

Wrestlemania Count-Up — Wrestlemania XXIV: A Forgotten Gem

Wrestlemania XXIV

Date: March 30, 2008

Location: Citrus Bowl, Orlando, Florida

Attendance: 74,365

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Jonathan Coachman, Joey Styles, Tazz

We're going outside for the first time in a long time for this one. It's also the first time the show has been in Florida which is odd for some reason. Anyway the main events here are Undertaker challenging Edge for the title and Orton defending against HHH and Cena. As for HHH's life mate Shawn, he's facing Flair in what was pretty clearly going to be Flair's last match. Let's get to it.

John Legend sings America the Beautiful.

The set is awesome with palm trees everywhere and a big canopy.

As usual, the big names on tonight's show talk about how important this night is to them. It's a used formula, but it always works.

This transitions into a video about how so many things can change in a year. People can return, champions can fall and surprises can occur, but it all culminates here.

John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Finlay

This is a Belfast Brawl which means street fight. Finlay was revealed to be Hornswoggle's dad and JBL beat up the tiny man as a favor to Vince. Tonight it's about revenge. Horny comes out with Finlay to appeal to the kids. Finlay charges at the ring and gets drilled by a knee to the head. JBL pounds away on the floor but gets sent shoulder first into the steps. We head inside for the opening bell and Finlay slides right back out to

find some trashcans.

As he gets back in though JBL CRACKS him with a can and picks up some cookie sheets. Now the steps are brought in but JBL can't powerbomb Finlay onto them. Some cookie sheet shots to the head put JBL down for two but a big boot does the same to Finlay. JBL stops to yell at Horny, allowing for the shot with that Irish club that I can't spell. Since this is a WWE hardcore style match, it's table time.

The table is set up in the corner but Finlay picks up the steps instead. JBL bails to the floor and beats on Horny, only to be rammed into the announce table by Papa Horny for his efforts. A trashcan lid to the head stops Finlay and gets two back inside, allowing JBL to pick up a trashcan and LAUNCH IT at Horny. That looked great.

Speaking of trashcans, a shot to JBL breaks up the Clothesline and Finlay blasts him with a lid for good measure. JBL is sent through the table for two and the fans are pleased. Finlay picks up the steps but gets blasted in the knee by a kendo stick, allowing JBL to knock him out with the Clothesline for the pin.

Rating: C+. This was fine. The whole point of this was to have a power brawl with some basic weapons which is what we got. I'm really not sure on JBL winning as the fans were solidly behind Horny and Finlay, but at least the match was entertaining and there were some hard shots in there. Good stuff here.

Kim Kardashian is guest hostess. She wasn't famous for the most part yet here. Kennedy pops in and says he'll win MITB and Kardashian is a little disturbed. Well to be fair she disturbs a lot of people so everything is even.

CM Punk vs. Shelton Benjamin vs. John Morrison vs. Chris Jericho vs. MVP vs. Mr. Kennedy vs. Carlito

Morrison is a tag champion and MVP is US Champion, having held it for nearly a year. Jericho is also Intercontinental Champion because what else is he supposed to do? Everyone goes after a ladder to start other than MVP who stays in the ring. Someone slides one in and MVP uses it to

knock everyone down. Jericho brings in a big ladder and it's time for a duel. MVP goes down and here's Morrison to use his own ladder to send Jericho down.

In an awesome move, Morrison goes up top with the ladder and moonsaults down onto a bunch of guys at once. Kennedy uses the distraction to go up but Jericho makes the save. He tries a catapult on Kennedy but sends him onto the ladder by mistake. Morrison dives onto the ladder to stop Kennedy but Shelton climbs his own ladder to make it a three way race. Kennedy loads up a superplex on Morrison but Shelton jumps over both of them with a sunset flip to make it a Tower of Doom. Cool spot.

Carlito tries to shove Shelton off the ladder but he lands on the top rope on his feet. Shelton shoves the ladder at Carlito and tries to dive onto said ladder but it gives way. Punk stops Shelton from going up and hits the GTS but Kennedy stops him with the rolling fireman's carry onto a ladder. MVP is back in now to kick Kennedy in the head but gets sent into a ladder by Carlito.

Shelton's dragon whip CRACKS Carlito in the head but as he goes up, Kennedy and Carlito shove the ladder forward, sending Shelton over the top and through a ladder which was bridged between the ring and the barricade. Carlito and Kennedy go up but MVP breaks that up, only to be broken up by Morrison. Jericho breaks up Morrison's attempt by putting him in the Walls on top of the ladder. Again, awesome. Kennedy tries to use the opening but Jericho throws John down and starts brawling.

Punk and Carlito dive at the ladders to make it a fourway with only Jericho lasting on top. Carlito comes back with the Backstabber off the ladder and everyone is down again. MVP goes up the ladder but here's the returning Matt Hardy to stop him with a Twist of Fate off the ladder. Everyone is back in again and Jericho beats on all of them with the ladder. In a cool visual one ladder is jammed into the bottom of another, so as Morrison climbs the vertical (and unfolded) one, Jericho shoves it back into the corner and onto Punk.

Carlito and Jericho go up but Carlito spits apple in the face to break it up. Kennedy shoves Carlito off but gets hit in the ribs with a ladder by

Punk. Jericho hits a Codebreaker with a ladder onto Punk to put everyone not named Jericho down. Punk goes up to stop Jericho but gets hit in the face by the briefcase. Punk climbs up again and knocks Jericho into the Tree of Woe with a shot to the head, allowing Punk to climb up and win the briefcase.

Rating: B. Good MITB here but as usual the high amount of people hurt it. Nothing here really stood out other than the Walls and Matt's return, as you can only get so much out of the same spots we've seen before. It's certainly good but it's a step below some of the other stuff, and this would only get worse until we got some fresh blood in there. A power guy wouldn't hurt either.

Orton, HHH and Cena are ready.

We look at the Hall of Fame induction ceremony from last night. The big deal of this was having Rock back to induct Rocky Johnson and Peter Maivia, his father and grandfather. The headliner though was Ric Flair who of course had everyone in tears.

Fink comes out to do the live introductions of this year's class. They include the Brisco Brothers, Gordon Solie (represented by his kids), Johnson and Maivia, Eddie Graham, Mae Young (who tries to strip) and Flair (represented by his children, including Reid who died about three days before this was written).

Snoop Dog is here to emcee the Playboy match later and apparently has a friend in Festus. Heel Santino Marella comes up to say that he's going to be at the match later but Snoop rings the bell to send Festus into a rage. Mick Foley pops up for a cameo, complete with Snoop Sock.

Batista vs. Umaga

This is a Battle for Brand Supremacy with Batista on the blue team and Umaga on the red team. Seriously that's the whole story here. Regal and Teddy are here as GM's/motivators. Slugout to start followed by Umaga missing a charge into the corner. Batista sends him to the floor but once back inside Umaga takes Big Dave down with a spinwheel kick (decent one too). A big unbooted foot sends Batista to the floor and Umaga is in full

control.

Umaga gets nowhere off a quick nerve hold and gets even worse off a missed swan dive. Batista can't slam him down though and Umaga falls on top for two. A HARD kick to Batista's back sets up another nerve hold to keep things slow. Back up and Batista walks into a Samoan Drop for another near fall. They fight up again and Batista gets up a boot in the corner to slow Umaga down. After blocking the Samoan Spike, Batista hits a spinebuster and the "Batista Bomb" (read as Batista picks him up and falls backwards to send Umaga to the mat) for the pin.

Rating: D-. This was AWFUL with Batista doing nothing and being booed for most of his comeback. I can't say I blame the fans either as the match was just dull all around. How this makes Smackdown bigger than Raw is beyond me but that's what WWE says so who am I to argue? Match sucked.

We look at the tale of the tape for Big Show vs. Floyd Mayweather, the latter being about as tall as my grandmother.

We look at the battle royal from the preshow with Kane winning a shot at the ECW Title.

ECW Title: Kane vs. Chavo Guerrero

In less time than it takes to type "in less time than it takes to type", Kane chokeslams Chavo and pins him for the title. Match ran about 6 seconds.

Actress Raven Symone is here for some charity thing and SHOUTS ABOUT IT A LOT.

We recap Shawn vs. Flair. This was an odd build up as Vince said that the next match Flair lost would mean his retirement. This basically started Flair's retirement tour as he held onto the title in upset after upset until he was all of a sudden on a roll. This led to Flair challenging Mr. Wrestlemania Shawn Michaels to a showdown at Wrestlemania, because if Flair can't beat him he doesn't want to keep going.

Flair was inducted into the Hall of Fame and it was made as clear as possible that Flair was going down to Shawn in Orlando. This led to a

tear jerking video set to Leave the Memories Alone with a highlight reel of Flair's career. The idea is that Shawn doesn't want to do this but Flair wants Shawn to bring it.

Ric Flair vs. Shawn Michaels

Feeling out process to start with neither guy being able to get the advantage. A hip toss puts Shawn down and Ric shouts about being Old Yeller, which Shawn referenced to set this up. Shawn chops him hard and Flair's lip is bleeding. They slug it out in the corner with Shawn taking over and going up top, only to be slammed down. Now Flair goes up and hits a cross body for two. Jerry: "IT ACTUALLY WORKED!"

Ric goes after the knee but Shawn kicks him to the floor. Shawn loads up an Asai Moonsault and hits table, landing square on the edge ribs first. That looked HORRIBLE and Shawn is in big trouble. Back in and a belly to back suplex gets two for Flair. Naitch stays on the ribs and hits a good looking suplex for two. Shawn comes back with a backdrop to send Flair to the floor and follows up with a moonsault which mostly hits floor.

Both guys make it back inside at nine and they chop it out. The forearm and nippup connect and Shawn starts slugging away. A slam sets up Shawn's top rope elbow but it hurts his ribs in the process. Michaels tunes up the band but can't bring himself to do it, allowing Flair to grab the Figure Four which is quickly broken. They fight to the mat and try Flair's bridge up out of a pinfall into the backslide but Ric is just too old.

Instead it's a sunset flip for two for Shawn but Flair takes out the knee with a chop block. The Figure Four is countered into an inside cradle for two. NOW the Figure Four goes on in the middle of the ring but Shawn finally rolls it over into the ropes. Back up and Shawn hits the superkick out of nowhere but the cover only gets two. Shawn tunes up the band again but gets kicked low for two.

Michaels comes back with a reverse Figure Four but Flair manages to crawl to the ropes. A quick rollup with a handful of trunks gets two for Flair and he fires off chop after chop. Out of nowhere Shawn superkicks Flair down but Michaels can't cover. Flair slowly gets up and says bring it.

Shawn looks at him, says "I'm sorry. I love you." and superkicks Flair into retirement.

Rating: B. This is a hard one to grade. The match itself was entertaining, but it wasn't supposed to be a competitive spectacle. This was designed to give Flair a great match to go out on and they almost did that. They made no secret about who was winning and that's ok, but at the same time it was like delaying the inevitable. It was a good match to send him out on and the fans were happy to see the famous spots one more time.

Flair gets a well deserved standing ovation. This match should have closed the show and was going to, but Flair said no because the title match should close the show. Usually I would agree but in this case, Flair should have ended the show. Ric takes the long walk up the ramp to nonstop applause.

Edge talks about being a Hulkamaniac at Wrestlemania 6 and watching his hero losing. His innocence was lost that day but it's ok. His life has come full circle because people rely on Undertaker to win at Wrestlemania. Tonight he's taking everyone innocence by breaking the streak.

Maria/Ashley vs. Beth Phoenix/Melina

This is a Playboy lumberjill match with Snoop Dogg as master of ceremonies in a golf cart. Snoop of course comes out with all of the lumberjills because that's what Snoop would do. Ashley is her usual self and Maria looks great. Also, her theme song continues to be ridiculously catchy. Oh and Beth is Women's Champion and has Santino with her. Melina has uh...wings.

Ashley tries to fight Beth and is immediately thrown around. Maria tries a double hip toss with Ashley which goes as well as you would expect two talentless models to be able to do. Melina is thrown to the floor and beaten up by the good Divas and takes a bad Bronco Buster from Maria. Ashley gets a running start to climb to the middle ropes to punch Melina as this mess continues. Melina takes over and catapults Ashley into a bearhug by Beth.

Melina hits a moonsault off of Beth's shoulders for two before we get a stupid trip from Ashley. Off to Maria for some kicks as the lights go out. They finally get a spotlight on as this continues to fall apart. Maria tries to counter the Glam Slam into a bulldog but can't even do that right. Melina breaks up the pin and we get heel miscommunication. Maria hits a kind of top rope bulldog but Santino breaks up the pin. Lawler punches out Santino but Beth hits a fisherman's buster for the pin on Maria.

Rating: F+. That's ALL for Maria looking great. I forgot this match was a lumberjill match after about a minute and the rest of the girls couldn't even be seen after that long. Maria was TERRIBLE here and she was the better worker on her team. This didn't work at all and was the disaster to end all disasters for Divas matches.

Post match Snoop lays out Santino with a clothesline and makes out with Maria. I'll give him this: he seemed to be having a blast out there.

We recap Orton vs. HHH vs. Cena. Orton won the title by forfeit at No Mercy and Cena is back from injury to reclaim the title that he never lost. HHH won the Elimination Chamber to get a shot as well.

Raw World Title: Randy Orton vs. HHH vs. John Cena

Cena has a drumline playing him to the ring which is pretty awesome. After some big match intros we're ready to go. Orton immediately blasts HHH with the belt but Cena takes the champion down with a bulldog before Orton can do any more damage. HHH pops back up and throws both guys to the floor before sending Orton into the announce table. Orton and HHH head back in with the champion being put in a sleeper. Cena comes back in and picks them BOTH up at the same time for an FU but both guys slip off the back. Orton's backbreaker puts HHH down as does a shot to Cena to give the champion control again.

Randy takes turns pounding away on both guys, getting two off a knee drop to the Game. Orton starts getting uncharacteristic for himself by going up top, only to be stopped by Cena. John loads up a superplex but HHH pulls Cena onto his own shoulders so Orton can hit a top rope cross body for two. Cena stands up to try the FU on Orton but Randy slides into a

cradle for two. HHH clotheslines Cena down but Orton clotheslines HHH to put HHH down.

It's Orton standing tall again as he sends both guys to the apron for a double Elevated DDT which gets two on both challengers. An RKO to Cena is countered but he shoves Orton into HHH to put both guys down. Cena hits the Throwback (a flipping face first mat slam) and the top rope Fameasser to keep Randy down. He isn't down enough for the STFU though and the champion rolls to the floor. Cena follows him and is sent into the post to slow things down again.

Orton and HHH fight it out in the ring with HHH taking out the champion's knee. Cena comes back in to distract HHH but after the Game puts him down, Orton catches him with an RKO to put him right next to Cena. Orton kicks HHH to the floor but walks into the STFU in the middle of the ring. HHH makes a save at the last second and sends Cena into the floor to put him down on the floor.

Back in and HHH puts on an Indian Deathlock to follow up on the knee work he started earlier. Now it's Cena back in to break up the hold and send HHH into the corner and out to the floor. Back to the STFU but HHH comes in for the save. The problem is that the save didn't work, so HHH puts Cena in a Crossface while Cena has Orton in the STFU. Cena lets go of his hold but manages to crawl over to the ropes to break up the hold.

Orton rolls to the floor so HHH and Cena can slug it out in the middle of the ring. The fans boo Cena's punches and cheer HHH's, continuing a trend for whomever Cena is facing. Cena slams HHH down and hits the Shuffle but Cena's FU is countered into a Pedigree attempt which is countered into an STFU attempt this HHH escapes. The spinebuster puts John down and there's the Pedigree, but Orton comes back in with the Punt to HHH to knock him silly and Orton pins Cena to retain.

Rating: B. This was a fast paced match with all three guys working hard out there in front of a huge crowd. The back and forth stuff worked very well and it wasn't clear who was going to win until the match was over. Orton getting beaten up and winning while stealing HHH's pin is perfect for him, as well as giving him the big win on the big stage that he

needed.

We recap Big Show vs. Floyd Mayweather which is the big celebrity match of the night. Big Show was a bully to the much smaller Mayweather at No Way Out where Floyd legitimately broke Show's nose with a right hand, setting up tonight's No DQ match. The big question was who do we cheer for in this match? The bully or the guy who keeps running his mouth and brags about how no one can beat him? That question was never answered even after the match was over. Mayweather allegedly got \$20 million for this one match. He's a world champion boxer if you're not a fan of his.

Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. Big Show

You can by pin, submission or knockout. Other than that anything goes. Floyd is in gloves which would seem to be a disadvantage for him but whatever. He bobs and weaves a lot before firing off some nice punches to Big Show. Mayweather stops for a drink from a chalice (seriously) and Show beats up Mayweather's team a bit. Show grabs an incoming punch and tries to stomp on Floyd's hand. Smart strategy.

Show lifts him up for a chokeslam but that lets Floyd get on even level with Show's head. Some rights to the face stagger show but Mayweather tries to choke him out, which actually works for a bit. Show finally flips him over and steps on Floyd's left hand. The guys on the floor FREAK and say that's not allowed before Show chops Mayweather in the corner. Show stands on Floyd's back before putting him down with a side slam.

A headbutt stops Floyd's comeback bid and there's an elbow drop for good measure. Mayweather tries to bail but Big Show chases the team down, beats them up, and throws Floyd back in the ring. Show loads up the chokeslam but a handler hits Show with a chair. He gets chokeslammed down but Mayweather gets the chair and blasts Show with it a few times. A low blow and three chair shots to the head sets up a brass knuckle right hand to Show's jaw for the knockout (and Show was on his knees at 9).

Rating: C+. This is one of those matches where all you can say is "well what else were you expecting?" Again though, who was I supposed to cheer for? The giant bully, or the loud bragging guy who used chairs and brass

knuckles to win? Like I said, the story was head scratch inducing, but this was tremendous fun.

Wrestlemania is coming back to Houston next year.

Kim Kardashian announces the new attendance record: 74,635.

We get a video on the Streak which is interrupted by Edge's theme music. Edge already beat Undertaker once by cashing in MITB last year and then costing him the title at Survivor Series. They're trying to play up Streak vs. streak here but Edge lost in MITB last year.

Smackdown World Title: Undertaker vs. Edge

Edge has Teddy wheel out Vickie who is in a wheelchair as always. The Canadian is defending here. The champ pounds away to start but gets clotheslined out to the floor. Back in and Taker comes back with a Stunner onto the top rope to put Edge down. Taker slugs away but charges into a boot in the corner, only to come back with the jumping clothesline for two. Old School is countered but Taker rolls forward and armdrags Edge down.

Edge sends Taker over the corner by avoiding a big boot, possibly injuring Taker's arm in the process. A spear sends Taker off the apron and into the barricade to work over the ribs a bit. Edge hits a hard baseball slide to send Taker back into the barricade as the match slows down a bit. With Undertaker on the apron, Edge hits a running neckbreaker to snap Undertaker's neck across the top rope.

Back in and Edge pounds away even more before hitting a spear into the corner for no cover. Instead it's a dropkick to put Taker down again and Edge goes up, only to be shoved down to the floor with a sick thud. There's the Taker Dive to continue the Wrestlemania tradition. Taker drops the apron legdrop and heads back inside for the Last Ride but his back won't let him use it.

They head outside again and Edge drops Taker back first onto the barricade, sending the big man into the crowd. Off to a half crab by Edge followed by a very modified Indian Deathlock which Undertaker kicks away.

Back up and they slug it out with Taker getting control and the cheers from Undertaker. The challenger gets the better of it and hits a running clothesline in the corner. Make it a pair of them followed by snake eyes but the big boot is blocked for two by Edge.

The chokeslam is countered into the Impaler DDT for two. The second chokeslam attempt works but it only gets a near fall as well. Old School is broken up again and Edge pounds away in the corner but has to counter the Last Ride out of the corner with a neckbreaker for two. These counters are getting awesome. The Last Ride (more of a regular powerbomb here) hits but it only gets two. Edge counters the Tombstone into the Edge-0-Matic for ANOTHER close two. The fans aren't buying Edge's near falls.

Back up and Taker's big boot hits the referee before Edge takes down the Dead Man. A low blow breaks up a chokeslam bid and Edge blasts Taker in the head with a camera. Taker sits up and like a dolt, Edge tries a Tombstone. Taker reverses into one of his own and here's another referee running a LONG way down the aisle to count two. Cue Hawkins and Ryder (as in Curt and Zack, the Edgeheads) to distract Taker and let Edge hit the spear for two. NOW the fans are fired up about the kickout. Another spear connects but Taker grabs the Hell's Gate submission out of nowhere and Edge taps away the title to make it 15-0.

Rating: A. I kept hearing about how great this match was and while I remember it being good, I don't remember it being this good. It's pretty safe to say that this is Edge's best non-gimmick match ever and it's one of his best ever period. Great match here and it would set up a series of solid gimmick matches between the two over the summer.

A lot of fireworks end the show.

Overall Rating: A-. There's some very good stuff on here along with some historic stuff to go with it. The bad stuff is mostly short and the main event was very solid and better than I remember. I don't know if I'd say it's one of the best ever but it's in the running for that list. Really fun show here which was better than I was expecting it to be.

Ratings Comparison

John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Finlay

Original: C+

Redo: C+

Shelton Benjamin vs. CM Punk vs. Carlito vs. Chris Jericho vs. MVP vs.
Mr. Kennedy vs. John Morrison

Original: B

Redo: B

Batista vs. Umaga

Original: F+

Redo: D-

Kane vs. Chavo Guerrero

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Ric Flair vs. Shawn Michaels

Original: A

Redo: B

Beth Phoenix/Melina vs. Maria/Ashley

Original: F

Redo: F+

John Cena vs. HHH vs. Randy Orton

Original: C+

Redo: B

Floyd Mayweather vs. Big Show

Original: D-

Redo: C+

Edge vs. Undertaker

Original: A-

Redo: A

Overall Rating

Original: C-

Redo: A-

WOW I totally shortchanged this last time. It's a great show and I said a C-? What was I on?

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/03/31/583/>

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Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2008:

Reach For It Jeff

Royal Rumble 2008

Date: January 27, 2008

Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City New York

Attendance: 20,798

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole Jonathan Coachman, Joey Styles, Tazz

We're in New York City again and there are three main events tonight. We have the usual Rumble and Edge defending the Smackdown Title against Mysterio, but the interesting one here was Orton defending against Jeff Hardy. I don't know how they did it, but the company did an OUTSTANDING job of making Hardy seem like he had a very real chance of taking the title tonight and shocking the world. I had no idea who was going to win and I LOVED that feeling. Let's get to it.

The opening video focuses more on the show being in MSG than anything else.

Ric Flair vs. MVP

Flair's career is on the line but MVP's US Title isn't. Flair talks about having his first match here in 1976 but MVP's music cuts him off. MVP takes him into the corner to start and he's BALLIN already. Flair goes after the arm for a second before chopping away at the jumpsuit. MVP comes back with a running boot to the head for two before hooking a chinlock. The fans tell MVP that he sucks as he cranks on the chin.

Flair fights up and picks the leg, only to get small packaged for two. A backdrop puts Flair down and there's a running boot to the face in the corner for three, but Flair has his foot on the rope. You know MSG isn't buying that one. Flair tries to steal the pin but gets clotheslined down for his efforts instead. A superplex gets two for MVP and a double clothesline puts both guys down. Flair starts trying for some fast pins before slugging away. MVP punches him down and hits a facebuster, but the Playmaker is countered into a quick Figure Four to end this.

Rating: C. This was about what you would expect. At the end of the day, everyone knew Flair wasn't going to lose this but it was a way to give him one last moment in MSG before retiring in April. I'm not wild on him beating the US Champion clean but the title hasn't meant anything in years anyway so what difference does it make?

Vince talks to Horny about the Rumble. This is during the "Vince is Hornswoggle's dad" phase. Vince tells him to not trust Finlay but he has to win. Finlay comes in and takes some offense to Vince telling them not to trust each other.

Mike Adamle is introduced as the newest broadcaster. Oh dear. For those of you that don't remember him, imagine Cole but with something resembling charm.

We recap Jericho vs. JBL. JBL cost Jericho the title at Armageddon and tonight is the blowoff. JBL brought Jericho's children into this too, saying Jericho would have to admit to them that he's a coward. Jericho would use this same line against Shawn soon after this.

Chris Jericho vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

Feeling out process to start with JBL hiding in the corner and ropes a few times. Jericho forearm him down and pounds away but gets sent to the floor. That doesn't last long as he slides right back in and hooks the Walls but JBL immediately grabs the rope. A baseball slide keeps Jibbles on the floor where he is sent into the steps. Back in and Jericho charges into a hot shot to put both guys down.

A clothesline (not the one from down under) puts Jericho down as apparently he has a bad throat and neck coming into this. Bradshaw slingshots Jericho throat first into the middle rope and hooks a quick sleeper. Jericho fights out of it and hits a clothesline of his own, only to charge into a big boot. John sends him shoulder first into the post which busts his head open somehow. Back in and JBL pounds away at the cut as a villain would do. Jericho comes back but they botch a clothesline, causing both guys to get booed loudly. A Cactus Clothesline sends them to the floor where Jericho cracks JBL with a chair for the LAME DQ.

Rating: D+. This didn't work at all for the most part. Jericho didn't work at all as a face with the short hair during this comeback and I think everyone knew it. Thankfully he would turn heel over the summer and have the feud of the year with Shawn. The ending to this sucked and I don't think they had any other matches after this.

Jericho destroys JBL post match and chokes him with a cord, which is what JBL did to him. That gets Jericho cheered at least.

Santino tells Ashley that Maria won't do Playboy. Thank goodness he was wrong.

We recap Edge vs. Mysterio. Edge is with Vickie now who just happens to be the corrupt GM. Mysterio won a Beat the Clock challenge by beating Edge himself to earn the shot. Edge is annoyed that Rey is claiming that Edge is just using Vickie, which of course he is.

Smackdown World Title: Edge vs. Rey Mysterio

Edge is defending if that's not clear. Vickie, Hawkins and Ryder are at ringside as well. After some big match intros we're ready to go. The fans LOUDLY boo Rey and cheer for Edge as Rey kind of messes up a rana. Edge runs him over but Rey speeds things up, causing Edge to panic a bit. Rey gets sent to the floor where Hawkins and Ryder go after him, only to stop when they're nearly caught. The referee ejects them anyway.

Back in and Rey almost hooks the 619, only to have the champion bail to the floor. Rey is perfectly cool with diving to the floor to take out Edge, drawing boos in a bizarre sequence. Back in and a seated senton gets two for Rey but Edge takes his knee out to take over. Edge pounds away and hooks a half crab for a little while. Rey comes back with kicks to the face to escape and you would think he was choking a kitten from the crowd's reaction.

Rey loads up the 619 but charges into a powerslam for two. Off to a kind of ankle lock hold but bending the knee instead of the ankle. Edge tries to take the knee brace off of Rey but gets caught in the sitout bulldog to put both guys down. Mysterio uses his good leg to kick Edge in the face for two before hitting another kind of seated senton for two. Like

an idiot, Rey goes up and hits a double stomp for two. Smart move on a bad knee Rey. Edge is sent to the floor where Rey slide through the ropes into a tornado DDT for two back inside.

Back in and Edge kicks Rey right in the face to put him down again. Why over complicate things? The spear misses so Rey hits the 619 and the top rope splash, but Vickie pops out of her wheelchair to break up the count. Edge misses another spear and puts himself in 619 position, but Vickie jumps onto the apron to take the hit, allowing Edge to hit the spear for the retaining pin.

Rating: C+. This was ok but you kind of expect more from Edge vs. Rey Mysterio. The ending was about Vickie, which would become a running theme over the next few months. Edge being all conniving and backstabbing the already evil Vickie was awesome stuff, but getting there was tedious at times. Still not a bad match at all though.

Mr. Kennedy is waiting for Flair when he gets out of the shower in a towel. Shawn comes in before anything happens and shakes hands with Flair. Shawn: "Imagine, a loud mouthed platinum blonde with a catchphrase. That gimmick will never work." Batista comes in (pop), as does HHH (lesser pop). HHH: "I've said this a lot of times before Ric, but put your pants on." It turns into a merchandise plug in a cute bit.

Maria comes out to do the Royal Rumble Kiss Cam. This eats up some time until Ashley comes out to ask Maria to be in Playboy again. Santino comes out to insult the fans (and the Giants), saying the people would cheer if you asked if they wanted hepatitis. He brings out Big Dick Johnson with a rubber chicken and wearing a half Patriots jersey. You can figure this one out for yourself.

WrestleMania ad featuring Mae Young as a lifeguard. Ok then.

Mike Adamle introduces us to the next match, featuring Randy Orton vs. Jeff Harvey.

We recap Hardy vs. Orton, which is based on three simple words: Hardy could win. Apparently this match drew HUGE numbers for the Rumble, which showed why they held out on Hardy winning the belt for nearly a year.

Hardy hit a HUGE Swanton off the set on Raw, which made you wonder how far he would go to win here. The video is a mini-history of Orton's career to this point, which isn't really a good idea for a heel. This is followed by a music video about Jeff Hardy set to the song Rooftops by the Lost Prophets, which really fits him well. I remember being very excited for the match and this video was a big reason.

Raw World Title: Randy Orton vs. Jeff Hardy

Jeff is Intercontinental Champion. Feeling out process to start with Jeff taking over via a headlock on the mat. An atomic drop gets two but Orton hits him in the face and brags to the crowd about it. Orton gets sent to the floor and a baseball slide sends him into the barricade. Hardy follows with a plancha to the floor as JR SCREAMS to get Orton back in the ring. Randy tries to walk out with the belt but Hardy will have none of that. Orton is rammed into the announce table and back inside we go.

As Hardy tries a springboard, Orton dropkicks him right back to the floor in a big crash. There's the Orton Stomp and some choking as Orton shows off his wide range of offense. This is before Orton was orange so the visuals aren't all that bad. A pair of knee drops get two on Hardy as Orton asks the fans if they believe in Jeff still. Hardy sends Orton over the top to the floor, followed by a bad clothesline off the apron (it hit Orton's arm and completely missed his neck and chest).

Back in again and Jeff misses a charge into the post, giving Orton both a two count and control again. Randy hooks a chinlock with a bodyscissors followed by a powerslam for two. Back to the chinlock (yep it's an Orton match) to fill in some time. Jeff fights up again and takes Randy down with a clothesline but can't follow up. Jeff starts striking with everything he's got and hits the Whisper in the Wind to fire up the crowd even more.

That's one thing I haven't talked about enough here: the fans are WAY behind Hardy here. It isn't the usual New York reaction to a face. They want Jeff to win the title NOW. Hardy hits the slingshot dropkick in the corner but before he can hit the Swanton, Randy bails to the floor. Jeff is cool with that and hits (kind of at least) a moonsault to the floor.

Back in and Jeff loads up the Twist but Orton counters into the RKO out of nowhere to retain.

Rating: C+. That's a really bad finish for a few reasons. First of all, it's WAY too sudden. If they were shooting at punching the audience in the stomach I guess they accomplished that, but it doesn't do much else. Hardy winning was an option, but at the end of the day they made the right move here...I think. I was disappointed Hardy won, but thankfully WWE stretched it out for a LONG time before he got the title, which was the right move at the end of the day.

Hardy gets a well deserved standing ovation. His time would come.

We get the Rumble by the Numbers video, which is always a favorite of mine. Here are those numbers:

20 years of history

21 winners

569 superstars in the Rumble

36 eliminations (by Austin, since broken by Shawn)

11 Rumbles for Shawn (since broken by Kane)

11 eliminations for Kane in 2001

3 identities under which Foley entered the Rumble in 1997

2 feet that must touch the ground

1 woman in the Rumble (Chyna, since joined by Beth Phoenix and Kharma)

62:12 of time that Mysterio was in the Rumble

2 seconds that Warlord lasted in the Rumble (since broken by Santino)

3 wins for Austin, still a record

1 is the spot that has the same amount of wins as #30 (Shawn and Undertaker)

4 men that have won the Rumble from the 27 spot, the most ever

73 percent of the Rumble winners have won the title at Wrestlemania

I love that.

Royal Rumble

As introduced by Michael Buffer (only the Fink gets all caps in the Garden), #1 is Undertaker, #2 is Shawn Michaels,. Now how's THAT for an opening pair? Isn't it amazing how a RANDOM pairing finishes the match the previous year and opens it this year? 90 second intervals here which seems to be the right amount of time most of the years. Taker powers Shawn around to start and elbows him in the corner.

Shawn gets crotched on the ropes but Taker GOES AIRBORNE with a running boot that misses in the corner. Shawn charges into the grip of Taker as he gets back in but there's no chokeslam. Taker kicks him in the face instead as Santino is #3. Twenty five seconds later Shawn superkicks him and Taker gets the elimination. Shawn tries to dump him but Taker hangs on and works on the arm.

Old School is countered and Shawn hits an atomic drop as Great Khali is #4. Taker jumps him as he comes in as Shawn is down from something we missed. The big chop puts Taker down as the fans tell Khali he can't wrestle. They grab each other by the throat but Khali misses a chop and gets eliminated. Shawn never touched Khali but charges at Taker when it's just the two of them.

Hardcore Holly is #5 and is a tag champion here. Taker slugs Holly down but Shawn tries to dump the big man again. John Morrison, also a tag champion but with Miz instead of Cody Rhodes like Holly, is #6. Morrison looks at Taker and immediately goes after Holly instead. Shawn dumps him to the apron but John gets back in. That winds up being bad for him as he get slammed down by Shawn followed by the top rope elbow.

Shawn tunes up the band but Morrison blocks the kick. Tommy Dreamer is #7 to a big pop and a LOUD Tommy Dreamer chant. #8 is Batista as we get another good blast of energy. Big Dave and Taker knock everyone down (no

eliminations) and they stare each other down, only for Dreamer to charge at Batista, earning himself an elimination. Shawn goes after Batista now but Dave spears Morrison down instead.

Hornswoggle is #9 and immediately dives under the ring without ever getting in. Batista and Taker hammer on each other in the corner as Holly clotheslines Shawn to the apron. Chuck Palumbo, a lame biker at this point, is #10. Taker flips Morrison to the apron but he hangs on again. Shawn and Morrison fight on the top rope as Jamie Noble, Palumbo's enemy at this point, is #11. Noble has taped up ribs so his offense can't last long. Palumbo dumps him after less than a minute.

At the moment we have Taker, Shawn, Holly, Batista, Palumbo and Morrison in the ring with Horny underneath. #12 is CM Punk as Morrison makes ANOTHER impressive save. Punk is insanely popular in New York of course and fires off running knees in the corner to everyone he sees, only to charge into a clothesline from Undertaker. Morrison, the guy that took the ECW Title from Punk, pounds away on him. Punk takes Palumbo out but gets jumped from behind by Shawn.

Cody Rhodes is #13 before he means anything at all. Yes he's a tag champion, and yes I stand by what I just said. Cody goes after Punk before shifting over to Taker like an idiot. Umaga is #14 to a decent pop. He spikes Holly out and gets to try on Batista for a bit now. Shawn gets backdropped to the apron but hangs on of course. Snitsky is #15 and badly pounds on everyone at once.

Rhodes jumps on Snitsky's back and they both head to the apron but no further than that. Taker gets headbutted by Umaga as the ring is starting to get too full. Miz is #16 with those stupid shorts of his. He goes after Punk as Taker tries to put Umaga out. Shelton with his even stupider gold hair of his knocks both Miz and Morrison off the top and onto the ropes but not out, before walking into a superkick from Shawn for the elimination in less than 20 seconds.

Jimmy Snuka of all people is #18 to a HUGE pop. He goes after Morrison as the fans do Snuka's barking kind of chant. Taker gets a headbutt which staggers the dead man before Snuka goes after Miz. At #19 here's Roddy

Piper to an even BIGGER pop. He takes his shirt off and causes about half the audience to faint before having a showdown with Snuka, which the rest of the match (remember this includes Umaga, Taker and Shawn) stops to watch. Piper pokes Jimmy in the eyes and the match finally picks up a bit.

Kane is in at #20 to hopefully clean out the ring a bit. Yep he knocks out Piper and Snuka before chokeslamming Miz. Taker loads up a chokeslam on Kane but before he grabs the throat, he spins around and grabs Michaels instead. Carlito is in at #21 and spits the apple at Rhodes. Punk and Morrison pick up Carlito but he kicks off the ropes and sends them both into them. Punk kicks Morrison in the head but gets caught by a Backstabber. Cool little sequence there.

Mick Foley is #22 and you know the fans freak out for him. A double arm DDT takes Kane down as Umaga hits a Samoan Drop on Taker. The ring is WAY too full now with Taker, Michaels, Morrison, Batista, Punk, Rhodes, Umaga, Snitsky, Miz, Kane, Carlito, Foley and Horny under the ring. Morrison hits a springboard kick to take Foley down and Kennedy is #23. I'll say this: the ring has some star power in it.

There's a Mic Check to Miz and a kick to Taker after he sits up from something. A chokeslam puts Kennedy down and Taker starts beating up everyone. Here's Big Daddy V at #24. Taker shoves Snitsky out, Shawn superkicks Taker out and Kennedy throws Shawn out. The only question I have from that: why is Taker on his feet after being superkicked? Taker drops a leg on the announce table on Snitsky because he's a big jerk at times.

Kennedy and Rhodes fight to the apron as Henry is #25. Horny comes out from under the ring and pulls Miz out from the ring for an elimination. Horny goes back under the ring as V is trying to put out Morrison and Kennedy. Chavo is #26 and freshly ECW Champion, thereby making it clear that the ECW Title isn't a world title. Kane sends Morrison to the apron and then to the floor with a big boot.

Horny comes in again as V and Henry double team him. Finlay runs out ahead of the gun (presumably at #27) and blasts both guys with the club.

He and Horny leave through the ropes and don't return, with the official statement being that Horny was eliminated for leaving and Finlay was disqualified. In the Rumble. Yeah this story was just badly done overall. Elijah Burke (D'Angelo Dinero) is #28.

Chavo dumps Punk after taking his title on Tuesday. That's just overkill man. Umaga spikes Batista under the ropes and out to the floor. HHH is #29 which leaves a hole at #30. Basically every major star has entered and the announcers aren't sure who is possibly left. Rhodes, V, Foley and Burke all go out at HHH's hands before he pounds on Umaga. The countdown begins for #30.

The roof is blown off the Garden, because JOHN CENA is #30. This is shocking as Cena had torn his pec and had announced that he would be gone until Wrestlemania at the earliest. Imagine that: lying about an injury and getting a big response from the crowd. Who would have ever thought of that, and in wrestling of all things? Carlito, Chavo and Henry are all gone in about fifteen seconds before it's HHH staring Cena down.

We've got Cena, HHH, Batista, Kane, Umaga and Kennedy to go. HHH takes Cena down with a spinebuster but walks into a superkick from Umaga. Batista takes Umaga down with the spinebuster and dumps Kennedy to get us down to five. There goes Umaga and we're down to four. HHH and Batista dump Kane and we've got three left. Batista gives the double thumbs down, Cena says you can't see me and HHH says suck it. They are fighting catchphrases and it's on.

Trips and Cena go after Big Dave but he clotheslines them both down. The spinebuster plants Cena and another one takes HHH down. The fans don't seem thrilled with Batista so they cheer when Cena backdrops him down. HHH clotheslines Batista out and we're down to HHH vs. Cena.

Since this is New York, the fans hate Cena by default and it's boo/yay time. Triple H pounds away but walks into the Protobomb and the Shuffle. The finishers are both countered and they clothesline each other down. Cena can't FU HHH out and gets caught in a DDT. The finishers are countered again until Cena hits the FU on HHH for the elimination and the win.

Rating: C+. It took awhile to get through the bad parts but once Cena's music hit the place was electric. The fans booing Cena doesn't surprise me at all because that's how New York works. Cena would wind up facing Orton at No Way Out for some reason, resulting in a three way at Mania with HHH involved as well.

Cena celebrates to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. Well it definitely wasn't terrible but at the end of the day, nothing is really all that good here at all. The best match is probably Hardy vs. Orton and that's just ok. On the other hand though, nothing is really bad here and you likely won't be bored with the show. It's one of those shows where you watch it and other than Cena's return, you probably won't remember watching it two days later.

Ratings Comparison

Ric Flair vs. MVP

Original: B-

Redo: C

John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Chris Jericho

Original: D+

Redo: D+

Edge vs. Rey Mysterio

Original: A-

Redo: C+

Jeff Hardy vs. Randy Orton

Original: C-

Redo: C+

Royal Rumble

Original: C-

Redo: C+

Overall Rating

Original: C+

Redo: C-

Wow the Smackdown title match really changed things around here.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/27/royal-rumble-count-up-2008-screw-wwe-list-this-is-the-1-rumble-moment/>

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No Way Out 2008: Reach For The Brass Ring Jeff

No Way Out 2008

Date: February 17, 2008

Location: Thomas & Mack Center, Las Vegas, Nevada

Attendance: 13,306

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Joey Styles, Tazz, Michael Cole, Jonathan Coachman

We've FINALLY moved past the brand exclusive shows and into the Elimination Chamber years. There are two of them tonight so I'm rather interested in this show. I figured since I hadn't watched a No Way Out in a month before I put up the 07 show that I might as well just finish the series so it isn't Mania time before it goes up. Anyway, both of the matches tonight are for the title shots rather than the belts, as Cena is cashing in his Rumble win TONIGHT to get a shot at Orton. Odd but ok. Other than that there's Edge vs. Rey for the Smackdown Title and that's about it. Just 6 matches on the card this year. Let's get to it.

Oh and also, the whole adding in the Chamber popped the buyrate from about 218,000 up to 329,000. In short, IT WORKED.

The opening video talks about how the Road to Wrestlemania has led us here. The theme song is Fake It by Seether which is an awesome song so I like the transitional stuff for once.

ECW Title: CM Punk vs. Chavo Guerrero

Chavo had taken the title from Punk and this is his rematch. We get a quick recap which involved something about a fiesta which I never thought was that great. We hear some of Tazz during this video which we weren't supposed to hear. We also recap the Gulf of Mexico match which wasn't much either. Crowd is entirely behind Punk.

Chavo sends him to the floor early and tries to get a countout early. In a cool spot with Punk on his stomach Chavo hits a front flip onto his back for two. Off to a body scissors as Punk is in trouble. Punk comes back and gets a powerslam for two. GTS is countered into a rana and a tornado DDT gets two.

Punk does Eddie's dance to tick off the crowd a bit. He goes nearly full heel as he hits Three Amigos. Knee and bulldog get two as Chavo gets his foot on the rope. Punk keeps going off on Chavo, beating on him on the floor which gets two as we're back in the ring now. Punk kicks him in the head and goes to

the corner for a top rope rana but is shoved off and the Frog Splash keeps the title on Chavo. Kind of an abrupt ending.

Rating: C+. This was more or less a TV main event but not bad. Chavo getting a clean pin after needing Edge to get the title in the first place is a good thing for him. The ECW Title would start going to monsters soon as Kane would win it at Mania in 8 seconds. Anyway, this wasn't bad but it was short and too abrupt for my tastes.

We recap Smackdown where Rey messed up Edge's proposal to Vickie. This was the start of Vickie in a wheelchair. Mike Adamle talks to Rey who says he's not sorry but it was an accident. Rey has a torn bicep apparently but he's going to wrestle anyway. Floyd Mayweather pops up and is friends with Rey apparently.

Jericho is getting ready for his Chamber match later.

LOWER THE CHAMBER!

We get a quick highlight reel of Chamber matches over the years.

Great Khali vs. Undertaker vs. MVP vs. Finlay vs. Batista vs. Big Daddy V

Winner gets the Smackdown World Title match at Mania. MVP is US Champion here. In case you're not familiar with the rules, you start with two in the ring and four in small pods. Every four minutes another person is released. You can be eliminated by pinfall or submission but it has to be in the ring. Last man standing wins. Matt Striker is Big Daddy V's manager which I had forgotten about.

Finlay's music is so bad here it's not even funny. It does not fit at all, but at least he doesn't have Horny with him here. Apparently it's Horny vs. Vince tomorrow night. That led to JBL destroying Horny and setting up a surprisingly good

hardcore match with Finlay vs. JBL at Mania. We start with Batista vs. Undertaker. I think that's sufficient enough don't you?

Taker slams the door shut and it's on. We have the camera shot of the ring kind of blocked by the cage but it's nothing you can really ignore. They slug it out early on with Batista surprisingly winning. There's a camera in the ring which helps a lot but they don't use it that often. We head out to the cage floor and Batista is in trouble. And never mind as he gets a boot in to send Taker back into the ring.

They slow it down a bit as we're waiting on the next guy to come in with less than a minute to go. Batista takes over and gets booed LOUDLY. Ok it's been four minutes and no one has come in yet. Is it five perhaps? More like four and a half apparently as both guys are down. Big Daddy V is in third to loud booing. V destroys both guys for awhile just because he can.

He doesn't do much aside from choking and chopping. And now we get really stupid as Taker is knocked through the door and hits the floor. Nice job guys. Taker might have tweaked his knee as he fell. V splashes his as he comes back in just to be a jerk. Running splash crushes Batista too. Batista finally wakes up and gets a VERY good spinebuster to V considering the enormous gravitational pull of V's fat. Taker gets a DDT on the steel and apparently you can get a pin out there as Batista gets rid of V.

Khali is in fourth just after V goes out and the beating continues. I think the fans are chanting USA but it's not that clear. Taker hammers on Khali but can't get the chokeslam. Punjabi Plunge gets two so instead of going after the weak Taker, Khali goes after the rested Batista like a stupid man. Vice Grip to Batista has him in trouble. And never mind as he breaks out and hits a spear to put Khali down.

Taker knocks Singh off the cage with a kick and then gets Hell's Gate to eliminate Khali but he won't let go. Back to Taker vs. Batista as we just kill time (which has been over five minutes since the next guy came in but whatever) until Finlay comes in. He comes in but Taker kicks him in the face to put him right down. Cole calls the STEEL chain concrete-like as Finlay gets the Celtic Cross for two.

Batista gets a slingshot to send Finlay into the cage. After a brief skirmish between the only two guys with a chance to win this, Finlay takes Deadman to the outside and works him over a bit. Finlay manages to send Taker through the BULLETPROOF, yes BULLETPROOF I SAY, glass. We finally get to MVP's countdown with them not even trying to hide the lack of caring about the clock anymore.

Taker stands in front of MVP's pod to wait on him and hammers away on him in the pod. Everyone is in now. MVP gets a Drive By to Batista and one to Taker as well, getting two on the taller one. MVP finds a chain from somewhere to choke away on Finlay for a bit. Taker is busted after a shot with the chain. He gets up and stares down MVP. The no selling of punches begins.

MVP tries to hide on the top of a pod but here comes the dude that sleeps with McCool. He grabs MVP by the throat and throws him over his head (called a reverse chokeslam which works as well as anything else) so Finlay can get the pin. Taker misses a top rope elbow to Finlay and all three guys are down. And here's Horny from under the cage to send in the Irish club that I can't spell to Finlay.

A shot to the head with it gets two on Batista so Undertaker chokeslams Finlay onto the cage which gets us down to one on one. Batista is busted open too. They do a long slow start and then slug it out. Crowd says yay for Taker so you can tell he's far more popular. Batista Bomb hits rather soon for two, making the fourth finisher that Taker has kicked out of (Bomb,

Plunge, Drive By, Celtic Cross).

Then we get proof that Batista is a very stupid man as he goes for multiple punches on the middle rope. As has happened to EVERYONE THAT HAS DONE THAT TO UNDERTAKER IN THE LAST SEVEN YEARS, the Last Ride hits for a long two. Dude your mentor was HHH. Did you never watch their Wrestlemania match? Taker mounts him and throws bombs. Batista sends him out to the cage but he sets like a powerslam and tries to ram Taker's head in again. Taker shoves off the cage, drops to his feet from Animal's shoulders and hooks the Tombstone in the ring to set up Taker vs. Edge at Mania. Sweet, sweet ending.

Rating: C+. The big problem here should be really obvious: there was ZERO chance anyone named Batista or Undertaker wasn't winning here and everyone knew it. They started the match, the dominated it, and they ended it. That's fine as they had mad chemistry together and the stuff they did was good, but did we need four extra guys in there and 30 minutes to get us here? It's ok but it's one of the weaker Chamber matches for sure.

The Edgeheads (Hawkins and Ryder) tell Edge that Taker is 15-0 at Mania which Edge more or less shakes off. Edge tries to set up a plan for later but Teddy comes in. He bands Hawkins and Ryder from ringside just because he can.

Mania ad with a bad Baywatch parody.

We get a clip of Maria and Ashley at the Playboy mansion as Maria was the Playboy chick this year, which was awesome stuff.

Ric Flair vs. Mr. Kennedy

Career threatening match here as if Flair loses he has to retire. Who why is Jeff Hardy suddenly underwater? Oh that's just the logo for the show. Creepy much? Flair's knee is taped and Kennedy struts to start. Apparently Kennedy is the future

of the WWE and a win over Flair will define his career. Why would that be the case? If he can't beat a guy that was over the hill five years ago and 20 years past his prime, what kind of future does he have anyway?

Kennedy works on the knee with a half crab like a smart man. Flair shouts an expletive which is of course censored. Figure Four on the post gets a Bret Hart reference. BIG slap to Flair, who has had no offense at all so far that I can remember. Regular Figure Four goes on from Kennedy but he's no Jay Lethal so it doesn't work.

Kennedy can't manage to break a 60 year old's legs and the fight is on again. The fireman's carry rolling slam gets two. JR asks why Kennedy doesn't get himself disqualified. Maybe because it would mean Flair is still active and it would gain him nothing? Flair hits a chop block and goes after the knee.

Kennedy counters into the anal displaying rollup for two with the ropes but gets caught cheating so it only gets two. Figure Four is countered again into a small package for two. There's the Figure Four for real and of course a 60 year old man gets in two shots to the knee and a basic hold is enough to beat one of the young hot shots on the roster. Makes perfect sense no?

Rating: D+. This wasn't very good. It was the epitome of a Raw match and not a very good one at all. Flair hit all of three moves and managed to win clean. I get that he can't lose, but it looks stupid to see him go over these young guys clean every time. How does that help anyone at all, especially when Flair is leaving in a few weeks? I don't get it but whatever.

Vince says to Finlay that he's going to hurt Horny tomorrow.

JBL is worried about the Chamber.

We recap Edge vs. Rey and of course, it's PERSONAL. We see part of the first match they had at the Rumble where Vickie

got out of her wheelchair and took a 619. That set up the apology thing which set up the engagement thing. And of course we get back to the Guerrero name and all that jazz.

Smackdown World Title: Edge vs. Rey Mysterio

Winner gets Undertaker at Mania. And remember Rey has a really bad and legit arm injury. Floyd Mayweather is in the front row. Edge's theme song is still awesome. Rey keeps dodging to start but hurts his arm on a rana. Rey hits the floor and Edge gets a baseball slide to send Rey's arm into the floor and then into the steps.

Rey is caught in the Tree of Woe but Edge misses a baseball slide to send Edge's balls into the post. Sorry Vickie. Moonsault press gets two as Rey can't hook a leg. Rey gets a 619 out of almost nowhere but Edge beats him to his feet due to the arm. He tries for a springboard something, but Edge spears him out of the air to pin him clean. This didn't even run six minutes so you can tell Rey was hurt badly.

Rating: C. Yes this was a pretty bad match, but major points to Rey for gutting it out and doing what he could. He was barely able to do anything out there but he tried which is all you can ask for at the end of the day. The arm was the focal point of the match so that makes sense. They've had better matches before when both were healthy so it's almost impossible to blame this on anything but the arm. Bad match, but not their fault at all.

Here's Big Show for absolutely no apparent reason. He's a face at this point, but that would get thrown out the window for the next few weeks. Apparently this is a return of some sort. Oh wow this is his return from his hiatus after December to Dismember. He's lost 108 pounds which is rather impressive and actually looks legit.

And never mind the face part as he hits the floor and grabs Rey by the throat and smacks him in the arm, saying does your

arm hurt. He gets in Mayweather's face a bit but drags Rey back into the ring. Floyd's team tries to keep him back but since WWE security is TERRIBLE, Mayweather gets in. There's no commentary here. Show shoves him and gets down on his knees. Mayweather goes right at him and lands three or four bombs, apparently legitimately breaking Show's nose. Floyd runs and we have our Mania match.

Mania is 42 days away.

Jeff Hardy is getting ready. Check for any flat surface with powder on it.

Adamle is with some fans and can't remember the company he's in. We recap Cena vs. Orton which started with Orton hurting Cena (it was actually Kennedy I think but Orton was #1 contender so that sounded better). This set up the EPIC return at the Rumble which no one, I mean NO ONE, saw coming. Cena won, but is cashing in tonight.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. Randy Orton

Orton isn't quite hearing voices yet which is good for me as I like his old music better. There's the bell and they're going for the big epic feeling here, which is getting pretty close actually. Cena gets a small package for two almost immediately. Orton gets in a shot to the ribs and the beating is on. Cena's bulldog out of nowhere gets two.

Orton comes back as neither guy has had anything as far as an extended advantage in the first three minutes or so. Cena keeps going for quick wins with rollups and covers off weaker moves while Orton is trying to slow it down and take away Cena's momentum. The crowd is split here for the most part. He counters the elevated DDT and gets the top rope Fameasser from the top for a close two.

FU is countered and Orton goes after the knee/ankle. Since that makes no sense he stomps away on the bad

shoulder/pectoral area that Cena had hurt and caused him to be put out for awhile. Makes sense. Orton can't get a knee drop on the pec and we hit the chinlock as is Orton's custom. Cena gets the Protoplex out of nowhere and with a point to the Mania sign, Orton can't see him. I have no idea what the connection is but Cena is rocking the serious stare here so don't question it.

FU can't hit again though and Orton hits the floor. At 9 and a half they both fly into the ring to prevent the double countout. Back in and Orton catches Cena in the backbreaker, although Orton may have tweaked his knee. Crowd is all over Cena here. A middle rope suplex is shoved off but Cena misses another Fameasser. Orton starts that slithering stuff he tends to do but the RKO is countered and Cena gets the STFU!

Orton gets a rope and heads to the floor, holding his knee. He DEMANDS that the referee count him out but was playing possum. RKO hits on the floor and Cena is legally dead. Somehow he manages to get back in without the help of a yellow sun as Orton is shocked. And there's a slap to the referee for the DQ to prevent Cena from winning the title which isn't as bad of an ending as it seems, because now Cena has used his title shot. He lands an FU and the STFU post match but it doesn't mean much.

Rating: B-. I liked this pretty well although it's no classic or anything. I like the ending as it fits something that a heel would do to keep the title. Cena is out of a chance at Mania but of course he would fight Orton there anyway, although with HHH thrown in for fun. The fans doing the GOODBYE song is funny stuff as he was absolutely loathed in this match. Decent match and one of the better ones they've had actually.

Orton lays in the ring as the fans chant THANK YOU RANDY. This is funny stuff.

HHH is sitting in the back and Shawn comes up. HBK says this isn't the appropriate time to shill merchandise or crack jokes and apologizes for what he might have to do out there. They say they'll go through each other if they have to and that seems to be mutually ok.

The Chamber is lowered again and we get the winner of the mobile poll. Hardy, HHH and Shawn have the vast majority of the votes. The other three combine for 10%.

HHH vs. Umaga vs. Shawn Michaels vs. Jeff Hardy vs. Chris Jericho vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

This should be a bit better don't you think? The entrances take the better part of forever, especially HHH's as he comes out first. Umaga is second and is pure filler in this match. I think he had Batista at Mania in a horrible match. Jeff gets a HUGE pop but it would be 9 months before he was in the world title scene again. He's IC Champion here and would be suspended for a few months soon after this for Wellness.

It'll be Jericho and Shawn starting us off. They would have their huge feud in about two months. Jericho is still a face here and it's odd to see him in long tights with short hair. At least Shawn isn't in the brown tights. Nice to hear Shawn come out to his own music rather than the DX song.

We get a rather technical start as this is far more of a wrestling match than a brawl so far which is a nice thing to see for once. They start slugging it out and Shawn nips up. The top rope elbow hits knees though and the best part about it: the elbow clearly would have hit had the knees not been there. Shawn tries to do the same thing to the Lionsault but Jericho grabs the Walls instead.

He can't hook the hold though but Shawn can't hook a Sharpshooter either. Both go for either cross bodies or a shoulder block as the time comes down. It's Umaga and the beatdown is on. Both pretty boys are in trouble quickly as he

takes both down with a clothesline. Shawn and Jericho team up to fight the monster off but he's like screw it and hits a Samoan Drop on both guys at the same time (think Cena to Edge and Show at Mania).

Umaga kicks Shawn to the outside of the ring and hammers on Jericho for awhile. He goes up for a middle rope splash but can't crush Jericho and here comes the Texas. In a cool spot Jericho gets the Walls and Shawn hooks the Crossface as JBL comes in at 4. He of course breaks up the Walls and hammers Jericho for awhile which isn't incredibly smart. Shawn is busted open as JBL pounds down Jericho.

Umaga and Shawn fight in the ring until Shawn is thrown out to the steel again. After maybe two minutes HHH comes in to a somewhat mixed reaction that becomes cheering partway through. He hammers on Umaga, sending his head into Bradshaw's. Umaga's head is rammed into one of the metal beams on a pod. HHH goes after Jericho but takes the Clothesline From JBL, again for no apparent reason. For his troubles JBL takes a Codebreaker and is out first.

Before he leaves though JBL grabs a chair and drills everyone with some HARD shots to the head. Here comes Jeff, just in time. Umaga is the only one up as the crack head comes in. Slingshot dropkick to Shawn as Jeff cleans house. DX comes after him but he hits a Whisper in the Wind. Pay no attention to HHH falling backwards before it hits too. Now the Samoan comes back and destroys various people.

Umaga gets a running hip smash to Jericho's head through the BULLETPROOF glass, which should kill him but since it's WWE he's up enough to get a Codebreaker just after Chin Music. A Pedigree is added and after a Swanton is the fourth finisher off a pod, Umaga is FINALLY gone. Shawn hits Jericho with Chin Music and Jeff steals a pin. Pedigree and Twist of Fate take care of Shawn. Those three eliminations happened in less than 45 seconds.

We're down to HHH vs. Hardy now for the Mania spot. Jeff gets a DDT on the steel but can't get a cover as his back is hurt from the landing. Jeff goes the heck off on HHH who can barely stand. Jeff counters a Pedigree with a backdrop but can't get the Swanton. Pedigree hits but gets two as the pop blows the roof off for a few seconds. Twist of Fate on the chair is reversed and a Pedigree onto it ends this, sending HHH to Mania.

Rating: B+. Much better match here with this being a war throughout, especially with four guys combining to take out Umaga. Granted when he or JBL is the worst guy in there rather than Khali or Big Daddy V things can go a bit better. It was also far more violent and while it was pretty clear HHH or Hardy would win, there was a chance Shawn or Jericho could pull it off. That and shaving off five minutes helped too.

Overall Rating: B-. Not a great show but much like TLC was last week, they didn't try to have a great show but rather a flashy one which worked just as well. It went by far faster than the previous year's and was definitely an upgrade. They would have another the next year with the titles on the line and it wouldn't be as good. Anyway this wasn't bad but it would have been better with one less Chamber match and another match added on instead. Still decent though.

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Survivor Series Count-Up – 2008: Not As Bad As It's Made Out To Be

Survivor Series 2008

Date: November 23, 2008

Location: TD Banknorth Garden, Boston, Massachusetts

Attendance: 12,498

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Todd Grisham, Matt Striker, Jim Ross, Tazz

This is one of those shows that just doesn't look that good. We've got three Survivor Series matches, a casket match between Undertaker and Show, and the two title matches. It's the title matches where things get shaky. First of all there's Cena vs. Jericho. In Boston. With Cena returning from injury. Then we get to the infamous part of the show: the Smackdown World Title match.

On I believe the late Saturday night/early Sunday morning, as in like 2am EST, a story broke on WWE.com, saying Jeff Hardy, one of the guys in the title match, had been found in a stairwell. I want to emphasize that THIS IS ALL THAT WAS SAID. The backlash to it was strong, with some critics saying that it was tasteless given Hardy's drug issues. Meltzer said it was the worst promotional tactic of the year. Maybe it was just me, but I had ZERO problem with this.

Hardy's issues had rarely if ever been mentioned on WWE TV, the article said nothing about drugs or alcohol, and it was announced like two days later that it was a physical attack. I never thought it was a drug issue until someone mentioned it to me, and even then I didn't buy it as it was broken by WWE.com at 2 in the morning before a PPV. But hey, since the guy had issues, we can never run any kind of angle with him right? Anyway, let's get to it.

The opening video is the EXACT SAME THING it's been for two years. Literally, they're the same clips before we get to the stuff about the

main events.

JR and Taz talk about the Hardy issue and say that ABC and TMZ picked up the story. I seem to remember that being a lie.

Team HBK vs. Team JBL

Shawn Michaels, Rey Mysterio, Cryme Tyme, Great Khali

John Bradshaw Layfield, The Miz, John Morrison, Kane, MVP

I think you can figure out the feuds yourself here. MVP and Mysterio get things going as all of the commentators are talking at once here. MVP is in the middle of a massive losing streak that would result in a face turn and I believe the US Title. Rey hits a quick rana and a clothesline for two before it's off to JTG for a double dropkick. JTG hits a HARD right hand but MVP gets in a shot to the ribs and hits the Drive-By (running kick to the side of the head) for the elimination. Khali immediately comes in and chops MVP in the head for the elimination to tie things up.

Kane comes in for the staredown of the giants and Khali clotheslines him down with ease. Khali slugs him down and easily breaks up a chokeslam attempt. There's the chop to the head and Rey climbs on Khali's shoulders for the splash and another elimination. Off to Morrison who speeds things up. We hear about how great Morrison is from Striker, but unfortunately that chick Melina screwed up his future. Mysterio hits a quick kick to the head and it's off to Shad.

Now Cryme Tyme vs. Miz/Morrison was a feud ahead of its time: their internet shows got in an argument and a wrestling feud followed. Shad misses a charge into the corner and it's off to Miz. Since Miz isn't quite the worker he is at this point, it's back to Morrison very quickly. Shad runs over both members of the tag team and powerslams Miz down before hitting another overhyped elbow. Miz pops back up and hits the Reality Check (backbreaker/neckbreaker combo) to eliminate Shad.

It's off to Shawn who comes in via a slow, dramatic step. He gets to face the Miz, meaning that entrance was wasted. To the shock of almost everyone, Miz takes over and double teams with Morrison to work over

Shawn's back. JBL, the slimmed down version, comes in to pound away and drop an elbow for two. Back to Miz who pounds away at Shawn's bad eye, busting it open again.

Morrison comes in again to crank on a headlock and send Shawn over the top. Why would you turn your back when you throw Shawn over the top rope? At least Morrison jumps him when Shawn skins the cat. A forearm puts Shawn down and Morrison nips up in a little jab at HBK. Morrison misses the top rope elbow and it's a double tag to bring in Miz vs. Mysterio. Rey hits a springboard rana into the 619 and the top rope splash puts Miz out.

JBL comes in and hits a hard shoulder to take Mysterio down. The crowd is WAY into Rey here. The fans think JBL can't wrestle. The correct chant would be "You can't work a style we like because we think that flying around and using a lot of moves is how a wrestler's talents are determined because we don't know what we're talking about!" Off to Morrison with a European uppercut followed by a backbreaker.

Rey gets in a kick to the face but it's off to JBL to hook an abdominal stretch with the leg being cranked on at the same time. Once Rey escapes, JBL uses something you don't often see: a big boot to the back of the head. Rey blocks a belly to back superplex and hits a moonsault press to put JBL down and bust open his lip. There's the tag to Shawn who hits the forearm and nip up of his own (take that Morrison) to send Bradshaw to the floor.

Shawn dives out to take Bradshaw out and loads up the superkick to send JBL running away. With JBL running away from the kick, Shawn slides back in and beats the count by one second, meaning JBL is gone via a countout. Morrison tries to superkick Shawn but Shawn is like boy these boots are older than you and kicks Morrison's head off for the final pin and 3-0 final score for lack of a better term.

Rating: C. This was fine but the ending was kind of anti-climatic. They were trying to save the Shawn pin over JBL which was a good idea as they would have a solid feud in the next few months which resulted in Shawn being JBL's lackey because Shawn was poor. The guys other than the

captains in this didn't do much of note but that's kind of the idea behind a match like this. Not bad but nothing great either.

HHH doesn't think he needs to give his opinion on the Jeff Hardy situation. Either way, Hardy will be back. Instead it's going to be Kozlov vs. HHH. The Game (Smackdown World Champion here) says tonight is Kozlov's first defeat.

Team Raw vs. Team Smackdown

Beth Phoenix, Mickie James, Kelly Kelly, Candice Michelle, Jillian Hall
Michelle McCool, Victoria, Maria, Maryse, Natalya

Beth is the captain of Team Raw and McCool is captain of Team Smackdown. They're also Women's and Divas Champions respectively. Santino is here with Beth because awkward romances are funny right? Mickie has her signature look down now and is very bouncy. For the sake of simplicity, only Michelle McCool will be referred to as Michelle. Beth and Michelle start things off with Beth controlling via a top wristlock. Michelle uses some decent chain wrestling to set up a dropkick to send Beth backwards a bit.

Maryse tags herself in and gets in a brawl with her own partner Michelle. Team Raw: "LET THEM FIGHT!" After the brawl is broken up, it's Beth vs. Maria with Maria avoiding a charge and hitting a slow motion headscissors. Off to Kelly vs. Maria and hopefully this doesn't last long. Victoria tags herself in and gets caught in a rana by Kelly for the pin. Kelly tries the same thing on Maryse for two so Maryse hits a backbreaker and gets the pin.

It's 4-4 now if you're keeping track and Mickie comes in while swearing a bit. A Thesz Press puts Maryse down and it's off to Michelle again. They try to bridge into a backslide, fail miserably, and try again to a standoff. McCool hits a Russian legsweep for two and Mickie hits a clothesline for the same, but Maria's save hits McCool on the save, allowing Mickie to hit the jumping DDT and pin Michelle. Mickie gets in an argument with Beth and gets rolled up by Maryse to tie it right back up.

Off to Candice vs. Natalya and they trade some rollups for two. Natalya busts out a Sharpshooter (it is the Survivor Series after all) but Jillian makes the save. Candice hits a spear for a quick pin on Natalya and it's 3-2. For those of you keeping track, it's Jillian, Beth and Candice vs. Maria and Maryse.

It's Jillian vs. Maria with Jillian getting two off a Samoan Drop. Maria grabs a quick victory roll to eliminate Jillian and ten seconds later, Candice hits a northern lights suplex to put Maria out. Maryse hooks an inverted figure four on Candice and we're down to one on one. Maryse gets in a few shots and a rollup but the Glam Slam gets the final pin very quickly.

Rating: D. As decent as last year's was, this felt like your traditional Divas match. You had some decent workers but most of the girls are models who are there because of how they look in swimsuits. I've seen worse matches and the right choice was the survivor, but this just didn't work for the most part.

Matt Hardy says that Jeff was hit in the back of the head with a blunt object. There. Controversy over. I'm sorry you had to suffer for less than a day you whiny people.

We recap Undertaker vs. Big Show. Show isn't scared of Undertaker so he'll win the casket match tonight.

Undertaker vs. Big Show

Casket match if that wasn't clear or if you're an idiot that needs everything spelled out for you. The casket gets the full druid entrance. I wonder if those guys hang out at catering after this. Show took all of 2007 off and lost a ton of weight so he's still kind of slim here. Well slim for him that is. They have a nice casket this year too. I don't think the bell rang but Show starts throwing punches anyway. One misses and Taker tries to dump him into the casket to no avail.

They head to the floor and Undertaker's headbutt has no effect. Show pounds away at the ribs and rams Taker face first into the announce table to daze Undertaker. The announce table gets loaded up but Show headbutts

him instead of putting Taker on the table. Taker grabs one of those big monitors WWE uses (you would think they would have upgraded by this point wouldn't you? They still use those things in 2012 I believe) and bashes Show's head in a few times with it. Taker drops a BIG leg to put Show through the table in the big spot of the match.

Very slowly we start heading back to the casket but take a detour back into the ring instead. Old School is countered and things slow down again. There's a side slam from Show as the crowd is a lot less interested than they were when Undertaker was on offense. The casket is opened and Taker is put inside, but Show has to close the casket himself. Since Show won't close the lid, Taker comes back with a bunch of punches and the jumping clothesline. Show hits a big elbow in the corner to slow down Taker (and the crowd) again. For some reason Show loads up a Vader Bomb when Taker is half up and gets chokeslammed down.

The casket is opened again and a big boot to the side of Show's head knocks him inside, but Show blocks the lid from being shut again. Back in and Show hits the chokeslam...then destroys the casket. Show starts walking away and there's a wall of fire to stop him from leaving. Taker goes after him and gets punched down again, but here are more druids with another casket.

Show punches Taker a bit more and stands the casket up so he can ram Taker into it and knock both of them down. The casket is stood up again but it's open this time. Taker punches Show to the edge of the stage before whipping Show into the casket, causing it to fall and shut to give Taker the win.

Rating: D. This is a horrible casket match by some people but it's really not that bad. It's certainly a bad match but the ending was kind of creative and what are you expecting from Taker vs. Big Show? They're going to hit each other a lot and it's going to be slow, so why do people act surprised when any match with either of these two or Kane is the same formula? Not a good match but it's definitely not terrible.

Carlito and Primo hit on the Bellas but can't tell them apart. In something I never thought I'd have to say again, the Gobbledygooker pops

up and the Colons think it's Charlie Haas, but of course he pops up in the room and the Gooker is played by the Boogeyman. This would be another pointless segment.

Randy Orton doesn't want to be team captain but his team will win anyway. He implies Cody is the weak link of the team. Cody says that if Randy is eliminated first, it's addition by subtraction. The team has to hold them apart.

Team Orton vs. Team Batista

Randy Orton, Mark Henry, William Regal, Cody Rhodes, Shelton Benjamin

Batista, Kofi Kingston, CM Punk, R-Truth, Matt Hardy

Shelton is US Champion, Matt is ECW Champion and Punk/Kofi are Raw tag champions. Yeah that didn't last long. Punk immediately charges at Regal and hits the GTS for the elimination in about ten seconds. Shelton gets a very fast two on Punk before pounding away on his back. Off to Kofi who grabs a front facelock. Kofi is even more over here than usual as he went to college in Boston. Kofi tries a monkey flip but Shelton lands on his feet and brings in Henry to pound away all slow like.

Henry apparently gets tired after a few seconds so here's Cody. Matt comes in, does nothing of note, and tags in Truth who pounds away. Striker talks about what a killing Truth is making as we can hear a lot of spots being called here tonight. I don't know if the ring is mic'd loudly or what but you can hear all kinds of stuff here. Batista comes in and everybody runs until it's only Cody left to face him. Ok make that Shelton actually. Batista takes him down with ease and gets two via a powerslam. Off to Matt vs. Randy as things speed up. A bulldog gets two for Matt but a moonsault misses.

It's off to Henry who lost the ECW Title to Hardy a few months ago. Cody comes in and chokes a bit but there's the double tag to Truth vs. Shelton. A victory roll gets two for Truth and he does his backflip into the splits spot. The spinning forearm misses completely and Paydirt (the same move Truth now calls Little Jimmy) gets the pin for Shelton. Kofi immediately comes in with a springboard cross body for two and a dropkick

to put Shelton down.

The Boom Drop gets another two for Kofi but Henry blasts Kofi in the back of the head. Henry comes in legally now for more quick pounding and it's finally off to Orton. Orton does his really slow stomp but the knee drop misses. Randy drapes him over the top rope and hits the Elevated DDT for the elimination. Punk is immediately waiting on Orton as Randy is the guy that cost Punk the world title at Unforgiven. Orton gets beaten up for a few moments but gets in a rake to the eyes and tags out to Cody.

Rhodes works on the arm for a bit but gets caught by the knee and bulldog combo for two. Punk goes up but Manu (the other member of Legacy who kind of sucked) distracts him long enough for Cody to shove him off the top. A DDT eliminated Punk quickly and we're down to...4-2 I think? It's Batista/Matt vs. Orton/Cody/Henry/Benjamin. Matt comes in and hits a quick Side Effect for two on Rhodes but it's quickly back to Henry. Matt hits an elbow to the back of Henry's head and manages to pull off the Side Effect for two. That's about it for Hardy as the World's Strongest Slam takes him out, leaving Batista all alone.

Big Dave immediately spears down Henry to make it 3-1 as Shelton comes in. Benjamin gets caught in a spinebuster almost immediately and the Batista Bomb gets is down to 2-1. Cody comes in and peppers Batista with some right hands before charging into a boot. Batista powerslams Rhodes down and says Orton is next. Batista hits the Bomb on Rhodes but Randy made a blind tag while Cody was in the air. The RKO gets the elimination and win for Rhodes and Orton.

Rating: B. This was a kind of throwback to the old school Survivor Series matches where the numbers finally caught up with the big face and he got beat. Orton vs. Batista was one of the big matches that WWE never really got to do on the scale I think they were hoping for. They would have a long match next month at Armageddon but that's hardly the second main event at Wrestlemania which they were capable of having. Still though, good stuff here and the best match of the night by far.

Kozlov says he'll win.

Hardy is officially out of the title match tonight.

The recap video is pretty pointless now because the video is mostly about Jeff. Kozlov is here because HHH wanted to have some big epic match with him that no one but him was interested in. Jeff is here because he keeps getting so close to winning the title so EVIL Vickie wouldn't let him in the match. Jeff invaded the contract signing and beat up a lot of people until he was put in the match.

Then HHH decided he didn't want to put Hardy over for the title so we needed a transitional champion, which is why the stairwell thing happened. HHH is kind of a jerk like that.

Smackdown World Title: Vladimir Kozlov vs. HHH

After the big match intros we're ready to go. The fans chant USA of course and for once it's actually appropriate. Kozlov, the amateur wrestler/combat sports expert, takes it to the mat with amateur stuff. Now remember that, because it'll become important later. HHH gets on the mat with him and hooks a headlock. The fans now chant boring as we hit a standoff. Now they want Hardy. Well to be fair they only paid for him, so why should HHH not wanting to drop the title matter?

They trade arm holds on the mat and then trade even more arm holds on the same mat. Back up and HHH hits the high knee and a facebuster followed by the DDT for no cover. The fans chant for TNA before HHH hits the spinebuster. Kozlov counters the Pedigree and hits the headbutt to the chest to take HHH down. Vlad sends HHH into the corner and out to the floor where very little happens.

Back in and a fallaway slam gets two for the challenger and he fires some shoulders to the ribs. A powerslam gets another two and it's off to a body grip to slow things down even more. Kozlov hits a pair of backbreakers for two and it's back to that grip. HHH comes back with some right hands but gets powerslammed down for another two. A comeback by HHH is countered into a belly to belly as Taz says Kozlov is going to win, further dooming him to lose. HHH hits a Pedigree out of nowhere and here's Vickie.

She says he's here and makes it a triple threat, with the third man being the returning Edge. Edge does the psycho eyes on the way to the ring and

I think a cameraman fell off the ramp as he was filming. Edge spears down HHH and here's Jeff Hardy to destroy the Canadian. His chair shot hits HHH though, allowing Edge to steal the pin and the title.

Rating: D. There's a lot to say here. First and foremost, as usual I disagree with his highness Dave Meltzer, who said this was the worst match of the year. It's arguably not even the worst match of the show, but think about this for a minute: are you telling me there isn't some terrible Divas match somewhere in the year worse than this? Or that Honky Tonk Man vs. Santino at Cyber Sunday was indeed better? He gave worst match of the year to Hardy vs. Sting in 2011, so apparently length doesn't mean anything.

This match was indeed bad, but let's think about this for a minute. Kozlov is supposed to be a combat sports expert and an amateur wrestler. So what did he do? HE WRESTLED LIKE HIS CHARACTER IS SUPPOSED TO! Now was it boring? Absolutely. Was it a REALLY stupid move to put him in a world title match? Absolutely. Were the fans interested? Not at all. If you want proof, back at Cyber Sunday the options for the title match were HHH vs. either guy, or a triple threat. The results were as follows:

Hardy – 57%

Triple Threat – 38%

Kozlov – 5%

Based on that alone, it's clear that almost no one wanted to see HHH vs. Kozlov. The interest just wasn't there, so they booked a triple threat instead which there was interest in. Then they screw the fans out of their money by taking Jeff out of the match because of whatever their reasoning was. Then they flip the fans off AGAIN by having Hardy run in at the end. Hardy would pin Edge in another triple threat the next month to win the title in a shocker. Why this match didn't happen here is beyond me, but again it's screwing the fans out of what was advertised until the night before the show.

At the end of the day though, no one bought Kozlov as a real threat to the title. The guy just wasn't going to be WWE Champion with the response

he got, which is why Hardy was the interesting factor in this match. Without him, you have twelve minutes of your time being wasted until the ending, which SHOULD HAVE BEEN HARDY. Anyway, nothing to see here but it's not the worst match of the year.

We recap Jericho vs. Cena. Jericho snuck into the Scramble match last month and stole the world title while Cena was on the shelf. Tonight, Cena returns from a neck injury to challenge for the title. In his hometown. Against a guy that has literally only beaten him once. And we're supposed to expect Jericho to have a chance because we're supposed to ignore all that stuff.

Raw World Title: Chris Jericho vs. John Cena

Cena almost immediately tries the FU but Jericho bails to the apron. Jericho comes back with a headlock which works on the neck followed by a shoulder block to take Cena to the floor. John holds his neck a lot and looks shaken. Back in and Cena pounds away in the corner as they're hitting hard but the pace of the match is pretty slow if that makes sense. Jericho takes over and things continue to go slowly.

Cena comes back with the Throwback and goes up for the Fameasser but comes down because that's the move that hurt his neck in the first place. Jericho takes over again and things go slowly. He kicks Cena in the side of the head which is good for a nine count from the referee. Back in and Cena slugs away but gets sent right back to the floor. Jericho throws him into the steps and heads back in for a neck crank.

After the hold is broken, it's time for more choking followed by a full nelson. The hold lasts almost a minute and a half but Cena blocks the bulldog. A shoulder puts Jericho down but the second shoulder hits. Jericho misses the Lionsault but the Shuffle is countered into the LIONTAMER! Cena escapes the hold so Jericho puts on the regular Boston Crab instead. Cena (as in the hold lasted a minute plus) grabs the rope to escape. Back up and Cena hits an FU out of nowhere but can't follow up.

Both guys head up to the top with Cena slamming him to the mat, followed up by the top rope Fameasser. Cena is all fired up now but Jericho breaks

up the FU and hits a Codebreaker for a delayed two. Jericho takes over and hits a clothesline followed by an EVIL smirk. He smirks a bit too much though and Cena grabs the STFU. Cena has to try to pull the hold back to the middle of the ring and Jericho kicks him away. The champ tries a small package but Cena pulls him up into the FU for the pin and the title.

Rating: C+. The match itself was fine, but there was less drama in this than in a Donald Duck cartoon. At the end of the day, Cena does not lose to Jericho and he does not tap out no matter what. The wrestling was fine and it told a story and all that jazz, but I'd rather have a main event where I wasn't sure what was going to happen than a match being designed for Cena to have everything come together and win and then everything coming together for Cena to win.

Cena celebrates to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. I don't know if it's because I've been doing so many of these lately, but this wasn't the most interesting show in the world. It was dull at times and almost felt like a chore to sit through. The first hour or so is WAY worse than the rest of the show, but even the last two thirds aren't all that great. This didn't work that well and it's not something I want to see again.

Ratings Comparison

Team HBK vs. Team JBL

Original: B+

Redo: C

Team Raw vs. Team Smackdown

Original: D-

Redo: D

Undertaker vs. Big Show

Original: D+

Redo: D

Team Orton vs. Team Batista

Original: C-

Redo: B

Edge vs. HHH vs. Vladimir Kozlov

Original: D+

Redo: D

John Cena vs. Chris Jericho

Original: B

Redo: C+

Overall Rating

Original: C-

Redo: D+

I've flipped on the two male Survivor Series matches but other than that it's about the same.

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

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/11/17/history-of-survivor-series-count-up-2008-let-jericho-beat-cena-once-just-one-time/>

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On This Day: November 3, 2008 – Monday Night Raw: Raw Turns 800(ish)

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 3, 2008

Location: St. Pete Times Forum, Tampa, Florida

Attendance: 12,000

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

This is the REAL 800th episode, at least according to WWE and is a three hour show. It means I'm probably wrong about some of the previous centennial episodes but does it really matter? Anyway we have a big long card and a bunch of highlights from the first 799 episodes which I'm sure we haven't seen a million times before. Oh and Batista defending against Jericho in a cage. Let's get to it.

DX fights Miz/Morrison tonight.

Here's Orton to open the show. He says to either fire Adamle as GM or he's walking. Shane and Stephanie won't fix things so he's going to put a stop to it. If you think he's bluffing, try him. Orton gets a chair and sits between the announce tables.

Hardys vs. The Brian Kendrick/MVP

Matt is ECW Champion and Jeff is about a month and a half from winning the WWE Title. We get a clip from Episode #764: Jeff diving off the tower onto Orton from earlier in the year. Jeff

vs. MVP gets us going with not much at all. Off to Matt so the Hardys can screw up some basic stuff. Back to Jeff for Poetry in Motion as the fans aren't that interested so far.

Off to Kendrick who jumps onto Jeff's back and kicks away at it. Sliced Bread is countered and Jeff hits the sitout gordbuster and brings in Matt. Matt cleans house, knocking Kendrick to the floor and hitting the Side Effect on MVP for two. MVP gets a shot in and it's off to Kendrick. The referee didn't see it so while he's being put out, the Twist and Swanton get the pin MVP.

Rating: D+. Pretty dull match here as I think the Hardys were there to give us some kind of a nostalgia feeling, but it doesn't quite mean much when the team hasn't meant anything in years at this point. Also the lack of doubt as to who wins here kind of hurt things too. Kendrick's push started and stopped in about the course of a month.

We get a clip of the first episode where Heenan couldn't get inside among other things.

The Kid beats Razor Ramon on Episode #17. That really was a huge deal.

Battle Royal

William Regal, Manu, JTG, Shad Gaspar, Cody Rhodes, Jamie Noble, Snitsky, Ted DiBiase Jr.

Orton is still at ringside. The winner gets an IC Title match next week. Santino is on commentary as he's champion. He declares himself champion of the world as this match is going nowhere. Snitsky the Bald is sent out by all three members of Priceless, but DiBiase throws out Manu and Rhodes in a nice move. Regal and Noble go to the floor but not over the top. Oh ok Noble is out. We have Cryme Tyme, Regal and DiBiase left. DiBiase fights the tag team and throws out JTG. Shad misses a boot so Ted can toss him, but Regal sneaks in to throw out

Teddy for the win and the title shot, which I think he would win.

Rating: D-. Really boring match here with an ending that you've seen a million times before. Well you've probably not seen a million battle royals but you get the idea. Still though, boring match and it was about as cheap of a way as you could get to give Regal the title shot. Nothing else to say here.

Shane and Stephanie arrive. Stephanie says Shane can handle this, referring to Orton I think.

Episode #409: Vince buys WCW but Shane steals it from under him. Still a huge moment, still amazing how much they screwed that up.

Orton is in the ring again and talks about how Adamle slapped him in the face. Therefore, either Adamle goes, or Orton goes. Cue the dancing McMahon who says he doesn't appreciate this. Orton says that Vince would get this done immediately. Shane says he's not his father but they have the same last name. Cue Adamle who says everyone in charge of Raw has always had an agenda. He wanted to be the first unbiased GM, but unfortunately that hasn't been happening. Therefore, he's quitting, and also drawing the biggest pop of the night.

Orton however wants an apology still. Shane says Orton should apologize to Adamle. Orton has had an excuse of a bad shoulder lately, but Shane thought Orton looked fine at Cyber Sunday. Shane thought something was up so he went to Orton's doctors, who said that Orton has been cleared to compete for months. Orton doesn't want to come back until Survivor Series, but Shane thinks it should be tonight. Randy says he doesn't have his gear, but Shane says he'll take care of that. It's Orton vs. Punk tonight.

Senator Barack Obama asks if you know what he's cooking. Senator John McCain wants to know if you know what he's

cooking.

Vladimir Kozlov vs. Charlie Haas

This is during Charlie's imitation period so he's Bret the Hitman Haas here. He even cuts a quick promo but the voice doesn't work at all. The fans didn't screw Vladimir at Cyber Sunday. Vlad screwed Vlad. Boot to the chest, suplex, headbutt, pin in 25 seconds.

After a clip of Batista winning the title at Cyber Sunday, Big Dave says he'll keep the title tonight.

Episode #257: DX invades WCW. HUGE moment here.

D-Generation X vs. John Morrison/The Miz

HHH is WWE Champion. DX does their intro and we get a clip from ECW where Miz/Morrison made fun of them for being old and then beat up some DX impersonators. Shawn points out that the impersonator has a huge nose. Maybe Shawn just got used to it over the years but THAT THING IS HUGE! They also mocked his chaps. You can punch his wife, you can spit in his face, BUT NO ONE MOCKS THE CHAPS!

HHH points out them making fun of Shawn for losing his hair. Shawn doesn't remember this. HHH: "Well I'm pretty sure..." Shawn: "No they didn't." HHH: "Shawn I'm sure..." Shawn: "Drop it!" HHH: "Well ok..." Shawn: "WE WILL NEVER SPEAK OF THIS AGAIN!" HHH makes fun of Miz/Morrison's high school pictures. Miz looks like a horse and Morrison enjoys rest stop sex. Shawn says he's ready, the fans say they're ready, we get a clip of Big Dick Johnson giving Miz a lap dance for some reason which traumatizes Shawn, and now we get to the DX intro, complete with more gay jokes from the Game. Funny stuff.

Oh yeah we have a match to get to. This is joined in progress with Morrison getting two on HHH. HHH takes his head off with

a clothesline and it's a double tag. Shawn knocks Miz down and hits the elbow to set up the Kick. Morrison breaks that up and Miz takes over via a clothesline. Miz whips Shawn into the corner where Shawn flips, followed by Miz's corner clothesline.

Morrison comes in and pokes Shawn in the eye so Shawn kicks him in the head. Off to HHH who cleans house with the knees to the face. Facebuster looks to set up the Pedigree on Morrison but Miz breaks it up, only to walk into the spinebuster. Morrison imitates Shawn with a forearm, nipup and then tuning up the band, with the kick connecting on HHH. Miz and Morrison do crotch chops and Miz loads up a Pedigree, which is easily countered. Shawn kicks Miz's head off and the Pedigree ends this.

Rating: C+. Not a bad match at all as Miz/Morrison got to show off a bit here. There was never any doubt as to who would win as the non-degenerates didn't mean much yet. Seeing them imitate DX's stuff was good though and that's what popped the fans for the most part. Fun little match.

JBL is with Shane and says he should be the new GM. Shane says he'll think about it and has an idea about putting JBL in a match tonight. JBL thinks he means making the cage match a triple threat for the title, but Shane says it's against the Undertaker.

Episode #243: Mike Tyson is here. Another HUGE moment.

Face Diva Team vs. Heel Diva Team

It's a sixteen Diva tag. Do you really think I'm listing off all of them in what's going to be a two minute match at longest? There are only seven good Divas so here's Mae Young to be #8. Beth pounds on Kelly to start but Kelly uses her screaming headscissors, which is her only offense three and a half years later. Here's Mae and Beth sells WAY too much for her. She knocks down everyone but falls down. A brawl breaks

out and Beth rolls up Mae for the pin. As usual, three girls were in the match. If I remember right Mae was legit hurt in this.

Smackdown ReBound of the casket match with Taker vs....Chavo Guerrero? Big Show interfered but Taker won anyway.

Episode #456: Rock challenges Hogan.

CM Punk vs. Randy Orton

Punk and Kofi are tag champions here in a reign I don't think anyone remembers. This is as a result of Orton punting Punk at Unforgiven and costing him the world title, which somehow wouldn't have a proper blowoff match until 2011. Punk takes him into the corner to start but Orton pounds him right back down. Here's the Orton Stomp and a knee drop for two. Off to a chinlock which is broken up quickly. Punk avoids a charge in the corner and hits the springboard clothesline. Orton comes back with a clothesline in the corner and loads up the RKO...and here's DiBiase for the DQ. Too short to rate.

DiBiase pounds on Punk and Orton punts DiBiase all the way into The Marine 2. Ted gets stretchered out.

Rhodes and Manu yell at Randy about it and Randy says if you have a problem do something about it right now. No one moves.

Episode #772: Floyd Mayweather is thrown over the top. This wasn't exactly what I'd call a huge moment.

Stephanie is looking very good in her office when Adamle comes in. He says he's leaving because she micromanages. Stephanie says being in charge is her birthright. He leaves and Shane comes in. He has a major announcement about Survivor Series but he won't tell her.

Episode #475: Undertaker vs. Jeff Hardy in a ladder match for the title.

Here's JR to call the next match and probably the rest of the show. Unfortunately it's him and Tazz instead of him and Jerry like it should be.

Undertaker vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

Taker grabs a headlock to start and hits a quick Old School. JBL shoulders him down and punches Taker in the corner. That doesn't last long as the punching comes from Undertaker now, followed by a big boot and legdrop. The chokeslam hits and Taker does the throat slit. JBL escapes the tombstone and they collide with JBL falling to the floor. John looks to get back in but Taker sits up, so JBL bails for a countout for another short match.

JBL tries to walk out but Shawn throws him back in for a tombstone.

Jericho comes in to see Shane and the announcement is that the winner of Batista vs. Jericho gets to defend against the returning Cena at Survivor Series in Boston.

Episode #304: Ausitn and the beer truck.

Here's Kung Fu Naki for a demonstration in the ring. Ok so I have his song on my iPod. Sue me. Horny comes in to dance with him. Boogeyman comes in to terrorize them and dances a bit too. Goldust, Jesse, Festus, Hacksaw, Slaughter, Lillian, Dusty, Cole and King all get in and dance too. Why is this happening? Oh ok, it's so Ron Simmons can get a line in.

Episode #775: Flair retires. I can't watch that anymore.

Episode #630: Edge and Lita's wedding.

Kofi Kingston/Rey Mysterio vs. Mark Henry/Kane

Kofi is a tag champion with Punk but for some reason he's in this match instead. Rey vs. Kane to start and I think you can figure out what's going on here: Mysterio moves around a lot

and gets in a few shots but Kane runs him over. Off to Henry who runs him over even more. A splash misses and here's the tag to Kofi. His kicks don't do anything as Henry just throws him around. Kofi manages to get in a shot to send Henry to the corner and he knocks Kane off the apron. Henry gets tired of being on defense and catches a top rope cross body in the World's Strongest Slam for the pin. Basically a squash.

Kane throws Mysterio out...and here's Khali. He chops down both other monsters and Rey's music plays for some reason.

Video on Raw being a longer running show than ANYTHING, except for World Championship Wrestling on Saturday Night which ran over 20 years without missing a week but we don't count that because it makes us sound bad.

Video on Cena, who is coming back at Survivor Series. It's kind of a career retrospective.

Shane and Stephanie say nothing of note.

Episode #761: Tribute to the Troops 2008.

Raw World Title: Batista vs. Chris Jericho

Batista won the title at Cyber Sunday, 8 days earlier. Pin, submission or escape as usual. Jericho charges straight at him which goes about as well as anyone else charging straight at Batista goes. He tries to run over the top but Batista catches him and hits a suplex followed by a clothesline for two. Jericho gets rammed into the cage and screams in pain. Or is it laughter? He's always been a complicated guy. Batista rams him into the steel again and we take a break.

Back with Jericho hooking the Walls of Jericho on the apparent injured knee of Batista. There's some tape on there but you would have to know to look for it. Batista kicks him off but he kicks him to the door so Batista has to make a diving save. They fight near the open door and in a smart move, Jericho

throws Batista's leg out the door so he can slam the door on it. Nice move.

We're told that the knee injury took place at Cyber Sunday. That makes sense. Back in the middle of the ring Batista hits a spinning Bossman Slam for two. Jericho goes right back for the knee and loads up the Codebreaker, but Batista rams him into the cage instead. A spear misses though and Batista is right back down after hitting cage. Jericho goes up to escape but climbs down in front of the door which Batista throws open and pulls him back in. That was creative.

Spinebuster puts Jericho down but the Batista Bomb is countered as Jericho grabs the cage and tries to climb out again. Batista manages to throw him off but gets crotched to put both guys down. They go up again and Jericho almost gets caught in a top rope Batista Bomb. He manages to pull something off the cage and rams it into Batista's head which allows him to get over the top. Batista grabs the top of Chris' head but can't stop him and Jericho wins the title.

Rating: B. I liked this a lot more than the Edge vs. Cena cage match that I did recently. The best part here was that they actually came up with some creative spots and we got a surprise ending. Why they gave Batista an 8 day reign is a little unclear but I'd assume it was so they could give us a surprise here, which is fine. Good main event.

Overall Rating: C+. I liked this show but it wasn't great. The problem was that they didn't seem sure if they wanted to do a regular show with nostalgia thrown in or vice versa which makes the show feel uneven. It's entertaining enough though and that's the important idea. Coupling that with a good main event and the show is definitely more good than bad, but it's not a great show or anything.

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WWE To Earn Approximately \$20 Million From Sponsorships

According to Meltzer. That would be almost TRIPLE what they were making in 2008, and that's why you're going to see WWE PG for a long, long time. This is another one of those facts that shouldn't surprise anyone who understands basic business.

Bound For Glory Count-Up – 2008: Sting Wants RESPECT

Bound For Glory 2008

Date: October 12, 2008

Location: Sears Center, Hoffman Estates, Illinois

Attendance: 5,000

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Don West

It's another installment in the biggest series there is for TNA, this time from two years ago. The main event is Sting vs.

Joe for the title. We're 9 days away from the debut of the Main Event Mafia so things are kind of in flux at this point. Other than that there is some decent stuff here, including Jarrett vs. Angle. I guess some things never change. This is an ok looking card on paper. Let's get to it.

The opening video is about Chicago and the gangster theme they have tonight. The basic idea of the Mafia is there but they haven't officially been made yet.

Steel Asylum

The winner gets a title shot later. There are ten men in this: Jay Lethal, Sonjay Dutt, Chris Sabin, Alex Shelley, Curry Man, Shark Boy, Super Eric, Petey Williams, Johnny Devine and Jimmy Rave. This is during the Prince Justice Brotherhood mini-era so I wouldn't expect anything of quality. You have to climb to the top to escape. The winner gets an X Title shot later on at some undesignated date.

Naturally with 10 guys in there it's almost impossible to keep track of what is going on. This turns into a mini-handicap match between the Guns and the Prince Justice Brotherhood and given that Eric is the best of the three characters, this is more or less one sided. Now we get a ton of running clotheslines, as in like 15, on various people.

The Guns get a triple suplex on the Brotherhood which at least makes sense from a friendship perspective. This is also during the Lethal/Dutt feud which means we get some shots of Val at her absolute hottest which is saying a lot. This is the living definition of a spot fest as there is no story or anything which is because there are WAY TOO MANY PEOPLE.

This match would work with like 5 people in it. That would work very well but it's TNA so let's just double everything because that's not going to hurt a thing right? There's a referee on top also which works to an extent but at the same time it makes me think "really?" Everyone busts out finishers

as we crank it up a bit.

The Guns take over almost completely and I think they're heels at this point. Sliced Bread is countered into the Destroyer from Williams. Double Stunner from Shark Boy (Stone Cold that is) on Sabin and Williams as we bust out more finishers including a botched Divine Intervention (over the shoulder Piledriver) on Rave. Curry Man shows off some surprising strength with a gorilla press on Dutt where he throws him into the corner.

He goes up but Lethal and Dutt make the save. In a cool looking spot, Lethal and Dutt hang upside down just by their ankles and slug it out. Translation: Lethal beats the heck out of him but you get the concept. Lethal climbs out on his own to end it as apparently everyone else is taking a nap.

Rating: C+. These matches are hard to grade because there's really no form of flow or stories to them. The best you can do is grade the spots and the ending and in this match both of those were pretty good so this is an ok grade. It's not a great match or anything really close to it due to the WAY too high amount of people in it, but what can you do about that I guess? Decent match and decent opener though.

We run down the card. Can someone explain this to me? Why do we need to waste time on this?

We go to Cornette's office where he's WAY too happy about it being Bound For Glory. Foley, who is brand new here comes in and Cornette tries to get him to come to Impact when they're live in Vegas. The Beautiful People come in to complain about M&Ms. This is funny stuff with Foley vs. them.

Recap of Beautiful People vs. the three random people they're fighting.

ODB/Rhaka Khan/Rhyno vs. Beautiful People/Cute Kip

Traci Brooks is referee here and comes out to a cover of Rag Doll by Aerosmith. Just Skye and Love at this point. This is a Bimbo Brawl apparently. You know because 6 person tag is just too hard to say I guess. Kip gets in the face of a Detroit Tiger who is in Chicago just because I guess. ODB and Velvet start us off.

West tries to convince us that Rhyno and Kip are very similar physically. And people wonder why he was replaced. Genders can intertwine here apparently. Basically the Beautiful People keep trying to get various shots in, none of which work. Everyone keeps hiding from Khan other than Kip. Both of them go for chokeslams. She grabs his balls as this is going absolutely nowhere.

Khan is really bad in the ring to put it mildly. Why does ODB think she's hot? Makeup box to ODB's head sends her to the floor. ODB spanks herself to get fired up for...a tag. Thankfully the guys come in as the girls just aren't that good at this point. Fameasser is blocked as Rhyno just stands up and Gores Kip to end it.

Rating: F+. And that's only for Velvet. This was just boring as all goodness with six minutes of the girls doing nothing, leaving Rhyno as the best person in there. Let that sink in for a bit. Just a bad match that never did anything at all of note. At least it was short I guess.

Consequences Creed says Bashir needs to leave if he hates America so much.

X-Division Title: Consequence Creed vs. Sheik Abdul Bashir

We spend like a minute introducing some army sergeant after Bashir is introduced. I get that these people are cool, but why does TNA insist on giving them lots of camera time so often? It's cool that he's here, but did he need a full entrance to be the ring announcers for Creed? Creed is billed as the great American challengers I guess. He looks like

Apollo Creed from Rocky if that means anything.

Tenay gets way too excited for America here, especially when Bashir is from Minnesota. Brawling on the floor now which gets Sheik two in the ring. The fans do the standard xenophobic chant. Basic match here for the most part. I don't know if it's the online video I'm watching or what, but the ring looks huge. Sleeper goes on and Creed is in trouble. Since this is after 1987 though and not a Ziggler match, the hold doesn't work.

Creed makes his comeback and hits a few moves for two. He hits a jaw breaker and nips up before heading to the top. It takes too long though and the crotch is bruised. A top rope rana gets two and then Bashir gets a rollup and grabs the rope for the pin. Are you kidding me???

Rating: D. Nothing that special here but the ending just completely ends any chance this had of being a good match. You build this dude up as awesome and have the whole army thing going on, and then he loses at the biggest show of the year? Eric Young would win the title two months later. For the life of me I do not get the booking idea here. Do we really need to have the evil foreigner keep the belt here? I mean dude...REALLY?

Foley is with JB, telling his some story about the Cell match. And here are Saed and Kong to see Cornette. Apparently Foley is in charge. The Rock is referenced somehow and this is kind of pointless. Foley suggests a visit from Yerple The Clown, who he calls. I love Foley.

We recap the Knockouts Title match, of which there isn't much of a story at all. There are two challengers for Taylor Wilde and that's it.

Knockouts Title: Taylor Wilde vs. Awesome Kong vs. Roxxi

Roxxi is in these ugly red plad pants. She would get much

better looking with a bit more hair and as a blonde. She and Taylor take out Kong and then go at it themselves. A rollup on Kong gets two for Taylor but Roxxi saves. She then gets her head knocked off by Kong. This isn't much here but they're moving out there. These Press off the top gets two for Roxxi.

Kong gets a cross body on Roxxi and gets crushed. Implant Buster gets two as Taylor makes the save. Both small girls are down and Kong goes up top. Taylor kicks her off and after a brief scuffle a German suplex gets the pin to retain for Taylor.

Rating: D. Total Impact match here with like five minutes of stuff here and nothing of note. Taylor should have probably defended one on one with Kong here but that's neither here nor there I guess. The Beautiful People would rise up as the new contenders soon enough but this wasn't much at all. Weak match.

AJ comes in to talk to Foley and welcomes him. The Dudleys come in and run down AJ for no apparent reason other than they're jerks. There are a bunch of masks on the wall for some reason. Bubba is in Foley's flannel shirt so he gets jokes from Foley. And of course we get ECW and WWE references. Foley gets on them for constantly talking about winning 20 tag titles. Cornette gets back and says nothing of note.

Tag Titles: Matt Morgan/Abyss vs. Beer Money vs. Team 3D vs. LAX

This is Monster's Ball and Beer Money have the belts. Steve McMichael of all people is the guest referee. He looks OLD too. The intros here are freaking ridiculous. Basically this is a four way street fight/hardcore match but I'm not sure if the pins have to be in the ring or not. WAY too many people in the ring here.

You know at this point, is Mongo the most successful singles wrestler in there? Ah that's right Abyss is a former world

champion. Not that we're ever told that anymore or anything though. Bunch of high spots including a tope con hilo from Homicide. We break out the weapons and its really nothing special at all. Homicide has a fork for no apparent reason and stabs D-Von's head with it.

Abyss is on his anti-weapons thing here. Cheese grater comes out as I feel like I'm on Emeril or something. That doesn't sound bad actually as I'm a bit hungry. Bubba suplexes Hernandez from the middle rope and the fans want tables. Blockbuster by Roode which makes me smile a bit. Total weapons thing starts up here as Mongo steals the tacks from Storm.

Mongo is FAT. We get a football sequence complete with helmet and football and Beer Money goes down of course. Morgan does a big dive to the floor to take out a bunch of people. This is such a huge mess. Johnny Devine comes out and pops Abyss with a kendo stick a few times. Table and lighter fluid are brought in on the stage. Abyss goes through it off a double chokeslam from the Dudleys.

Homicide in control now. I've never seen this ring genius or whatever that he's supposed to be. Sweet goodness Mongo counts slow. Sit out powerbomb by Hernandez gets two. Elevated Gringo Cutter gets two due to Jackie getting the save. Apparently the Dudleys and Morgan have like died or something. Ah there's Morgan. Border Toss to Morgan as Bubba brings in a table.

Supermex makes the save for Homicide though as this is probably getting close to the end. Mongo helps lay out the tacks on the table and Hernandez hits a 3D on the table on the tacks but Beer Money runs in to steal the pin.

Rating: B-. It certainly was violent, but it was just a big long weapons match. This is the longest match of the night, getting over twenty minutes. Mongo hurt this a lot as he counted so slowly that it appeared that he was shortchanging everyone with the cadence of his counts. This was pretty good

but at the same time it was nothing we hadn't seen before. Also having 8 guys out there was just too much. Still fun though.

Recap of Booker vs. Christian vs. AJ. This is about respect apparently and is more or less the groundwork for the rise of the Mafia.

Booker T vs. Christian Cage vs. AJ Styles

This is a three way WAR apparently. Booker and AJ start while Christian just kind of lets them. That's rather smart. AJ takes care of this by setting for the forearm but in a perfect movement, backflips into a moonsault instead. If he hadn't floated over Christian and more or less crashed it would have been even better. Booker vs. Christian now after a briefcase shot from Booker. On Impact he would reveal the Legends Title inside the case.

Booker misses a clothesline and kind of falls down, allowing Christian to hit/walk into a double clothesline. AJ pops up again and hits the springboard forearm to Booker. He gets to show off here with an insane move as he leapfrogs Booker and while in the air backflips over Christian so Christian and Booker collide. All Styles here as he's just completely awesome at this point.

Axe kick misses and AJ gets a cross armbreaker of all things. I've never seen him use that before. Book End gets two. And now, we break dance. Christian hits the jumping elbow from the middle rope (called a forearm by the genius known as Tenay). AJ backflips out of a suplex and in one motion hits a Pele on Booker. He's absolutely stealing the show here.

Tower of Doom is blocked but AJ misses Spiral Tap. Everyone is down and we go to the corner now off a slingshot. We set up another Tower of Doom spot but AJ fights out of it. He gets caught in a slightly modified Unprettier off the middle rope. Top rope axe kick ends Christian though as Booker gets the

pin.

Rating: B-. AJ absolutely stole the show here, blowing everyone away with his insane spots and moving out there. The problem here again became that we had to have people lay around again and the triple man spots didn't work that well. Still though they kept this moving well enough that it came off rather well. AJ again was the best thing here though.

We recap Jarrett vs. Angle. It's more or less the same feud but Angle doesn't like Foley being called a huge acquisition. Foley is the enforcer here which means he stands outside and does nothing of note until the very end.

Kurt is with Lauren (good night she's gorgeous) and says this isn't one on one.

Jeff breaks down in tears to talk about what he's going through at the moment. There is WAY too much emphasis on his daughters here.

Jeff Jarrett vs. Kurt Angle

This is Jeff's first match in two years and we're told about his little girls every 9 seconds of course. Angle flips Foley off almost immediately. He's on the floor for the majority of this match as he's just an enforcer. Who he's enforcing against or what he's enforcing are anyone's guess but that's a constant question in wrestling. Big THANK YOU JEFF chant.

Feeling out process to start as Angle tries to embarrass Jeff. I think 2005 did that about as well as possible Kurt. Angle dominates on the mat of course which is what I think everyone expected. He hits a European Uppercut in the corner which is called a German by West because he's a stupid man. Jarrett hits a pescado to take Angle down on the floor.

Spending a lot of time on the mat here which is probably an attempt to balance out the lack of cardio that Jeff likely

has. We get some dueling chants as Jeff fights out of a chinlock. Someone needs to win with one of those once just for the pure shock value of it. Angle's shoulder hits the post and Jarrett is too spent to do anything about it.

Jarrett starts a comeback but can't finish him. He goes for a middle rope suplex but Angle blocks and tries a belly to belly to the floor. Since that would more or less kill Jarrett, Angle gets a top rope suplex instead. A nice counter sets up the figure four and Angle is in trouble. Foley has done absolutely nothing in the nearly fifteen minutes we've been going so far.

Rolling Germans have Jarrett in trouble. Ankle Lock is on and Jeff is about to tap. Angle Slam gets two and a moonsault misses. According to Tenay the figure four is the reason the moonsault missed. I'm pretty sure it was actually Jeff rolling out of the way but what do I know? Stroke gets two but the referee is out so Foley counts two.

Kurt goes to get a chair and Foley says no way. Yes let's tell one of the most intense men in the history of the sport that hates your guts not to use a chair he has in his hands. Foley gets his skull caved in for the 150th time which he should get a set of steak knives for I think. Chair to Jarrett gets two as Foley stops it. Socko to Kurt and a guitar shot ends it with Foley making the count.

Rating: B. Solid for the most part here and considering that it was Jeff's first match in so long, this was pretty good. Foley didn't need to be there like at all but it fit in with the story so I can live with that. Tenay SHOUTS at Jeff's kids in Nashville that they all love them and this was for you. WOW yeah that wasn't overkill at all Mikey.

Recap of Sting vs. Joe which is about Sting being the old guard and Joe not respecting him. Announcer: Sting paved the way for men like Joe. Sting: I paved the way for you Joe! This

was actually well set up for the Mafia angle.

We get a video about Sting as he's on the way to the ring. The tale of the tape thing listed him as 6'3 and this lists him as 6'2. Little things like those are what makes us say TNA is a stupid looking company. I know it's not a big deal, but it's something that shouldn't have been screwed up. It makes them look sloppy which is not good at all.

Video on Joe says nothing of note. He's the heel by default here.

TNA World Title: Sting vs. Samoa Joe

We get their weights for the third time in four minutes in the big match intros. Also I love that JB says standing in the corner to my left when he's pacing from corner to corner. Joe is ready to go. Joe puts him on the floor seconds into this with a backdrop. Suicide dive with the elbow and Sting is in trouble early.

We're out into the crowd and it's more or less even. They go up near the top of the arena as it's nothing but punches and chops so far. Joe gets a running start from a luxury box and jumps over the guard rail with a dropkick and crashes on the stairs. That was very awesome. The fat apparently kept his back safe though as we head back to the ring. No rematches no matter what apparently either.

They've been in the stands for like four minutes out of the six this has been going on. They were in the ring about 5 seconds literally. Sting with a cross body off the hockey boards to take Joe out which was cool looking too. Joe is bleeding from the nose and it might be broken. Sting gets the little Stingers crotched on the boards and an Ole Kick puts him down. You don't kick a guy when his balls are in need of repair! It's got to be illegal in some way.

FINALLY we go back to the ring and, get ready for it, WE GO

INSIDE IT! This has been going like 8 minutes and we've been in the ring all of 15 seconds. Not a fan of that style more often than not. The fans are behind Joe now as I guess the TNA crowd thing is like a virus. Muscle Buster is blocked by a freaking jumping tornado DDT out of the corner and a Frog Splash for Sting gets two. I haven't seen him use that in YEARS.

Joe gets a powerbomb into an STF as they're moving very fast out there. Off into a crossface as he channels his inner Benoit. Ok make that the Rings of Saturn. This is like something out of a video game. Sting steals the Muscle Buster which Joe no sells completely. Wait why? It's not like it's a move you can learn the block for. You get dropped on your head which isn't something you pop up from.

Sting matches the idiocy by popping up after a Scorpion Death Drop. See, it's not like they even got covers. Both guys were up before the other one. If either of those moves end the match then the grade is dropping BIG time. You don't no sell getting dropped on your freaking head! Joe getting booed a bit now as this really is a split crowd.

Joe has a thing going on at this point where he would win by TKO or knockout since he would beat the people and the referee would count them out which is how he beat Booker at Victory Road. He gets to 8 here on Sting but keeps pounding on him. And here's Kevin Nash. Well of course he's here. It's a major match so we have to have more old people in it.

Sting goes for the bat but Nash steals it from him. He had been the mentor to Joe for like ever so it fits to have him out there. Again though, just because it fits doesn't mean that it's a good idea. Referee jumps out of the way of Sting so Nash pops him with the bat. Scorpion Death Drop ends this.

Rating: C. Not bad here but it didn't really feel like a mega match. It was barely discussed all night which kind of made it

feel less important. There was far more emphasis on the Jarrett/Angle match which I think is something I complained about when I watched this live. Sting winning set up the Mafia angle even more so for once this was a good idea. TNA tends to like setting up groups after their big PPV and this is no exception. Decent match.

Overall Rating: B-. This show was ok. It's nothing great but there was nothing too terribly bad. It's not a classic and it didn't really feel like the biggest show of the year, but there's enough stuff here to make it better than average. The Angle/Jarrett match was built up too highly I think and it overshadowed the main event, but then again it's a better match. This worked and it set the stage for the Mafia's dominance so yeah I'd think this was good for a major show.

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**On This Day: October 5, 2008
– Florida Championship
Wrestling TV (Debut Episode):**

NXT's Granddaddy

Florida Championship Wrestling TV

Date: October 5, 2008

Location: Florida Championship Wrestling Arena, Tampa, Florida

Commentators: Todd Grisham, Dusty Rhodes

This is something I found that seemed like a good idea to take a look at. This is the debut of Florida Championship Wrestling's TV show which airs in the Tampa area. Considering that this is over a year before the rise of NXT, expect some very interesting names to pop up here. For example, the heavyweight champion is Sheamus, who won the title from Jake Hager about a month before. Hager had to drop it because he debuted on ECW as Jack Swagger. The tag champions are Heath Miller and Joe Hennig, more commonly known as Heath Slater and Michael McGillicutty. I have no idea what to expect here so let's get to it.

We open with a video about Championship Wrestling From Florida which was a huge territory back in the day.

The graphic introduction is kind of cool.

John Cena will be here tonight.

Jake Hager defends against Heath Miller. This must be on tape delay because Hager had lost the title in September. Hmm whatever. Those kinds of things happen a lot and you get used to them after awhile.

And here's Ric Flair. Why do I have a feeling a lot of this is going to be people saying how awesome FCW is? Dusty gets to claim lineage from the former CWF (the aforementioned company). Wait I listed that wrong. He can, but the rest of the company can too I guess. Flair talks about all the people that are running this place and how great they are. This was fine and not long enough to get ridiculous.

Shawn Spears vs. TJ Wilson

We go to a break after Spears' entrance. This is on the night of No Mercy with Hardy vs. HHH where Hardy didn't win either. Spears was in ECW for like a week back in 08 and never went anywhere. TJ Wilson is more commonly known as one half of the Hart Dynasty: Tyson Kidd. Wilson has tassels on his boots like Warrior did. It's weird hearing Dusty talk about Stu Hart.

Kidd does a lot of arm work to start and looks good doing it. Wilson can move out there and is rather acrobatic, far more than you would see on WWE today. Spears works on the head and takes over. The crowd is very energetic here which is nice. Kidd hits a nice running dropkick and a Northern Lights Suplex for two. He tries another running...something, but gets caught in a reverse neckbreaker for the pin. This of course begs the question: what is a forward neckbreaker?

Rating: B-. Basic but good here with both guys not trying to do too much and it resulted in a good match. Often times in wrestling you have to remember that less can be more and this was definitely an example of that. They just went out there and had a wrestling match and didn't try to do stuff that they weren't capable of. The result was definitely successful, although it's weird seeing Spears beating a current champion.

Afa and Rocky Johnson are here.

Sin Bowdee/Alicia Fox/Jay Bradley vs. Colt Cabana/Brianna Bell/Ricky Ortiz

Bradley was on Smackdown like twice as Ryan Braddock and Bowdee is more famous as Kizarny. Based on who all is in there, this needs to end fast. Kizarny hadn't debuted in WWE yet so this was even weirder back then. I'm not sure how but just go with it. Cabana is rather popular here and I'm surprised he got to keep his more famous name. Grisham says Cabana is like Dusty. Is that a compliment?

This is more or less a regular tag match with Divas on the side. Dusty explaining bare basics to Grisham is rather amusing. If you don't get that Brianna Bell is Brie Bella, I can't help you. Speaking of her she gets an X Factor for the pin on Fox.

Rating: D+. The tagging between the guys was good but of course the girls were nothing special. Fox could be pretty hot if not for her hair. None of these guys other than Cabana are particularly good so keeping it really short was likely the best idea. This was ok but it really wasn't anything all that good.

Nic Nemeth vs. Greg Jackson

Nemeth is Dolph Ziggler and he's a natural. My cousin is named Greg Jackson but I have no idea who this guy is. I'd bet on a squash here. Jackson has a good armdrag if nothing else. AHA! Jackson is more commonly known as Trent Barretta. I knew I had seen him before. Good to see that the second biggest team on Smackdown has one guy that's unrecognizable.

Sweet dropkick to take out Jackson on a springboard clothesline. Nemeth has half black hair here which is a weird look for him. Jackson makes a short comeback but a jumping Downward Spiral ends Jackson and completes this glorified squash.

Rating: D+. Again not much here but they were kind of flying through this since it was only a squash. The match never really went anywhere but for a glorified squash what can you really ask for? At least the right guy won as Ziggler is by far and away the better talent of the two.

Some Tampa Bay Bucs are here. And so is the Champ. Ok so he's not the champ at the moment but Cena is indeed here. Cena talks about how the opportunity is for the city of Tampa and how these guys are here to entertain the people. Putting WWE over as family entertainment is a good idea which is something

they should do more often.

And here comes Shawn Spears to do something. I would have gone with another heel to give someone else more exposure but this works too. Spears asks what would happen if tonight an FCW Superstar tried to make a name for themselves? Cena says he'll knock the maple syrup out of Spears (Canadian). Spears backs off and then charges into a big backdrop and the FU. Cena's theme music is kind of ironic here.

Florida Heavyweight Championship: Heath Miller vs. Jake Hager

Miller thinks he's handsome and gives off a kind of Rick Rude/Johnny Nitro feel. He's more famous as Heath Slater though. Hager is Jack Swagger and is a cross between Angle and Goldberg. He's undefeated here and the streak is part of his character. Mixed reaction for Hager who is in regular trunks here. Miller is a rock star without the instruments. I'm not sure if that's better than one man rock band or not.

Miller also has shoulder length hair which is a weird look for him. Big high knee sends Miller to the floor. Hager is a tweener I think but it's not really clear. Miller with a nice springboard clothesline to take over as we're running very low on time. Hager avoids a Zig Zag and hooks the gutwrench for the pin and the end of the show.

Rating: C+. Nothing great here but the idea was to have Hager look like a champion as an introduction to the audience which he certainly did. This was a decent little TV match that gave us something to look forward to on the show. I'm not sure why Hager was fighting him but I guess I can let that slide on a debut for a local TV show. Not bad.

Overall Rating: B. For a debut show, this was very good. You got four matches to give you a nice taste of what you could expect out of FCW. Hager looks like a big star which is exactly what he was supposed to do. This flowed very well and the Cena/Flair appearances helped legitimize things a lot. The

production values were very good as you could see there was some effort put into this and it felt like a professional show. They're better than OVW's for sure. This was a well done debut show and I'd watch the next episode if I could, which I might do someday.

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On This Day: September 22, 2008 – Monday Night Raw: Another Anniversary Show

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 22, 2008

Location: US Bank Arena, Cincinnati, Ohio

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

This was on my request list for some reason. I've done a few shows from around this time lately so maybe it has to do with that. This is a few weeks after Unforgiven so Jericho would be world champion at this point and feuding with Shawn. Other than that I don't remember a thing about this time so it'll be interesting to look at. Let's get to it.

We open with the world title hanging above the ring and a ladder underneath it. Here's Jericho to some LOUD pyro. Cole

says this is the 800th episode. So that's probably....WAIT WHAT??? On November 3 of the same year, they would have a big 800th episode celebration with a three hour show. Can't they even keep their continuity straight for six weeks??? I'm going to have to do every show in the history of Raw to get the right episodes aren't I?

ANYWAY, Jericho sits on top of the ladder and talks about how Shawn has convinced Mike Adamle to make their match at No Mercy a ladder match. Shawn has claimed that he revolutionized the ladder match and the mindless sheep that the fans are believed him. Just because HBK says something, it doesn't mean it's true. Jericho on the other hand is an honest man. The truth is that he's won three titles in a ladder match. He's won more ladder matches than Shawn has ever appeared in.

Jericho says the last thing you'll see at the PPV is this, and he pulls down the title. Shawn attacked him recently but he came back, because he's just better than Shawn. Jericho keeps talking and is interrupted by...Randy Orton? Jericho starts to call himself champion but Orton cuts him off. He says that if not for him kicking Punk in the head, Jericho wouldn't be champion. The ladder match doesn't mean anything because whoever wins is living on borrowed time.

Jericho asks what's stopping him from punching Orton right now. Punching Shawn's wife was an accident but this would be on purpose. Randy is still injured here. Orton has spoken to Mike Adamle and anyone that hits him is suspended immediately. Jericho says get well soon and leaves. Orton says he'll be champion again and throws the ladder out. Randy goes to leave and here's Punk. Punk gets in his face and slaps him, causing Adamle to come down and suspend him indefinitely.

Now here's Shane McMahon of all people to dance around on stage in white shoes. Now he dances in the ring a bit. He got a big pop so I can't complain much here. Apparently he's here to evaluate Adamle later on. Shane overrules Adamle's

suspension of Punk so Orton yells about that too. The suspension rule is still in effect, but it starts right now. Shane asks Orton to leave and makes Punk vs. Rhodes and Jericho/JBL vs. Batista/Shawn. Shane dances some more and it's FINALLY over. This segment ran nearly 20 minutes which is WAY too long given what we got out of it.

Cody Rhodes vs. CM Punk

Feeling out process to start. It's amazing how much bigger this would be in just a few years. Punk uses his strikes to take over, including a spinning elbow to the face. Cody sends him to the outside but Punk kicks him through the ropes. They brawl on the floor before heading back in with Cody hitting a top rope cross body, rolled through for two. Cody hits a few knees, including a big one in the corner for two.

Punk loads up the GTS but Cody escapes and bails to the floor as we take a break. Back with Cody working on the ankle/leg after crotching him during the break. It's leg lock time as the match slows down. Punk counters that into an ankle lock of all things but Cody makes the rope. The running knee hits but the bulldog is countered of course. GTS gets the pin about a second later.

Rating: C. Not bad here but Cody didn't mean a thing at this point so the match wasn't going to be anything good. Punk was really just a glorified upper midcard guy at this point so this didn't mean much of anything. Somehow Punk wouldn't get the real revenge he was looking for until 2011.

DiBiase and Manu run in for the beatdown but Kofi makes the save. He and Punk would win the tag titles very soon.

Smackdown ReBound is about Kozlov attacking Jeff Hardy. He also beat up MVP and HHH.

Adamle complains to Shane about being embarrassed out there. Shane says Adamle is doing fine and that he shouldn't be

worried. Kane comes in and wants Mysterio, and he'll get him at No Mercy apparently. Kane tells Shane to say hi to Linda for him. He leaves and Shane explains the history between himself and Kane.

A photographer is talking to Kelly when Beth and Santino come up. Santino has a facial injury and Kelly laughed last week, so it's time for pain tonight. He makes fun of Batista who of course pops up behind him. An awkward staredown ensues.

Santino Marella vs. Deuce

We get the Honk-A-Meter prematch but Deuce cuts it off. This is non-title of course. Deuce goes after the injured face and drops a punch for two. Santino rolls him up for the pin out of nowhere. This was like a minute long.

Santino talks about how great Beth is post match.

Kane vs. Evan Bourne

Evan is an ECW guy at this point and is standing in for Mysterio who is still injured. Bourne fires off a kick to the ribs which gets him nowhere, followed by an enziguri to stagger the monster. A Kane powerbomb is countered and Bourne kicks some more. Bourne keeps trying to keep things moving but Kane gets in a single punch to stop the offense dead in its tracks. A big boot misses and Kane gets caught in the ropes. A moonsault to the floor puts Kane down again and the double knees get two. Kane gets in a single uppercut and begins the total destruction. HUGE chokeslam gets the pin.

Rating: C. This was a lot better than I was expecting from it. Bourne is a guy who is small enough to be able to make you feel sorry for him against a monster like this so the crowd was getting into it. On top of that it plays up the Kane vs. small guys feud which is what they're going with despite it getting annoying. Fun match.

Rey comes out and gets beaten down as well.

Jamie Noble asks Shane for another match with Regal. Dolph Ziggler comes up and introduces himself and leaves. Orton comes up for another distraction and says overturning the suspension wasn't cool. Shane says it's cool and that Orton is getting off easily. Orton threatens him so Shane says he's a fourth generation McMahon. That means something I guess.

Beth Phoenix vs. Kelly Kelly

Beth takes him into the corner but Kelly moves out of the way for some speedy gymnastics. Beth comes back with a Buckle Bomb and yells about Batista. Candace is watching in the back. Kelly comes back with a cross body out of the corner for two. Santino's interference backfires and Kelly gets the rollup for the pin. This was when the Divas were only bad and not horrible yet.

They set to double team Kelly until Batista makes the save. Santino ACTUALLY HITS Batista. Guess how well that goes.

We recap the feud between the Dirt Sheet and Word Up, Cryme Tyme's show. They had argued for awhile on their shows, resulting in an AWESOME rap video parody by Miz and Morrison. Dirt Sheet and Miz/Morrison were hilarious at this point.

John Morrison/The Miz vs. Cryme Tyme

JTG vs. Morrison to start things off. Miz cheats as is his nature but JTG comes back with a spinning clothesline for two. Shad comes in with a huge gorilla press to send Morrison to the floor. Shad throws JTG onto both of them and we take a break. Back with Morrison holding an armbar on JTG which is quickly broken. Off to Miz for more chinlockery as he prevents the hot tag. The tag goes through a few seconds later and Shad cleans house. Powerslam gets two on Miz. Delayed release gordbuster puts Miz down but Morrison kicks Shad in the head which lets Miz get the pin.

Rating: D. This wasn't very good. The problem was that these two were better teams but for some reason neither were tag champions at this point. It's not that the belts meant anything so it doesn't really matter but it's still a pretty stupid miss. Boring match here with the majority of it being spent in chinlocks.

Jericho tries to convince Adamle that Shane is manipulating him. Jericho has an idea but we don't get to hear it.

We run down the No Mercy card.

Charlie Haas is at Dave and Busters to shill the Mr. Perfect DVD with an imitation. He does the sports bit that Perfect did which is kind of funny.

Shawn Michaels/Batista vs. John Bradshaw Layfield/Chris Jericho/Lance Cade

Jericho's idea was to make it 3-2 and I guess it worked. Shawn and Cade start things off with Shawn destroying him. Cade reverses a whip and JBL adds a right hand to really give Lance an opening. Off to Jericho for a chinlock and an enziguri puts Shawn down. Off to JBL who hits a swinging neckbreaker for two. Back to Cade for more of a beating in the corner. Jericho chokes away as this has been one sided for the most part. Bradshaw comes in and they slug it out but JBL kicks him in the face to put him right back down.

It's JBL vs. Batista at No Mercy if that clears anything up. Shawn jumps into the fallaway slam but he counters into a DDT to put both guys down. There's the tag to Batista who cleans house. Spinebuster to Jericho and a powerslam sets up the Shawn elbow. Superkick is countered into a Walls attempt but Shawn rolls him up for two. Everything breaks down and Batista spears JBL outside. Lionsault misses and it's off to Cade. Forearm puts him down but Jericho's distraction lets him hit a sitout Rock Bottom to Shawn for the pin.

Rating: C. Just a main event tag match here that felt like it belonged at a house show. It wasn't bad or anything but it just wasn't interesting. There wasn't much focus on the JBL vs. Batista match at all and Batista was only in the match for about a minute or so. Not bad, but just kind of there.

Overall Rating: C-. This wasn't a bad show but it was nothing interesting at all. Nothing really happened and while they pushed No Mercy, this isn't a show that you would need to see to see No Mercy. Orton was in a weird place here where he was hurt, but it was clear they wanted him to be the #2 heel on the roster. That's hard to do but they tried hard. It came off as forced though and it didn't quite work. Pretty meh show.

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On This Day: September 7, 2008 – Unforgiven 2008: What A Scrambled Web We Weave

Unforgiven 2008

Date: September 7, 2008

Location: Quicken Loans Arena, Cleveland, Ohio

Attendance: 8,707

Commentators: Jim Ross, Tazz, Mick Foley, Jerry Lawler, Todd

Grisham, Matt Striker

We're at the end of the Unforgiven series here and the most important thing is that we have a pretty unique concept to it tonight. This time, it's based around Championship Scrambles for the world titles. The idea is you have 5 people and a 20 minute time limit. Whoever gets the last pinfall (I'm not sure if you have to pin the champion) before the time is up wins the match and the championship. There are three of them. Let's get to it.

The opening video is all about the Scramble but then shifts over into Jericho vs. Shawn which is based on Jericho accidentally hitting Shawn's wife in the face and setting up an unsanctioned match with them tonight.

ECW Title: Matt Hardy vs. Mark Henry vs. Finlay vs. The Miz vs. Chavo Guerrero

The guys come in on a random draw with Hardy vs. The Miz. Man who would have thought Miz and Henry would be the biggest stars out of this group? Miz is just a chick magnet here. You don't have to pin the current champion (Mark Henry) to become the interim champion (best word I can think of for it). These two will fight for five minutes until someone else comes in.

Miz and Matt exchange some pinfall attempts even though they don't really mean much at this point. The corner clothesline misses for the Chick Magnet and Matt gets a cool move in as Miz is caught in the corner and Matt pulls him out by his legs into a sitout powerbomb. It's kind of hard to describe but basically Matt pulled him out of the air into the powerbomb. We get a history of Cameron, North Carolina which has like 600 people in it to fill time since nothing in the first 19:00 is going to mean anything.

According to Striker this is the brainchild of Pat Patterson. He also came up with the Royal Rumble so maybe this will be good. Miz hits the Reality Check but Matt falls to the floor.

Eventually that gets two as Chavo is the third guy in. Ok so now it's a triple threat for five minutes. Chavo hits a Frog Splash on Matt for the pin to become the Interim Champion very quickly. I don't think he has to get pinned to change it but I'm not sure. Yeah it can be anyone pinning anyone so it's like a triple threat.

Chavo busts out a rolling Liger kick of all things and then a suicide dive to further kill Miz. Everyone goes to one corner but Miz shoves them both off. He busts out a cross body to take out both guys, getting two on Hardy. Matt takes over and pops Miz with a right hand and a Side Effect to Chavo gives Matt the Interim Title. The fans are way behind Matt here and they should be.

Everyone slows down as Mark Henry comes in at #4. Everyone goes after Mark when the right answer would be to run from him. If he can't catch you, he can't pin you. Henry takes them all down with ease, not selling anyone like a good monster. The Slam gets the pin on Chavo to make him Interim Champion. Hardy escapes the Slam but gets knocked to the floor quickly.

Again, why does everyone go after Henry? We've established that you can pin anyone but wrestlers are stupid above all other things. Henry takes turns giving people bearhugs to people and finally settles on Hardy. Here's Finlay to complete the group with five minutes to go. Finlay goes straight for Henry and actually pounds him down, getting a DDT for two. Horny slides Finlay the club and Henry is thrown to the floor after a shot with it. A Celtic Cross to Hardy makes Finlay Interim champion at 3:45 to go.

Miz comes in and takes out Finlay with a missile dropkick but walks into a Twist of Fate and Matt is champion at 3:15 to go. Henry and everyone else is back in now and Hardy starts playing defense, breaking up every possible cover. Two minutes left. Henry slams everyone in sight other than Hardy and Miz rolls up Finlay for two. Miz is cut a little bit on the

forehead.

Finlay tries the Celtic Cross on Hardy but Henry breaks it up. The Slam gets two on Miz as Hardy saves again. Thirty seconds left and Hardy starts throwing people to the floor in some GREAT psychology. Everyone winds up in a pile in the corner and time runs out, making Matt the official champion.

Rating: B. Fun match here as the ending few minutes after Hardy got the Interim Title were great with him THINKING through the whole thing, knowing that he had to keep anyone from pinning anyone and finding ways to prevent that from happening. This was really fun and Matt would hold the title for awhile until Jack Swagger debuted and eventually took it from him, prompting Matt's ill-advised heel turn.

The Hardys celebrate in the back after a video for Mania tickets.

HHH and Punk are warming up. They're the champions coming in.

Should Big Show have been in the title match? Run up your cell phone bill and let us know!

Raw Tag Titles: Cryme Tyme vs. Legacy

If nothing else we get the Priceless theme here which is always a treat. JTG vs. Rhodes to start us off. The racial stereotypes take over and clear the ring quickly with a double clothesline from Shad sending the champions to the floor. Shad vs. DiBiase takes up some time and Ted does about as well as Cody did. The challengers hit a nice double team move ending in a slingshot clothesline by Jimmy the Gimmick.

Legacy finally realizes that JTG is beating them up and takes over with double teaming. They work on JTG's arm and show how much they've grown in the past few years as they're not much here. Jerry gets on Cole for talking too much as JTG fights back, hitting a belly to back suplex. Cody prevents the tag

and Legacy cheats like proper heels. I get a little smile on my face every time JTG gets punched. I can't help it after watching over 35 weeks of him on NXT.

Cody works on the arm a little more and then slams JTG near the corner. A moonsault (decent one too) misses and it's hot tag to Shad. Remember when JTG vs. Shad was supposed to be a big feud? Neither do I but some people actually believe it would be. Shad cleans house and I can see why people thought he'd be a good bodyguard style character. The guy has a good look and can do some power stuff.

Not that it really matters here as Cody grabs a DDT on him to slow him down. It only gets two but the momentum was stopped dead. Cody comes in legally now and gets his head taken off via a lariat. In a not great ending, JTG rolls up Rhodes as Shad hits DiBiase. DiBiase stumbles into the package and rolls it over so that JTG gets pinned. Why didn't he just let go?

Rating: C-. Not as bad as most Raw matches but still it's nothing all that great. They tried and Cryme Tyme was over, but Legacy at this point wasn't a threat of any kind. Neither had a finisher that I remember and they came off as rookies with zero personality (intentionally I think) and didn't do anything until a few years later when they split from Orton, which took years to get to.

There's a post match brawl until Manu debuts to help Legacy. He joined them for like a month and no one cared.

Shawn is having his bad arm taped up for his match with Jericho. Shawn is in fighting clothes and has a partial tear in his elbow tendon.

We recap Jericho vs. Shawn. The feud had been going for awhile before this but at Summerslam, Shawn had said that he was listening to his doctors for once and was walking away due to his eye and various other injuries. Jericho said he didn't accept that because Shawn was doing it in the spotlight,

unlike how he should do it by resigning quietly.

Jericho wanted Shawn to admit that it was Jericho that retired him but Shawn said no, but to tell your family that you'll never be Shawn Michaels. With that, Jericho went for the eye but Shawn ducked and Jericho punched Shawn's wife. Jericho, the consummate heel, said that it was Shawn's fault. Shawn vows revenge and it's an unsanctioned match tonight. This easily won feud of the year and the match at No Mercy won match of the year. This is no slouch though.

Chris Jericho vs. Shawn Michaels

This is unsanctioned and it's pin or submission only. In essence, it's no holds barred. Cole says Shawn told him of a Bible verse which talks about the Walls of Jericho coming down. That's a great line. Why is there a WWE referee in an unsanctioned match? Couldn't anyone referee it/not need a referee? Shawn takes his cowboy boot off to whack Jericho with it as he's going after the eye just like Chris did to him.

They're into the crowd already and it's been all Shawn. The injury is to the triceps, not the elbow. Jericho is bleeding from the nose so Shawn hits a slingshot into the post. Shawn's chair shot misses and Chris sends him into the table (doesn't break it) to take over. Now we get a breakable table set up but instead Jericho just throws it at Shawn to keep him down. Chris tries to powerbomb him through the table but Shawn fires off punches. Jericho just drops him face first onto the apron instead to keep the advantage. That looked painful.

Back inside now and Jericho works Shawn over with a chair. Jericho wedges said chair in the corner but misses a charge into the opposite corner, ramming into the post. Jericho can't suplex Shawn over the top through the table as Shawn lands on the apron. Back in Shawn nips up and just chokes Jericho down. The elbow hits and Shawn is all fired up. Sorry for the play by play but this is one of those matches where you almost have

to have all of the individual details for the other stuff to make sense.

Shawn sets for Chin Music but stops to punch Jericho more. Off to a Crossface but Jericho manages to send his head into the chair, reinjuring the eye. Jericho peppers the eye so Shawn fires off right hands. Shawn tries a piledriver but gets reversed into the Walls instead. Shawn gets to a rope but THANKFULLY the referee doesn't break it. Instead HBK finds a fire extinguisher from somewhere to spray in Chris' eyes to break the hold.

They go to the floor and Jericho goes into the barricade as it's all Shawn here. There's a suplex on the ramp and both guys are down. Here's Lance Cade and Shawn beats him up too. Cade gets in a shot to the arm though and Jericho wraps the arm around the post for good measure. Jericho hits the arm with a chair as Shawn is in real trouble. They set to Pillmanize the arm but Shawn kicks Cade into the ropes to crotch Jericho. Chin Music puts Cade down and clocks Jericho with the chair, sending him to the floor through the table.

Shawn works over Jericho with the chair now and loads up the announcers' table as per wrestling law. Cade is laid out on the table while Jericho is on the floor. Shawn sets to go up top but instead coems down and puts Jericho on top of Cade on the table. Here's your HUGE spot of the match as Shawn drops an elbow onto the back of Jericho and pops up somehow. That was awesome!

Back in the ring Shawn whips Jericho with the belt and won't let up. He pulls Jericho's arm around his own neck (Jericho's arm is around Jericho's neck) and pounds away at the eye as the referee is begging him to have mercy. Shawn just doesn't care and goes back after the eye until in an unsanctioned match, the referee stops it, drawing a very mixed reaction from the crowd.

Rating: A-. This is one of those matches where blood would have really improved things. Having Shawn in a white shirt and having him covered in Jericho's blood to end it and looking down at himself and not caring how far he let it go would have been a great ending. That being said, it's still a great revenge match as Jericho did everything imaginable to make the fans hate him and it worked. Good stuff here, although the lack of a clearer finish hurt it.

Shawn goes after Jericho again post match and superkicks the referee when he tries to stop him. The fans are very pleased.

Legacy (Manu included) is in the back when Orton comes in. Rhodes introduces Orton to (named) Manu and Manu praises the champs. Orton says it was luck instead of skill. Orton says talent is forever but luck can run out, so no he's not impressed.

Smackdown World Title: Triple H vs. Jeff Hardy vs. The Brian Kendrick vs. MVP vs. Shelton Benjamin

Same rules as earlier and Jeff starts with Shelton who is currently a boring heel and US Champion. Shelton says he's the Gold Standard. Yep, that's really the best they could come up with him. Hardy grabs a rollup to start and they're moving out there. They kind of botch something as you could tell Shelton was supposed to do something but Hardy moved. He immediately grabs a headlock and you can hear him talking to Jeff. Snap suplex gets two for Shelton.

JR talks about the Grand Slam Title and Hardy looking to become the 7th Grand Slam winner ever. Hardy takes him to the mat and gets a bunch of nearfalls. There's the countdown and Kendrick (with Big Zeke Jackson) is in third. He was channeling some serious Brian Pillman around this time too. Zeke doesn't come with him here for some reason. Kendrick chills outside and Shelton tries to hook a German on Hardy off the apron. Kendrick knocks Shelton to the floor, possibly by

mistake, and then goes after Hardy.

A forearm gets two on Hardy and Kendrick is all lit up. Jeff grabs a faceplant on Kendrick out of nowhere and becomes Interim Champion in a POP. Back to Shelton now who Hardy covers, probably out of instinct. Shelton misses a Stinger Splash so Jeff rolls him up again. Twist of Fate is countered into Shelton's Paydirt finisher for two. Kendrick hits Sliced Bread and is Interim Champion.

Up fourth is MVP and I have no idea if he's a face or a heel. The fans cheer for him so we'll say face. He throws out the white guys and beats on Shelton. MVP loads up the Drive By on Shelton but Kendrick comes out of nowhere with a SICK leg lariat to a huge reaction. Jeff is back in now and hits the slingshot dropkick on MVP and Shelton at the same time. Shelton finally takes Kendrick down with a Samoan Drop.

Everyone knocks each other down as we're waiting for HHH to come in and dominate everything in sight. Kendrick counters a Shelton powerbomb into a nice rana. Here's HHH and Kendrick has been Interim Champion for five minutes plus now. Facebuster for MVP and a spinebuster for Kendrick sets up a Pedigree to make HHH Interim Champion 48 seconds after his music hit.

We're under four minutes now as Shelton takes a beating from HHH on the floor. MVP and Hardy are in the ring now and a Twist of Fate makes Hardy the Interim Champion (POP) with about 3 minutes left. Sliced Bread is kind of countered so Hardy hits a sitout gordbuster and goes up for the Swanton. HHH makes the save and Pedigrees Kendrick again to get the title at 2:00. Jeff Swantons Kendrick immediately and is champion with 1:45 to go.

Pedigree is countered and we're under 90 seconds. Hardy dives on HHH and the other three do a Tower of Doom spot to put everyone down at 40 seconds left. Whisper in the Wind to MVP

and a Swanton to Shelton. HHH runs back in for a Pedigree on MVP and Hardy shows his idiocy by not breaking it up as HHH wins the belt back with 1 second left. Hardy's time was coming.

Rating: B-. Nowhere near as good of a match as this was about Hardy and HHH having another contest. HHH did his thing and is somehow a 13 time champion or whatever. Not as good as the first one because we all knew it would be Hardy or HHH at the end of the day. Kendrick was shockingly champion for the longest amount of time while MVP never was anything more than a bonus. The ending was stupid too with not breaking up that cover which he saw.

Shawn says he's not happy with what happened and he'll be back for more. He's content but there's no closure. He wants to hurt Jericho like that every night and the worst is yet to come for Jericho.

Punk is in the back when Orton comes up. He calls Punk a fluke and Punk runs him down, saying he's always hurt and all that stuff. Punk says he's busy at the moment when Legacy attacks. Kofi tries to come in for the save but is beaten down also. Punk gets Punted and is out cold. This wouldn't be paid off for over two years but they FINALLY got to it eventually.

Divas Title: Maryse vs. Michelle McCool

Michelle is champion. Michelle as a face just never worked. She's such a natural villain and her pumping her fist doesn't work at all. She hurts her knee going to the floor and Maryse works on it as we're waiting for the people to get back from popcorn time to end this. Michelle works on Maryse's leg in a heel hook but she gets a rope. The fans are all over this match already. A sitout gordbuster keeps the title on McCool.

Rating: D-. Michelle and Maryse are too hot to be a failure but the match was terrible. NO ONE cared and that was very clear. Nothing to see here and we're moving on. Why this got

almost six minutes was crazy but I'd assume that it was due to a long line at the Cena shirt booths. Horrible match.

Mike Adamle, the GM of Raw, says Punk is out of the title match and that he'll find someone else.

Here's Big Show to chat for a bit. He offers his services to replace Punk in the title match. Show says go vote and makes a bunch of election references for some reason. He asks the fans if they'll vote for him and goes to leave but the still fat Vickie waddles out. She blasts him for no apparent reason and this is going nowhere. She throws him out and that causes...druids?

Show is laughing as a casket is brought out. This takes FOREVER until Taker pops up on the screen. He says he's coming for her like he promised and she'll burn and all that jazz. Show holds Vickie there and this takes forever. Taker grabs Vickie by the throat and Show turns heel, knocking Taker out. The beating goes on for awhile because we have 15 people in three matches so there's almost no midcard to speak of.

We recap the Raw World Title match. Orton was on Raw and called out Punk for disgracing the title. Orton was injured at this point and Punk called him an afterthought. That set up the punt earlier.

Regal is talking to Adamle and says he should be in the Scramble. Adamle says he's on the list but Punk might be able to go.

Raw World Title: John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Batista vs. Kane vs. Rey Mysterio vs. ???

Batista vs. JBL gets us going in the main event here. Batista takes over quickly with power (duh) but JBL hooks a sleeper. Big Dave breaks that quickly and throws on a pretty freaking good Figure Four. It's better than most HHH ever used. JBL no sells the knee work and beats on Batista outside. Kane comes

in third and that wasn't five minutes. That might not have been four minutes.

He's a heel here if you're not all that up to date on your Kane face/heel alignment. He hits his low dropkick and I guess if no one gets a pin here, Punk is still champion? JBL is still down so it's one on one here. Side slam puts Batista down and Kane misses the clothesline off the top. Batista misses a spear but breaks out of the chokeslam. JBL pops back in and walks into a chokeslam to make Kane Interim Champion. Rey, complete with mowhawk, is in fourth and that wasn't five minutes either.

Rey knocks Kane to the floor but JBL comes back and pops him in the face with a punch. He speeds things up but Kane ducks a 619 and takes Rey's stupid looking mowhawked head off with a clothesline. Batista and Rey team up to beat up Kane and then Mysterio tries to steal a pin on Batista. JBL beats up various people as the fifth man is...Chris Jericho. You know, because no one is better suited than the guy that is walking slower than an 80 year old woman.

Jericho gets in after 50 seconds of walking down the aisle, only to have Batista spear him down. Now that just wasn't nice. Four minutes left and Batista takes everyone down. He manages a big boot to Kane and gets two as Rey saves. Under three minutes. 619 to JBL and Batista DESTROYS Rey as he's trying a springboard move. Rey just collapsed and it looked awesome. Two minutes left and everyone is down. Kane gets up and the clothesline gets two on Big Dave with 75 seconds left. Batista spears Kane down with 53 to go and a spinebuster makes Batista Interim Champion at 35 seconds. Rey goes after Batista and Jericho steals a pin on Kane with 4 seconds left to win the title.

Rating: D+. The problem was that once Jericho came in, everyone knew he was going to win. He was by far and away the hottest thing in the company at this point though so you can't

really argue putting the belt on him. Not a good match in the slightest but Jericho winning was a great surprise and gave Shawn vs. Jericho a new dynamic and a reason to continue, which was a good thing.

Overall Rating: C+. Pretty decent show overall and definitely something different, but the Scrambles get old after the second one. The LONG Taker vs. Show segment is annoying because that feud was played 5 years before this show. Shawn vs. Jericho is a great brawl and the ECW match is good, but the rest is pretty weak stuff, especially since the lowest of the Scrambles was the best.

Well I'm done with Unforgiven now and there's not much to say here. It's just another B level show that had some good years and some bad but it's never something worth much. It's the Backlash of Summerslam and while that's fine, it doesn't make for a ton of interesting matches and stories because everything significant was done the month before. Next up will be the Great American Bash.

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