

I Want To Talk A Little Bit About Money In The Bank

Money in the Bank has ruined a lot about wrestling. It causes multiple problems and is a major reason why the world titles don't mean anything anymore. Granted there are other reasons like automatic rematch clauses but we'll get into those later. Anyway, there are a lot of things that MITB does which hurts wrestling and I felt like talking about them a bit so let's get to it.

First and foremost, the title changes mean NOTHING. A few years ago at a PWG show in California, Kevin Steen gave someone three package piledrivers then put his six month old son on top of the guy that took the piledrivers and counted three, making the son undefeated as a wrestler. It was cute and everyone laughed and all that jazz. It was ok because it didn't mean anything and was used to make a joke. WWE does the same thing, including once at Summerslam last year in front of 17,000 people at the biggest show of the year.

Let's take either Alberto's or Bryan's win as an example here. Those wins don't prove anything. There was a battle royal once where Jimmy Hart hid under the ring for the whole match but then ran in after everyone else was eliminated to win the match. It was a joke and the whole place erupted in booing. I could give you a dozen examples of matches just like that. You know what the one connecting factor would be? None of them would be for the world title. MITB breaks that rule.

It's a joke instead of a real match. The guy that cashes in hasn't proven he's better than the former champion. Look back to Flair in 1991 in WCW. Lex Luger never beat him, so why should people have accepted Luger as the rightful champion? There was no reason to, so no one did. It's the same here. Why should I have accepted Bryan as the world champion? He didn't

beat Big Show. He pinned a guy that was already beaten. Yes I get that that's the point of his heel turn, but just like everything else in wrestling, it's been done into the ground.

This brings me to my second issue: MITB allows the writers to be lazy. MITB has become a nuclear option in case something needs to be changed in a hurry. Don't have someone built up (Oh we'll get to that soon enough)? Let them cash in. Someone not working as champion? Give someone a briefcase. Want to give us a surprise with no thinking to it that gives you a way out of your bad stories? Here's MITB to the rescue!

The writers are already lazy enough. They've come up with so many tricks to buy themselves months off (automatic rematch clauses for example) that they don't need to actually think anymore. The writers need all the exercise they can get to show them what works and what doesn't, so having then being allowed to just throw something out there with no thinking to it is making things even worse.

Don't believe me that they need to be made to think? Flash back to the Attitude Era. The company was in big trouble and had to be pushed harder and harder to come up with new storylines. What was the result? Compelling storylines that had people glued to their sets every week to see what happened next. Now you get the same story every year. And their solution to the problem? **DOUBLE THE AMOUNT OF CASES!!!**

That ties into the next problem with the cases: they're repetitive. At the end of the day, the winner has a perfect record with it. The shock value of it is fine for a few moments, but there's nothing new to them. It's like watching a great movie for the first time then watching the story being rehashed in a bunch of sequels. It's cool the second time but after that, it really starts to get dull because you've seen it time after time.

Somehow the process needs to be switched up. First of all,

drop it down to less competitors in the ladder match. Eight people is just WAY too many as you can't keep track of what's going on and it drains the rest of the card because everyone is in the ladder match. Cut it down to five or six and things would be much more interesting. The other thing, which has been beaten into the ground over the years but needs to be said again, is that someone needs to lose their cash-in attempt.

Money in the Bank was built on the idea of it could happen at anytime. When Edge originally cashed in, it was shocking because you didn't see it coming. It's a legit surprise and a great moment because it fits in with the idea that Edge was the ultimate opportunist. The second one at least had a twist on it as the cash-in was announced in advance to build to a match. Since then though, it's been one surprise after another.

These are indeed cool at the moment but they need something changed about them. After the cash-in, the shock is gone and you'd left realizing how weak of a champion that person has become. In order to rebuild the shock value, they need to slow things down. This could be done by either cutting the amount of cash-ins down to one, or having the surprise element taken out. Have someone cash in at a designated time like RVD did. Use it on a major Raw or at a PPV.

Daniel Bryan talked about doing it that way and cashing in at Wrestlemania, but at the end of the day we get the same thing all over again: someone cashing in as a surprise when the champion was down and the title change means nothing. Instead, spend the next few cash-ins on matches that are announced in advance. If nothing else it lets you build up to something instead of hoping that the people watch in hopes of seeing a cash-in.

However in the modern world of WWE, that's as likely as a Diva having a match last longer than five minutes or most people

caring about it. The idea is that bigger and more is better, which isn't the case but in Vince's mind it is. Money in the Bank is possibly not going to be its own PPV this year which would be a step in the right direction, but I doubt they'll keep things going that way because that's not how WWE works.

In summation, Money in the Bank is fine in the short term if you need something fixed, but the problems with it outweigh the good. It furthers the idea of being lazy in creative is ok and that there's no need to give the fans a reason to care about guys as long as you do something that shocks them. It's rationale like that which hurt WCW and look how well they did.

The idea can be fixed but it might be too far gone. If it were up to me, I'd drop the concept. Yeah imagine that: a guy having to earn a title shot and then win the title without someone else doing all the work. Unfortunately that's probably not going to happen because at the end of the day, this is the WWE and they're going to use the easiest method possible anymore, which is why things are weaker lately.

So Uh... About Those TV Shows From The 80s

The Youtube channel I've been using got banned so those shows are done. That's a shame as I was enjoying doing those.

Sorry about that.

Edit: Apparently not all of them are. I'll have to see which

are still around and which aren't.

Wrestlemania #11: Should Celebrities Main Event The Show?

As you know, Lawrence Taylor, a football player, main evented the show against Bam Bam Bigelow. Was that a good idea? In my mind, no. It was probably the biggest match on the show but it should have had Shawn vs. Diesel going on last. Their match was good and while not a classic, it was better than anything else on the show. At the end of the day, it's a wrestling show, not a celebrity show.

Thoughts?

Wrestlemania Count-Up – #11: Just Close Your Eyes. It'll Be Over Soon.

Wrestlemania 11

Date: April 2, 1995

Location: Hartford Civic Center, Hartford, Connecticut

Attendance: 16,305

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jerry Lawler

America the Beautiful: Kathy Huey

Oh goodness, we did have to get to this eventually didn't we? If you remember my review of WM 9 being the worst WM ever, I should have said it would be the worst for the next two years. This show is one of the most interesting in wrestling history from a reaction standpoint. From the fans' perspective, this show is what's played on a constant loop in the seventh circle of torment, minus the WWF Title match.

The number one issue I have right off the bat with this is that it's from Hartford, Connecticut. Seriously, HARTFORD??? Wrestlemania has broadcast from New York, LA, Chicago, Toronto, Las Vegas, and now HARTFORD? It just doesn't sound right. Another factor here is that there's a whopping total of 7 matches. What's the main event you ask?

Would it be Shawn Michaels getting his first WWF Title match since becoming a main eventer against his former bodyguard Diesel? Nope. We get Bam Bam Bigelow who was wrestling a clown last year against Lawrence Taylor, a former football player and current contestant on Dancing With The Stars. The sad thing is, I'm not making this up. The weird thing though is, this show allegedly brought the WWF back into the war with WCW.

The ratings were decent and it got the company the main stream exposure it's looking for. Think of it like the modern day TNA: the hardcore wrestling fans like us mostly hate it, but the common fans eat it up. Go figure. Anyway, let's get on with this so I can look for a hammer to apply to my head.

The opening video is about various Manias through the years which tends to be a theme in these opening videos.

Your celebrities this year are Pamela Anderson (actual celebrity), Jonathan Taylor Thomas (Randy on Home Improvement.

Another child star that did nothing.), Jenny McCarthy (Mini-celebrity now, she was at the last SNME so points for that I guess), some guy from NYPD Blue, and Salt N Peppa, who hit on Bret Hart which just looks ridiculous. A special Olympian sings America the Beautiful, and it's time for our first match.

Ok not quite yet as we get a very interesting chat from Vince and Jerry about what Wrestlemania is. You don't get to hear that much from Vince. It's short and sweet but it got the point across just fine. NOW on to the match.

Lex Luger/British Bulldog vs. The Blu Brothers

No that's not a typo, it's spelled Blu. These guys have the gimmick of being two incredibly hick brothers from the mountains. You know them better as D.O.A., the Harris Brothers, or those two big white bald guys that are in every promotion on the planet. My goodness how far has Lex fallen in a year? He's going after the WWF Title and next year is curtain jerking in a tag match?

The twins are named Jacob and Eli in case you were so bored you were actually wondering. Lex and Davey go by the name the Allied Powers. That delayed vertical suplex by Davey never gets old. It's nothing short of amazing. Definitely like the fact that Bulldog's tights are about 3 sizes too small. Oh yeah we have a match to get to.

For some reason the Brothers come down second. The Brothers try to jump them which winds up in a pair of powerslams for them. Note that this is just a powerslam and not The Powerslam by Bulldog so it's just a normal match. Bulldog is in trouble early on as the power of evil double teaming has him hurting.

A double big boot puts Bulldog down as Luger is just worthless on the apron here. The fans aren't incredibly impressed. Jerry says that Bulldog has only lost once at Mania which isn't true as he lost at both #3 and #4. Luger comes in and the fans pop

just slightly. I guess the jump back to WCW was the right move indeed. Another powerslam gets no cover.

The loaded forearm gets two as the other twin makes the save. Uncle Zebekiah gets drilled and it's Twin Magic time. One twin goes for a powerbomb/Piledriver but Luger makes a blind tag, allowing the Bulldog to hit a top rope sunset flip for the pin, prompting a fireworks display to go off.

Rating: D. Not bad, but just there. It's nothing special at all and I'm not sure how many people really cared. The crowd was about as dead as I've ever heard for a Mania opener, and that's including The Executioner vs. Santana back in 85. Wow I feel old for writing that. Anyway this was pretty bad and could have been on any Superstars show back in the day.

Jim Ross talks to the Uncle who says this is what they deserved for being in the big city. They pinned the wrong guy and that's not the last you'll see of the twins.

The NYPD Blue guy is with the Million Dollar Team (DiBiase's stable of mostly jobbers) when he's supposed to be in the dressing room of Pam Anderson but the mic doesn't work. As an aside, during the show Lawler accidentally knocked some cords loose and he and Vince had to redo the entire commentary on the show from watching video. Due to that, the commentary you'll hear on these matches isn't live at all.

Lawler describes football as a game where eleven men spend hours trying to move a small object 100 yards, which is just like the post office. What that has to do with this is beyond me but it sounded good at the time. Oh it's about the NFL guys here for the main event.

Intercontinental Title: Jeff Jarrett vs. Razor Ramon

No real story here other than they're feuding for no apparent reason. Jarrett is in his country music gimmick here and even the Fink sounds bored out of his mind here. Jarrett won the

title at the Rumble thanks to the Roadie (Road Dogg in case you didn't know that) interfering. 1-2-3 Kid and Ramon are in the back and say that Ramon is ready.

Razor was so over back then it's insane. Vince makes a weird comment saying that Ramon knows where he is at all times. Not sure why that's a compliment. Don't most people know where they're located? It's either a Vince line or a rib that 3 people get. Razor is all over Jarrett to start this off. Jarrett hits the floor and Razor gets to shoot off his pyro. He gets about three covers in the first 2 minutes, all off punches.

Double J may have hurt his tooth. Rollup gets two for Razor. Roadie saves Jarrett from the Razor's Edge and Jarrett tries to leave but the Kid is waiting in the aisle to stop that. Five minutes in and JJ's biggest move has been a hard Irish whip. You know for all of his detractors, Jarrett can wrestle quite well. I've always wondered why he didn't get the recognition as a star that he deserved.

Jarrett tries to get on offense but can't get anything long term going at all. He gets thrown to the floor again as the crowd dies all over again. Jeff gets some dropkicks in and here comes the guy from Tennessee. We hit the chinlock and the fans get going a bit. At least it's a fast one as Razor gets a backslide for two. Sleeper goes on Razor and again it lasts just a few seconds. Oh hey here's another chinlock to keep us interested.

This match just isn't flowing. It's like they're working move to move and it's showing badly. In a really stupid looking sequence, they both hit the ropes and hit head to head. Then they get up and hit the ropes again and both punch each other. It's more or less the same spot twice in a row. Just looked stupid. This referee is counting ridiculously fast too.

Fallaway slam gets two. Discus punch gets Jeff down. Can Razor

do anything else besides punch and go for the Edge? Razor hurts his knee going for a top rope bulldog, which is the same knee that was hurt THREE MONTHS AGO at the Rumble. Of course it's still sore. Why wouldn't it be?

Figure four by Jarrett as the Roadie pulls on Jarrett's arms for more leverage. I've always wondered about that. How does it make it hurt more? I love how Razor's knee is hurt badly, yet he can pick a 230lb man up, sit him on the top rope and belly to back suplex him from it without his knee giving out.

He gets him up for the Razor's Edge but Roadie chop blocks him for the DQ. Post match, all four men brawl. JR asks Jarrett about his cheating and Jarrett says he'll always be the IC Champion. If by always he means until he jumps to WCW and then back to the WWF, loses to Chyna after being hit by a fish and then is banned from the company because Austin hated him, they yes he'll always be champion.

Rating: D+. This was WAY too many punches and rest holds. These two have had far better matches before, such as at the Rumble. Razor probably had 90% of his offense from throwing punches. Jarrett wasn't anywhere nearly as serious as he should have been at this point and that change wouldn't come for many years. Definitely a weak match from them.

Since there was no audio earlier, let's redo the exact movements from the interview earlier on. Pamela Anderson is nowhere to be found. Shawn and Sid say that Diesel is afraid.

Todd Pettingil gets in a 3 point stance with a football player and that's all there is to this pointless bit.

The Undertaker vs. King Kong Bundy

This is the result of a mini feud with DiBiase and Kama over the Urn being stolen for about the 12th time. A baseball umpire is refereeing the match for no apparent reason. Bundy charges straight at him to start but that gets him nowhere. Old School

can't take him down. A bunch of clotheslines finally put the bald man down.

Bundy knocks him to the floor and Taker gets the Urn back. Now of course Bundy is in big trouble as Taker is all ticked off. Here's Kama (Godfather) to steal it back again. This is going as fast as I'm typing it so it's not like I'm skipping over a ton of stuff. Taker grabs Kama's face but Bundy makes the save and Kama escapes.

Ross grabs an interview with Kama who says he's going to melt it down and make a chain out of it and put it around his neck, which he wound up doing. Bundy chokes away in the corner, showing off his vast array of offensive talents. This referee is rather bad at counting. Bearer plays cheerleader to try to get Taker out of a chinlock. Avalanche hits in the corner but Taker is no Special Delivery Jones so it has no effect. A slam and the jumping clothesline of all things end this.

Rating: F+. Oh man this was bad. Taker was completely lacking direction at this point and it was painfully obvious that they had no clue what to do with him. He would feud with Kama for a bit before feuding with King Mabel for a bit until FINALLY Mankind debuted to give Taker something to do long term. Terrible match.

Oh look, the NYPD Blue guy still can't find Pamela Anderson. Steve McMichael says he'll take down Kama. The rest of the All-Pro Team says they'll take care of the Million Dollar Team. The NYPD Blue guy does find Jonathan Taylor Thomas beating Bob Backlund at chess though. I never thought I'd have to type that. Backlund's rant about the world being screwed up is hilarious.

Tag Titles: Smoking Gunns vs. Owen Hart/???

Owen has a mystery partner here. The Smoking Gunns are a great example of the failure of tag wrestling during this time period. They were definitely talented, but absolutely no one

cared about them. They're practically forgotten but were one of the most successful tag teams from this time frame.

As you probably know, the partner is Yokozuna. Oddly enough the partner comes out before the Gunns, the champions, do. This is of course about Bret somehow because Owen is completely obsessed with Bret. Yoko weighs a few tons by this point and is straight up waddling to the ring. The Gunns say they don't care who the partner is. Billy with a mullet and a mustache is freaky looking.

More fireworks for the champions here. What's with that tonight for the tag teams? Owen and Billy start us off. That's the most talented combination out there I guess. Apparently Owen and Neidhart were eliminated from the tag tournament to determine the #1 contenders so this is a result of that. The Gunns work on the arm of Owen to start which lasts only a few seconds as it's off to Yoko.

The leg drop misses and Yoko takes over again. And never mind as it's back to Owen again. Cornette is yelling at the fans which is one of the more entertaining parts of the show. Double Russian legsweep to the Canadian by the American cowboys. Yoko gets sent to the floor as we're in the Colossal Connection formula here: Owen does the vast majority of the work while Yoko is brought in as the heavy hitter.

Apparently Men on a Mission have turned heel on the Gunns. Riveting indeed and unfortunately it set up King Mabel. The Gunns hit a modified Sidewinder (side slam/legdrop combination) for two on Owen. Yoko comes in and gets the legdrop on the back of Billy's head to more or less kill him. I'm surprised Yoko has been in the ring this long.

LONG nerve hold by Yoko on Billy to waste a lot of time. Yoko misses a legdrop and Bart comes in. Everything breaks down and Billy gets killed by a belly to belly from the fat man. Banzai Drop ends Billy and Owen gets the pin for the title, which

might be his first in the company if that's possible.

Rating: D+. Eh just a tag match here. The Gunns were boring beyond belief and Yoko was so fat that he could barely move at all. This was simply to have a title switch on the show much like the first show in the series. Boring match and somehow the best one so far I think if that's possible.

Bigelow says he'll destroy Lawrence Taylor. There was a Mania Work Out and they had a skirmish there too. This feud never really got going for me but the media actually paid attention so there's that I guess. This interview takes forever and nothing special is said at all.

Bret Hart vs. Bob Backlund

This is an I Quit match with Roddy Piper as referee for no apparent reason. Vince says Roddy knows something about submission. What in the world would that be anyway? This was their second submission match technically as the other was a throw in the towel match that had to end in submission if I remember right. Piper would be Commissioner by the next Mania.

Backlund is more or less crazy here which was rather impressive given how completely different he used to be back in his glory days. I'm still mad about not getting Bret's glasses when I was a kid. The annoying kid next to me got them. I did however get a Slaughter helmet. Bret gets a headbutt to start and the fight is on. Sharpshooter can't go on early.

Vince doesn't remember Piper losing to Bret at Mania 8. Some fan he is. Bret goes for the Sharpshooter again and can't get it. You couldn't tell that from Vince as he keeps changing his reaction every five seconds. "Yes! No. Yes! No." Is he the Zodiac or something? Figure Four goes on but Backlund reverses it. Neither guy says they quit as we get a quick check-in with the German commentators for no apparent reason.

Bret works the knee again as this is rather boring. Piper needs to quit asking them if they quit so often. Backlund works on the arm as I try to find a good novel to read so I don't have to watch this for awhile. Backlund hooks a Fujiwara armbar and Bret says No to Piper. That was a shocking line then apparently which is amusing given that in an I Quit match in 99 with HHH vs. Rock, HHH said Suck It when he was asked if he quit.

Backlund likes that armbar. Jerry talks about breaking into a pyramid (what the heck?) and seeing a picture of Stu Hart with a headlock on King Tut (where does he get these jokes from?). Sharpshooter almost goes on but Backlund gets to the ropes before it gets cinched in. Bret charges again and his shoulder hits the post to put him in real trouble.

There's the Crossface Chickenwing and Bret is in trouble. And never mind as he casually reverses and gets a horrible version of it on Backlund for the submission. You know, from all that devastating work that he did on Backlund's arm the whole time. This was an awful match if you didn't get it.

Rating: F+. This was really bad. Backlund was just flat out too old to be a serious main event threat by this point and while Bret was sharp as ever, Bob just didn't have it in him anymore. Bret has called it the worst match of his career and he might be right. Backlund's I saw the Light thing led to an angle where he would run for President of all things. As you can guess, it went nowhere. Also, having a Bret match lack any and all psychology is very weird indeed.

Backlund is leaving and says he saw the light. This would mean he became a Presidential candidate.

Ok, the NYPD guy was annoying at first. Now he's just making me mad. NO ONE CARES. They're changing the celebrities around.

More audio issues as Todd tries to talk to Diesel. He finally says that he's going to keep the title. He slips up when he's

trying to say if he's going to regain or retain the title and finally screams HOLD ONTO IT. This was back when Nash was actually really good and got the reputation he's lived off for years now.

Celebrities are introduced as Jerry Lawler reveals he accidentally unplugged some cords.

WWF Title: Shawn Michaels vs. Diesel

The deal was supposed to be McCarthy came out with Diesel and Anderson, who was viewed as ten times hotter and more important than McCarthy (hogwash) would come out with the Rumble winner, Shawn. For obvious reasons, this got reversed. The NYPD Blue guy is the ring announcer and he's miles better at this than he is as an interviewer. He shouts almost everything he says and for the sake of this, it works really well.

The story here is Diesel was Shawn's bodyguard but realized he was awesome on his own so he turned face and won the WWF Title. Sid replaced him as the bodyguard and the exact same thing would happen in about a year. Shawn has finally morphed into the character that would make him a legend by this point. As weird as this sounds, Diesel is a freaking beast at this point. Sweet intro, the music was cool, he has Pamela Anderson, just the complete look. What in the world happened to that? Anderson simply couldn't want to be here less if her life depended on it.

Shawn hammers away to start as we're already into the power vs. speed area. Diesel had been champion since a few days after Survivor Series so he had almost 7 more months with the title here. Diesel sends Shawn to the floor as we look at the ladies. Sid distracts the referee but Shawn can't get in a shot on Diesel. Suplex puts Shawn down.

Back to the floor again as Sid and Diesel stare each other down one more time. Diesel counters a sunset flip as this is

more or less one sided so far. Nash gets sent to the floor but Shawn Skins the Cat and dives down to crush Diesel. Baseball slide has the champion in trouble. We look at Anderson again and sweet goodness does she want to be anywhere else but here.

The fans loudly chant for Sid, thus proving that this entire match is booked wrong. Shawn hits a splash off the apron to the floor as Diesel is in trouble. Back in the ring Shawn stomps away and hits a bulldog for two. I've never liked that move at all. Reverse cross body off the middle rope gets two again. Shawn works on the arm and gets a LET'S GO SHAWN chant in his honor.

Ok make that he's working on Diesel's ribs. A top rope elbow to the back gets two in what is for some reason a highlight reel clip for Shawn. Never really have gotten why but it certainly is. Off to the chinlock now as the fans still like Shawn better. Diesel fights back and gets Snake Eyes to get some momentum going. Flair Flip in the corner and Shawn hits the floor again.

Nash follows and it's time to see Shawn's tights pulled down as is the tradition for big matches he's in for no apparent reason. They slug it out on the floor and the referee twists his ankle getting down. I guess it wasn't an Attitude Era thing. Back in the ring Shawn gets Sweet Chin Music but there's no referee which would be a factor in Shawn's reasoning as to why he lost.

It gets two and the fans boo loudly on the kickout. Sid goes to an old school heel move and rips off the turnbuckle pad. Diesel gets a suplex to avoid being rammed into it and both guys are down. Shawn gets an arm over him for a long two as the fans aren't seeming to care much here.

In a slick counter, Diesel catches a bulldog off the middle rope in a side slam. Nice move. Shawn circles Diesel but gets his legs tripped from under him. Diesel goes old school with a

slingshot into the exposed buckle. If only that had actually been where he landed, as Shawn's head hit the middle buckle instead of the top one. Big boot and Jackknife end this anyway.

Rating: B. As you can tell, I really like this match. It's not famous at all but it's definitely solid all around. There was a story with the ribs, a controversy that would lead to rematches and a clean ending. The match also got enough time to put on something decent and it showed. Shawn was clearly coming into his own but still wanted to prove himself. Solid effort all around and a very good match. These two had some of the most forgotten great matches of all time and this is one of them for sure.

Shawn and Sid complain to Ross and say it's not over, which it wasn't. The celebrities celebrate with Diesel forever and Nash gets both chicks.

Shawn whines even more in the back.

Lawrence Taylor vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

If you have never seen a person die and you want to...actually if you want to I'd recommend psychiatric help. But anyway, right here you're about to see a man's career die right in front of your eyes.

Here it is. Let it be known throughout the universe and all the world, that the reason that WM 11 is called the worst WM of all time is this match and this angle right here. Here's the idea: for those of you that don't know, LT is one of the best football players of all time, bar none. He was at the Royal Rumble in the front row and Bigelow shoved him, leading to this.

Instead of the WWF Title being on the line in the main event of the biggest show of the year, we get a retired football player against a barely upper midcarder that was about 8 years

past his prime. Do I even need to explain why this was a bad idea? Each man has a group of 5 supporters at ringside so it's more or less a lumberjack match. Their entrances take the greater part of forever. Oh and Salt N Peppa sing LT to the ring.

Pat Patterson of all people is the referee. There are so many jokes I could make about that I don't know where to start. This is by far and away the main event of the show which still makes my head shake. I used to complain that Lawrence couldn't wrestle but that was the point I think: he wasn't supposed to be able to wrestle but rather be able to fight.

Diesel had been showing him some stuff apparently. The bell hasn't rung yet so we're just hanging around and waiting to start. Patterson wants a handshake but Lawrence slaps Bigelow instead and it's on. Taylor likes to throw forearms which makes sense as it's a basic strike. Taylor sends him to the floor with Bigelow doing the majority of the work to get himself over the top.

Bigelow misses a corner splash and Taylor gets a belly to back for two. More forearms which keep working so naturally he keeps going with them. Taylor gets in the face of the Million Dollar Team as we're still waiting on the big brawl between the guys on the floor. Lawrence gets caught on his way back in and now we get into the main part of the match.

They're going very slow which is understandable here. Falling headbutt misses Taylor but he can't capitalize and Bigelow takes over again. Boston Crab goes on which shifts into a sloppy half crab instead. Ok now it's shifted into more or less Bigelow pulling on Taylor's leg. This is a very different kind of match and not incredibly interesting.

The rope is finally grabbed and Taylor goes back to the forearms. A suplex gets Taylor out of trouble for a bit and both guys are down. Bigelow gets the advantage again and hits

the Moonsault but hurts his knee, having to roll off. He covers shortly thereafter and gets two to ZERO reaction. I think the fans were confused or flat out didn't care. Either way it's not a good sign.

LT gets a gutwrench suplex that is called a Jackknife for two. Enziguri puts Taylor down again and this is really needing to end like now. Top rope headbutt gets two and a tiny reaction. Taylor makes his big comeback and hammers away with the forearms and now the crowd is getting into it. In the big spot of the match, LT goes to the middle rope and hits a flying forearm to get the pin. Taylor might have been hurt but he seems ok. DiBiase rips into Bigelow post match, setting up his failure of a face turn.

Rating: D+. Well they tried. I'll give them that: they tried. For the life of me I don't get why this is what they closed the show with. Well actually I do as it was certainly the biggest match, but it shouldn't have been if that makes sense. Taylor's offense made sense as he kept at it with the forearms, but the match didn't work for the most part. Still though, not completely unwatchable but not incredibly good.

Overall Rating: F+. Yeah this show is still boring. It feels more like an In Your House rather than what it should have been, which is the biggest show of the year. Shawn vs. Diesel is good and that's about it. Everything else is completely forgettable to say the least and the main event is one of the biggest headscratchers of all time.

To give you an idea of how odd this show is, it runs less than two and a half hours. Think about that. Wrestlemania ran less than two and a half hours. The show was shockingly well received though and it got a solid buyrate for the time. It doesn't hold up well at all and that's what kills it. 95 simply wasn't kind to PPV and this is probably the second worst show of the year, after Summerslam. Bad show.

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NXT – March 14, 2012: Tag-0-Rama

NXT

Date: March 14, 2012

Location: Nationwide Arena, Columbus, Ohio

Commentators: Josh Matthews, William Regal

With this show, half of NXT has been in this season. I can't believe that. I mean, it feels like we've been at that point for years and years. Anyway, Regal is in his second week in power now and hopefully something changes because last week was the same thing as we've always had. Tonight's big match is a mixed tag with Bateman/Kaitlyn vs. Maxine/Curtis. Let's get to it.

Striker and Regal are in the ring to open the show. Regal is the Official Match Coordinator. Tonight is all tag matches.

Titus O'Neil/Darren Young vs. Usos

The heels make fun of the Siva Tao on their way to the ring. Titus gets beaten down in the corner almost immediately. The Usos double team and use some nice coordination for a corner splash for two on O'Neil. Darren comes in and walks into an uppercut from Jey. Young gets launched over the top in the corner and Jimmy hits a cross body off the apron. Jey takes out Titus and we're almost in squash territory here.

We take a break and come back with Jimmy and Darren slugging it out, won by Darren. Back to Titus who rams Jimmy into the corner and it's right back to Darren. The heels double team well enough to send Jimmy into the apron and out to the floor. The beating continues for awhile until Jimmy gets something like a superkick up in the corner to take Young down. There's the double tag to bring in Titus and Jey. The place erupted for the tag and then just kind of stopped caring. They've been hot so far though. Samoan Drop takes down Titus and the Superfly Splash gets the pin at 8:05.

Rating: C. Not bad and I'm sure it won't lead anywhere for the Usos. They've been dominant on this show forever but can't get a title run because we need to see Kofi and whatever partner he has this week beat the champions but not be able to get the titles. The match was fine though.

Percy Watson and Alex Riley talk about basketball in the back. They have a tag match later tonight. Reks and Hawkins come in and Regal pops up (this was earlier in the day apparently) to make the tag match. If Reks/Hawkins lose, they're doing Regal's laundry.

Curt Hawkins/Tyler Reks vs. Alex Riley/Percy Watson

Watson starts with Reks but gets caught in the wrong corner. The double teaming allows Reks to take over and Watson is in trouble early. A knee drop gets two. Off to Hawkins and the chinlock. This is a really dull match. Unlike the previous one which built up a hot tag, this has been Reks and Hawkins in control from the star with nothing interesting at all. Watson comes back with a belly to belly throw and there's the tag to Riley with no pop from the crowd this time. Riley is now the Rare Breed. Oh boy. Riley takes Hawkins down but a distraction from Reks allows Hawkins to slam him off and hit a top rope elbow for the pin at 5:05.

Rating: D. Like I said during the match, this wasn't

interesting at all. Reks and Hawkins are the villains of the show I guess but they're not doing anything interesting. Granted that's probably because they lose half of the time and haven't done anything but be annoying so far. Hopefully Riley and Watson don't team together that often as they're not that interesting.

Maxine is leaving a note for Striker when Kaitlyn runs in and rams into her. She's playing tag with Bateman apparently. Someone canceled Kaitlyn's flight again but Maxine says she doesn't know anything about that. Bateman comes in as does Curtis who apparently wants a fourway. In the ring that is. Apparently there really was a game of tag going on.

Here's Michael McGillicutty in street clothes. On the way to the ring we see a recap of his feud with Kidd. McGillicutty gets on the fans for being pathetic and demands respect. Kidd talking about hanging out with Bret Hart is lame too. No rematch either. Here's Tyson to talk about how he's been with the Harts since he was 16. McGillicutty says that no matter what he does, Kidd will never be a Hart. Kidd hits him with the mic and they go to the floor. Tyson tries for a Sharpshooter but Michael runs away. McGillicutty agrees to the rematch.

Raw ReBound makes sure the main event isn't that long.

Kaitlyn/Derrick Bateman vs. Maxine/Johnny Curtis

Regal says Bateman was raised by nuns. No joke there, just a statement of fact. The girls start and Maxine gets taken down a lot. Apparently that was Regal's office they were in rather than Striker's. Maxine is frustrated and we take a break. Back with the guys in there and Curtis taking him to the mat by the leg. Curtis keeps looking at Kaitlyn and dancing for her which results in a Bateman rollup for two. Regal works in an Exotic Adrian Street reference for you old time fans. Kaitlyn slaps Curtis and the falling bulldog gets the pin at 3:32. Since a

good bit of that was on a commercial no rating, but this was nothing.

Kaitlyn hugs Bateman's mom as she leaves.

Bateman says that Maxine can go with whomever she wants, be it Curtis or Regal. Regal: "Wait what?" Bateman says tag, you're it to Kaitlyn and kisses her to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. So that's NXT for the week. It ran about 45 minutes, there were three tag matches which weren't very good, there's a new couple which we pretty much knew would happen and I won't think about this show again until next week. That's all NXT is anymore: 45 minutes of subpar wrestling that I don't think about after I watch it. Why is this just now a revelation?

Results

Usos b. Titus O'Neil/Darren Young – Superfly Splash to O'Neil
Curt Hawkins/Tyler Reks b. Alex Riley/Percy Watson – Top Rope Elbow to Watson

Derrick Bateman/Kaitlyn b. Maxine/Johnny Curtis – Sweetness to Curtis

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Monday Night Raw – February 24, 1997: ECW Invades Raw

Monday Night Raw

Date: February 24, 1997

Location: Manhattan Center, New York City, New York

Attendance: 1,000

Commentators: Paul Heyman, Vince McMahon, Jerry Lawler

Based on the commentators and perhaps the date you might know why we're reviewing this one. This is of course the ECW Invasion of Raw for one night only while the main guys are in Europe or somewhere like that. This is more or less a hype show for Barely Legal, the first ECW PPV. Seeing the ECW guys on Raw this early is just weird, even though the Dudleys would be there in less than three years. WCW is KILLING Raw at this point so they were doing whatever they could to get a quick ratings boost. This didn't do that, but it's certainly historical so we'll take a look. Let's get to it.

The old school WWF logo, as in the one with the storm and all red used to scare me when I was a kid and terrified of thunderstorms.

The old Raw intro still rocks.

Godwins vs. Blackjacks

The Blackjacks are Barry Windham and Bradshaw. It's so weird hearing the guys talking about ECW when we have the same look for the show as there was back when the show debuted. BIG brawl to start as Bradshaw might be the smallest guy in there. Vince promises a big surprise for later. Oh hey we get Sunny vs. Marlena in ARM WRESTLING. Oh joy indeed. Wait it's 97 Sunny. OH YES.

We get to an actual match now with Phineas and Bradshaw in there. Clothesline from JBL but it isn't a finisher or named yet. Henry runs over Barry and we head to the floor where the heels take over. This is weak so far. The fans want the Dudleys and some guy named Ken Shamrock is sitting in the front row. Now the fans want Sandman. Would it be too much to ask for SOMETHING to happen here?

Phineas finally gets the hot tag and no one cares in the slightest. I was writing and didn't realize he got a tag due to the lack of any kind of reaction. Clothesline takes him down but he gets a foot on the rope. This goes unnoticed and the Blackjacks win it. The referee gets slopped for his troubles.

Rating: F+. Oh this was boring. It went on forever and was a total borefest with the styles completely clashing. Four power guys can rarely make a match work and this was no exception. The tag division left something to be desired around this time as we were about 6 months from the Outlaws forming to save things a bit. Weak match and a bad omen for the rest of the night.

Ad for some boxing match. Sugar Ray Leonard is back. Ok then.

As we're about to go to a break there's a ring attendant looking at a turnbuckle. The ECW Tag Team Champions hit the ring and hit Total Elimination on him as Heyman shouts about the challenge being accepted. The look on Lawler's face is great.

Little Guido vs. Stevie Richards

Richards would be in the #1 contenders' match at Barely Legal for absolutely no apparent reason. The BWO is here with Richards which as Joey perfectly described: "If any gimmick never deserved to make a dime and made a whole boat load of cash, THIS IS IT." I remember this actually but just vaguely. Stevie says they're taking over as Paulie joins on commentary.

Heyman couldn't be happier to be here to put it mildly. The match means nothing at all of course with Guido being the epitome of a jobber at this point in a big comedy stable. Jerry can't say who the BWO is ripping off in a funny bit. Moving from funny to borderline surreal, Raven comes out and stands in front of the RAW set, which is just big letters saying Raw. Raven stares Richards down and the future

psychiatrist freezes.

Goldust says he isn't impressed and says nothing when Vince asks him about his match with Savio. Heyman kind of compliments Goldust as the fans LOUDLY chant BWO. Lawler more or less is shooting on ECW here as he hates the thing. Stevie Kick ends it clean. Lawler points out the obvious that Shawn has done the same move about 1000 times.

Rating: D. Like I said the match meant nothing so don't pay much attention to that anyway. This was about having a different kind of thing being shown on Raw which definitely worked. No one but Paulie ever really got the idea of how Richards wound up in the three way at the PPV. Guido would get a lot better but here he was more or less a joke. Nothing special at all here, but the point was having ECW on Raw, which is mind blowing when you consider this is back in 1997.

Honky Tonk Man comes out to referee the arm wrestling match. Sunny comes out first and does the Rick Rude intro by calling everyone fat and saying to hit the music. Naturally she looks amazing but the costume is more or less tame compared to today's stuff which is weird to say. Marlena has bad ribs due to HHH's associate injuring her. The associate would soon become known as Chyna.

Sunny offers to let her forfeit due to the injuries which of course is turned down. Loud TAKE IT OFF chant. Any wrestling fan knows the formula here so I'll spare you the details. Sunny stalls a lot, she takes over early, Marlena makes the comeback, Sunny throws powder (seriously do I even need to make jokes here?) in her eyes and it's over.

Savio Vega comes out to get on Marlena so here's Goldust to come out for the save. They're scheduled for a match so this is it I guess.

Goldust vs. Savio Vega

One of the guys that becomes part of Los Boricuas is on commentary now. Miguel talks about Savio not being Puerto Rican anymore or something. No one cared at all about the group but Vince pushed them for over a year. Crush helps beat up Goldust with a powerslam on the floor.

Boring match so far as you can clearly see why WCW was destroying them around this time. Lots of punches both ways and then we have announcements for upcoming shows that take up a third of the screen. And now we hit a chinlock to make my head hurt a bit more. Oh wait scratch that. It's a nerve hold rather than a chinlock.

Every time you look up there are more members of the Nation out there. Sunny is there cheering for them as well I guess because Goldust is associated with Marlena. Savio's splash hits knees. This match needs to end badly. We get our third shot of Shamrock tonight as Lawler says he'll go talk to him. Savio slaps Goldie's a bit so Goldust elbows him and kisses him.

Crush trips Goldust, allowing Vega to take over, and here's Crush to help with the beatdown to end it. Twelve minutes to get THAT ending? Perez, the guy from the announcers' table runs in to help with the save.

Rating: F. Oh man this was boring. It got TWELVE MINUTES and we get a weak DQ ending? This was just so boring on all levels and nothing at all happened. I never got the appeal of Savio and he was just not interesting as a heel in the slightest. Granted you could argue that he wasn't interesting ever but you get the point. Just a boring match that took up over 5% of the whole show. Mind boggling.

Raw is in Berlin next week, which featured the Bulldog vs. Owen match in perhaps the best match in Raw history for the first ever European Title.

We flashback to Jerry Lawler making fun of Tiny Tim, a weird

singer that was in wrestling more than once but no one knew why. Weird thing to air here.

Jerry talks to Shamrock, allegedly his friend. Shamrock says he's never met Lawler in ANOTHER pointless segment. Granted Shamrock would become a fairly big star in a few months' time.

The Slammys are coming. I love those things.

Heyman gets in the line from the Rise and Fall DVD: Man, has this show sucked without ECW or what huh? He's right.

Taz vs. Mikey Whipwreck

Whipwreck is a cool name. Nice amateur stuff from Taz. We don't see the extreme aspects here which is what's hurting the show. Lawler asks him about that and Heyman says why do that when we can do that on PPV? Taz DESTROYS him as we hear from Farooq. Notice the ECW matches have had interviews that have nothing to do with the show spliced in but we hear nothing during the WWF matches. Not saying it's unfair as it's a WWF show, just an observation. Sabu pops up on top of the Raw R and falls off which sums up his career pretty well. Tazmission completes the squash.

Rating: N/A. This was to make Taz look good and that certainly worked. Whipwreck would also get a lot better which was fun watching. This wasn't much at all though but it did its job well enough I guess. Still though, would it kill you guys to tell us why Taz vs. Sabu is a big feud? They didn't say it on Barely Legal either so it doesn't really matter.

Headbangers vs. Legion of Doom

Yep this is the surprise. If this breaks a minute I'll be stunned. The people are, to put it mildly, stoked to see the LOD. Even the ECW fans are happy here. We start calling the LOD American Originals which never went anywhere but they kept calling them that for about a year. Animal and Mosh start us

off and I think you can guess how that goes. Apparently the Lawler vs. Tiny Tim thing was because Raw is back where it all began tonight. That makes sense.

The fans chant Nitro Sucks which Vince won't say. The match is already at two minutes which means it's too long. BIG powerbomb from Animal to Mosh gets two. Hawk hits his decent dropkick and we go WAY too long here. There's a reason the Road Warriors rarely went long without a great team in there such as the Horsemen with them: they kind of sucked other than power moves.

And now the Headbangers are on offense. Well of course they are. We go to a break and come back to the Headbangers in control. Yes, in this match we've gotten a commercial to go with an already long match. Shawn is injured apparently. And there's a DOUBLE COUNT OUT? ARE YOU FREAKING KIDDING ME? Mosh takes a Doomsday Device just because he deserves one.

Rating: F+. The match was boring, it went about 15 minutes counting commercial, AND WHY WOULD YOU BRING BACK A FREAKING TEAM LIKE THE LOD TO HAVE THEM GO TO A DOUBLE COUNTOUT WITH THE FREAKING HEADBANGERS??? DO I HAVE TO DRAW YOU A PICTURE HERE? They deserved to lose at this point with stupidity like this.

We get the very cheesy Tell Me A Lie video about Shawn that always turns my stomach a bit. He was "probably retiring" due to his "knee injury" which popped up right before he was supposed to drop the title back to Bret at Mania. What are the odds???

Tommy Dreamer vs. D-Von Dudley

We get Beulah if nothing else. Dreamer looks YOUNG here and for some reason didn't wrestle at the PPV. They lock up immediately as everyone is FAR more impressed with Beulah than the match which I can't blame them for. Heyman rightfully kisses up to Vince for this. Dreamer breaks out some weapons

to make things interesting for a change. Lawler hating on violence is funny considering one of his most famous things is the Tupelo Concession Stand Brawl (look that up if you've never heard of it).

All Dreamer so far here. Naturally we plug the stuff later on in Raw but again ECW needs to be happy with what they got, which I'm sure they were. Lawler goes on a total shoot, talking about how he's been in wrestling for 20 years and has never been ashamed to be a wrestler but is now because this stuff is in his ring. He also didn't mind showing up on ECW shows at least twice and getting a big paycheck for it.

Dreamer with a Piledriver next to a chair as Lawler is reaching Austin levels of ranting here. Taker cuts a split screen promo and while he's talking about Sid (it was the main event of Mania 13 so first of all it's more important than the match, but second, THIS GETS A PROMO WHILE WE HAVE A MATCH?) Dreamer hits the DDT for the pin.

Rating: N/A. Just a quickie here as the highlight was Lawler's insane rant against Heyman and ECW. Based on what I've heard most of that was legit as Lawler wasn't a fan of ECW at all. There are few people more old school than Lawler so that doesn't surprise me, but considering how many Memphis companies he's been apart of he doesn't have a ton of room to talk about anyone else's failing. Granted he had a national TV spot every Monday night so maybe he can talk about them.

Bubba runs down for the 3D on Dreamer but Sandman comes through the crowd and general beatings occur. Paulie thanks Vince which sounds very legit but goes after Lawler, resulting in the ECW guys coming down for a big pullapart deal.

We recap the insane world title scene around this time. Bret won the Royal Rumble and the shot at Mania but Austin snuck back in and threw him out and was declared the official winner. Due to the controversy, they put Taker and Vader who

were also feuding and were the other final two in the Rumble along with Austin and Hart in a match called Final Four at a show appropriately titled Final Four.

Sid and Shawn had been trading the title, resulting in Shawn winning it back and then losing his smile, forfeiting the belt. There was supposed to be one last Sid vs. Shawn match at Final Four with the winner fighting the winner of the Final Four match at Mania. Bret won the match and the title but lost it to Sid the next night due to interference from Austin. That was a week before this and Taker has been named #1 contender. There would be a rematch between Bret and Sid in a cage sometime in March but Sid retained so it means nothing. Austin and Hart had a match at Mania that you may have heard of. Taker vs. Sid sucked.

Todd Pettingill (the 90s version of Michael Cole but less annoying and just a backstage guy) talks to Ken Shamrock in an actual interview. He has his wife and father with him and introduces them. Ken picks Taker for the world title at Mania and can't pick a winner for the submission match. Todd was annoying but he knew how to connect with a crowd so he throws in a very quick crowd poll. Little things like that can make a guy because he talks specifically to the crowd which is the best thing a guy can do.

Farroq vs. Undertaker

Hmm I wonder who wins here. Before we start though and before Taker gets here, Shamrock and Farroq have a standoff. Shamrock can't talk at this point AT ALL. After a break we come back for Taker's entrance which lacks something in this small of an arena. Most of the Nation is out there so Taker is just like screw this and goes out to beat on random people.

Ah there we go and all of a sudden the mat is really loud. BIG Old School takes down Farroq again. Farroq was a guy that could have been a top level heel but Austin being such a huge

star all of a sudden kind of stopped anything they had planned but in a good way I'd think. This is your standard let's beat on Taker and think we're hurting him before he pops up and is perfectly fine. We take a break with a Nation member (D'lo Brown) taking down Taker by clipping his knee.

Back with Taker's knee in trouble. Farrooq is smart and just keeps hammering on the knee like he's supposed to. Taker busts out a Fameasser of all things to break the momentum. Never seen him use that before. In a weird bit the fans are singing the Nation theme song. Long chinlock sequence follows as we're kind of killing time here. Ok there's no kind of to it. We head to the floor as we're desperately running out of time. And then after about 15 minutes again the rest of the Nation runs out for the DQ. The LOD comes out to save as we RUSH off the air.

Rating: C-. Match wasn't much at all but Farrooq wasn't boring here. This was better than I expected with both guys pounding on each other hard and some better than average (for him anyway) selling from Taker. The ending sucks but I get why they did it was obviously Taker couldn't lose and Farrooq was kept strong looking here. Much better than what I expected here.

Overall Rating: D. Paulie was dead on when he said this show has sucked without ECW. I don't remember a ton of Raw from this time frame but if this is any indication it's no secret I would have been watching WCW. This was just DULL with matches no one cared about for the majority of the night. However since a lot of the stars were on a tour the lack of talent is more than understandable so I can give this a bit of a break.

This was a rather weak show though but the ECW addition is very interesting as it was totally not what WWF was about at the time and considering ECW hadn't even debuted on PPV yet it's unlikely most people had any clue who they were, making it at least an attraction. Bad show but very interesting form

an historical standpoint.

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WWF Philadelphia House Show – May 22, 1982: Backlund Was Pretty Awesome In His Day

WWF House Show

Date: February 22, 1982

Location: Philadelphia Spectrum, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 11,513

Commentators: Dick Graham, Kal Rudman

Here's a show from an era that you don't often hear from. This is during the Backlund is champion era and is one of the many house show cities that had its own TV show. In other words, this show was filmed and aired on TV in the Philadelphia market. Snuka is making his Philly debut tonight and Backlund is facing Bob Orton, presumably for the title. Let's get to it.

The announcers talk about the show for awhile. They sound nothing like what most wrestling announcers do and I'm not sure if I like that or not. There's talk of some new hold called the Crossface Chickenwing.

We get a clip from last month of Tony Atlas vs. Jesse Ventura. Jesse is controlling with a full nelson but misses an elbow drop. Atlas comes back to dropkick him to the floor and Atlas goes after him. Jesse rams Tony into the table and busts him open then slides in to win by countout. Atlas wants to keep up the fight but Jesse runs. The full match ran 15 minutes apparently but we only got about three here. There's a cage match later between these two.

Gary Michael Capetta is the ring announcer. For some reason he gets booed.

Charlie Fulton vs. Larry Sharpe

Sharpe is far more famous as the trainer of Bam Bam Bigelow, Raven and Big Show among a lot more. He's a pretty boy in white. Sharpe jumps Fulton to start and knocks him to the floor and it takes awhile for Charlie to get back in. Sharpe throws him back out to the floor again as Fulton is looking pretty awful here. Fulton comes back in with right hands and grabs the arm.

Sharpe headbutts him in the ribs and takes over again. Fulton is a guy that never really went anywhere so I'm curious as to whether he's a jobber here or not. Fulton comes back with nothing but punches and is kicked in the face on a backdrop attempt. Sharpe goes up but gets slammed down. Since Fulton can't manage to make a sandwich without getting beaten up, Sharpe throws him into the ropes to take over (as in Sharpe whipped him in and Fulton hit them chest first and fell down) and hits a piledriver to end this.

Rating: F+. What was that? Fulton was TERRIBLE out there and looked like a jobber that didn't realize he was a jobber. Sharpe didn't do much better but he looked like he was far better out there and the bigger deal. Also that wasn't a bad piledriver. This was a very strange match though as it was like a squash that went awkwardly.

Sharpe says his conditioning is bad so that's why it took so long. That's not something you often hear.

Baron Mikel Scicluna vs. Pete Sanchez

The Baron is in the WWE Hall of Fame for some reason, despite most people having no idea who he is. He's a heel here and the announcer says he'll probably use a foreign object. He's from Malta so if it's a Maltese object is that really foreign? We start with a bearhug on Sanchez which isn't a normal starting move. Sanchez grabs a headlock and Baron looks bored. Baron hides in the corner and might have pulled out an object.

The referee stops to check him for weapons but doesn't find one. Baron goes to the corner with his back to the ring again and again the referee checks him. Where would he have gotten an object in between there? Pete grabs a wristlock and the referee kicks Baron's arm off the ropes. He then makes the FASTEST COUNT EVER but Baron gets his shoulder up. That would be a heel turn move today.

We play hide the object again and apparently there is one in existence but the referee can't find it. Typical. Baron almost shoves the referee but that isn't a DQ. Baron chops him down and I kid you not, he looks like he's in slow motion. Pete takes over and kicks him very low but it's also not a DQ. Baron pulls out the object, holds it in the air like he found it in a Hylian dungeon and hits Pete in the throat with it for the pin.

Rating: D-. This show is three and a half hours long. Oh what have I gotten myself into? The wrestling in the early 80s was...how do I put this nicely.....REALLY BAD. It's mostly punches and kicks here and the whole foreign object bit. We get the idea but that was the whole match. To be fair though, it's 1982 and this is the second match on a card and it runs 8 minutes. I'm probably overreacting here, but it's still pretty boring.

Pete finds the object post match and drills Baron with it.

One of the announcers says hi to a fan that Backlund has talked to who is too sick to be able to come to a show. Cool.

Swede Hanson vs. Laurent Soucie

Now there's a new announcer who must be in his mid 70s. Swede tries to control with a top wristlock to start and takes it to the mat controlling the arm. And never mind as they break it up quickly. Here's the basic story of the match: Swede tries to put a hold on him, Laurent runs away. Laurent hits him with a forearm and Swede looks annoyed. Apparently Swede has a habit of slapping people in the face. Well that's just rude of him. In a really sudden and different ending, Swede grabs a backbreaker and bends Laurent over his knee, which gets a submission.

Rating: D. Well they're getting better. Not a good match or anything but it's a step up over the other two dismal performances we saw earlier tonight. This show is somehow almost forty minutes in now and it's been dreadful. Swede was another generic bad guy which is getting a little tiresome.

Mr. Saito vs. Johnny Rodz

Saito is a Japanese guy and Rodz is supposed to be nuts. He trained a ton of ECW guys, namely Dreamer, Taz and the Dudleys. Saito jumps him to start and I think Rodz is the heel here. Rodz is in trouble but does the equivalent of HULKING UP and shrugs Saito off. He grabs a headlock and cranks on that sucker. A middle rope elbow to the head is followed by a second one and Saito is in trouble.

Back to the headlock and Saito tries to crawl over the ropes to escape. That's quite a headlock. Saito comes back with a superkick and a middle rope chop to the shoulder. Here's a nerve hold and Rodz's arms start shaking. Saito strikes away in the corner but misses a charge to allow Rodz to hammer

away. Rodz tries an O'Connor roll out of the corner but Saito ducks, sending Rodz's head into the corner which gets the pin. Well you can't say they're overused finishes.

Rating: C-. It might be because of how weak the first three matches were but I was getting into Rodz' energy out there. He wasn't doing much else besides punching but sometimes that's all you need to do. Not a good match or anything and we had another unusual ending but it's by far the most entertaining match of the night so far.

Intercontinental Title: Pedro Morales vs. Jimmy Snuka

Snuka has only been around for a few months at this point but the fans are loving him, despite him being a heel. The announcers aren't sure what to do with him because they know he's popular but he's supposed to be the evil savage. He has a thing for flowers apparently. Snuka wrestles barefoot which is another thing that made him different. The fans here are split which is a weird sight.

They fight over a top wristlock to start and Snuka complains of a hair pull. Snuka takes it to the mat with arm control and Dick Worthle is the referee. He died a few days ago so that's kind of sad to see. Now Snuka pulls the hair to keep the advantage. See how easy a heel move that is? Such little things like that one are just lost in modern wrestling.

Snuka runs him over and headbutts Pedro down as the fans applaud. Now keep in mind: Pedro is a very popular guy. He held the IC Title forever and was a former world champion. However, Snuka was a totally different kind of guy and the fans, especially the Philly crazy people, took notice and loved him. Pedro is in trouble and gets knocked to the floor by a forearm. All Snuka so far.

Out to the floor and Pedro goes into the apron. Back in and Pedro is almost knocked right back out. Off to a chinlock for a few moments and Pedro FINALLY gets up. He hits his first

decent offense of the match in the form of a backdrop but Snuka takes him right back down again. A middle rope headbutt half kills Pedro and you would think that Snuka was the top guy in the company based on the fans' reactions.

That only gets two though and Snuka has a headache from the headbutt. Pedro grabs the face and works it over (that's not something I'm used to typing) and starts his comeback. He hits his big left and Jimmy looks like he's dancing. Out to the floor and Snuka tastes the steel. A BIG left hand sends Snuka flying into the ropes. Snuka rakes the eyes which doesn't really do much good. Pedro hits a knee to the chin and then shoves the referee because of that firey Latin temper of him. Now Pedro throws him to the floor and it's a LAME DQ.

Rating: C+. Well it wasn't a classic or anything as Pedro was way too fond of just throwing the left hand but the crowd was very energetic for this as they were both very popular guys. Notice that the match is very similar to the rest of them but the names are bigger. There wasn't much variety in this era and it shows badly at times.

Pedro throws the referee down again and again. Snuka nails Worhle and the brawl continues. Out to the floor and Snuka goes into the post. They KEEP FIGHTING and Snuka headbutts both Morales and the referee at the same time. Snuka finally leaves and the fans aren't pleased with Pedro. Cool brawl though. Morales is mad about the brawl and says bring Jimmy on again anytime.

Steve Travis vs. Blackjack Mulligan

Mulligan is Barry Windham's dad and Husky Harris' grandfather. He's also about the size of the Undertaker so this is a painful match for Travis. Travis is thrown to the floor and goes into the post quickly. Back in Travis charges into a knee in the corner and Mulligan hooks the Claw around the throat. Travis manages to get in some offense to send Mulligan to the

outside where he takes a quick walk. Back in Mulligan hooks the Claw in a nerve hold and Travis is in trouble again. Steve elbows his way out of it but walks into a back elbow as he runs the ropes which gets Blackjack the pin.

Rating: D-. Just an observation here, but you don't see a lot of near falls at all. The fans spent most of the match chanting for Andre because of a battle of the giants thing going on but he never showed up. The Blackjacks were old school heels in the black hat wearing cowboy attire but they were pretty effective back then.

Mulligan berates the commentators post match because no one knows what he'll do next so there's no point in talking about him. Can I introduce you to a Mr. Michael Cole? Oh and he's the real giant because he's AMERICAN. He'll just take all of Andre's deals and contracts while he's at it.

WWF World Title: Bob Backlund vs. Bob Orton Jr.

This is Orton's return it seems. This is called the main event despite three more matches after this. Backlund outmoves him to start and trips Orton easily. Orton, a very good scientific wrestler in his own right, can't keep up with Backlund at all and almost gets sent to the floor because he can't even stand up when Backlund goes after him. There's an abdominal stretch by the champ but Orton escapes.

Backlund hooks a top wristlock so Orton braces against the referee to backflip out of it. The champ trips him immediately but it was a cool visual. We get a test of strength and Backlund monkey flips him over but maintains the grip. Off to a bodyscissors as this is all Backlund so far but he's not doing much damage. Instead he's getting in Orton's head which is a lot more interesting.

Backlund fakes him out on two monkey flips so Orton tries an elbow. Backlund avoids THAT and Orton is ticked off so he heads to the outside to cool off a bit. Backlund looks awesome

so far. Orton tries an armdrag and is IMMEDIATELY taken into a headscissors. Backlund is so fast. I just realized they're both named Bob so I had to go back and edit that name out. Pinfall reversal sequence results in a backslide for two for Backlund.

Orton wants a handshake and actually doesn't sucker Backlund in. They go to the ropes and Backlund gives him a clean break but the Cowboy doesn't, smashing Backlund with an elbow. Out to the floor and Backlund goes into the steel as Orton takes over. Backlund gets whipped over the railing and may have hurt his back. Somehow he's not counted out so Orton stomps on him some more.

Here comes the superplex which is Orton's finisher. Why can't more people use basic moves like that and have them be built up as finishers? Anyway Backlund breaks that up and hits a middle rope forearm to knock Orton into the corner. Backlund hooks a suplex and pounds on Orton. Orton is in big trouble and rolls to the floor. Back inside and Backlund hits a not that great piledriver for two.

Orton comes back with a belly to back suplex and both guys are down. They slug it out from their knees and Orton gets his knee up in the corner to take Backlund down. Orton goes lucha and tries a Vader Bomb but it gets knees. Backlund knocks him to the floor which doesn't last long as Backlund knees him in the head and dropkicks him right back to the floor. Now Orton is running which is where we get to the interesting part of Backlund which I'll get to later. Out to the floor and Orton finds a rope from somewhere to choke Backlund with and the champ misses the count, giving Orton the win.

Rating: B. This was a very fun match as Backlund was the guy who was rather uninteresting until he was pushed to the edge when he would blow everyone away like he did here with Orton. He's a fun guy to watch and would be even better in stuff like Texas Death Matches where his back was to the wall and he had

to fight for everything he had, which he could do quite well. Fun match and by far the best of the night so far.

They put the cage up for Ventura vs. Atlas.

The announcers say Orton should go back to the NWA because he's not ready for the WWF. Now there's a line you might never hear again.

We get a sitdown interview with Jesse Ventura who talks about how awesome the East-West Connection (Ventura/Adrian Adonis) are. They're in People Magazine according to Jesse. There's no place to hide in a cage and after Ventura has beaten Atlas in everything else, a cage is the last place for them.

Tony Atlas says he's not going to let Ventura up, which goes against what his daddy taught him but it's ok here. He's not worried about the blood either. This interviewer is really bad. They also talk about Rocky 3 and Hulk Hogan (I didn't think he'd be mentioned at this point) and then they talk about Mr. T. being a wrestler. Nah that would never work.

Now the announcers talk about whatever they can to fill in time while the cage is finished. They talk about Backlund vs. Orton for a long time and show some clips of it to show how awesome Backlund is.

Jesse Ventura vs. Tony Atlas

In a cage in case you're really dense. Ventura wants a referee in there with him. Yeah see back in the 80s, you didn't win by some lame pin. You had to get out and leave your opponent in there to win. Jesse stalls forever and tries to escape almost immediately. Atlas gets his hands on him and chops him down before ramming Jesse into the cage. A headbutt puts Jesse down and this is one sided so far.

Ventura gets in a shot but Atlas blocks the shot into the cage. The second attempt works though and Tony is down. Things

slow way down as Tony is busted open. Jesse goes up but comes back inside instead of leaving. I've heard a lot about how Jesse isn't the best in ring worker ever but he was a human heat machine and could get a crowd worked up as well as any heel on the roster. That seems to be the case here as the action is awful but Jesse plays to the crowd like a master.

After a very slow beating Jesse goes up but Atlas makes the save. Jesse gets pulled down off the top and might be bleeding a bit as well. He tastes the steel and sells like a master. Then he does it again. And again. Man that's a serious cut on Jesse. He gets in a shot and Atlas is down again. Jesse goes up and poses but Atlas climbs the cage in what must be record time to climb out and win.

Rating: C-. The selling was good, but the cage felt more like it was hurting them, as they had to find a way to incorporate it. The high amount of punches and forearms got old too which made the match dull. The ton of blood helps though, although the ending sucked with Atlas just leaving instead of beating Jesse down and then leaving.

Jesse calls conspiracy.

Here are the Official Wrestling Ratings.

10. Jay Strongbow
9. Ivan Putski
8. Tony Atlas
7. Bob Orton
6. Adrian Adonis
5. Greg Valentine
4. Pedro Morales
3. Jesse Ventura
2. Black Jack Mulligan
1. Jimmy Snuka

Jimmy Snuka, sounding much more coherent than usual, says he's from the Fiji Islands and raised in Hawaii. The interviewer

compares him to Antonino Rocca (Look him up) and we see some clips of Snuka. Apparently cliff diving prepared Snuka for what he does now. Jimmy talks about working in a gym in Hawaii and getting involved in wrestling. This is a lot more like a real interview rather than a promo. The WWF is tough but he wants to be champion. He's not coming off as heelish here at all.

Here's a video package on various wrestlers set to way too happy music.

Mr. Fuji vs. Rick McGraw

Fuji is a tag champion. Feeling out process to start and Fuji grabs the evil nerve hold. That eats up like two minutes until McGraw throws him into the corner and punches away. And never mind as he misses a dive and Fuji ties him up in the ropes. He chokes away and that's a DQ win for McGraw.

Rating: F. This is one of the final matches on the show and it's kind of like the last half hour of Saturday Night Live: they have the time to fill but they've used up all their good stuff so here's something boring that still qualifies as professional wrestling so you can't sue us for false advertising.

We hear about an upcoming battle royal. Some of the entrants are listed and I've reviewed that match before for Best of the WWF Volume 4. Also Backlund vs. Orton in a lumberjack match.

Ivan Putski vs. Adrian Adonis

LONG stall before the match start as Adrian wants to stay in the corner a bit. With his jacket still on he jumps Putski and ties Ivan up with the jacket. There's an atomic drop and a knee drop off the middle rope. Putski is holding his groin due to the atomic drop from earlier. Back in the ring and Adonis hooks a sleeper. That gets two arm drops but Putski stands up and rams Adonis' face into the corner. Adrian goes up but gets

crotched. Putski goes off on him but Adonis goes to the eyes to escape. He tries a sunset flip but Putski sits on the chest for the pin.

Rating: D. Another bad match here but I think this is the last one on the card. This was just like the previous match but with bigger names in it. Adonis would be a somewhat big time heel for awhile before becoming too fat to tie his own shoes. Putski got old in a hurry and didn't really do much other than be an ethnic face.

The announcers talk for about seven minutes to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. This is a hard one to grade. Some of the good matches are ok with the world title match being quite good, but three and a half hours is WAY too much for this, especially with how weak some of these matches were. It's amazing how much different the Hogan era is as he blew up the whole idea of what pro wrestling was before he arrived and it changed things. Whether that's for the better I'll leave it up to you.

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Wrestlemania #10: Which Is The Better Match?

I'll have to take Adam Bomb vs. Ear.....oh you mean the other matches. This show has two masterpieces on it and the question is simple: which is better?

I think I'm going to have to go with the opener. It's got a built in story and it still holds up to this day as a great match. The ladder match is still great and I don't buy the argument of "it's been topped since." The future ladder matches have no bearing on this one because they had history to look back on. This was, for all intents and purposes, the first ladder match. Maybe it's that I've seen the ladder match too many times, but I like Bret vs. Owen a little better.

Your pick?

Wrestlemania Count-Up – #10: One Of The Great Shows Ever

Wrestlemania 10

Date: March 20, 1994

Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City, New York

Attendance: 18,065

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jerry Lawler

America the Beautiful: Little Richard and the Harlem Boys Choir

This show is ALL backstory so get used to that word. Yokozuna had won the title back from Hogan at the first King of the Ring PPV after a Japanese photographer's camera blew up in Hogan's face. Hogan left the WWF and wasn't seen there again for almost 9 years.

On the 4th of July in the previous year, Yokozuna held a huge thing on a US ship, challenging anyone to bodyslam him. There were a ton of people showing up to do it but no one could. Finally a helicopter landed on the ship and out walks the former heel Lex Luger.

He nails Yoko with the forearm and kind of slammed him, although you could argue it was a hiptoss. This launched Luger into one of the biggest face pushes of all time, resulting in his title shot at Summerslam. Luger knocked Yoko unconscious but he knocked him out of the ring as well.

Luger wanted another title shot but was told he would have to win the Rumble to get it. Bret Hart also wanted his rematch at Mania but was told HE had to win the Rumble. Low and behold they're the final two. They go out at the same time, and we have a tie. The WWF President Jack Tunney decrees that there will be a coin toss deciding who gets the match first.

The loser will have to have a match before getting their title shot and no matter what, whoever comes out of the first match with the title would have to face the loser of the title match. If Bret lost the toss he would have to face Owen and if Lex lost he would have to face Crush. Lex wins the toss so Bret would be the one to close out Mania. I hope that made sense.

This Mania was a new beginning for the company as there was no more Hulk Hogan to carry the load. With him gone, it was time for the young guns to step up and take over. Following last year's awful Mania, something big had to happen here and it went about as well as it could have given the ridiculous story that I just listed off to you.

There was also a thing called a ladder match that I'm sure will bomb completely. Anyway, after Little Richard rocks the house, it's time for what is still likely the best opening contest of all time. Also our own NSL was in attendance.

We open with a highlight reel of the first Mania which really is a cool thing. The first one was absolutely amazing from a mainstream perspective.

We recap Bret vs. Owen. Bret had been feuding with HBK all of the previous year which resulted in a Survivor Series match between Shawn's team and Bret's team of him and his three brothers. Owen was accidentally knocked off the apron and into the railing leading to his elimination.

Later Bret attempted to help his brother get his first title by teaming with him to go for the tag titles. Bret was injured during the match and it wound up costing them the match. After the match, Owen kicked Bret's leg out from under him, fully turning heel. This was the showdown that had been building for awhile.

Bret Hart vs. Owen Hart

Ok so this is considered the best opener ever, so let's see if it's still that good. Remember Bret has to be in the main event later tonight against the winner of Lex vs. Yoko for the title. There's the bell and it's game on. It's MSG so the entrance is behind the ring rather than off to either side. Owen keeps celebrating every tiny victory which is funny stuff.

Naturally it's a technical style to start which is exactly what you would expect it to be. A little leverage sends Owen to the floor so Owen slaps him in the face. Almost all Bret to start as Owen can't get much going but it's being destroyed at all. Rollup gets two for Bret and it's to the mat with Owen. Bret speeds it up again and sends Owen to the floor where he's very frustrated.

Now it's Bret with a slap and a rollup for two again. Crucifix gets two and to my shock and awe, Lawler says Bret is the better wrestler. You'll likely never hear that again. There's that spinwheel kick and Owen takes over for real for the first

time in the match. Bret's back meets post on the floor and Owen SCREAMS at him. Camel clutch goes on and Owen yells some more as you have to wonder how legit that is.

Belly to belly puts Bret down for two. Of course it's only two. It's not like Owen could ever beat him or something. Give me a break. Owen tries to suplex Bret back in but Bret reverses but Owen reverses that into a BIG German for a long two. Bret grabs a small package for two as Owen continues his dominance. Owen gets a Tombstone out of nowhere and Bret is in trouble.

No cover though as Owen goes up for a splash which hits. Too bad it hit the canvas and not Bret, but it did indeed hit something. Russian Leg Sweep gets two for Bret. The middle rope elbow gets the same. Owen gets an enziguri "out of nowhere" and goes for the Sharpshooter. Bret reverses into an attempt of his own but can't get that either.

Bret with a Pescado but hurts his knee and amazingly enough isn't goldbricking. Owen goes after it and Vince is surprised for some reason. That reason would be that Vince from this era is a very stupid man. The leg goes around the post and Bret is in trouble. Owen's mocking of Bret is great as for him it's personal. Well granted it has to be personal as it's between two people but you get the idea.

The blonde Hart gets a leg lock which gets two as Bret's shoulders are down. Lawler points out that it would be smart for Bret to give up so he has a better chance in the title match later. That's actually very true. Figure Four by Owen and WOO Bret is in trouble. Bret rolls out but Owen grabs a rope as we keep going. Bret comes back with an enziguri as for once Vince's WHAT A MATCHUP isn't overkill.

Owen's selling is awesome as every time he gets hit he stays in one place like he's been shot. Bret gets a Piledriver to probably tick off Jerry a bit. A superplex gets two as Bret

can't finish him. A sleeper from Bret is countered by a low blow as Owen takes over again. Owen gets the Sharpshooter as Bret is in trouble again after the back and knee work from earlier. Ladies and gentlemen, PSYCHOLOGY! Oh how I love it.

Bret counters into his own but Owen is right in front of the ropes so it's not like it means anything. Bret finally starts throwing punches but they're to the ribs which Vince makes sure to point out. Owen reverses a whip-in but Bret gets his feet up. Bret goes for a Victory Roll but Owen rolls into it and gets a rollup for the pin to silence the entire arena. Awesome finish to an awesome match.

Rating: A+. This match had been viewed as one of the best matches of all time and it holds up today. The psychology here is off the charts here as both wanted the submission but Owen goes for the pinfall and uses Bret's own wrestling technique against him.

The best thing about this match is simple though: Owen pinned him perfectly clean. The better man won and that's what makes the match so much better and one of the best ever. This was proof that a match could work on basic wrestling and the buildup for it. Classic all the way.

We get a post match promo in the back from Owen talking about how great his victory was and everything he says is absolutely right. He even gives credit to Bret for putting on such a great match. Love this promo. Excellent start to the show so far.

WM Moment: WM 2 Battle Royal.

The president of the hair club for men has a toupee for the Fink. Humorous if nothing else. Is there any reason why some dude named Bill Dunn is doing the announcing here and not the Fink?

Bam Bam Bigelow/Luna Vachon vs. Doink/Dink

This is what gets to follow that opener. These guys feuded forever for no apparent reason and no one cared. This has the distinct look of a comedy match here and I don't it's going to end well. Thankfully Howard does the announcing here. Doink is played by some dude from Puerto Rico here I believe.

Bigelow jumps the big clown and we're off. A dropkick puts him down and hopefully this is dominance. Vince's overall conclusion about Lawler: he's not a nice person. Off to Dink and Luna as I search for a reason to have this at Wrestlemania. Get on with this already.

Luna misses a top rope splash and it's back off to the big guys. You know, the future pyromaniac and the full grown wrestling clown. This is after a classic match and before one of the best gimmick matches of all time. And we get to the "comedy", and I use that term loosely, of the match. Bigelow sits on a sunset flip attempt and the beating is on. After some time is wasted, a top rope headbutt ends Doink finally.

Rating: F. This was a complete waste of time. Thankfully this is the end of the feud and it was never mentioned again. Bigelow went from potential IC Champion to this in six years. There's your explanation as to what a knee injury can do for you. Get on to something else.

Post match Luna and Dink do a stupid segment that just extends this longer with nothing coming from it.

There's a Bill Clinton impersonator here for some reason.

WM Moment: Attendance record at WM 3.

Randy Savage vs. Crush

No backstory here but that's what I'm here for. Crush had challenged Yokozuna for the WWF title and got beaten pretty badly. Yoko hit some banzai drops on him and put him out of action. Savage came in at the very end to help Crush, after he

got hurt. Savage was about to be reinstated as a wrestler when he and Crush got into a fight at ringside. Savage was suspended from commentating but came out of retirement to wrestle. They had been feuding since November but this was their big match.

Savage is a full blown legend at this point, along the lines of what HBK is at this point. Needless to say, he was mad over in this match. The rules here are you get a pinfall but then the person has sixty seconds to get back into the ring. Therefore you could get a ton of pinfalls in this. Savage charges at him in the aisle and the fight is on.

Crush gets Snake Eyes on the railing and the first pin is in less than a minute. Fuji blasts him with the flag and Savage makes it back in with seconds to spare. Crush is dominating and gets him in the Tree of Woe. Fuji hands him some salt but Savage is like boy I wrestled in Memphis and throws it back in Crush's face. That and a slam sets up the elbow but no cover. Oh ok he throws him to the floor and THEN gets the pin. That was smart.

Fuji has to grab some water to throw on Crush to keep the match going which is kind of funny. They hit the floor for awhile and it's all Savage for the most part here. Savage reverses a backdrop in the aisle and we head to the back. Savage slams him on the concrete and then in an incredibly creative finish, Savage uses a rope and ties Crush upside down from a scaffold to get the guaranteed win. Awesome ending to a fun match and also the extent of Savage meaning anything as a WWF wrestler.

Rating: C+. This match was a real grudge match and you could see the emotions coming out. This was the precursor to what would become hardcore and the last man standing match. The falls having to be outside of the ring was just a bad idea though and holds it back. Savage as the legend is something that really works well for him. I've always liked this match for some reason, partially because Savage was still awesome at

this point and was clearly having fun out there.

Todd talks to the fake Clinton again. It's pointless. To be fair though, he's a pro imitator and it's made to look legit so this is a huge improvement over what we usually get. IRS is there with him and congratulates him for raising the taxes. I'll spare you a long rant on that one.

We recap fan fest which is the precursor to Axxess.

Savage goes into the crowd to celebrate as we see another WM moment with Savage winning the belt.

Women's Title: Alundra Blayze vs. Lelani Kai

For some reason, Kai's music here is the same that Harley Race came to the ring to during Flair's retirement ceremony last year. Very odd indeed as there's absolutely no connection between the two that I know of. Kai was the Women's Champion going into the first Mania, 9 years before this. She was the best option they had? Seriously?

Blayze is more common known as Madusa in WCW. Sunset flip out of the corner gets two for the champion. This isn't going to be anything special at all is it? Another sunset flip is the high point of it so far. The crowd is DEAD. A slam gets two as I think you can get what's going on here. All Blayze does is leverage stuff although I'd bet a lot of this ending with a German suplex. This needs to end badly and the German finally does it. Moolah, Mae and Nikolai Volkoff are sitting together for some reason.

Rating: D-. The match itself isn't bad, but this is at Wrestlemania and it's clear that this match was thrown onto the card. There's no story, no build, no time given to it, and no one cares. Blazye was solid, and in case you can't place here she's far more famous as Madusa in WCW. The problem she had though was there was no competition for her anywhere at all. She was the woman that dropped the Women's Title in the

trash on Nitro which allegedly triggered Montreal.

WM moment: Roddy sprays Morton Downey Jr. at WM 5. Funny actually.

Tag Titles: Men on a Mission vs. The Quebecers

Zero transition between the previous moment and this. Oh my I had forgotten about M.O.M. This very well may be the worst gimmick of all time. The idea behind the team was that they would help young kids improve their lives in the inner cities by preaching positive values to them.

Of course there's one thing they need to get over. What's the one thing that every young kid is into? What does everybody love? No not head you sick freaks. Get your minds out of the gutters. They love RAP of course. Therefore, the team had a rapping manager named Oscar.

The team was therefore Mabel (more commonly known as Viscera or Big Daddy V), Oscar, (more commonly known as annoying) and Mo (more commonly known as Felix, the bum that washes your windows in exchange for a non-urine soaked blanket and a bag of Funions). Mabel, Oscar, Mo. M.O.M.

Now after that description, what's coming next is absolute proof that Satan himself is a wrestling fan: THEY GOT OVER. Yes, somehow this team was wildly popular to the point that they were regular tag title contenders, even winning the belts at a house show literally by mistake. Mabel fell on one of the Quebecers and he couldn't kick out in time because of the weight.

Anyway, this is for the tag titles so let's get it over with. It's a basic formula for MOM: Mo does all the work until Mabel comes in to clean house. For some reason that no one knows, we cut to the back for an interview with some annoying blonde tv show host? Before she can talk though, HBK interrupts for some reason but the girl doesn't mind.

They pose for a picture until Burt Reynolds interrupts. He says Shawn should shave his chest before Shawn leaves. Can someone pick Bex up off the floor? Apparently the girl's show is called Up All Night and Burt makes a joke saying she keeps him up all night and they both wish there was something they could do about that as the dirty jokes of Mania continue their hallowed tradition.

We go back to the arena after that totally random moment for the Quebecers entrance. They're accompanied by Johnny Polo, a.k.a. Raven in a gimmick that astounds me to this day. Considering what he would become in less than two years, to be Polo here is amazing.

Oh I forgot to mention: MOM's outfits are shiny purple and gold with the writing on Mabel's chest saying whomp there it is. Let's get this over with. The champions jump the apparent Laker fans and double team Mabel. Mo gets a cross body on Pierre and a big old legdrop from Mabel to the back of Pierre's head nearly kills him.

The Quebecers do a sneaky switch and Mo, of course, is in trouble. Jacques backdrops Pierre onto Mo for two. I want this to end very soon. Mo hits the ropes and kind of rolls forward to take down Pierre. False tag to Mabel sets up a missed guillotine legdrop and the tag to Mabel to ZERO reaction.

Mabel misses a charge into what must be a hard buckle as it somehow gets through the layer of flab known as Mabel's gut. On their second attempt the Quebecers actually get a suplex on the fat one. A Cannonball gets two on Mabel as this is DRAGGING. Mabel hits his spin kick and the double splash from him and Mo for no count. After another double splash the champions take a walk for the countout. Well at least it's over.

Rating: F. This was dull and the ending was completely awful. Mabel was so fat that he fell on a Quebecer at a house show

and it was enough to accidentally switch the titles. Mo was totally worthless to the point that Mabel was the better one. What does that tell you?

Another Mania moment is the Ultimate Challenge from Mania 6 which is awesome.

We bring in the celebrities which are a bit weak this year. Some chick from USA and some actor named Donny Wahlberg are here. OH! That isn't a TV station they're saying. It's NKOTB: New Kids on the Block. WOW this is even worse than I thought it was.

WWF Title: Yokozuna vs. Lex Luger

Here we have the first of two WWF Title matches tonight. Due to Lex Luger winning the coin toss he gets the first crack here. The winner of this match faces Bret Hart in the main event, which is stupid as Bret already lost but that's logic and therefore doesn't belong in wrestling. This is a rematch from Summerslam and the theory is that Luger has Yoko's number.

First though we have a guest referee: Mr. Perfect, who hadn't been seen in forever. This Donny dude isn't a bad announcer actually. The fans chant USA almost immediately. Perfect is in a referee shirt and matching pants, making it look like he's in pajamas. Manly pajamas mind you but still pajamas. They stare it down in the middle and Luger hammers away.

Clothesline hits but Yoko doesn't move. Yoko hits one of his own and Luger certainly does move. To the floor and Yoko eats steps so we go back into the ring. This isn't looking good early on. Luger goes aerial and gets a cross body for two. Lex goes for a slam but can't get the fatness up again so Yoko gets going again. Granted he didn't get going in the first place but it sounds better that way I guess.

Yoko tries to get the buckle off a corner but Lex stops him

with punches. We hit a nerve hold which is a nice way to say Yoko is tired and needs to lean on someone to rest for awhile. Two minutes have passed and nothing has changed. Literally, ALL nerve hold for that stretch. It's broken up, Luger fights him off, gets knocked down again and we hit the nerve hold again. We're seven minutes into this match and over half has been nerve holding.

Luger is sent to the floor and Fuji trips him which is somehow the most interesting thing we've had going on so far. Oh look: MORE NERVE HOLDING! I get that Yoko isn't able to move that well and needs to conserve energy for later, but maybe, just maybe, THAT MEANS THIS WAS A BAD IDEA! Luger gets some clotheslines and slams Yoko before the forearm hits.

Cornette and Fuji are brought into the ring which gets them nowhere. Luger covers Yoko who is out cold but Perfect won't count due to the loaded arm. It's a heel move but it's perfectly legal which is my favorite kind. Perfect won't count, Luger isn't happy because he thinks Perfect has better hair, Luger shoves him and it's a DQ. At least it's over.

Rating: F. Sweet merciful crap this was dull. Luger's offense consisted of various clotheslines and punches. Aside from that there was probably 1/3 nerve hold. The fans have one of the loudest BULL CRAP chants I've ever heard. This was an awful match to put it mildly and the ending kills it even worse. Just awful all around.

While it's a nonsense finish, allegedly it was Lex's own fault. There's a fairly popular theory in wrestling that Luger was supposed to leave WM with the title but went out to a bar and got drunk before telling a bunch of the people that he was going to win it. WWF found out and changed the plans, leading to this finish. Whether that's true or not, I wouldn't be surprised. Luger's push was monumental at this point and him getting the title would have made sense.

Luger screams at Perfect in the back over what happened.

WM moment: from WM 7, the awful blindfolded match. Even Vince says "yet another WM moment" as he's getting sick of them too.

Harvey Whipleman and the Fink get into an argument. Adam Bomb runs out to protect Harvey from the horrible terror that is the Fink and his slaps of death. Earthquake runs out for this.

Earthquake vs. Adam Bomb

Seriously? Quake still had a job in 19 freaking 94??? This is literally three moves long. Belly to belly, powerslam, Earthquake, pinfall. What in the heck was the point of this? No rating of course.

Jim Cornette cuts another of his great fast talking promos that so many people should study. Really, this guy is gold. You can just hear the passion flowing out of him whenever he speaks.

Another Mania Moment is Taker appearing at Mania 8. There was nothing to it and I have no clue why this was listed here.

Intercontinental Title: Shawn Michaels vs. Razor Ramon

No backstory again, so here I am to save the day! The idea here is Shawn was the IC Champion but was fired/released from the company for testing positive for steroids. He was the IC Champion at the time and was stripped for not defending it often enough. However he was rehired a few months later and still had the title belt. He said he was the real IC Champion, despite Razor Ramon having won it in his absence. The solution: this match. Put both belts above the ring and the first person to go get them wins both.

The announcer says there are no rules in this match, then lists off how you win. That sounds like a set of rules to me. Dang if you can't trust wrestling what can you trust? I can't really overstate the importance of this one enough as it made

both guys' careers and changed wrestling forever, as now instead of being about power and muscle guys, younger and more athletic guys were stealing the show with high flying and innovative stuff. Huge stuff to say the least.

Also for a bit of known trivia, Shawn vs. Bret was the first ladder match nearly two years before this. Razor stares at Diesel as we get going. Shawn tries to move around and use his speed so Razor grabs him by the throat and hits a chokeslam. The cameraman runs into the referee on the floor as it's been far too long since I watched this match.

Diesel hits a clothesline to Razor on the floor and is thrown out almost immediately. NOW we get to the good stuff. Razor hits a HUGE clothesline to send Shawn to the floor as this is incredibly hard hitting already. Razor peels back some mats on the floor but the fight goes back to the ring. Shawn backdrops his way out of the Razor's Edge and Razor crashes onto the concrete.

IT'S LADDER TIME as this is about to get awesome. Shawn gets the baseball slide into the ladder into Razor's ribs and the Bad Guy is in trouble now. The ladder is fully in the ring now and Shawn begins his dominance. The ribs take a big old pounding now as Shawn literally drops the ladder on his back.

Shawn goes up but Razor grabs a foot. We get the famous spot of the match as Shawn jumps off the ladder with a splash onto Razor which has aired in about 1000 highlight reels. Shawn goes up again but Razor shoves the ladder over, sending Shawn into the ropes to put both guys down.

We get the always cool Wile E. Coyote shot from above which is cool to see as Razor looks a bit dead. Shawn goes into the ladder in the corner and crashes to the floor. So far all of the big bumps involving the ladder have been done by Shawn as the biggest Razor has done was being thrown over the top before the ladder came into play.

Slingshot into the ladder and Shawn hangs on so it falls backwards and crushes him against the floor. Razor is alone in the ring now with the ladder and goes up but Shawn dives in off the top for the last second save. Both guys climb and the slug out is on. Razor slams him off the ladder and takes a rather slow fall down onto the ropes to the point where he doesn't actually hit the ground.

Shawn dropkicks him off the ladder and Razor takes a decent enough bump this time. Razor is still down so Shawn just shoves the ladder on top of him. Why mess with the simple stuff? Big Piledriver to Razor has his down for a good while now. Shawn gets in another famous spot as he rides the ladder down onto Razor and both guys are in pain again.

And alas it has to end as Shawn puts the ladder over top of Razor which doesn't really do much. Razor gets up, shoves the ladder and along with it Shawn over. His leg gets caught in the ropes and Razor climbs unhindered to the top to become the undisputed Intercontinental Champion. Shawn did the majority of the bumping here but the idea of Shawn doing everything in this is absurd.

Rating: A+. The best gimmick match of all time at that point by a long shot. This is one of the handful of WWF matches give five stars by Meltzer and for once I agree with him. These two beat the tar out of each other and it still more than holds up over fifteen years later. This is what made Shawn and Razor, which is rare to see for two guys.

There was a scheduled ten man tag scheduled that had to be cut for time reasons. It was held on Raw a few weeks later. Nothing special.

DiBiase tries to buy the President who brushes him off.

We get a pretty sweet video package on Bret, further cementing his title win tonight. A similar package airs on Yoko but it's far worse, and it leads us to the main event.

WWF Title: Yokozuna vs. Bret Hart

This is the first time ever that we get a rematch in the main event of Mania. A bunch of mid 90s celebrities introduce themselves and maybe 10 people care. Seriously, this NEVER works as they're outdated in two years 99% of the time. However, the guest referee is introduced: HOT ROD HIMSELF, Rowdy Roddy Piper! Holy goodness, this makes absolutely no sense but who cares??? Burt Reynolds is the drunk ring announcer for the evening.

Yoko is out first, as if Bret needed anymore guarantees that he'll be winning here. This is a year after their first match and Bret has come a LONG way since then and here it actually seems that he's got a chance to pull it off. If you watch WM 9's main event and then this one back to back, you'll see exactly what I'm talking about. A very subtle difference also is Bret's music. Last year he was using the Hart Foundation's old music, whereas this time it's his own song.

This match also truly feels like a main event. You really get the feeling that this is truly it. The more I see the finish the more I like it. Oh yeah we have an actual match here.

Yokozuna jumps Bret to start as Bret's knee is still messed up from earlier in the night which is the kind of continuity you rarely get anymore. Yoko misses what can only be described as a running Frog Splash and both guys are down. Piper counts a bit fast for my taste. Bret gets a headbutt and hurts himself.

Down goes Yoko off a solid shot as the crowd is clearly pretty tired. Bret knocks him back down with just strikes which isn't considered a huge deal this year. Huge difference there which helps a lot. Piper drills Cornette for interfering. Legdrop hits Bret and he's in big trouble. He fights back and gets a bulldog for a long two. You can't blame Piper as he DOVE to get the hand down.

Bret gets up and limps ever so slightly. NICE. A clothesline

puts Yoko down for two again. Bret comes off the middle rope and jumps into a belly to belly and the Canadian is in trouble. Yoko takes him to the corner to set up the Banzai Drop but he literally slips and falls off the ropes and Bret climbs on for the pin to get the title back. It sounds corny but this surprisingly worked.

Rating: C+. The main reason this match is miles ahead of last year's is it gets a little more time. With Yoko you can't go much longer than 15 minutes as he gets tired as well as he starts to run out of moves that he can use. This match clocks in at about 11 minutes, which doesn't sound like much when compared to the nine and a half that it got the year before, but the time really does help.

There's far less of the match dedicated to Bret trying to find a way around Yoko's size and he just goes for it from bell to bell and it's a huge improvement. He comes off as a challenger and not an underdog the entire time which helps it out a lot. Rather than having Bret doing whatever he can to survive, Bret looks like a guy looking for a way to win, which is a subtle but key difference. FAR better than last year.

Luger comes down to congratulate him as the locker room empties for the big celebration. Owen won't get in there though and we have the feud for the rest of the year.

Overall Rating: A. You have a 9 match card with two all time classics and do I really need to go on? This show is all about that and the rest is just kind of there, but all the bad stuff is pretty short. When you have two A+ matches on one show, it's kind of hard to say it's anything but great. The one criticism I have: why wasn't Luger vs. Bret the main event? Either way, this was a great show as it feels epic on all levels and it comes off that way too. Definitely worth seeing.

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Monday Night Raw – August 20, 2001: This Is A Joke Right? Where's The Real Show?

Monday Night Raw

Date: August 13, 2001

Location: ARCO Arena, Sacramento, California

Attendance: 9,182

Commentators: Paul Heyman, Jim Ross

We're past Summerslam now and the Alliance war continues. Rock got the WCW Title last night and Austin cheated to keep the WWF Title. Other than that not a lot happened last night. Still though, they had a well hyped show last night and the show worked very well. It was probably the high point of the Alliance Era PPVs. Tonight we start on the road to Unforgiven. Let's get to it.

Austin is greeted by a big celebration from the Alliance. This is Steve Austin Appreciation Night. He says he'll lead by example and has more of last night for him if need be.

Stacy Keibler/Torrie Wilson/Ivory vs. Jacqueline/Molly Holly/Lita

The Alliance beat up Lita last night so there's your story. Ivory and Molly start with a nice little gymnastics routine. Off to Jackie vs. Torrie and guess who wins that one. Jackie takes down both blondes and here's Lita to a big reaction. She beats on Ivory for a bit and then brings Jackie back in. A

tornado DDT gets a quick pin on Ivory. It's as out of nowhere as it sounds.

Rating: D. What exactly are you looking for here? The match was nothing and a few of the girls looked good. In short, it was a Divas match and no one cared. These feuds went nowhere until Trish FINALLY started getting better and feuded with Lita to make anyone care in the slightest about the Divas.

The Dudleys are in the back with Test when Stephanie comes in. She says they've had issues in the past but now they're both more mature. Last night she didn't get what she wants so tonight she wants Test to take Jericho out for good. Test calls Stephanie a bad name and says he'll do it.

Here's Rock, the new WCW Champion. Booker had talked about taking Rock to school but last night, Booker got taken to People's Elbow 101, Advanced Rock Bottoms and Getting Whipped All Over The Building 407. Rock requests the appearance of Booker and it's midget time. He ends every sentence with sucka and is convinced to do a Spinarooni. Now it's a Moonwalk, the Running Man and the Deion Sanders dance.

Rock wants to know if Booker wants to keep dancing until Lance Storm comes out. Hijinks will end tonight and there's a WCW Title match with Storm challenging later. Rock doesn't know who Storm is. Storm superkicks the midget which isn't quite as good as Shawn superkicking the girl a few years back. Somehow this took over twelve minutes.

We recap the APA chasing Shane off during the WCW Title match last night, resulting in Bradshaw taking Shane down with the Clothesline.

APA/Scotty 2 Hotty/Big Show/Spike Dudley/Billy Gunn vs. Dudley Boys/Chuck Palumbo/Sean O'Haire/Hugh Morrus/Tommy Dreamer

There are twelve in this if you don't feel like counting. Farroq vs. Palumbo to start things off. Quickly off to Sean

and Scotty. I wouldn't expect any long segments in this match. Morrus and Dreamer try to double team Hotty but get taken down by a double clothesline. Here's Gunn who gets caught in What's Up but the APA saves. Bradshaw pounds on Tommy and Spike adds a double stomp off the top.

Dreamer catches Spike in a half crab but it's off to Bubba for some power. A HUGH double flapjack gets two for D-Von. Morrus comes in and walks into a Dudley Dog. Show comes in and everything breaks down. It's finishers all around for the next minute or so, ending with Show killing Dreamer with the chokeslam for the win.

Rating: C-. This was a big mess but the parade of finishers is always fun to see. It makes no sense as why wouldn't they use those all the time, but it's always cool to see. This was really the only way to get most of the people on the roster onto the shows, especially before the Brand Split, which really was a good thing.

Hurricane gives his testimonial about why he loves Steve Austin, which turns into why Green Lantern is awesome. Austin is his new favorite though.

Chris Jericho vs. Test

Jericho is all banged up from the Rhino match last night. He says nothing of note pre match. Jericho hits a quick forearm to start but walks into a full nelson slam for no cover. Test hammers away but a powerbomb is countered and Jericho takes him down with a spinwheel kick. A neckbreaker sets up the bulldog but Stephanie breaks up the Lionsault. The big boot misses and Jericho knocks him to the floor. Chris goes after Stephanie but here's Rhino. Jericho sends him into the steps but walks into the big boot for the pin. Short match and not much to it.

Last night Christian accidentally speared Edge but Edge won the IC Title anyway. Christian comes up to Edge and talks

about how they won the King of the Ring and the IC Title last night. Edge raises his glasses at this but lets Christian take the trophy for his match tonight.

Austin inspires Stasiak so much that Stasiak can't say it right so we get well over 40 takes of it.

Mick Foley is at WWF New York and is inspired by Angle almost winning but getting screwed last night.

WCW Title: Lance Storm vs. The Rock

Storm jumps the champ to start and Rock is in some trouble. Rock comes back with a clothesline and punches away. Storm hits that perfect superkick of his to knock Rock to the floor. Back in Rock charges into an elbow and Storm gets two off a clothesline. Storm punches him down but walks into a spinebuster to put both guys down. The champ gets two off a DDT. Rock Bottom ends this clean.

Rating: D+. The match wasn't bad I guess but what was the point? Rock was never in any real jeopardy (as expected) but there wasn't even a hurdle for him to get over. This went nowhere though and seemed kind of stupid to do to a guy that lost the IC Title last night. Couldn't they swap in like Hugh Morrus or someone like that here?

Little Booker comes in for a People's Elbow and two Spinaroonis.

We recap last Thursday where Saturn beat Moppy and then had Moppy stolen. He put her face on a milk carton. I think Raven wound up doing it.

European Title: Christian vs. Matt Hardy

Christian makes fun of the Sacramento Kings before the match because he's turning heel soon. Lita still has a bad leg. Christian jumps the champ to start which doesn't work that well. Matt is sent to the floor but is back in quickly for

more punching. Matt hits a clothesline and escapes the Unprettier. Twist is countered and Christian gets a rollup with his feet on the ropes for two. Reverse DDT gets two. Unprettier is countered into the Twist for Matt to retain. This was nothing again.

Package of stills from Austin vs. Angle last night.

Booker arrives over an hour into the show and gets laughed at.

Page thinks Sara wants to sleep with him. He's not worried about Undertaker.

Taz says Austin has toughened him up.

Booker demands a rematch with Rock tonight. Since Shane owns WCW, couldn't he make the title match anytime he wanted to? Regal makes midget jokes and explains the midget to Booker. Tajiri laughs so tonight it's Booker vs. Tajiri.

Booker T vs. Tajiri

Booker is in street clothes. Booker welcomes Tajiri to the fire so Tajiri fires (see what I did there?) off kicks. Tajiri gets caught by a beating and we go to the floor. Booker beats on him for about two minutes until the referee disqualifies him. Yeah keep making those young and popular guys look like jobbers WWF. Keep it up and see what's going to happen with it.

Taker makes sure Sara wants to fight DDP tonight.

Diamond Dallas Page vs. Sara

Sara is allowed a free slap. Page shoves her down so Undertaker pulls him to the floor, chokeslams him on the concrete, the bell rings and Sara gets the pin in four seconds. And AGAIN, a WCW guy is made to look like a joke, meaning there's no point in caring about him at all. Stuff like this is probably one of the biggest reasons the Invasion

failed (along with the McMahons and it lasting five months).

Here's the whole Alliance for Steve Austin Appreciation Night. Some of them have gifts for Austin. Heyman is the master of ceremonies here. Hurricane says that Green Lantern has been his hero but now Austin is his hero. Didn't he say this earlier? He's going to wear an Austin shirt instead of the Green Lantern one. Kanyon gives him a Who Better Than Austin shirt. Debra gives him a plate of the famous Debra Cookies. Heyman saves him from having to eat one by airing a video package of Austin's time in the Alliance. All five weeks of it.

Stephanie gets in and calls the rest of the Alliance in as well. And now, a song. Yes a song. It's the high point of the camp value of this, minus the good aspect of it. Lillian is brought in to sing, and I couldn't possibly make this up, Wind Beneath Our Ring. It's a version of a Bette Middler song and the words are on the screen with a bouncing Austin head. Stephanie makes her start again for a lack of heart and soul.

Now Stephanie is going to lead it. JR: "Oh God not that." It makes Vickie Guerrero sound like Shakira if you're interested. Chavo sings some of it for some reason as does Terri. Even Raven sings as does Justin Credible. I'm in awe of this. Not because it's good or anything, but because THIS IS AIRING ON MONDAY NIGHT RAW.

Austin thanks everyone for it and yells at Tazz for wearing a Tazz shirt. FINALLY Angle arrives in the milk truck to spray everyone down/ Stasiak takes a header into the truck which gets the only laugh of the show out of me. JR says the Billion Dollar Princess has just become the Dairy Queen to end the show.

Overall Rating: F. There's nothing redeeming about this show at all. Nothing. The longest match is the twelve man tag at just over five minutes. Everything else is a squash with the

Alliance guys being decimated AGAIN. Then to top it off, they sang a Bette Middler song until a guy came out and sprayed everyone down with milk. Even TNA would say that was stupid. Horrible HORRIBLE show and one of the worst I can remember in a long time.

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