Hardy jumps him to start but Robbie knocks him down with a clothesline. Jeff comes back with a Whisper in the Wind for two and some clotheslines stagger Robbie. Twist of Fate and the Swanton get the pin at 2:36. This was just a step above a squash.

Sting is still looking for Aces and 8's.

We get a recap of AJ vs. Daniels and the Clair Lynch jazz.

Here's AJ for the reveal of the results. He says he doesn't remember the night but if it's his kid, he'll take care of it and be responsible for it. If it's not his though, he doesn't want to hear from Kaz and Daniels ever again. JB asks Lynch to come out but here are Kaz and Daniels instead. Kaz goes into a somewhat hilarious rant about how people like Styles are the reason for how bad the country is and how overpopulated the prisons are. Daniels says AJ has put Clair through so much stress that she's in a hospital.

Some chick in a suit comes out and takes the mic from Daniels. Apparently her name is Grace Stein and she's Lynch's attorney. She has a statement from Lynch which says she lied, agreed to blackmail AJ, and drugged him on the night the pictures were taken. Lynch never was pregnant and it was all a lie from Daniels. AJ kicks Daniels in the head and that's it.

The Tough Enough guy says he needs this because he doesn't have anything else to go home to.

Aces and 8's are walking in the back when Sting stops them and flips a deck of cards at them. He throws a bat to Hogan who is behind the masked guys and all three get beaten down. Hogan threatens to feed their hearts to his dog if they ever attack his daughter again.

Alex Silva is proud to have won Gut Check.

Gut Check: Kris Lewey vs. Gunner

Kris takes over to start with a shoulder but Gunner knocks him into the corner to take over. An elbow takes Lewey down again but Kris comes back with some bad strikes followed by a bad Samoan Drop. A top rope splash misses and the release F5 gets the pin for Gunner at 2:59. Lewey looked really bad.

ODB is on the phone with Eric Young and wants sex. She hits on someone we can't see and that's it. Fish references are made because of Young's show.

Bound For Glory Series: Mr. Anderson vs. Bully Ray

This is Anderson's last match in the Series. It's a feeling out process to start with both guys hitting some chops. We take a break and come back with Ray dropping an elbow. The fans want something but I can't make it out. A slam looks to set up a Vader Bomb (what is with the popularity of that move lately?) but Anderson moves. They slug it out from their knees and it's boo/yay time. A clothesline puts Ray down and things speed up. Neckbreaker gets two for Anderson and a spinwheel kick gets the same. The announcers are talking about what Hogan did and call him Hollywood Hogan. That doesn't bode well.

Anderson tries a fireman's carry but Ray is too fat. A neckbreaker gets two for Ray but as he goes up, Anderson hits him in the ribs and hits the rolling fireman's carry slam for two. Anderson goes up but gets crotched and superplexed. We cut to the back and see Gunner, Robbie T and Angle beating down three members of Aces and 8's. Back in the ring and a Bubba Bomb gets two. Another one is countered into a DDT followed by a Swanton Bomb for two for Anderson. Bubba Cutter is countered into the Mic Check for the pin at 12:19.

Rating: C+. Another good match here but that puts Anderson a point shy of the top four, meaning that at the moment he's out of the finals at No Surrender. That's probably a good thing though as Anderson is more or less just kind of there in the Series and the company at this point. Then again, that's been the case for him for years now.

An Aces and 8's guy is in the back and he says they've been playing his game all night. In three and a half minutes, they're unleashing the Dead Man's Hand.

Here's almost the entire roster to end the show. Sting says the three and a half minutes have passed. There's no Hogan in the ring, nor is there a Joe that I can see. The fans want Hogan. Here they come and it's a brawl at ringside and in the ring. There's nothing special to it. It's just a brawl that the TNA guys are winning. Aces and 8's are getting run out of the building. Hogan and Storm are fighting in the back with some more members. AJ is there with them too.

Back in the arena, RVD, Aries and Hardy are left alone while everyone else is beating up more members. The camera is cutting all over the place. Aries dives on more guys on the floor. There must be 20 Aces and 8's guys all around the arena. Hardy is down at ringside. A big guy is in the ring now and he took Aries head off with a clothesline. The big guy calls in some more members and they have a piece of the guardrail stacked up on the buckle. Aries has his arm placed on it and crushed with a chair. Bully Ray comes in for the save and the six guys in the ring bail. In the back Aces and 8's get on their motorcycles and leave to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. The show was good overall for the most part although there were some weak areas. For one, the AJ/Daniels/Kaz thing was pretty terrible, but if it means they're pulling out of the thing once and for all, I'm all for it. The Aces and 8's stuff was interesting and it's pretty clear they're heading to BFG with this angle. TNA is doing a great job at making you want to watch next week, which is the whole point of a TV show. Good stuff again here.

Results

Tara b. Miss Tessmacher – Superplex

Robbie E b. Rob Van Dam and AJ Styles – Rollup to Van Dam

Jeff Hardy b. Robbie T – Swanton Bomb

Gunner b. Kris Lewey – Release F5

Mr. Anderson b. Bully Ray – Mic Check

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NXT – August 22, 2012: They've Made Me Want To See The Title Match

NXT

Date: August 22, 2012

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Byron Saxton, William Regal

So I had the whole intro written about how great it was that the title tournament ended tonight and how great it was to see something like that finally happen on NXT. Then I started watching the show and for no apparent reason, the match is next week. My guess is that they wanted it to be at the start of a new taping or something like that, but it's still disappointing. Let's get to it.

Derrick Bateman vs. Antonio Cesaro

Cesaro pounds him into the corner almost immediately but Bateman comes back with a dropkick for one. Regal talks about how strong Bateman is as

he pounds away. Cesaro comes back with a hot shot to take over and it's off to the cravate and chinlock. Bateman comes back with a belly to back suplex and some clotheslines. He hooks what can only be called a reverse DDT (Bateman hooked him for a DDT and then fell forward to drive Cesaro's back into the mat. Why not just use a regular DDT?) but a charge misses in the corner. Gutwrench suplex sets up the Neutralizer for the pin at 4:01.

Rating: C-. Nothing special here but it's good to see that Bateman isn't a featured guy anymore. He's competent in the ring and the people in Florida seem to like him somewhat, but the guy just isn't that interesting. I think he's supposed to be an everyman character which is ok but that's about as far as he's taken it.

Some WWE stars talk about what it means to be the first champion. This is probably the only time you'll ever see Cena talk about NXT.

Tamina Snuka vs. Sofia Cortez

Tamina grabs an armdrag to start but Cortez comes back with some kicks to the ribs. Tamina hits a forearm to the chest and Sofia gives her a look that says "HOW DARE YOU" before wrapping Tamina up with a bodyscissors. Snuka comes with some chops and a superkick for two. The Superfly Splash gets the pin at 2:52. Sofia showed a lot of fire here, which means nothing because she was released about ten days ago.

Raquel Diaz jumps Tamina post match and draws the lipstick L on Tamina's head.

Kassius Ohno vs. Jake Carter

I believe Carter is Vader's son. Feeling out process for the first minute with no one being able to get an advantage. Carter takes him into the corner and pounds away but Ohno suckers him in and takes over. Ohno puts

on a Cravate but misses a big boot. Carter hits a side slam for two but walks into the rolling elbow for the pin at 3:55. According to Regal it's called the Dream Killer.

Rating: D+. I know Ohno was an indy legend, but his NXT stuff hasn't really grabbed me. He just kind of does the same strikes over and over until hitting the spinning forearm/elbow for the pin. There's no story to his matches for the most part and they're just not that good. I've only seen a bit of his indy stuff and it was way better than his stuff here.

Ohno beats on Carter some more until Richie Steamboat makes the save.

We get the same package from Raw and Summerslam, showing us what WWE did in LA for Summerslam week.

More people talk about the Gold Rush Tournament and what it means to be champion.

Michael McGillicutty/Johnny Curtis vs. Tyson Kidd/Justin Gabriel

Michael and Kidd start us off as Regal talks about Walt Disney spinning in his refrigerator. Wouldn't that be a freezer? Kidd takes him down by the arm and tags in Gabriel to speed things up. Kidd comes back in with a slingshot rollup for two as McGillicutty can't get anything going so far. A double kick to the rib keeps McGillicutty in trouble. Curtis comes in for a distraction and McGillicutty takes Justin's head off with a clothesline.

We take a break and come back with Curtis hitting a forearm to Gabriel to knock him down. Back to McGillicutty who doesn't stay in long at all. Curtis comes in and hits a suplex before it's off to the chinlock. Gabriel tries to speed it up but walks into an AA (that'll likely get Curtis in trouble) from Curtis to put him down again. Johnny tries a twisting moonsault but crashes and both guys are down.

There's the hot tag to Kidd and a lukewarm one to McGillicutty as well. Kidd fires off some kicks to the head for two but McGillicutty and Curtis hit a side slam/slingshot "leg" (more like a hip) drop combo for two. Back to Curtis who can't hit a superplex but Kidd slips off the top trying a moonsault press. McGillicutty is knocked to the floor and a Hart Attack with a Blockbuster from Gabriel gets the pin on Curtis at 7:42 shown of 11:12.

Rating: C+. Good fast paced tag match here but it got a bit sloppy at times. These guys are like the Cruiserweights in WCW: you can throw them out there in almost any combination and the match is going to be entertaining. Kidd and McGillicutty are ready for regular TV but for some reason they rarely make it onto those shows.

Kassius Ohno accepts a challenge from Richie Steamboat, presumably for next week.

It's time for the showdown to end the show. Byron Saxton calls out Seth Rollins and Jinder Mahal for a face to face chat. Rollins says that his dream is to be in WWE and that's all that matters to him. He's on the brink of achieving that dream and he's not leaving here without becoming the champion. Mahal speaks Punjab and says that Rollins is a failure. The fight is on and Rollins dives onto Mahal on the floor and stands tall in the ring to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. The point of this show was to build up the title match next week and they did that very well. They made the NXT Title match feel like a big deal which is pretty impressive given that it's the minor league championship. Having a showdown like that was a nice touch and while I'm not wild on either guy, I want to see them fight now. The rest of the matches were just ok, but they weren't the point of the show tonight.

Results

Antonio Cesaro b. Derick Bateman – Neutralizer

Tamina Snuka b. Sofia Cortez – Superfly Splash

Kassius Ohno b. Jake Carter – Dream Killer

Justin Gabriel/Tyson Kidd b. Michael McGillicutty/Johnny Curtis –
Blockbuster to Curtis

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Thought Of The Day: You Never Know What You're Going To Get

I went to my first Raw in June 2009. On that night, The Miz was on the show. He called out John Cena in a “feud” that basically consisted of Miz calling out Cena over and over and when Cena didn't acknowledge him, Miz declared himself the winner. Eventually Cena beat him in basically a squash at The Bash.

Flash forward less than two years. Wrestlemania just went off the air and this is the final result you see:

The Miz b. John Cena – Miz pinned Cena after a Rock Bottom from the Rock

Who in the world would have believed you would have seen that? Miz went from being the host of Smackdown to a chick

magnet to a guy in a funny show on WWE.com to a joke tag champion to a good tag team champion to a guy who called out Cena to the US Champion to Mr. MITB to world champion, pinning Cena in the main event of Wrestlemania.

Oh and Rock came back and was in the main event of Wrestlemania and will be in the main event of the Royal Rumble next year. You never know what you're going to get.

Regarding Clair Lynch, Real Name Julia Reilly

Note that this contains spoilers for this week's Impact so if you do not want to be surprised by it, do not read this until after Thursday's show. The latest rumor going around is that Clair Lynch, who is portrayed by a model and actress named Julia Reilly, is quitting the company because she was embarrassed when her name and picture were shown on a wrestling message board. If this is the case, I have something I'd like to say to/regarding Ms. Reilly.

If it's true that she's quitting because she didn't want to be associated with wrestling and she's embarrassed by people knowing she works for a wrestling company, screw her. No seriously, get off my TV and never come back.

Yes, Julia Reilly, you work for a wrestling company. I'm sorry to tell you, but it's true. I know it must suck as an actress and a model to be put on live national television every week in a featured role, which is more than probably 99% of actresses will ever get and I'm sorry you were paid to do it.

I'm a wrestling fan and I've been one for well over 20 years. I'm also a college graduate with a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Kentucky. What Ms. Reilly is saying is that people like me that watch her performances and potentially pay money out of our pockets to see the resolutions and advancements in her storylines are beneath her and she doesn't want her name associated with us, our kind, or the thing we're interested in watching. If this is true, then I feel no sympathy for her and I hope that someday her career fails to the point where she can't get any other job than as someone who used to be on a wrestling show and even then gets turned away. I haven't heard of such arrogance in a long time and it's disgusting to me as a wrestling fan. I guess wrestling just isn't as classy as a damsel in distress from a series who tells kids to eat their vegetables so they'll get big and strong.

In short, get over yourself Julia Reilly. You're not better than us and you likely never will be. I'm sorry that you think this is beneath you, because I assure you it isn't.

WCW Saturday Night – August 21, 1993: 40 Minutes Of Sting Vs. Flair. I'm Sold.

WCW Saturday Night

Date: August 21, 1993

Location: Center Stage Theater, Atlanta, Georgia

Attendance: 750

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Jesse Ventura

This was my first request via Twitter. I don't usually do Saturday Night

but the few I've done have gone pretty well. This is less than a month before Fall Brawl 93 so we have two world titles at the moment. Both champions are in action tonight. One has a squash, and the other has a 40 minute match against the guy who is probably his greatest rival. Let's get to it.

Also this is three days after Clash of the Champions 24 but it was taped earlier, so we likely won't hear much about the Clash.

Sid Vicious/Harlem Heat vs. Ron Simmons/2 Cold Scorpio/Marcus Bagwell

Harlem Heat has been around like two weeks at this point. They're Kane (Stevie) and Kole (Booker) at this point and all three heels are managed by Colonel Parker. This is just after the Heat were changed from prisoners in shackles won by Parker in a card game to street thugs. How did this company not get sued into the ground? Apparently the commentary was recorded after after the Clash or the results were given to Tony and Jesse beforehand.

Booker and Scorpio start things off with Scorpio countering a kick into a fast rollup for two. Off to Bagwell and the arm work begins. The ring is divided into sections, almost like a bunch of gym mats hooked together. Stevie comes in but Bagwell suplexes him over anyway. That's more power than I was expecting out of him. Bagwell gets caught in a slam but an elbow misses. While the match isn't that great, the commentary does offer a good line. Jesse: "Why do they call it an Irish Whip? Did someone from Ireland invent it?" Tony: "Uh yeah Jess."

Off to Simmons to make it power vs. power. Stevie takes him down with a clothesline but Simmons comes back with a botched spinebuster, making it look more like a shove. The heels bail to the floor and things stop for a bit. Sid comes in and wants a test of strength with Simmons, but as any good heel would do, he kicks Simmons in the ribs instead of going through with the test. Ron is cool with that and it's time to go after the arm. Considering it's 1993 and this is Sid vs. Scorpio, 2 Cold is dropped face first onto the buckle pretty quickly and the bad guys take over.

The Heat double team Scorpio on the floor with a clothesline and it's back in to Sid for a one armed chokeslam, which Tony says is like a

powerbomb. Off to Booker who yells at the camera a lot and tags Stevie in again. We head to the floor and Scorpio is dropped throat first on the barricade, making him sound like a cat coughing up a hairball. Back in and Scorpio avoids an elbow drop and it's off to Bagwell. Everything breaks down and Sid powerbombs Bagwell to death for the pin.

Rating: C. Sid was on his way to the world title at this point and it's pretty easy to see why. He was the perfect kind of monster giant and him vs. Vader could have been an awesome clash of the titans. Then he went insane stabbed Arn Anderson so we got Flair in the main event, which worked out fine. Harlem Heat would wind up being the most successful out of all these guys though, which shows you never know what you'll get out of wrestlers.

The announcers talk about the Amateur Challenge, which is something kind of sort of like Tough Enough without an actual contest.

The Equalizer vs. Ron Preston

Equalizer is a big guy who would become "famous" as Dave "Evad" Sullivan. Here he's just a big bad guy who didn't really equalize anything. We have a two minute match here and about a minute of that is spent in a neck crank. Full nelson ends Preston.

We go to the Fall Brawl Control Center, which is the old way they used to promote the PPVs. Back then, they would actually take time to hype their matches and tell us why we should buy them, as opposed to today when they have both guys beat the other and then hope that gives us enough reason to want to see them fight a third time. We get some clips of past WarGames matches after the host of the segment says the wrong year for when the match started (it was 87, not 88).

Charlie Norris vs. Fury

So if you've read my stuff before from this time period, you know that I don't really like WCW in 1993. Two of the big reasons for that are Equalizer and Charlie Norris. They were both big, strong, and absolutely AWFUL. Norris is an Indian and that's about it. Norris hooks on an armbar as the match is ignored for the sake of talking about the PPV. In this

case, I'm totally fine with that.

Fury, who is apparently part of a tag team called The Wrecking Crew, hits a clothesline and shoulder block before hooking a chinlock. Norris grabs a sunset flip for two before getting suplexed for the same. Back to the chinlock but Norris gets up, goes on the warpath, and hits a big chop for the pin. Fury by the way is Marcus Laurinitis, brother of John and Road Warrior Animal. He never did much of note.

Rating: D-. This was Norris' Saturday Night debut, which basically would be his national debut. If that's the case, why in the world would you have him get beaten down this long, and why would you have this match go nearly seven minutes? Like I said, 1993 in WCW was horrible and it would only go downhill from here for Norris.

We see Cactus Jack's return promo from the Clash, which is him saying he's back and he wants Vader. He talks about the look in the eyes of wrestlers when they face Vader. They used to look at him like that and he wants to earn that look again. This is another classic Jack promo.

Mike Thor vs. Johnny B. Badd

Badd has been injured recently and is wearing a mask as a result, but tonight he's removing it. Badd is still at the point where his character is gay but we can't say he's gay because it's 1993 and you can't do that. Johnny knocks him into the corner to start and then down onto the mat with a headlock. Off to the arm as Jesse tries to figure out what the B. in Badd's name stands for. After some near falls, Badd takes the mask off and reveals that he's fine before hitting the big left hand (the Tutti Fruti) for the pin.

Rating: D. This was about four minutes of armdrags and armbars. Badd would get WAY better around 1995 but he was still developing at this point. To be fair, he was a lot better than he was a year before this, as he now had an actual offensive move set outside of the punch. Also, Mike Thor is a good name for an indy guy.

Badd insists he's still pretty.

Ice Train vs. Rage

This is Train's debut and he has a guy named Thunderbolt Patterson with him. Fury is the tag partner of Rage from earlier. Nothing match that Train wins in less than a minute with a powerslam. I always liked Ice Train.

Patterson and Train say Train wants to learn and improve.

Big Van Vader vs. JD Stryker

Chokeslam, punch, powerbomb, pin.

Vader, the WCW Champion, and his manager Harley Race, say they don't care about what happens in the main event. Race wants to talk about WarGames, where Vader is going to destroy everything. A mystery partner is mentioned, who was already revealed to be the Shockmaster.

So we have almost fifty minutes to go in the show and this is all we have left.

NWA World Title: Sting vs. Ric Flair

I know why this was requested. This is one of those matches that is nearly impossible to screw up and you start at a higher rating than the usual. It's not about will the match be good but how good will it be. A quick shoulder takes Flair down as Tony talks about the history of these two, without mentioning the original Clash for some reason. Sting wins a battle of a hammerlock as Tony messes up the date of the original Clash (he says April, it was March 27).

Sting controls with a wristlock on the champion (Flair has the belt coming in) and we're still in the feeling out process here. Flair tries a Figure Four out of nowhere but Sting escapes before he gets close. Things speed up but they botch the gorilla press spot. Sting doesn't panic though and throws on a chinlock, which is probably the best thing they could do in that situation. Now the press slam hits and Flair goes to the apron.

A suplex back in puts Flair down and there's a Boston Crab. Flair taps

but it doesn't mean anything yet so he gets a rope and bails to the floor instead. Back in and Flair goes to the eyes before chopping away in the corner. Say it with me: those don't work on Sting. A half crab works on Flair's back again, followed by another gorilla press for two. Sting hooks an abdominal stretch and the champ is in trouble.

As is his custom, Sting misses the Splash in the corner and Sting gets his second wind. They head to the floor but Flair tries a piledriver and gets backdropped instead. Flair begs off in a corner and suckers Sting in like only Flair can do. Sting gets thrown to the floor but it just ticks him off. Flair fires off the chops but, say it with me, THOSE DON'T WORK ON STING.

The champ begs off again and walks to the floor for a breather. Back in and Tony calls Sting Steamboat before Sting misses a splash on the top rope, clotheslining himself. There's the knee drop to the head from Flair and the champ has his third wind. I don't know what it is about them but Flair does some of the best snapmares ever. Flair rolls up Sting about six times in a row, all for two.

Ric is in full heel mode despite being a face coming in. A cover with the foot on the ropes gets one and a suplex gets about twelve. We take a break and come back to Sting making a comeback. During the break Sting rolled through a top rope cross body by Flair for two. Both guys are down for a bit before Flair hits a belly to back suplex for another few two counts. He must have had seventeen near falls so far.

Flair goes up top....and the forearm off the top actually connects. You never know what you'll find in these old shows. A sunset flip gets two for Sting as does a backslide. There's the Flair Flip in the corner and down to the floor he goes. Flair pokes him in the eye and goes up, only to get slammed down. It wouldn't be a Flair match if that spot hadn't happened. A clothesline gets a few two counts for Sting and he clotheslines Flair to the floor.

They head to the outside and Flair chops him against the railing. Even on the floor, THOSE DON'T WORK ON STING. Back in and Flair backs off again and Sting escapes a suplex into an O'Connor Roll for two. Flair pokes him

in the eye and there's the Figure Four (complete with a Whomp There It Is chant from the audience for no apparent reason). That finally gets turned over but Flair gets the rope.

Sid comes out to the commentary desk for no apparent reason as Sting gets a small package for two but the knee is in big trouble. Sid says this should be his title match and talks about bees. Flair chops him again because at times he really isn't that bright. The gorilla press hits and a bulldog puts Flair down. Another small package gets two for Sting as does an atomic drop.

Probably the fourth gorilla press puts Flair down but the splash hits knees. Sting comes back with a clothesline and puts the Figure Four on Flair. Flair gets the rope and they trade rollups for two again. For the fifth time the chops don't work on Sting so he superplexes Flair down. Eventually that gets two and gorilla press #5 puts Flair down again. Flair cross bodies Sting to the floor and both guys are down. Sid sneaks in and sends Sting into the barricade to give Flair the win by countout.

Rating: B+. This is one of those matches that it's pretty much impossible to get wrong. They were getting pretty repetitive at the end though, with way too many rollups and gorilla presses. The first half of the match was great though with Flair trying to get Sting to use energy and Sting working on the back to set up the Scorpion. The ending kind of sucks but they couldn't put either guy over clean here so I can certainly live with that.

Flair freaks out on Sid but Harlem Heat runs in before there can be another fight. Sting saves Flair and they knock Sid to the floor.

Post break Flair and Sting say that sucked but they'll get Sid and the Heat later.

Overall Rating: B. It's a two hour show and 1/3 of that is Sting vs. Flair for forty minutes. The rest of the show was standard 1993 WCW nonsense that no one wanted to see, but for free TV on their flagship show, this was pretty awesome stuff at the end. I don't have anything else to say: it's Flair vs. Sting for forty minutes. That sums everything up.

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Thought Of The Day: It's The Little Things

I was watching a Flair match and he put his feet on the ropes on a cover. It wasn't the end of the match, it wasn't a plot point, it was nothing more than a regular cover. However, it got the fans to boo him louder and cheer for his opponent more. Flair did that because he's a heel and that's what heels do. Today, the only time you see something like that is to end a match and advance a plot. During matches, heels glare at crowds and that's about it for the most part.

See how easy it is to make thing better?