

# 2017 Awards: Moment of the Year

I saved this one for last for...well no apparent reason actually.

While there are all kinds of great matches and promos, sometimes it's something very simple that work better than anything else. The moments are the things that you remember more than anything else and some of these are bigger than others. Some of them are important moments and some of them are just fun, but they all belong on here.

Before we get to the regular nominees, we need to get a quick honorable mention. The night after Wrestlemania, Vince McMahon was about to announce the new General Manager of Raw. He mentioned the new GM being bald...and here comes Teddy Long to accept the offer. Teddy started making a tag match but Vince said it wasn't him. Teddy said "my bad" and danced off into the back. I laughed very hard and while it wasn't important, it entertained me when I was sick and I'll always take that.

Sticking with the night after Wrestlemania, there was the opening of Raw. Just...WOW. The opening sequence felt like it went on for an hour with the THANK YOU TAKER chants but once Reigns came out, the fans absolutely went off on him because he had taken their hero. This was pure anger from the crowd and that's exactly what it was supposed to be. The follow up needed to be better but what an opening to the biggest Raw of the year.

What was the follow up? That would be Braun Strowman turning over an ambulance with Reigns inside. I'm not even sure what to say about that. Of course the visual was faked but at the same....HE TURNED AN AMBULANCE OVER! What else can you really ask here? It was one of the coolest visuals WWE has put

together in a long time and made Strowman feel like a star.

It's been too long since we've gone down to NXT so we'll have to look at Aleister Black saying Velveteen Dream's name. I called this a promo but when the whole thing is four words long, I'm not sure you can really call it a promo. The idea of giving Dream everything that he wanted in the worst circumstances was poetic justice and an amazing moment at the same time.

We'll stick around in NXT with Tommaso Ciampa turning on Johnny Gargano to split up DIY. They took the perfect amount of time to make this work and the Chicago fans were STUNNED. This is going to set up one of the biggest matches NXT has had in years and when Ciampa comes back, likely to screw Gargano over somehow, the reaction is going to be amazing. The split couldn't have been better though and the beatdown worked very well also. Throw in the awesome shock and it's very high on the list.

In a moment that I was lucky enough to be there for, we have the Hardys returning to WWE at Wrestlemania. I was in the stadium for that and heard New Day say that there was going to be another team. During the pause, I got to my feet and said out loud "they wouldn't". And then they did with the Hardys returning only a night after having a huge ladder match in Ring of Honor. This felt big and was the big moment that Wrestlemania needed. Well one of them at least.

The final two are about as different as you can be and we'll start with the comedy option. Back on February 13, Chris Jericho was trying to show Kevin Owens that they were still great friends. This led to Jericho, in a shiny outfit that only he could pull off, presenting Owens various presents (including a painting involving the two of them and Jericho without pants) but the big finale made the whole thing. Owens gave Jericho a new list but it had Jericho's name on it. Jericho pulls the list out of the box....and it was the List of

KO. The beatdown was on and the Wrestlemania match was made.

They got me. I'm not exactly easy to surprise in wrestling but I was actually shocked when that List of KO appeared. It was the perfect way to split up the team and Owens looked like the biggest heel in the world. At the same time though, Jericho looked like he was trying to be a good guy but Owens just turned on him. That's how to make Jericho a face, and it worked to perfection. Amazing segment here and it's going to take something special to top it.

And then the Undertaker retired (I'm going with that until I see otherwise). He took his gear off and stood in the middle of the ring in front of the Orlando crowd and then put it back on for one final time. When I looked at him, I saw Mark Callaway in Undertaker's clothes, which was the first time that had ever been seen. Undertaker walked up the aisle and then descended through the stage to say goodbye. This one doesn't need much more of an explanation and if it stands, will be one of the best moments in wrestling history.

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## **2017 Awards: Non-Wrestler of the Year**

Who says you have to be a wrestler to be in wrestling?

While this might as well be called the Paul Heyman Award, there are certainly several candidates for it this time around. It might be an announcer or an interviewer but there are a variety of options this time around. I'm not sure if anyone is going to get past Heyman this year, but when you show up every now and then, it's easier to look great.

Actually yeah, this year someone can pass Heyman for the exact reason mentioned: he's not around very often and that brings him down a lot. Sometimes you need to do more than talk about how awesome Brock Lesnar is and while Heyman can do that better than anyone else, I'd like to see him around a little more often to declare him the best in this role.

We'll go with someone who is more of a jack of all trades now with Corey Graves. Is there anything this guy can't do? He hosts shows, he does commentary on both major shows and he rips on Byron Saxton like no one else can do. Graves is fun to listen to and has some rather good heel roles in there, which few others know how to do anymore. He's very talented and I'd love to see him do this for a very long time to come.

There's also perennial nominee Dario Cueto, who brings a completely new dimension to this by being an actual actor. He's capable of being incredible menacing while also calculating, but that evil smile is just perfect for looking like the biggest villain in the world. I'm really hoping he's back for the next season as the show really wouldn't work without him.

If Corey is a jack of all trades, Renee Young is a jill of them. She's the perfect combination of smart, funny, edgy, flirty and interesting that you can imagine her pulling off anything you ask her to do. She does the occasional storyline but for the most part, she's the most polished interviewer WWE has had in a very long time. There's a certain charm to her that you can't make up and it works like a...well a charm actually.

Above all though, there's Zelina Vega. To have showed up from pretty much nowhere and become the best manager in NXT is quite the accomplishment. Vega and Andrade Cien Almas are one of the best pairings around as Vega is the perfect compliment to her. She's stunning, manipulative, evil, conniving and can be physical when she needs to be. It's made Almas interesting,

which seemed to be one of the most impossible tasks in all of NXT. Vega pulled it off though and that's enough to win this hands down.

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## 2017 Awards: Show of the Year

It all kind of depends on this no?

Sure there are good matches and good promos, but which of them come together to make the best overall presentation? Some of them are of course better than others and some don't need to exist (which they don't) but when they work well, they can be some of the best shows you'll see in a long time.

We'll start things off at the beginning of the year with Wrestle Kingdom XI. The Wrestlemania of New Japan almost never fails to impress The main event was one of the best matches of the year and while I liked Kushida's match better (which tends to be the case more often than not), this was an excellent show from top to bottom. A bit long for my taste, but the biggest show of the year should be longer.

Speaking of the New Japan Wrestlemania, I'll throw in the WWE's Wrestlemania as well. The show didn't quite live up to the standards of some of its predecessors but that's not to say it wasn't very good. The Hardys return was a great surprise and the ending made it feel historic, definitely giving this some great moments top to bottom. If this had that one blow away match, it would probably win the whole thing.

We'll wrap up the main roster portion here with Royal Rumble, which did have that blow away match as John Cena defeated AJ Styles to win his sixteenth World Title. The Rumble itself might not have been the classic it needed to be, but the drama

near the end was very good and there wasn't a really bad match on the show. It's one of my favorite shows of the year and this one didn't disappoint whatsoever.

But yeah, this is all about Takeover and that's really not a surprise. We'll start with Takeover: Chicago, which had the Match of the Year in Tyler Bate vs. Pete Dunne II but also a heck of a ladder match for the Tag Team Titles, followed by the awesome split of DIY. The triple threat for the Women's Title was very good and the NXT Title match worked as well, because as is the rule in NXT: you really don't have a single bad match.

Overall though, Takeover: WarGames is the Show of the Year and it's not even close. Where do you begin with this one? The NXT Title match was a great surprise, WarGames actually delivered in spades and there's the amazing (and still underrated by me) Velveteen Dream vs. Aleister Black match. The Women's Title was won by someone new and the opening hoss fight were good as well. This one delivered as only NXT can and it beat everything else in the year.

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## **Impact Wrestling – January 18, 2018: Nope. No No, No No No, No No, NO!**

### **Impact Wrestling**

Date: January 18, 2018

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Jeremy Borash, Josh Matthews

This is another interesting show as the main event is a big barbed wire

match between LAX and OVE. Well in theory at least, as for some reason that is airing on Impact's new Twitch channel just after the regular show ends. Not that they advertised that last week or anything. There's also a "World Title match" in the form of more clips from another promotion's show. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

### X-Division Title: Dezmond Xavier vs. Taiji Ishimori

Xavier is challenging. An early lockup sees the champ driven into the corner and it's an actual clean break. Ishimori's break isn't as clean and things get a bit testy, all the way to an armdrag. A twisting rollup gives Ishimori two and they trade dropkicks as things speed up in a hurry.

Back in and Dezmond strikes away in the corner before grabbing a chinlock. Something close to a Last Chancery keeps Ishimori in trouble but as usual, it doesn't last long. Back up and another dropkick sends the champ outside and a suicide dive puts him over the barricade. Dezmond hits a huge flip dive from the ring over the barricade to drop the champ (that's some impressive athleticism) and we take a break. Back with Dezmond hitting a jumping cutter, followed by a dropkick to the back of the head for two.

Ishimori is fine enough to hit a delayed superplex for two of his own and they're both down again. A Vader Bomb hits Dezmond's raised boot though and the Final Flash gets two. Back up and Dezmond slips out of a Tombstone attempt before hitting a standing moonsault for two more. That just earns him a gutbuster, followed by Ishimori's 450 to retain the title at 16:33.

**Rating:** B-. If that's their big, blow away match for the division, they're going to be having some problems. The match was completely acceptable and little more, mainly because there's not much of a story being told. They were doing their moves to each other and while those looked good, I need a little more than just "here are some nice moves".

OVE promises to take over everything tonight.

Long recap of OVE vs. LAX, including their battles over the titles and OVE bringing in Sami Callihan as backup. This eats up nine minutes. My goodness stop acting like this is Edge and Christian vs. the Hardys vs. the Dudleys. A barbed wire match isn't all that impressive.

Video on American Top Team taking out James Storm and Moose trying for revenge. This show is starting to feel like a pay per view pre-show instead of a regular episode.

Flashback of the week: Aron Rex wins the first Grand Championship.

Video on Ethan Carter III vs. Matt Sydal for the Grand Championship.

Video (COME ON ALREADY!) on Gail Kim vacating the title and Laurel Van Ness winning it, much to Allie's annoyance.

Allie is ready for her title shot next week because she's tired of being treated so badly by Van Ness. This was an old school style promo and it worked quite well.

### Kongo Kong vs. Chandler Park

I did not wait for nearly an hour for a freaking Kongo Kong match. Chandler's strikes to the chest have no effect but Kong's missed charge gives him a breather. That's about as long as it lasts too as Kongo whips him into the corner for a Cannonball. An over the shoulder sitout Tombstone is good for the pin on Park at 1:57.

Kong gives Chandler a top rope splash and Joseph throws up the injury X. This is what the world was waiting for: more Kongo Kong.

Johnny Impact wants to take the World Title back to Los Angeles. Drake is from LA too, so does he want Eli to retain?

Alberto El Patron is in Detroit for the sole purpose of taking the Impact Wrestling World Title.

Eli Drake is ready to defend the title anywhere, including Detroit.

Impact Wrestling World Title: Eli Drake vs. Alberto El Patron vs. Johnny Impact



Drake is defending and this is at another poorly lit Border City Wrestling show. It's a brawl to start with the ropes looking very loose. Impact is sent shoulder first into the post and Drake powerslams Alberto for two. They head outside (likely to be away from the unsafe looking ropes) with Drake chairing Impact down.

We're clipped (erg) to Alberto hitting double knees in the corner on the champ for two but Impact comes out from underneath a pile of chairs to blast both guys. The breakdancing legdrop gets two on Alberto but Eli comes back in with something resembling a ProtoBomb for two of his own with Alberto pulling the referee out. Patron can't hit the Gravy Train on Drake but a Backstabber gets two with Johnny pulling the referee out.

Now it's Johnny hitting his flip neckbreaker on Alberto but, say it with me, Drake pulls the referee out. The referee yells at all of them so it's a triple superkick to take him down. Another referee comes in to count two on Johnny after a low blow and it's Drake taking over. Drake isn't happy with a two count so the second referee takes a Gravy Train. The locker room empties out and the match is a no contest at around 7:20.

**Rating:** D+. It was better than when they did this a few weeks ago but it's still coming off as this match not being important enough to air in the Impact Zone. Having a small, dimly lit arena hosting a World Title match makes the title feel small and the match wasn't even very good. Just treat the World Title like it means something. That really shouldn't be too much to ask.

### Rosemary vs. KC Spinelli

Josh hypes up all the available DVDs of wrestlers who aren't on the roster anymore. Way to promote your current talent. Rosemary gets her choke over the ropes as JB mentions that next week it's Drake vs. El Patron vs. Impact for the title in a cage as the main event of Genesis. Yes that feud continues, but yes next week is also a special episode, which I don't recall hearing until just now. Spinelli kind of dances into a hip attack in the corner, followed by a bulldog for two. A discus lariat gives KC two but Rosemary fakes her out with the mist, setting up the Red Wedding for the pin at 3:38.

**Rating:** D. The match was a quick win for Rosemary but the announcers treated it as a place to put all of its announcements. I'm assuming Rosemary will be in the title hunt soon enough, presumably feuding with Taya Valkyrie once she get the whole visa situation sorted. Other than that though, this was just more filler on a show full of it.

Post match Rosemary says she wants to face Laurel but has to wait for our favorite bunny Allie to get her chance. Rosemary wants the next shot but gets jumped by Hania, who has wrestled for Ring of Honor before. Hania lays her out with a reverse DDT on the steps.

In case you didn't get the idea earlier, here's a seven minute video on the barbed wire match.

Genesis preview.

The entrances for the barbed wire match wrap us up and it's off to the Twitch channel. And that's the show. I'll edit in the match after it airs on Twitch.

**Overall Rating:** D-. The ONLY reason this isn't a failure is the opener was pretty good. This show was a joke as they spent two hours hyping up this barbed wire match, which better be the most amazing thing anyone has ever seen. The World Title match felt like an afterthought, Kongo Kong won a squash and Hania debuted. Other than that, this was ALL about the barbed wire match, which apparently they can't even air on TV. That didn't stop them from hyping it up last week, but now we have to go somewhere else to see it. This show was bad, but worse than that it felt like a waste of my time, which just doesn't work.

### LAX vs. OVE

Six man tag with the ropes replaced by barbed wire. They slug it out to start and head outside with OVE staring up at LAX. Shouting ensues until Santana hits a running flip dive to take everyone out. Callihan and Ortiz head inside and they have...forks. The Abdullah the Butcher tribute begins before they both get in a stab to the forehead. Ortiz is tossed into the barbed wire and Callihan is sent in a few seconds later.

A spear sends Dave Crist into a barbed wire board in the corner but Ortiz takes a slow motion charge into it as well. Jake Crist tries an O'Connor Roll for the sake of being kicked into the wire. Homicide wraps the wire into Jake's mouth and it's time to head outside for more violence. Chairs and barbed wire boards are swung, followed by a double suplex onto another barbed wire board.

Back in and Homicide pours alcohol onto Dave's open wounds, only to have Sami DDT him onto a trashcan lid for two. Jake gets suplexed through a barbed wire board on the floor, followed by Homicide hitting a cutter "onto" the barbed wire board. The Gringo Killer is broken up and Homicide is suplexed onto the ropes, breaking them down. We take a break (because this was originally set up for TV) with Jake being sent through more wire and onto a table.

The wire is still wrapped around Jake but Santana cuts him free so he can be Death Valley Driven through a barbed wire board for two. Dave spears Santana through a table to the floor, leaving Homicide to be tombstoned onto a chair wrapped in barbed wire for two. Sami loads up two tables in the ring but stops to piledrive Dave instead. A ladder is brought in but Konnan hits Callihan with a barbed wire bat. Ortiz stabs Dave with some wooden spikes and superplexes him through the two tables for the pin at 16:57.

**Rating:** N/A. I rate wrestling, and this had nothing to do with it. I hate this death match bull\*\*\*\* and all of the morons who try to tell me that it's REAL wrestling. This was a bunch of stupid spots with people torturing themselves for the sake of trying to get people to watch their stupid show because they're so freaking pathetic that they have to air commercials for this stuff instead of a regular show. This nonsense ticks me off like nothing else and makes me want this stupid company to finally die so it can stop embarrassing the wrestlers who work hard but get stuck dealing with this kind of garbage.

### Results

Taiji Ishimori b. Dezmond Xavier – 450 splash

Kongo Kong b. Chandler Park – Sitout Tombstone

Johnny Impact vs. Alberto El Patron vs. Eli Drake went to a no contest

Rosemary b. KC Spinelli – Red Wedding

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# **Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2007 (2018 Redo): The Texas Hogan vs. Warrior**

## **Royal Rumble 2007**

Date: January 28, 2007

Location: AT&T Center, San Antonio, Texas

Attendance: 13,500

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Tazz, Michael Cole, Joey Styles, John Bradshaw Layfield

This show received the same amount of votes as 2001 and sounded intriguing so here's a bonus redo. We're back in Texas here with Undertaker and Shawn Michaels both in the Rumble, meaning good things should be happening. There's also a well remembered John Cena vs. Umaga

match, which should be a lot of fun. Let's get to it.

The opening video is your standard look back at the history of the show, including what it means to win and go to Wrestlemania. Well that's certainly a big deal. The rest of the card (not so big of a deal) is discussed as well, mainly focusing on Cena vs. Umaga.

We hear from all six announcers because WWE thinks we need to have six announcers. Just wait until there's basically a press row.

### MNM vs. Hardy Boyz

The Hardys had made a comeback late in 2006 and their main rivalry was with MNM. Joey Mercury is coming in with a shattered nose, meaning he's got a face mask. MNM has Melina in their corner and just...wow. That's really all that needs to be said. Matt comes in with a dislocated jaw and Jeff is Intercontinental Champion, showing you how balanced the team was. Nitro jumps Matt from behind to start and Mercury comes in to go after Matt's injured face.

Matt takes over though and brings Jeff in, meaning it's time for the WOOing from the crowd. It must be a North Carolina thing. Jeff's atomic drop into the legdrop between the legs gets two and it's back to Matt. Johnny sends him into the buckle though and we're down to the beating. A good looking/hard kick to the head has Matt in trouble as MNM stays on the face for the sake of revenge. Makes sense actually and the kind of thing you wouldn't see a lot of the time.

Melina hits the screeching because...that sound made me lose my train of thought so we'll go to Matt being caught in a chinlock. Mercury misses a middle rope elbow though and it's off to Jeff to speed things back up. A facebuster gets two on Johnny, followed by a Whisper in the Wind for the same with Mercury having to make a save. The Hardys hit their top rope legdrop/splash combination but Jeff is banged up and Nitro stays on the ribs.

We hit the waistlock for a bit until Jeff reverses into a rollup for two. Nitro grabs a bodyscissors as you certainly can't fault their psychology so far. Jeff finally backdrops his way to freedom but, of course, the

referee doesn't see it so Matt stays in trouble. Double teaming doesn't work so well though as Jeff sends MNM into each other, meaning it's off to Matt so house can be cleaned.

The bulldog/clothesline combination gets two but Jeff has to break up the Snapshot (elevated DDT) as everything breaks down. Poetry in Motion is broken up and Nitro's rollup gets two (and more screeching). The Twist of Fate into the Swanton (with Nitro rolling over so it can hit) gives Jeff the pin.

**Rating:** B. Good but not great match here as the Hardys were only going to be able to do so much at this point. I'm not sure what the point was in having MNM lose the matches like this when you need to build younger teams up but at least they were pushing the heck out of the Hardys while they could. Jeff would of course break free and go on to some huge things, but it was WAY too early to realize that yet.

Jonathan Coachman (Raw Executive Assistant) and Teddy Long (Smackdown General Manager) are holding the Rumble drawing (SWEET). After the standard bickering over who will win, Edge comes in to pick his number but first we look at Kelly Kelly (my goodness the WWE women were stunning back then).

Edge's partner Randy Orton (Raw Tag Team Champions) comes in to draw his own number. Orton threatens to eliminate Edge and we get the standard "I'll show you mine, you show me yours" exchange. King Booker comes in to say tell me you didn't just say that. I miss these segments and I have no idea why they don't exist anymore. You can get some nice character development in all of a few seconds with no effort put in. Probably not high concept enough for WWE or something.

We recap Test vs. Bobby Lashley. Test wanted a title shot and is on a roll so he gets to be the sacrificial lamb to the monster champion. It sounds good, but it's Test in 2007.

ECW Title: Test vs. Bobby Lashley

Test is challenging while Lashley does the Brock Lesnar jump to the apron entrance, complete with the same pyro. They start a little slowly until

Lashley spears Test down, sending the Canadian bailing to the ropes. Back up and Lashley avoids a charge and snaps off a great looking t-bone suplex. If he could have talked, he would have block Lesnar's career out of the water.

With the wrestling not working at all, Test tries posting Lashley instead to actually take over. Back in and we hit the armbar for a very, very long time, because that's exactly what you would expect in an ECW match (To be fair, people like Lashley and Test never would have been in ECW to begin with. And there's the whole WWE aspect so maybe the armbar isn't as big of an issue as it seems. Maybe that's enough filler to get through this armbar and...oh sweet we're on to something else.).

Test gets suplexed again but the shoulder gives out, allowing Test to get in the big boot for two. That's his big shot so Test tries a TKO, only to get countered with a belly to belly. A clothesline puts Test on the floor...and that's a countout. Egads this needs a rematch? For TEST? Someone thinks this is worthy of a second match?

**Rating:** F. Just no all around here, between a big power guy using an armbar for such a long stretch of the match, Test in general, the stupid ending and thinking that a pay per view as big as the Royal Rumble isn't enough of a stage to end this nothing feud. Terrible match here and it didn't even feel like a TV main event.

Lashley beats Test up again. Why in the world was this not a clean pin? Lashley pinned him in an even shorter match on the following episode of ECW TV, so what was the point here?

John Cena's ribs are banged up but he'll defend the title anyway. Vince comes in and mocks You Can't See Me, saying he won't be seeing Cena as WWE Champion after tonight. Funny enough line, but Vince vs. Cena doesn't do anything for me.

We recap the Smackdown World Title match with Mr. Kennedy winning a Beat the Clock Challenge to earn the shot at Batista. Kennedy cheated Undertaker out of the shot so Undertaker went after him, only to hit Batista by mistake. That would be saved for Wrestlemania XXIII though, with Kennedy getting the shot and bragging about beating six World

Champions leading up to lucky #7 tonight.

### Smackdown World Title: Mr. Kennedy vs. Batista

Batista is defending and easily tosses Kennedy around with raw power. Back up and some right hands stagger Batista as JBL sings Kennedy's praises. A suplex takes Kennedy down again though and it's time to head outside. Kennedy gets in a shot to the leg to slow Batista a bit and it's time to go to work back inside. We hit a reverse Figure Four of all things (I haven't seen that in years) until Kennedy gets caught in the ropes. A running boot in the corner keeps Batista in trouble as this has been almost one sided so far.

Kennedy grabs a half crab to stay on the leg for a good while until letting go, allowing Batista to snap off a spinebuster. After some holding the knee, Batista starts the comeback with clotheslines and a backdrop, followed by a Kenton Bomb (Kennedy's Regal Roll). The Batista Bomb is broken up though and a ref bump allows Kennedy to get in a low blow. Kennedy's neckbreaker (finisher) gets no count but the fans are chanting for Kennedy. For some reason Kennedy goes to the middle rope but dives into a clothesline. The Batista Bomb retains the title.

**Rating:** D+. Not the worst match in the world here as they didn't bother having Kennedy trying to do more than he could have done. Batista wasn't exactly great against smaller guys so there was definitely a styles clash here. At least the match had a point and felt like a TV main event, which is all this should have been. The fans reacted to Batista's win though and seemed to like Kennedy, even if this really didn't rocket off the launch pad.

JBL is FURIOUS over the non-count off the neckbreaker.

Kevin Thorn and Ariel try to draw a number when Hornswoggle (nearly feral at this point) comes in to do the same. Coach makes a short joke and gets bitten and attacked. Great Khali comes in for the visual joke, followed by grabbing three balls. He leaves two, which Kelly Kelly picks up. You know the joke and you know what Ron Simmons comes in to say.

We recap John Cena vs. Umaga. Cena escaped with a fluke win at New Year's



Revolution but Umaga's manager Armando Alejandro Estrada decided the rematch should be a Last Man Standing match. Umaga injured Cena's ribs coming in for a pretty simple but perfectly acceptable story.

### Raw World Title: John Cena vs. Umaga

Cena is defending, Umaga has manager Armando Alexjandro Estrada in his corner and it's Last Man Standing. It's almost weird to hear Cena get a pretty strong face reaction but it's still in full force here. Cena tries to slug away and even hits a jawbreaker, only to have a single shot to the ribs put him on the floor. Umaga sends him into the steps and it's time to knock Cena up the aisle.

For some reason Cena tries to send Umaga head first into the apron and is promptly beaten down for his efforts. Serves him right. Back in and Cena charges into a clothesline for an eight count. Umaga throws the steps in but Cena snaps Umaga's neck over the top and throws the steps over the top and down onto Umaga's face for another near win. It looked great if nothing else and that's what they were going for there.

Back in and Umaga, whose head is hard enough to survive having steps thrown at them, grabs a bearhug into a belly to belly. Umaga puts the steps up in the corner but the running Umaga Attack only hits steel. Another steps to the head shot drops Umaga again but Cena's high crossbody (Just...why?) is countered into a swinging Rock Bottom (Oh...that's why.). A low blow gets Cena out of trouble and he hits the Throwback onto the steps. The entire finishing sequence is initiated onto the steps but Umaga is too heavy for the FU, sending Cena head first into the steps and busting him open in the process.

That's only good for nine and the fans think Cena sucks (now that's more like it). Cena somehow gets all fired up and tells Umaga to bring it, meaning a bunch of right hands and a Samoan drop to crush Cena all over again. So I guess that's Umaga bringing it. Cena gets tied in the Tree of Woe but Umaga misses a running headbutt. A whip sends Umaga into the post, followed by a heck of a monitor shot to the head. I mean, it shouldn't work on Umaga but that's what they do around here.

For some reason Cena dives at him and gets driven back first into the

post to change control again. You would think Cena would learn at some point. It's time to load up the announcers' tables and since there are three of them, Cena is laid on the third one for a running splash but Cena moves, likely clued in by the running Samoan charging at him. That's only good for nine so Estrada unhooks a rope for the sake of setting up the finish. The turnbuckle is ripped off and Cena grabs an FU before choking Umaga out with the rope in the STF to retain at 23:10.

**Rating:** B+. There wasn't exactly any subtlety in this one and there's nothing wrong with that. Last Man Standing matches are designed to be wild brawls with both guys beating the heck out of each other which is exactly what we got here. Cena had to go to another place to retain the title here and that's the kind of match he needed to boost him to another level. Really fun brawl here with Umaga playing his role perfectly as the monster that has to be stopped somehow.

Wrestlemania ad.

Sandman goes to pick his number but sprays beer everywhere instead. Ric Flair comes in and Kelly hits on him. The lights go out and the rest of Extreme Expose (Brooke Adams and Layla) come in to dance. Again: back in the day when there were jobs for sexy women whose job was nothing more than to be sexy and dance in tiny outfits. There is something to be said about the old days.

We look back at various famous Rumble moments and winners in a nice touch as this is the 20<sup>th</sup> Rumble. That being said, how many times can we have THE MOST STAR STUDDERED ROYAL RUMBLE IN HISTORY???

### Royal Rumble

Ninety second intervals with Ric Flair in at #1 (That's the second time he's been #1. In five appearances he entered #3, #1, #5, #30 and #1 for some of the worst luck ever in this thing.) and Finlay in at #2 in what could be a very interesting midcard match if they were given some time. The promos alone could be interesting. Finlay easily wins a battle of the forearms and catches Flair with a backdrop. A rake to the eyes gets Flair out of trouble and it's Kenny Dykstra (a twenty year old who has given

Flair some issues before) in at #3.

Kenny knocks Flair down but has to save himself from Finlay. Some chops cut Kenny off and it's Matt Hardy in at #4. Still not much going on aside from a bunch of right hands so it's Edge in at #5 for some spears. Flair is knocked through the ropes to the floor and comes up with a pair of chairs. Matt cuts Edge off with a clothesline but Edge is still up to get rid of Flair without much effort. Edge tosses Dykstra as well and Tommy Dreamer is in at #6. Matt can't get Edge out as the announcers joke about how Lawler survived for a long time by hiding underneath the ring. To be fair, it was a smart idea.

Sabu is in at #7 and sets up a table at ringside to fulfill general expectations. Dreamer clotheslines him out of the air though as Jerry impresses the commentators by remembering all of Sabu's nicknames. Cruiserweight Champion (for a YEAR now) Gregory Helms is in at #8 as this isn't exactly lighting the world up so far. More eliminations are teased but there's just nothing going on at the moment and it's really starting to show. Shelton Benjamin is in at #9 and nearly gets Matt out but can't quite put him near the tables.

Matt can't suplex Shelton out either and it's Kane in at #10 (CLEAN THE RING OUT!), giving us a group of Finlay, Hardy, Edge, Dreamer, Sabu, Helms, Benjamin and Kane. House is cleaned in a hurry with a tilt-a-whirl powerslam to Helms and a chokeslam to Edge. Dreamer and Sabu, the latter via a chokeslam through the table, are tossed without much effort (good, as they were nothing more than filler anyway as no one took ECW seriously at this point). CM Punk, not yet a big star, is in at #11 and goes right for Edge which just feels right. We're getting back into the same lull we were in earlier, just with some bigger names.

Finlay punches Punk down but can't get him out (I'm as shocked as you are). King Booker is in at #12 and quickly eliminates Helms. Matt and Finlay can't get rid of Kane so people keep running around and punch each other until Super Crazy (complete with lawnmower noises to start his entrance) is in at #13. More eliminations are teased with no eliminations so Jeff Hardy comes in at #14, hopefully firing things up a bit. We get some double teaming but NO ELIMINATIONS, even when they get in a fight

with Kane.

The Sandman, coming through the crowd, is in at #15, cracks some people with the kendo stick, and is eliminated by Booker in about fifteen seconds. Jeff and Punk both manage to survive and it's Randy Orton (with the sweet Burn in My Light theme) in at #16. Orton and Edge immediately get together to eliminate Crazy and both Hardys, thankfully clearing some of the ring out. US Champion Chris Benoit is in at #17 and slugs away at Booker before grabbing some German suplexes on various people. There's very little to talk about between these entrances aside from kicking and the occasional suplex.

Rob Van Dam is in at #18 and starts firing off the kicks. Kane gets rid of Booker, who gets back in and dumps Kane like a royal jerk. The fight continues at ringside as Viscera, complete with smoking jacket, is in at #19. Rob hammers on Finlay as the announcers make a bunch of fat jokes about Viscera. Johnny Nitro is in at #20, giving us Finlay, Edge, Benjamin, Punk, Orton, Benoit, Van Dam, Viscera and Nitro. It also gives us another section of NOTHING HAPPENING until Benoit throws Shelton over the top but since that might be interesting, Benjamin gets back in.

Kevin Thorn is in at #21 giving us another meaningless body in there. A dropkick knocks Nitro into Viscera but some clotheslines can't get rid of the big man. Hardcore Holly comes in at #22 and the crowd is just DONE. How boring of a match does it take to kill the freaking Royal Rumble crowd? Rob hangs on off a catapult to the apron as there are way too many people in the ring as we wait on someone to come in and clean house.

A bunch of people can't get rid of Viscera so it's hometown boy Shawn Michaels in at #23 and PLEASE HELP US!!! Shawn hits a Thesz press on Finlay (the only person not trying to get rid of Viscera) and dumps him without much effort. Viscera is finally dumped after a superkick from Shawn and everyone else getting together. Shawn gets rid of Shelton and somehow the ring is still overcrowded. Chris Masters is in at #24 and Benoit eliminates Nitro. Chavo Guerrero is in at #25 to really bring up the energy.

Benoit gets rid of Thorn as well and Rob can't find someone to kick. MVP

is in at #26 and dang I missed that clock entrance. Rob dropkicks Masters out as they're doing a good job of keeping the total about the same at worst and going down when they can. Some right hands from Orton can't get rid of Punk and it's Carlito in at lucky #27. JBL insults Cole as is his custom while Shawn is put to the apron and BARELY hangs on in a spot that wakes the crowd up a bit. Great Khali is in at #28 and he has get rid of a bunch of people. Everyone gets chopped down with Holly being the only one eliminated.

Miz (JBL: "Don't worry King, I hate him too.") is in at #29 and Khali gets rid of him in short order. Van Dam, Punk, Carlito, Chavo and Benoit all go out at Khali's hands and it's a Punjabi Plunge to Shawn. There's one name left and there's the gong to give fans hope over Khali. Of course it's Undertaker in at #30, giving us a final group of Edge, Orton, Shawn, MVP, Khali and Undertaker. The giant slugout is on with Undertaker getting the better of it and clotheslining Khali out to REALLY wake the fans up.

Old School hits MVP and we're down to four in a hurry. MVP grabs a chair but Orton takes it away and caves in Undertaker's head. Edge teases spearing Orton but Randy has to catch Shawn with an RK0, sending him underneath the ropes to the floor. A bloody Undertaker gets beaten down by Edge and Orton but of course comes back with right hands and running clotheslines in the corner. The double clothesline puts them down again and it's Snake Eyes into the big boot on Edge.

A chokeslam on Orton is broken up with a spear and Edge blasts Undertaker with the chair. JBL points out the problem that knocking him down makes it even harder to throw him out, which is the only smart point he's made all night. A Conchairto is loaded up but Shawn comes back in to get rid of Orton and Edge. Shawn collapses and it's Undertaker sitting up, closely followed by Shawn's nip up and you it's on now.

Undertaker misses a charge in the corner and Shawn hammers away but gets whipped hard over the buckles. Shawn hangs on with one arm (like he did in 1995) and punches his way out as you can feel the energy here. Another Flair Flip in the corner puts Shawn on the apron but Undertaker misses a running boot and winds up on the apron. Shawn's running forearm can't get

rid of him and a second attempt eats an elbow, allowing Undertaker to get back in.

Shawn grabs a swinging neckbreaker and both guys are down again. That means it's time for the slugout as the fans are almost entirely behind Shawn. A big boot cuts Shawn down but he hangs on the apron again. Undertaker puts him on top and they slug it out with Shawn doing some of the best milking of the drama that you'll ever see. Shawn FINALLY knocks him back to the mat and drops the top rope elbow.

Sweet Chin Music is blocked though and it's a chokeslam to put Shawn down again. Somehow Shawn pops up with another superkick and they're both down for what feels like the fifth time. Shawn tries another superkick with Undertaker against the ropes (how Shawn won in 1996) but gets backdropped out to the floor to give Undertaker the win, making him the first #30 entrant to ever win.

**Rating:** C-. Shawn and Undertaker just came as close as you can get to saving a really boring match with a ten minute segment. That was some of the best drama you'll ever see and you could actually feel the drama at the level you almost never get in the Rumble, right up there with Hogan vs. Warrior back in 1990. Absolutely incredible finish there and they would have been crazy to not run that match at Wrestlemania at some point. It took two years but I'd say it worked well to put it mildly.

The rest of the Rumble though...egads. This was a wreck with WAY too many stretches of people laying around and doing almost nothing at all. You shouldn't have more than eight or nine people in the match but for some reason they had over ten in there multiple times. There was almost nothing in there until Undertaker came in and that's WAY too late to make this work. It doesn't help that almost no big story for the first eighty percent of the match, which really makes the match a chore to sit through. Just check out the ending though because that stuff is incredible.

Shawn looks like he's about to cry and Undertaker points at him. Undertaker soaks in the victory and does the pose at the Wrestlemania sign to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. The ending of the Rumble helps this a lot and the Last Man Standing match is great but the rest of the show just wasn't working at all. This wasn't the best time for the company as they were trying to develop some midcard talent but it wasn't quite there yet. It was still a good show but there was a lot to be desired, especially in the Rumble. Give the Rumble a better middle and this show goes way up. As it is though, it's just pretty good.

### Ratings Comparison

Hardy Boyz vs. MNM

Original: B-

2013 Redo: B

2018 Redo: B

Bobby Lashley vs. Test

Original: D-

2013 Redo: D

2018 Redo: F

Mr. Kennedy vs. Batista

Original: B-

2013 Redo: D+

2018 Redo: D+

John Cena vs. Umaga

Original: C

2013 Redo: B+

2018 Redo: B+

Royal Rumble

Original: B

2013 Redo: C+

2018 Redo: C-

Overall Rating

Original: B

2013 Redo: C+

2018 Redo: C+

My jaw kept falling lower and lower with each of those original ratings. The Rumble rating just shouldn't have been that high either time though.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/26/royal-rumble-count-up-2007-the-best-spot-finally-wins/>

And the 2013 Redo:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/01/21/royal-rumble-count-up-2013-redo-2007-the-battle-of-texas/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Monday Nitro and Thunder Reviews Volume VI: July – December 1999 in e-book or paperback. Check out the information here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2017/11/22/new-book-kbs-monday-nitro-and-thunder-reviews-volume-vi/>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>



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# Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2006: The Eddie Guerrero Show

## Royal Rumble 2006

Date: January 29, 2006

Location: American Airlines Arena, Miami, Florida

Attendance: 16,178

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Joey Styles, Tazz

Eddie Guerrero. If you honestly believe this show is about anyone but him, you're completely wrong and missing the point. Tonight's show is about milking as much as we possibly can out of Eddie's dead body, because the entirety of the Smackdown main event scene until Wrestlemania (and even glimpses of it for years to come) would be about Rey Mysterio fighting for Eddie's memory against people like Orton. I never have been comfortable with this but it is what it is. Let's get to it.

The opening video is about Mark Henry vs. Kurt Angle. The Rumble and Edge vs. Cena gets a little time as well.

Cruiserweight Title: Gregory Helms vs. Kid Kash vs. Funaki vs. Jamie Noble vs. Nunzio vs. Paul London

Kid Kash is champion coming in and this is Texas Tornado rules and one fall to a finish. Helms is from Raw but is here because it's an open invitational. It's a big brawl to start and everyone gangs up on Helms. I don't know if there was a delay of some sort or just a really bad sign, but there are dozens if not hundreds of empty seats visible in the lower arena, most of them opposite the hard camera.

Helms gets beaten into the corner but Kash pulls some other people off for no apparent reason. Nunzio slams Kash onto the mat for one Noble gets two on Nunzio off a powerslam as London hits a dropsalt for two on Noble and Nunzio. Wait apparently those red seats are stairs. Those are rather

distracting and the seating structure is odd as there's a group of about eight seats per row then another set of stairs as opposed to most arenas where there are about twice that many in a row. At least the place isn't as empty as it seemed.

Nunzio hits a slingshot to send Noble into the corner and Funaki adds a bulldog for two. We finally get to the dives with Nunzio diving on a pair of guys, allowing Noble to get two on Kash via a leg lariat. Noble dives on Helms and Nunzio on the floor and Funaki is knocked off the top onto Nunzio and Noble. London kicks Kash to the floor as well and dives on everyone not named Helms with a shooting star off the top.

Back in and London loads up a shooting star press onto Kash but Helms goes up top at the same time and hooks a swinging neckbreaker to bring London down for two. A brainbuster from Kash kills London again but two guys come in for the save. All six guys are back in the ring now and Kash gets two off a Backstabber on Nunzio. Funaki can't hit a tornado DDT on Noble and gets caught in a gutbuster for trying. Noble gets sent to the floor by Helms and Gregory hits a Shining Wizard out of nowhere for the pin on Funaki and the title.

**Rating:** C+. What are you expecting to find here? It's six guys in the ring all at once and going nuts on each other with spots. There isn't supposed to be any sort of story or flow to it and there certainly wasn't here. It was the right choice for an opener and the match worked well enough for its purpose. Fine but nothing memorable at all. Helms would hold the title for over a year.

Teddy gushes to Vince about how excited he is over the Rumble. Vince is happy because he has Torrie, Victoria and Candace Michelle doing the drawing. They were a heel Divas stable at the time which didn't work at all. HHH and Orton come in to draw and only the latter seems pleased with his number. Amazingly enough, these guys got the EXACT SAME NUMBERS that Guerrero and Flair got when they came in to draw last year.

Trish is looking GREAT in a referee outfit when Mickie, currently the psycho lesbian, comes up and says she loves Trish. Ok then.

Mickie James vs. Ashley Massaro

Trish is referee and I didn't realize she was in some barely there shorts. I miss Mickie wearing those skirts that often flew up above her waist. The problem with Ashley was simple: she wasn't that good. Mickie cranks on the arm but Ashley counters into a wristlock of her own. Massaro armdrags Mickie down and it's clearly Mickie flipping while Ashley moves her arm.

James heads to the floor to get a breather but Ashley hits a clothesline off the apron to take her down. Back in and Mickie snaps, basically turning heel mid-match. Mickie hooks a standing half crab to fill in some time as it's clear Ashley has nothing to do here. We head to the floor where Mickie rams Ashley's ribs into the post. Back in and Mickie hooks a bow and arrow hold to work on the back even more.

Ashley catches an incoming kick from Mickie and starts her "offense" but can barely hook a crucifix. The only good thing about it was Mickie's skirt flying up but the rollup only gets two. Massaro shoves Ashley into the corner and the fans are openly booing now. She's just absolutely horrible and thankfully Mickie kind of powerbombs her out of the corner for the sloppy pin.

**Rating:** D. Again, anything with Trish looking that hot involved can't be considered a failure whatsoever. She was likely there because it was clear that the match was going to be horrible and the fans had to have something to be distracted by. Thankfully Trish and Mickie would get to have their excellent Mania match instead of another Ashley mess. Terrible stuff but hot women in tiny outfits make up for it.

Big Show draws his number. Rey comes in to talk about Eddie a bit. Apparently Eddie is joking with Rey by giving him this number.

### John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Boogeyman

This is part of an ongoing feud, which involved Boogeyman eating a growth off of Jillian Hall's face. Do yourself a favor and don't ask. Oh and I forgot to mention the set. It's themed like a coliseum with guards opening up the doors for the wrestlers to come in. They did that at some of the old King of the Rings and I still like it.

John hides behind Jillian for awhile and then bails to the floor, leaving the blonde chick to get stalked. Boogeyman puts worms in his mouth and spits them into Jillian's mouth. Boogey gets sent to the floor and into the steps before JBL chokes away a bit more. The Clothesline misses and a pumphandle powerslam ends JBL in less than two minutes. I have no idea what the point of this was.

Mama Benjamin comes in and hits on Vince. Thankfully Shelton comes in to save Vince from a future paternity suit. Melina comes in to hit on Shelton but Mama takes him away quickly. Mama Benjamin was one of those ideas that didn't make a ton of sense and didn't accomplish anything but it certainly exists. MNM draws their numbers as well. Vince and hits girls sit on the couch to watch the Rumble.

Video on the Rumble, which says everyone thinks they'll win. Vince is vindictive against Shawn around this time too. Apparently there will be some returns tonight as well.

Before the Rumble starts, the Spirit Squad comes out to give us a chant.

### Royal Rumble

HHH is #1 and Mysterio is #2, naturally coming out in a lowrider and an Eddie shirt. HHH tries to power him down to start but Rey comes back with kicks to the knee. Rey hits a headscissors to take HHH down and into the corner but HHH lifts him to the apron. Rey comes back with a springboard dropkick to the back but HHH ducks the 619. Simon Dean is #3 and goes after Rey to a bunch of boos. Dean sends him to the apron and wants a high five from HHH but gets punched in the face and hit by a seated senton. The elimination is academic.

Rey takes HHH down and hits a Bronco Buster as Psychosis is #4. He immediately goes after Rey before kicking HHH down. Psychosis busts out a freaky move where he hooks a Rock Bottom grip on Rey but lifts him into the air and slams Rey face down. Rey gets put in a Razor's Edge position but rans Psychosis out for the elimination. Ric Flair is #5 and goes right for HHH. They slug it out with Flair taking over but ducking his head into the facebuster. Ric comes back with a crotch grab but HHH rakes the eyes and backdrops Flair out.

Big Show, who hates HHH at the moment, is #6. They were feuding at this time, I believe over HHH injuring Big Show's hand with the hammer. Show chops him in the corner and HHH falls forward onto Show's chest. A headbutt keeps Rey down and there's a side slam to HHH. Like an idiot, Big Show picks up HHH and slams him to the mat instead of to the floor. Coach is #7 and makes it about thirty seconds before Show puts him out.

Show does that stupid slam thing to HHH AGAIN. I'm sure that won't come back to haunt him or anything. The chokeslam takes HHH down again and here's Lashley at #8. He and Show slug it out with Show getting backdropped to the mat. Kane, Big Show's tag champion partner at this point, is #9. He and Lashley stare it down and Kane kicks Lashley's head off.

Lashley immediately comes back with an overhead belly to belly and a third press slam to HHH. Kane takes a Dominator and Sylvan, the "Smackdown fashion consultant" is #10 and lasts about 18 seconds before Lashley throws him out. Unfortunately he turns around and gets caught in a double chokeslam followed by the elimination. The partners quickly turn on each other with Kane getting a boot up to stop a charging Show. They fight to the ropes and HHH runs up to throw them both out, emulating the same thing Shawn did in 1996 with Vader and Yokozuna.

Carlito is #11 and goes for Mysterio as is the theme tonight. There's a Backstabber to put Rey down in the corner, where he's been for a lot of the match tonight. Carlito punches HHH down and here's Benoit at #12. Everyone gets a German and Carlito taps to a Crossface which means nothing here. HHH breaks it up for no apparent reason and whips Benoit hard into the corner.

The Game puts Benoit on the apron and they fight over a suplex with Benoit winding up on the top rope. Benoit headbutts HHH down and hits the Swan Dive before Booker T is #13. He's US Champion here and in tights, which suggests an injury to me. Oh yeah he's barely moving out there and just letting Benoit chop him. Benoit dumps him in about 20 seconds so yeah Booker must have been hurt.

Benoit chops on HHH until Joey Mercury is #14. Mercury fires off

dropkicks but gets caught in Rolling Germans. Carlito jumps Benoit to break it up and Mercury pounds on Benoit a bit. Freaking Tatanka is #15, giving us a group of Mysterio, HHH, Carlito, Benoit, Mercury and Tatanka. Seriously why did he bring TATANKA back? He fires off chops as the fans do the Seminole chant.

Johnny Nitro is #16 to give us the Smackdown tag champions in the ring at the same time. HHH is upside down as Tatanka chops Nitro down. Nitro is John Morrison if you don't remember him. Mysterio is finally back to his feet after being down for about half the time he's been in the match. Trevor Murdoch is #17 and chops away on Tatanka as the match calms down again. Eugene is #18 and immediately Hulks Up, hooking an airplane spin on Murdoch. Mysterio hits a double bulldog to take both guys down to remind us that he's still there.

Road Warrior Animal is #18 and immediately takes MNM's heads off with a double clothesline. A powerslam puts Nitro down and we hit another lull. RVD is #20 and is back for the first time in nearly a year. Animal and Benoit have a staredown until Benoit gets kicked in the face. RVD kicks MNM down and backdrops Animal out to finally clear some room out in the ring.

Orlando Jordan is #21 and no one cares. Van Dam hits a kick to Carlito's face off the top and Chavo Guerrero is #22. Nitro takes Three Amigos but Chavo goes up and is immediately knocked out by HHH. Matt Hardy is #23 and hits the Twist of Fate on Jordan. RVD and Rey combine to get HHH to the apron but they can't get him out. MNM put out Tatanka and there are way too many people in this match with three letter initials. Super Crazy is #24 and literally flips to the ring.

At the moment we've got HHH, Mysterio, Carlito, Benoit, Mercury, Nitro, Murdoch, Eugene, RVD, Jordan, Hardy, Crazy and now Shawn Michaels at #25. Why are there THIRTEEN PEOPLE in the ring at once? Everyone swarms Shawn but he punches them all off until Murdoch gets in some shots on him in the corner. There goes Trevor and Carlito knocks Shawn to the apron but not out.

Chris Masters is #26 and Hardy sends HHH to the apron. Viscera is #27 in

his World's Largest Love Machine period. He sits on Matt and does his anal rape thing as Mercury saves himself from being eliminated. Matt gets some boots up in the corner but is thrown out pretty quickly thereafter. Shelton is #28 and Benoit eliminates Eugene. Goldust returns at #29 and chops a bunch of people to no reaction.

Orton is FINALLY #30, giving us a final group of HHH, Mysterio, Carlito, Benoit, Mercury, Nitro, RVD, Jordan, Crazy, HBK, Masters, Viscera, Benjamin, Goldust and Orton, or HALF THE PEOPLE IN THE MATCH. To give you an idea of how lame the star power is other than like three people in this, the final five were Masters, Viscera, Shelton, Goldust and Orton. Other than Randy that's like a medium budget indy show, not the last five entrants to the Royal Rumble.

Randy almost immediately puts out Benoit. Seriously? You can't put out Masters or Jordan? It just HAD TO BE Benoit??? An RKO takes down Viscera so Masters and Carlito can throw him out. Carlito immediately turns on his partner and dumps Masters. Goldie loads up Shattered Dreams on Carlito and gets in a good kick, only to be eliminated by RVD. Orton puts out Jordan and Shawn and HHH finally go at it. MNM double teams Shawn but gets eliminated for their efforts.

Shawn has to skin the cat to stay in and turns into a kick to the head from Shelton. Michaels is cool with that and sends Shelton to the apron followed by a superkick to eliminate him. This brings out Vince who hates Shawn and the distraction lets Shane run in and dump HBK. Shawn is ticked and runs back in and superkicks HHH after escaping a Pedigree attempt. He goes after Vince but a single referee stops him. Ok then.

We're down to Carlito, Van Dam, HHH, Mysterio and Orton. Van Dam kicks Carlito out and we're down to four. Van Dam kicks Orton in the head and teams up with Mysterio to beat on the Evolution guys. Rob goes up top but HHH crotches him and sends Rey into the corner to knock Van Dam out, getting us down to three. Evolution teams up on Rey but he knocks them both into the ropes for a double 619. Orton takes the seated senton but HHH clotheslines Rey down.

Orton powerslams HHH down but the RKO is countered into a spinebuster.

HHH goes after Rey and gets flipped out to get us down to two. Cole's voice is almost gone. HHH, ever the nice guy, pulls Rey to the floor and sends him into the steps. Mysterio is basically dead so Orton takes his sweet time. That's his downfall though, as Rey counters the elimination attempt into a rana and sends Orton out for the win. Naturally he had to be #2 which the WWE considers less than #1 for absolutely no apparent reason, but that's HHH for you.

**Rating:** C-. This isn't a bad match, but man alive is it boring. There are three major problems in this match. First of all, there were WAY too many people in the ring at most given times. Like I said, once Orton got in there we had fifteen people in the ring at once. That's double what the number should be around and it clutters things up way too much with that many people in there.

Second, as I touched on near the end, the talent pool was pretty shallow here. I mean, MNM aren't bad but they don't need to be in the final grouping of the Rumble. Guys like Masters and Carlito should have been eliminated earlier but just stuck in there. That gets old fast and it was begging for someone like Shawn to come in there and eliminate like five guys at once.

Finally, since there were so many people in there at once, it was hard to focus on any single story. You had stuff like HHH trying to go wire to wire but that got lost in the shuffle. Rey was on the mat for long stretches of time so he wasn't really noticed either. Shawn's issues with Vince only popped up for the elimination and were only touched on. When you can't focus on one thing, you can't focus on anything and that makes for a dull match. One good thing was that Rey wasn't a guaranteed winner, so there was some drama. It's not a bad Rumble but it was badly run.

Mickie comes in to hit on Trish as she does an interview on WWE.com.

Rey celebrates when Edge comes in and says don't even think of challenging him at Mania.

We recap Edge vs. Cena. Edge won MITB back at Mania and waited nine months before cashing in on Cena after Cena survived the Elimination Chamber. Tonight is the rematch three weeks later.



## Raw World Title: John Cena vs. Edge

Cena walks across a catwalk that lowered from the ceiling and hops in over the top. You know, in case it's wasn't clear enough that Edge had no chance here. Cena clotheslines him down to start but has to chase Edge back inside, allowing the champion to send Cena into the buckle. We head to the floor again with Cena having to avoid Lita and getting sent into the steps as a result. A baseball slide sends Cena over the barricade and the match stops again.

Edge tries for a countout but Cena DIVES back in at nine. Back in and Cena pounds away but charges into a spinwheel kick for two from the Canadian. Edge punches Cena to the floor again but goes after him instead of going for the countout again. Cena gets sent into the steps and back inside a missile dropkick gets two for the champion. Edge loads up a superplex but gets shoved off, only to avoid a guillotine legdrop from Cena.

Cena grabs a quick FU attempt but Edge counters into a rollup for two. A big boot puts Cena down but he rolls through a top rope cross body for two. Edge tries a rear naked choke of all things which Cena eventually breaks up. The spear misses and there's a DDT to put both guys down. It's Cena up first to start his finishing sequence but Lita distracts the referee. Edge misses a charge and is sent into Lita, setting up Cena for the FU and STFU to get the title back.

**Rating:** D+. This was a world title match at the Royal Rumble? Why? Edge never felt like he had Cena in trouble and the match wasn't anything that you would remember five minutes after it ended. Lita's cleavage was awesome but when that's the best thing about a match...well you shouldn't be surprised because it often was in Edge's matches, but still, pretty lame match here that made Edge look like a footnote. Obviously that would change, but not a good start for him here.

Edge freaks out on Todd Grisham in the back. Edge storms off and Lita panics a bit. We get a random Hacksaw Jim Duggan cameo (does anyone do those better?) to call her a H0!

We recap Angle vs. Henry. Batista had been scheduled to face Henry but

tore his triceps and had to vacate the title. Angle won the title in a battle royal and gets to defend here. The idea is that Henry is way too strong for Angle. Seriously, that's the story. Why this main evented the show isn't quite clear.

Angle is all I'M THE BEST WRESTLER IN THE WORLD and no one can beat me. He leaves but comes back to tell Mark Henry that he SUCKS. This version of Angle was AWESOME, as he would just go out there and go beast mode on everyone and make them look like fools trying to keep up with him. Also he was perfect for a quick title reign like this as no one would question him popping up out of nowhere and taking the title. Those kind of people are hard to find but Kurt was one of them.

### Smackdown World Title: Kurt Angle vs. Mark Henry

Angle gets overpowered to start. That's about all there is to say for the first two minutes or so, as Kurt keeps getting shoved around and then taken to the floor. Henry whips him into the steps and then stands on Angle's chest back inside. We hit a bearhug for a bit until Angle hiptosses out of it. He tries a cross body like an imbecile but rolls out of the World's Strongest Slam. The ankle lock and Angle Slam are no good so Henry clubs him down again.

Instead Angle hits a German (kind of) to put both guys down. The Angle Slam gets two (duh) and the ankle lock is broken up again. The counter causes the referee to get bumped so Angle gets a chair. A low blow and two chair shots take Henry down for two, so Angle takes a buckle off. Kurt drop toeholds him into the buckle and rolls Henry up to retain. Our hero everyone.

**Rating:** D. Seriously, why was this.....

And a gong strikes. That's why.

As for the match, it sucked pretty terribly. Why would we buy Henry as a potential champion here after him showing no proof of being at that level? The match wasn't even ten minutes long, making it feel much more like a TV match than a PPV title match. I know they wanted to do the big ending with Taker, but there had to be a better way to do it.

Taker comes out in a freaking horse drawn chariot and motions that he wants the title. Then he shoots lightning from his hands at the stuff over the ring, before slamming his arms down to send lightning at the posts. The ring collapses to end the show. Yeah that happened.

**Overall Rating:** D. I watched this show over the course of two days, and honestly the only thing that came to my mind other than the last ten minutes of it was how Trish looked in that referee outfit. That's how completely forgettable this show is. Nothing came out of this show as Cena was champion all over again, making the last three weeks feel like nothing. Nothing to see here and definitely not worth seeing.

### Ratings Comparison

Gregory Helms vs. Kid Kash vs. Funaki vs. Jamie Noble vs. Nunzio vs. Paul London

Original: B-

Redo: C+

Mickie James vs. Ashley Massaro

Original: C-

Redo: D

Boogeyman vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

Original: F-

Redo: N/A

Royal Rumble

Original: D

Redo: C-

John Cena vs. Edge

Original: B

Redo: D+

Kurt Angle vs. Mark Henry

Original: D-

Redo: D

Overall Rating

Original: C-

Redo: D

What was I on for that Edge vs. Cena match?

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/25/royal-rumble-count-up-2006-eddie-guerrero-puts-on-a-mask-and-wins-the-rumble/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Monday Nitro and Thunder Reviews Volume VI: July – December 1999 in e-book or paperback. Check out the information here:

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# Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2005: Horrible Injuries Can Be Hilarious

## Royal Rumble 2005

Date: January 30, 2005

Location: Save Mart Center, Fresno, California

Attendance: 12,000

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Jim Ross, Tazz

It's time for a new set of guys to take their place on top of the company and what better time to do that than at the Rumble? Other than the Rumble, we've got the final blowoff of Orton vs. HHH in a feud that still makes me shake my head to this day. Also it's Big Show vs. JBL vs. Angle for the Smackdown Title in a match that sounds so uninteresting I'd rather watch last year's show all over again. Let's get to it.

The opening video is designed like a clock counting down in the Rumble. Cool idea there.

I almost forgot: this is the West Side Rumble, which is actually designed on a theme of West Side Story, as in gangs of Raw and Smackdown guys snapping their fingers and singing. Remember that THIS was considered the best idea and that someone received a paycheck for doing this. Let that sink in when you're unemployed next time.

## Edge vs. Shawn Michaels

Edge is mad that he didn't get the title shot at Taboo Tuesday and is finally turning heel, which he would be for years to come. Edge jumps Shawn before Shawn can take off his vest, only to get sent back to the floor by Shawn. Back in and Shawn chops away in the corner but Edge comes back with a swinging neckbreaker to take over. Edge is embracing the evil here and pokes Shawn in the eye but it only ticks Shawn off, resulting in a Thesz Press by Shawn.

The Canadian is sent back to the floor but he catches Shawn in an Edge-0-Matic to take over again. A baseball slide keeps Shawn down and we head back inside. The fans are firmly behind Shawn here, which means the heel turn is working for Edge. Shawn tries a standing rana but gets caught in a powerbomb for two instead. Off to a rear naked choke from Edge which stays on for a good while.

As Shawn fights up, Edge slams him right back down to stop the comeback before doing Shawn's pose. Shawn gets guillotined on the top but Edge jumps into a punch to the ribs for two. Shawn counters a belly to back suplex into a cross body for two but Edge clotheslines him right back down. We hit the chinlock again although for far less time here. Michaels comes back with an atomic drop and they mistime something pretty badly with Shawn waiting on one side of the ring while Edge stumbles around on the other side.

Anyway Shawn pounds away in the corner and grabs a rollup for two, prompting Edge to try to walk out. The imbecile of a referee holds Shawn back, allowing Edge to sneak up from behind and spear Shawn to the floor. Shawn finally crawls back in and Edge dances a bit. Edge tunes up the band and spears Shawn down for two more, sending Edge into a fit. He pulls his own hair out and does those awesome facials that only Edge can do.

With nothing else to try, Edge puts Shawn on top for a superplex, only to get knocked down for the flying elbow from Shawn. Sweet Chin Music is countered into an electric chair drop for two more and Edge is very frustrated. Edge rolls through a sunset flip into the Edgeucator (imagine a Sharpshooter but with Edge behind Shawn like an ankle lock) but Shawn makes the rope. After a small package gets two for Shawn, Edge reverses a rollup into one of his own and grabs the ropes for the cheap pin.

**Rating:** B-. Decent match here but at nearly 20 minutes it's too long. I'm not sure if I like the ending or not either, as Edge cheating shows that he's embracing the heel turn, but I don't think cheating and then hitting a move like another spear would have been a bad choice either. Still though, solid way to further Edge's turn and a very long opener, which isn't a terrible idea.

Teddy and Eric banter about who is going to win. Apparently we're doing the old school tumbler thing to draw numbers with. Flair and Eddie come in (Flair hits on Torrie of course) to draw and Flair is very happy with his number. Eddie is disappointed, so he picks Flair's pocket and steals his number. See, THIS is the kind of stuff we need more of. It enforces Eddie's character and is funny at the same time, unlike the stupid stuff we get today that doesn't help anyone.

Heidenreich is panicking about caskets when Snitsky comes up. Heavy breathing ensues and Snitsky says he has an idea.

We recap Heidenreich vs. Undertaker. Basically Heidenreich wants to replace Undertaker is his chance in a casket match. Most people didn't think much of Heidenreich and they would wind up being proven correct. He would be followed by Great Khali in the long line of strange guys to face Undertaker.

The casket is brought out.

#### Undertaker vs. Heidenreich

Taker grabs a headlock to start and pulls Heidenreich towards the casket but (Jon) Heidenreich runs away. That works so well that we do it again and Jon is terrified. Since that didn't quite work, Taker hooks the leg with a half crab, causing Heidenreich to crawl towards the ropes in front of the casket. As we ignore the problem of crawling to the ropes, Jon bails to the floor to take the fight out there.

Heidenreich sends Taker into the casket and pounds his head into it, which apparently isn't a problem for him. Back in and Heidenreich pounds away in the corner, only to get caught in a modified triangle choke. Taker pulls the hold down to the mat and Heidenreich is almost out, so here's Snitsky to break up the hold. After a double suplex to Taker, the monsters start pulling him to the casket...which has Kane inside.

Kane, who was feuding with Snitsky over Snitsky punting a plastic version of the baby that Kane's wife Lita (just go with it) lost, destroys both guys and takes Snitsky into the crowd. Heidenreich starts shoving the casket away very slowly before slamming Taker into the steps. Heidenreich

slides the casket into Taker, which looks rather stupid as Taker had nothing behind him to be crushed against but whatever.

Back in and Jon puts on a cobra clutch which chokes Taker out enough to get him into the casket. Well mostly in at least as Taker sticks an arm out and chokes away. With Heidenreich's torso in the casket, Taker drops the apron legdrop in the spot of the match. Back in and Heidenreich is suddenly fine, pounding away on the Dead Man and hitting a Boss Man Slam for a cover. Taker chokes his way out of the casket and wins a slugout, followed by a bad running DDT. Chokeslam and tombstone hit and we're done.

**Rating:** D. This just didn't work. At the end of the day, Heidenreich just didn't work at all and he never came close to it. This was supposed to be a preview of Snitsky/Heidenreich vs. Kane/Taker at Mania, but thankfully they went with Kane in MITB and Taker vs. Orton in a great match, whereas Snitsky and Heidenreich didn't even make it onto the show.

Teddy yells at Eddie to get Flair's number back. Evolution comes in and a beatdown nearly ensues. Eddie has to give the number back, and he throws in Flair's wallet too. Batista is going to go draw for the Rumble but HHH wants to talk about the match with Orton. Tensions flare but Flair calms things down. I think I smell a showdown.

Christian is here to draw his number and he's well pleased. Cena shows up and hits on Christy but Christian isn't pleased. He says rapping isn't hard and challenges Cena to a battle rap. Tomko won't give Christian a beat so he has to go it alone. Christian actually rhymes a bit but can't rhyme charisma. Cena makes gay jokes and isn't nearly as funny as Christian.

Smackdown World Title: Kurt Angle vs. Big Show vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

This match has a backstory that isn't important enough to explain to us. Apparently Angle had a last man standing match with JBL but the winner is even less important than the backstory. JBL is defending. Angle bails to the floor to start so Show runs over JBL a few times. There's the loud chop in the corner followed by a legdrop which finally draws Angle into the ring for a save.



Now it's Kurt getting a big chop in the corner. Cole says that's like getting hit in the chest with a skillet. My question continues to be: how does anyone know what that feels like? Is that what goes on at WWE headquarters when there aren't any shows on? Show clotheslines both guys to the floor to a surprisingly big reaction. Angle tries a German on the floor which fails completely, so Show picks up the steps.

Show loads up the announce table and climbs the steps to chokeslam JBL through said table. Before he can though, Angle hits Show low and blasts him with a monitor, knocking Show through the table. Back inside and Angle puts JBL in an armbar followed by a keylock. Kurt rolls the Germans but walks into a big boot for two. Big Show gets back in and there's a double clothesline and headbutts all around. He slams Angle onto JBL to a big reaction. When did Big Show get this popular? Both guys get crushed in the corner and another double clothesline puts both guys down.

Show loads up a double chokeslam but the other guys go High/Low to take Show down. Angle Germans JBL down and hits a bad Angle Slam which gives JBL two. There's a chokeslam to JBL but he gets a foot on the rope. Out to the floor and Show spears JBL through the barricade in his signature spot, putting all three guys down.

Back in and Angle goes after Show with a chair but gets flapjacked face first onto the steel. Mark Jindrak and Luther Reigns, Angle's lackeys, come out for the save as JBL's Cabinet try to wake up the champion. Show beats up Jindrak and Reigns as Orlando Jordan puts JBL in the ring for the Clothesline to pin Angle to retain.

**Rating:** C+. This is one of those matches I was expecting to suck but it wound up being pretty solid. Angle is going to be good no matter what he does and Show had some solid motivation out there for a change. JBL escaping with the title was a recurring theme for nearly a year until he ran into a buzzsaw called John Cena in a few months. Shockingly good match here.

Batista won't sign Carlito's petition to get rid of Teddy Long. Carlito loads up the apple, looks at Batista, and swallows. Funny bit.

Batista goes to draw his number and hears Bischoff bar Evolution from

ringside for the next match. Big Dave seems very happy to tell HHH.

Long video recapping HHH vs. Orton. They hate each other, Orton was never supposed to get another shot, so tonight he gets another shot.

### Raw World Title: HHH vs. Randy Orton

HHH is defending. This is when Orton was still young and a not quite plucky face. He punches Orton to the floor and gets two off a dropkick back inside. HHH pounds away in the corner but gets caught in Snake Eyes to stop him cold again. Orton tries the RKO again but gets dumped to the floor, which thankfully doesn't break his shoulder again. HHH sends him into the steps and heads back in for some knees to Orton's back.

The Game goes after the taped up knee and wraps it around the post because he can. HHH modifies the cannonball down onto the leg by dropping an elbow instead of sitting on it. After a quick attempt at a small package by Orton, HHH puts on a LONG Figure Four, lasting way longer than almost any other I can remember. Orton finally turns it over, sending HHH retreating to the floor.

Orton sends him over the announce table and pounds away before heading back in for his backbreaker. A swinging neckbreaker gets two for Orton as does a regular one. The powerslam by Orton gets two as he doesn't seem interested in selling the knee at all. HHH counters punching in the corner into an atomic drop to slow things down again. HHH goes up top for no apparent reason and gets armdragged down, allowing Orton to hit a top rope cross body (his old finisher) for two.

Orton counters a Pedigree attempt into a catapult but HHH counters the RKO for at least the third time before hitting the high knee for two. Randy is bleeding from the lip. The Pedigree is escaped again and Orton gets two off a clothesline. The champ rolls to the floor again and gets sent into the steps for trying to hide. Back in and Orton pounds away in the corner, only to miss a DDT attempt and possibly give himself a concussion.

The referee looks at Orton to stall even more, as I think they're going for some big emotional moment where Orton fights through adversity. HHH

charges at Orton and knocks out the referee at the same time. It's hammer time but HHH misses his charge and hits the post. Back inside and Orton gets the hammer, only to have his head taken off by a clothesline. HHH throws away the hammer and hits the Pedigree to retain.

**Rating:** D+. As usual, these two do not work well together at all. This was one of their worse matches too, as Orton never seemed to have HHH even remotely in danger at all. At the end, HHH had Orton dead to rites for a long time and won clean (he never used the hammer) with a Pedigree. Orton's face push was killed dead here so he had to turn heel and feud with the Undertaker soon after this. Not a good match and kind of headscratching booking.

Angle literally steals Nunzio's number and spot in the Rumble.

Teddy tells JBL and company that Jibbles has to defend the title against Big Show in a barbed wire steel cage match at No Way Out.

### Royal Rumble

Eddie Guerrero is #1 and Benoit is #2. Dang Benoit is on a run of bad luck in these things. I think we've got 90 second intervals again here. Feeling out process to start and they get into a technical standoff of course. Eddie hooks one of the few chinlocks in Rumble history until Daniel Puder, the winner of Tough Enough 4 (beating Mike MIZanin in the finals) is #3. He gets on the mic and says that he'll be the first Tough Enough Champion to win the Rumble, drawing "are you serious" glares from Benoit and Eddie.

Benoit and Eddie fire off chops in the corner followed by a double suplex because they can. Eddie hits Three Amigos and Hardcore Holly is #4. Holly asks if he can have some fun with Puder and rips some skin off with chops in the corner. Benoit and Eddie get in some chops of their own before Holly kicks Puder low, hits the Alabama Slam, and throws him out. Hurricane is #5 as Guerrero and Benoit dump Holly.

Hurricane gets double teamed but Eddie tries a double cross, only to get chopped for his efforts. Hurricane hits a Blockbuster on Eddie but Benoit chops him down and whips him into Eddie for the elimination. Kenzo Suzuki

(one of the most forgettable footnotes in wrestling history) is #6. Just like everyone else, Benoit and Eddie pound on him in the corner with chops and suplexes, but Benoit turns on Eddie ala earlier but only throws him to the apron.

Edge is #7 to a BIG pop. He beats on everyone in sight but gets clotheslined down by Benoit. Rey Mysterio is #8 and my goodness does Suzuki look out of place in there. Thankfully Rey headscissors him out about twenty seconds after entering, getting us down to an AWESOME tag match if they ever got around to doing it. Edge goes after Guerrero and here's Shelton Benjamin, the current IC Champion and on pure fire at this point, at #9.

There isn't a bad combination in the ring at the moment. Benoit tries to dump Rey but Eddie tries to put both of them out. Shelton can't eliminate Edge so he walks into a headscissors from Rey instead. Here's Booker at #10 to keep the talent level high. Question for discussion: who is the worst worker in the ring at the moment? Here's Eric Bischoff to cheer on the Raw guys as Benoit puts Eddie in a Boston Crab.

Jericho is #11 to a BIG pop. Teddy Long comes out to cheer as well as various people beat on each other. Luther Reigns is #12 to stop the hot streak dead. With four Raw guys (Benoit, Edge, Jericho and Benjamin) and four Smackdown guys (Booker, Luther, Mysterio and Guerrero), it's time for a showdown ala the West Side Rumble that the show is based on. That's a cool idea in theory, but what happened to the "every man for himself" concept?

Muhammad Hassan is #13 and the match stops cold. Everyone surrounds Hassan and the group beatdown is on. The fans REALLY dig this, which says a lot about Hassan's potential. He was going to win the world title over Batista in Washington DC at Summerslam, but real life issues got in his way. Hassan is out in less than a minute and here's Orlando Jordan at #14. Tazz says we can compare Jordan to Benjamin. Other than a good look, talent, charisma or fan interest, they are indeed neck and neck.

Scotty 2 Hotty is #15 but Hassan jumps him in the aisle, keeping him from ever getting into the ring. Taker beat him down in the aisle in 2002 also

so it's not the best even for Mr. Hotty. The ring is getting too full now but most of the guys are talented enough that I can live with it. Charlie Haas is #16 and Luther is put out by Booker, as is Jordan. That clears things out a bit. Booker stops for a Spinarooni and charges into a low bridge from Eddie to get rid of him.

Renee Dupree is #17, giving us Benoit, Guerrero, Edge, Mysterio, Haas, Jericho, Benjamin and Dupree. The World's Greatest Tag Team hits their Shelton jumps over Charlie spot to Renee but Shelton misses a splash in the corner and gets dumped by Edge. Simon Dean is #18 but he stops to do exercises on the floor before getting in. JR goes off on him in a funny bit. Eddie stops to look at him and Edge dumps Guerrero as a result.

Shawn is #19 and superkicks Simon out, doing some Hindu Squats to celebrate. Edge tries to corner Mysterio in a corner. JR: "Makes a lot of sense." Shawn backdrops Charlie out and Kurt Angle is #20. He hits Angle Slams on everything in sight but tries the ankle lock on Shawn. Michaels rolls through and superkicks Angle out after less than 40 seconds. Coach is #21 and you can hear JR groan. He gets in a single shot on Benoit and runs to hide.

Edge tries to put Mysterio out and here's Jindrak at #22. Angle comes back in and dumps Michaels before blasting him with the steps and putting him in the ankle lock. I'm thinking we need a masterpiece at Wrestlemania to settle this. Viscera is #23 and he pounds on everyone in sight. Paul London is #24 and nearly slides out of the ring from sliding in so far. Dupree takes him down but stops to dance, allowing Jericho to dump him.

London gets sent to the apron but slides back in as Cena (BIG pop) is #25. He gets in a shot on everyone and backdrops Viscera out. Cena and Benoit slug it out as Snitsky is #26. He's still kind of a threat at this point and runs over everyone in sight. London gets knocked to the apron again and hit with a HUGE clothesline for an even bigger backflip off the apron to the floor. That made a lot of highlight reels.

Snitsky and Cena stare each other down and John takes a big boot. Kane is #27 complete with pyro. Tazz: "WHY DO I HAVE TO SIT OVER HERE??? THIS IS NUTS!!!" Chokeslams all around as London is taken out on a stretcher.

Jindrak goes out thanks to Kane and Coach of all people tries to avenge him. Batista is #28 and the pop that Cena got looks like a whimper. Snitsky is gone immediately and it's time for a showdown with Kane. The crowd is WAY into Batista as he powerbombs Kane.

There goes Jericho thanks to Big Dave but Edge hangs on. Christian is #29 and he goes right after Cena. Cena is all like BRING IT ON and stomps Christian down in the corner. Rey hits a 619 on Kane and Cena FU's the monster out. Flair is #30, giving us a final group of Benoit, Edge, Mysterio, Coach, Cena, Batsita, Christian and Flair. Not bad at all with one exception. Evolution teams up for a spinebuster on Coach for the elimination before doing the same to Christian.

Benoit chops away at Flair but walks into a spinebuster and the elimination by Ric. Flair goes for a toss out of Batista but gets glared at in response. Edge and Mysterio dropkick Batista down and Edge dumps Flair, getting us down to Edge, Mysterio, Cena and Batista. Edge spears Cena and Batista down but Mysterio avoids the one coming at him. There's a 619 to the Canadian but a springboard legdrop misses and Edge spears Rey out. Edge charges at Cena and we're down to Cena vs. Batista.

The fans REALLY like this (and they're in red(ish) and blue to match their brands) and the staredown is on. Cena slaps away (clearly open handed) and tries the FU over the top but Batista blocks it. Dave loads up the Bomb but Cena fights out of it and they head to the ropes where both fall out, seemingly at the same time. Seriously, it's so close you can't fairly say one of them went out first.

We have a split decision, so here's Vince to charge out, slide into the ring...and destroy his knees and rip both of his quadriceps at the exact same time. While Vince sits on the mat (and hopefully doesn't seeing Batista dying laughing), both guys throw each other out and Vince restarts the match. Why this means we don't start with Benoit and Guerrero again isn't explained but it's spinebuster and elimination for Batista, sending Big Dave to the main event of Wrestlemania.

**Rating:** A-. I don't remember liking this as much the first time around but this was really good stuff. That segment in the first part with all

the talent was reminiscent of the 1990 edition where there was a string of incredibly talented guys to start things off. Then things slowed down a bit, but once Cena hit the crowd, who was already red hot all night, got turned up to white levels and things went through the roof. Goofy ending (which wasn't planned) aside, this was great stuff and a forgotten classic Rumble.

**Overall Rating:** B. This is a solid show overall with only the casket match being really bad. The Raw Title match isn't terrible but it's not worth watching either, especially with Orton's lack of selling being horrible. Batista and Cena would of course go on to Wrestlemania to win both world titles and dominate the company for years to come, making this a truly game changing show. Good stuff here and certainly worth seeing.

### Ratings Comparison

Edge vs. Shawn Michaels

Original: B

Redo: B-

The Undertaker vs. Heidenreich

Original: D-

Redo: D

John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Big Show vs. Kurt Angle

Original: B

Redo: C+

HHH vs. Randy Orton

Original: D+

Redo: D+

Royal Rumble

Original: B-

Redo: A-

Overall Rating

Original: B-

Redo: B

Like I said, I liked the Rumble a lot more this time around.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/24/royal-rumble-count-up-2005-the-rise-of-the-new-generation/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Monday Nitro and Thunder Reviews Volume VI: July – December 1999 in e-book or paperback. Check out the information here:

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## **New Column: Somebody's Gonna Get Their Paige Turned**

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-somebodys-gonna-get-pai>



[ge-turned/](#)

They're very different but they both seem to have left on the same day.

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## 2017 Awards: Promo of the Year

This might be my favorite one.

Something a lot of people forget about wrestling is the importance of the talking aspect. If there's no story to build things up, the match is just two people doing moves to each other. I need a reason to care about what I'm seeing and that's where the promos come in. This year had some excellent promos, many of which were only a few words line. Still though, they did their job and that's what matters most.

First of all, I'm leaving the Festival of Friendship off because that's more of a segment than a promo.

Since this is probably the hardest award of the entire year, I'm going to knock off one of the only ones which isn't bouncing around my head as a possible winner. Samoa Joe was already the #1 contender to Brock Lesnar's Universal Title but he wasn't done yet. Instead, on the June 5 Raw, Joe went after Paul Heyman, telling him that he wanted Brock Lesnar before choking Heyman out. Joe is often described as one of the few wrestlers who feels real and that's what he did here. It was a great moment and made Joe look like a real threat to Lesnar, which is exactly the point.

Next up we go down NXT for one of those short form promos that also capped off a story. For some reason, Velveteen Dream was obsessed with getting Aleister Black to say his name. This led to a downright bizarre feud with Dream seemingly being attracted to Black, who refused to say his name. They had a rocking match at Takeover: WarGames with Black kicking Dream's head off. After the match, with Dream waking up, Black said "enjoy infamy...Velveteen Dream." It was a great moment and capped off a great story with Black both giving Dream what he wanted but not in the same way. This was a really strong candidate.

Back to the main roster now with the one I enjoyed the most, albeit maybe not the best. Due to reasons that I really don't agree with, one of the big matches at Wrestlemania saw Nikki Bella/John Cena vs. Miz/Maryse. This was a great way to give Miz exposure (and to give us a plot device for Total Divas) and Miz took advantage of it, leading to a series of "lost" Total Bellas episodes featuring Miz and Maryse as Cena and Nikki. These were some of the funniest things I've ever seen with the two of them perfectly mocking the ridiculous nature of the show. Throw in Maryse being a hotter Nikki than Nikki and these were GREAT.

It took me awhile but I finally managed to decide between the top two. In what might be the most to the point yet stretched out sentence that I've ever heard, Roman Reigns took the crowd to new levels of hatred. The night after Wrestlemania, Raw opened with nearly four minutes of fans chanting for Undertaker, who Reigns seemed to retire the night before. Reigns came to the ring and after standing for nearly five minutes with the fans not letting him get a word in because they were not having it, Reigns merely said "This is my yard now" before leaving.

If this had been followed by Reigns being edgier or even turning heel, it's the promo of the year easily. As it is though, it's one of the most amazing displays of the fans

being led exactly where WWE wanted them to go. Reigns looked like the biggest heel in the world here and it worked to pure perfection with the fans absolutely HATING HIM the entire time. This worked, but it wasn't the best thing Reigns was involved in all year.

We're going to August and back to one of the best talkers of all time. On August 28, John Cena and Roman Reigns signed the contract for a match at No Mercy. At the signing though, Cena tore into Reigns like few people have ever torn into anyone else, talking about how Reigns was supposed to be this next big thing but couldn't do it because he was a corporate made John Cena bootleg. When Reigns fumbled his lines, Cena said it was called cutting a promo and if Reigns wanted to be the big dog, he better learn how to do this. Cena burned him several more times as it was as one sided as you could have gotten.

The big reason this worked though was it felt real. Just like with Rock vs. Cena from a few years ago, this felt like two people who had real animosity towards one another, leading to the two of them going off with the insults. Reigns tried his best but when you get personal with Cena, he just hits another level with the shots and promo work. It made Cena look like one of the biggest stars ever while Reigns was just left in the dust. Reigns won the match, but he lost this one handily.

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## **Monday Night Raw – August 18, 2003: With a Rap Sheet As Long As Kevin Nash's Old Hair**

**Monday Night Raw**

Date: August 18, 2003

Location: Van Andel Arena, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the go home show for Summerslam and the big story continues to be Kane, who is seemingly ready to squash Rob Van Dam, and his feud with Shane McMahon. That's not it for Shane though as he's in another feud with Eric Bischoff. Oh and there's something about an Elimination Chamber match which hasn't exactly gotten a ton of time. Let's get to it.

By the way, this is the second time I've reviewed this show as I'm on an old laptop with a battery so bad that if your power cord comes out, it's going to power off completely in less than thirty seconds (not an exaggeration). The old review was wiped out because I dared to leave it alone for a few minutes. God bless Microsoft for installing that CRITICAL security update that turned my regular laptop into a brick last week.

Opening sequence.

Chris Jericho is in the ring and we're starting with the Highlight Reel. It's a busy week for the king of bling bling because tonight he's taking Kevin Nash's hair and then this Sunday he's winning his World Title back. I wouldn't double down on that one Chris. It's been a long time since he's been World Champion though and he wants it back so bad that he's putting himself back in the most vile, evil, dangerous structure he's ever been in over his fifteen year career.

The fans tell Jericho that he sucks so he brings out his guest: the man who stole the title from him in the first Elimination Chamber, Shawn Michaels. Shawn is a little too dance-y for someone about to head into such a horrible match. Like any good jerk of a host, Jericho won't let Shawn get in a single word before bringing out his other guests: Evolution. HHH talks about how he and Shawn know what it's like inside that Chamber and no one will ever forget it.

After that first match, HHH spent forty eight hours in the hospital and lost the World Title to Michaels. This Sunday, Evolution is going to make sure that HHH leaves Summerslam as champion. The fight is on with Shawn getting beaten down until Kevin Nash, with hair so blond that he looks like Flair, comes in for the save. That goes just as badly for the good

guys until Goldberg comes out for the real save.

House is cleaned but Goldberg spears Nash by mistake (whose hair is so blond that I actually thought it was Flair for a second). This is the kind of segment that the match needed as it was barely getting any kind of attention compared to the other matches on the card. It's not enough to make the match interesting but it's an improvement.

Test comes up to Stacy in the back and promises to treat her differently if he wins her back tonight. That means treating her "like the little s\*\*\* that you are". So being a manager now implies sexual slavery?

#### Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Molly Holly

Molly is defending and as Jerry put it, "IT'S PUPPY TIME!". Molly takes her down by the wrist to start but Trish nips up and gets in a Thesz press of all things. Back up and something like a backbreaker doesn't quite work as Molly picks her up and then sits her down again before rocking Trish straight back to the mat. A shoulder breaker gets two as Lawler can't help but talk about Trish's chest.

Trish comes back with a dropkick but here's Gail Kim, who actually goes after Molly for the DQ. Odds are this sets up another triple threat match, which might be the worst possible idea they have. To be fair though, what else are they supposed to do? Come up with something else?

Evolution is in a good mood when Steve Austin comes in. They don't have a main event tonight so Austin makes Orton vs. Goldberg with Austin as special enforcer. Between two General Managers they don't have a main event nearly half an hour into the show? Get it together people.

Here's Shane McMahon for a chat. He's here for two reasons. First of all, there won't be a match with Eric Bischoff on Sunday because he's giving Eric his beating tonight. The other reason is Kane, for whom Shane has a special present. That would be a can of gasoline so Shane can play with fire. Thankfully JR isn't thrilled by this discussion of attempted murder.

Goldust is still trying to cure Lance Storm of being boring. Tonight's

suggestion: go into the women's locker room and kiss the first woman he sees. I don't see this going well.

### Test vs. Scott Steiner

The winner gets Stacy's "services" because she's a commodity. Test jumps Steiner on the way in and hammers away until Steiner elbows him in the jaw. There's the belly to belly and some elbows to the head, followed by the elbow (if it's not belly to belly suplexes, it's elbows) into the pushups. Test stops a charge in the corner but misses a big boot and comes up favoring his knee. The referee calls for the trainers but doesn't ring the bell, meaning you can see the swerve coming from here. The trainer comes out to say we need to get Test to the back so he's helped up, only to have him hit the big boot for the pin on Steiner.

**Rating:** D-. I almost didn't rate this one as the match wasn't even five minutes and Test's shenanigans ran for the better part of three minutes. Still though, I have no idea why this feud is still going over four months in but neither guy is really getting anything out of it. The matches haven't been good and the story is more cringe-worthy than anything else.

Here's La Resistance for a chat. They talk about the death of the Dudleys last week and show the picture of the two of them covered in the American flag. The two of them find a serviceman in the front row and ask how many innocent people he's killed this year. Cue the Dudleys to chase them off and bring the serviceman into the ring to wave the flag.

And of course it's a ruse (partially because the serviceman is former OVW Heavyweight Champion Rob Conway) so the beatdown is on with the Dudleys being buried underneath the flag again. The story isn't bad (if you don't mind having patriotism beaten over your head) but if the matches could be ANY better, this would be a lot easier to sit through.

We look back at Linda McMahon being piledriven. Jerry: "Everywhere I go, people are asking me about Linda McMahon." No Jerry, they aren't.

### Chris Jericho vs. Kevin Nash

Hair vs. hair. JR talks about how these two are going to a structure where careers go to die. Uh, no one's career has ever died in there JR. Nash powers him into the corner to start and elbows Jericho in the jaw before hitting a gutwrench suplex. That's the first new move I've seen him add in years. A two handed choke slam drops Jericho again as it's almost all Nash to start.

Jericho gets smart by dropkicking the knee, only to get backdropped out to the floor. Nash follows him out but clotheslines the post by mistake. Back in and a missile dropkick gives Jericho two (while showing off Nash's very white socks). Jericho starts kicking at the ribs as he continues to go around the body. It's time to take a turnbuckle pad off but Nash grabs a rollup (He's working tonight!) for two instead. A running crotch attack to Nash's back but Jericho misses a charge into the post.

Nash's clothesline and side slam get two but Snake Eyes onto the exposed buckle is broken up. Instead Jericho grabs a rollup for two, despite Nash being both under and in the ropes (Jerry sounded annoyed at the count even reaching two). Nash gets in another clothesline for two but Jericho scores with his bulldog.

The Lionsault gets a delayed two so we hit the Walls with Nash grabbing the ropes without too much effort. The Jackknife gets its own delayed near fall so Nash kicks him in the face again. Another Jackknife is broken up with Jericho raking the face though, allowing a low blow to set up a brass knuckles shot to put Nash away.

**Rating:** C+. Actually not bad here, though that's mainly due to Jericho doing almost all of the work. That's about all you can ask for out of Nash though, whose power game is still acceptable enough. The match was mainly there for Jerry to make hair jokes and there's nothing wrong with that, especially with the right guy winning. If a movie role is all it takes to have Nash do this clean of a job (a low blow and knuckles after a ref bump is pretty squeaky clean for him) then so be it.

Post match Jericho hacks the hair off with scissors and takes it away like a trophy. I miss his trophy case gimmick, which could do someone

some good today.

Earlier today, Rosey saved a kitty (Mr. Snugalot) from a tree, much to the delight of a little girl. Hurricane shows up to explain comic books to the kid (Hurricane: "Aquaman sucks. Remember that.") so Rosey walks off with the cat, who attacks him. Rosey beats the cat up against a tree and throws it away before telling Hurricane they need to get out of here. Hurricane tells him to calm down until Rosey drops the superhero voice and says "LOOK MAN! WE GOTTA GO!" They leave and the girl asks where her kitty is. Uh.....oh look a match. Funny stuff here, as they're going full speed ahead with the comedy, as they should.

### Rosey vs. Rodney Mack

Theodore Long is back and sees that whitey is still trying to keep Rodney Mack down. So get whitey out here for the beating he deserves. I'm guessing he's not happy with Mack's opponent. Mack wins an early boxing match and shrugs off a bunch of shots from Rosey. As Jerry asks about the kitten, Mack yells at Hurricane, allowing Rosey to hit a Samoan drop and his spinout Rock Bottom for the fast pin.

We look at Kane attacking Linda again.

Speaking of Linda, we go live to her house in Connecticut where she, with a magazine featuring Stephanie on the cover, says she's healing up and should be ok with more therapy. She's also hoping to be out of her soft collar, which is on her desk, soon. As she's talking, the doorbell keeps ringing until Eric Bischoff comes in. See, Shane is looking for Bischoff in Michigan but Eric is right here instead.

Back from a break, Eric says he's here to please her. Linda does the smart thing by going to call security but Eric hangs the phone up. Eric rips on Shane a bit and complains about Shane stealing ECW from him in 2001 (Really? Like really really?) like it was a graduation gift. Who pays for their own graduation gift? Linda loads up the Stephanie Slap so he pins her arms behind her back and tells her to not fight it so she can enjoy it more. Eric: "You are a rather big breasted beauty aren't you?" He asks to be shown the bedroom and rather forcibly kisses her to end this. I wonder if the cameraman can be tried as an accomplice.



So...yeah. Eric Bischoff is a lot of things but sexual predator really doesn't feel like one of them. They've done things like this with him before and they didn't work then either. This felt WAY out of character for him and was more disturbing than anything else. The segment didn't work and I'm hoping they drop this in rather short order.

Post break, Shane is livid (Shane: "THAT MOTHERF\*\*\*\*\*!" True in this case.) and storms off instead of, you know, calling the cops in Connecticut.

### Intercontinental Title: Rob Van Dam vs. Christian

Rob is challenging and I'm not sure why. He's won a single match since early June and was last seen being left laying by Kane. Why is he getting a title match? They start simply as JR questions the presence of Eric's balls. Maybe we could ask Linda. Rob monkey flips the champ down and a spinning kick to the face sets up an armbar. The shoulders into the corner have Christian in trouble until he avoids the one off the backflip to send Van Dam shoulder first into the post.

Christian stays on the arm with an armbar but stops to mock the Van Dam pose. A kick that might have been a bit low cuts off Rob's comeback but the fans think Christian sucks. This crowd is very anti-Canadian. Rob makes the comeback with his usual assortment of kicks but Rolling Thunder hits knees.

Another kick hits the referee but Christian scores with the Unprettier. There's no point in covering though so he goes to grab some chairs for a Conchairto. You don't put a chair that close to Van Dam though and it's the Van Daminator to knock Christian silly. The Five Star connects but here's Kane instead. Van Dam dropkicks a chair into his head but a dive allows Kane to chair him in the head (THUD). Rob is out cold and it's a no contest as Kane carries him to the back.

**Rating:** D. The arm stuff was fine but it feels like every match tonight has had either a distracted ref or a ref bump. That being said, this wasn't exactly the most thrilling match as it was an exercise in waiting on Kane to come out and interrupt. They weren't exactly hiding that ending and while it wasn't the worst match, Christian isn't exactly

rolling into the pay per view. Eric and Shane can have a match, but the new Intercontinental Champion (or the Cruiserweight Champion for that matter) can't?

Speaking of Summerslam, we run down the card and it's looking pretty rough outside of Lesnar vs. Angle.

Test forces Stacy to dance on a bench for himself, Rico and Steven Richards. This would be your latest segment seemingly saying that she's a sex slave.

Kane has Van Dam chained to a post in the back and covers him with gasoline while shouting about wanting Rob to feel his pain. He lights the match but says he's not going to do it because that's what they want. We can now add torture and threats of murder to this show's list of crimes.

#### Randy Orton vs. Goldberg

HHH and Flair are on commentary while Austin is ringside enforcer. Orton runs around the ring to start and gets shouldered down back inside. We look at commentary talking about Orton not wanting to be World Champion on Sunday as Orton makes a comeback and clotheslines Goldberg over the top. A whip sends Goldberg into the steps and it's off to the chinlock back inside.

The referee gets bumped though (AGAIN) so Austin comes in and counts two off a Goldberg clothesline. Goldberg grabs a kneebar so Flair comes down to pull Austin out before the submission. Austin beats Flair down and it's the spear to cut Orton down. A Stunner does the same to Flair, followed by the Jackhammer to end Orton.

**Rating:** D. Why does WWE insist on booking Goldberg like anyone else? You could have had Nash or Michaels in the same spot and done the exact same match. Goldberg is a once in a generation talent and for some reason he's being treated like he's any given face. Let him be the big dominant monster (as in the style that got him where he is) instead of acting like he's just the challenger of the month.

Goldberg stares HHH down but gets decked by Nash (now with a normal

haircut), who comes in through the crowd. HHH walks into a superkick from Shawn, who gets chaired down by Jericho. Chris poses with the title to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** F+. Let's see: forced entry, rape, cruelty to animals, sex slavery and being rude to Canadians. That's the best they can do to set up the second biggest night of the year? I know things tend to get better around the time of the bigger shows but in this case, they need to get past Summerslam as fast as they can. This was a really bad show and made me care about the pay per view even less than I already did. Really bad effort here with a lot of things that were more in bad taste than anything else.

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