

Savage vs. Steamboat

I'm watching the True Story of Wrestlemania and they brought up a great point about the match that I hadn't considered before. While the match was great, it did something far more important: it invented the Wrestlemania moment.

Think back for a bit. Wrestlemania II didn't have anything that really stands out. You could go with Liberace at Wrestlemania I or maybe the main event itself but those pale in comparison to Savage vs. Steamboat. It established the concept of the really other good match on the card that everyone wanted to see and could be remembered aside from the big main event. That idea has been a standard for Wrestlemania almost every year and something almost everyone looks forward to.

The match is great and one of the best ever, but it's more important than good.

Championship Wrestling From Hollywood – April 12, 2015: Indies Are Fun

[Championship Wrestling From Hollywood](#)

Date: April 12, 2015

Location: Oceanview Pavilion, Port Hueneme, California

Commentators: Johnny Loquasto, Stu Stone

You might have heard of this promotion before but I wouldn't be surprised if you haven't. Until a few years ago it was a member of the NWA but eventually went independent. It turns out they also have a TV show airing on some channel called Youtoo TV. Apparently I have this channel so why not check out a show. I have no idea what to expect here and I've only heard of a few names on the roster. Let's get to it.

We open with a commentator opening the show backstage when three men (a Russian, a guy smoking a cigar and a short Hispanic guy) called the Revolution interrupt. They aren't happy with not being booked on the show so they're going to do something about it. Well they're definitely heels.

Opening sequence with the names of some wrestlers on stars. Unfortunately the stars are cut off at the sides and I couldn't make out a lot of them. A more upbeat song would have helped too.

Before we get started, there's a tiny chance you've heard of Stu Stone. He's actually a voice actor and rapper, appearing on shows such as the Tick, X-Men, Rugrats and the classic Rollin With Saget.

Che Cabrera vs. Sgt. Major

Cabrera, a Cuban, is the cigar guy in the Revolution and the others are named Sasha Derevko and Fidel Bravo. They certainly got on the show quickly. Stone is a big but generic military guy. The fans chant USA and it's easy to hear them across the pretty small ring. They slug it out to start with Major grabbing a headlock as the announcers talk about the Revolution hating America.

We hear about the chain around Derevko's arm (Stone: "He's the best chain wrestler in this company." That was good for a chuckle) before the audio freaks out and makes me think my TV is broken. Major hits a loud chop in the corner but Bravo trips him up to change control after about nine seconds of Major on offense.

The fans chant Fuzzy Wuzzy at someone as Major is sent to the floor for a beating from Bravo. Cabrera starts in on the arm as the announced main event is Willie Mack (now in TNA as the Mack) and the Hobo (really?) vs. the Vermin. Major comes back with the Blackhawk (TKO) but a Revolution

distraction lets Derevko get in a chain shot to give Cabrera the cheap pin at 4:52.

Rating: D. I'm in for a long night. This was a basic enough story to get by but the wrestling was nothing special. The Revolution is fine for a run of the mill heel stable, but I don't have much of a desire to see them again. There really isn't much to say here as it was just a basic wrestling match with the heels cheating to win. Acceptable but nothing more than that.

Revolution vs. Tag Game Strong

So they aren't scheduled and they get two matches. This would be Bravo/Derevko vs. Leo Blaze/Cedric King, with the latter looking a bit like the Prime Time Players. Heelish commentator Stone used to manage them but they act like faces here. The Revolution jumps them to start but TGS sends them into each other. A double dropkick sends the evil foreigners to the floor and the fans are behind TGS.

Blaze hits a flip dive (with the camera only seeing the crash) to give King two on Derevko back inside. The announcers run down the tag division which sounds fairly deep in a positive note. Derevko hits a Brogue Kick for two on Blaze to take over before monkey flipping his partner onto Blaze for two. Not a bad spot. Bravo rolls through a sunset flip and gets two off a basement dropkick.

Blaze comes back with a quick backdrop and makes the hot tag to Cedric, who is still in sunglasses and his vest. A double slam puts Bravo down but Derevko makes the save. The camera work still needs a lot of work here. Something like a Black Widow puts Blaze down as King and Bravo cross body each other. Cabrera blows smoke in Derevko's eyes by mistake, setting up a superkick into a Saito Suplex (close enough to one at least) to pin Bravo at 5:55.

Rating: C. Well that was certainly better but aside from the ending blown heel spot, the Revolution wrestled like faces. I liked that monkey flipping your partner bit and Derevko and Bravo worked well together out there. TGS....eh they have potential but they don't seem to have any kind of strong personalities or presence. It looks like they've been giving a

simple gimmick and are out there to get ring time, which is a fine way to use guys.

Jakob Austin Young vs. Dom de la Vega

Young is a small guy and looks like Alex Shelley. Vega is a skinny kid who looks to be a high flier. I really like his name if nothing else. They start with a basic wrestling sequence as we hear about Austin being unproven and Vega being on a winning streak. See how easily you can recap two guys in a few sentences? I have an idea of who both guy is and the announcers repeating Young's catchphrase of "compassion is difficult" helps as well.

Vega takes him outside for a hard chop before raking the eyes back inside. A hard elbow gets two, but only after Young stares at the crowd for a bit. Vega gets two off a rollup, only to walk into a one footed dropkick. Back up and Vega scores with some dropkicks but Young hits him in the throat and hits a Backstabber for the pin at 3:54.

Rating: C. This Young guy has a future as he plays the part of a heel well and already has some of the mannerisms down. Vega looked like a spunky jobber and there's nothing wrong with that role. However, he was clearly outclassed here and I wouldn't mind seeing more of Young.

Ty Matthews, a soft spoken guy who looks like Kevin Smith, talks about taking a guy named Anderson Cruz under his wing but the philosophy didn't work. Tonight, Cruz has another chance on his own.

Anderson Cruz vs. Ryan Kidd

Kidd is the face here but no one seems to care for him. He's also never won a match in this company. Cruz is a much bigger guy but Kidd is chopping him around with ease. Cruz catches him diving off the top rope and hits a fall away slam before choking away. The announcers start talking about Scientology of all things as Cruz gets two off a running knee to the chest.

Matthews is watching in the back and we go to a split screen with a shot of Ty taking up about 80% of the screen. A middle rope splash gets two

for Cruz and we hit the chinlock as those audio issues continue. Back to the split screen as Cruz gets a very close two off a spinning spinebuster. Cruz chokes away and doesn't let go, drawing a DQ at 5:12.

Rating: D+. The story here isn't bad but it doesn't help that the story is about someone not winning for a year. It makes you think that there's no way he's going to win....and that's exactly what you get. Cruz has some potential as well but there are dozens of guys with a similar look and style.

The split screen shows a calm Matthews holding his open hand towards the screen with Cruz doing the same in the ring.

Vermin vs. Willie Mack/Hobo

Vermin are Kevin Martinson (a decent sized guy) and Yuma (looks like a cruiserweight), the latter of whom is Heritage Champion (seems to be the top belt in the company). The announcers both loathe Yuma for recently stealing the title from Hobo, who is billed as weighing 200 cans of beans. Mack is one of the few guys I've heard of here and he has HUGE trunks ala Jim Duggan. Before we get started, Kevin has to take care of the belt on the announcers' table.

Hobo and Yuma get things going with the fans entirely against the champ. Yuma gets punched back and forth between the good guys (billed as a dream team here) before he gets planted with an atomic drop. Off to Mack to drop Yuma with a chop. A big boot to the face drops Yuma again and a tandem elbow gets two. Martinson comes in and chokes Hobo down into the corner as we take a break. Back with Mack splashing Yuma in the corner before hitting a nice delayed vertical suplex for two on Martinson. Stone: "You can count to 100 there but you can't count to 3."

Yuma offers a distraction so Kevin can kick Willie in the face for two. We hit the chinlock on Mack but Yuma can barely get his arms around Mack's neck. Mack shrugs him off and makes the tag to Hobo for some house cleaning. Some running splashes in the corner (Hobo Trains) have Vermin in trouble but Martinson flips out of a belly to back and hits a nice dropkick to drop Hobo.

Vermin double teams Hobo in the corner as Stone sings the Facts of Life theme song. I think I like this guy. Yuma misses a charge (Stone: "No water in the corner!") and the hot tag brings in Mack. Everything breaks down and it's back to Hobo for more trains, with Mack hitting them as well. Martinson gets clotheslined to the floor, leaving Hobo to hit the Hobo Driver (Roman Reigns' Moment of Silence if you watched him in NXT) for the pin on Yuma at 13:44.

Rating: C+. Nice tag match here which helped to set up the title rematch in the future. Hobo seems like a guy who isn't anything special but the fans like him, which isn't the best thing to do with a champion but it works well enough around here. Yuma seemed in over his head out there but Martinson looked pretty smooth.

Overall Rating: C+. Opening match aside, I had a decent time with this show. They don't go back to a story they've already covered in the night and there were very few backstage segments, which leaves you with a wrestling heavy product. I liked it well enough to watch another week, but this feels minor league due to the audio and camera work along with some talent not being the strongest out there. Still though, fun for what it was.

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Finally Caught The Paul Heyman Documentary

Yeah I'm a bit behind on these things. There's not much to say here but I have three notes.

1. Yeah it really is as good as people say it is. It's interesting that two of the best documentaries they've ever had have focused on something related to ECW. Heyman may not be the most popular guy in the history of wrestling, but he's one of the most fascinating stories the business has ever seen.

2. I'll go conservative and estimate about 75% of what he said was a lie.

3. "He does everything Vince hates. He yells too much, he keeps going forever and he never lets the story breathe."

– Stephanie McMahon, who may in fact be the most delusional, clueless and least self-aware person to ever appear on a WWE television show.

Mayhem 1999 (2015 Redo): Like Deer In The Headlights

Mayhem 1999

Date: November 21, 1999

Location: Air Canada Center, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Attendance: 13,839

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Bobby Heenan

It's tournament time with the final four participants in the World Title

tournament squaring off to find out who Russo has decided should be his first World Heavyweight Champion. Other than that, we have a bunch of stupid gimmick matches for stories that make next to no sense and are likely there to make fun of the WWF and expose the business as much as possible. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the tournament, which for some reason had 32 people involved (or however many it was when you take out all of the Madusas) and we hear about how the final four got here. Just so you know what's going on, they recap EVERY SINGLE MATCH before they get to the important ones. Two and a half minutes into the recap, we know the final four names.

Opening video. Wait that wasn't what we just watched?

The announcers, with Tony in a snazzy suit, preview the show and try to talk over the WE WANT FLAIR chants. I think this is the first time we hear the card in full.

WCW World Title Tournamet Semi-Finals: Jeff Jarrett vs. Chris Benoit

Guess who the fans are behind here. Jeff tries to jump Benoit from the bell but gets chopped into the corner for a tornado DDT for two. A top rope superplex gets two for Benoit less than two minutes in as he's coming out swinging here. He misses a baseball slide but wins a quick chop off on the floor. That earns him a crotching against the post as the American takes over.

Back in and Jeff gets two off a powerslam (that's a rare one for him) and almost drops him in a vertical suplex. There's the sleeper as you can see fans posing to see themselves on the big screen. Normally I would say watch what you paid for, but I'd be stunned if a good chunk of that arena wasn't papered. Benoit reverses into a sleeper of his own but Jeff belly to backs his way to freedom. Something like an Irish Curse (I won't bother saying "Canadian Curse?" as it's WAY too easy of a joke) sets up the Rolling Germans for two on Jeff and here are Creative Control to prevent a good match from breaking out.

Jarrett hot shots him to the floor but Benoit comes back in and rolls

through a high cross body for two. A belly to back sets up the Swan Dive but Creative Control breaks it up and lays out Benoit, allowing Jarrett to hit the Stroke. Cue Dustin Rhodes to fight Creative Control as Benoit kicks out at two. The guitar is brought in but Benoit takes it away and blasts Jeff (totally against his character of course) to go to the finals.

Rating: B-. Dang it they almost had me there for a second. I almost thought we were going to get a good match from beginning to end between two talented guys who can work whatever kind of match you ask. But alas, it took three run-ins and a weapon to make this REALLY interesting. It was nice while it lasted though.

Benoit gets beaten down post match and the fans think Jarrett, who isn't even involved in the show at this point but he used to be in the WWF and therefore matters, sucks.

Disco Inferno insists he cares about the title but is curious how much the gold is worth. He's bet \$25,000 on himself tonight because there's NO WAY he could lose to Karagias. Jarrett and Creative Control lays him out due to frustration.

Cruiserweight Title: Evan Karagias vs. Disco Inferno

Disco is defending but is also running from gambling bosses who want the money he owes them. The banged up champion has Tony Marinara in his corner but Evan jumps Disco in the aisle, but the referee starts the match anyway. The bell rings and they get inside with Evan getting two off a clothesline. Marinara joins commentary to ask why Heenan is called the Brain. Heenan goes to answer but fugitaboutit. He's Italian you see. Disco fights back but Evan does some leapfrogs into a dropkick for two. Feel the workrate baby!

A springboard twisting cross body gets two on the champ as the fans have died quite a bit since the opener. Imagine that. The announcers discuss what Schiavone is paid before talking about haircuts. Madusa offers a distraction and we get an awkward, mostly messed up sequence into a rollup from Evan for two. A nice Russian legsweep plants Karagias and the dancing elbow (complete with a kiss to Madusa) gets the same.

Disco throws him to the floor, unfortunately causing Madusa to walk towards the camera. Back in and Evan's splash hits knees as the fans are REALLY not impressed. With Evan down, Disco goes outside to hit on Madusa. That goes as well as you would expect so Marinara gets leaves the booth to try his hand with Madusa. Evan goes after Tony, who gets chaired in the head by Disco. Tony: "What else can go wrong?" Oh you don't want to ask that Schiavone. Evan hits a high cross body for the pin and the title, plus \$25,000. That makes no sense but whatever.

Rating: D+. Here's the problem: these matches aren't cruiserweight style matches. They're matches that happen to have cruiserweights involved. Evan wrestles a cruiserweight style but he's just not very good at it. The gambling story is interesting but as usual there's too much going on in the same match to keep track of it. It didn't help that Marinara's HORRIBLE Italian stereotype made the commentary even more horrible.

Bret Hart arrives half an hour into the show.

Russo tells a bloody Jarrett to prove himself by the end of the show or his favors are over.

Norman Smiley is scared of construction workers but is ready for the Hardcore Title match. Well he's in luck then.

Hardcore Title: Norman Smiley vs. Brian Knobbs

The title is vacant coming in and I believe this is for the inaugural championship. I've seen this billed as a tournament final but I don't remember anything but Knobbs getting to face the winner of a match. Norman comes out in Maple Leafs gear to keep the fans behind him. Brian hammers him down with whatever weapons he could find to start but misses a middle rope trashcan shot. Some hockey sticks onto the trashcan onto Knobbs has Brian in trouble but he breaks up the HARDCORE WIGGLE. That's like the Big Wiggle, but HARDCORE. What's HARDCORE about it isn't clear but it's 1999 so you have to say HARDCORE in a loud voice.

Knobbs finally has a good idea and takes off some of Norman's pads, only to get nailed in the head with a trashcan lid. Norman goes after Jimmy Hart though, allowing Brian to knock Smiley into the cart full of

weapons. They stagger backstage and just happen to run into a waiting camera crew.

Knobbs sends him through a table and breaks a crutch over Norman's back. They fight by the hamburger buns and Knobbs' face is RED. Jimmy throws cans of soup at Norman and this is finally getting to be kind of entertaining. They fight into an elevator and the doors close....but unfortunately open again with Jimmy hitting Brian with a trashcan by mistake to give Norman the pin and the loudest pop of his career.

Rating: C-. See, the way to make the hardcore matches entertaining is to take them out of the ringside area. These things are so much better when they get creative with them instead of just doing the same weapons spots over and over again. I mean, would you want to try to make something out of Brian Knobbs without mixing things up a bit?

Knobbs beats Norman up post match.

We recap the Revolution vs. the Filthy Animals, which is built around kidnapping Torrie Wilson. This story made little secret about it being a way to showcase Torrie, which was one of the best ideas they could have had here.

The Revolution wants to see Torrie get stuck alone without help.

The Animals speak whatever language they use. In a genuinely funny moment, Gene stares at Konnan, so Konnan asks if it's the hat or the belt this time. Gene in a deadpan voice: "Hat." Torrie is going to use the Revolution as toothpicks or something.

Marinara is bringing the boys to deal with Disco tomorrow. Disco thinks he's a dead man.

Jarrett has a 2x4 and is going to deal with someone. That would be the fourth promo segment in 90 seconds on a pay per view.

Revolution vs. Filthy Animals

It's Saturn/Malenko/Asya vs. Guerrero/Kidman/Torrie and this is elimination rules. Kidman and Guerrero storm the ring to start fast as

Douglas sits in on commentary. That's a very repetitive theme for WCW these days. Eddie backdrops Dean to officially start and the fans chant for Torrie. The guys fall to the floor so Saturn takes both of them out with an Asai Moonsault.

Kidman dives on all of them but a Canadian clown pokes Malenko with a Canadian flag. They treat it like a real fan but you never can tell around here. The girls go at it with Asya getting the better of it but walking into a BK Bomb. Eddie checks on Torrie but shoves Kidman into a rollup for the elimination. After about four seconds of the Revolution's theme music plays, the Revolution guys jump Eddie and the Animals are in trouble. Saturn kicks Eddie in the back from the apron as Konnan leaves as well. Some teammate.

Asya suplexes Eddie for a round of applause, even though she would be an appetizer for Chyna. Off to Dean who gets dropkicked into the corner, setting up a hurricanrana from Eddie for the elimination. Not quite Hostile City Showdown but that might be entertaining. Saturn t-bones Guerrero down as Torrie is on the floor like a manager due to a bad ankle injury. Heel miscommunication (another running theme tonight) sees Saturn superkick Asya, setting up the Frog Splash to make it 2-1.

It's Saturn with a northern lights suplex for two as you can see a "Who booked this crap" sign in the front row. Eddie gets out of a sleeper with a jawbreaker and puts on one of his own, only to get tossed down by a belly to back (not a t-bone Tony). A tornado DDT gets two for Eddie but he walks into the Death Valley Driver for a near fall, sending Douglas into a panic. Saturn misses his great looking top rope elbow but rolls through a high cross body into the Rings of Saturn to make Eddie give up. So it's Saturn vs. Torrie with the girl kicking him low for two. Douglas low blows Torrie with his cast to give Saturn the pin.

Rating: C. This was decent due to the talent in there and Torrie in general but there wasn't much of chance with how fast the eliminations went down. What was the point of the eliminations anyway? Other than having an unnecessary stipulation, I don't know why they needed to put it out there. Couldn't they put Torrie on a pole or something?

Jarrett and Creative Control lays out Bagwell, even though that would be hurting his chances to get rid of Hennig, even though the Powers That Be seem to want to get rid of Bagwell at the same time.

Curt Hennig vs. Buff Bagwell

Loser retires, which makes you wonder why the Powers That Be didn't give Hennig this stipulation from the start. Or why Buff is in this stipulation at all. Creative Control and Jarrett come in to beat down Hennig and the bell rings as the attack begins. Bagwell comes out with the 2x4 to make the save but Hennig decks him anyway because both of their careers are on the line. The fans chant PERFECT as he takes it to the floor and walks Bagwell around ringside.

Hennig gets in a rant that I couldn't understand on the headset before they head back inside. Buff knocks him right back to the floor for an ax handle off the apron. Back inside with Buff in control, which Tony interprets as being all Hennig. Curt takes over a few seconds later with a legdrop between Buff's legs for a smattering of applause. Off to a sleeper (I believe the fifth of the night) before Hennig chokes Buff with Buff's necklace. That goes nowhere so it's right back to the sleeper.

An elbow drop with a biceps flex gets two for Curt but Buff claims gimmick infringement and takes control as a penalty. Heenan tries to say this is the most important match of their careers and you can tell he doesn't believe a word of it. A Blockbuster out of nowhere (seriously, they were just trading punches before it hit) makes Hennig retire. They keep using the term "hang up his boots", which he'll probably do literally before taking a pair from the Powers and turning heel.

Rating: D-. I have no idea what happened in this story and it was clear that they just gave up trying about three minutes in. I'm still not sure how we got to this match and why the Powers want to get rid of either guy, but the match was horrible most of the way around. Bad stuff and why do I not believe Hennig is really gone?

Hennig gets a standing ovation from the respectful crowd.

Sting says we may be in Canada but it's still Showtime.

To give you an idea of Russo's pace, we're not even halfway through this show and we have seven matches left. For a comparison, Wrestlemania XXX and XXXI had seven matches total.

WCW World Title Tournament Semi-Finals: Sting vs. Bret Hart

Recent DVD releases suggest that Bret is really proud of this one. Sting has already started wrestling in the t-shirt. They shove each other around to start and stare each other in the face before Bret wins a slugout. Tony: "Those have authority!" Something I've always wondered: whose authority is that?

It goes outside with Bret still in control before taking it back inside for the Five Moves of Doom. Sting, having seen ANY Bret match ever, is easily able to break them up. Yes, Sting was actually smart. It's shocking I know but it does happen occasionally. Sting sends him into the buckle but Bret kicks him in the ribs. I guess his horrible knee injury from a few weeks ago is just fine now. A low blow from Sting (who seemed to have turned face again recently) puts Bret down and we hit sleeper number 8 or so tonight.

Back outside for some reason with being sent into the announcers' table. The Stinger Splash hits the table (at least it wasn't the barricade again) to change control and they head back inside. Sting pulls the referee in the way of a top rope forearm because we need to get to the interference. As luck would have it, here are Luger and Liz with the former hitting Sting in the knee with the bat.

Bret isn't cool with that and puts Lex in the Sharpshooter, but that's a DQ win for Hart. He doesn't want it that way though so he goes through the Five Moves, gets kicked in the face, and counters the Scorpion into the Sharpshooter to make Sting tap. Again, Russo has no idea how his characters work.

Rating: D+. That's what he was proud of? It was decent enough but as usual it turned into a brawl instead because neither guy seemed interested in doing a match. They need to pick a side for Sting, but NOT ONE THAT TAPS OUT. Just totally against his character but why should that matter to Russo? I mean, he's just a wrestler. Interesting coincidence

here: the two semi-final matches had exactly the same time at 9:27 each.

Sting shakes Bret's hand to turn face again I guess.

Benoit says it would be an honor to beat Hart for the title in Canada.

Luger already has a surgical collar on and doesn't think he can compete tonight against Meng.

Vampiro vs. Berlyn

Dog Collar match just because. You win by pins or submission. In case this isn't enough, Dr. Death and Ferrara as JR come out with the latter doing commentary. Berlyn hits the referee with the collar as Ferrara lists off football stats. The Misfits are sent to the floor as Wall beats up Vampiro. Wall misses a big boot and gets crotched with the chain as Berlyn stomps on Jerry Only outside. That doesn't hurt Wall's bricks though so Vampiro slams him down.

Berlyn comes back in and stomps Vampiro down, only to have Wall put the collar around his own neck. A HUGE chokeslam puts Vampiro down and Wall covers for two. That angers Berlyn but the referee keeps counting anyway. Wall, minus the sunglasses now, throws the collar at Berlyn (Ferrara: "COLLAR! COLLAR! COLLAR!") and walks away. Vampiro hits a spinwheel kick and throws him down with a release superplex. Now Only gets in for a double suplex, followed by a Vampiro camel clutch with the chain to make Berlyn tap. Vampiro and Berlyn were never attached by the chain.

Rating: F. Next. That's all I've got. Next.

Williams beats up Vampiro and Only, because this whole mess was there so we could have a laugh at JR's expense. It wasn't a funny laugh but it was indeed a laugh.

Rick Steiner has forfeited the TV Title and, news to me, was scheduled to defend against Scott Hall tonight. Therefore Hall is now a double champion and issues an open challenge for both titles tonight.

Hennig leaves.

Kimberly is just getting here.

Meng vs. Total Package

Luger is wrestling in the surgical collar. Meng hammers on him to start and no sells a slam. That takes them to the floor with Meng dominating, but Tony thinks the neck brace is a way to block the Tongan Death Grip. And yes, that is EXACTLY the point of the thing. Back in and Meng tries the Death Grip to no avail. Meng chokes in the corner (should that work either?) and Luger screams for help. Luger: "HELP!" See? He screamed for help.

Luger tries a headbutt to about as much avail as you would expect and Meng runs him over a few more times. A kick to the face gets two and Meng chokes on the ropes, only to pull Luger up so Liz maces Luger by mistake (same deal that started the feud). Meng takes off the brace and puts on the Death Grip to win.

Rating: D-. A month ago Luger went over Bret on pay per view and now he's jobbing to Meng in five minutes. This was a one idea match and it made Meng out to be a one move wrestler. I could have seen this sort of thing on Thunder but instead we get it late in the second hour of a pay per view. Only in Russo World. Also only in Russo World can Liz play Jimmy Hart to Luger's Brian Knobbs and Meng's Norman Smiley as it's basically the exact same ending from an hour ago.

Bret says he's been here for two years and is going to win the title he deserves. Luger can be heard shouting for Liz as he's talking.

David Flair is polishing his crowbar in anticipation of holding Kimberly down against her will or making her scream that she can't take it anymore.

TV Title/US Title: Scott Hall vs. ???

After the survey, with Hall saying Nash is on his way, the open challenge is answered by....Booker T. Well he does deserve a big spot like this. If nothing else, Booker is the second young guy to get a shot at a main event star tonight. Ignore the commentators' surprise after his music

came on for a second and then went back off. Hall is insanely over because this is Canada and if you were over in the WWF, you were over forever. For life you might say.

Hall drives the shoulders in to start but Booker hook kicks him for two and some booing. A forearm puts Hall on the floor and he has to check for loose teeth. Back in and the chokeslam and fall away slam have Booker in trouble and a clothesline puts him on the floor. Hall puts on a sleeper and we've got Jarrett plus Creative Control. Tony makes sure to point out that they're Patrick and Gerald because that's so funny. Booker fights out and kicks both twins down but gets caught in the Outsider's Edge to retain the titles.

Rating: D. It's a shame too as this could have been a good match had they just let these guys fight. In theory this is just Booker getting screwed by the Powers and not Hall being on their side, unless there's some grand scheme to get all the titles on a select group of Russo backed wrestlers. Nah that couldn't happen.

Midnight comes out for the save.

Luger is still trying to find Liz.

We recap David Flair vs. Kimberly. So Kimberly tried to get David to sleep with her for reasons not clear, but she wound up sleeping with Ric instead. That sent David into insanity so she ran him over with a car. He was crazy enough to no sell it and has turned into a B-movie stalker ever since. Note that instead of Ric vs. Page in what could be a decent match, this is the best we can get.

Kimberly vs. David Flair

After running scared of David for weeks, Kimberly comes out in leather pants and a low cut backless top with a smirk on her face (she looks great in other words). David no sells a low blow and shoves the referee down, so Kimberly drops to her knees. You know what the fans are chanting. She unbuckles his pants and takes out the cup he was wearing before getting in some kicks as the fans turn on this mess. David stands up so here are Kanyon and Page (Why was he not with his wife all

night???) to lay out Flair. Arn Anderson comes out to save David and gets beaten up by the tire iron. That's the, ahem, match.

Anderson is taken out on a stretcher.

We recap the Goldberg vs. Sid rematch from last month where the match was stopped due to Sid's excessive bleeding. Sid has kind of turned face since then so this should be interesting. Horrible of course but interesting.

Sid says he won't say he quits.

Goldberg vs. Sid Vicious

I Quit match. The fans boo Goldberg to start and then INSTANTLY start chanting his name. That's one fickle group. They start slugging it out before Goldberg even gets in the ring as Heenan says this is like the Super Bowl or the World Series. It heads to the floor immediately and the fans think Goldberg sucks. Back in and Sid's cobra clutch slam gets a nice reaction. He slowly chokes and rips at Goldberg's face and plants him with a pair of chokeslams.

Goldberg pops back up and cranks on the arm before picking him up and clotheslining him down a few times without letting go of the bad arm. The fans boo this out of the building as Goldberg puts on a horrible cobra clutch (Goldberg: "This is it.") for the win with Sid passing out. Well having Goldberg's hand on your forehead and holding your hand is indeed painful looking.

Rating: F-. This was supposed to be Hart vs. Austin, but that was four times longer than this, had two competent wrestlers, and a ton of emotion. Oh and that whole iconic image thing. Instead, as usual with Russo, they tried to get to the ending without putting in the effort first and it looks like a disaster instead of what they were going for.

Luger says Liz knows she screwed up and he'll find her.

WCW World Title: Bret Hart vs. Chris Benoit

Feeling out process to start until Bret takes him down in an armbar. A

headlock puts Bret down for one and they hit a pinfall reversal sequence, capped off by a Crossface attempt to send Bret into the ropes. The fans are WAY into this one as they know one of their heroes is coming out champion.

Benoit gets sent to the floor and the Canadian Clown from earlier jumps the barricade to attack him with the flag. It's Dean Malenko in something else he probably hated doing. Bret chases him off and piledrives Benoit for two. A belly to back gets two on Hart and both guys are already beaten down. The tombstone and Swan Dive get two more as we have Outsiders (late to break up the pin so Bret had to make an awkward kickout).

They nail the referee so Goldberg comes out to deal with them. That earns him a chair to the back but Bret helps fight them off as we're left with Benoit vs. Goldberg in the ring. A new referee comes out as Goldberg fights the Outsiders on the stage. The screen splits to show the three of them fighting in the back while the WORLD TITLE is being decided in the ring. Benoit goes after the leg but the Figure Four sends Bret right to the ropes.

With the knee suddenly fine again, Bret scores with a backbreaker followed by a superplex. Bret starts in on the back and throws Benoit to the floor, where Benoit is pelted with trash. Back in and Chris rolls some Germans but can't get the Crossface. Instead Bret sweeps the legs and puts on the Sharpshooter for the submission and the title.

Rating: B. Well that was....well it was something. It's the best wrestling match in the Russo Era so far, but that's covering some very shallow ground. The ending being clean helps this a lot and gave it the legitimacy it was needing. However, this brings up the same question that comes up every night: what was the need for the interference? What did those three coming to the ring add to this match in the slightest? They even threw in a split screen to make sure you knew they weren't doing anything important. Bret winning the title is a good thing, though it should have been a year ago at the latest.

Bret's family comes in to celebrate and he hugs Benoit. Tony says this is

just another day in Bret's career to end the show.

Overall Rating: D-. The opener and main events carry this as far as they can but the rest drags it down through the floor, the concrete and the upper half of the earth's mantle. Way too much interference and nonsense throughout the show cripples it as the stuff they have ranges from not making sense to being there just to pad out the show in the place of wrestling. It's clear that they have no idea what they're doing on a wrestling show and somehow it's only going to get worse. The wrestlers are trying where they can, but they're fighting a guerrilla war against people that hate what they do and why they're there.

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Thunder- November 18, 1999: Benoit Does It Again

Thunder

Date: November 18, 1999

Location: Allen County War Memorial, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Attendance: 3,283

Commentators: Scott Hudson, Larry Zbyszko

We're three days away from Mayhem and the interesting thing this week is can they keep up the wrestling on this show. Thunder has definitely

become the wrestling show, with matches getting more time than Nitro gets most of the time, but with less star power and more bad interference. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Jerry Flynn vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

Hardcore so Bigelow brings out some weapons but Flynn takes him away and nails Bigelow with a trashcan. Barbarian is out here with Flynn, despite Jerry beating him in an impromptu boiler room brawl Monday. Norman Smiley comes out but Hart sends Knobbs and Barbarian after him. Without noticing what's going on outside, Bigelow takes Flynn down with a clothesline. Thankfully he didn't ruin the mullet.

Time for the cookie sheet shots followed by the can lids crashing around Flynn's head like cymbals. The flying headbutt misses though and Jerry hits something like a Van Daminator with the trashcan. Barbarian comes in like a schnook and gets beaten down, followed by a chair to Flynn to give Bigelow the three count.

Rating: D. There was nothing to this one other than Hart and Smiley shouting at each other a lot. That was the most entertaining part of the match, which is likely due to the idea of taking two entertaining guys and letting them entertain. This is different than Flynn who is there because he knows karate and Bigelow, who could be entertaining but not in a mess like this.

Disco can't get anyone to give him action on a bet for a match tonight.

Bagwell is looking for Chris Benoit.

Disco Inferno vs. Prince Iaukea

Non-title and Iaukea has new gear. Not interesting gear of course but it's new with some trunks and boots. Disco goes to the eyes to start but Iaukea smacks him in the back of the head. I'll give WCW 1999 this much: their heels had great hair. After begging off, Disco sends him into the corner and takes over with all of his usual stuff. A clothesline and middle rope elbow get two each on the Prince.

Iaukea's sunset flip doesn't work and Disco stays on him with elbows and chokes, followed by a chinlock to keep the fans bored. Iaukea comes back with an even less interesting offense (the high spot is a dropkick) until Disco drops him with a DDT. Thankfully for a change, we get silly as a messenger brings Disco a package. Inside is....a fish? Oh I get it: sleep with the fishes. The distraction lets Iaukea grab a rollup for the pin.

Rating: F. Is it bad that I want to see where the fish story is going? I know it's the mafia gambling stuff but it's more entertaining than most other stuff going on with this promotion. What isn't interesting however is the really dull wrestling in this match as neither guy knows how to keep an audience. Disco is nothing great but at least he has something unique with the dancing. Iaukea....what in the world do they see in him to keep him on the payroll?

Post match, Disco hits Iaukea with the fish. Remember that he has a title defense three days from now.

Evan Karagias says he's going to beat Savage for the love of his woman.

Van Hammer asks Curt Hennig to get counted out tonight and a fight breaks out. This story is one of the worst in the company and that covers a lot of ground.

Evan Karagias vs. The Maestro

The bubbles in Maestro's entrance are always odd to see. Maestro grabs a quick headlock to start and nails a shoulder. Evan comes back with a cross body but rolls outside to kiss Madusa. The delay works for a bit but Maestro comes back by raising a boot in the corner. Some forearms and a belly to back suplex get two on Evan as this is just a step ahead of the previous match.

More uppercuts set up a German suplex but Evan flips over the back and gets two of his own off a snap suplex. Madusa has to play cheerleader despite looking about 20 years older than she really is here. A spinebuster puts Evan down but Madusa gets on the apron and kisses Maestro. Evan kicks him down and checks on Madusa (who didn't seem to mind), allowing Maestro to roll him up for the pin.

Rating: D-. Boring wrestling, uninteresting characters, Madusa being a focus for reasons not exactly clear and the #1 contender to the Cruiserweight Title losing about ten minutes after the champion lost. The wrestling on this show isn't great, but the booking continues to be the real problem dragging this down. I guess they're setting it up that Evan is distracted by Madusa, but when the champion loses earlier in the night and Evan has never really done anything, the story is a huge mess.

The Revolution talks about Torrie being a Barbie doll. Shane wants to see Asya rip her apart, sending Saturn into a rant about taking the limbs off a Barbie. Shane: "Perry, IT WAS A FIGURE OF SPEECH!" Saturn: "My point exactly!"

Disco is panicking on the phone with Tony Marinara.

Benoit heard that Bagwell is looking for him. He leaves a few seconds before Bagwell shows up.

Nitro recap video, complete with Sid's half the brain line.

La Parka and Kaz Hayashi have another overdubbed interview with Hayashi sounding like he's from rural Georgia. I think these predated Kaientai's INDEED promos but they're around the same time.

Buff and Benoit finally get together with Bagwell asking Benoit not to use the suplexes or the Crossface on the bad neck. Benoit says Buff knew what he was getting into and they brawl.

Kaz Hayashi/La Parka vs. El Dandy/Silver King

Kaz has his own chair and even the announcers have to mention the dubbed voices. Dandy gets flipped around while trying to backslide Kaz so it's quickly off to La Parka vs. King. La Parka does his dance so King dropkicks him in the face and everything quickly breaks down. King and Dandy are headscissored to the floor and the fans are actually behind Kaz and Parka here. Dandy comes in and tries a right hand but hits his partner by mistake. After the calamity calms down, Kaz gets whipped into a gutbuster as we settle into a more standard formula.

A double slam gets two on Kaz but Dandy lets him walk over for the tag to

La Parka. Things speed up with Silver coming in to help Dandy as the heels take over again. La Parka is sent to the floor so Kaz comes in, only to get tripped down a few seconds later. The heels screw up with King hitting Dandy, allowing Kaz to tag La Parka again. Everything breaks down with La Parka hitting a missile dropkick and Kaz adding a high cross body to King. La Parka's kind of Whisper in the Wind is enough to pin King.

Rating: C-. This got messy in the middle but I like the idea of La Parka and Kaz being these guys who can barely speak English but suddenly have the dubbed voices. I'm fine with these decent nothing matches on Thunder though, as they're clean enough to not make my head hurt and long enough to quality as a match instead of an angle. It doesn't mean anything after the match ends but at least it was decent while it lasted.

La Parka chairs King post match.

Bagwell and Hennig get in a fight over something we don't hear.

Curt Hennig vs. Van Hammer

Larry goes on a rant against the term "Powers That Be". I kind of agree as WCW has announced that they're Russo and Ferrara so why not just go with that? Curt knees Hammer on the way in but gets thrown outside for a brawl. To keep up the stupidity of this show, we see a sign saying "I'm only here for the Nitro Girls." Maybe Russo is on to something about the fans being morons. Back in and Hennig starts in on the leg as Bagwell strolls out to follow up on a five minute old angle. All the oil on Buff's arms distracts Hennig so Hammer can get in a cheap shot and snap his throat across the top rope.

Curt goes after Buff but catches Hammer trying to jump him from behind with a kick to the ribs. Back in and Hennig slams Hammer's head against the mat as Buff plays cheerleader for Hammer. Apparently it works as Hammer comes back with a knee in the corner followed by a DDT, only to miss a middle rope flip dive. Curt is sent outside for a brawl with Bagwell, only to have Benoit come out and get sent into the barricade. Back up and Hammer is accidentally whipped into Buff, allowing Curt to hit the HennigPlex for the pin.

Rating: D-. I need a minute here. Let's try to figure this out. So the Powers That Be want to get rid of Hennig by saying he's gone as soon as he gets pinned, because a submission isn't good enough for them for whatever reason. At the same time, they want to screw with Bagwell by making him job all the time because wrestling is scripted, but Bagwell wants to rebel and win his REAL matches.

Now he's screwing with Hennig to get rid of him, presumably as a favor to the Powers That Be to get them off Bagwell's back? At the same time, Benoit is involved despite being in the final four of the World Title tournament because they have nothing better to do with him tonight and there's NO ONE else they could throw into this mess? The fact that I had to write out two paragraphs to understand this story, ignoring the fact that it completely exposes the business, sums up Russo's booking in a nutshell: A stupid midcard feud took that long to understand and I don't even care now that I've figured it out.

Luger works out as Chavo sells Liz Amway jewelery. THIS story gets to continue but we're not likely to hear any more about La Parka and Kaz.

Lash Leroux vs. Kenny Kaos

Leroux takes him down to start but Kaos kicks him in the ribs and scores with a butterfly suplex. After a middle rope legdrop gets two, Lash botches a flip over the back but takes over anyway. Why let something like a big mishap screw up your quick match right? Kaos comes back with a boot to the face and a bunch of kicks and punches in the corner.

A gutwrench suplex gets two for Kaos but Lash comes back with a Russian legsweep and stomps of his own. Kaos is sent outside but Lash baseball slides into his leg to really take over. The leg is fine enough to catch a diving Cajun though and drive him back first into the barricade. So he's generic and doesn't sell. Back in and Lash escapes a slam and hits Whiplash for the pin.

Rating: D. In the old days, this would be filler on Saturday Night but now it's one of the later shows on Thunder. It really is apparent that no one cared about this show and they were clearly just filling in time. Again, I'd love to know what someone was high on when they picked Kaos to

be a champion a year ago. That stuff could make me a fortune on the streets.

The Animals brag about Torrie being a martial arts expert. I smell an unfunny comedy bit coming up.

Vampiro wraps a chain around his hand.

Chavo Guerrero Jr. vs. Barbarian

Chavo comes out with his order forms for Barbarian, but Barbarian hits him in the back with the briefcase, setting up the Kick of Fear for the pin at 8 seconds.

Post match, Barbarian says he'll pay Chavo later. Well, at least it's something for Chavo to do. Stupid yes but something.

Tournament recap.

Liz and Luger watch Meng from a monitor.

Meng vs. Vampiro

Vampiro gets taken down by the hair to start, which you would expect to have been the other way around. Meng loses a kick-off but Vampiro stupidly tries a headbutt. Well no one ever accused him of being smart. Now Meng headbutts the buckle but doesn't seem to phase it. A bunch of chops stagger Vampiro and Meng nails a decent dropkick. I remember Jesse Ventura freaking out when Haku hit those and I can't say I disagree.

Vampiro gets piledriven and sent to the floor for a whip into the barricade. Back inside and Meng is finally put down by a top rope spinwheel kick. That's the extent of Vampiro's offense though as his hurricanrana is countered with a powerbomb. Jerry Only of the Misfits comes in and takes the Tongan Death Grip and that's the match, presumably for a no contest.

Rating: D+. Meng is one of those guys that is kind of fun to watch, just due to him no selling almost everything and hurting as many people as he did. Unfortunately he's being set up with Luger, which is about as dull

of a program as you can have. The ending here did nothing for anyone, but that really shouldn't be surprising.

Liz comes out to apologize to Meng and the monster is nice enough to stop lunging at her with the Death Grip as Luger is late with his cue. He finally shows up and chairs Meng down before crushing his knees with the chair.

Chris Benoit vs. Buff Bagwell

Ever the genius, Buff tries to slide under the ropes and gets stomped down. Chris takes over with a dropkick and a knee to the ribs but gets dropped ribs first onto the top rope. They head outside with Buff dropping Benoit's throat across the barricade before stomping away. Back inside and Buff keeps up the stomping motif as this is actually one of the more entertaining matches of the night due to the charisma both guys have. Buff wasn't much in the ring but he had some energy to him.

A neckbreaker sets up a chinlock on Chris as I guess Buff is a heel all of a sudden. They trade punches and chops in the corner before Benoit takes it to the floor to give Bagwell the beating he deserves. Back in and Benoit hits the snap suplex and puts on a surfboard before "accidentally" kicking Buff low. They head outside again with Buff getting whipped into the barricade but Benoit makes the same mistake Buff made at the start and lets Bagwell get in some shops as he comes in.

Buff hammers away but has to grab the ropes to block a German suplex. That's fine with Benoit as he plows through Buff with a clothesline, only to miss the Swan Dive. Buff goes up for the Blockbuster but here's Hennig to break it up, allowing Benoit to slap on the Crossface for the win.

Rating: C+. So to recap, Benoit has gotten two of the longest matches of the Russo Era and has put in two of the best performances to date. Aside from Benoit being awesome, a lot of it goes to show that when you give the guys a chance to show what they can do, you more often than not get a good match. You can't do anything with two minutes and three plot devices at a time.

Benoit stares at Hennig and leaves, allowing Curt and Buff to brawl to

end the show.

Overall Rating: D. They had something here with the self contained story of Bagwell/Benoit/Hennig ending with a match but I can't imagine this is going to be a recurring theme. Other than that though, this was your usual disaster with nonsensical ideas and booking decisions that seem to be more there for the amusement of Russo and Ferrara than anything else. I have no desire to see Mayhem more than I did two hours ago though, so the show was a waste of time.

No show next week due to Thanksgiving.

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I Checked Out Signature Sounds

The documentary about WWE music.

This is one of the shows in the series that I had been really looking forward to watching and it was actually far better than I was expecting. It's another countdown format but with WWE music king Jim Johnston hosting (kind of) and talking about each song. As someone with as much musical talent as a Coke machine, it's fascinating to see someone who has put together this many different kinds of songs and made a lot of really

catchy stuff. I mean, the guy made songs for everyone from Fandango to Undertaker to Orton and a lot of points in between.

If nothing else, it's awesome to see someone pick up a guitar or sit down at a piano and make WWE songs come out. You can tell this guy is really, really good at what he does and it's clear that he knows exactly what he's talking about when he breaks down the process of the songs and what was going through his head when he put them together. The countdown has some rather questionable picks for a top 25 (Prime Time Players? No DiBiase?) and the worst part about this it's only a little over 50 minutes long. This really could have done better without so many comments from wrestlers and a lot more from Johnston as he literally wrote about 90% of WWE music over the years.

Assuming he didn't request it, this somehow got him a job writing soundtracks for WWE Films. Anyway, it's really cool to see something like this instead of the 19th rehashing of the Monday Night Wars or the career of someone we've covered to death. I'd love to see more behind the scenes stuff like this as the entrance music is something taken for granted a lot of the time, but it really can push someone over the top. Check this out if it's something you even only kind of care about as it's really interesting and less than an hour total.

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Impact Wrestling – April 10, 2015: Wanted: Top Level Heel, No Experience Preferred

Impact Wrestling

Date: April 10, 2015

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Taz, Josh Matthews

This is an interesting time for TNA as they have a bunch of potential challengers for Kurt Angle's World Title but it seems that Lashley has the most valid claim to a shot. Last week Angle pinned Lashley but the replay showed that Lashley's shoulder was up. Other than that we have Drew Galloway's Rising ready to deal with MVP's Beat Down Clan. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Galloway debuting a few weeks back to try and take back wrestling from the Beat Down Clan. He now has his friends in the Rising to help in his battle.

Tonight, fan Tweets will be airing on screen. This is apparently interesting for reasons that I don't really understand but WWE does it so it's a good idea right?

Here's Kurt Angle to address the end of last week's show. There's been a lot of buzz over the match with Lashley so he'd like Lashley out here right now. We look at the tape of Lashley's shoulder being up and the fans want a rematch. Angle says he won't back down from a title defense because he knows he can beat Lashley again. They're ready to fight tonight but Eric Young comes out to crank up the suck.

Eric says he's #1 contender and the rankings say so. He's a main event champion and Angle is holding his belt. The fans don't seem to agree but Young grabs Lashley's face. Angle goes for Young but Lashley spears the champ down by mistake. Oh the drama. Maybe we can see Eric Young get in a match way over his head again but get to see him survive because he's

Eric Young and has been around forever and for some reason that makes him interesting. I mean, he's not tall like Big Show but he has been around a long time.

Post break, Angle is still in the ring and says he'll fight Lashley and Young tonight at the same time.

Video on the history of Awesome Kong vs. Gail Kim.

Gail Kim vs. Awesome Kong

#1 contenders match. They go nose to nose until Gail gets launched across the ring by the hair. Back up and Kin gets in a few unsold shots before being tossed right back down. As the match goes on, I get THRILLING Tweets of fans saying they like the match and that they're watching the show. You can't buy journalism like this people. Gail fights up from a camel clutch but runs into a hard clothesline. King rips the turnbuckle pad off and sends Gail outside, only to get dropkicked into the barricade.

Back in and Gail fires off forearms to the chest before getting two off a spinning cross body. Kong misses a charge into the exposed buckle to give Gail two as we get a Tweet from Jim Ross about how good Gail is. See, that's the kind of thing we need live commentary to point out. Eat Defeat gets another near fall but Kong just grabs her by the throat and sets Kim on the top rope. Gail dives again and goes right into the Awesome Bomb for the pin at 7:18.

Rating: C. This is one of those old, storied feuds in TNA that was indeed cool ten years ago or however long it was, but now it's more like "hey, I remember when they had matches back then." Thankfully they didn't play that up too strong here and it was really just a step above a Kong squash. Taryn vs. Kong could be good if they book it right.

We immediately cut to James Storm and Mickie James. Mickie thanks him for the save last week but that's just how southerners are raised. This is more like the old Storm. She goes to leave but he asks for a hug. Manik comes up and asks what was up with that but Storm goes back into Revolution mode and tells Manik to never question his motives. He orders

Manik to round up the team for a fight. That transition from Kong to Storm was way too fast and something TNA needs to work on. It's ok to stay on the winner more than two seconds before you get to your next thing.

Back from a break with the Revolution in the ring and Storm sitting in a chair. He's brought them out here to make things very clear: this is about a revolution, not for him to take care of them. Each and every one of the men in this ring failed him, which is why Sanada is gone. Storm yells at Khoya, saying he brought him out of that horrible country but now Khoya has failed him.

There's always room for one more, but now there can always be room for one less. He's going to win this Tag Team Title tournament and one of them is going to be his partner. The fans chant for Manik, but Storm makes a three way to determine who gets the spot. A referee comes out and Storm insists that there must be a winner.

Abyss vs. Khoya vs. Manik

Abyss cleans house but Manik hits him with a chair, which seems to be legal. Khoya picks up a stick that Storm left in the ring but Abyss knocks him into the corner. Apparently the title match is next week in Ultimate X. That's rather sudden but that's life in TNA. Manik counters a chokeslam into a standing cross armbreaker (Six Second Magic for you No Mercy fans out there) but Khoya comes in for the save. A Sky High to Manik is enough to get Khoya the spot in the tournament at 2:50.

We go back to James Storm's barn with the ghost hunters from last week. The results are inconclusive.

Here's the Rising for a chat. Drew really does fit in this role. He's so awesome that he can cut a promo and have his LIVE Tweet show up on screen at the same time. Drew says he'd give us the shirt off his back and that's exactly what he does. He started the Stand Up campaign to bring wrestling back where it belongs and the fans are part of the Rising with them. Drew hands the microphone off for the official introductions.

First up we have Micah, formerly known as Camacho. The BDC is a bunch of

bullies and it's time to punch them right in the mouth. The other member is Eli Drake (you might know him as Shaun Ricker) and he talks about how they're definitely not Superstars, but professional wrestlers. Drew throws down the gauntlet and here's the BDC to answer. King thinks they're rising like a yeast infection and MVP accepts the challenge. Drew counts down from three to one and the brawl is on in the aisle as we go to a break. Drake and Micah are just warm bodies but they were fine here.

Rising vs. Beat Down Clan

This would be the second match made by the wrestlers in the first hour. King grabs a headlock on Drake to start but gets caught in a powerslam. It's quickly off to Micah vs. MVP with the BDC taking over and stomping away in the corner. MVP comes back in and puts on a chinlock before kicking Micah in the face for two. Micah scores with a Samoan drop and Drew gets the hot tag to clean house. Everything breaks down with the Rising clearing the ring, leaving Micah to dive onto all three of them. Drew and Drake pose but a masked man in BDC gear sneaks in with what looked like a pipe for the DQ at 6:52.

Rating: D+. This match was watchable but I'm really not seeing why I should care. Rising is a bunch of newcomers and Drew stands out, but I'm not really sure why these teams need to fight. The BDC hasn't actually won anything other than the X Title once or twice. Do we really need a stable to fight against them?

The masked man is Homicide. Oh...great.

Angle says he's ready to prove himself again when Eric Young jumps him. After a break, Angle insists he's fighting tonight.

DJZ vs. Davey Richards

Feeling out process to start with both guys flying around a bit until Davey dropkicks him out to the floor. Davey kicks him in the face from the apron but DJZ comes back with some shots of his own back inside. That's fine with Davey as he wins a slugout and sends DJZ to the floor for a suicide dive. Back in again and a running kick gets two for Davey

but he misses the top rope stomp. Instead he throws DJZ up in the air for the kick to the chest, setting up a spinning kick to the head (Creeping Death) for the pin at 5:32.

Rating: C. Well that happened. I guess they're setting up the tag tournament next week but it was announced as the X-Division match of the night. The match was entertaining enough but having matches for the sake of having a match isn't the best way to get my interest up. Still though, watchable.

Homicide says the BDC is familia. MVP says they're the Beat Down Clan and they do what they do because they can. I've heard worse catchphrases.

We see some girls playing with dolls. The Dollhouse is coming soon. The girls appeared to be Marti Belle and Mia Yim.

Here are the Hardys to celebrate beating James Storm last week. Next on their list is winning the Tag Team Champions for the first time in TNA. This brings out Ethan Carter III and Tyrus to remind us that Ethan is undefeated for nineteen months, but somehow he hasn't gotten his title shot. He's entering the tournament to get a Tag Team Title, but he needs a partner. He wants someone who can hurt people and that man is....Bram. Now that's interesting. Bram comes out and says he hates everyone, but he'll team up with Carter because he hates him the least.

This brings out Anderson, who asks if Carter just said he and Bram are the odds on favorites. Carter: "Yup." Anderson: "Huh?" "Yeah." "Huh?" "I do." "Huh?" "Indeed." This goes on for about ten more seconds because Carter is rather entertaining on the mic. Anderson's partner is Spud and they have a quick argument over Spud grabbing Anderson's microphone. The two of them head to the ring but Austin Aries comes out, talks about loving gold, and announces Roode as his partner.

A preview for next week shows that we have four qualifying matches and the winners going to an Ultimate X match for the Tag Team Titles. It also shows the four teams in the Ultimate X match because these previews aren't thought out in advance.

TNA World Title: Kurt Angle vs. Eric Young vs. Lashley

Angle is defending and this is one fall to a finish. Young hides on the floor to start and lets the suplex machines fight, but they quickly get together and beat Young back and forth. Lashley plays Bret on a Hart Attack and Young gets beaten up on the floor as we take a break. Back with Angle busting out the suplexes on both guys and clotheslining Lashley to the floor. Kurt ducks his head and eats a piledriver but Lashley makes the save and throws Eric outside.

The running powerslam gets two on the champ and a big spear gets the same with Young making the save. Lashley tweaks his ankle on a leapfrog but is still able to low bridge Eric to the floor due to Eric sucking so much. Both challengers get rolling Germans but Young breaks up the ankle lock (it lasts about 20 seconds, which Josh timed as three minutes) and puts Lashley in the Figure Four. Lashley makes the rope so Eric wedges a chair in the corner, only to get caught in the delayed vertical. The spear hits the chair though and Angle Slams both guys, setting up the moonsault onto Lashley's bad leg for the pin at 13:43.

Rating: B-. So now we get Angle vs. Young because Young will be CRAZY while saying he never got beat right? You know, because we absolutely, totally and completely need Eric Young in our lives and main events. He's been around for years you know. The match was decent enough, as long as Young was kept reined in.

Post match Angle leaves so Young goes after Bobby's leg with the chair and puts on another figure four.

Overall Rating: C+. Decent enough show that set up the tournament next week, but the wrestling outside of the main event was only so good. The stories don't have the same heat they did a few weeks back, but at least we've still got enough good stuff to keep things going. I would however appreciate a top heel instead of a bunch of mid level ones running around. Angle seems to be a transitional champion and that's the right kind of reign for him at the moment, hopefully with Carter rising up to the top spot soon enough.

Results

Awesome Kong b. Gail Kim – Awesome Bomb

Khoya b. Abyss and Manik – Sky High to Manik

Rising b. Beat Down Clan via DQ when Homicide interfered

Davey Richards b. DJZ – Creeping Death

Kurt Angle b. Lashley and Eric Young – Moonsault to Lashley

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Monday Night Raw – March 3, 2003: We'll Get There One Way Or Another

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 3, 2003

Location: Nassau Veterans Memorial Coliseum, Uniondale, New York

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the week after Rock showed why he's one of the best of all time and now it's time for a showdown with Steve Austin. While Steve might not be the star he once was, those two around Wrestlemania time never gets old. On top of that, we'll get an update on HHH vs. Booker T. at the biggest show of the year. Let's get to it.

We open with Bischoff in the back with Rico and 3 Minute Warning. They're instructed to keep Austin out of the building tonight. Why do the evil authority figures hire such lame help?

Here's Booker T. to get things going. Last week he won the battle royal to go to Wrestlemania but here are Flair HHH to interrupt before he can get a minute in. HHH thinks Booker is a bit confused. Yeah Booker is going to Wrestlemania, but someone "like you" doesn't get to be a World Champion. That's reserved for people like HHH because Booker is here to entertain instead of compete. HHH asks for a little dance because people like Booker, "with your nappy hair and your SUCKAS" are very good at entertaining. The idea of Booker challenging HHH for the title makes the champ laugh.

Yeah Booker was a five time WCW World Champion but that title is a joke. That was back during the time when David Arquette and Vince Russo were World Champion, meaning Booker championed that place right into the ground. Booker wants to go to Wrestlemania to face the best in the world and he'll do what people like him always do: lose. Booker finally gets to talk and says somebody like him is going to take that title at Wrestlemania. HHH: "Well good luck brother." HHH reminds Booker that he has Scott Steiner tonight and would be surprised if Booker makes it to Wrestlemania.

Allow me to pause and say WOW. I remember watching this back in the day and feeling uncomfortable with it, but this is mind blowing stuff now. I mean....HHH just basically said a black man can't win the title. Yeah later on they would change it to HHH meaning an ex-convict, but there is NO spinning what he was going with here. It was flat out "Booker, you're black" without actually saying it and I can't believe they didn't bail on it by the end of the show.

Jeff Hardy vs. Christian

Fallout from Jeff's failed save attempt last week. Jeff jumps him to start and hammers away in the corner before jumping to the floor and pulling Christian face first onto the apron. A top rope dive puts Christian down again as Lawler talks about Hardy being frustrated lately.

What appears to be a moonsault is broken up as Hardy gets crotched on top for two and the fans go mild. We hit the abdominal stretch as JR gets in a Wilbur Snyder reference. That goes as far as most abdominal stretches go so Jeff comes back with the Whisper in the Wind for two. The Twist misses though and the Unprettier is good for the pin.

Rating: C-. Not bad but these two know each other so well that they can have a passable match in their sleep. They were pushing Hardy's impending heel turn which was an interesting way to go with him, but the fans weren't quite ready to boo him yet. Christian was starting to rise up the card at this point, which is a good sign as the tag teams were long past done.

In case Austin gets past 3 Minute Warning, Lance Storm is ready for him next.

Chief Morely vs. Spike Dudley

This is the perk of having a minion like Spike around. If he wins here, the Dudleys are unsuspected. Spike jumps him to start and stomps away in the corner, but amazingly enough a guy the size of a Diva with some meat on her bones isn't enough to stop Morely. The Dudley Dog is countered into a kind of powerbomb for two before stomping away with some force in the corner. See Spike, that's how it's done. A suplex and the Money Shot end Spike in a hurry.

Eric wants Christian and Jericho to help guard him against Austin. Why don't evil bosses ever SEND ALL THE LACKEYS AT ONCE? If there was even an evil guy with a brain, the villains would win every time.

Trish Stratus/Jacqueline vs. Jazz/Victoria

The heels argue over who starts and Trish bulldogs both of them down at once. Jackie and Jazz get things going but Victoria offers a trip, allowing Jazz to take over with a dropkick. A sitout powerslam gets two for Jazz but Victoria kicks Jazz by mistake. Again, GET SMARTER VILLAINS. Victoria comes in for two off a snap suplex but Jackie slips out of a slam and tags in Trish. Everything breaks down and Victoria breaks up the Stratusphere, only to get rolled up for the pin a few seconds later.

Rating: D+. Not much to see here but they set up the Wrestlemania title match well enough. Trish was really starting to figure out how to be the superhero of the division but it's really distracting with King freaking out that her top is so low cut. Victoria was awesome at this point too and I really want them to just get to the showdown between Victoria and Trish and cut out Jazz and Jackie.

Morely is going to help Storm against Austin.

Coach knocks on Rock's door (why did it take this long to get to Rock? Why is anyone else on this show?) for an interview. First words from Rock: "Coach, are you on crack?" Rock thinks they might be able to do this Wednesday and sends Coach off with instructions to wash up. The camera follows Rock into his dressing room and sees him get annoyed as the fans boo. He looks for his guitar to soothe his soul but finds Hurricane instead.

After being confused for a second after FINDING HURRICANE SITTING IN HIS LOCKER, Rock asks the obvious question: HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN THERE??? Hurricane might have seen him walking around without any clothes on. Rock brings up eliminating Hurricane last week and asks about Ronald McDonald and pals. Apparently Rock was screaming something in Hurricane's ear last week, but Hurricane only heard Rock screaming when Booker threw him out.

That's just a mistake though because Rock tripped. Fans: "BOO!" Rock: "THE ROCK SAID THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED!!!" Rock goes into a rant about how Hurricane is nothing but his phone goes off in his pocket. Rock: "Excuse the Rock one second. Oh hey buddy." After hanging up: "It's nothing! He says he knows you!" Rock gets even better when he sees that Hurricane has braces. Is he going to go sell band candy after the show? Last week, Rock was saying his lines from Scorpion King, which was in I think Arabic.

Rock asks if Hurricane knows what the line means. Hurricane: "If it's what I saw from behind that curtain, it means that the Scorpion King has a tiny ding-a-ling." Rock: "WHAT????? AND STOP LAUGHING!!!" We finally get to the point of this: Hurricane thinks Rock is scared of Austin and has had Bischoff sending the goons after him. Hurricane leaves and Rock

tells his crotch that it's the king.

Sweet merciful goodness the Rock is on fire right now, but there's one thing more important than all others here: he's having these segments with Hurricane. Not HHH, not Austin, not Undertaker and not Hogan. He's doing this with someone who has never gotten a break and is just kind of there.

Rock isn't losing a thing with these segments and is going to have the real main event at Wrestlemania XIX. In other words, he's giving someone a rub because it's not going to hurt him and we get an entertaining segment as a result. Why can't more big names do that? Ah yes, because they're too busy telling their World Title opponents to dance.

Here's Chris Jericho for a match with Test, but of course he has something to say. Jericho wants to apologize to Stacy for hitting her in the face with a steel chair a few weeks ago, but he'd rather apologize for her hooking up with a lying cheater like Test. Jericho shows us a clip of Test signing a girl's chest, which leads to Stacy freaking out. Of course this leads to a plug for the Girls Gone Wild pay per view, but Test charges the ring as Jericho thinks it's going to be a countout.

Test vs. Chris Jericho

Test goes right for him as Christian follows Stacy out to the ring. That earns Christian a clothesline from Test and a toss over the barricade for some Canadian violence. Back in and a tilt-a-whirl slam plants Chris as this is all Test so far. Since he's Test though, Jericho quickly counters into a Walls attempt but Test kicks him off. A quick powerbomb drops Jericho but he distracts the referee so Christian can come in with a cheap shot to Test for two. Test plants Jericho with a full nelson slam but has to kick Christian off the apron, allowing Jericho to hit him low and hit the Breakdown (Skull Crushing Finale) for the pin.

Rating: D. This seems like the blowoff to the singles feud as Test either needs to get a partner or they need to split something off into another singles feud. Jericho and Christian were a good team but this was an awkward time for Jericho as he was main eventing Wrestlemania last year but a year later he's in a midcard tag team.

Post match Jericho and Christian give Test a Conchairto to really knock him out of the story but Shawn Michaels comes out to save Stacy. That earns him a chair to the face as Jericho means business. We actually get some blood to really make the Wrestlemania match clear. Jericho makes it even clearer by holding up the chair but says he wants to end Shawn's career at Wrestlemania.

Goldust arrives (an hour and ten minutes into the show) and freaks out 3 Minute Warning.

Christopher Nowitski wants to help fight Austin but gets a surprise 3D for his efforts.

Scott Steiner vs. Booker T.

They slug it out to start with Steiner getting the better of it until Booker nails the flying forearm. He's still no Tito Santana. The ax kick misses so Steiner nails the Namesake Line and a belly to belly. It seems that Steiner has morphed into a heel in the span of a week. The elbow into the push-ups gets two but Booker comes back with a running elbow.

The side kick out of the corner looks to set up the Spinarooni but Steiner plows over him because Booker is kneeling in the middle of the ring with his back to his opponent. Cue HHH and Flair as Steiner is bleeding from the eye. That goes nowhere so Booker botches the sunset flip out of the corner for the pin.

Rating: D. My goodness how did Steiner convince anyone to keep him around after those HHH matches and then this one? They've managed to make Booker look horrible because he can't carry Steiner (who could at this point?), after making him look like a fool because HHH is doing a racism angle for reasons I still don't comprehend.

Rock is singing about how a big star like him has to deal with being in Long Island when Bischoff comes in. That's not cool with the Rock as he yells at Bischoff for sending all the goons to stop Austin. If there's anything left of Austin, Bischoff can make some rattlesnake dip out of him, but Rock will walk back to Smackdown if anyone goes after Austin.

Al Snow/Tommy Dreamer vs. Rob Van Dam/Kane

Hardcore of course. It's a brawl on the floor to start until Rob slides in and dives out onto Snow. Dreamer brings in the first cane because he doesn't know how to wrestle a regular match. It's Kane coming off the top this time with the flying clothesline to knock Dreamer silly, only to have the ECW guys come back with trashcan shots. This goes as well as you would expect as Kane chokeslams both guys down, setting up a Five Star to pin Dreamer in a short match. Apparently this was punishment from Morely. It's punishment to face a couple of lower card guys?

Austin fails to run over all the lackeys with his truck so Bischoff yells at them. That's a surprising result.

Here's Austin in the arena for a pretty weak reaction. The interest just wasn't there at this point. He isn't sure what to talk about first, but before he gets into anything else he needs to thank the fans for sticking with him after he left. Then he got tired of sitting at the house and now he's back and ready to beat up anyone in that locker room. This brings Hollywood Rock out to the stage, complete with an open bottle of water.

Rock is glad to see him back but gives Austin some advice: as soon as you become successful, these people will turn on you. Rock isn't here to talk to the people though because he has something to say to Austin. There's one thing Rock needs to do in his career and that's beat Austin at Wrestlemania. How about it? It one corner the baddest man in wrestling, the man who revolutionized Monday night and the biggest star in this industry. Then in the other corner, Steve Austin.

Before he can answer though, here's Bischoff to offer make Rock vs. Booker T. next week. If Rock wins, he can have his choice of Austin or HHH at Wrestlemania. HUH? Why in the world are we talking about HHH now? Booker vs. HHH is set and Austin vs. Rock III needs to happen. Instead, here's 3 Minute Warning to get beaten down as you would expect them to. Austin turns around and sees Rock face to face. Rock teases leaving but comes up swinging, only to run away from an attempted Stunner to end the show. That's it?

Overall Rating: D+. What the heck was that ending? We've spent all night

setting up Rock and Austin's showdown and get a culmination of the Bischoff stuff which was already blown off back at No Way Out? This was a mess all around though as the build isn't working for the most part. We're getting to the big matches, but HHH has already cut Booker's legs off and now they're postponing the announcement of Rock vs. Austin for another week for no adequate reason. The wrestling was mostly horrible here but that's nothing out of the ordinary.

If nothing else though, it's amazing how much easier these shows are to sit through than the three hour versions. No these aren't great episodes, but they don't have time to drive you crazy or to wear me out. I can live with short matches and some questionable endings as long as the show just doesn't drone on and on. This show would be fine if they just let Austin and Rock talk all night, but Booker needs to get something back on HHH next week after that mess to open the show.

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Lucha Underground – April 8, 2015: That's Not Good

Lucha Underground

Date: April 8, 2015

Location: Lucha Underground Arena, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Vampiro, Matt Striker

The tournament continues tonight as we try to find the first Trios Tag Team Champions. I get the idea behind doing this instead of having a regular set of Tag Team Titles but it's not really winning me over just yet. If nothing else, it doesn't help that the matches usually break down into insanity too quickly, though that can be said about a lot of things on this show. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's tournament match and Prince Puma successfully defending his title against Cage.

Konnan and Puma are in Cuerno's office. The boss wants Puma in the tournament to make it mean more, so he needs to get some partners because next week he's facing King Cuerno and two partners who will be ringside tonight for Cuerno's title shot.

Trios Tag Team Titles Tournament First Round: Son of Havok/Ivelisse/Angelico vs. Aero Star/Fenix/Drago

Well that's different. Fenix and Angelico slap hands to start but Fenix counters a monkey flip with a double stomp to the back to take over early. Off to Ivelisse who gets thrown into Angelico, only to have him flip her over to the apron and come in instead. Fenix kicks Angelico in the face and it's off to Drago for a DDT as Vampiro goes into fanboy mode. Now we get to the problems as Fenix goes to the middle rope and Star climbs onto his shoulders for an elbow, but Drago wants the pin.

Off to Havok vs. Star with the fans behind the former as he gets two off a standing shooting star press. Ivelisse comes in off a slap but Angelico tags himself in and gets spun around by Star, allowing Drago to come in for a tornado DDT. Angelico is sent to the floor so Fenix can launch Drago onto him, but Fenix's corkscrew dive hits his partner by mistake. Back in and Ivelisse hits a running DDT (Think Dolph Ziggler) to stun Fenix before Havok hits a flip dive on Drago.

Fenix dives on everyone so Ivelisse dives on everyone not named Fenix (he only got a rope kicked between his legs). Fenix walks the ropes to drop an elbow on Angelico, leaving Drago to kick Havok back inside. That's fine with Havok as he springboards off the ropes into a double back elbow to Drago and Star. Ivelisse short arms Havok on a tag attempt and walks

out, so Havok kicks Drago in the head and hits the shooting star to advance to the finals.

Rating: B-. This fits into the category of a match that isn't really good from a quality standpoint but man alive was it fun. They were flying all over the place and hitting dive after dive, which is all you need for something like this. It doesn't hurt that Ivelisse looks great and can back it up in the ring. Fun stuff here.

Konnan has found Puma a partner with Hernandez. Johnny Mundo pops up and says Puma already asked him to be his partner because he wants a piece of Cuerno. Konnan isn't pleased.

Sexy Star vs. Super Fly

This is mask vs. mask, which really should be a bigger deal than it is here. Cueto set this up because Star saved Fly from having his arm broken and Cueto is kind of a jerk. Star works on a wristlock to start before they fight over a top wristlock. They hit the mat and come up in a standoff before Fly just pops her in the face to take over. Back up and Star kicks him in the ribs and nails an X-Factor (modified version of an old Konnan sequence) but Fly slaps her in the face again.

A middle rope hurricanrana drops Fly to the floor and Star hits a big dive for good measure. Striker is doing play by play a mile a minute here, which is FAR easier to sit through than his fanboy stuff. Back in and a Codebreaker gets two for Star but she grabs a running DDT for the same. Fly powerbombs her down and goes up for a moonsault but Star rolls away and grabs La Majistral for the pin.

Rating: D. Uh...what the heck was that? They set up a lucha de apuesta and blow it off in the span of eight minutes? That's totally out of character for this promotion and I'm really surprised they did this. I know it's because Super Fly recently lost his mask in Mexico and they had to get rid of it here too, but they could have built this up for weeks given their taping schedule. One good note here: Star looked like a wrestler who happened to be a woman. That's a good sign.

Post break, Fly kneels so Star can unmask him in a pretty emotional

moment. Pentagon Jr. comes in and snaps his arm.

Lucha Underground Title: Prince Puma vs. King Cuerno

So is Cuerno Puma's father or are they from different countries? The champ has Hernandez, Konnan and Mundo in his corner but Cuerno's partners are revealed to be Cage and Texano. Feeling out process to start with both guys grabbing wristlocks but Cuerno bails to the floor. Puma dives on the partners but they throw him to Cuerno for a neckbreaker. Mundo and Hernandez come over for a save but the sandpaper snake stops them.

We get a...oh you don't know what Striker means when he mentions a sandpaper snake? It's Texano's bullrops. How did you not get that connection? Back in and Cuerno stomps away before kicking Puma hard in the ribs. Texano gets in some cheap shots on Puma's leg as the referees around here continue to be kind of worthless. Puma comes back with a Superman Punch but eats an enziguri from the apron.

A big flip dive over the top takes Cuerno down (why he was on the floor isn't shown as we were looking at the commentators) and Mundo follows with a flip pf his own. Striker: "Arguably the best athlete on the planet!" WHAT PLANET IS HE TALKING ABOUT???? Mundo is good but dude, come on. Back in and Puma gets two off something like a Blue Thunder Bomb but misses a springboard 450. Cuerno rolls some Germans for two but the partners get up on the apron for some cheap shots but Puma wants Hernandez to get down (Puma didn't see Hernandez interfere). The 630 retains Puma's title.

Rating: C. Uh...why was the title on the line here? Tell me, what does this add to this match? Cuerno lost his last match against Mundo in the cage but for some reason he gets a title match here? That's the kind of bad logic that Lucha Underground usually avoids but this felt like throwing a title match on the show so they could say we have a title match tonight. The wrestling was your standard fare here but I never got into it with all the other moving parts at ringside.

Hernandez tries to raise Puma's hand but the champ doesn't want his praise. Everything breaks down into a big brawl to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. They're entitled to a misfire every now and then. The problem with this show was the lack of patience and wanting to just hotshot everything at once. Instead of letting something build up over a few weeks, they announced a mask vs. mask match and a title match on one show. That's the kind of low level mistake that you don't expect from these guys and I hope it's not something that continues in the future. Not much to this week but it's hard to get too upset in 45 minutes.

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