

# Monday Night Raw – January 4, 2016: One vs. All

## Monday Night Raw

Date: January 4, 2016

Location: AT&T Center, San Antonio, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

It's the first Raw of the year and we're starting with a bang. Tonight we're seeing the rematch between Roman Reigns and Sheamus for Roman's WWE World Title with Vince McMahon as the guest referee. It's also time to keep going towards the Royal Rumble as we've got less than three weeks to go. Let's get to it.

We open with another long recap of Reigns vs. Vince to set up tonight's title defense.

Here's Stephanie to get things going but Roman Reigns cuts her off on the way to the ring. Reigns laughs off Stephanie's annoyance and calls Vince out. Vince isn't here yet and Stephanie goes into her degrading voice about how this isn't Roman's night. Roman says that title is his life and his family because without it he can't provide for his wife and daughter.

This amuses Stephanie even more as she rips on the fans for having so much false hope, just like Reigns. Stephanie says you can't keep a good billionaire down and promises to destroy Roman tonight. After he loses the title, she's going to work him all around the country until he drops. Then the fans are going to forget about him and move on, just like they did with Roman's father Sika. Not really Steph, not really. Roman threatens to send Vince to the hospital and Stephanie finally shuts up.

We look back at Kevin Owens' path of rage (and his loss) from last week.

Brock Lesnar is back next week.

## Neville vs. Kevin Owens

Ambrose is on commentary. Neville has taped up ribs and quickly sends

Kevin outside for a flip dive. Owens gets knocked across the ring and out to the floor on the outside, setting up a shooting star from the top. Back in and Owens gets smart by kicking Neville in the ribs and plants him with a hanging DDT out of the corner. Neville gets dumped out to the floor and we take a break.

Back with Neville still on the floor and missing his rib tape. He dives back in to beat the count at nine but Owens sends him back outside and hard into the barricade. Neville kicks him in the face to get a breather and busts out a sweet 450 off the apron. They head back in with Neville going up top, only to get crotched down for a Cannonball. The Pop Up Powerbomb ends Neville at 9:45.

**Rating:** B. I had a lot of fun with this thing as they were just beating the tar out of each other for the entire time they were out there. This was exactly what they needed to do last week with Neville looking awesome (including some fresh stuff) but Owens looking like a killer at the same time. Really well done here.

Post match Owens goes after Neville again but Ambrose dives on him to make the save. Owens loads up the announcers' table again but Dean takes over and drives him through the table with an elbow drop. Dean tells Owens that all he has to do is ask for a shot.

Vince arrives and finds it ironic that last week he was on the wrong side of the law but tonight he is the law.

### Stardust vs. Titus O'Neil

So this is still a thing. Titus chops him HARD in the corner to start until the Disaster kick puts him down. Stardust slowly stomps away in the corner as well and we hit the chinlock. The fans start chanting CODY to freak Stardust out, allowing Titus to come back with a big clothesline. A big boot in the corner and the Clash of the Titus puts Stardust away at 4:26.

**Rating:** D. Pretty lame match but when is the last time you saw a random midcard match with no interference and a clean winner? I like what I see with Titus and he could be fine as a midcard act if you give him more of

a character aside from doing a dog bark. Nothing to see here, other than the total collapse of Stardust.

Becky Lynch is getting ready when Charlotte comes up. Apparently Charlotte isn't happy that they're having a match tonight but they pinky shake anyway. Ric Flair comes in and WOO's.

### Charlotte vs. Becky Lynch

Non-title. Becky gets sent into the corner to start but grabs some armdrags to frustrate Charlotte. They hit the ropes with Becky nipping up and Charlotte cartwheeling into a standoff. Charlotte flips over in the corner but dives through the ropes into a rollup for two. Becky throws her down again but helps Charlotte up, only to take a HARD chop. Charlotte drops some knees until we take a break.

Back with Charlotte doing her figure four neck flips, which she really should bring back. Becky dives out of the corner but gets caught in midair, only to spin around into a sleeper. That earns her a backwards drop onto the mat for the break but Becky makes her comeback with clotheslines and a leg lariat. There's a t-bone suplex for two on the champ but Ric grabs Becky's leg. It doesn't work this time as Becky rolls her up and grabs the trunks for the pin at 8:50.

**Rating:** C+. Good match here that felt more like an NXT match than a WWE match. The ending really didn't need the trunks involved but at least Becky got a big win to likely set up the title match at the Rumble. I could use less Ric in this whole thing but at least they're getting somewhere with an actual title feud.

Post match Charlotte goes full heel (for real this time) and destroys Becky while Ric struts.

Sheamus comes in to see Vince, who implies he'll call it down the line. May the luck of the Irish be with you.

### Ryback vs. Big Show

Ryback is officially in the Rumble. Show chops him into the corner to start but misses a charge, allowing Ryback to hit a quick clothesline.

Ryback calls to finish it thirty seconds in, only to walk into a chokeslam. Show throws Ryback over the top...and we've got Wyatts. They surround Ryback so he goes after Harper, only to get quadruple teamed. That's not very nice of Ryback. They might have wanted to sell him some Girl Scout Cookies. We'll say the match ended at about 1:15.

Strowman chokes Ryback out as Big Show just watches. Now the Wyatts circle the ring and go after the giant. Show knocks Bray, Harper and Rowan down but spends too much time staring at Strowman, allowing the swarm to take him down. Bray says they are the four horsemen of the apocalypse and everyone will fall. The other three do an upside down Horsemen gesture.

#### Alberto Del Rio/Rusev vs. Usos

Hokey smoke the Usos are in different color gear. I could get used to this, but it means I can't just pick a random name and say they're starting. Jimmy and Del Rio get things going with Alberto eating an early clothesline. Rusev gets double clotheslined but the heels take over on Jey with Rusev driving him into the corner. A wicked overhead belly to belly sends Jey flying and we take a break.

Back with Jey trying a comeback on Rusev but missing an enziguri. Del Rio kicks him hard in the back and it's off to Rusev for a chinlock. Jey finally fights up with a Samoan drop and makes the tag off to Jimmy as things speed up. A kick to the face gets two and there's an enziguri to stagger Del Rio even more.

Jimmy goes up but gets crotched down but the top rope double stomp misses (thank goodness). The superkick and Superfly splash get a VERY close two on Del Rio with Rusev diving in for the save at the last second. Jey dives through the ropes to take Rusev out but lands on a raised boot. Back in and Del Rio kicks Jey in the head to tie him in the ropes, setting up the top rope double stomp for the pin at 13:25.

**Rating:** B-. Fun match here but I'm getting a bit bored with the fairly long midcard tag match of the week. They're entertaining and the time could have been used for far worse things, but these things are getting harder to get hyped for. It doesn't help that these two aren't the most

interesting teams in the world, though the action was good. Quality, but not exactly entertaining here.

### Dolph Ziggler vs. Heath Slater

Ziggler is officially in the Rumble. Slater comes out with Adam Rose, Curtis Axel and Bo Dallas, all of whom have apparently been tweeting about change all day. Ziggler gets some early rollups and small packages for two each, followed by that dropkick of his. Slater chokes a bit and throws Ziggler down by the hair. That goes nowhere and Ziggler tries a superkick but has to go after Rose. Slater grabs a rollup and gets the big upset at 4:41.

**Rating:** D. Sure why not. Ziggler is going to be in the exact same place no matter what he does and a loss to Heath Slater isn't going to change a thing for him. It's not like these guys are doing anything else so why not throw them together into a nothing midcard stable. I doubt it lasts past the Rumble but it's better than having them on the roster for no apparent reason.

Post match Slater says he's found some friends. Rose gets way too excited about the four of them being flowers. Axel goes on about the chains being off and Dallas says it's all about getting back up. Slater caps it off by saying they're trending worldwide despite being social outcasts. That sounds like the team name.

Ambrose is defending the Intercontinental Title against Owens on Smackdown. On the same show, Lynch will be challenging for the Divas Title.

Vince comes in to see Reigns and tells him not to cheat tonight. Reigns seems uneasy.

Here's New Day for a chat. Big E. promises to make this the greatest year of all time and they'll start by beating up the Dudley Boyz and Kalisto like they were Mike Tyson falling off a hoverboard. We get a reenactment of Tyson falling and now it's time for a countdown. The ten count gets down to three and BREAK DOWN THE WALLS!

Yes Chris Jericho is back and declares himself as the party host for the night. He's here to save the WWE one more time, sixteen years after he debuted. Woods isn't pleased because the New Day has already saved this company through the power of positivity. Now it's time for Jericho to not be impressed because the unicorn horns are stupid.

Jericho says he's back to bring some life to this place and he's sorry that we had to sit through five minutes of Green Day and rootie tootie. Big E.: "WHO ARE YOU CALLING ROOTIE TOOTIE?????" The fans get in on the chant until Jericho announces his entrance in the Royal Rumble. The Y2J problem is back and the WWE will never EVER be the same again.

#### Dudley Boyz/Kalisto vs. New Day

Woods and Kalisto start but Xavier wants Bubba. That's fine with Bubba and Woods actually stays in the ring. A chop has no effect on Bubba and it's time for a ROOTIE TOOTIE chant. It's off to Kofi who is immediately caught in a very delayed vertical suplex. JBL: "Put the unicorn down." D-Von comes in and sends everyone to the floor, allowing Bubba to throw Kalisto out on top of everybody.

Back from a break with Bubba in trouble but avoiding a splash in the corner. That allows a tag off to Kalisto but it's quickly time for the Unicorn Stampede. Woods slaps on a chinlock and the Warrior splash gives Big E. a near fall. Kalisto avoids another charge and makes the tag off to D-Von as everything breaks down. Bubba cleans house and Kalisto is driven into the barricade. A quick save keeps Kofi out of What's Up and the Midnight Hour puts D-Von away at 16:40.

**Rating:** C+. Another fun match here and I'm glad it was D-Von taking the fall here. Kalisto is getting a chance to look like a big deal and it would have really been a waste to have him lose here. It's also cool to see New Day win a six man for a change as they lose these things way more often than they should. Good stuff here.

Here's the same recap that opened the show. Dude cut that out. You can do it in about a fourth of the time. Stop eating up so much of the show.

#### WWE World Title: Roman Reigns vs. Sheamus

Reigns is defending and Vince is guest referee. Sheamus jumps him to start and gets a pretty quick two count. A hard Irish (of course) whip gets two for Sheamus but Reigns comes back with the corner clotheslines. Another clothesline puts both guys on the floor for no count as Vince doesn't want Sheamus winning the match without the title. Sheamus gets in a shot with the steps but Vince wasn't paying attention as we take a break.

Back with Sheamus getting two off the Regal roll but Reigns comes back with his array of clotheslines. The Samoan drop gets a VERY delayed two and the fans boo Vince out of the building. White Noise is countered into a sitout powerbomb for another two but Vince has something in his eye. Vince: "I NEED SOME EYEDROPS!"

Now it's a Superman punch to knock Sheamus silly but Vince just won't count. Reigns finally Superman punches Vince and spears Sheamus before calling for another referee. With nothing else to do, Reigns throws Sheamus outside and over the announcers' table. Vince gets up so Reigns throws him back down and yells a lot.

Frustration gets the better of Roman and he grabs Vince with the fans chanting for the table. Cue a power walking Stephanie to get on the apron so Reigns throws Vince into the ropes, bringing Stephanie inside. She bails to the floor as Reigns loads up a spear to Vince but eats a Brogue kick. A second one knocks Reigns out but Vince is slow to count (looked like a missed cue). Crooked referee Scott Armstrong comes in to count two. Reigns blocks another Brogue with a Superman punch and spears Sheamus down to retain at 18:20.

**Rating:** C+. Well it told a good story and Vince continues to be one of the best performers in the world. They actually had me believing they might change the title here which says a lot given that we're less than three weeks away from the Rumble and it was Sheamus. Solid stuff here and they're on a roll with the storytelling all over again.

Post match Vince says Reigns is going to defend the WWE World Title again at the Royal Rumble. Reigns keeps saying one vs. all so that's exactly what he's going to get. At the Royal Rumble, Reigns will defend his title

against twenty nine other men in the Royal Rumble match.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This was another good show and you can see the effort involved. They've reached the point where they have to start putting in some effort for the Rumble and ensuing Wrestlemania season and it's already starting to pay off. The shows aren't great or anything but they're so far ahead of what they were doing just a month ago. Good show here and hopefully a sign of a hot Rumble and Wrestlemania build.

### Results

Kevin Owens b. Neville – Pop Up Powerbomb

Titus O'Neil b. Stardust – Clash of the Titus

Becky Lynch b. Charlotte – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Ryback b. Big Show via DQ when the Wyatt Family interfered

Alberto Del Rio/Rusev b. Usos – Top rope double stomp to Jey

Heath Slater b. Dolph Ziggler – Rollup

New Day b. Dudley Boyz/Kalisto – Midnight Hour to D-Von

Roman Reigns b. Sheamus – Spear

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# WWE Raids New Japan, Possibly Signs AJ Styles, Shinsuke Nakamura and Others

<http://www.f4wonline.com/wwe-news/njpw-stars-nakamura-aj-styles-luke-gallows-and-karl-anderson-headed-wwe-204971>

If this is true, it's the biggest talent raid since Hall and Nash. This could be huge.

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## Impact Wrestling – January 4, 2010: And Now For Something Completely The Same

### Impact

Date: January 4, 2010

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Episode Title: Time For A Change

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Tazz

This is a show I've been asked to do for a long time and I could have sworn I did it live. It seems appropriate now with the possibility that Impact is ending its run on Spike. People have called this the beginning of the end, and I'm curious to see how poorly it holds up. I remember there being big

problems when it was fresh but it could look a lot worse four and a half years later. Let's get to it.

We open with a history of the company with a focus on the first show back in 2002 and the big names debuting. Naturally this all pales in comparison to Hogan arriving because the battle with WWE begins.

Theme song.

Tenay and Tazz run down the card.

Earlier today, new correspondent Bubba the Love Sponge, asked fans what they wanted to see. The general response: more wrestling, more of the old school, Hulk Hogan and mostly unclothed muscular men. Keep in mind that none of these people actually paid to get into this show.

Chris Sabin vs. Alex Shelley vs. Homicide vs. Kiyoshi vs. Jay Lethal vs. Consequences Creed vs. Suicide vs. Amazing Red

This is a Steel Asylum Xscape match, meaning it's a BIG RED CAGE and the first person to climb out of a small hole in the top wins. The Guns (Shelley/Sabin), Lethal Consequences and Homicide/Kiyoshi are regular tag partners. Red is X-Division Champion but the title isn't on the line. We immediately see the problem: there are eight people in the ring at once and the red bars are thicker than traditional cages, making it almost impossible to tell what's going on inside.

Tenay tells us that Mick Foley couldn't get through security to get in. Remember that because it's going to be important later. It's a huge brawl to start of course with various people climbing up and quickly being pulled back down. The fans are behind Shelley as he gets to the upper part of the cage (it's shaped like a teapot with a lid instead of a regular cage) but Lethal makes a save before Alex can get to the hold.

Jay hits a Lethal Injection on Suicide but Kiyoshi (I think. You can barely tell) takes him down. The cameras are cutting away so fast that you can barely tell where everyone is. Suicide goes for the hole but Red makes a save. Well in theory as he kind of touches Red to get him down before diving at Sabin with a hurricanrana instead. Homicide busts out a baton and starts beating people.....for a no contest. IN A CAGE MATCH.

**Rating:** F. None of the spots were anything special, the match ran less than five minutes, YOU COULDN'T SEE ANYTHING, AND IT WAS A FREAKING NO CONTEST IN A STEEL CAGE MATCH. Throw in that this was for nothing but bragging rights because the champion was in the match, meaning there wasn't a title shot or anything like that up for grabs, and this was one of the worst opening matches I've seen in years.

The fans are rightfully livid, but we're not done yet. Homicide goes climbing after the match is over....and he can't get out. To be fair to him it's a horrible design that a trapeze artist would have trouble getting out of but that's why this was stupid. As Homicide is hanging upside down and trying not to die, the other guys get up so Homicide drops down to the mat.

They keep brawling until Jeff Hardy debuts (coming through the crowd because Hogan bringing him to the ring and saying "LOOK WHO I SIGNED" was too simple) and gets in a fight with Homicide outside (nearly falling over the bottom of the cage) of the ring. Jeff lays him out with a chair shot and Twist of Fate before climbing the outside of the cage and sitting on top. After tonight, he wouldn't appear TNA for over two months.

Hardy and Shannon Moore are glad to see each other after a break.

Hulk Hogan is on the way, complete with a motorcade. Keep that in mind as well.

Kevin Nash makes sex jokes with Christy Hemme (no issue there) and says this is a great night for TNA and for Hogan himself. He talks about being mentored by Hogan and how good it's going to be to have him back. Nash reiterates that Hogan is on his way and not alone.

#### Knockouts Title: ODB vs. Tara

ODB is challenging and Tara (coming out to the rocking BROKEN song) is actually wearing the belt. ODB takes over with some choking to start, followed by the fall away slam for two. Back up and Tara hooks the Tarantula followed by a slingshot flip legdrop for two of her own. The Widow's Peak is countered into a rollup with a handful of trunks (and a cutaway because they come up a bit too high) to give ODB the title.

**Rating:** D. I forgot how good Tara looked at this point. The match was nothing to see though as it was mainly just a brawl for a few minutes until ODB cheated to win. This comes off like the US Express losing the Tag Team Titles to Volkoff and Sheik at the first Wrestlemania: give them something to make it historic. The similarities continue as Tara would get it back less than two weeks later.

Tara lays out the new champion and puts her spider on ODB's face.

Ric Flair arrives in a big surprise and goes into World Champion AJ Styles' locker room.

Earlier today Christy was talking to fans when Mick Foley arrived and tried to get in. He's been barred from the arena though and doesn't seem to care. Security stops him though and Mick just leaves.

Bobby Lashley and his girlfriend Kristal come out with something to say. A loud BOBBY chant cuts Kristal off as she tries to talk about how big of a night this is. She says Bobby wants Hogan to know what a big star he is and how no one can

handle him. Unlike MMA, wrestling is full of inbred degenerates that people like Lashley have to put up with. Lashley has asked for his release because they have more important things to do. Both would be gone before the end of the month.

The Beautiful People are playing strip poker because that's what good looking women do. Notice the Five Hour Energies (sponsor) on the table. On the other hand, ignore that Lacey claims to have a flush but seems to have four hearts and a diamond.

Scott Hall (looking BOMBED. DDP truly is a miracle worker) and Sean Waltman beat up security but get stopped.

Hogan is still coming.

After a break the limos have stopped outside the Impact Zone. Someone gets out of one limo and gets into the other one.

Hall and Waltman get into the arena.

It's 9pm so here's Hulk in black. Brooke is of course in the front row. Hogan immediately puts over the roster and the locker room for working as hard as they have. Now we get the infamous line from this promo: "I've been in the back all day." Remember that this is after AN HOUR OF WATCHING HIM DRIVE TO THE BUILDING. That line was edited out of the rebroadcast of the show and it's painful to hear all over again.

Hogan talks about how many new and familiar faces there are here. As he's talking, Hall and Waltman try to get to the ring. Hogan says give them a mic and let them get in the ring. Hall and Hogan do the Wolfpack sign and Hall says the party is back. The boss tells him that's not how it works anymore. Waltman thinks it's the same people so it's the same party, but Hogan shoots him down too. In a laughable line, Hogan says it's time to grow up.

Hall says everything is changing, with or without Hogan. Wait so is everything changing or is everything the same? Nash comes out and wants to know what's going on, but Hulk insists he's not playing a role. Hogan says they need to do this FOR REAL because it's a different time. Hall and Waltman are ready to fight but Eric Bischoff debuts and says they reinvented this business. Dixie Carter is shown watching from the crowd.

Bischoff says this is all about communication and that has broken down recently. Everyone has to earn their position in this company, which Nash hears loud and clear. Nash, Hall and Waltman leave and Bischoff again claims that they can change the business again. Hogan says they've shuffled the deck as Dixie cautiously applauds. Bischoff rips up the format sheet to show how different things are going to be. He hands the producer a new format because they're turning this company upside down. So this basically boiled down to the same "this is new" promo that every indy company starts with.

Sting is shown watching from the rafters.

Knockouts Tag Team Titles: Awesome Kong/Hamada vs. Sarita/Taylor Wilde

Hamada and Kong are challenging. Sarita armdrags Hamada down a few times to start as we cut to the back to see the Motor City Machineguns laid out. Kong comes in and starts cleaning house but Taylor kicks Hamada out to the floor. The champions double team Kong to the floor and hit stereo dives to take the villains out as we take a break.

Back with Hamada hitting a running basement dropkick for two on Sarita. Taylor comes in and is promptly destroyed by Kong with ease. Hamada gets in some shots of her own and it's back to Kong, who actually allows the hot tag to Sarita. The challengers catch a top rope cross body with ease but Taylor makes the save. Kong drops Sarita with a spinning backfist and an Awesome Bomb with Hamada adding a missile dropkick gives us

new champions.

**Rating:** C. I liked this better than I thought I would but I always liked Hamada. There's no story here of course but then again there never were with these belts. This title reign didn't mean much either as Hamada and Kong would be stripped of the titles when Kong left the company due to an altercation with Bubba the Love Sponge.

The Beautiful People are still playing cards when Sean Morely shows up in a towel. He wants to deal.

Security still won't let Foley into the arena. He's in the building now at least. Foley leaves and the Nasty Boys debut but can't get in either. Allegedly this was a rib by Bischoff and Hogan for fans who would ask where the Nasty Boys were.

Matt Morgan/Hernandez vs. Raven/Dr. Stevie

Carbon Footprint ends Stevie in thirty seconds. Apparently this was a #1 contenders match.

D'Angelo Dinero is ready for Desmond Wolfe when Orlando Jordan (not named here) debuts and asks if they've seen Hogan. Pope isn't happy. Somehow this took like three and a half minutes.

D'Angelo Dinero vs. Desmond Wolfe

Wolfe throws Dinero around to start and goes after the arm with a flying hammerlock. The arm is sent into the buckle but Dinero comes back with a knee in the corner and a Vader Bomb elbow. The fans think that THIS IS WRESTLING as Pope escapes the Tower of London and small packages Wolfe for the pin out of nowhere. Too short to rate but the fact that TNA didn't even bother saying Wolfe was awesome tells you everything you need to know about it.

Jeff Jarrett arrives.

Rhino is down in the back. Bubba the Love Sponge shows up and

says he'll get to the bottom of this.

The announcers recap the evening and we get a clip of Hogan debuting.

AJ Styles is excited about Hogan arriving and is ready for his match with Angle at Genesis so he can prove how great he is. Bischoff comes in and makes AJ vs. Angle for the title tonight.

Jeff Jarrett makes his big return to the Impact Zone and thanks the fans for being here. He founded TNA seven years ago and the fans said they wouldn't last six months. Instead he's sitting here in a six sided ring on a Monday night. He spent years trying to get Hogan here and now the time is right.

Jarrett talks about doing good and bad things, but the best thing he's done is bring in people like Beer Money, Daniels, Samoa Joe and AJ Styles. The best is yet to come...and Hogan cuts him off. Hogan talks about how Jarrett ran the country into the ground and how he and Bischoff are here to save it. Hogan is now Dixie's partner and he'll take TNA to the top. Jarrett has no power and needs to lace up his boots and be ready.

Let's stop to recap this for a second. Hogan and Bischoff came into the company as good guys. This should be obvious given how they were hyped up. Jarrett didn't show a single bit of heelishness in the promo and it was all for the fans. They were into it as well, and then Hogan cuts him off at the knees like a heel. It didn't come off like a heel turn, but rather Hogan talking to a heel.

Was TNA expecting Jarrett's promo to get booed? I have no idea why as there wasn't anything but sucking up to the fans in it, nor do I have any idea why Hogan has to oppose Jarrett. Yeah Jarrett did some stupid stuff in real life, but what does that have to do with his on screen character? In theory it's more of Hogan's blurring the lines stuff and this is a good example



of how bad it can look.

Daniels is in the back when JB interrupts him (a recurring trend tonight). Apparently Foley is still trying to get in and convinces Borash to open a door. Foley finally gets in and wants a meeting with Hogan.

Jeff Hardy is painting but Shannon Moore says the big man called. They leave.

### Abyss vs. Samoa Joe

This is the sixth match of the night and these are the second and third people still actually with the company just four and a half years later. Actually, so far the only people we've seen still with the company are the announcers, Christy, JB, Lashley (who was gone for a four year stretch), Homicide, Joe, two Beautiful People, Hardy and Abyss. That's eleven people out of probably thirty or forty still around and only seven are active wrestlers. That's an INSANE turnaround in less than five years.

Joe hammers him down in the corner to start and hits a quick Facewash for good measure. They head outside and Abyss has to duck a chair being pelted at his head. Back in and Abyss slams him down but charges into a boot to the face. We see Sting watching from the back. Joe follows it up with a middle rope boot to the chest for two. An enziguri staggers Abyss but he chokeslams Joe down with ease. The referee gets bumped and Joe nails Abyss with a chair, setting up the Clutch for the submission.

**Rating:** C-. Decent power brawl here but more than that it was nice to see a match get nearly five minutes without anything interrupting it. Oh wait there was the Sting deal. I knew it was too good to be true. The match didn't mean anything but that's par for the course on this show.

Bischoff is editing the new format when Kristal comes up and

demands a meeting with Hogan. Eric tells her to take a number and wait in line.

Now Beer Money has been attacked. Bubba thinks he knows who did it.

The Nasty Boys still can't get in so Bubba comes in and says let them in.

Kurt Angle (the eighth person still on the roster) says he's been waiting to get his hands on AJ since September.

Jeff Hardy and Shannon Moore get envelopes (presumably contracts) when some teenage girls come up. Jeff gives them the painting and they scream a lot.

The Nasty Boys trash Team 3D's locker room. Team 3D would lose the showdown on PPV.

#### TNA World Title: AJ Styles vs. Kurt Angle

AJ is defending. Angle quickly suplexes out of a headlock as the fans are split on what to do. Kurt goes outside and gets taken down by a big flip dive to finally give the fans something good to cheer for. A masked man comes in and attacks AJ but Angle helps get rid of him to save his title shot. Angle nails a buckle bomb and we take a break. Back with AJ nailing some shots to the face and hitting the AA into a backbreaker.

The springboard forearm is caught in an overhead belly to belly but AJ escapes the Angle Slam. A catapult sends AJ into the buckle and it's time to roll some Germans. He's able to escape the Slam again but Angle counters the Pele into the ankle lock. AJ rolls out and hits another Pele for two with Angle getting into the ropes. Now the Angle Slam connects for two but Angle walks into the springboard forearm to put both guys down. The champion takes his time getting to the top, allowing Angle to run the ropes for the belly to belly.

This time it's Kurt going up but missing a frog splash. There's the Styles Clash for two but Kurt is able to fight out of a superplex attempt. The frog splash lands for two and Angle is getting ticked off. Another Angle Slam is countered into a DDT, drawing a WHO NEEDS BRET chant (Bret was returning to the WWE on Raw). Angle rolls out of another Clash attempt but can't get the ankle lock.

A springboard into the reverse DDT gets two for the champion. AJ takes too long going up this time so Angle hits something like the Angle Slam off the top for two. I remember buying that as the finish back in the day. The ankle lock is countered with Kurt being sent into the buckle and a second Styles Clash gets two. Angle rolls through a third Styles Clash attempt and grabs the ankle lock with the grapevine.

AJ becomes one of the only people to escape the hold as Flair comes out to watch. Styles suplexes him down and hits a springboard 450 for two. We take another break and come back with AJ in what looks like a triangle choke. He powers up but gets caught in the ankle lock, only to counter into a third Styles Clash. A second springboard 450 is enough to retain AJ's title.

**Rating:** A-. Awesome main event here but unfortunately it came at the end of a horrible show. There were a ton of great near falls in there and I loved that AJ escaped the hold that Angle spent the entire match trying to grab. Flair meant nothing and Daniels meant even less. Oh Daniels was the masked man in case you were wondering. Odds are you forgot though, just like TNA apparently did as he wasn't mentioned after the first two minutes of the match.

Hogan comes out to applaud and give his seal of approval but there's another interruption. Foley is breaking up the poker game (remember that?) and demanding to know where Hogan is. Because THE BEAUTIFUL PEOPLE AND VAL VENIS are the first people you would ask. He goes into Bischoff's locker room and

they go back and forth a bit with Foley saying he wants to stay. Hall, Nash and Waltman come in and lay him out, revealing themselves to be the attackers all night long. Shocking I know. Hogan comes in and sees what happened to close the show.

**Overall Rating:** D-. I can't call a show with that good of a main event a failure. That being said, that's the extent of the good stuff about this show. Let's see. TNA brags about having the best young roster in the world. Ok, that's cool. Let's look at how it was utilized tonight. The opening match is one of the biggest disasters I've ever seen. Seriously, it's that bad. Hardy didn't make things better as he got on my nerves with one of about two million stories going on throughout the night.

Moving on, Tara vs. ODB was too short to mean much but it was nothing special. The other Knockouts match was better, but is that really the match you want getting the second most time all night? Yeah it was watchable but this is supposed to be TNA's grand showcase show, not any other episode of Impact. I'll give the girls a pass for this show, but they were really just passable at best.

As for the up and comers, Morgan and Hernandez got about thirty seconds, Pope had a nothing match against one of the best wrestlers in the company who might as well have been any given jobber, and two former World Champions had a four and a half minute match that didn't mean anything. The main event was indeed great because it was given time to be great, but it didn't make up for everything else.

Let's look at the backstage segments. I don't hate him nearly as much as some do, but Bubba the Love Sponge is as big a waste of space as anyone I've seen in a good while. A handful of people might know him, but if you think he was hired for anything other than being Hogan's friend you're missing the point. His main story throughout the night was either letting

in the Nasty Boys (more on them later) or saying "Yep, these young guns have been knocked out cold. I think I know who did it but I'm not going to tell anyone."

That brings me to all the old people being brought in to take spots from younger people. Aside from Hogan, Bischoff and the NWO guys, we had Val Venis, Orlando Jordan, the Nasty Boys, Ric Flair, Jeff Hardy and Shannon Moore debut. Of those six full time wrestlers, only Hardy and MAYBE Flair should have been signed. It doesn't help that Venis, Hardy, Jordan and the Nasty Boys all won their debut matches, making the TNA guys look second rate as a result.

That's the line to sum up this whole show: the newcomers made TNA guys look second rate. The old guys' stories looked more important (all 19 million of them), they were treated like bigger stars, they got more time, and their stories all made little to no sense. Also, they can all be summed up as "let the old times roll!" That's the extent of the main story: the NWO guys want to be the NWO again and Hogan is split over loyalties. Tell me: how does this make TNA look good? It comes off as Hulk N Pals using TNA as a playground instead of actually making them look better.

The whole show came off as "step aside kids and let the big boys show you how it's done." Unfortunately, those old guys aren't all that interesting anymore because they haven't meant much in about ten years. The problem with that is the same thing that has plagued TNA for years: they would rather be a nostalgia promotion rather than something new. It's fine once in awhile, but when it's all you've got, it stops being fun and becomes a promotion built around old guys that a lot of fans have no connection to. If you're under about twenty, this show holds no appeal to you as far as nostalgia goes and that isn't going to work long term.

This show was a disaster with almost nothing going right. The debuts (other than Hardy and the shock value of Flair) came

off like the last minute hires to fill in a roster, the matches were bad save for the main event, and the stories were all over the place. It didn't make me want to watch any more and the whole thing was just a mess. TNA would waste a few more years on Hogan and Bischoff before they left with more damage than anyone could solve.

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<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B0188BJRGU>

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## **Monday Nitro – January 4, 1999: It's Hogan! AGAIN!**

### **Monday Nitro #170**

Date: January 4, 1999

Location: Georgia Dome, Atlanta, Georgia

Attendance: 38,809

Commentators: Larry Zbyszko, Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan, Mike Tenay

We had to get here eventually. This is the show that a lot of people credit with putting WCW down a hole that it was never going to get out of. The main event here is Goldberg vs.

Nash II for Nash's World Title, but the major story coming out of last week is Flair winning control of the company for 90 days by defeating Eric Bischoff. I'm sure that will go perfectly smoothly. Let's get to it.

We open with dramatic clips from Goldberg vs. Nash at Starrcade.

Nitro Girls in the ring and we get balloons and confetti.

There's a Nitro Party in a suite.

Hogan is here tonight.

### Glacier vs. Hugh Morrus

The announcers go on about the end of last week's show and explain why Savage would want to hurt Bischoff (Bischoff helped the NWO destroy Savage's knee in a cage last year). Glacier's now in a shorter singlet and the look really doesn't work. Morrus throws him down to start until Glacier cranks on the arm to take over. Hugh grabs a powerslam and both guys are down. Glacier legsweeps him down but gets leveled with a clothesline, setting up No Laughing Matter to give Morrus the pin. Not long enough to rate but a nice return for Morrus after a few months off.

The announcers talk about Flair a bit more.

Opening sequence, finally with some new video.

Arn Anderson, Ric Flair and the Flair Family walk from the parking lot into the arena. A lot of the backstage workers applaud Flair on the way to the ring. They finally make it to the ring with Benoit, Mongo and Malenko joining Anderson and the Flairs. Ric talks about Eric Bischoff ruining this company but it still being the greatest wrestling company in the world. The people have been asking what Flair is going to do to Bischoff on his first night. Flair tells Eric to get out here right now to talk to the boss.

An angry Bischoff gets in the ring and Flair says the shoes are on different feet tonight. Flair talks about Eric insulting him over the years on commentary and running down Ric's career. The easy thing would be for Flair to just fire Bischoff, but that wouldn't be fun. Instead, Bischoff is going to be working under Tony Schiavone and doing commentary. Also since Bischoff won't be visible on commentary, his pay is cut in half. Next up for Flair is referee Randy Anderson. Randy, stricken with cancer, was fired by Bischoff about two years ago. Flair calls him to the ring and offers him his job back at double the salary.

With Flair still in the ring, Tony walks Bischoff through the segment list. Bischoff's disgusted reply is amusing. This leaves Flair with his first match to make. He'll start with Souled Out, where he's booking himself into a handicap match with Barry Windham and Curt Hennig. David Flair steps up and asks to be his father's partner in the match. Ric says David isn't ready but Arn says David knows what he's doing.

#### Booker T. vs. Emery Hale

The needling continues with Tony telling Eric to jump in at any time. Hale jumps Booker to start and stomps away in the corner, only to charge into a spinebuster. The side kick sets up the missile dropkick and Hale is done in less than 90 seconds. Eric still hasn't talked other than one sentence.

Nitro Girls.

Bischoff is looking away with his feet on the desk. Tony: "Don't make me file a report with Mr. Flair."

#### Norman Smiley vs. Chavo Guerrero Jr.

Chavo fires off chops to start and dropkicks Norman out to the floor. Eric still won't talk. Back in and Norman runs Chavo over but stops to glare at Pepe. A World's Strongest Slam gets two on Guerrero but he comes back with a few rollups for two



each. The Big Wiggle allows Chavo to dropkick him down and now Chavo dances some as well. Chavo botches a springboard and then slightly botches a rollup for two. Back up and Guerrero grabs a sunset flip for the pin.

**Rating:** D+. The match was just there for background noise as Chavo is still doing the same stuff he's done for months now. Smiley is still over but I'm not sure why you would have him lose a match like this. I mean, this man was on Starrcade! Nothing to see here but it's the first hour of Nitro so what do you expect?

Norman beats up Chavo and breaks Pepe's head off to turn into a serious heel rather than a goofy one.

#### Chris Benoit vs. Horace Hogan

Benoit gets a jobber's entrance. Horace gets beaten down in the corner but comes back with a running clothesline. Another clothesline misses and Benoit rolls some Germans as Tony threatens to demote Eric to the international broadcasts. Horace throws Benoit out to the floor and drives him into the barricade in a nice crash.

Back in and a clothesline gets two for Horace before Tony rubs it in that Randy Anderson is referee. Horace goes up but gets superplexed down. The Swan Dive connects but Benoit is holding his head instead of covering. Horace gets two off a shoulder breaker but his suplex is countered into the Crossface to give Benoit the win.

**Rating:** C-. Not the worst match in the world and it's nice to see Benoit survive until the end. Horace wasn't terrible as a big guy for roles like this and the match worked well enough. That Swan Dive continues to make me cringe though as Benoit's head just smacked off Horace.

And now it begins. Goldberg is arrested for charges that aren't explained yet. He goes on a rant about all the good

things he does for this community. Goldberg talks more here than he has in his entire time in the company. No charge is ever mentioned but he eventually goes "downtown."

After a break, Goldberg is taken to a police car. Nash says this can't happen because they have a match tonight. Hogan shows up and laughs, saying he's an honest man and calling Goldberg guilty. He'll appreciate Nash's vote too. As he walks by, Liz is seen talking to cops.

### Perry Saturn vs. Chris Jericho

Feeling out process to start with Saturn slapping Jericho in the face. Referee Scott Dickinson, who has been having issues with Saturn lately, yells at Saturn about throwing a punch. They trade wristlocks with Saturn getting the better of it before heading to the corner. A release overhead belly to belly sends Jericho flying and Saturn fires off kicks in the corner.

Saturn goes to the apron and Jericho nails the springboard dropkick to send him out to the floor. Chris does the long strides but there's nowhere near as much energy to it. We take a break and come back with Jericho nailing a belly to back suplex followed by its vertical cousin for an arrogant two. Saturn's Death Valley Driver doesn't work but a t-bone suplex gets two on Jericho. The referee gets hit in the jaw by mistake before Jericho pulls him in the way of a diving Saturn. A low blow and the Lionsault sets up the Liontamer but Dickinson calls for the bell before Jericho turns him over. Jericho wins.

**Rating:** C-. This corrupt referee nonsense is getting annoying in a hurry, just like Saturn getting beaten all the time. Jericho knew he was leaving at this point and it was clear that he didn't have the same energy. He's still doing his old standards but a lot of them are really lackluster.

We go to the police precinct, which Tony points out "is across

the street at the CNN Center.” Remember that as it becomes important later. They’ll be in room three as the cameras are already waiting for them. Apparently Goldberg is being charged with aggravated stalking by Elizabeth Lebetski, more commonly known as Miss Elizabeth. Goldberg knows the cop and tells him to do his job because the cop knows this is bogus. I believe the charges were originally going to be rape but Goldberg refused to do it.

Nitro Girls. Larry gets in a good line about how these are real women, as opposed to Liz who has tried to be a Miss five times now.

Back to the Nitro Party where we’ve got thumb wrestling. Like as a featured event. A JAIL BREAK chant starts up.

We go back to the station where Liz is being interviewed. She says Goldberg last confronted her at the water cooler. Liz says she’s filed three reports already because Goldberg has been at every show she’s been at, at the hotels and at the gym. Again, this is more talking than she’s ever done in WCW. The detective goes off to talk with his partner.

Here’s a long segment of an LWO party with low riders, a lot of women and Eddie running things. They head inside for dancing to mariachi dancing and Eddie says he’s on top of the Latino world. Now there’s a card game with Eddie trading cards with other LWO members to win. Eddie says they’re united together and that’s about it. This ran nearly four minutes.

#### Kidman/Rey Mysterio Jr. vs. Psychosis/Juventud Guerrera

Tornado match. Well in name only as they start with tags. Psychosis nails an early backbreaker on Kidman before it’s off to Juvy who gets dropkicked a few times. Off to Rey for a nice top rope hurricanrana before he throws Juvy at Kidman for the sitout powerbomb. Rey pulls Juvy out to the floor but Psychosis gets in a shot of his own, setting up a slingshot legdrop to the floor to crush Rey.

Back in and Psychosis nails a top rope ax handle as Heenan asks Bischoff if he remembers calling the early shows with Mongo. Tony promises to deliver the World Title match they advertised. Juvy hits a backbreaker of his own on Mysterio before it's back to Psychosis who gets dropkicked out of the air.

Everything breaks down which Tony says is perfectly legal. Kidman and Mysterio clothesline the LWO outside for big planchas off the top. Back in and a springboard Doomsday Device of all things gets two on Psychosis but Juvy comes back with the Driver for two on Mysterio. Everything breaks down again and Kidman's missile dropkick accidentally hits Rey, allowing Psychosis to hit the guillotine legdrop for the pin on the masked man.

**Rating:** C+. This was the fun you expect from these kind of matches, but the tornado stuff was some combination of unnecessary and confusing. The referee and wrestlers didn't seem to know it was under tornado rules but Tony kept insisting it was. It's interesting to see some drama between Rey and Kidman as a match between the two could be awesome.

Goldberg has an explanation for why he's always at the same places Elizabeth: they work for the same company and she's a member of the gym he owns. The fact that they work together comes as a surprise to the detective.

Here's Nash to address the Goldberg situation. He doesn't think he beat Goldberg at Starrcade because Goldberg got screwed that night. Nash doesn't buy the stories Liz is telling and thinks Hogan is behind it. Therefore, Nash wants Hogan tonight as a warmup for later tonight when he fights Goldberg. Flair comes out and says if Goldberg can't make the match, Hogan can take his place.

Video on Goldberg vs. Nash.

Liz tells the original detective's partner the story but the

details are different (Coke machine instead of water cooler). The original detective comes back in. Goldberg calls her all the time but hangs up before anything is said. The detectives don't ask how she knows it's him and Liz rants about being the victim.

Here's Hogan in a black suit with something to say. Hogan says the wrestling world still revolves around him but he came here to announce his retirement. He's also going to announce his running mate but seeing Goldberg made him sick. Hogan thinks he owes the fans a retirement match so he'll give them one tonight. Gene says the match would be a title match so Hogan agrees.

Schiavone: "Fans, if you're even thinking about changing the channel to our competition, fans do not. We understand that Mick Foley, who wrestled here one time as Cactus Jack, is going to win their World Title."

I get the idea WCW was going for with this line and the idea makes sense to a degree, but when you think about it there's much more potential for harm than good. On the other hand, giving away results worked for WCW in the past so it's logical to do it again, even in very different circumstances. The idea of one show being taped as opposed to live doesn't make much of a difference to me though. A show being live or taped doesn't matter if the show is still horrible.

We get a clip of Jericho praising Scott Dickinson earlier in the day and saying a wrestler should never touch a referee. Jericho says Saturn should get disqualified if he ever touches Dickinson again. Was this really necessary?

#### TV Title: Scott Steiner vs. Konnan

Both name graphics say Television Champion even though Scott is defending. Before the match, Buff dances a bit and fakes a heart attack to mock Flair. Konnan starts fast but gets taken down by a single forearm to the back. Some right hands in the

corner and a clothesline put Steiner down and the fight heads to the floor. Tony repeats the Cactus Jack line and actually says HA HA at the thought of Foley winning the title.

Buff gets in some cheap shots on the floor before Scott stomps on Konnan's head back inside. The announcers spend about half the match talking about how Bischoff isn't going to say anything and about the Goldberg issues. Konnan comes back with a tornado DDT (looked more like he was trying a small package) before missing the rolling lariat and botching the X-Factor. Bagwell comes in for the DQ before the Sunrise can go on.

**Rating:** F. They botched a bunch of spots, I had to listen to unfunny jabs at Bischoff, and the HA HA line. Terrible match with commentary making it even worse.

Post match Konnan gets beaten down with a chair.

The announcers talk about the Goldberg situation. Tony again mentions that the precinct is across the street. Eric: "Goldberg is jail bait."

Wrath comes out and actually grabs a mic. He's been destroying people for six months and wants anyone in the back to come out here and take a beating.

### Bam Bam Bigelow vs. Wrath

They stare each other down to start with Wrath's shots only having a limited effect. A running clothesline puts Bigelow down but he low bridges Wrath to the floor. They head back inside with Bigelow nailing some elbows to the back of the head. Outside again with Wrath taking over with knees to the ribs. Bigelow sends him into the barricade and back into the ring before grabbing a chair. The referee moves the chair and the distraction lets Wrath nail a backdrop. They head outside for the third time and the referee goes down, causing him to throw the match out.

**Rating:** D+. Take two guys and let them beat each other up for awhile. It was barely a match and there's nothing wrong with that. It's nice to see Wrath get to hang with someone of Bigelow's caliber, even though this is a demotion for Bigelow. At least they dropped the idea of him not being on the roster.

They brawl to the back.

Back and the precinct, the detectives start poking holes in Liz's story as she can't remember details. The fact that she can't remember the difference between water and Coke (or Pepsi, which she said she got out of a Coke machine), says a lot about Liz's abilities. She keeps looking at her watch as she gets the color of Goldberg's tights wrong. They threaten to charge her with perjury and Liz realizes she had the wrong wrestler.

Tony is aghast at these developments.

We've got roughly forty minutes left in the broadcast for Goldberg to get back to the arena.

Nitro Girls.

Bischoff waves to the camera as the announcers talk about the World Title match later tonight. Bobby says Goldberg will come to the arena without his clothes if need be.

### Brian Adams vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Anderson calls for the bell, starts counting Adams on the floor, then calls for the bell again to start the match. Adams hides in the corner to start but Page hammers away with rights and lefts. Brian bails to the floor so Page dives over the top rope to take out both Adams and Vincent. There's barely any selling though as Adams stomps away back inside to take over.

We come back from a break with Page fighting out of a chinlock as Tony brags about it being live again. A swinging neckbreaker puts Adams down but Brian nails a low blow in the

corner to stop Page cold. We hit a bearhug and Eric says "by golly" for no apparent reason. Adams gets two off a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker but Page grabs his running DDT to put both guys down. Page nails a quick clothesline and goes to the middle rope for a jumping Diamond Cutter and the pin.

**Rating:** C. The ending looked good but could have looked great had they stuck the landing (Page partially landed on his legs instead of his back but it was fine). Adams is good in his role as he has a few good power moves and seems like a moderately difficult dragon for a hero to slay.

Goldberg is released from custody as we go to a break. We've got roughly twenty minutes left in the show and he made it from the arena to the station in less than ten minutes by car earlier.

#### WCW World Title: Kevin Nash vs. Hollywood Hogan

Nash is defending of course. Hogan is in street clothes and has Scott Steiner with him. Nash counters with Scott Hall, whose actions at Starrcade are apparently forgiven. The bell rings, Nash rips his shirt off, Hogan circles him for a bit, Nash says bring it and shoves Hogan into the corner, and the finger to the chest gives Hogan the title at 1:40.

Goldberg arrives less than 30 seconds later as Bischoff is already gloating. That's not terrible as far as him getting back to the arena in a reasonable time. Goldberg hits the ring and kicks down everyone not named Hogan. Some of the weakest belt shots ever have Goldberg on one knee but he's right back up to spear (almost zero impact) Hogan down. Luger comes out to break up the Jackhammer and the huge beatdown is on. Goldberg gets put in the Rack before being cuffed to the ropes.

Hall busts out the shock stick to jab into Goldberg's side (with Bischoff providing sound effects). Goldberg gets the red spray paint treatment on his back and black on his head. Hogan



spray paints a red NWO on the belt to close the show. Tony in a defeated voice: "They're back together. Again."

**Overall Rating:** D+. That's omitting the big angle. This show just wasn't very good for the most part with the usual array of boring Nitro matches that either meant anything or were nothing we hadn't seen before. As usual the cruiserweight match was good but with Eddie being gone, it really doesn't mean anything. This was far more boring than bad.

Then there's the moment that people still talk about over fifteen years later. The idea of having Goldberg have to run through a bunch of opponents to get the title back is a good idea. Unfortunately, that's about the extent of the good to this story. Let's look at this one item at a time.

1. Why did Nash do this? He won the title fairly (remember that Starrcade was No DQ) and had the belt free and clear. Out of loyalty to Hogan? A man who as far as we knew, he had split with about nine months ago? We'll come back to this later, but for now it brings us to the first major issue with this.

2. The title looks worthless. Nash had it all to himself and then he literally handed it over to Hogan, basically saying "I don't want this. Here you take it." If a big star like Nash says it's worthless, why would I want to see anyone else fight for it in the future? How do I know that they won't just hand it off to someone they think deserves it more?

3. Back to the first point, we could assume either it's a massive swerve and that there never was a real split or the problems between the NWO camps were hashed out somewhere in between. Either way, it makes pretty much everything since May look completely pointless. The NWO factions going to war? All patched up. The bickering and people jumping from team to team? Doesn't matter. Nash talking about how the Red and Black is forever and the Black and White was just for life? Nothing more than another catchphrase. Now everything is back where it

was when Savage took the title from Sting and then lost it to Hogan the next night. That brings us to possibly the biggest problem of this whole thing.

4. IT'S HOGAN AGAIN. At the end of the day, Hogan is standing tall as champion with his army around him and it's likely going to be months before anyone can challenge him. Yeah we've got Flair and Goldberg on WCW's side and one faction is done, but we're basically back to some point in 1997 instead of going forward.

5. While it's not directly related to the story, the Foley match getting free advertising makes things even worse. If this is just a normal week in the Monday Night Wars, you could have watched one or the other. If you see the Foley title win, it's an emotional moment with a new star being made and probably the loudest moment ever in wrestling. On the other hand, you have WCW doing the same stuff they've done for years with the same people on top and the same story being set up that we spent all of the better part of two years going through. If you don't have that comparison to make, what happens on Nitro is nowhere near as bad.

Overall, it just wasn't a well thought out move. There's a nice idea at the end, but the rest of the story just does not work. Hogan just wasn't what people wanted to see again and when you combine this with Bischoff beating Flair eight days ago, it was clear that the company wasn't interested in listening to what the people were wanting. The time for the NWO being on top had passed, but WCW decided to go back to the well again. I understand that it worked once, but it wasn't working this time.

To answer a question that is often asked, no, this wasn't what killed WCW. It was a moment that hurt them, but overall the company had a lot more moments to come that would hurt and ultimately kill them. An important thing to keep in mind was that Nitro had won a night in the ratings wars less than three

months ago. The WWF had been in far worse shape than this at times and it was hard to tell how much more steam Austin vs. McMahon had at this point. It didn't turn out well for WCW, but they still had a lot more chances to make a comeback in the future.

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# Monday Night Raw – January 4, 1999: He Did It

## Monday Night Raw

Date: January 4, 1999

Location: DCU Center, Worcester, Massachusetts

Attendance: 10,668

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

This is the Raw from the same night as the Fingerpoke of Doom and of course features Mankind winning his first world title. The rest of the show is more or less forgotten and since this is my favorite moment in the history of wrestling I just wanted to do this show. Let's get to it.

A video about the career of HBK opens the show. He had recently been fired as Commissioner by Vince so this is kind of a goodbye thing. Vince yells to cut the video, so we cut to the arena to see the Corporation coming to the ring. There is a lot of talent in there to put it mildly. Oh and Test is there too. Vince talks about how Shawn humiliated his son and if anyone does that again, they have to deal with Vince.

A live shot of Shawn coming to the arena is shown on the screen, and there's the music. Not sure what the point of the video was since he was there seconds later. He has the cavalry with him, and it's DX. And by that, I mean the REAL DX: HHH, X-Pac, Chyna and the Outlaws. This team with Shawn is a weird visual but cool at the same time.

According to Shawn he's still the Commissioner because the contract is iron clad and Vince said the Commissioner answered to no one, including Vince. Shawn says the only way he leaves is if he resigns, which more or less set up the Vince makes Shawn's life a living nightmare angle. We see a clip of Vince drawing his number for the Rumble and he wanted #2. Shawn therefore grants his wish, setting up one of the worst Rumbles of all time. He also promises Vince a surprise for later in the night, which will drive him Stone Cold Crazy.

By the way, Cole is somehow more of an annoying douche here than he is now.

### Ken Shamrock vs. Steve Blackman

Shamrock is the IC and a tag champion here but this is nontitle. Ken was in the ring for the opening segment but had a regular entrance for no apparent reason. It's a striking contest to start with Blackman taking over. We hear about Billy Gunn feuding with Shamrock, more or less giving away the ending.

Dan Severn, in a neck brace, comes down. He used to be both UFC Champion and NWA Champion at the same time. It's so weird

hearing about UFC on WWF TV. His mustache on his own could probably win the IC Title. It's that awesome. Dan and Shamrock were big rivals in UFC so there's the reason. Shamrock hits his belly to belly which is more of a throw than anything else. Severn pops up on the apron and Billy Gunn runs down for a Fameasser to Shamrock, giving Blackman the pin. Predictable but fine.

**Rating:** N/A. Not about the match or anything as this was just for the angle. That's perfectly fine and is a common practice in wrestling today still. Blackman was just boring to put it mildly, but he was trying at least. The Attitude Era was known for having a point to everything, and this had about three angles going at once, which is average for the time.

Gunn and Shamrock are fighting in the back.

Here comes Mankind for no apparent reason. He doesn't have his far more famous music yet either. Foley beat up Shane last week apparently. Foley: "I swear that was the first time I've ever grabbed another man's testicles." He's just awesome at this point with his promos as he's a clueless putz that seems to find himself in the top feuds in the company but everyone loves him and he can back it up. It was just out there all the time, but it worked like a charm.

He wants a shot at the Rock and the Title at the Rumble. We get an I Love Lucy reference as he says that's what the fans want. He corrects the fans by saying he's not God but he's good. Foley beat Rock at Rock Bottom but Vince changed the decision. Vince comes out and blames Foley for blaming the fans. He says Foley hasn't paid his dues and no more title shots for him.

Vince makes HHH vs. Foley tonight with the winner getting a spot in the Rumble. We see a clip of Foley beating up Shane, and Shane is announced as the guest referee. I knew that before it was said. There was a hardon for guest refs around

this time so it was pretty clear that was coming.

Chyna and her friend Sammy are here.

### Mark Henry vs. Goldust

Henry is sexual chocolate here and wants Chyna. How weird is it that these two are still employed? Goldie is still a bit insane here unlike now when there is nothing special about his character in the slightest. Goldust goes to the legs because that's what you do against every big man you ever fight. Just as always, it doesn't work.

Henry more or less dominates, hitting a big elbow drop. A press slam drop ends Goldie's comeback and here are Chyna and Sammy on the stage. This allows Goldust to hit Shattered Dreams, which is of course a DQ.

**Rating:** D. This was just a waste of time and did nothing but set up the angle that's about to happen. Goldust didn't really mean much at all and Henry was in this whole thing with Chyna. You got a lot more pointless matches like these at this time, but it was a far more angle heavy period of time.

Sammy and Chyna get in and Chyna has something to say. The other night with him was incredible, but she's not enough woman for him. She introduces him to her friend Sammy. Chyna makes the inevitable offer, and Henry faints. I'm not sure if this ends tonight, but the payoff for this is BAD. Apparently it doesn't but Sammy is a transvestite. Gotta love Russo!

Jesse Ventura is governor of Minnesota. That's still insane. His line at the inauguration: "We shocked the world." Amen. Also for you REALLY old school fans, Terry, Tyrell and Jade are here, more commonly known as his wife, son and daughter. Just in case you never got those references.

Dennis Knight (soon to be Mideon) is in a dungeon, chained to the ceiling with various metal objects hanging around and

laying on the floor. Sure why not?

### Godfather vs. Test

Test is in the Corporation, which would change later. He had just debuted recently before this as a hired gun. Ho Train hits and Test is in trouble. Val Venis comes out as Test hits a big boot. Godfather and Test fight on the floor and the referee just throws it out for no apparent reason. Val runs down and brawls with Test. This whole thing took like 2 minutes.

DX is talking.

### Mankind vs. HHH

Winner goes to the Rumble. Shane is guest referee. HHH works on the arm as Cole is REALLY annoying already. This is going to be short. Foley hits a baseball slide to put HHH down. HHH gets a sunset flip but Foley grabs the ropes. Shane kicks his arm and makes a fast count to end it. Like I said it was short, as in like 2 minutes.

HHH apologizes but says business is business and a win is a win. To avoid thoughts of a heel turn he gives Shane a Pedigree before saying to Foley that Shane is all his. Mankind says this is something my high school coach taught me. He more or less puts Shane in an abdominal stretch while sitting down. Foley says he'll break Shane's shoulder if Vince and the Stooges, who have just come out (ok not in Patterson's case but 2/3 isn't bad), come any closer. He wants a title shot TONIGHT and makes Shane screams. Vince agrees but Foley wants No Disqualifications. It's on, and Rock comes out to yell at Vince.

Slam of the Week is X-Pac getting kicked in the head by Bossman.

We recap what just happened.

## Edge vs. D'Lo Brown

Edge has only been around about 6 months at this point and still comes through the crowd. I LOVED this guy back in the day and did for a long time. Brown and Henry have been having issues with PMS, so expect a run in here. No bell here as we just get going. Big plancha to the floor by Edge which has no effect for some reason.

Liger Bomb to Edge doesn't get a cover as D'Lo has to play to the crowd. Very nice top rope cross body from Edge gets two. Here's PMS as has been a theme tonight. Terri is pregnant but won't say who the father is. D'lo accidentally knocks her to the floor and she holds her stomach. This would result in Brown being their slave more or less. I hated this stable, as did most people. The match just ends.

**Rating:** C+. This was a fun match as Brown was always solid in the ring and Edge was AWESOME when he debuted. This was a great pairing and I'd love to see them go at it again. And then we have to do a lost baby angle which was one of Russo's favorites. It turned out that Terri was never pregnant of course.

Kane comes out with Shane, Bearer and the Stooges. He's in the Corporation as well but doesn't seem happy about it. Kane has a sign on his back for the Brisco Brothers' Body Shop. Shane says this is a handicap match against the Stooges. Wait what?

## Gerald Brisco/Pat Patterson vs. Kane

Vince comes out again and says this is because the Stooges were partially responsible for Shane getting hurt last week. Patterson tries to bribe Kane with what he has in his pocket: a cigarette and a condom. Would anyone else like to just watch Patterson go about his daily life? Chokeslam for Brisco. Patterson gets a chair but Kane sees him. Shane is in the ring with a mic and egging Kane on which is funny stuff. Kane PUNTS the chair off the mat and over the top. That was rather



impressive looking actually. Kane grabs Shane by the throat but Vince says Kane will go back, meaning to an insane asylum. Not even a match.

Dennis Knight is still in the dungeon. The Acolytes come in and say "he's ready for you." Knight is more scared by this. The he is Undertaker and Knight would become Mideon in a FREAKY ceremony the next week.

### Hardcore Title: Al Snow vs. Road Dogg

Snow is the challenger and wearing a shirt covered in "blood" from a bloodbath from the Brood. Snow hides behind the curtain and we fight on the stage. The Hardcore Title was actually a coveted title at this point and not a joke. It's very violent very early as Snow is dominating. He hits a moonsault off the barricade but Road Dogg moves, sending Snow through a table.

Big old cookie sheet (why are those under wrestling rings or in arenas ever?) gets two. They head up the ramp and off to the side towards the back. Dogg goes up a set of steps and does a flying leap to take Snow down with a double axehandle. We're in a supply closet now or something and various stupid things are used as weapons.

They find a cart of potted plants to throw at each other. This is more intense than it sounds. Snow gets a steel pole and does some nice spinning and flipping (there's a proper term for it but I can't think of it. Think of a drill team) with it before driving it into Roadie. They go outside into the snow. Keep in mind this is Massachusetts in early January so it's FREEZING.

Snow gets put in a wheelbarrow or something and shoved into a wall. The referee can't stand up in the snow which is kind of funny. A piledriver on a wooden pallet pins Snow so Road Dogg retains (Cole of course says he won the title because Michael Cole is an idiotic douche).

**Rating:** B. Keep in mind this was a hardcore match and not a regular match when thinking about that grade. This was actually quite good and worked rather well. Road Dogg was cleaning up his real life a lot around this time and got off of drugs and stopped drinking for the most part and his in ring work went WAY up as a result. The push was kind of a reward for it and he would get the IC Title in two months. This was one of the better Hardcore Title matches I remember actually.

Dennis Knight is thrown through a door.

The Corporation jumps Shawn and beats the living tar out of him, throwing him into the window of a car. That's all in theory that is as the cameraman was knocked down and we heard glass breaking. When we come back Shawn is bloody and in the windshield.

#### WWF Title: Mankind vs. The Rock

This is No DQ remember. This is the match that Tony Schiavone gave the ending away to on their show, shifting the ratings for the night because of it. DX comes out to back up Foley, because they couldn't go to the hospital with Shawn or help defend him right? Rock of course has the Corporation with him.

Rock jumps him immediately and knocks him to the floor. He won't let the Corporation beat them up because he wants to do it himself. How noble of our heel champion. Foley does his first sick bump of the match as he goes knee first into the steps and flies over them in a painful looking shot. These two always had mad chemistry together, which is something that could be said about most guys with Rock actually.

Rock does commentary during the match, which always cracked me up. He talks a bit too much though so Foley takes over. Foley does a promo of his own and we cut to a shot of Vince and Shane, but we hear a bell ring. Foley is down and Rock has the bell. Subtle. Rock Bottom through a table and Foley is in

trouble. This has all taken less than three minutes so I'm not leaving much out at all.

To play up the spontaneous nature here Rock is in street clothes, as in the kind you would work out in. Corporate Elbow (debuted 5 minutes from my house) hits for two as this is ALL Rock. Foley with a spinning neckbreaker out of nowhere to get both guys down. Bossman throws the belt in and a shot to the head (sounded SICK) gets two as well. Double arm DDT onto the belt and Rock is in big trouble.

There's Mr. Socko as the crowd has lost it. Mandible Claw goes on but Shamrock pops Foley with a chair. Billy Gunn takes him down and the brawl begins. Everything goes crazy and CUE GLASS SHATTER! Austin comes out and everyone loses it. He caves Rock's head in with a chair and pulls Mick on top for the pin and the world title as the roof is blown off the arena.

**Rating:** A+. This was about a shocking moment and excitement and a feel good story and they NAILED it. This is very personal bias heavy, but they're my reviews so who cares?

DX puts Foley on their shoulders as the Corporation carries Rock out. Cole gets in the famous line of "Mick Foley has achieved his dream and the dream of everyone else who has been told you can't do it!" This is one of the best feel good moment in WWF history as Foley was considered one of the best to never be world champion as he worked as hard as anyone else but was never given a serious shot at it.

He got the shot tonight and he won the title. Road Dogg does the big announcement of Mankind being the new champion to a HUGE ovation. Foley dedicates the win to his kids and takes a lap around the ring with the belt to end the show. This is my favorite moment in wrestling history, bar none.

**Overall Rating:** B-. I hate to use that grade as the show is far from average given the ending but the rest of the show is

pretty bad. The last half hour is great stuff though which pushes the rating higher.

There was a very clear and predictable pattern for everything that wasn't the main event and it got annoying after awhile. The ending more than makes up for it though as this was just perfect all around. Great moment and 100% worth seeing. If you even remotely like Foley I defy you to not smile a bit while you watch this.

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<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B0188BJRGU>

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## Royal Rumble Count-Up – 1995: Short And Bad

### Royal Rumble 1995

Date: January 22, 1995

Location: USF Sun Dome, Tampa, Florida

Attendance: 10,000

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jerry Lawler

Oh dang it 1995 WWF still exists. This is that year that no one likes to

talk about and you have to fly through it as fast as you can or you might risk seeing something on it. The big twist this year is that the intervals in the Rumble are only 60 seconds, so the whole match is like 40 minutes long. The other problem is that Diesel is WWF Champion here. The good news is that he's facing Bret Hart, one of the two men capable of dragging an awesome match out of him. Let's get to it.

We open with the big deal about tonight's show: Pamela Anderson arrives. She'll be escorting the winner of the Rumble to the ring at Wrestlemania. A bunch of guys arrive to greet her.

#### Intercontinental Title: Jeff Jarrett vs. Razor Ramon

Jarrett is challenging and now has the Roadie with him. Razor starts with his usual assortment of punches and a fallaway slam to send Jeff to the floor. After a little toweling off on the floor, Jeff armdrags Razor down and struts. They trade arm holds until Razor gets taken to the mat where Jeff messes with his hair. Careful with the grease there Jeff. Razor gets annoyed and knocks Jeff to the floor for some more Memphis stalling.

Jeff gets back in and is immediately puts in an armbar where Razor can mess with Jarrett's hair. Some dropkicks floor the champ and a clothesline gets two. Razor catches a boot coming and ducks the enziguri from Jeff, but Razor misses an elbow to keep Jarrett in control. We hit the chinlock followed by a sunset flip by Jeff for two. Another dropkick gets the same and Jarrett is getting frustrated.

Jarrett hooks a sleeper but Razor quickly counters. The counter doesn't last long though as Jeff hits a swinging neckbreaker for two. Ramon slides behind Jeff in the corner and crotches him on the post to a big pop. We get a messed up (not botched mind you) spot where Razor was going to try a bulldog off the middle rope but Jeff turns around and it had to be a clothesline. Eh no harm no foul. Jeff backdrops Razor to the floor, injuring the champ's knee. Roadie clips him in the knee and Razor gets counted out.

We won't get to the rating just yet. Post match Jeff calls Razor a coward for taking the easy way out like that and calls him back into the ring. Razor pulls a Marty McFly and takes the bait, giving us another match.

## Intercontinental Title: Jeff Jarrett vs. Razor Ramon

Razor tries some quick rollups for two but Jeff goes right for the knee to take over. Jeff does his best Ric Flair imitation but as he goes for the third cannonball down onto the leg, Razor kicks him over the top and out to the floor. Back in and Jarrett puts on the Figure Four, putting Razor in a lot of trouble. Razor escapes and starts his comeback with punches and the belly to back superplex but Jeff counters in mid air for two. Razor clotheslines him down and loads up the Edge, but the knee gives out and Jeff rolls him up for the pin and the title.

**Rating:** C+. I always remember liking this match and it holds up pretty well. Memphis stalling isn't for everyone but it's a good way of drawing heel heat, which Jeff might as well have been an iceberg for otherwise. Razor was awesome at this point and had good chemistry with Jeff, so this worked pretty well all around. The ending was smart as it was Razor's trademark ending for house shows, but he would usually win in about 30 seconds with the Razor's Edge. Nice to see them switch things up here.

Pamela Anderson has been given a lot of gifts from various wrestlers. One of the running gags on this show is that Pamela clearly doesn't want to be here at all and has these "GET ME OUT OF HERE" looks on her face the whole night. Todd Pettingill tries to hit on her and completely fails of course.

Jeff says it's time to celebrate.

## IRS vs. The Undertaker

This is the start of the Undertaker vs. Million Dollar Team feud which went on FOREVER. The bell rings and we stand around a lot. IRS tries to jump Taker from behind and it goes nowhere. Taker glares him down to the floor and the stalling continues. IRS slides in, gets glared down, and hides on the floor again. Finally we head back in with IRS pounding away and getting kicked in the face for his efforts.

Taker grabs him by the tie and swings him out of the corner, followed by Old School as this is dominance so far. IRS and DiBiase get in an argument on the floor, causing DiBiase to call for some druids. Taker

loads up Old School again but the druid shakes the rope and Taker goes down. A clothesline puts Taker on the floor where he beats on the druids a bit before IRS jumps him from behind.

The druids send Taker into the steps and there's an abdominal stretch by IRS. That goes nowhere so Taker misses an elbow to really slow himself down. IRS hits some basic stuff as the crowd is almost completely silent. Druid interference gets two for IRS and also allows him to escape the Tombstone. A clothesline puts Taker down but he pops up and hits a chokeslam for the pin.

**Rating:** D. At the end of the day, this was about thirteen minutes of Taker beating up IRS. I mean....did ANYONE buy IRS as a threat to the Dead Man here? That was the problem with the eight month long feud between Taker and DiBiase's group: no one on the team was a real threat to him at all. Bad match here but that had to be expected.

Post match Taker beats up the druids and has a staredown with King Kong Bundy. During the staring, IRS steals the Urn. There's the launch of the feud and Bundy beats up Taker for awhile.

Diesel doesn't have much to say about his match with Bret.

Bret is ready for his chance at the title.

#### WWF World Title: Diesel vs. Bret Hart

Diesel is defending in case you're really slow. Bret tries to brawl to start but is almost immediately knocked down by a big shot to the face. A clothesline puts Bret on the floor where he chills for a bit. Back in and Bret goes after the knee like a smart Hitman. He puts on a quick Figure Four and after a good deal of time in it, Diesel gets to the rope. Bret does something you hardly ever see enough: he puts the same hold back on. Why don't more people do that? He had Diesel in trouble, so why mess with what was working?

Diesel makes the rope again and heads to the floor where Bret hits a suicide dive to have the champ reeling. Diesel shrugs it off and sends Hart into the steps to get a breather. With Bret in the ropes, Diesel

hits the running crotch attack to his back. There's a backbreaker to Bret and Diesel bends him across the knee a bit. Bret fires off some right hands but gets whipped hard into the buckle to stop him cold.

The champ loads up the Jackknife but instead puts Bret on his shoulder for a backbreaker. Why he doesn't JACKKNIFE HIM WHEN HE HAS THE CHANCE is beyond my intelligence as Bret escapes. A big boot (Diesel's leg seems fine) puts Bret down for two, but Bret gets a boot up of his own, followed by a middle rope clothesline for two. Hart goes up and Diesel tries to slam him off, but the knee goes out, giving Bret a two count.

The knockout sends Bret to the floor and he pulls Diesel's legs out for the figure four around the post. Actually scratch that as he ties Diesel's legs together instead and pounds away. The Five Moves of Doom get two but Diesel grabs a rope to block the Sharpshooter. Bret clotheslines him to the floor but a dive is caught in mid-air. The tall guy rams him into the post and hits the Jackknife in the ring, but Shawn Michaels runs in to break up the count.

Shawn beats on Diesel's leg which isn't a DQ for no apparent reason. Shawn and Diesel had split up at Survivor Series if you're wondering why this beating is happening. We get a ruling that the match must continue to the delight (yes I said delight) of the crowd. Bret goes back to the knee, hooking another Figure Four. Diesel can't get to the ropes so he hits Bret in the bad ribs to escape. Ah selling, how I love you.

Diesel is all ticked off now and pounds away on Bret in the corner. A gutwrench suplex of all things gets two for the champ but a big boot in the corner misses. Bret wraps Diesel's leg around the post and blasts it with a chair. There's the Sharpshooter but now it's Owen coming in for the save and a beatdown on Bret. I would say there's a great tag match in there, but Bret and Shawn teaming up would mean the end of the world as we know it.

The match is going to continue AGAIN though and Diesel gets two on Bret. The place is starting to lose its minds over these near falls. Bret sends him into the buckle that Owen exposed and pounds away as Diesel is rocking again. Diesel comes back AGAIN with elbows and forearms to the



face before punching Bret into the ropes where Hart's legs are caught. Bret is holding his knee but you never know with him.

Yep, he stands up and lays back down in some classic Hart goldbricking. Diesel goes for the Jackknife but Bret fakes him into a small package for two. Bret tries an O'Connor Roll and the referee is bumped. Backlund, Michaels, Roadie and Jarrett run in and that's FINALLY enough for the double DQ.

**Rating:** A. These two had MAD chemistry together and this was no exception. They knew how to work the David vs. Goliath (I'm not sure how fair it is to call Bret David actually) formula to perfection and the matches were great as a result. Why the company kept going with Diesel vs. power guys is beyond me, because his best stuff comes against small guys like Bret and Shawn and always has.

Backlund stays in the ring and puts the Crossface Chicken Wing on Bret. This set up their I Quit match at Mania which even Bret admits sucked. Diesel makes the save and hugs Bret.

More Pettingill and Anderson stuff.

Bob Holly and 1-2-3 Kid are excited to be in the finals of the tag team title tournament.

Tag Titles: Bob Holly/1-2-3 Kid vs. Bam Bam Bigelow/Tatanka

Shawn and Diesel split up and we needed champions. Holly and Tatanka start things off with Tatanka hitting a side slam for two. Holly comes back with a slam and a few dropkicks as this is going nowhere so far. Off to the Kid vs. Bigelow, with the big man running over both of the smaller guys with ease. Bigelow LAUNCHES Kid into the air but gets caught in a rana to send Bam Bam rolling.

Back to Tatanka who whips Kid into the buckles a few times before it's off to Bigelow to pound on the small guy some more. In something that actually impressed me, Kid backdrops Bigelow to the floor. Both small guys try top rope cross bodies but they escape and dropkick the heels together. Things settle down with Tatanka beating on Holly for a LONG

time. Bigelow comes in, allowing Tatanka to distract the Kid. Holly goes to the corner to find no partner and Bigelow splashes Bob.

Holly gets beaten down so badly that he goes to the wrong corner and tags in Tatanka. Thank goodness this isn't the Attitude Era because it probably would have been legal in some of their matches. Tatanka comes in for more beating on Holly until Bob FINALLY gets in a clothesline for the hot tag to the Kid. Everything breaks down and Kid is LAUNCHED to the floor by Bigelow. Bam Bam loads up the moonsault but Tatanka accidentally hits the ropes to knock him to the mat. Somehow that's enough for the pin and the titles for the Kid.

**Rating:** C+. This went nearly sixteen minutes which was just too long. It's quite good but it would have been great if they cut off five minutes or so. Those launches by Bigelow were awesome looking as Kid continues to be an excellent seller of moves like those. The idea was that it was all Bigelow's fault, even though Tatanka is totally to blame for Bigelow crashing like that. The Gunns would win the titles back the next night on Raw, making this whole thing pretty pointless.

Post match DiBiase and Tatanka leave Bigelow in the ring, where Lawrence Taylor, NFL legend, laughs at him. Bigelow shoves him down, and there's Wrestlemania people.

We get a recap of the 94 Rumble, focusing on Diesel's dominance and Shawn helping to eliminate him.

Shawn laughs a bit.

We look at the ending to the match from last year.

Luger says he wants the title. Lex, it's been over for you for like eight months now. Let it go dude.

Vince apologizes to Lawrence Taylor.

Here's Pamela Anderson to watch the Rumble at ringside and MAN does she look miserable.

Royal Rumble

Shawn is #1 and Bulldog is #2. Shawn immediately jumps Bulldog but this isn't going to last long. Remember there are one minute intervals, which was just a bad idea in general. Smith gets a quick gorilla press, but why throw Shawn OUT when you can just slam him? That clearly won't come back to haunt him later or anything of course. Smith charges into a boot and here's Eli Blu (one of the Harris Brothers, who were the big bald bikers who were around for WAY too long) at #3.

Nothing happens so here's Duke Droese (a wrestling garbageman) at #4. Eli fights Smith and Droese squeezes Shawn until Jimmy Del Ray of the Heavenly Bodies is #5. Nothing continues to happen because there isn't enough time between entries. Sione (Barbarian) of the Headshrinkers is #6 as Del Ray is tossed out. Tom Prichard of the Heavynly Bodies is #7 and STILL nothing is happening.

Doink is #8 as the Rumble is going way too fast. It's like the original Rumble: not enough names to care about and nothing going on at the same time. Kwang is #9 and Rick Martel is #10, I believe in his last WWF match. There are nine people in the ring right now. Shawn is almost out but fights off Kwang to survive. Owen Hart is in at #11 and here's Bret to jump him in the aisle. Owen survives and climbs in, only to be eliminated in three seconds.

Shawn puts out Droese and Timothy Well (partners with Steven Dunn in the tag team of Well Dunn) is #12 and is out almost immediately. Martel and Prichard go out faster than I can see them and Kwang superkicks Doink out. Luke of the Bushwhackers is #13 and during his entrance, everyone but Bulldog and Shawn are gone. Literally, four people were put out inside of six seconds. Luke is out almost immediately and it's Shawn vs. Bulldog again.

Here's Jacob Blu at #14 and HE T00 is gone in like fifteen seconds. This is so stupid. King Kong Bundy is #15 and he beats on both guys for about twenty seconds before it's Mo at #16. Mo is like the fifth guy to last less than thirty seconds. If your roster is this weak, CUT THE FREAKING MATCH DOWN. Nothing else happens until Mable is #17 for the showdown with Bundy. Mabel dumps him out as Butch is #18 and is gone in less than 20 seconds as well. More on this later.

Lex Luger is #19 and he goes right for Mabel for no apparent reason. He eliminates the fat purple and gold dude before gorilla pressing Michaels down like an idiot. Mantaur, a stupid monster character, is #20. He beats on Luger and Bulldog until Aldo Montoya (Justin Credible with a jockstrap on his face) is #21. Henry Godwinn is #22 as we're waiting on a bunch of people to get thrown out so everyone can go home. I think this is one of Henry's first matches.

Billy Gunn is #23 so naturally Bart Gunn is #24. Bob Backlund is #25 and also lasts about fifteen seconds due to a Bret Hart attack. Steven Dunn is #26 as there are like ten people in there. Bret and Backlund fight in the aisle again and old man Dick Murdoch is #27. Mantaur misses a charge at Bart and Adam Bomb is #28. For the second year in a row, Vince decides Adam Bomb is going to win the Rumble. Seriously.

Fatu is #29 and Luger eliminates Mantaur. Crush is #30, giving us a final group of Shawn, Bulldog, Luger, Montoya, Godwinn, Bart, Billy, Dunn, Murdoch, Bomb, Fatu and Crush, or WAY TOO MANY PEOPLE. Thankfully Crush immediately eliminates the Gunns to clear the ring out a bit. We cut to Anderson who gives a very uninterested wave and points to the ring. You know, because this is SO beneath her. Well, not beneath her enough to give the check back or anything but you get the idea.

Dunn is put out off camera and Murdoch almost puts Shawn out. Luger makes the save due to a lack of intelligence as Murdoch tries headbutts on Fatu. Naturally it doesn't work at all because YOU DON'T HEADBUTT A SAMOAN. Bomb is backdropped out and Shawn throwsn Montoya out. Luger saves Shawn AGAIN and Crush eliminates Fatu. There are six guys left: Murdoch (who hits a dropkick and airplane spin on Godwinn), Godwinn, Shawn, Bulldog, Crush and Luger.

Murdoch gets dizzy from the spin and falls out to get us down to five. Lex dumps Godwinn and we've got four left. Michaels and Crush double team Luger as Bulldog gets a breather. They dump Lex and we've got three guys left. Smith gets double teamed until Shawn turns on Crush and is lifted into the air. Bulldog uses the distraction to eliminate Crush and it's one on one. Davey destroys Shawn and presses him onto (not over. That would make sense) the top rope. Shawn is knocked over the top, but in the

famous finish, he hangs on and ONLY ONE FOOT touches, allowing Shawn to come back in and eliminate Smith to win.

**Rating:** D. This is a hard one to grade, because the stuff that was decent was in fact decent. The problem is there wasn't much stuff that falls into that category. First and foremost, SEVEN PEOPLE OUT OF THIRTY did not last thirty seconds. If they're that meaningless to the match, simply do not put them in the Rumble. It looks stupid and there's no reason to have them out there.

Second, the time intervals. These were a major issues because there's no time to get ANYTHING going in the match. When you count ten seconds or so to get into the ring (some people take up to twenty), you're looking at about 45 seconds of action with the new guy before someone else comes out. That's just not enough time to get anything going at all.

Third, and this is probably the biggest problem of the match, look at the roster here. At a glance, I see four people with actual chances to win: Crush, Luger (they're both BIG stretches), Bulldog, and Shawn. After that there's Owen Hart but he was one of the guys that didn't make it thirty seconds in the ring.

Then you're looking at guys like Montoya and Well Dunn and the Bushwhackers (who amazingly still had jobs in 1995) and the Heavenly Bodies (by my count there were five tag teams in here, or one third of the match. WAY too many guys at that level) and Dick freaking Murdoch. This is a match that was BEGGING for a midcard to come in and fill in some spots. Guys like Ramon and Jarrett and Bigelow and Tatanka would have helped this match a ton, but instead we get all these fillers. That's a big reason why this didn't work.

Anderson poses with Shawn to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. This is a hard one to grade because as good as the world title match is, the Rumble sucks it right back down. IRS vs. Taker isn't anything good but it's much more boring than bad. The opener and tag matches are good so I can't complain much there. 1995 would be AWFUL for the most part though, mainly due to all of the problems you could see coming in the Rumble. Still though, not an awful show by any stretch and

it has a great world title match.

### Ratings Comparison

Jeff Jarrett vs. Razor Ramon

Original: B+

Redo: C+

Undertaker vs. IRS

Original: D

Redo: D

Bret Hart vs. Diesel

Original: B-

Redo: A

Bob Holly/1-2-3 Kid vs. Bam Bam Bigelow/Tatanka

Original: D+

Redo: C+

Royal Rumble

Original: D+

Redo: D

Overall Rating

Original: C-

Redo: C+

What in the world was I thinking on the title match? It was great.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/14/royal-rumble-count-up-1995/>

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# Royal Rumble Count-Up – 1994: Flying Dead Man

## Royal Rumble 1994

Date: January 22, 1994

Location: Providence Civic Center, Providence, Rhode Island

Attendance: 14,500

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Ted DiBiase

This is one of those shows where the good stuff is good but the bad stuff is REALLY bad. The main idea here is that someone has to stop Yokozuna, and it's going to be one of three people: Bret Hart or Lex Luger who could get the shot by winning the Rumble, or the Undertaker who has a casket match against Yoko tonight for the title. Oh....this is going to be a long night. Let's get to it.

Vince is on commentary here and gets to do his carnival barker stuff. The guy knows how to make a show sound exciting, I have to give him that. DiBiase comes out to do commentary with McMahon due to having to retire

late in 1993 due to a bunch of injuries.

### Tatanka vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

Bigelow is in Ludvig Borga's spot because Borga broke his ankle. Bigelow pounds on Tatanka to start and dropkicks him into the corner. Tatanka literally bounces off of Bigelow before coming back with a chop to take Bigelow down. A DDT puts Bam Bam down again but Tatanka goes up for a cross body, missing Bigelow by a mile. This is a REALLY hot start so far. Bigelow crushes Tatanka in the corner with a splash and things slow down somewhat.

Tatanka gets in a shot to the head and tries a top rope sunset flip, only to have Bam Bam sit on him. When all else fails, sit on the other guy. Off to a bearhug for about two minutes before Bigelow drops him with a shoulder block. Tatanka starts his war path thing so Bam Bam decks him in the head with an enziguri to drop him. The moonsault misses though and Tatanka goes up again, this time hitting the cross body for the pin.

**Rating:** C+. Shockingly hot opener here and if you cut the bear hug in half or so, this is a really solid match. They stuck to the formula really well here and the match was good as a result. This is one of the nice surprises in wrestling: on paper this sounded horrible but it turned out to be a pretty nice match. Good opener.

We recap the tag title match, which is a rare instance where it's all about the challengers rather than the champions. Owen Hart was the only Hart Brother eliminated in the Survivor Series match against Shawn and his Knights, which ticked him off. Owen had been whipped into Bret on the apron and the distraction let Shawn roll Owen up for the pin.

This caused Owen to cut a heel promo, talking about how he was tired of being in Bret's shadow and wanting a match with him to escape it. Bret of course said no, but instead offered to team up with Owen to get his brother his first championship. Owen talked about leading the team but seemed genuinely ok at this point. For some reason we also see the Quebecers losing the tag titles to the 1-2-3 Kid and Marty Jannetty for a single week for some reason.



The Harts talk about all the teams they're going to give title shots to once they win the belts tonight.

#### Tag Titles: Bret Hart/Owen Hart vs. Quebecers

The Quebecers are managed by Johnny Polo, who would change his name to Raven in ECW. Pierre and Bret start things off with the challenger taking over. Off to Owen to work on the arm with his signature spinning counter to a wristlock. Off to Jacques and they botch something, but Owen hits a quick suplex to keep things on track. An enziguri gets two for Owen and it's back to Bret.

After a bunch of rollups by Bret, everything breaks down and the Quebecers take over. Actually scratch that as Owen hits a kind of spear into a rollup for two and the Harts stand tall. It's Bret vs. Jacques with Hart in control until it's back to Owen for a gutwrench suplex for two. Bret comes back in, only to get powerslammed down by Pierre. A pair of knees to the back gets two and it's back to Jacques.

That goes nowhere so Pierre comes in to jump into a boot. Owen comes back in and belly to bellies Jacques down before hooking the Sharpshooter. Pierre bulldogs Owen down for a fast save of course and it's back to Pierre legally. Owen dropkicks both Quebecers down and it's off to Bret again. For some reason both champions are allowed to stay in the ring for way too long. Pierre is atomic dropped to the floor, and now we get to the turning point of the match: Johnny Polo holds the ropes open to send Bret to the floor. Bret comes up holding his knee and he's in big trouble.

Pierre rams the knee into the barricade to further the damage and the match turns into a kind of sloppy brawl on the floor. Owen finally throws Bret back into the ring and the leg work begins. Jacques puts on a half crab but Owen makes a fast save. The champions load up the Cannonball (kind of an aided Swanton) but Bret rolls away. Instead of tagging though, Bret tries the Sharpshooter...and the referee stops the match for the knee injury.

**Rating:** B-. This is one of those matches where you can look at it in multiple ways. From a match standpoint, it's a standard tag match with

the faces and heels doing exactly what they would be expected to do. On the other hand, the idea here was about setting up Owen's heel turn, and the ending does that perfectly. There was no reason for Bret to not tag at the end and it sets Owen off as it should.

Post match Owen glares at Bret and paces back and forth. Bret manages to pull himself up but can barely stand up. Owen kicks the leg out, officially turning heel to HUGE booing. He leaves so here are some officials to come check on Bret. Ray Rougeau, a reporter for WWF at this point, comes out to interview Bret while he's on his back in agony. For some reason that cracks me up.

Owen is in the back and goes on a huge tirade about how selfish Bret is and how Bret cost him the biggest match of his career. Bret is being carried to the back and has to watch this promo on the video screen. Owen's face here is great as he unleashes all this pent up anger and frustration on Bret, saying he'll win the Rumble because he doesn't have to count on Bret. This would be the top feud for the next eight months or so.

#### Intercontinental Title: IRS vs. Razor Ramon

Guess who is defending here. JR and Gorilla Monsoon do commentary for this match. IRS goes on a big rant about how evil the crowd here is for not paying their taxes, even though they have about three months left to file. Razor goes off on IRS to start, knocking him out to the floor. IRS comes back with some forearms but Razor punches him right back down to take over again.

Ramon hits a bunch of basic stuff like atomic drops and clotheslines for some two counts, but IRS ducks under a clothesline to send Razor out to the floor. Back in and IRS goes up but jumps into a boot. For one of the only times I can EVER remember this happening, IRS avoids the foot and drops an elbow for two instead. WHY IS THAT SO HARD FOR PEOPLE TO DO???

We hit the chinlock for well over a minute before Razor fights up and hits the fallaway slam. The referee gets knocked out in the corner and IRS grabs his briefcase, only for Razor to take it back and clock him in the head with it. No referee though, so Razor loads up a belly to back

superplex. There's still no referee, so Razor sets for the Edge, only to have Shawn run out and clock him with the fake IC Title. IRS finally wakes up and pins Razor for the title.

**Rating:** D+. This wasn't bad but the overbooking hurt it a lot. This should have lasted about three minutes less and it would have been a lot better. Oddly enough I don't remember IRS being champion at all, but then again this is the remastered version so maybe they really cleaned things up.

Or maybe another referee comes out to explain the interference and the match is restarted. Razor hits the Edge to retain.

Bearer and Undertaker are making a coffin for Yoko.

We recap the world title match, which is Yoko being scared of Taker and Taker being one of the last hopes to stop the monster. Apparently the contract was signed before Yoko and company knew it was a casket match. Taker I believe debuted his popping out of the casket spot in this feud.

#### WWF World Title: The Undertaker vs. Yokozuna

They stare each other down to start and Taker fires off his uppercuts to stagger the champion. A clothesline puts Yoko down and another uppercut puts Yoko on the floor. Taker is sent into the steps and it's immediately no sold, scaring Yoko to death again. There's Old School but the jumping clothesline misses as Yoko ducks. Why does no one else ever think of doing that?

They fight over a chair on the floor which winds up going upside Yoko's head. There's a plastic chair to the back of the champion but Yoko grabs the trusty salt to blind Taker. Now it's Taker's back getting hit with the chair and we head back inside. A clothesline puts Taker down but he fights out of the casket. Taker wins a slugout in the middle of the ring but Yoko belly to belly suplexes him down. Come on. You know that's not holding him down. Taker pops up and grabs Yoko by the throat and hits a DDT to put the champion down again.

Yoko is placed in the casket but here's Crush to block Taker from closing

it. Taker slugs him down so here's Great Kabuki and Tenryu but Taker beats them down as well. Yoko is still out cold in the casket. Bam Bam Bigelow comes in now and it's 4-1 in the ring. One has to wonder why Paul Bearer doesn't go over and close the casket but this match doesn't seem to be the most logical one. Fuji and Cornette have stolen the Urn.

Yoko finally gets out of the casket as Bearer beats up Fuji and Cornette, stealing the Urn back. He uses it to recharge Taker, who fights off all four mercenaries. Now it's Adam Bomb to make it technically 8-1 but Taker fights everyone off with the salt bucket. Jeff Jarrett comes in as well, as do the Headshrinkers. That makes it NINE wrestlers (Yoko, Crush, Kabuki, Tenryu, Bigelow, Jarrett, Samu, Fatu, Adam Bomb) against Undertaker.

AND HE GETS UP. Diesel comes out and they get Taker in the coffin but he fights ALL OF THEM OFF. Yoko steals the Urn and hits Taker in the head with it before opening the Urn. Green smoke comes out of it and Taker now is powerless. Everyone hits a bunch of moves on him as this goes on WAY too long. After ALL THAT, Taker is put in the coffin and Yoko retains the title.

**Rating:** F. On a major wrestling show, The Undertaker just fought off ten men until green smoke was released to drain him of his power. I've seen Japanese anime that makes more sense than this. Oh and the match itself, as in the one on one part, might have gone about six minutes.

BUT IT GETS WORSE!

The heels all push the coffin away when a gong goes off. Smoke comes out of the casket....and a FREAKING CAMERA FEED FROM INSIDE THE CASKET POPS UP ON THE SCREEN. Taker says his soul lives in everyone and he can't be extinguished. He says there's going to be a rebirth of the Undertaker and he won't rest in peace. Then electrical noises go off and we get something like an inverse camera shot (as in it's all in black and white but what is white is black and what is black is white).

Then, to REALLY hammer home the point, the image on the screen starts to rise up through the top of the screen (which should be the top of the casket, meaning it should be ramming into the people that put him in the

freaking casket) and A FREAKING BODY RISES OUT OF THE TOP OF THE SCREEN. AS IN A TANGIBLE BODY (which might have been played by Marty Jannetty).

In other words, WWF just said Taker is something like Jesus. Oh and one other thing to really make sure this is stupid: YOU CAN'T SEE IT. All I can see are some quick shots of it when flashes go off. This is one of those things that embarrasses me as a wrestling fan. I mean....WOW.

The usual Rumble interviews eat up some time.

### Royal Rumble

Scott Steiner is #1 and Samu is #2. Also the intervals are every 90 seconds this year so the entrances will come in faster than ever. Scott pounds away to start and hits a butterfly suplex as Samu tries to hang on. He does indeed survive and kills Scott with a clothesline. Rick Steiner is #3 and Samu is in BIG trouble. After some suplexes he's out very quickly (but not before getting his head caught in the top and middle rope which is always kind of scary looking), giving us the Battle of the Steiners.

That battle literally lasts six seconds as Kwang (Savio Vega in a mask, allegedly Asian here) is #4. Scott suplexes Kwang down and Owen Hart is #5 to BIG heel heat. The heels take over and Owen actually dumps Rick out. That's one of the rare times where the constant pushing against the ropes worked. Bart Gunn is #6 and things speed up a bit. No one really does anything so here's Diesel at #7. This is where things pick up as this match is without a doubt Diesel's coming out party.

He beats on everyone and throws out Bart, Scott, Owen and Kwang inside of 45 seconds. Bob Backlund is #8 and immediately goes for the leg. He actually gets Diesel up against the ropes and upside down, but Diesel will have none of that. Who would believe these two would have a world title match in Madison Square Garden later in the year? Backlund is gone quickly. Billy Gunn is #9 and doesn't even last fifteen seconds.

We cut to the back where Kabuki and Tenryu are destroying Lex Luger. After Diesel stands around for a bit, he has to throw out Virgil who is #10 in about thirty seconds (causing DiBiase to laugh loudly and get in

some good verbal jabs). Note that the fans are LOUDLY chanting for Diesel here, who had NEVER gotten a reaction until this point. No one has been able to stand up to Diesel at all so far. #11 is Randy Savage. This should be a bit better challenge I'd think.

Savage goes right for him and pounds away on the big man in the corner before peppering him with jabs. He has Diesel in trouble but Jeff Jarrett is #12 to save the not yet Big Daddy Cool. We hear about Jarrett wanting to become WWF Champion so he'll be a famous country singer in Nashville. And people wonder why he never got over until he completely changed everything about his character.

Savage is thrown to the apron by Jarrett but Randy comes back and eliminates Jeff with ease. Crush, who Savage HATES at this point, is #13. Diesel just kind of chills in the corner as Savage beats up Crush. The numbers finally catch up with Savage though until Crush eliminates him with ease. Doink is #14 and he gets beaten up as well but not tossed. Here's his big rival Bam Bam Bigelow at #15 and it's 3-1 now. Bigelow easily throws the clown out ala the Spike Dudley throw from ECW.

Mabel is #16 and dang there are some big guys in there. He goes right for Diesel in a terrifying preview of Summerslam 95. Mabel cleans house until Sparky Plugg (Bob Holly as a racecar driver and debuting here as a replacement for the 1-2-3 Kid) is #17. Shawn Michaels is #18 and stares down Diesel to start. Everyone gets on Diesel and Shawn gives the final push to eliminate him. Diesel gets a VERY audible ovation and chant as he leaves.

Mo, Mabel's totally useless partner, is #19. Nothing of note happens so here's Greg Valentine in a one night only appearance at #20. Mabel misses a charge in the corner and Shawn is gorilla pressed by Crush but not eliminated for some reason. Tatanka comes in at #21. To recap we've got Plugg, Valentine, Tatanka, Mabel, Bigelow, Crush, Michaels and Mo in there. Valentine puts Michaels on the apron but can't get him out.

Kabuki is #22 and almost everyone gangs up on Mabel to dump him out. It's amazing how much easier it is to see with the big fat purple tub of goo out of there. Lex Luger (looking FINE after that attack like 15 minutes

ago) is #23 and he cleans house. There are ten people in the ring right now but there goes Kabuki at the hands of Lex. Luger clotheslines Bigelow down and here's Tenryu at #24.

There are WAY too many people in there right now. Like seriously, do we need FREAKING MO in there? Or Valentine? Those are bodies you could dump out and no one would care. Luger and Tenryu go at it as Shawn is almost dumped out. Bastion Booger is supposed to be #25 but he's not here for some reason (Vince says it was supposed to be Bret Hart but more on that in a bit). I believe there are nine people in there at the moment so Booger not coming in was a good thing. Granted it was a good thing either way but you get the idea. Rick Martel is #26 and nothing happens.

For your big face pop of the match (other than Diesel): Bret Hart is #27 and limping very badly. Today, people would have a bandage on the knee and charge to the ring because modern wrestling is stupid. Fatu is #28 and DEAR FREAKING GOODNESS THROW SOMEONE OUT ALREADY! A bunch of guys team up and FINALLY throw Crush out as Marty Jannetty is #29. Naturally he goes right for Shawn and punches Shawn to the apron.

Adam Bomb is #30, giving us a ridiculous THIRTEEN FINAL PEOPLE in the Rumble. The final group is Bigelow, Sparky, Shawn, Mo (seriously, FREAKING MO?), Valentine, Tatanka, Luger, Tenryu, Martel, Hart, Fatu, Jannetty and Bomb. Bret saves Shawn (shocking I know) to dump out Sparky, thank goodness. Bret beats on everyone as we still need to get rid of more people. Everyone beats on everyone for awhile and nothing is happening. DiBiase: "The smart thing to do is go after Bret Hart's knee." Vince: "The smart thing to do is throw people out of the ring." Did....did Vince just burn Ted Dibiase?

Martel dumps Valentine but is quickly dumped out by Tatanka. Luger throws out Bomb and Mo is FINALLY put out as well. Bigelow tosses Tatanka and Lex forearms Bam Bam out. Jannetty goes out to get us down to Luger, Hart, Fatu, Tenryu and Shawn. Tenryu rams Shawn and Fatu's heads together which only hurts Shawn of course. Luger and Bret put out Tenryu and it's Bret vs. Shawn (duh). Luger goes for Fatu's head and gets superkicked for being stupid.

The heels put Luger on the apron but he fights them both off and clotheslines Fatu into a 360. Bret dumps Fatu and Luger dumps Shawn and we're down to two. They slug it out and Luger picks up Bret, but they both fall out at the same time, giving us a double elimination to end the Rumble.

**Rating:** C+. This is a hard one to grade. The pacing is TERRIBLE with guys like Sparky Plugg and Mo staying in for over twenty minutes each, but the action is solid for the most part. The stuff with Diesel is excellent and it truly made him a star. The ending stuff once they got rid of about seven guys in 90 seconds was good too, but stuff in the middle didn't work all that well.

Post match there's a disagreement over who wins but both guys have their music played. This would lead to a somewhat complicated decision where there was a coin toss and two world title matches at Mania. This goes on for about eight minutes or so but it's just the referees arguing and both guys saying they won. Replays don't really show us anything either. They do a good job here of making it impossible to tell who won, unlike in 2005 when it was clear that one of them (I want to say Cena) hit first. They're finally declared co-winners to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This show is one where it's very hard to come up with an overall grade. I really liked the opener and the tag match and Rumble were both good, but when a show has what might be the dumbest moment in wrestling history (and that covers A LOT of stupid moments), it's brought down a lot. Early 1994 was not a good time for the WWF but once they finally picked Bret as the guy, things got a lot better.

### Ratings Comparison

Tatanka vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

Original: B

Redo: C+

Quebecers vs. Bret Hart/Owen Hart

Original: A+



Redo: B-

Razor Ramon vs. IRS

Original: C+

Redo: D+

Yokozuna vs. Undertaker

Original: F

Redo: F

Royal Rumble

Original: B

Redo: C+

Overall Rating

Original: B

Redo: C-

DANG I liked this show a lot better on the first viewing.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/13/royal-rumble-count-up-1994/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of Wrestlemania at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B0188BJRGU>

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# New Blood Rising (2015 Redo): Exactly As Advertised

## New Blood Rising

Date: August 13, 2000

Location: Pacific Coliseum, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada

Attendance: 6,614

Commentators: Scott Hudson, Tony Schiavone, Mark Madden

I'm really not sure what to say about this one. It's borderline legendary in how horrible it is due to the levels of Russo pumped into it with one match in particular. I've seen this show a few times before and every time I watch it I can't believe what I'm seeing. There's no way around this so let's get to it.

First and foremost: is there a reason this show is named after the New Blood when they haven't been a thing in about a month at least?

As I load this up on the Network, I keep expecting some warning to pop up telling me it's not worth it.

The opening video shows Jeff Jarrett breaking a bunch of guitars over various people. Then we cover the real main event of Goldberg vs. Kevin Nash vs. Scott Steiner in what is being teased as a shoot. As opposed to all the other matches which are worked shoots you see. This one is going to be a REAL shoot.

In an odd camera shot, we see the New Blood Rising logo in the corner of the arena but it's quickly covered by pyro from one of the ring corners. Who shoots from there?

3 Count vs. Jung Dragons

This is a double ladder match for 3 Count's recording contract as well as their gold record. Tank Abbott is with 3 Count and has a shirt with the nipple areas cut out for no apparent reason. So 3 Count wants the record because it's theirs and the Dragons want the contract so 3 Count can never record again. I'm not even going to try to make sense out of this mess. Oh and you have to tag in a ladder match.

Jamie and Shane get things going but everyone realizes that this is a ladder match so they sprint up to the entrance to make this interesting. Shannon makes a quick save on Yang as Tony thinks he's going for the gold record because the ladder is hung underneath it. Ignore the fact that the contract is on top of the record so he's under both of them. Yang gets crotched on a ladder in the corner as the fans are way more quiet than they should be for a six man ladder match.

Shannon splashes Yang and covers for a second because no one understands the rules of this mess. Three straight splashes crush Yang against a ladder in the corner as Scott asks the stupid question of what label is on the contract. Yang gets up again, only to be down onto the top rope. This hasn't been his night so far.

3 Count goes outside so Jamie can hit a huge dive for a good reaction. We get a second ladder so Shannon can pull Yang off with a sleeper drop. Shane neckbreakers Jamie off as well, leaving Evan to suplex Kaz down to put all six on the mat in a heap. Yang gets a ladder superkicked into his face but the Dragons come back with a pair of spinwheel kicks to get one of their only advantages.

Kaz charges into a powerslam on the ladder as Evan seems to have a bad ankle. Shannon does a springboard over the top to catapult the end of the ladder into Jamie and Shane's faces. That always looks sick. Shannon is thrown back in and gets splashed by two Dragons, allowing Jamie to grab the gold record. Not that it matters as Tank knocks him out and steals it back, earning himself some homophobic chants.

Evan gets crushed between a ladder as Tony yells at Madden for not understanding the logic behind this match. Jamie powerbombs Shannon off the ladder but Tank shoves over both ladders to take out a member of each

team. Evan climbs up and gets the contract for the win (I guess?).

**Rating:** B. Enjoy this one people because it's the last good match you're going to see for about two hours. These six guys would give the fans everything they could and then be asked to do it again week after week because WCW didn't care about any of them. I know Russo's mantra continued to be about pushing the young guys, but giving them the same matches over and over again without letting them get anywhere isn't a push. Still though, fun stuff here, even if it was nothing compared to what Edge and Christian and company were doing at the time.

Tank leaves with the record and the contract.

The Filthy Animals want to referee the Tag Team Title match. As in four referees in an eight man match. On top of that, they want a shot tomorrow night. Rey promises to make sure Cat beats Great Muta as an incentive.

#### Great Muta vs. The Cat

Cat talks some trash and hits Muta in the head with the mic to get things going. Some kicks set up a dancing elbow (I love Rock but good night I wish the People's Elbow wasn't copied so much) but Muta grabs the arm as Hudson talks about the "legitimate heat" between these two. Tony goes on about how lame "the marquee says wrestling" line is as the fans want Bret. Cat fires off some strikes but is mesmerized by the power of Muta's bald spot, allowing Muta to kick him back down.

Cue Tygress (fans: "WE WANT PUPPIES!") as Cat kicks Muta out to the floor. Back in and they hit each other a few more times until Muta snaps off a dragon screw leg whip to take over. Muta misses the moonsault but sprays green mist at Cat. This isn't a DQ for whatever reason, allowing Tygress to hit Muta with a chair for two. Instead Cat fires off a bunch of kicks for the pin.

**Rating:** D-. Standard Nitro match here (yeah a D- is pretty standard these days) with Cat showing why he should almost never be in the ring. He's a great talker but that doesn't mean he's anything more than a guy who kicks a lot. Muta continues to look bored and I still don't know why they brought him back in.

So we're just under half an hour into the show and it's been quite watchable to this point. That's about to fall apart.

Buff Bagwell can't find his mom.

### Buff Bagwell vs. Positively Canyon

This is Judy Bagwell on a pole, which means Canyon drives her in on a forklift. See because she's a bit overweight. For reasons that I'll never understand, Canyon wanted Judy to be his Kimberly. Canyon calls her a battleax a few times until Buff finally figures out that his mom is on a freaking forklift in the arena.

Buff runs out to throw Canyon over the barricade to start the fight in the crowd. I'm assuming you win by pin here but I doubt Russo ever got past "so we put her on a forklift." They get back to the ring for the opening bell and Canyon grabs a middle rope Russian legsweep for two. Canyon cuts off the turnbuckle pad because this doesn't have enough going on yet.

Buff jumps into a sitout Alabama slam for two and we hit the chinlock. The Canyon Cutter is broken up and Buff drops him forehead first onto the exposed buckle for two. Now the Canyon Cutter connects for two....and here's David Arquette, who hits Buff with a hard hat for two. A double Blockbuster is enough for the pin on Canyon, winning Judy back for Buff....I think?

**Rating:** F. The match itself was watchable at times but they brought David Arquette back for a two minute cameo. This was like watching a movie with a gorilla in a top hat and tails standing in the corner doing nothing. Judy on the forklift was such a distraction and really didn't change anything, making the match a combination of boring and WHAT AM I WATCHING. In other words, the Russo Special.

Arquette gets a Canyon Cutter post match.

Lance Storm arrives with a police escort. You would expect Storm to arrive on time.

Goldberg isn't here due to a motorcycle accident. And so it begins.

Tag Team Titles: Kronik vs. Perfect Event vs. Misfits in Action vs. Sean O'Haire/Mark Jindrak

Kronik is defending, Rection and Cajun are representing the Misfits and the Filthy Animals (as in Mysterio/Disqo/Tygress/Juvy are ALL guest referees). Konnan sits in on commentary to give us a ridiculous thirteen people involved with one match. Before the match Disqo threatens everyone, saying he has the authority to have them wrestling polar bears in Nome, Alaska if they step out of line.

Palumbo and Adams start things off as Disqo is the in ring referee. Chuck is quickly sent to the floor so it's off to Stasiak, who walks into a full nelson slam. Cajun vs. Jindrak now with Mark taking over via some technical stomping as the fans loudly chant....something. O'Haire comes in to punch Clark, followed by a nice spinning kick to the head for two. A hard slam drops O'Haire but Disqo counts slow.

Rection comes in and gets a slow count as well as there are far too many empty seats opposite the hard camera. Tygress gives Rection a Bronco Buster but the General raises his boot to block Rey's attempt. We get the Sting falling headbutt/low blow spot on Stasiak before it's back to Cajun for the dancing punches. That means another slow count as the announcers have no idea whose side the Animals are on.

Rection comes in and starts cleaning house as everything breaks down. Palumbo's great right hands stagger Rection and it's off to a sleeper. Disqo checks the arm twice and slaps Rection in the face to wake him up. Palumbo superkicks Rection back down as the fans want Bret again. It's off to Cajun who is quickly sent outside as everything breaks down again.

The Seanton bomb nails Clark but here's the Dark Carnival to break up High Times to Palumbo. Clark gives Palumbo the Meltdown for the slowest two count yet so he yells at Disqo. High Times plants Palumbo again but here's Lieutenant Loco to steal Disqo's shirt and count the pin, thereby screwing over the Misfits in the process to keep the titles on Kronik.

**Rating:** D-. What in the world did I just watch? Instead of anything resembling a regular match, this was a bunch of quick segments with Disqo tying everything together (work with me here) until Chavo ran in for the

completely illogical ending. I get the idea that Disco wanted to give the Animals the easiest match possible tomorrow night but this was just WAY too much for what they were going for.

Jeff Jarrett accuses Pamela of wearing Okerlund out last night. He's been looking for Booker all day long and the champ better have eyes in the back of his head.

### Shane Douglas vs. Kidman

Strap match with wins via pinfall. Before the match, Shane says Kidman isn't man enough to keep up with Torrie all night long (which is nothing like the story of X-Pac vs. Kane with X-Pac using the exact same line about Kane and Tori in a storyline that aired earlier in the year). Kidman ties up the legs to start and Shane is rather irritated. A legdrop gets one for Kidman as Madden goes over the benefits of having a shirt on here.

In one of the funniest and at the same time saddest moments of the show, the announcers try to make fat jokes about Torrie based on that video from Monday. How do you even keep a straight face on a line like that? Shane crotches him with the strap and chokes a bit, followed by the reverse Hennig neck snap (which is actually a cool move). Torrie gets in some choking of his own and it's off to a knuckle lock of all things.

Since it's just a knuckle lock, Kidman comes back with a hurricanrana out of the corner and the Low Down gets two. Kidman finally gets smart and takes Shane's shirt off, meaning they can actually start using the strap for a change. Torrie accidentally hits Shane in the face with a shoe for a near fall, followed by the Pittsburgh Plunge to Kidman for the same. A quick Kid Crusher (Killswitch) gives Kidman the pin.

**Rating:** D. Another match where there was no need for a gimmick because Russo doesn't get how to actually run matches. Kidman getting the win was good but the Torrie factor is really starting to drag. The stuff where she used to be with Kidman was fine but I'm supposed to care that she used to be overweight? It doesn't quite work when she's a bombshell and one of the best looking women ever in wrestling.

Kidman spans her with the strap so Shane hangs him in the corner, drawing Vito out for the save. Reno sneaks in from behind and gets beaten up by Vito as well.

Booker arrives and Jarrett attacks him by slamming Booker's knee in the car door.

### Miss Hancock vs. Major Gunns

Rip off the Camouflage and of course there's mud. An early slap starts the catfight and Hancock does a Muta handspring elbow. Madden gets right to the point and says he wants to see these two lose their clothes. Gunns gets a jackknife cover for two in the ring because the rules are still all over the place. Hancock rips off the top to reveal more camouflage and I'm sure you get the idea here.

After a facebuster gives us the upskirt shot, Hancock loses the bottom half of her dress to reveal camouflage shorts. A cross body gets two for Hancock but she charges into a foot to the stomach. Hancock misses a cross body and goes to the floor holding her stomach. Oh here we go.

Gunns gets posted and Hancock rips off the shorts to reveal a swimsuit bottom. They head up the aisle with Hancock losing her top. Gunns gets sent into the mud and drags Hancock with her as Madden is calling himself daddy. Hancock gyrates a bit and goes down holding her stomach again, allowing Gunns to get an easy pin.

**Rating:** F. Do I really need to explain this one? The women looked good in their outfits but they're horrible in the ring and the ending made it even worse. This stuff stopped being interesting a long time ago because EVERYTHING is an angle. You get numb to this stuff after a while and we passed that point nearly eight months ago with Russo.

David Flair dives into the mud to check on Hancock. To get this over with as quickly as we can: yes she was supposed to be pregnant and yes Russo was probably going to be revealed as the father because in Vince Russo's WCW, he gets to sleep with Miss Hancock. Of course this is treated in the serious voices and made to be something real. Yes really real.



The Dark Carnival wants Demon to prove himself.

The announcers are all serious again and use Hancock's real name to make sure this is as shooty as possible.

### Sting vs. The Demon

Sting repels in from the ceiling and wins with the Death Drop in less than a minute, which included a brawl in the aisle.

Vampiro and Muta come in to beat down Sting. Kronik comes in for the save as Demon walks by the brawl. For no logical reason, Kronik offers to put the titles on the line tonight.

Booker's knee is being worked on.

### US Title: Mike Awesome vs. Lance Storm

Storm, with a bit of a mouse under his eye, is defending and gets the big Goldberg entrance. You can see that Storm is really proud to be here as he talks about getting to wrestle in the greatest country in the world tonight. The extra security is due to his hatred in America and he's worried about a terrorist attack in the back. It's not his fault that he threatens the American illusion and he defeats another American hero tonight. As for this match, he's using rule 32B of the Canadian rule book to appoint a special referee: Jacques Rougeau! As in the Mountie! And not Bret Hart!

After a full rendition of O Canada (which is a big deal here and "not a work" according to Tony), we're ready to go with Madden in tears. Rougeau will be the outside referee as Awesome hammers away, only to be sent shoulder first into the post. They head outside and Awesome loads up a table, drawing the required ECW chants.

Storm drives him into the barricade for a break but Awesome snaps off a belly to belly back inside. Mike slips off the top to a lot of jeering but quiets the fans down with a wicked sitout Awesome bomb for the pin and the title. That was a VERY close pin and Rougeau says no, which actually seems fair in this case.

We're not done yet though as Rougeau has the Canadian rule book, which says you need a FIVE count. I didn't know King Kong Bundy was Canadian. Tony: "Did this happen when we were in Toronto last year?" Awesome slams him for three before grabbing a dragon sleeper of all things for the tap out. I think you know where we're going here.

The book says a title match is pinfall only so the match continues. Mike throws him down with a release German suplex and a slingshot shoulder gets four. You can imagine how screwy this must be for everyone involved. The Awesome splash gets give to give Awesome the pin (and Storm's third job in about eight minutes) but this is Texas Death rules (in Canada?) so after a pin, Storm has until ten to get to his feet.

Mike throws a table in but gets chaired in the back for four. In theory wouldn't you want the five count so you can have another eight or nine seconds to get up? Both guys go up and something like a belly to belly superplex puts both of them through the table. Rougeau rules that the first person to their feet by ten (huh?) wins. Mike is almost up first so Rougeau punches him out at seven to keep the title on Storm.

**Rating:** C-. I actually didn't hate this as you could clearly see the idea they were going for. Now it was stupid to have Rougeau as the referee (Heidi would have actually made more sense) and to have the champ job that many times in one night, but there was at least an idea here. The bigger problem here of course is that Awesome didn't cheat so Storm keeps losing over and over, but the live crowd was going to eat it up anyway. It's over thinking as always, though it's nowhere near as bad as it could have been. The action itself worked too so this was actually easy to watch.

Oh and here's Bret Hart after the match for the Canadian pride moment. You know, because BRET HART would totally go for something like this. I've always thought that's why he didn't do the referee job here. Can you imagine Bret standing for something this stupid?

Nash doesn't buy Goldberg's motorcycle story and says he's going over Steiner and getting the title back.

Tag Team Titles: Kronik vs. Dark Carnival

Kronik is defending in case you didn't see them enough earlier tonight. Tony brings up Canadian rules and Madden slips up by saying Vampiro is from Canada, making the whole thing even screwier. Clark shoulders Vampiro for two to start and a big powerbomb gets the same. Muta gets choked in the corner and it's back to Vampiro to get powerslammed for two.

It's off to Adams and the villains start in on the leg...which goes nowhere as it's quickly back to Clark for the Meltdown. For some reason there's no cover so Muta mists the referee by mistake. Vampiro breaks up High Times but the Harris Twins of all people return to give Clark an H Bomb, setting up the moonsault for the pin and the titles.

**Rating:** D-. Good grief I can't stand Vampiro. Every time I see him in a match, cutting a promo or just being there in general I can't stand him. Now he gets a title, though given how insane this division has been lately, I can't imagine him holding onto it for that long. The worst part here is the Harris Twins vs. Kronik, which could set a new standard for horrible.

Booker says Jarrett will have to kill him to take the title. Don't hate the player, hate the game. As usual, this is a feud that is totally fine and has told a completely acceptable story of the old champion getting annoyed as the new star. The knee injury is find for a plot point to advance the story as well. However, almost no one remembers this because of how ridiculous the rest of this show is, which is really a shame.

Quick recap of the triple threat match, which is designed to look like a SHOOT. Not a "shoot", but a SHOOT. They've been arguing over who has to do the job (using that term) and it's going over the heads of 99% of the audience who just wants to see people fight.

#### Kevin Nash vs. Scott Steiner vs. Goldberg

The winner gets the title shot next month. No Goldberg to start due to the motorcycle accident. Tony tells us to pay extra attention to see if there's anything out of the ordinary. Nash takes him outside to start and sends Steiner hard into the barricade. Here's a taped up Goldberg about a minute in to go after Nash with a chair. With Nash down on the floor,

Steiner clotheslines Goldberg and drops an elbow for two.

Goldberg comes back with a flying shoulder and the Bret Killer kick, drawing Nash up from the apron for a big staredown. Hudson tells stories about Starrcade 1988 (yes 1988) when Nash was on the booking committee and put himself over Goldberg. Steiner comes back in to save Goldberg and gets two off a belly to belly. Tony interprets Steiner yelling at the referee as him not being on the same page with everyone else.

Goldberg suplexes Steiner down but Nash clotheslines them both. A big boot drops Goldberg but the Jackknife is broken up. It looked like a simple counter but IT'S A SWERVE because it's really him not following the script. Russo, in his MANLY sleeveless shirt, tells Goldberg to get back in but Goldberg walks to the back.

The announcers freak out that this is Goldberg not following the script, even though it looked like a pretty basic counter to the powerbomb. I love how we're supposed to buy Kevin Nash and SCOTT STEINER as the professionals here. Tony: "What are they going to do now? Improvise?" This is just so bizarre to hear because it's clear that they're trying to sound like they're shooting. There are shows where you can hear the raw audio and it sounds NOTHING like this, mainly because the announcers aren't very good actors.

Midajah comes out as Steiner takes Snake Eyes. The referee goes down and Midajah hits Nash low to give Scott two. Nash fails at a DDT and goes after Midajah so Steiner grabs a sleeper. That goes nowhere so Nash kicks him in the face and the Jackknife is good for the pin. And that's a shoot of course.

**Rating:** F. I can't get mad at this. I'm trying and I just can't do it. Stuff like the Hogan stuff last month and the Russo destroying Flair nonsense makes me angry but this was just.....dumb. This felt like seeing a kid do something he wasn't supposed to do and then listening to the ridiculous explanation that they come up with to try and get out of it. Instead of getting mad at them, it's almost amusing to see them trying so hard to be clever and leaving so many holes in the story along the way.

I don't think I have to explain why this was stupid and why it completely

defeats the point of professional wrestling in the first place, but I really can't get mad at it. Maybe it's the shoot interviews that set it up or maybe I've just reached the point where Russo isn't worth getting annoyed at anymore. It's one thing to yell and rave about something stupid when it's clearly for one person's (namely Russo) benefit. Instead, this felt like Russo actually thought he had a good idea but he's too stupid to realize how bad it was.

After sitting through the first two hours of this show, there are so many other things to get mad at. Like Judy Bagwell on a pole for instance. That felt much more cruel and low brow than this because it was all about Judy's looks. The Hancock stuff is stupid because it's not something I'm ever going to believe. This on the other hand felt like they were trying for something interesting and just failed, which is a lot harder to get mad about. It's still stupid, but Judy Bagwell on a Pole is the far more infamous moment for a reason: that was lame and stupid whereas this was more a failure, which I can live with much easier.

Finally, this is a rare occasion where watching the TV leading up to it helps a lot. They basically said "yeah we're going to do something stupid" for the last three weeks and then this is what we got. With the Hogan vs. Jarrett mess last month they treated it seriously and then did the stupid shoot. This time they basically advertised a screwy finish and you were watching to see how bad it was. On top of that, as lame as it was, you actually got a match. Steiner vs. Nash isn't great but it's better than "pin me, pay me." It was a lame idea and didn't work for most of the fans, but this could have been WAY worse.

Tony throws us to the recap video for the World Tag Team Title match, meaning Booker vs. Jarrett. I guess it's the Andre the Giant coming out in him. We've covered this already: Booker won the title last month so Jeff is trying to get it back by injuring Booker's knee in advance.

#### WCW World Title: Booker T. vs. Jeff Jarrett

Jarrett is challenging and Booker's knee is in horrible shape coming in. Booker fights out of the corner to start and quickly takes it to the floor to send Jeff into the barricade. Back in and the champ crotches him

against the post (Madden: "That's a walk down Slapnuts Boulevard.") but the missile dropkick hurts his knee again. You know you don't have to ask Jeff to work on a limb twice so he wraps the knee around the post.

A chair shot crushes the knee even more and Booker gets caught in a half crab. That goes as far as a half crab is going to go so Booker grabs the spinning sunset flip out of the corner for two. A double clothesline puts both guys down and the knee is suddenly fine enough for an ax kick and Spinarooni. There goes the referee and Jeff blasts the knee with the guitar. Jeff grabs a bad looking Figure Four for WAY too long until Booker grabs the rope. The referee breaking the hold ticks Jeff off so we get a second ref bump.

Booker's knee is fine again and they set up a table at ringside, only to have Booker do something like a Book End off the apron through said table. Jeff hits the new referee with a chair and then Strokes Booker onto the chair for two from a fresh ref. Booker tries a neckbreaker which turns into a Diamond Cutter (to be fair how often do you see a main event swinging neckbreaker?) onto the chair for two. The Book End retains the title.

**Rating:** C. This was fine, albeit overbooked. Booker vs. Jarrett is a good example of a pairing that really doesn't need a lot of extras on the side and they would have been better just having a wrestling match. The ref bumps got annoying in a hurry but that's the main event style of the time. Not a great match or anything, but it really needed to be something more simple.

The fans bail out immediately and pelt trash into the ring to end this mess.

**Overall Rating:** F+. I've heard this called one of the worst shows of all time, maybe even THE worst of all time and it just isn't that bad. I wouldn't even call it the worse show of the summer as Great American Bash offered NOTHING of value. This show had an entertaining opener and a totally fine main event which more than make this a better show than some of the others of this era.

Now that being said, this is another disaster on Russo's watch because he

can't just leave well enough alone and let the show work. It's not a good show but for the most part everything goes by fast enough (longest match is the main event at just under fifteen minutes) that it doesn't really infuriate me. Stuff like the Judy Bagwell match and the Canadian Rules match (which at least got a really good reaction) are really more things you just roll your eyes at and move on to the next match.

The show is really bad, but its reputation is far worse than it actually is. At least with this one you have some entertaining matches and a feeling that they're trying to do something positive instead of flipping the fans off and laughing at them for not getting behind the ideas. There are still WAY more problems here that need to be fixed and this show was horrible, but somehow it's an improvement over some of the other stuff they've done this year.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of Wrestlemania at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

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## Thunder – August 9, 2000: Three Times The Bad Tags

### Thunder

Date: August 9, 2000

Location: World Arena, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Stevie Ray, Tony Schiavone

It's the go home show for New Blood Rising because we're just that lucky. The big story continues to be the potentially SHOOT triple threat because Goldberg, Scott Steiner and Kevin Nash, because when you think of Kevin Nash, you think of a shoot. Oh and the World Title is in there somewhere too. Let's get to it.

Tag Team Titles: Kronik vs. Mark Jindrak/Sean O'Haire vs. Perfect Event

Right now, someone tell me who Kronik is defending against on Sunday. I'd be shocked if most of the regular fans of this show could answer that at this point. This is the result of Kronik wanting both teams to come out here for a fight which of course means let's have the challengers lose again before their REAL title shot on Sunday.

After some stalling (of course) it's a quadruple team on Adams early on. Stasiak gets in a jumping back elbow but Adams shrugs it off and hits a quick gutbuster, allowing the tag off to Clark. It's off to O'Haire for two off a clothesline as this is acting more like a handicap match than a three way tag.

Clark gets in a quick DDT and brings in Adams for a full nelson slam. A piledriver gets two on Stasiak and everything breaks down. The tilt-a-whirl slam gets two on O'Haire as Jindrak gives Clark a nice hurricanrana out of the corner. Sean pops up for a Seanton bomb but Stasiak wants the pin. That earns Shawn a Meltdown and High Times with Adams running interference so Clark can get the pin.

**Rating:** D. I've watched the match and I'm still not sure whether or not this was a three way or a handicap match. It was mentioned as a title match, but there was no indication of how many opponents Kronik had here. You have a title match here but WCW really didn't care enough to explain who was challenging. Just...dang man.

Muta and Vampiro come out for a distraction, allowing Juventud Guerrera to run in and steal the belts again.

Mike Awesome and Heidi come in to Cat's office so Cat can put him in a



flag match against Lance Storm later. The Dragons appear, have their heads rammed together, and are thrown out.

Daffney has made a Watch Crowbar Wrestling shirt to wear at ringside. Crowbar wants to tell her something but changes his mind.

Jeff Jarrett has a guitar with Booker's name on it.

### Crowbar vs. Elix Skipper

Elix, ever the rookie, accepts a handshake and gets pulled into a German suplex. Crowbar sends him to the floor for a dive, followed by the apron splash. I've missed Crowbar being around here as he has more energy than half the people on these shows. Cue Smooth with flowers for Daffney, who doesn't seem to mind.

Crowbar tries a standing Lionsault but Skipper Matrixes away from it in an awesome looking counter. A Death Valley Driver puts Skipper down but Crowbar goes outside and yells at Daffney about the flowers. Skipper dives on Crowbar and destroys the flowers in a truly evil move. Back in and Crowbar can't hit a hurricanrana, allowing the Overdrive to give Elix the pin.

**Rating:** C. These were two hidden gems near the end of WCW and you could see them having fun out there. Sloppy fun, but still fun. Like I said, Crowbar looked like he was actually trying every single time out there and that's an effort you can't ignore. Skipper on the other hand was an athletic freak who could do things most people just can't do. That made for a fun match with an angle that actually made sense as everyone could see Crowbar loved Daffney so it was easy to exploit. In other words, my guess is Russo/Ferrara had nothing to do with this.

Jarrett asks Jimmy Hart where Booker is. The answer is not here so Hart gets a guitar. At least he could probably give us some good music with that thing.

Okerlund and Bagwell talk about Canyon, who appropriately comes in and issues a challenge for a tag match tonight. That means it's time for a mystery partner, which can only end badly. Like only. As in there is no

other option.

Tank Abbott and 3 Count are here to perform their old song because Tank's new single isn't ready yet. I heartily approve of the classics.

### 3 Count/Tank Abbott vs. Misfits in Action

Shane gets in trouble to start with Rection doing a little dance before dropping a leg. A pop up powerbomb is countered into a hurricanrana as the announcers try to explain the double ladder match on Sunday.

Everything breaks down with Shane getting destroyed. Karagias gets in an argument with the fans on the floor and it's Flair/Hancock here to go after Hancock. Tank cleans house with right hands and here's a ladder for no logical reason. Shane and Shannon put it on the top for a top rope splash/legdrop combo for the pin on Cajun.

**Rating:** F. I have no idea what the point of this was, much like I have no idea if they remember that the Dragons and 3 Count are fighting on Sunday as they haven't had any contact in at least a week. This felt more like an angle than a match and it says a lot when Hancock can't save things.

Post break Rection yells at the Misfits and a mixed tables match is made later with Gunns/AWOL vs. Flair/Hancock.

Crowbar yells at Smooth about the flowers (how did he know Smooth gave them to her if he didn't see the delivery?) but Smooth says he's an operator.

The Dark Carnival attacks the Jung Dragons because they're just jobbers for midcard acts. Cat makes the save and puts himself in a tag match against Muta/Vampiro with a mystery partner. So to recap that's two mystery partners and one mixed tag.

Video on Sunday's triple threat.

Okerlund hopes Pamela isn't the mystery partner because she's nuts about him.

Cat gets a mystery partner, even though the partner doesn't like his fashion.

### Mike Sanders vs. Norman Smiley

Sanders is now Above Average, meaning he's on top of the B list at 49%. That's not how above average works but whatever. Let's make this a hardcore match just because of reasons. Smiley declines because he's retired from hardcore wrestling (thank goodness), only to get a chair to the back. Norman whips him over the barricade so Mike hits him with a ladder.

They head backstage where Sanders puts a trashcan over Norman for a beating with a broom. There's a stretcher here for no logical reason so Sanders throws Norman on top. Both guys being thrown through tables, only to have Jarrett pop up and nail Norman with a guitar. Apparently the pin has to take place in the ring though so here's a wheelbarrow to bring them back to the ring. Sanders tries a chair shot from the middle rope...and knocks himself out to give Norman the easy pin.

**Rating:** D-. So what was the point here? Norman being dragged back into hardcore? That's the best they've got for these two? Sanders can clearly talk but people aren't going to care if you have him lose a match he challenged Norman to. At least he can talk though and that's the best thing you can have, especially here.

The Dark Carnival broods in the back. Demon shows how much depth he has by growling.

### Mike Awesome vs. Lance Storm

Non-title, which is actually the right move for a change. Storm gets in a good line by saying Mike better be a good fat chick thriller because he's horrible as a career killer. They brawl on the floor to start with Mike getting the better of it as you might expect. Storm tries grabbing a chair and gets it punched into his face, setting up a very quick Awesome splash.

Mike goes for the flag but Heidi, the woman we've known for like a week, turns on him by hitting him with the American flag. She takes off her shirt and shows off a new one saying "Canadian and Proud of it!". The Maple Leaf goes on and Heidi hands Storm the flag for the win. As usual,

this is too much character development and something that could have been done at the pay per view instead of the big mess they wound up doing instead.

Kidman challenges Shane to a strap match, which Torrie can teach him a thing or two about. Pamela finds that way funnier than it should be and Kidman steps to the side to kiss Syren (Reno's girlfriend/Nitro Girl).

#### Sgt. AWOL/Major Gunns vs. David Flair/Miss Hancock

Tables match to make sure this is as bad as possible, or to make sure that David Flair or Sgt. AWOL doesn't have to job. The guys slowly brawl to start with Wall having to figure out how to make David look threatening. While this is going on, the women yell at each other a lot. Hancock takes over with choking as David sets up a table in the ring. Wall kicks him in the face but gets his eyes raked by Hancock, only to have Gunns choke her. Hancock whips her through the table for the win a few seconds later, making this one of the shortest table matches in history.

Wall chokeslams David through another table post match.

This Week in WCW Motorsports. Do we have any proof that those teams have actually been shut down? It really wouldn't surprise me if they were still around to this day.

Kanyon is talking to his partner.

Doug Dillinger tells Cat that "he's here".

#### Kidman vs. Reno

Kidman starts fast with a headscissors to send Reno outside, setting up a nice plancha (are any of Kidman's dives ever bad?) to drop him again. Back in and Reno gets smart by grabbing Kidman for a pair of quick suplexes. When all else fails, throw the guy around. A third suplex stops Kidman's comeback but he grabs a quick Low Down for two. Not that it matters as Reno Rolls the Dice, only to hammer on Kidman instead of covering.

Cue Syren, allowing Reno to bring in a chair. For some reason Reno tries a powerbomb onto the chair and you know what that means. This brings out Torrie for another distraction, allowing Shane Douglas to come in with the chain to knock Kidman out. The referee actually sees it for a change though and it's a DQ.

**Rating:** D+. I like both guys and you had Syren and Torrie in the same match so it's kind of hard to get mad here. Reno is a good power guy and has a nice selection of suplexes to go with a cool look, which is why he never went anywhere in wrestling. The Kidman vs. Shane feud needs to wrap up soon but I can tolerate it as long as Torrie is around.

Vito runs out to make the save for no logical reason. Reno and Vito seem to know each other. Like, aside from working together.

The Artist, now in street clothes, finds Paisley and I believe Papaya from Nitro giving Kwee Wee a massage, leading to a brawl. I still have no reason to care about the Artist.

Jarrett comes out again and makes Penzer read a message, basically saying that it's Booker's fault for everyone getting hurt tonight. Jeff is going to keep screwing with stuff until the end of the show and there's a guitar shot for Penzer. He guarantees a title win on Sunday. So Jeff is now stealing Kanyon's schtick?

Here's your weekly shoot style interview, this time with Booker T. Bash at the Beach was the greatest day of his life because he finally reached his top goal in wrestling. It meant a lot to him to see the company give him the shot and the fans accept him with everybody raising the roof. Booker talks about coming up through the Dallas territories and how much it means to come all the way to the top over all the years.

Tony brings up Russo talking about the old guard being shoved aside so people like Booker can rise up. Booker doesn't feel any pressure because he's at home in the middle of the ring. His knee is still banged up and will probably never be the same but he's still going to be defending the title every night. The fans have paid their money and Booker is going to give them his best every single time.

This wasn't a shoot and felt a lot more like a talk with the man outside the ring. In other words, it was far easier to sit through than the usual nonsense that didn't tell us anything we would want to hear about. That being said, this wasn't exactly riveting stuff but at least it didn't make me go nuts sitting through it. As usual, Booker is the voice of reason around here.

#### Buff Bagwell/Gene Okerlund vs. Positively Kanyon/???

Kanyon's partner is....oh sweet goodness it's Mark Madden. Let's get this over with. Judy sits in on commentary as I'm assuming this is supposed to be funny. Madden and Gene start things off but Gene actually decks Kanyon off the apron. It's off to the actual wrestlers with Bagwell in control until Madden knees him in the back. Buff goes after him as Judy's voice has me begging for this to end even more.

Back in and Buff gets two off his double arm DDT but another Madden cheap shot lets Kanyon run him over. Kanyon misses a splash though and it's hot tags Gene and Madden. Everything breaks down and Madden's low blow has no effect (with Tony pointing out that Gene didn't sell it). Apparently Gene is wearing a cup, which winds up on Madden's face. Of course it does. Buff throws in a Blockbuster to give Gene the pin.

**Rating:** D. This could have been a lot worse as they had the wrestlers do most of the work. I get the idea here and it was cute at times but giving this five and a half minutes was just a bad idea. Hopefully this ends the story with the announcers and leaves us with serious material....like Judy Bagwell on a forklift.

Kanyon takes out Buff with the Kanyon Cutter but Stevie saves Gene, while also holding Judy back.

#### Sting/The Cat vs. Great Muta/Vampiro

Not a bad mystery partner if you don't mind a lack of mystery. It's a big brawl to start of course with Sting sending Vampiro into the announcers' table, much to Stevie's approval. Tenay: "Do you think Sting will ever forget being set on fire by Vampiro?" Cat gets dropped and it's time for some double teaming inside. Muta's power drive elbow sets up some choking

as we're a far cry from the classics these two had ten years earlier.

It's off to a front facelock from Vampiro and the referee actually doesn't allow a tag he didn't see. So this is a rare match with rules. The Stinger splash hits Vampiro's raised boot but a double clothesline puts both guys down. Cat comes in off the lukewarm tag and gives Muta a really bad looking hiptoss. Sting stands around while Cat fights both guys and here's Demon (who Tony calls Disciple for the second time in the match). The mist takes Sting down but Cat kicks Vampiro in the head for the pin.

**Rating:** D-. Cat really doesn't belong in the ring and the story isn't working either. It's basically Sting fighting a bunch of guys who look like evil clowns and are doing a lame Ministry impression. That's the best you can do for one of your biggest stars of all time? Lame main event, but you kind of had to expect that given who was involved.

Muta gives Cat the red mist and Demon puts Sting in the Scorpion Deathlock to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D-. There were some better efforts here but just too much bad to overcome. With the same mystery partner angle running twice and a cooky mixed tag tables match thrown in, there's only so much something like Skipper vs. Crowbar can do. That means it's time for New Blood Rising though, meaning I'd probably want to watch this show three times over instead.

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# Thought of the Day: Natural

Ah the joys of 80s WWF. I know this is something that's been beaten to death but my goodness it's amazing how much more natural Jesse and Gorilla were on commentary. It feels like two people having a chat while watching a show. They get in catchphrases, plug stuff and talking about the matches while also sounding like they're professionals. I can't remember the last time I heard something like this without going back to some JR and King days. It really shouldn't be pushing ten years since I can remember natural commentary but that's what's happened.