

Monday Night Raw – November 5, 2012: This Show Might Start Another War With Britain

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 5, 2012

Location: LG Arena, Birmingham, England

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jim Ross

We're in England for another taped show here which usually don't come off all that well. Survivor Series is in less than two weeks and while we have a main event not, it doesn't really mean anything overall. The main issue tonight is finding out why Brad Maddox screwed Ryback out of the title at HIAC which is apparently opening the show. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the end of last week's show with the announcement of the teams.

Earlier today (like the rest of the show), Miz asked Heyman what kind of a leader runs away from his team. Heyman says it's the Art of War...and Miz QUITTS the team!

Theme song.

We get a stupid narrator doing a voiceover about the stuff with Vickie and Cena last week. STOP DOING THIS ON WRESTLING SHOWS! IT SOUNDS FREAKING DUMB!

Rey Mysterio/Sin Cara/R-Truth vs. Prime Time Players/Antonio Cesaro

So much for Maddox starting the show I guess. Cesaro and Truth Tout to each other that they don't like each other. Seriously? We go from Gabriel and Kidd to R-Truth? That's the best they've got? The masked dudes make fun of the Players' dance which is always funny. Cesaro and Cara start things off here and Antonio takes it to the mat. Cara will have none of

that and nips up before hitting a quick rana to take Cesaro down. Off to Young vs. Truth with Darren getting in trouble fast.

Titus and Rey come in and the masked guys hit stereo kicks to a seated Titus for two. Truth does the same with a low dropkick for two and all six guys stare at each other as we go to a break. Back with Cara jumping in to hit Young in the arm before firing off forearms. Cara slips going up the ropes for the armdrag but it didn't look terrible. Rey loads up the 619 on Young but Cesaro makes a blind tag and picks off Rey into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker.

That gets two and here's Titus for a series of backbreakers. Cesaro's gutwrench sets up a front facelock on Rey but Mysterio sends him into the corner. Everything breaks down and Truth hits a suplex into a Stunner on Cesaro for two. Young's gutbuster is escaped by Cara and it's a 619 and Little Jimmy from Truth to pin Cesaro at 7:50 shown of 10:50.

Rating: C. Not bad here but this thing about Truth and Cesaro "developing a rivalry" that fast is a joke. No, Touting about each other and being in a six man doesn't develop a rivalry. It means they're setting up a match at Survivor Series and nothing else. Stop overhyping everything immediately as it makes things sound stupid. The match was fine.

Lawler is back next week.

We recap Vickie/Cena from last week again.

Here's Vickie with some IRON CLAD video evidence of the affair between Cena and AJ. She shows us the SAME VIDEOS FROM LAST WEEK. GOOD FREAKING GRIEF WE AREN'T THIS FREAKING STUPID! Cena comes out before the new video is shown to interrupt Vickie and make fun of her a bit. "Vickie Guerrero running a clean show isn't going to happen. It's like me learning a new move. I've got five and that's it."

Cena brings up Vickie's relationships with Edge and Ziggler but Vickie doesn't seem to care. We get the video of AJ in a robe going into someone's room but we can't see who. Cena says that proves nothing but we get a clip of Cena in a towel coming out of the same room to get something. Cena says the footage is bogus and Vickie says the lies are

exhausting. They're not the only things kid.

Vickie wants AJ to come out here but she gets AJ on the screen instead. AJ says Vickie doesn't want her out here because it'll result in the beating of Vickie's life and AJ will get fired. Zigler pops up and puts his arm around AJ and implies she's a w****. That's it...again. As in YET AGAIN nothing happens in this story.

Heyman recruits Barrett (POP) to replace Miz. That would actually make sense so I doubt it'll happen. Yep, Barrett turns him down because he doesn't trust Heyman. Barrett steps off camera and immediately comes back on, saying he'll join the team but Heyman owes him. Heyman says ok.

Daniel Bryan vs. Cody Rhodes

HELL NO gets one of the biggest pops of the night. Feeling out process to start until Bryan moonsaults out of the corner and starts firing off the kicks. Cody gets backdropped to the floor where Sandow jumps Kane. Bryan actually stands up for his partner by hitting the suicide dive to take out Sandow. Cody hits the Disaster Kick off the apron...and slides Bryan in for the Cross Rhodes and pin at 1:55? Great way to kill your hot crowd WWE.

Cody brags about the win and says Sandow could do the same to Bryan just as easily. Kane pulls Damien in, and apparently we're doing the EXACT SAME THING that the Players and Mysterio/Cara did last week. Are they THIS bankrupt for ideas?

Kane vs. Damien Sandow

This is joined in progress after a break with Kane in control. Sandow gets in some offense but Kane is like boy please and knocks him back down. Bryan and Cody get into a fight on the floor and get ejected. Back to the match with Kane still in control. A side slam puts Sandow down and the chokeslam gets the pin clean at 3:58.

Rating: D+. Yep, it's exactly the same thing they did a week ago with those other two tag teams, even down to the traded finishes. I'm utterly amazed at how creatively bankrupt this company seems anymore as it's like

they're not even trying to do something interesting anymore. Between doing the exact same thing in back to back weeks and the STUPID AJ/Vickie/Cena thing and TOUTING to each other being grounds for a title feud, this first hour has been rather stupid so far.

Here's Cole to talk to referee Brad Maddox. Naturally we have to see a video of something before we can advance though. I need to time how long we spend on recaps one week. Cole asks if Maddox is working with Heyman and Punk, but Brad says it's all him. All his life, all he's wanted to do is be a WWE Superstar. The fans keep chanting Feed Me More so this is taking a good while to get through. Maddox says he's tried to get his foot in the door but it's been shut over and over. He's sent tapes everywhere and even once paid two grand for a tryout.

After all that, he was given a chance with a developmental contract. Even in developmental he wasn't good enough because he doesn't look right or wasn't big enough or because he can't flip enough. WWE told him he'd never get to the main roster but he wouldn't let his dream die. He said he'd do whatever it took to get to the WWE, so he became a referee. When Raw got expanded to 3 hours, he only needed one chance to make an impact.

Maddox reiterates that Punk had nothing to do with it but Punk was shocked. Ryback and Punk and everyone else noticed him though and he's famous. Maddox wants to face Ryback. Oh dear I hope that doesn't actually happen. Here's Vince to say that he doesn't believe what Maddox is saying, but he offers Maddox a million dollar contract if he can beat Ryback next week.

Maddox gets out of the ring and Vince says hang on a second and goes to the back. He comes back with Vickie and asks her if she believes Punk was involved somehow. Vince leans on her a bit and she says she agrees, so Vince asks why Punk is getting to hide behind all these people in a Survivor Series match. Instead it should be a title defense against...Dolph Ziggler? Vince says that's the wrong answer so it's now Punk defending against Ryback...and Cena. So to be clear, Vince can override Vickie (he threatened to fire her) but he just doesn't for some reason most of the time. Good to know.

Sheamus vs. The Miz

Show comes out just behind Miz to watch the match. Sheamus runs Miz over to start but Miz slips down to the floor to avoid the forearms on the apron. Cole brings up the White Noise from last week and Show yells a lot. Miz pounds away in the corner but Sheamus comes back with the Regal Roll. The pale one drapes Miz over the top rope and pounds on him with the forearms to knock Miz to the floor. Sheamus gets sent into the announce table and Miz takes over.

Back in and Miz hits a kick to the chest and puts on a chinlock as we take a break. Back with Miz hitting a top rope ax handle for two. Off to a chinlock as Show torments Cole some more. Sheamus suplexes out of the hold but walks into the Reality Check. Miz's corner clothesline is countered by the ax handle to the face. A knee lift looks to set up White Noise but Sheamus has to settle for a powerslam instead.

The top rope shoulder gets two for Sheamus but White Noise is countered again. The short DDT gets two and Show double dog dares Cole to bring up the 45 seconds reign. Miz avoids the Cloverleaf and the Brogue Kick, but Sheamus escapes the Finale and hits White Noise. Brogue Kick gets the pin at 14:40.

Rating: C. So. Freaking. What. That can sum up this entire show. Sheamus beats up Miz which is the only logical solution as Miz has nothing going on right now and we're supposed to believe that a win over Miz means ANYTHING anymore. Sheamus vs. Show is probably the best story going on right now and even that is nothing special whatsoever. As I said, this whole show seems like it doesn't matter at all.

Vickie comes out of Vince's office to talk to Dolph It's officially Team Ziggler at Survivor Series. Punk comes up to claim a conspiracy and goes on a rant about Vince. Tonight it's Ziggler/Punk vs. Ryback/Cena. Great. ANOTHER worthless tag match.

Regal and Sheamus talk in the back and nothing is said.

We get almost the entire AJ/Vickie/Cena segment from earlier.

Eve Torres/Aksana vs. Layla/Kaitlyn

Aksana makes me feel better if nothing else. Aksana and Layla start things off with Layla grabbing a quick rollup for two. Layla tries her bouncing cross body out of the corner and thankfully Aksana decks her while she's bouncing to take over. A kick to the face gets two for Aksana and it turns into kind of a fist fight which goes nowhere for the British chick.

Off to Eve for a front facelock to keep things slow. Eve kicks away Kaitlyn's hand to stop the tag in a nice touch. The bouncing moonsault from Eve is blocked by Layla and there's the hot tag to Kaitlyn. Everything breaks down and Eve hits that neckbreaker on Layla but Kaitlyn hits a bad reverse DDT for the pin on Eve at 4:58.

Rating: D+. This wasn't as bad as most of their matches have been lately. Again it helps that they're giving them some extra time, which sounds simple but it gives them more practice. When you literally triple the amount of time they're getting on TV a week, the amount of practice also triples. It's still nothing to get excited about, but it's notably better than it was.

Alberto yells at Ricardo in the back when Rosa literally bumps into him. They both seem interested by the other.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Kofi Kingston

During the entrance, we get clips of Orton and Del Rio fighting in the catering area on Smackdown. Has there been a match without a recap during the entrance so far tonight? Del Rio knocks Kofi down but Kingston comes back with a jumping back elbow. The announcers talk about who is going to be the new fifth member of Foley's team. Is there a reason why Foley is involved at this point? Alberto pounds away in the corner and knocks Kofi to the floor.

Back in and Del Rio hits a double stomp and a suplex for two followed by a body scissors. Alberto works on the arm as this is dragging along. Kofi avoids a charge and Del Rio's shoulder hits the post now. The fans are pretty dead for this. Some dropkicks put Alberto down and there's the

Boom Drop. The armbreaker is countered and the SOS gets two for Kofi. Kofi misses a springboard cross body...and here's Orton. Well his music at least, allowing Kofi to roll up Del Rio for the pin at 7:45.

Rating: C-. This match felt like it went on for about twenty minutes instead of just under eight. Ignoring the idea of Kofi, the IC Champion, needing help from Orton to get a rollup win, the match was really dull with Del Rio continuing to be boring in the ring with his really basic arm work. Nothing to see here.

Orton comes in and hits the RKO on Del Rio post match.

We recap the Brad Maddox and Vince thing from earlier.

Santino Marella/Zack Ryder vs. Epico/Primo

Primo vs. Santino to start things off with Marella taking him to the mat. Santino asks for a break and Santino starts marching around the ring. Off to an armbar by Marella and there's the tag to Ryder. Zack misses a cross body and the cousins take over with stomping in the corner. Ryder grabs a rollup but Santino is arguing with the referee for some reason. Epico comes in and hits a dropkick for two. Off to the chinlock for a few seconds before Ryder escapes a suplex and hits a neckbreaker. There's the tag to Santino and everything breaks down. Santino busts out the Cobra and lays out Epico for the pin 5:05.

Rating: D. Another boring match here which went on too long. I'll give them this: they've developed a lower card for the tag teams now. This one was for the crowd though as the fans love Ryder and Santino. The match was fine enough I guess, but this show has been so draining already that it's hard to care.

Brodus Clay vs. Wade Barrett

Brodus' face looks different. Did he have facial hair and I never noticed it? Brodus hits his suplex and a legdrop for two. Barrett comes back with the Boss Man Slam and it's off to a chinlock. Brodus hits a splash in the corner but a second one misses and it's the Souvenir for the pin at 2:58. Just an extended squash.

Heath Slater vs. Jey Uso

THE USOS ARE STILL ALIVE! Slater plays the guitar to start but Jey charges into a boot in the corner. Slater plays more guitar and it's off to a chinlock. Jey fights back but it's time to hit that chinlock again. Back up and a side kick to the face gets two for Heath. There's the third incarnation of the chinlock but Jey fights up and hits a superkick. Then he stands around before doing anything. A top rope splash hits knees and Slater hits an inverted DDT for the pin at 3:58. The DDT is called the Smash Hit apparently.

Rating: D. I love the 3MB. They're so stupid and goofy and they're exactly what these horribly boring Raw's need. They're the kind of act where you can totally turn your brain off and just have fun for about five minutes. Their promos are hilarious and they make the show fun for just a few moments. I mean, we can do that on anything else on the show, so take it where you can get it. Also the DDT is a way better move than that sleeper drop Slater used forever.

Here's Punk before the main event with something to say. He talks about how he beat Ryback but people are trying to taint his victory because of Maddox. Punk says he's going to get screwed by Vince at Survivor Series but he'll win anyway because he's the best in the world. We're at 351 days, so Survivor Series is a big moment for him.

CM Punk/Dolph Ziggler vs. Ryback/John Cena

Cena vs. Punk starts things off and they fight over a top wristlock. It's quickly off to Ziggler who gets caught in a surfboard submission. A bulldog puts Ziggler down and it's off to Punk who is hiptossed for two. Double teaming puts Cena down and Ziggler drops about ten elbows for a two count. Back to Punk for a kick to the back of Cena's head for two. Punk works on the arm but Cena hits an AA out of nowhere to put Punk down.

Back to Dolph who gets two off a Fameasser as does Punk off a neckbreaker. An electric chair puts Punk down again and it's back to Ziggler. Dolph goes up but misses a missile dropkick and there's the hot tag to Ryback to face Punk. Ryback destroys both guys and Meathooks

Ziggler to the floor. Another Meathook puts Punk down and the Shell Shock gets the pin at 10:12.

Rating: C. This was your normal main event tag and it's so cute that they want us to believe that Ryback has a chance in the main event of the PPV. Cena is there so they can keep the title on Punk without having Ryback get pinned again, because the stupid Rock vs. Punk match needs to happen, because...screw it. This is freaking dumb and having the match set seven months in advance was STUPID because no matter what Punk does, he's never near Rock or Cena's level and no one is going to believe Punk has a chance against Rock, but in modern WWE, who freaking cares because that's what they want to do.

Ryback and Cena stare at each other to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. The wrestling on this show, while long and drawn out at times, was mostly fine with some decent matches, but at the end of the day the show falls apart in the third hour when it's clear that they're filling in time however they can. The fact that they've changed the entire top of the card of the PPV a week later tells me they have no idea what they're doing and no plan at all. Tonight's show felt like it should have ended at about 10pm and the last few matches just dragged and dragged, which isn't something you want to see.

I have no idea what they think they're going to do to fix things, but if they think Rock is the solution to all of their problems, they're in trouble. WWE has been able to turn it on in a single night before, but this is as bad as I can remember it being. It's like they have no clue what they want to do or where any of this is going. Cena and Vickie's feud is now thrown into a world title match which has nothing to do with Vickie and Ziggler is in the Survivor Series match to somehow feud with Foley who wasn't even here tonight. This show is a huge mess anymore and a lot needs to change, starting with losing an hour.

Results

R-Truth/Sin Cara/Rey Mysterio b. Antonio Cesaro/Prime Time Players – Little Jimmy to Cesaro

Cody Rhodes b. Daniel Bryan – Cross Rhodes

Kane b. Damien Sandow – Chokeslam

Sheamus b. The Miz – Brogue Kick

Kaitlyn/Layla b. Aksana/Eve Torres – Reverse DDT to Eve

Kofi Kingston b. Alberto Del Rio – Rollup

Santino Marella/Zack Ryder b. Primo/Epico – Cobra to Epico

Wade Barrett b. Brodus Clay – Souvenir

Heath Slater b. Jey Uso – Smash Hit

Ryback/John Cena b. CM Punk/Dolph Ziggler – Shell Shock to Ziggler

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Thought of the Day: WWE Is Too Polished

I've noticed this a lot watching Raw's from the Attitude Era. Back in the day, Raw looked a bit more gritty and toned down. It wasn't the same set but with different colors on the tron. Things looked more bare and in a way, that's a nice change. Instead of having everything flashy and a big presentation, it was more about what you got in the ring and in the back. I'm not saying strip everything down, but stop making things look so big and polished. It might help a bit.

Smackdown – November 2, 2012: It's Raw 2 And They're Not Even Hiding It Anymore

Smackdown

Date: November 2, 2012

Location: Crown Coliseum, Fayetteville, North Carolina

Commentators: Josh Matthews, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're in the Big Show Era here and for the life of me I'm not entirely sure why. Sheamus was doing ok as champion (other than the three months that Del Rio sucked the life out of him) so they put the title on Big Show of all people? At least the match was good though so that helps a bit. Other than that we're going to have to speed through the build to Survivor Series in three weeks. Let's get to it.

We start with a kind of commercial for the show, talking about what we're going to see. Most of it is related to Raw of course, because being bored by that stuff on Monday isn't enough anymore.

We open with MizTV and Miz talks about Ryback a bit before moving on to Sheamus getting knocked out. Sheamus is the guest tonight and as he comes to the ring, we see another clip from Raw of Sheamus hitting White Noise on Big Show. Miz asks Sheamus about being a loser, but Sheamus asks him about losing to Kofi on Sunday. Miz says the difference between the two of them is that he can beat Kofi and will do it again to get back the IC Title. Sheamus agrees that he's never beaten Big Show but he's not going to hide.

Miz cuts him off and says he doesn't want to hear cliched stock answers. See, it's Miz that can be blamed for Sheamus losing the title. He won the match at Wrestlemania that got Johnny Ace power, which led to Show getting his job back, which led to Show's change in attitude, which led

to Show winning the title. Sheamus: "So it's you whose head I should be kicking off?" Miz backs off and says he'll win his title back from Kofi.

Before Miz can say his catchphrase, here's Kofi. Kofi says Miz hasn't been on the Real World in awhile, but apparently Kofi has kicked the sense out of Miz, because Miz can't beat him. Miz says he'll beat Kofi at Survivor Series, but here's Big Show for another interruption. He isn't happy with Miz taking credit for Show's victory, so he's siding with Kofi in saying there's something wrong with Miz. Why is Sheamus getting interviewed instead of the new champion? Why ask Sheamus what it's like to get knocked out when you can ask Show what it's like to knock him out.

Miz asks him just that but as Show starts talking about euphoria, Sheamus cuts him off and asks what it felt like to take White Noise on Monday. Show laughs it off and says no rematch at Survivor Series. Miz tries to jump Kofi and is immediately knocked to the floor. I'm pretty sure you can figure out the main event already.

After a break, Big Show is in the back and runs into Booker who makes the tag match with the four guys in the opening segment.

Sin Cara vs. Darren Young

Things start fast and Cara spins Young around with a rana and armdrag off the middle rope. Darren wisely slows things down and hits a neckbreaker for two. Off to a chinlock but Cara fights up and grabs a small package for two. Back to the chinlock by Darren which doesn't work again as Sin fights up and hits a middle rope dropkick to take over. A jumping back elbow gets two for the dude in the mask but Young knees him in the ribs to put Cara right back down. The gutbuster gets the pin for Young at 3:37.

Rating: D+. Not bad here but the time hurts it. It's nice to see these guys doing something other than having the same tag match over and over again as it'll keep the feud somewhat fresher. I'm still amazed by how

much better Young and O'Neil are than when they were on NXT, just by doing some stupid dance.

Post match Titus starts blowing on a whistle and talks about beating on a pinata in the ring. Those little dogs tried to get in the ring with some big dogs and Titus is going to give another little dog that chance. He calls out Mysterio and we're getting another match. Before we get to that, quick sidebar about something Titus said: regarding pinatas, is there a more bizarre tradition ever for children? "Here son, here's your favorite cartoon. NOW BEAT HIM WITH A STICK UNTIL HE BREAKS IN HALF AND EAT WHAT FALLS OUT OF HIM!"

Rey Mysterio vs. Titus O'Neil

We get the bell after a break and Rey fires off kicks to the leg. Titus gets in a single shot to knock Rey down and the beating begins. A slam gets two for Titus and it's time to stand around. O'Neil misses a running boot to Rey who was against the ropes. The partners fight on the floor as Titus catches the 619. He takes Rey to the corner and gets down in a three point stance, only to hit the middle buckle, allowing Rey to roll him up for the pin at 2:55.

Cara and Rey do the Players' dance on the stage.

We get a recap video from the end of the PPV with Maddox hitting Ryback low to give Punk the pin, followed by the Shell Shock on top of the Cell.

Maddox will be on Raw on Monday.

We get the full ending segment from Raw, starting with Heyman introducing Miz as Punk's first team member.

Teddy and Booker are in the back and Teddy thinks there's going to be mutiny in the Raw locker room. Natalya comes in and wants to be the

assistant since Eve is on the European tour. Otunga comes in and says he'll do anything Booker needs. Booker says he needs Otunga to compete against a returning superstar. Otunga says ok but Booker says it's Great Khali. Otunga spits his coffee on Nattie. After an insult from Otunga, more coffee goes flying at Teddy. This was supposed to be comedy I believe.

Wade Barrett vs. Randy Orton

Del Rio is on commentary. While Orton is doing his pose on the ropes, Del Rio tries to run in and jump him, only to get knocked right to the floor. Ricardo rams Orton into the post and a double beatdown ensues as we take a break. Back and the scheduled match is in progress with Orton clotheslining Barrett to the floor. They head back in with Barrett taking Orton down upon reentry.

Wade chokes away on the middle rope and does the same on the top rope so it doesn't feel left out. There's the running big boot while Orton is sitting on the middle rope, knocking him back to the floor. After ramming Randy into the steps a few times, it's back inside for ye olde chinlock. Orton tries a comeback with a belly to back suplex but immediately after taking Barrett down with it, Wade kicks him in the ribs to slow Randy back down.

They slug it out and Orton takes over, which even Josh thinks is very surprising given that Barrett is a bareknuckle fighter. Barrett comes back with a kick to the face and a middle rope elbow for two. Back to the reverse chinlock followed by Barrett slamming him down. Wade goes up for another elbow but Orton crotches him and hits a superplex to put both guys down. Orton busts out some clotheslines and the powerslam followed by the Elevated DDT. Before the RK0 can be loaded up, Del Rio shows up on the stage. Orton has to knock Ricardo to the floor and Wade gets a rollup win at 8:43 shown.

Rating: C+. The match was pretty good here but I'd like for Barrett to be

more than a prop in someone else's feud, which is all he is anymore. These two have fought three times now and have alternated wins every time. It's hard to get behind either guy, especially when Barrett isn't even getting any of the focus. Has he even gotten an entrance in any of the matches?

We get the segment from Raw of everyone talking about breast cancer and a clipped down version of Cena presenting the million dollar check to the Susan G. Komen Foundation.

Striker asks Alberto why he keeps tormenting Orton. Orton comes up from behind and they brawl. They head to the catering table and Orton throws hot coffee on Ricardo. Once Alberto is down, Randy pours what looks like barbecue sauce on Rodriguez as well. Alberto gets thrown over a table. The desserts are spared and when Del Rio runs away, Striker tries to talk to Randy, earning him a trip into a cake. When did Striker become the whipping boy of Smackdown?

Great Khali vs. David Otunga

Khali recently had to have some kind of surgery on his brain so it's a good thing to see him back. During Otunga's entrance, we actually recap the scene that set this match up. Teddy and Nattie having coffee spat on them deserved a recap? Seriously? Otunga takes him down but Khali chops him from his knees. More chopping in the corner follows and Natalya is watching in the back. Khali misses a boot but comes back with the big chop for the pin at 1:35.

Post break Natalya thanks Khali for beating up Otunga. They shake hands and Nattie thinks his hands are big. Ok then.

R-Truth vs. Justin Gabriel

Feeling out process to start and Truth starts gyrating. Gabriel avoids a

shot of his own and gyrates a bit as well. Truth hits the spinning forearm for two but Gabriel dropkicks him down and kicks away a bit. Off to a chinlock by Justin as JBL is talking about Shawn Michaels. A spin kick puts Truth down and since it worked so well the first time, Justin does it again. Gabriel tries a springboard I'm assuming clothesline but Truth ducks out of the way and hits Little Jimmy for the pin at 3:23.

Rating: D+. Wasn't Gabriel supposed to get a push? Now he's losing to R-Truth clean of all people? This was a rather random match between two faces with no tease of either guy turning or anything. This whole show has felt like it doesn't need to exist and this is another match that would fit on the same list. It wasn't bad or anything though.

ANOTHER recap from Raw, this time about the AJ/Vickie/Cena/Ziggler segment. You know, WWE's PG version of TNA's horrible Clair Lynch story.

Show tells Miz to follow his lead tonight because Show is in charge out there.

We recap Alberto and Ricardo costing Orton the match earlier as well as the brawl. Next week on the live Smackdown (as in taped earlier in the day) it's Del Rio vs. Orton in a falls count anywhere match. In other words, the Barret matches meant nothing at all.

Sheamus/Kofi Kingston vs. Big Show/The Miz

During Sheamus' entrance, we get I believe the sixth video from Raw of the night, this one being Sheamus hitting White Noise on Show. Didn't we see that already? Miz and Show keep changing places to decide who faces Sheamus. It's eventually Miz with Sheamus hammering away to start in the corner. I'm so used to calling Sheamus the champ but I can't do that anymore, so it's just Sheamus working on the arm.

Off to Kofi who comes in off the top with a shot to the arm, only to be

clotheslined down by Miz. Kofi hits the same move to knock Miz to the floor, followed by a suicide dive to take over. Show and Sheamus stare at each other on the floor as well and we take a break. Back with Show slamming Kofi down before doing some amateur stuff (yes you read that right) to take Kofi to the mat.

A side slam puts Kofi down for the third time and Show keeps looking over at Sheamus. Off to Miz to work on the downed Kofi. A knee drop gets two and Miz puts on a reverse chinlock which doesn't last long. Kofi tries to dive over Miz to get to Sheamus but the right route is apparently going through the legs instead. Sheamus gets the hot tag and destroys Miz, hitting a powerslam and the ten forearms in the ropes. The Regal Roll takes Miz down and it's off to Kofi for his top rope cross body. Show gets knocked off the apron but as Kofi pounds on Miz in the corner, Show knocks him cold, giving Miz the pin at 6:42 shown of 10:12.

Rating: C-. Standard main event tag match here that wasn't anything great. Thankfully Show didn't lose in his first match as champion and Miz FINALLY pins Kofi to give us a reason to care about a fourth match between them. Other than that though, this was a pretty dull match with nothing significant happening at all.

Miz poses over Kofi post match and Sheamus kicks his head off. Well he was too busy yelling at the referee while Show punched Kofi so he had to do something good here.

Overall Rating: D-. This is officially a Raw supplemental show. They recapped EVERYTHING that happened on Raw and nothing here was anything new. Between meaningless matches (Gabriel vs. Truth and Khali vs. Otunga) and the same match we've seen on the last two TV shows which apparently is just to set up Del Rio vs. Orton again, what's the point in watching Smackdown anymore? I certainly can't think of why anybody would sit through this.

Results

Darren Young b. Sin Cara – Double Knee Gutbuster

Rey Mysterio b. Titus O'Neil – Rollup

Wade Barrett b. Randy Orton – Rollup

Great Khali b. David Otunga – Chop

R-Truth b. Justin Gabriel – Little Jimmy

Big Show/The Miz b. Kofi Kingston/Sheamus – Miz pinned Kingston after a WMD from Big Show

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Impact Wrestling – November 1, 2012: Has Interesting Wrestling Been Outlawed And No One Told Me?

Impact Wrestling

Date: November 1, 2012

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Jeremy Borash, Todd Kennely

It's Open Fight Night and the two fights announced so far are Bully Ray vs. D-Von and ODB calling out Jesse Godderz because for some reason TNA thinks we care about him. Other than that we've got one more show after this before Turning Point and a few more matches being announced would be nice. Also Angle got beaten down last week so we'll probably hear something about that. Let's get to it.

Here's Joseph Park to open things up. He talks about how he was attacked and had his rights violated by Aces and 8's and because of that, he wants a match with Aces and 8's. Since he's not allowed to do that though, he has to use Open Fight Night. He challenges any member but gets four instead. Angle and Sting make the saves and Sting promises to take a mask off someone in Aces and 8's tonight.

Jesse is annoyed at having to fight ODB tonight but Tara says she has his back. Jesse makes her sterilize him. This guy is still annoying.

Magnus calls out Joe for a TV Title match. So do champions automatically have to defend their titles? If so, the entire roster is rather stupid. Magnus says Joe is the Howard Stern of wrestling: he has a radio face and isn't the image we want.

TV Title: Magnus vs. Samoa Joe

Joe comes straight to the ring and beats Magnus down in the corner. I'm assuming this is for the title but I'm not sure. Magnus gets a boot up in the corner but charges into an atomic drop. Joe kicks him down and hits the backsplash for two. A jumping knee to the face puts Joe down and it's off to a quick chinlock which Joe fights out of without much difficulty. Magnus charges into a Rock Bottom out of the corner to send him out to the floor. Joe rams Magnus' back into the post but Magnus pulls something from underneath the ring. It's a wrench and Magnus hits Joe in the head with it for the DQ at 3:44.

Rating: D. What was the point of this again? Magnus gets the match he wants and cheats to lose it? I'm not sure what they're going for here as Magnus has potential but he doesn't seem to be going anywhere at all with this feud. Joe beat him clean at BFG, so why is this feud still going?

Angle wants D-Von tonight but Hogan says he has to wait until Turning Point. Angle has Garrett Bischoff and Wes Brisco to help in the fight tonight, so I'm guessing they're ready to be revealed as members.

Post break Joe rants about wanting to fight Magnus with No DQ.

We recap Aries attacking Hardy after the title defense against Angle and stealing the belt.

Hardy is putting his paint on and we get those inner thoughts of his again.

Here are Daniels and Kaz with something to say. Kaz says that the real masked men around here are Hernandez and Chavo. Apparently what he and Daniels said last week has offended some people, so tonight they're calling out the Spanish announcers Hector Guerrero and Willie Urbina.

Christopher Daniels/Kazarian vs. Willie Urbina/Hector Guerrero

Post break the announcers are still getting into the ring as the younger guys are making fun of them with very basic Spanish. Daniels shoves Willie so Hector punches him down, but Hector is quickly in trouble. The tag champs finally make the save and there's no match of course.

We get the Christian York Gut Check video from last week.

ODB wants Eric here and wants her fried chicken. For the love of goodness GET ANOTHER JOKE.

Gut Check; Christian York vs. Zema Ion

York throws Ion's hairspray away and things start fast. York works on the arm for a bit and flips out of the corner. To say York is more polished than the rest of the Gut Check guys so far is a huge understatement. With Ion down in the corner, York hits a rolling flip attack to put Ion in even more trouble. York goes up but Ion rolls to the apron and comes back in with a tornado DDT. A middle rope moonsault hits York's knees and York hits Eve Torres' rolling neckbreaker for two and we head to the floor. As

they come back in, Ion kicks the ropes into York's balls and hooks that arm hold (Submission Impossible) for the win at 4:20.

Rating: C-. York looked solid here and I have zero idea at all why Ion won this match. I mean...IT'S ZEMA ION. Do you REALLY need to protect a guy like this? York looked more than good enough to get a contract, especially after some of the people that have gotten one through this concept. It still doesn't mean anything if they're never on TV afterwards though.

Aries goes to see the Rob's about something.

Garrett Bischoff says he's got Ray's back tonight. Someone comes up and says Aces and 8's is outside right now. Ray and Bischoff find find Sting and Angle and see five members of the team not including D-Von. D-Von shows up and gets Bully to chase him. Aces and 8's run off. Oh and Wes Brisco was there helping Sting and company but I didn't see him at first.

Here's ODB to call out Jessie Godderz because someone thinks that wrestling fans want to see some Big Brother alumnus. ODB makes fun of Jesse before calling him out

ODB vs. Jessie Godderz

This is your first hour main event for some reason. ODB chops Godderz to start until Jessie shoves her down and we get a lot of posing. ODB comes back with a bad wheelbarrow slam and does the face into the crotch stuff in the corner. A middle rope Thesz Press misses and Jessie slams ODB down. ODB spansks Jessie a bit and GOOD GRIEF END THIS ALREADY! Tara's distraction lets Jessie pin ODB with a handful of I guess tights at about 4:00 (forgot to time it).

Rating: R. As in reality stars suck. Miz took forever to get going before he got good and I have no idea why someone thought this was a good idea.

Terrible match and the ODB character has LONG lived out its usefulness now. Just end the Knockouts Tag Titles already and get rid of ODB while they're at it.

Taz isn't here tonight because of Hurricane Sandy so Tenay and JB do the second hour.

Here are the Rob's and the smaller one is calling out Jeff Hardy as per Aries' request.

Jeff Hardy vs. Robbie E

As expected, Hardy takes over quickly to start and hits a middle rope legdrop. We head to the floor where Hardy sends him into the steps and hits Poetry in Motion off the same steps to take Robbie down. We take a break and come back with Robbie in control off stuff that isn't important enough to show us. Jeff comes back but can't hit the Twist, allowing Robbie to hit the Twist for two. The second attempt at the Twist hits and it's the Swanton for the pin at 4:15 shown of 7:45.

Rating: D. Of all the people Hardy could pick, he picks ROBBIE E to beat up Hardy? Why not like, I don't know, THE BIG STRONG GUY THAT HANGS OUT WITH ROBBIE E??? Nothing match here as Hardy didn't really have to break a sweat to beat Robbie. It was the world champion against a jobber to the stars. What were you expecting here?

Post match Aries comes out and says the difference between them is three seconds. Aries says he's climbed the ladder of success in the time he's been here. Hardy says let's do it this way and pulls out a ladder. Aries: "You going to put some new shingles on a roof?" Austin says no to the ladder match and leaves.

We get a video of Hogan's Beach Shop opening when Matt Morgan showed up and wanted an explanation of why he hasn't gotten a chance at the top.

Morgan takes one of Hogan's old ropes which is apparently like 30 years old. He says he'll make history with it.

Storm tells Hogan he's ready for the world title. Hogan says he might have an idea for Storm. This is unlike last week when Hogan DID have an idea for him.

Here's Bobby Roode, presumably with another challenge. Actually he says he's here with a fact: he's getting screwed once again. Roode says that he got screwed last week when he wasn't included in the four guys who could have gotten a shot. This brings out AJ Styles who talks about how Roode got the longest world title reign ever while AJ had personal issues to deal with. AJ: "I got accused of something because I was in an elevator with a female, WHICH SEEMS TO BE THE NEW NORM IN WRESTLING IF YOUR NAME IS AJ!" BURN on WWE!

The brawl starts with no referee but here are Hogan and Storm. Hulk makes a three way at Turning Point with Roode, Storm and AJ and says the winner gets a shot, but the loser CAN'T get a shot until next Bound For Glory.

We run down the Turning Point card.

Here are Morgan and Ryan with Morgan talking about how he's doing this to get Hogan's attention. He's also wearing the robe that he stole from Hogan's shop. Morgan says he's going to go through the whole roster until he owns the world title. Ryan says he usual avoids VD's, but tonight he wants RVD so he can show us that the X Title can be X-Rated.

Joey Ryan vs. Rob Van Dam

Joey jumps him to start but Rob fights back with shoulders in the corner. Van Dam takes him down but Morgan pulls Ryan out of the way and Joey grabs a side roll and trunks for the pin a 1:37. The announcers and Tenay sounded surprised that happened so maybe it wasn't as planned.

Morgan kicks RVD's head off post match.

Here's Ray for the callout of D-Von. First though he shouts out to the people in NYC who have been hurt by Hurricane Sandy. Nothing wrong with that. He wants D-Von RIGHT NOW and here we go.

D-Von vs. Bully Ray

We've only got about five minutes left so this won't be much. D-Von immediately heads to the floor so Ray grabs a table. There's been no bell yet unless I missed it. D-Von keeps up the stalling and here come the troops, including the one that looks to be Wes Brisco. Ray grabs his chain to fend them off but there are like eight guys not counting D-Von. A big army of guys come from the back to help in the fight but it's quickly down to just Bully and D-Von.

Ray punches him down and the fans want the table. A big guy breaks up a powerbomb attempt by Ray but Joseph Park of all people comes in to face off with the big guy. Park gets punched in the ribs and the big guy pounds him down. Park comes back and gets the mask to reveal...Luke Gallows. Gallows chokeslams Park through the table to end the show. Naturally we don't hear Gallows' name because that's copyrighted by WWE.

Overall Rating: D. This show didn't do it for me at all. Look at the matches on here along with some of the segments and tell me what was good on this show. I like the three way they announced with the loser stipulation, but other than that I'm not sure what I'm supposed to care about on this episode. Just dull all around, like almost all wrestling is anymore at this point. Open Fight Night is totally worthless as a concept as it's just not needed to make the matches we're getting.

Results

Samoa Joe b. Magnus via DQ when Magnus hit Joe with a wrench

Zema Ion b. Christian York – Submission Impossible

Jeff Hardy b. Robbie E – Swanton

Joey Ryan b. Rob Van Dam – Side Roll

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NXT – October 31, 2012: Big E. Langston Belongs On Sesame Street

NXT

Date: October 31, 2012

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: William Regal, Tony Luftman

It's Halloween and we're coming off a pretty good show last week. I'm hoping to see more of that Bronson guy as his debut last week impressed me. Other than that I'm hoping we don't see more of Slater vs. Rollins as the match last week wasn't anything interesting. We should be getting close to the time when Bray Wyatt comes back too. Let's get to it.

Usos vs. Johnny Curtis/Michael McGillicutty

There's a different ring announcer this week who doesn't sound very confident in her abilities. I don't know why the Usos can't get on the main shows. They've got experience and a decent enough gimmick, so why can't they get a spot? Curtis seems to want to pose instead of get ready and McGillicutty is getting annoyed at him before the bell. McGillicutty

and Jey start things off with Jey no selling a smash into the buckle. It's nice to see some stereotypes being followed in modern times.

Off to Curtis who starts dancing. Jey punches him in the face and brings in Jimmy to work on the arm. McGillicutty breaks up an O'Connor Roll before yelling at Curtis some more about messing around. Off to Curtis for a double clothesline to the back of Jimmy's head which gets two. It might have been three if Johnny wasn't gyrating while covering. Back to McGillicutty who whips Jimmy into the corner but misses a splash. There's the hot tag to Jey who cleans house and hits a Bubba Bomb on Michael, followed by a Samoan Drop. Jimmy finishes McGillicutty with a Superfly Splash at 4:17.

Rating: C-. I like three of the people in this match and I like that they're trying something with Curtis, but the guy just isn't that good or interesting at all. I've heard they're giving him a new gimmick on the main shows which at least shows that they're trying, but I'm not a fan of the guy at all.

As the Usos are celebrating, Ascension appears near the top of the arena for a staredown.

Xavier Woods vs. Leo Kruger

You might remember Woods as Consequences Creed from TNA. Apparently he and Regal are both big fans of funk music and they trade 8-tracks. Woods takes over with a headlock but Kruger counters with a backbreaker. Kruger pounds on the back for a bit and gets two off a suplex.

Off to a bearhug and Woods is in trouble. Woods starts pounding out of it so Kruger belly to belly suplexes him down. Xavier finally escapes and gets in some shots to the head followed by a clothesline (the new commentator calls it an explosive athletic move. He doesn't know many move names but he's good at the delivery). Woods misses a missile dropkick and Kruger hits that spinning face first mat slam of his for the

pin at 4:00.

Rating: D+. This was just a step above a squash which is ok. One of the major advantages NXT has over WWE at this point is that they can throw out new guys like Woods all the time who know what they're doing and can do jobs like this one. It's much better than how WWE has big names facing big names all the time and one has to lose or we get a screwy finish. They've got something decent with Kruger but he needs to do something instead of constantly squashing people.

Video on Big E. Langston.

Langston is in the arena and Saxton asks him about the five count. Langston talks about how much he loves the number five. He has five fingers on each hand and five toes on each foot. People also have a high and low five....and here's Vickie. Dang I was wanting to see where he was going with that. No seriously, how much further could he go with that?

Anyway Vickie says she's here to recruit and someone has caught her eye. She offers her services to Vickie. Fans: "JUST SAY NO!" Langston says he has what she needs and throws powder on her. This was bizarre, primarily due to Langston's voice. He has an odd speaking pattern where he sounds like he's trailing off and then gets a burst of energy before going back down again.

Here's Jinder Mahal with something to say. He says he's the modern day maharajah but doesn't have his crown jewel. Being a champion is his birthright and it's also his right to have a rematch with Seth Rollins. Mahal demands Dusty Rhodes come out and present him with his rematch.

Instead he gets Justin Gabriel who says that Jinder should get in the back of the line. Mahal says that Justin lost in the first round, so Justin polls the audience. After the fans pick Gabriel, here's Drew McIntyre who says it's reality check time. He says it should be his shot because he's the only person that has a victory over Seth Rollins. Now

here's Bo Dallas who says all of these guys have had their shot at Rollins, so it's time to give someone new a chance. Dusty comes out and says it'll be a fourway next week with the winner getting the shot.

Roman Reigns vs. CJ Parker

Reigns used to be Leakee in FCW. He's a member of the Anoa'i family and is the son of Sika and the brother of Rosey. The announcers pound in the fact that Reigns has the IT factor and that we'll be talking about this debut for years to come. Reigns catches Parker's crossbody and pounds on the arm and shoulder. A DDT on the arm puts Parker down and Reigns cranks away on it some more. Parker fires away some elbows to escape but a side kick misses and Reigns slugs him down again.

A belly to back suplex by Reigns is countered into a cross body by Parker for two. Parker hits some knees in the corner but gets caught by a flying forearm. Reigns kind of roars and hits a belly to back slam for the pin at 3:43. Think Cena's Protoplex (the spinning slam he sets up the Shuffle with) but instead of spinning the other guy around, Reigns drives the down with his hand.

Rating: D+. The commentary is over the top but Reigns looked fine here. He's got a good look and a good physique and his in ring abilities were fine. The match was just a squash though with Parker getting in a few shots here and there. Much like everyone else, it's too early to say what Reigns has without giving him a more serious challenge.

US Title: Tyson Kidd vs. Antonio Cesaro

Cesaro is defending. They immediately head to the mat with Cesaro holding a front facelock to control. He switches over to a test of strength grip but Kidd bridges off the mat. Cesaro jumps on him to break the bridge, but Kidd bridges up with Cesaro on top of him. Kidd grabs a rollup for two and what looks like a heel hook for a bit but Cesaro makes the rope.

Tyson grabs another pair of rollups for two each and they trade near falls in a very good pinfall reversal sequence, ending with Kidd holding an armbar as we take a break. Back with Cesaro putting on a bearhug as Kidd is in trouble. Kidd fights out of it and backdrops his way out of the Neutralizer before hitting a low dropkick to put the champ down. Kidd starts firing off kicks before hitting a slingshot reverse rollup for two.

Cesaro sends him back to the apron where Kidd hits an enziguri and a slingshot rana for two. A legdrop to the back of Cesaro's head puts the champion on the floor. Kidd hits a kick from the apron and a springboard elbow back inside for two more. Tyson tries for the Sharpshooter but Cesaro kicks him away. The uppercut hits Kidd and the Neutralizer gets the pin at 7:10 shown of 10:40.

Rating: B-. This is what guys like Cesaro and Kidd, as in guys not trained by FCW, are great at: having flashy matches that aren't like the same style that you so often get in WWE anymore. Cesaro is definitely a great overall package and Kidd has more than enough skill to get over his size limitations. Good match here and I'd like to see more of Kidd on WWE TV.

Cesaro celebrates and JR plugs the fourway next week to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. NXT is starting to click again as they're back to having solid wrestling throughout the show and pretty much no time being wasted. We're also moving towards the next challenger for the title which is treated as a big deal, which it should be. NXT continues to be a solid wrestling show and pretty easily the best one going today.

Results

Usos b. Michael McGillicutty/Johnny Curtis – Superfly Splash to McGillicutty

Leo Kruger b. Xavier Woods – Spinning Face First Mat Slam

Roman Reigns b. CJ Parker – Belly to Back Mat Slam

Antonio Cesaro b. Tyson Kidd – Neutralizer

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I Want To Talk A Little Bit About Sting Vs. Vader

This is one of those feuds that people always mention among the best ever, but every time I watch some of the matches from it, I'm blown away all over again by how freaking AWESOME they are. These guys had some of the best chemistry you'll ever see in wrestling and I don't recall them ever having a bad match against each other. I don't really have a point to this other than I love this feud and I felt like talking about it and why it's awesome. Let's get to it.

Before we get to the reasons this was awesome, let's get through the basic story of it. Vader had been around WCW for a year or two but didn't do much. Then he was paired up with Harley Race and got a world title match against the resident superhero and WCW World Champion Sting. They fought in the Omni in WCW's home city of Atlanta and in very basic terms, Sting got massacred. Vader beat him from one side of the arena to the other with Sting not getting in much offense at all. The beating became so bad that Vader was disqualified and Sting literally escaped with the title.

They had a rematch a few months later (to sell Sting's injuries from the match. That's very important as it made Vader look like even more of a

monster) at the Great American Bash and things got interesting. Sting did WAY better this time, hitting Vader with almost everything he had and literally throwing him around the ring (Remember that Vader is roughly 450lbs and a MONSTER) for over fifteen minutes....and then got powerbombed to death and Vader won the title.

Between July and December, Vader lost the title to Ron Simmons, but both he and Sting were entered into the King of Cable (This wasn't about cable TV. This was about the ropes being made of cable. WCW was actually confused as to why most people didn't get this) Tournament. The finals were at Starrcade 1992 and Sting had been talking about a new strategy against Vader. Watching the match, you can see Sting's basic pattern: when he goes all insane and aggressive, Vader destroys him. When Sting takes his time and makes Vader miss, Sting takes over. Midway through the match, Vader starts beating on Sting again, but Sting tells him to bring it on, resulting in Vader being spent and allowing Sting to FINALLY catch Vader in a powerslam to win the tournament.

At SuperBrawl III there was a strap match where Sting agreed to fight Vader in a match based on power. Sting may be a lot of things, but smart has never been one of them. To the shock of almost no one, Vader completely overpowered Sting and won the match by hogtying Sting and touching all four corners. They then feuded over Vader's WCW World Title in Europe and traded the title back and forth in a week.

Over the summer and into late 1993, they feuded with each other in a variety of tag matches with various partners. In the spring of 1994, the main event of a PPV was going to be Vader vs. Rick Rude for the WCW International Title, but since Rude had a career ending injury, the title was returned to the former champion Sting (WCW made little sense at times if that wasn't already clear) but Sting wanted a match to earn the title. The natural opponent to pick: the #1 contender, Vader (Someone has to explain this logic to me. Shouldn't it have been Vader being handed the

title and then him having to earn it?). Anyway the match wasn't great but it was still one of the best matches of the night.

The final match was actually a threeway involving the Big Boss Man who was eliminated early, leaving Sting vs. Vader. To give you an idea of how good Vader and Sting were, the match (through MORE WCW idiocy) wound up being about who could knock the other off their feet first (Vader won due to cheating), and it was STILL arguably the best match of the night. You could watch these two fight over a game of Chinese checkers and it would be interesting.

Now the interesting question is WHY these matches and the feud were so great. There are a few different reasons here and we'll start with the most important one: the results weren't obvious. Look back at the matches in the feud that I listed. A quick count shows that the results are 4-3 in favor of Vader. The key idea to this is that it's not clear who is going to win. By comparison, John Cena and Chris Jericho have fought on PPV in singles matches or triple threats five times. Cena is undefeated. To the best of my knowledge, Chris Jericho has a total of one televised one on one win against John Cena, which was in their first match when Cena was a rookie.

Having the winner of a match being pretty obvious doesn't make things interesting. It takes something special to overcome an obvious ending to a match. Look at Undertaker's Wrestlemania matches for an example where this can work. It took people like HHH and HBK to make those matches interesting, because there was no way someone like Mark Henry was going to end the Streak. That's the main reason a feud like Vader and Sting worked: it was a legitimate rivalry instead of Sting beating Vader every time, giving you an uncertainty of who is going to win. Think of it like this: it's rare that a movie or book is as good if you've heard the ending, because the payoff isn't there.

A second reason these matches worked is the formula. It's a classic story of a hero against a monster. Sting was the undisputed top man in the company and by 1992, it was a pretty safe bet to say that he was the most popular wrestler in the world, given that Hogan was on an indefinite hiatus. Vader was an unstoppable monster that only Sting could stop and you can connect the dots yourself here. The idea of a classic story is one that you can run at any time and get a reaction. Hero vs. monster is one of the most classic stories of all time and it's never not going to work.

Third, and arguably the most important depending on how you look at it, the matches were really good. I know that sounds simple, but that's a very important point that a lot of feuds don't have. Look at Flair vs. Rhodes. It's another classic story (wealth/elite status vs. the common man) where the promos were great and the fans were into the feud, but the matches SUCKED.

Sting is one of those wrestlers that gravitates to the kind of wrestler he's facing. If his opponent is good, he'll have a good match. If his opponent is bad though, the match is going to suck. Vader happens to be one of the best big men workers of all time, and Sting had the power and speed combination that works perfectly against him. You had Sting selling like a madman out there for Vader, causing the crowd to erupt whenever Sting would make a comeback. Vader would then kill Sting dead with a few HARD shots and the sequence would start all over again.

Finally, the matches were mixed up. Look at the list of matches I gave you. We had title matches, tournament finals, gimmick matches, tag matches and multiple man matches. It wasn't the same stuff every single time and you had to wait between each match to get another one on one encounter, even if it was just a little time. This is the way to keep the

feud fresh, which is something that so often misses anymore. Look at the recent snoozefest known as Alberto Del Rio vs. Sheamus. There were three PPV matches and two of them ended with Sheamus Brogue Kicking Del Rio for the pin. Mix it up a little. Throw out the Cloverleaf for one of them. You know, the move that Sheamus had built up for weeks.

Overall, Sting vs. Vader is one of the best feuds ever for a lot of reasons, ranging from how back and forth it was, to how high quality the story was, to how the feud was kept fresh. You don't get stories like this too often anymore, mainly due to how fast the turnover is in them, but when you do you'll often hear them compared to this one. Sting vs. Vader is one of those matches that I throw on every now and then when I just want to see a fun match. Check them out, especially the Starrcade one as I can almost guarantee you'll be impressed by something in it.

Thought of the Day: WWE Is Now Ripping Off TNA's Bad Ideas

I mentioned this in the review last night but it deserves its own mention here. Last night on Raw, we saw WWE rip off the Clair Lynch storyline that TNA ran a few months back. We have Cena in the role of AJ Styles, being accused of an affair and having a plausible excuse for every piece of evidence presented to him. Vickie is now playing the role of Kaz and Daniels as the accuser and AJ is playing a not-angry Clair Lynch. This is the consensual PG version, but it's the same story.

If this is the best they can come up with, they're in trouble.

An Expanded Thought On Why Raw Sucked Last Night

If you haven't seen/read about Raw from last night and don't want to be surprised, go check it out before you read this because there are heavy spoilers inside this.

This is one of those posts that isn't going to make a ton of sense in a few months (hopefully), but for now it's what's on my mind. In short, Raw has been especially bad for weeks now and last night's (this is October 30, 2012) was one of the worst episodes I can remember in years. Not that it was actively bad, but that it was so dull and counterproductive that it might as well not have existed. There were two major areas that are causing all these problems though, and today I'm going to use last night's Raw as to illustrate this. Let's get to it.

We're going to go step by step through Raw (it won't take long) and then I'll get to my conclusion. My first major problem with Raw though is that NO FUN IS ALLOWED. The opening segment is about Ryback, a guy who at least got the crowd excited, getting the rug cut out from under him at the PPV. Want to cheer this guy who is unstoppable? WELL SCREW YOU! HE LOSES! Ryback gets to squash a jobber and the fans get to do his cheer.

Then we have Wade Barrett vs. Orton. This is going to be covered in the second major issue.

We go to Vickie and AJ in the back. Here we have Vickie laughing at AJ and making her beg for her job because of some affair and a romantic dinner. In other words, we have a person losing her job doing the thing she loves. This is a stretch, but in an economy like the United States is in today, talking about losing your job isn't exactly going to thrill fans. Ignoring that though, this is another segment about stuff that isn't fun (or interesting but that's another discussion) and looks grim.

Next up is HELL NO vs. the Prime Time Players. This can be classified as laid back, but the most popular part of the champions, as in the comedy sketches they did, are long gone and they're just arguing. This segment is a lot better than most of the stuff on the show but it's not great.

Now we get a recap of the Punk/Ryback/referee stuff to further hammer it in.

Vickie calls Cena to the ring and we get the WWE version of the AJ/Claire Lynch story from TNA a few months back. This involves Cena being accused of having an affair with AJ (are either of them even married right now? Does it even qualify as an affair?) and having to explain away photos, videos, and jokes he makes. Ziggler comes out and gets shoved down as well. How is this supposed to be entertaining or something I want to see?

The next match is champion vs. champion with Antonio Cesaro vs. Kofi Kingston. This will also be covered in the second point.

And now we get to the exception that proves the rule: the 3MB, a goofy, WAY over the top band gimmick played by Jinder Mahal, Heath Slater and Drew McIntyre. This is presented in a Behind The Music segment where they

refuse to play any music and act as stupid as possible. Remember this segment because it's going to be referenced later. 3MB also wins a match over Ryder/Santino.

AJ beats Beth on a fluke after the cute and tiny AJ gets crushed by Beth for about two minutes. This is IMMEDIATELY changed because Vickie wants to torture AJ some more and Beth beats her in ten seconds.

Now we have Sheamus and Big Show talking about going to WAR with each other. Not a fight, not a battle, but war. SERIOUS don't you know.

Then Cena tells AJ it's ok. Vickie comes up and fires Beth for winning a match. Not only is it more serious and mean stuff, but it doesn't make sense.

A long tag match follows with the fan favorites Sin Cara and Rey Mysterio losing to Rhodes and Sandow. Quick sidebar: the Rhodes Scholars is a cool name for a team. Team Rhodes Scholars sounds ridiculous.

After all that other stuff, let's talk about CANCER! This goes on for about eight minutes with Cena presenting a check to a cancer charity. That's a cool thing to do, but again it's depressing, especially with the video reminding us that most people know someone who has suffered from breast cancer.

Then Justin Gabriel gets squashed by Alberto Del Rio. Remember last week when Gabriel had a good match and looked like he was being moved up the card? WELL SCREW YOU FOR GETTING EXCITED! HE HAS TO LOSE TO DEL RIO BECAUSE.....WELL SOMEONE HAS TO! More on this later.

We close out the show with the announcements of the teams for the Survivor Series matches. Again, a serious subject for a main event which has nothing on the line but pride. Also, Punk gets to look like an idiot because he thinks Ryback isn't in the match. Nice touch there guys.

This ends point one, so let's look at the second point that is holding WWE back: nothing goes anywhere. Let's again look through Raw for examples.

We'll begin with Ryback. Ryback dominates for six months and then loses in his first major match because of a crooked referee. Why is he crooked? Why did he do it? That's not important enough to address in the first show after it happened. Ryback appears to still be a factor in the main event, but the initial spark is gone and they can never get it back.

Now here we get to the main extreme of this issue: Wade Barrett vs. Randy Orton. Orton lost to Barrett on Smackdown, then tonight Orton beat Barrett. What does this accomplish? That's not a rhetorical question. I honestly don't know what the point of it is. Orton doesn't look better than Barrett and Barrett doesn't look better than Orton as they both come out 1-1. They're both at the same place they were before this exchange of wins started and now Orton is back to facing Del Rio this Wednesday on Main Event. We've wasted a match that might make people want to pay money to see (don't believe me? WWE ran it as a PPV main event before) twice in four days on free TV and no one gained anything from it.

Let's talk about Barrett a little more while we're on the subject because he's an example of the crux of this whole problem. The following statement was written before HIAC and doesn't involve Barrett, but it fits perfectly.

WWE wants to push let's say Kofi. Kofi pins Miz and gets pushed. Well now Miz needs to get his heat back so let's have him beat Brodus. Brodus looks weak now so have him get a fluke win over Del Rio. Del Rio is angry so he destroys Kofi.

Now we're say two weeks later, everyone is 1-1 and no one is any stronger than they were when the whole cycle started. Then the cycle starts all over again and there's no one to get behind because they're all the same and no one of the four looks ready to move up because they're the same as everyone else. Then Cena gets hurt and you get lucky that there's one guy you haven't jobbed out yet and the fans are getting behind. If Ryback wasn't there, who in the world were they going to throw at Punk? Orton? Maybe? They need to fix this FAST so there are people to get behind. Stop worrying that these people are going to get hot and leave and enjoy them while you've got them there.

How many people does this apply to in WWE? Someone comes in hot, dominates for a few weeks, and then loses to someone else or is just not pushed anymore (think Brodus in the last month). This doesn't do anyone any good and it's a big part of why no one can ever seem to get any elevation on the roster anymore.

After that match we had the tag champions facing the Prime Time Players. Why? The Players lost clean at the PPV, so why should they get a chance to face the tag team champions? The titles weren't on the line, but a win would have launched the Players up in the rankings, likely ahead of a team they lost to a single day ago. Basically what is being said here is the match at the PPV meant nothing and Sin Cara and Mysterio's win was worthless.

Cesaro vs. Kingston. This is another great example of the booking being worthless. The Miz was on commentary for this match and Cole constantly talked about how Kofi had beaten Miz three times in a row. The problem here can be summed up in a pair of simple questions: if Miz has lost to Kofi three times in a row, 1) why should I think he has a chance in the fourth match and 2) if Miz wins the fourth match, so what? It puts him at 1-3 in this series, yet by wrestling logic he'll be declared the winner because he wins last. That's never made sense to me but it's how wrestling works.

The 3MB beats Marella/Ryder. Again this is fine as Marella/Ryder are jobbers and the 3MB are a new team (who lost their first match).

AJ vs. Beth Phoenix happened twice with AJ getting destroyed but winning the first match, then getting slammed and pinned in the second about 45 seconds later. Not only does AJ's win mean nothing at all, but she looked bad in getting the win. This begs the question: why have the second match? "To have a reason to fire Beth." Here's another way to fire Beth: DON'T PUT HER ON TV AND RELEASE HER! As usual, WWE makes problems they don't need to have.

Now it's Sin Cara/Mysterio vs. the Scholars. Based on the match last night, it appears that the masked guys are getting a push, but now they lose to the Scholars? Easy solution: don't have them fight. Put the Usos in there instead of the masked guys and have the masked guys beat the Players earlier. The masked guys still win, the Players lose, the Scholars win, and you have a potential big match saved for later. Also this puts the Scholars up 2-0 over the masked guys in two weeks, making any future matches look less interesting ala Miz vs. Kofi.

Remember earlier when I said WWE makes problems they don't need to have?

Gabriel vs. Del Rio is a great example of that. As I said earlier, Gabriel's win last week looks to mean nothing now. Want to keep the idea of him getting pushed alive? Don't have him fight here. With the roster WWE has, they don't have ANYBODY else to put in there? Not Derrick Bateman or, I don't know, A JOBBER? Yoshi Tatsu anyone?

Finally we get to the Survivor Series announcement. The teams are the usual idea of matching up feuds in an elimination match, but at the end of the day, this match means nothing. The team is called Team Foley, which AGAIN takes the focus off Ryback and puts it on someone else. This is what happened with Cena last week and it's happening again here. Put SOMETHING on the match so that it means something. Ryback gets a rematch maybe?

So after looking at Raw last night, it's clear that we have at least two problems: things are too serious, and the matches/booking go nowhere. Why would I want to watch this show? It's not targeted to me, because stuff like affairs and managing supervisors and fake pictures don't interest me whatsoever. They don't interest children either, so who is this show marketed to?

In the review of the show, I mentioned the idea of comic relief. By that, I mean WWE needs to have something on their show where we can breathe for five minutes. Even the Divas have a big serious story going now with someone attacking Kaitlyn and blonde wigs and whatever else is going on. I know I criticized them a lot but sometimes you need good looking women in tiny outfits having bad matches for the sake of bad matches.

For an example of how this can be a problem, look at Wrestlemania 19 with me for a second. The last probably two hours or so are spent on the following in order (matches only):

Shawn Michaels vs. Chris Jericho

HHH vs. Booker T (Raw World Title)

Hulk Hogan vs. Mr. McMahon

The Rock vs. Steve Austin

Brock Lesnar vs. Kurt Angle (Smackdown World Title)

That's A LOT to sit through in a row. While the matches are all at least pretty good, they're all big and sitting through four straight matches that could be called the main event of the show with no break is a lot to ask. For a comparison, let's look at Wrestlemania X7's final five matches.

Shane McMahon vs. Vince McMahon

TLC 2

Gimmick Battle Royal

Undertaker vs. HHH

The Rock vs. Steve Austin

By simply throwing in an easy match, you give the fans a chance to breathe (as well as go to a restroom and buy nachos and soda for the two big matches. No joke, that's a good thing to do). If that portion of the Mania 19 card looked like this instead:

Shawn Michaels vs. Chris Jericho

Hulk Hogan vs. Mr. McMahon

Chris Benoit/Rhyno vs. Los Guerreros vs. Team Angle (Smackdown Tag Titles)

The Rock vs. Steve Austin

Kurt Angle vs. Brock Lesnar (Smackdown World Title)

By having the Raw World Title moved earlier, that last stretch is MUCH easier to sit through. My point is exactly the same for Raw: give us something where we can turn our brains off and not have to be all focused. It doesn't have to be comedy even. Just give us something simple that doesn't mean much. Put out a simple Divas match or a Tyson Kidd match or whatever you like that can go nice and easy with zero thought from us. You have 8.5 hours of TV a week. I'm sure you can come up with five minutes to spare for something like this.

In short, Raw's main problems are that it's WAY too serious with no relief and the booking goes nowhere for various reasons. Why would I as a fan want to sit through three hours a week of wrestling that isn't very entertaining, has no idea what its target audience is, and gives me zero reason to get behind almost anyone on its show? That's not entertaining television, which is why Raw has been so awful the last few weeks, among other reasons of course.

Monday Night Raw – October

29, 2012: Dear Goodness They've Made Punk An Idiot Too

Monday Night Raw

Date: October 29, 2012

Location: Time Warner Cable Arena, Charlotte, North Carolina

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jim Ross

It's past HIAC and we're on the way to Survivor Series now. Ryback got screwed over by the referee that Punk and Heyman yelled at a few weeks ago because of the botched call in the Cena match. Other than that we've got Big Show as Smackdown Champion in a decision I like the less I see it. I'm not sure what's coming tonight but let's get to it.

Here's a very banged up champion (Punk) to open the show. He says everyone thought, nay they KNEW, that Punk would be just another victim (hi Taz) in the path of destruction of Ryback. Punk points at a lot of people and says they were wrong. He talks about beating all of the heroes the WWE fans have: Mysterio, Orton, Cena, and now Ryback. As for the referee last night, he had nothing to do with it and only took advantage of the situation. He talks about how awesome his reign is and how there's no rematch with Ryback.

Cue Foley with an interruption that annoys Punk. Punk: "It's a homeless guy who got misplaced by the storms in the northeast." Foley talks about how Ryback left Punk laying on top of the Cell and Punk wants to know why Foley is here. Mick talks about how he told Punk to make himself famous in the Cell instead of cheating again. Punk says that the bandages on his body are the results of doing what Foley told him to do.

Punk rips into the audience a bit and says that the belt is what represents tradition for the last 344 days. The champ throws out the idea of Team Foley vs. Team Punk at Survivor Series and Foley says you're on. Cue Ryback and Punk runs. No word on if Foley is wrestling in the match or not.

Ryback vs. JTG

Meathook, Shell Shock, 1:58. A lot of that was JTG walking around and a Thesz Press into the head smashes into the mat.

Post match Ryback....talks? He says that revenge is an admission of pain. He isn't hurt and the next time he feasts, it will be on Punk. FEED ME PUNK.

Wade Barrett vs. Randy Orton

Is there some rule that says if you have one match, you have to have it again on the next TV show? Orton dropkicks Wade to the floor but Wade goes after the bad arm. Randy is like DRAMATIC STARE and rams Wade into the steps and the announce table. Back in and Orton hits the Circle Stomp followed by a clothesline to take Barrett to the floor. Uh oh, it's been less than five minutes since we had a commercial, so let's go to a break.

Back with Barrett holding an armbar followed by a different variety of an armbar (that's a good thing) to have Orton in trouble. Wade cranks the arm and sends Orton down to the mat for two. There's the big boot to Orton in the ropes which gets another two. Orton comes back with his usual stuff (clotheslines, powerslam, you know the deal) but after the Elevated DDT, the RKO is countered into the Winds of Change for two. Not that it matters as the second attempt at the RKO gets the pin at 10:11.

Rating: C. I like Barrett, but YET AGAIN he's a guy that gets off to a hot start and then turns into cannon fodder for the established names. But hey, it's his fault for not getting over right? To be fair, Barrett at least gets in a good deal of offense and never looks like a clueless putz out there. This was nothing compared to their match on Smackdown though.

We go to Vickie and AJ in the back with AJ possibly getting a job as a Diva back. Vickie asks what AJ thinks her weakness is and she says she gets too attached to her job. Vickie says that means you're crazy right? AJ has to come up with a good reason to get her job back when Vickie gets back.

HELL NO vs. Prime Time Players

Lose on PPV, fight the champions on Raw. Makes sense. Bryan fires off kicks to Young to start but Kane tags himself in and beats on Darren a bit as well. Young takes over on Bryan as Cole called him Darren O'Neil. Bryan realizes he's getting beaten up by Darren Young and makes the tag to Kane. The side slam sets up the top rope clothesline and a chokeslam kills Young. Titus is shoved to the floor and the NO Lock gets the tap from Young at 4:22.

Rating: D+. Total squash here as the Players, who three months ago seemed like the next champions, are now the tag team jobbers. At least the champions get to look good here which is the right idea for them. The bickering is still funny but I'd like a few more comedy bits from them which have just stopped happening anymore.

The champs argue post match.

We recap the opening promo.

We recap the history of Brad Maddox, with the guy being brought in as a referee when we needed more for the three hour shows. He messed up a count on Punk in a tag match and then somehow his next major appearance is refereeing a world title match in the main event of a PPV. Makes sense.

Here's Vickie to talk about the new era on Raw. This would be the third new era on Raw this year if you're counting. She has evidence of AJ and Cena's inappropriate relationship and brings out Cena to present it. We get a clip from three weeks ago where Cena jokingly asked AJ out on a date. Cena talks about how he tells jokes all the time but Vickie has more footage of Cena hugging a crying AJ. Vickie shows us a still of Cena at dinner with AJ. Cena is wearing his t-shirt and there's a candle.

The last video is Cena in his hotel doorway and Cena seemingly inviting AJ in. Apparently it was an elevator. Cena says it was nothing and they went their separate ways. Vickie laughs evil and insults AJ, but Cena defends her. FINALLY Ziggler comes out to hopefully make this something resembling interesting if you have 20/4000 vision and squint. Cena says

don't talk about him and AJ anymore and shoves Ziggler down. This felt like WWE ripping off the Claire Lynch story.

Antonio Cesaro vs. Kofi Kingston

Antonio makes fun of America having fat kids which is going to get worse because of Halloween. Miz is on commentary and neither title is on the line. Cole talks about how Kofi has beaten Miz three times in a row. Yet the feud looks to be continuing. You know: because THAT MAKES SENSE. Miz lists off his accomplishments as Cesaro slams Kofi down and double stomps him. After a chinlock goes on for a bit they head to the floor where Kofi throws Cesaro at Miz. Miz interferes for the DQ at 2:32.

The heels beat down Kofi post match until Truth makes the save.

Vickie continues to annoy AJ and offers to give AJ a job as a Diva if AJ admits to the affair. Vickie hires her back anyway and AJ gets to face Beth Phoenix tonight.

We go Behind the Music with 3MB. Mahal says he's the fun one and Drew talks about his looks. They refuse to perform and THEY HAVE HAND SIGNS. This was so campy that it was AWESOME.

Santino Marella/Zack Ryder vs. 3MB

Drew is on the floor for this. Mahal and Ryder start things off with Ryder taking over. Mahal gets in a knee and it's off to Slater who takes over. Ryder gets beaten on for awhile before Santino gets the tag. Everything breaks down and the match gets REALLY sloppy until Santino Cobras McIntyre, allowing Slater to hit MVP's Play of the Day for the pin at 3:51.

Rating: D. It's 9:37pm EST right now and 3MB has been by far and away the most entertaining thing on this show. Here's why: it's the only thing (other than maybe HELL NO) that isn't being treated as the most serious thing on the planet. It's something FUN, which is probably the biggest problem on Raw right now: everything is treated so seriously and it's hard to sit through as it gets tiring after awhile. Sometimes it's ok to just throw something light and silly out there and let the fans know

they're watching an entertainment show, not a high strung drama.

Jerry Lawler returns to Raw in two weeks. That's awesome.

AJ vs. Beth Phoenix

Beth glares at AJ to start and says AJ should be scared. Beth shoves her and AJ goes nuts, but Beth slams her down onto the mat. AJ gets her face rubbed into the mat and we head to the floor. AJ gets rammed into the barricade but back inside she grabs a rollup for the pin at 2:08.

Vickie comes out post match and demands more from AJ. Beth jumps her so Vickie says restart the match. Glam Slam gets the pin in like ten seconds.

Video on WWE 13.

Here's Sheamus sans belt for the first time in months. He says that he's got a smile on his face but no title. Show was the better man last night but it took two knockout punches to do it. He didn't come to WWE to win all the time. He came here to fight. Last night was the greatest fight of his life and Big Show won. The war is far from over though and he wants a rematch with Big Show. After the war is over, he'll be smiling and still champion.

Cue Big Show who is very happy to have the title back. He says that the fight last night took him to levels that he didn't know he could reach and thinks that no one can beat him. If Sheamus fights him again, it's going to take more than Sheamus has to win. Sheamus can't beat him and he'll never take the title from him. He calls Sheamus a ginger snap, so Sheamus picks him up and hits White Noise with ease. That's scary power.

Cena is with AJ in the back and says it'll be ok. Cena leaves and Vickie pops up to yell at...Beth. Vickie FIRES Beth because the match shouldn't have needed to be restarted. That's how they're writing her off TV I guess.

Rhodes Scholars vs. Sin Cara/Rey Mysterio

Cara and Sandow start things off and Damien is quickly frustrated. Off to

Cody who gets kicked by both guys and covered for two by Rey. The Scholars cheat and take over on Rey but the masked dudes start cheating as well. Cara hits a PERFECT Asai Moonsault to take Cody out as Rey hits a seated senton off the apron on Sandow as we take ANOTHER FREAKING BREAK.

Back with Damien tagging in Cody to work on the down Sin Cara. A long delayed gordbuster gets two for Cody and it's time for arm work. Damien comes in and does nothing but Cara reverses an Alabama Slam into a sunset flip for two. Cara's spinning mat slam puts Cody down and there's the hot tag to Rey. Rey speeds things up but gets sent to the floor where the Scholars double team him to take over. Sandow comes in and hits the Wind Up Elbow before tagging back to Rhodes.

Rey counters a double suplex into a double DDT and there's the tag to Cara. Cara hits a top rope cross body on Rhodes and an enziguri on Sandow for two before going to the floor with Cody. Everything breaks down and Cody pulls Sandow out of the way of a Swanton from Cara, allowing Sandow to hit the Terminus for the pin at 14:43.

Rating: C-. Not a bad match here but it's the weekly match that gets extended because we can only stretch out so many recaps and stupid segments. The match was fine, but was there any reason to have the masked guys lose tonight? Why not have them off the card, have Santino/Marella lose here, and have some other random team put the Band over? It's like you could keep the masked guys hot and put the Scholars over at the same time!

Foley is playing a video game when Heyman comes up and they banter about the Survivor Series match a bit.

Video on breast cancer. Make that a long one about it. Eh it's the last show of the month with this stuff. The roster (most of it) comes on stage and Cena presents a check to the Susan G Komen Foundation in the amount of one million dollars. Ok that's awesome. The people from the foundation speak a bit.

Justin Gabriel vs. Alberto Del Rio

Alberto pounds him down to start but Gabriel comes back with a corner clothesline. Gabriel sends him to the floor but Del Rio wrenches Gabriel's arm to take over. Off to an arm hold as Ricardo yells at a Hogan fan at ringside. A suplex puts Gabriel down and it's back to the arm hold. Del Rio kicks him in the back a bit and puts the hold on for a third time. Gabriel comes back and hits his top rope Lionsault but it's the armbreaker for the tap at 5:20.

Rating: D+. Gabriel beats the US Champion last week, loses to him last night, then gets squashed tonight. All those fans that looked at Gabriel as something new, SCREW YOU! HE'S A LOSER! That's the WWE idea anymore: keep people looking weak even if they're big names, because only a few people are allowed to stay pushed.

Here are Heyman and Punk to announce the Survivor Series teams. Punk comes out in a WWE 13 video game hoodie. A big banner comes down with the cover of the game on it. Heyman has been asked to pick Team Punk, so his first name is The Miz. He's also picked the Rhodes Scholars and Alberto. If it's not clear at this point who most of Foley's team is (assuming he's not wrestling), you need to pay better attention.

Punk runs his mouth a bit before Foley cuts him off again. Foley says Punk weaseled his way out of the Cell last night instead of surviving. He has no problem referring to Punk as champion, but he does have a problem addressing him as a man. Foley's team is about what you would expect: Kofi (no belt), HELL NO (no belts either), Orton and...Punk starts running his mouth when he thinks Foley is the fifth man. Since...you know what, screw the joke. Ryback is the fifth man, Punk is suddenly an IDIOT that didn't see that coming, and a brawl (Punk runs from Ryback) won by Team Foley with Cody getting killed by Ryback ends the show.

Overall Rating: D. This was another bad three hour Raw which is the norm. I'm not going to go into full details of why I didn't like this Raw as I don't have the time right now to get into everything in depth, but for now, we'll go with this: you may have heard of something called comic relief. Think about that term for a second.

It's comedy used to take pressure off something. That's what this show is

dying for right now. Other than the 3MB and maybe HELL NO, everything is serious. We've got people fighting to keep their jobs, accusations of affairs, war, and CANCER. It's ok to do something stupid every now and then and it can really make things better. In short, lighten up already. It's not the most serious show in the world.

I know that's not much to go on, but I'll be back tomorrow (or Wednesday) with a much more in depth look at what I think is wrong with WWE and Raw in particular.

Results

Ryback b. JTG – Shell Shock

Randy Orton b. Wade Barret – RKO

HELL NO b. Prime Time Players – NO Lock to Young

Kofi Kingston b. Antonio Cesaro via DQ when Miz interfered

3MB b. Santino Marella/Zack Ryder – Spinning Neckbreaker to Marella

AJ b. Beth Phoenix – Small Package

Rhodes Scholars b. Sin Cara/Rey Mysterio – Terminus to Cara

Alberto Del Rio b. Justin Gabriel – Cross Armbreaker

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Hell in a Cell 2012: We're In WCW Land So Of Course It's A

Screwjob

Hell in a Cell 2012

Date: October 28, 2012

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jim Ross, John Bradshaw Layfield

The main event here is Ryback vs. Punk and there's one thing I love about it: I have no idea who is going to win. They really could go either way and as a big supporter of Ryback, I'd love to see it. The main event is in need of a major change, so why not Ryback? The main issue for him though is that the fans are going to have the Goldberg chants going on high tonight. The Sheamus vs. Big Show match should be good too. Let's get to it.

On the preshow, here's Cena to address the AJ/Vickie/Cena story. Apparently Vickie has evidence of the inappropriate relationship which she'll show tomorrow on Raw. Tonight, Cena is answering questions from social media. The first question is about him passing a torch to Ryback. Cena says no but he never had any fire to pass. A TOUT asks what advice Cena would give Ryback for the Cell tonight. Cena says that brute strength alone isn't going to do it.

A Tweet asks if Cena could beat Ryback. Cena asks the fans who aren't really clear on an answer. He does however say if Ryback wins the title, he'd love the first shot. Another TOUT is about what was Cena's toughest match. Of course he says it's the one against Rock. Cena wants another shot of course. This isn't going anywhere is it? Another TOUT asks if Punk is the best in the world but Cena won't say yes. Another TOUT is from Dolph Ziggler asks if Cena will tell the truth. Cena says the people should cheer Dolph because he used TOUT. If Dolph is here, why not just come out here and fight?

Here's Dolph...or make that Vickie. She says the fans are more confident in her than in Cena because Cena got his hand caught in the cookie jar. Ziggler finally charges and gets knocked right back to the floor. This was free on Youtube and I feel like I deserve a refund after sitting

through it.

Now on to the actual show.

The opening video is about the two world title matches, just as it should be.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Randy Orton

That's quite the opener. Orton immediately jumps Del Rio and we're out on the floor very quickly. Alberto goes face first into the announce table and back inside we get the Orton Stomp. Orton stomps away in the corner until the referee pulls him off. Alberto throws him to the apron and rams the arm into the bar connecting the buckle to the post. Back in and Del Rio hooks a kind of armbar followed by something close to the armbreaker over the top rope.

Orton's shoulder goes into the post and Randy is in big trouble. Alberto hooks a different kind of armbar to keep control. It's nice to see the holds used being mixed up as watching the same stuff over and over again gets old in a hurry. Orton jumps over Del Rio out of the corner and grabs a rollup for two. Del Rio hits a DDT on the arm for two and puts on yet another kind of armbar, followed by another armbreaker over the rope. This time though Orton shoves Del Rio off and out to the floor. Basic storytelling and psychology there but it worked just as well.

Orton sets for the powerslam back inside but Del Rio hangs onto the ropes. More good psychology there as you can only have Orton or anyone use the same moves so many times before someone sees it coming. Del Rio tries the armbreaker but Orton makes the rope almost immediately. The backbreaker from Randy looks to set up the Elevated DDT but Del Rio counters into another shot on the arm. Alberto tries the RKO but gets countered into the Elevated DDT.

Randy tries the mat pounding but hurts his bad arm again. Nice touch there again. Del Rio hits the Backstabber for two but the armbreaker is countered into the powerslam for two. They go to the corner but Orton gets shoved off. He hangs on by the ropes but Del Rio hits a double stomp to Orton's chest for two. This has been way better than I was expecting.

Just as I say that, Del Rio goes up and I think is supposed to jump into the RK0, but instead he just lands next to Orton and they're completely out of sync now. The RK0 is countered as Orton is sent into the corner where Ricardo rams the arm into the post. There's the armbreaker but Orton somehow hangs on and rolls on top of Del Rio for two. Del Rio tries the running enziguri in the corner but Orton ducks and catches Del Rio in the RK0 as he comes down for the pin at 13:06. That didn't have the impact they were looking for I don't think.

Rating: B-. This was higher until the jump off the top which looked horrible. Either way, this was a very nice surprise with some solid psychology and storytelling the whole way through. Orton isn't great all the time but if you get him the right kind of opponent, which is usually a guy who isn't a giant, he can have some solid matches and this was one of those. If the botch hadn't happened, it would have been an excellent opener. With it, the match is just quite good.

We recap the AJ/Vickie/Cena stuff and Vickie says she's got the pictures to prove the affair happened. Vickie turns around and runs into Heyman. Paul wants the match canceled but Vickie will have none of it. Heyman snaps at the theory that Ryback scares Punk and goes off on Vickie for a bit. Vickie continues to do nothing for me at all.

Tag Titles: HELL NO vs. Rhodes Scholars

The Scholars won this shot in a long tournament. In case it's not clear, HELL NO is defending. The Scholars say that there's one thing for sure: at the end of the night they'll be able to say "WE ARE THE TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS!" Funny stuff. Bryan vs. Sandow (in dark gray trunks, just like Cody) starts things off and Bryan hits a running knee to Damien's ribs. Off to Kane for a low dropkick before it's off to Cody for the same move for two.

Cody gets caught in the champions' corner and it's back to Bryan for some rapid fire kicks in the corner. Kane comes in again and throws Cody around again until Damien gets in a chop block to take Kane's knee out. More leg work keeps Kane down but Sandow jumps into an uppercut. There's the tag to Bryan who moonsaults over Sandow in the corner and hits a

running clothesline to take Damien down. There are the NO Kicks and the Scholars are both sent to the floor. Bryan hits a BIG suicide dive to take them both out.

As they head back in, Cody grabs Bryan's leg and Sandow knocks Daniel into the barricade. Back in and a running knee gets two for Rhodes as we enter the tag team formula mode. Bryan plays Ricky Morton for a bit as Cody comes in to work on the arm a bit. Bryan punches his way out of the corner but a knee to Bryan's ribs takes him right back down. Off to Sandow again who pounds on the ribs for two.

Sandow's windup elbow gets two (I'm not even going to try to spell the real name) and it's off to a chinlock. Kane: "COME ON GOAT FACE LET'S GO!" That actually works as Bryan almost gets the NO Lock before hooking a drop toehold to send Sandow into the middle buckle. A double tag brings in Cody to face the fresh Kane and the Big Fried Freak takes over. The sidewalk slam gets two and the top rope clothesline kills Cody. Kane signals for the chokeslam but Bryan tags himself in and hits a Swan Dive, but Kane breaks up the cover.

Sandow pulls Kane to the floor and gets punched in the face. Bryan backdrops Cody to the floor onto Kane and misses the running knee, taking out Kane by mistake. The champs get into a shoving match and a pair of baseball slides take out Kane. Back in and Cody hits Cross Rhodes on Bryan but Kane makes the save. Kane is losing it and destroys everyone in sight drawing a lame DQ at 13:30 for beating on Sandow in the corner.

Rating: C+. This was getting good at the end before the lame DQ. They did set up another match later on which is fine, but with all of the teams they've got built up, do they really want to go another month with the same guys? Still though, entertaining enough match here and the champs fighting is almost always entertaining.

Sandow gets a chokeslam post match.

Miz talks about how Kofi brings mediocrity and mediocrity brings the end of civilization, so Kofi brings the end of the world. It ties into a show coming up about people who are preparing for doomsday if that clears up anything.

Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Kofi Kingston

The inflatable AWESOME from the Mania match with Cena is back. Kofi is defending and this is a rematch from a few weeks ago on Main Event. Both guys try and miss their finishers less than thirty seconds in, sending Miz to the floor to regroup. How much regrouping do you need after half a minute? Kofi jumps over the steps on the floor but Miz kicks his head off to take over. That gets two back in the ring and things slow down a bit.

Off to a chinlock for awhile followed by a clothesline to put Kofi down. There's a top rope double ax for two and Miz punts him in the ribs. Miz's corner clothesline is blocked by a hard clothesline from the champ and both guys are down. Kofi chops Miz down and hits the Boom Drop for two. Miz runs from Trouble in Paradise but gets caught by the spinning top rope cross body for two.

The SOS is countered into half of the Reality Check but they seem to miss on something before the neckbreaker. SOS gets two and Miz hits a kind of Stunner to the leg. Miz bends the leg around the ropes and takes off the leg pad and boot from Kofi's left leg. Kofi gets to the second rope but Miz slams him off and puts on a half crab.

Kofi crawls to the ropes but Miz pulls it right back to the center. The champ counters into a cradle for two but Miz gets the same off a short DDT. Miz loads up the Finale but Kofi counters into a kind of victory roll for two. The kick misses for Kofi but the Finale can't hit again. Miz gets kicked to the floor and as he comes back in, Kofi kicks him into oblivion for the pin to retain at 10:44.

Rating: C+. Another good and lengthy match here as this show is already better than anything WWE has thrown at us in weeks. This gets Miz out of the title picture and hopefully pushes him back up the card. Kofi is fine in this role and can be put with almost anyone to get a good match. Solid stuff here and a fine match.

Kofi says Miz has brought out the wildcat in him and that he's proud to be the champion.

HELL NO argues again. Kane thinks Bryan almost lost because he was

thinking about vegan candy. Bryan yells at Kane for bringing up Halloween when he's always wearing a mask. Kane says that Bryan has been wearing a mask since he was born on Old McDonald's Farm...AND HE SINGS THE SONG. Bryan: "YOU ARE IMPOSSIBLE!" Kane: "No. I AM THE TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS!" I love these two.

US Title: Antonio Cesaro vs. Justin Gabriel

Since we only had three announced matches left and it's ten after 9, they had to add another match or two. Antonio says something in what sounds like German or Swiss before the match. Cesaro is defending and they've traded wins on Raw lately to set this up. Cesaro takes it to the mat as soon as the bell rings before cranking on the arm a bit. Gabriel counters a hip toss and monkey flips Cesaro down.

Justin goes up top but the champ knocks him off to the floor. Back in and a legdrop gets two for Cesaro and he pounds away with some rough looking shots to the head. An uppercut to the back of Gabriel's head gets two and it's off to a chinlock with a knee in the back of Justin. Cesaro puts him face down on the top rope and hits a running knee to the ribs. A double stomp gets another two on Gabriel and it's back to the arm. The crowd is pretty dead for this so far.

Gabriel comes back and takes Cesaro down for a quick top rope Lionsault for two. Cesaro takes Justin's head off with a clothesline for two. The champ pounds away in the corner but Gabriel comes out with a spinning DDT for two. Gabriel tries the 450 but rolls through when Cesaro moves. Cesaro goes to the floor so Justin hits a dropkick through the ropes for two. He heads back in but dives into the uppercut to knock Gabriel silly. Back in and the Neutralizer retains the title at 7:35.

Rating: C. I know there wasn't much here, but having Cesaro run through the entire lower card is a fine way to keep him on TV without having him face guys he's not ready to beat yet. It's also a good way to make him look like more than he really is, which is something Cesaro needs. Imagine that: using jobbers to the stars to push someone higher up the card. It's so crazy that it just might work.

Breast cancer is bad.

Video on Ryback and how unstoppable he is.

Heyman sucks up to Vickie in the back because apparently the Cell has been canceled. Vickie doesn't seem to understand what he's talking about. The match is still on.

Prime Time Players vs. Rey Mysterio/Sin Cara

Sin Cara and Darren start things off with Young slapping him around on the mat. Cara headscissors him down and there's the tag to Rey. Cara has what looks like a Mysterio mask on the back of his own mask. The main event for Main Event this coming week is these four teaming with Del Rio and Orton respectively. Yep the card is already falling down. Off to Titus for some power to take over on Mysterio. A double elbow by the Players take Rey down and Young comes in for some near falls.

Off to a quick reverse chinlock by Young but Titus charges into a boot in the corner to let the masked guys make a tag. Back to Cara who speeds things up and hits a top rope cross body on Titus. Cara's spinning armdrag out of the corner is caught by Titus and he rams Cara into the corner. Back to Darren to pounds away a bit more before hitting the belly to back suplex onto the apron for two.

Back to Titus who suplexes Young onto Sin for two. JR says the Players are trying to get a big payday for a win on a major PPV. What exactly would be a minor PPV? Titus yells at Cara in the corner and tells him to speak English, which will probably be a fine for O'Neal. Titus puts on a kind of abdominal stretch before slamming him down for two. Back to Young for a backbreaker which gets two. Titus gets in a three point stance but charges into the post.

Cara hits a kind of standing Sliced Bread #2 and makes the hot tag to Rey. Mysterio speeds things up and hits a tilt-a-whirl DDT on Darren for two. JR: "Keeping up with Rey is like trying to pour smoke through a keyhole." JBL: "Who would want to do that?" Cara dives on Titus on the floor as Rey counters the gutbuster from Young into the 619 and top rope splash for the pin at 12:50.

Rating: C-. This wasn't a bad match at all but it ran too long and

overstayed its welcome. These guys are a good undercard feud for the tag division (imagine THAT say six months ago) and putting them on here was as decent enough of an idea as you were going to get. Either one of these teams could get a title shot, and that's kind of cool to think about.

Cara may have hurt his neck but he gets up on his own power. Apparently on that standing Sliced Bread he landed on the top of his head.

WWE is promoting a Rolling Stones PPV concert.

We recap Big Show vs. Sheamus. The idea is that Sheamus can't Brogue Kick Show but he wants to fight no matter what.

Smackdown World Title: Big Show vs. sheamus

Sheamus is defending. Show throws him around to start and Sheamus tries to brawl with him. That results in the champion being knocked down into the corner and Show is in command. Zigler is watching with the case in the back. Sheamus knocks Show to the floor and as the challenger gets back in, Sheamus fires away with all he's got. It does a bit of damage but Show shrugs it off and knocks Sheamus to the floor again.

We head to the floor with Show throwing Sheamus into the barricade. Back in and Show keeps pounding on Sheamus very slowly. He steps on Sheamus' head and knocks the champ to the floor before sending him over the announce table. This has been almost all Show so far and Sheamus is looking like a ragdoll. Back in and Show hits the Eye of the Hurricane for two. I think he used to call that the Final Cut. Sheamus tries to fight back with some punches to the ribs but Show throws him over the top to the floor.

As Sheamus comes back in, he hits the slingshot shoulder but charges right into a superkick for two. Show knocks him down again with Sheamus only being able to get in some punches before charging into a bearhug. Show gets on his knee instead of picking Sheamus up, allowing Sheamus to hit some forearms. A slam doesn't work at all and the Vader Bomb Elbow gets two for Show. He calls for the chokeslam but Sheamus counters into a DDT but the kickout sends Sheamus out to the floor.

Sheamus tries the ten forearms in the corner but Show shoves him off. The chokeslam hits but it only gets two. Show is getting ticked off now but he can't hook the Colossal Clutch. Sheamus avoids an elbow and tries the Cloverleaf of all things but Show kicks him off. They head to the floor and Sheamus drives Show into the post a few times. Back in and Sheamus goes after the knee before hitting some ax handles to take Show down.

Sheamus hits White Noise and does it with EASE. That looked better than a lot of the AA's Cena hits on Show. That only gets two and Sheamus charges into the WMD....for two. Show tries another punch but Sheamus kicks Show's head off....FOR TWO. This is getting AWESOME. Sheamus gets WAY fires up but the Brogue Kick charges into the WMD for the pin and the title at 21:37.

Rating: B+. This was exactly what it was supposed to be: a heavyweight slugfest with Sheamus pounding away with everything he had but it just wasn't enough. I would initially say that Show winning the title was a bad thing but the way they were going with the feud it was probably the best idea. This was a great match though and WAY better than I was expecting. The kickouts were great and the match worked really well. I can't believe I'm saying this, but match of the night so far.

Eve tries to talk to Booker but Booker goes to check on Sheamus. Teddy says Eve is going to lose when Ryder comes up dressed as a witch. Oh ok he's Eve. Teddy says that's one letter off.

Vince is here and Punk asks him to cancel the match. Vince asks if Punk is afraid of Ryback but Punk says no and leaves.

Divas Title: Layla vs. Eve Torres vs. Kaitlyn

Kaitlyn was attacked at Night of Champions and Layla had to defend against Eve instead of Kaitlyn. Eve won the title and was accused of attacking Kaitlyn, setting up this. The challengers double team Eve, argue a bit, and then double team Eve again. Eve and Kaitlyn finally start fighting and we get a pinfall reversal sequence. Eve comes back in and knocks Layla to the floor so she can beat on Kaitlyn a bit.

Eve works over Kaitlyn's leg with a long hold until Layla finally gets

back in. A hard kick to Eve's face slows her down and Layla pounds away in the corner. A cross body gets two for Layla but Eve throws her into the splits. Eve gets thrown into the splits as well and Kaitlyn gives us a DOUBLE NOGGIN KNOCKER!!! Kaitlyn puts Layla in a Fujiwara Armbar but Eve makes the save. The crowd dies as the match starts to drag. Kaitlyn hits Stratusfaction on Eve to send her to the floor and powerslams Eve down. Eve hits a middle rope Swanton to break up the pin and covers Layla to retain the title at 6:39.

Rating: C-. The girls are getting better and they have an actual story anymore, but the fans still don't care. This is MILES better than they were having a few months ago, but at the same time it's still nothing to write home about. Kaitlyn appears to be the future but I'm still not sold on her at all. Decent match that ran too long.

Big Show brags about getting the title back and dares anyone to try to take it from him. That sounds like a match for Ryback once he's done with Punk.

Sheamus is getting looked at.

We recap Punk vs. Ryback. Punk and Cena were feuding, then Cena got hurt and Ryback was the next best thing they could come up with. It's in the Cell because the calendar says it needs to be.

The Cell is lowered. Cole says the Cell was introduced 15 years ago. My goodness do I feel old.

Raw World Title: Ryback vs. CM Punk

I honestly don't know who is going to win here and I love that feeling. The Goldberg chants start before the music hits. Ryback has a red singlet tonight. Not much of a pop for him though. The big match intros inform us that this match will indeed be taking place inside the Cell. You know, in case you're REALLY FREAKING STUPID. The fans get fired up for the Feed Me More chant at least.

Punk immediately heads to the floor and we're in the big Cell where there's almost no room at ringside. Punk gets back in and immediately

runs to the floor again. After almost a minute and a half Ryback gets his hands on Punk and chokes him in the air. Ryback kicks him in the chest and Punk is in trouble early. Punk gets a boot up in the corner but a tornado DDT is easily countered.

Punk is sent back to the floor where he tries to get out of the door. Ryback throws him into the Cell wall and then does it again. The Goldberg chants start up and Punk hides under the ring. Heyman distracts Ryback, allowing Punk to spray him with a fire extinguisher and knock Ryback into the cage. The champ finds a chair but Ryback knocks it into Punk's head. Back in and Ryback hits a Warrior gorilla press drop.

Ryback misses a charge into the corner and Punk hits a springboard clothesline to take him down. A top rope double ax only kind of hits so Punk hits a second to stagger Ryback. A third attempt is caught in midair but Punk hits a leg lariat to take Ryback down again. Punk sends him to the floor and hits the suicide dive but Ryback is slammed into the cage instead of being knocked down. Ryback easily breaks up a neckbreaker on the floor but his spear hits the steps.

Back in and Punk puts on a chinlock. We're over eight minutes into this and it's been pretty good stuff so far. Another Ryback charge hits the post and Punk smiles. Heyman: "HE'S STILL ALIVE!" Punk hits the running knee in the corner and a clothesline to set up the Macho Elbow for no cover. Punk brings in a kendo stick and mocks the FEED ME MORE chant.

Ryback Hulks Up and takes the stick out of Punk's hands. Ryback is all fired up now and Heyman is panicking. The fans are getting into the chant now and there's the Meathook (clothesline). Ryback loads up Shell Shock...and the referee hits Ryback low and fast counts a Punk rollup for the pin to retain at 11:45.

Rating: B-. This is one of those what the heck was that endings but it was a good match until we got there. I don't like the screwjob ending and I wanted Ryback to win, but this sets up another match down the line I guess. I don't recognize the referee but I'm sure we'll find out who he was later on. The fans went silent after the pin which is a good thing...I think?

Ryback gets up and murders the referee as Heyman pulls Punk through the door. Ryback catches up to him though and throws Punk at the Cell, but Punk climbs up to escape. Ryback follows him and hits the Shell Shock on top of the Cell.

Ryback poses on top of the Cell to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. This was a really good show actually and the ending has me wondering where they'll go next. There wasn't a really bad match on the show but a few of them were pretty slow. The Show title win was a nice surprise and the ending visual of the Shell Shock was good, but it wasn't a classic show. For what it was, this was solid, but it's another show that leads to another one instead of something conclusive, which is an annoying habit WWE has.

Results

Randy Orton b. Alberto Del Rio – RKO

Rhodes Scholars b. HELL NO via DQ when Kane would not stop attacking Sandow

Kofi Kingston b. The Miz – Trouble in Paradise

Antonio Cesaro b. Justin Gabriel – Neutralizer

Rey Mysterio/Sin Cara b. Prime Time Players – Top rope splash to Young

Big Show b. Sheamus – WMD

Eve Torres b. Kaitlyn and Layla – Eve pinned Layla after a powerslam from Kaitlyn

CM Punk b. Ryback – Rollup after a low blow from the referee

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