

Monday Night Raw – May 4, 2015: The OLE Is Strong With This One

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 4, 2015

Location: Bell Centre, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Booker T.

We're already getting close to Payback and a lot of the card is already set just a little over a week after Extreme Rules. Seth Rollins is ready to defend the World Title against Roman Reigns and Randy Orton at the next pay per view in a triple threat match. The bigger story though seems to be Rollins vs. Kane, which has been brewing for months. Let's get to it.

We open with Randy Orton, who thinks Payback is the perfect name for this upcoming pay per view. It's time for him to get his payback on Rollins, and if Reigns has to get in the way so be it, because Orton is walking out champion. This brings out Reigns, who says Orton's words won't be coming true. If anyone is getting payback, it's him. The fans chant RK0, but Reigns says the people don't fight for Randy. Orton compares their resume and says Reigns has some catching up to do. Reigns brings up beating Randy back at Summerslam and has no problem breaking him in half again at Payback.

Cue the Auth.....uh.....actually IT'S A NEW DAY! Woods says that as the only champions here, it's their job to spread the positivity. No one cares about the Montreal Boo-job (that sounds like a Bo Dallas line) they have going on right now. Kingston says Rollins doesn't just have Orton's number but he's got it on speed dial. Big E. offers them a chance to clap along with the New Day. Kofi: "I TOLD YOU THEY WOULDN'T DO IT!" A handicap match has been made.

New Day vs. Roman Reigns

Non-title. Of note here: the bell rang at 8:14, after a commercial. That's the kind of speed I want in my opening segments. Kofi and Orton don't do much so it's off to Woods, who gets nailed by a hard shoulder. Woods' leapfrog is countered into a Samoan drop, followed by the tag to Orton. The two man team take turns working over Woods until a Kofi distraction allows for the tag to Big E. It doesn't take long to get back to Woods for a dropkick as we take a break.

Back with Reigns fighting out of Kofi's chinlock but getting caught in some suplexes from Big E. for two. We hit a front facelock from Kofi and a chinlock from Xavier until Reigns finally powers out. A clothesline sets up the hot tag to Randy to clean house, including catching a springboarding Kofi in a powerslam. There's a Superman Punch to Big E. and the elevated DDT to Kingston. Woods gets the RKO but Reigns spears Orton by mistake and Kingston gets the pin at 13:15.

Rating: C+. Totally logical and well done match with the CHAMPIONS WINNING. They had me thinking they were going to do the stupid "champions with an advantage lose" thing but instead they keep the losers looking strong and give the champions the win. That's all I can ask for so the clapping was a nice bonus.

Kane comes out and says these two aren't done yet and it's Reigns vs. Orton for the main event.

After Kane's announcement, he runs into Rollins in the back. Seth again dangles the Authority over Kane's head (is the Authority just never in contact if they're not on TV?) but Kane makes Rollins vs. Ambrose again for tonight but bars the Stooges from ringside. Rollins yells so Kane threatens to tie Rollins' arms together for the match with Ambrose.

Renee Young (looking spiffy as always) brings out Ryback for a chat. He has no idea why Bray Wyatt has been going after him. The fans chant Goldberg and Ryback says he loves the fans too, because if he ignores it they'll just keep doing it. That starts a FEED ME MORE chant so maybe he's onto something. Ryback talks about being hungry to be a hero every single week to every kid in this audience. Last week, Bray Wyatt woke Ryback up and now he's hungry. Talking time is over and now it's feeding

time. This brings Bray to the screen to talk about fear making us pledged allegiance to higher powers. Ryback will fear him as well.

Ascension vs. Tyson Kidd/Cesaro

The inset interview has the Ascension talking about Tyson being a Hart wannabe. Viktor stomps Kidd down in the corner to start and Ascension starts taking turns on him. Konnor gets two off a suplex and Viktor follows it up with a middle rope kick to the chest. Kidd rolls over for a hot tag to Cesaro for about ten running European uppercuts in the corner to Viktor, who stupidly kicks out at two. Kidd takes Konnor out with a flip dive and it's the Swing into the dropkick for the pin at 4:07. Cesaro and Kidd got a huge face reaction here.

Rating: C+. THIS is the Kidd/Cesaro that the fans have been dying to cheer for months and they were on fire tonight. They're developing an awesome chemistry together and Cesaro's power hasn't looked as good in a long time. Watching this match, you totally get the desire to see Cesaro become a breakout star. Really good stuff here from one of the best tag teams in a long time.

Dean Ambrose vs. Seth Rollins

Non-title rematch from Smackdown with the Stooges barred from ringside. Before the match, Kane comes out to raise the stakes: if Ambrose wins here, he's added to the triple threat match to make it a fatal fourway. Rollins is livid but Dean takes the mic from him and says it's a great idea. Kane says ring the bell so Dean rolls Seth up for a quick two.

Some chops send Seth to the floor but the champ takes over, only to throw Ambrose in for that 619 on the mat spot and takes Seth down again. Back in and Dean gets two off an elbow and hammers away in the corner before sending Rollins into the opposite corner for a Flair Flip. Seth comes back with a snapmare into a chinlock but Dean tosses him outside as we take a break.

Back with Rollins cranking on the neck and sending him face first into the middle buckle. The springboard knee misses though and Dean nails a tornado DDT to put both guys down. Dean slugs away and hits his bulldog,

sending Rollins to the floor. Ambrose nails a suicide dive and the fans are very impressed. It's only enough for two though and Dean is frustrated.

The standing elbow drop gets the same but Seth comes back with the springboard knee to the head. Another slugout leads to a Cactus Clothesline from Ambrose to put both guys on the floor. Rollins gets the better of it with a running powerbomb into the barricade and the fans are way into this again. Dean somehow beats the count back in at nine and a half and Rollins is livid. Seth hammers away in the corner and nails the enziguri but Dean hits the rebound lariat. Cue the Stooges because stipulations mean nothing, but Dean rams them into each other and rolls Seth up for the pin at 16:33.

Rating: B+. I don't think this holds up due to some stupid stipulations/loophole, but man alive these two work well together. This was more about topping each other instead of the violence that made their feuds work so well before, but this was fine in its own right. Dean is another good example of a guy who can easily get a win like this and bounce right back to the top. It made me chuckle when people said he was buried after losing to Wyatt.

Post match Rollins storms into Kane's office and blame him for the situation but Kane says the fans picked the match and Rollins lost to make it a fourway. Maybe Seth would like six, seven, even ten challengers instead? This is all to make Seth into the champion they want him to be, and Kane has a plan.

Lana doesn't know anything about getting a positive reaction. Fandango comes up and says you have to accept the fans. He leaves so Rusev comes in and yells at Lana.

Fandango vs. Rusev

The fans chant for Lana as Rusev gets going. Fandango gets in a quick shot so Rusev throws him to the floor, where Fandango gets Lana to start dancing. Rusev snaps and nails Fandango before ejecting Lana, but the dancer sends him into the post. Back in and some dropkicks have Rusev in trouble, but the jumping superkick and Accolade end Fandango at 2:14. So

to recap, Rusev is Marc Mero and Lana is Sable?

Tough Enough audition tapes.

R-Truth vs. Stardust

Rematch from last week's King of the Ring match. Stardust comes out with a mystery bag. A release gordbuster puts Truth down to stat and a running stomp to the chest has him in more trouble. The fans get bored as both guys collide and begin to entertain themselves. Truth wants to know what's in the bag and finds...plastic spiders. Stardust rolls up the freaked out Truth for the pin at 2:55.

Cena comes out for the open challenge but has to wait for the fans to tell him that he sucks. Cena: "I quit." He tries to talk about how those words have meaning now but gets cut off by an OLE chant. Some people would love for him to quit now, but he's learned to deal with these reactions. Everyone knows he doesn't give up and he won't at Payback in his final match with Rusev. Even if he loses, he's done because there's no reason for him to have a rematch if he quits.

Cena calls the fans passionate but goes back to Rusev, saying Rusev just wants the title. On the other hand, Cena is fighting for everything he believes in. If your back is up against the wall and someone puts a mic in your face, would you say you quit? There's a guy in a Nordiques jersey (old Montreal hockey team) because even though they left in 1996, that guy still won't quit. Cena is proud of that title and will never give it up. In two weeks, the champ is here. Right now though, it's open challenge time.

US Title: John Cena vs. Bret Hart

Wait what? Bret says he's here to introduce the real opponent, but gets cut off by the man answering the challenge.

US Title: John Cena vs. Heath Slater

He isn't getting cut off again this week because two weeks ago it was an RKO out of nowhere and then Rusev jumping him out of nowhere. Slater is tired of getting attacked out of nowhere, so there's a mic to his head

from Bret. Now here's the REAL challenger.

US Title: John Cena vs. Sami Zayn

YES! I can't remember the last time I actually pumped my fist and shouted YES at the TV for an announcement but it happened tonight. In a travesty of justice, this is joined in progress with Sami sending him to the floor and teasing a dive. Back in and Sami gets caught in a side slam into a chinlock, followed by a belly to back for two. Then the referee stops the match and throws up an X with Sami holding his shoulder. Oh no man not now.

Sami says he can keep going and the fans love him even more. Cena is tentative to go after the arm so they circle each other a bit until Cena gets him into the corner for some right hands. Zayn comes back with a clothesline but comes up holding his shoulder. Cena loads up the finishing sequence but Sami counters the Shuffle into a rollup for two. John bails to the floor, allowing Sami to hit the big flip dive, but Cena slaps on the STF back inside. Zayn gets over to the ropes for the break and can barely move.

The Downward Spiral into the Koji Clutch out of nowhere has Cena in trouble but he floats over into the AA, only to get caught in a flat German suplex for two. Rusev and Lana are watching in the back as Cena nails Sami with a clothesline. The AA is countered and a double clothesline puts both guys down.

Cena rolls outside and gets caught by the running diving DDT through the ropes to knock Cena silly on the floor. Back in and the AA hits for.....two? The Blue Thunder Bomb gets the same and the fans are losing their minds on these kickouts. Cena's springboard Stunner sets up another AA to finally retain the title at 10:40 shown.

Rating: A-. They give Stardust vs. R-Truth a full match and THIS gets clipped down? That shoulder story worked great and Sami looked like the pluckiest underdog in the history of dogs that are under, which is basically his character in a nutshell. I really hope this is the start of Sami's main roster run as he can clearly hang on this stage.

Cena helps Sami to his feet and leaves him alone for a standing ovation from his hometown crowd.

The Bellas are coming to the ring and New Day is STILL celebrating in the back. I want to marry this show and divorce it after about four years.

Renee is trying to find Sami for an interview but New Day comes up to continue celebrating. Big E. says victorious about five times and Woods plugs his E:60 special tomorrow night on ESPN. Cesaro and Kidd break up the NEW DAY ROCKS chant but Woods calls Tyson a catastrophe of a Canadian. This negativity will not keep the champions down but Kidd starts a NEW DAY SUCKS chant.

Nikki Bella vs. Naomi

Naomi and the returning Tamina Snuka jump the Twins from behind with Tamina nailing a superkick to Nikki's chest. Well it's kind of hard to miss. Naomi says this is what family is all about. No match, which is probably the smartest thing they could have done. Also, I'll take Tamina (who is Naomi's cousin by marriage) over a Funkadactyls reunion every single day.

Here's Bad News Barrett for the first time since winning the crown. Barrett: "Hear ye you filthy commoners!" Oh yeah he's going to nail this. He talks about Princess Charlotte being born a few days ago and says how great a week this is for the royal family. Great, great stuff here as Barrett's voice makes the character.

Sheamus/Bad News Barrett vs. Dolph Ziggler/Neville

Barrett kicks Ziggler in the ribs to start but gets thrown to the floor as we take an early break. We come back with Ziggler fighting out of Sheamus' chinlock but getting caught in a tilt-a-whirl powerslam. Sheamus talks a lot of trash, allowing Dolph to score with a sweet superkick. Dolph gets the tag and Neville comes in like a house of fire, including the big spinning flip dive to Barrett.

Back in and the standing moonsault gets two before Neville has to duck the Bull Hammer. A German suplex gets two on Barrett as Ziggler and

Sheamus fight outside. Neville kicks the King in the head and goes to the apron, only to springboard into the Bull Hammer for the pin at 8:38.

Rating: C. Nice little tag match here but it didn't have time to do much with the break at the beginning. Sheamus and Barrett make a nice heel team and could be a fun act together for a good while to come. If nothing else, swap them with Big Show and Kane as the Authority's enforcers.

Roman Reigns vs. Randy Orton

Before the match, the Authority comes out to delay things even further. Noble is guest ring announcer, Mercury is guest timekeeper, Kane is guest enforcer, and Rollins is guest commentator. Cole: "Thank you mayor of Munchkin City." The bell rings at 11:02 and there's no contact in the first thirty seconds. Orton tries an RKO out of nowhere but Reigns shoves him away and starts a slugout.

Reigns takes him down with a Samoan drop and they go outside. Your guest ring announcer takes a right hand to the jaw and Kane gets stared down. They trade secondary finishers and Orton takes over with the powerslam. The RKO is countered and Reigns nails the Superman Punch, only to have Kane pull him outside. Orton gets beaten down as well and we'll call it a no contest at about 6:30.

Rating: D. Nothing match here but did you expect anything else? There's nothing else to talk about here so I'll save you some time.

Reigns dives on everyone but the beatdown is on until Ambrose makes the save. Reigns takes an RKO and Orton eats Dirty Deeds to leave Dean standing tall to end the show.

Overall Rating: A. Well that's about as good of a show as I've seen since.....the Raw after Wrestlemania XXX? Everything was on point all night with the right pace, the right decisions and A LOT of really good wrestling. This was the kind of show they needed, but now they need to keep things going. Of course it doesn't have to be at this pace because that's an unfair request, but something with this kind of energy and logic will do wonders for them. Outstanding show.

Results

New Day b. Randy Orton/Roman Reigns – Kingston pinned Orton after a spear from Reigns

Tyson Kidd/Cesaro b. Ascension – Cesaro Swing into a dropkick to Viktor

Dean Ambrose b. Seth Rollins – Rollup

Rusev b. Fandango – Accolade

Stardust b. R-Truth – Rollup

John Cena b. Sami Zayn – Attitude Adjustment

Sheamus/Bad News Barrett b. Dolph Ziggler/Neville – Bull Hammer to Neville

Randy Orton vs. Roman Reigns went to a no contest when the Authority interfered

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New Column: The Evolution Isn't A Mystery

This may sound familiar.

<http://www.wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-evolution-isnt-mystery/35309/>

Wrestlemania XXXI Preview: WWE World Heavyweight Title: Brock Lesnar vs. Roman Reigns

And then there's this.

This is one of those matches where there are so many different ways it could go that it makes me want to see it. I'm not entirely sure that's how they meant to get there, but it makes me want to see the main event more than I did otherwise. I'm not even sure where to start with this one.

So Reigns won the Rumble after everyone knew he would for like a year, then beat Bryan to defend his title shot at Fast Lane. Much like HHH vs. Sting, it all started coming off the rails after that because they had no idea where to go with it after that. They've tried things like Roman wanting to be the monster that slays the bigger monster or Reigns living up to his family's history of being all dominant and such, but it seems like they really don't know where they're going.

That of course leaves the problem of people not caring about Roman Reigns. They've done a horrible job at making him a guy that we're going to connect with because he doesn't have much of a personality. Look back at the two stories they've tried. Not many people are going to be able to connect with the idea of being a Superman who can beat up anyone in the world and is going off to fight the big dragon. At the same time, most of

them can't connect with the idea of being part of a legendary family with a huge reputation to live up to.

On the other hand, there's a major risk of having Reigns booed out of the stadium because Brock Lesnar is the easiest guy in the world to cheer for because fans like seeing Brock destroy people like Godzilla crushing buildings in the abandoned warehouse district of Tokyo. He's a guy people are ready to cheer for (because they can forgive the Streak being broken that quickly) but instead we're supposed to cheer for Reigns because of....hey isn't that Reverend Slick over there?

They just haven't done a good job of setting this match up because there's no reason to want to see the showdown. Reigns is pretty much the same guy he was a year ago but now he has the stupid promos on his resume. He's been SO much better when he's the Batista type who lets his fighting do the talking and spears people in half after punching them in the face. But instead, for some reason WWE decides that he needs to be a guy with a personality because that's how WWE thinks people are supposed to be.

You know who works as a powerhouse who doesn't say much and shows off with his physical abilities? Brock Lesnar. He's actually a really good standard for someone who doesn't need to do much talking and can be a huge success by just letting his power and dominance do all the talking he needs. Let Reigns be something like a Batista instead of trying to make him the new John Cena.

I don't even see why Reigns needs to win the title at Wrestlemania. Why does Reigns, age 29, NEED to get his first World Title here? Most wrestlers don't win their first title at Wrestlemania and they wind up being fine. Let him win it somewhere else first and then come back and get his really big win later on? Why have him win here and throw him out in deep water? It's like asking him to win a gold medal in the Olympics and not even giving him a broken freaking neck. It doesn't work that way.

All these issues aside, it seems very obvious that it's going to be Reigns taking the title from Lesnar because the story seems to be that Cena couldn't do it so let's get someone even bigger and stronger to take

the title from Lesnar. That's a pretty lame story to tell because it's just going and getting the next guy up instead of finding someone we might be interested in seeing.

Then Lesnar re-signed and everything changed.

That signing turned this match on its head and made it a completely different story. The idea was that Lesnar was going to lose the title because he might have been on his way out of the promotion to MMA so Reigns had to be the guy to take it from him. However, now that he's staying and there's a chance Bryan and Cena will be winning the midcard titles to headline the house shows, why not leave the belt on Brock?

There are a million ways to go with Lesnar if he sticks around as champion, including turning him face. Like, for instance, Reigns sees that he can't win the title on his own and needs some help. Maybe two guys in black? One of whom says Reigns is his brother? Or you have him fight the Authority and finally clear them out. There are a million options.

Then there's one more option: the cash-in. I'll keep this short: if Lesnar retains, I think there's a cash-in tomorrow on Raw. Otherwise, nothing.

So for the official prediction, I'll take Lesnar retaining because he's sticking around. At the end of the day, I think WWE is going to throw the brakes on at the last minute and let Reigns lose here to build him up again for later. I know Vince wants to pull the trigger on him, but hopefully HHH can talk him out of the itchy trigger finger for now. No cash-in at Wrestlemania if Lesnar retains.

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Wrestlemania XXXI Preview: Sting vs. HHH

Let's get something out of the way first.

For some reason there are people thinking this is going to close out the show. I know Sting is a big deal and I'm looking forward to seeing one of my all time favorites finally getting inside a WWE ring, but don't kid yourself: this match isn't closing the show and there's no logical reason that it should.

This is another match where they really needed to pick a story and stick with it a long time ago but for some reason they can't decide what to go with. At first it was being presented as WCW vs. WWE in one final round of the Monday Night Wars. I thought that was really stupid but was ready to go with it, even though they're ignoring the totally logical story (we'll come back to that in a minute).

But anyway, they seemed to be going with the WCW vs. WWE story, but then Sting said the most logical thing I've heard all year: "Of course I'm not fighting for WCW. That would be pretty ridiculous fourteen years after it closed." Makes perfect sense, so of course Stephanie came out, cut off Sting's balls, turned it right back into WWE vs. WCW and didn't let Sting get in any rebuttal because this company is all about making sure Stephanie never looks bad.

See, this is where the story goes off the rails because they had the perfect story when Sting made his debut. After all the months of the Authority using their power to abuse and intimidate everyone, Sting shows up as the Dark Knight: the one man with the power and stature to be immune to the Authority and the only man willing to stand against them because, simply put, THAT'S WHAT STING DOES. He did it in WCW against the NWO and he did it in TNA against their 184 different heel factions. Sting is the guy that stands up to the corrupt bosses and fights the good

fight.

But for some reason that's not what we're getting. Well, at least not the full on version of it. Instead they're building it up as a dream match, which you could go with if you've run out of other dreams to have I guess. I'll give them this though: the image of HHH pulling out the hammer but Sting countering with the ball bat is the most naturally perfect image this feud could have had and they nailed it as well as they could have.

Now the match itself is a completely different story. We've seen that HHH can still go in the ring with anyone and give a good to very good performance. I have no doubt he'll be ready to go for Wrestlemania. On the other hand, I haven't seen Sting look good in a match in a very, very long time. The guy is just getting up there in years and can barely sit back on the Scorpion anymore. However, this is Wrestlemania and I think Sting has one more decent to good match in him.

The question now is who wins. My instinct and every bit of wrestling logic I have says Sting goes over. Why in the world would you bring Sting in and have him lose his WWE debut match? That being said, this is WWE in 2015 where logic and common sense is thrown out the window for the sake of "well why don't we do this?" and ignoring the response of "because it's really stupid." HHH doesn't need to win another match as long as he lives though, so I'll go with Sting since HHH does seem to have mellowed a bit in recent years as his last win was at Wrestlemania XXIX. The one before that? TLC 2011.

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Wrestlemania XXXI Preview: Randy Orton vs. Seth Rollins

A classic case of overthinking it.

Oh man I'm torn on this one. On one hand, this could be the one that completely steals the show and makes Rollins into an even bigger star than he was before. On the other hand, GOOD FREAKING GRIEF HOW DID THEY MANAGE TO SCREW THIS MATCH UP SO BADLY??? I've been in awe over the horrible botching they've done with the build to this match because it really should have been the easiest thing in the world.

Think back to Fast Lane where Orton returned and cleaned house on the Authority but Rollins escaped. That right there was all they needed to do, but since this is modern WWE, they managed to completely overthink it and ruin the whole thing. Instead of Orton, who has been built up as a guy that can snap at a moment's notice for years, going into Apex Predator mode and hunting his way through the Authority to get his hands on Rollins, he joined them after beating them up to get his hands on Rollins instead.

A few weeks back Orton tried to explain the whole thing and it just didn't make sense. It came off like damage control, which really shouldn't be needed for a match like this. Like I said, this should have been Orton coming back, saying Rollins tried to end his career and trying to end Rollins' career (or take his briefcase) as payback. But that would have meant Stephanie didn't get to add Orton's balls to her collection so instead, this is what we got.

The match itself should be entertaining as both guys have a tendency to rise up like few others can when they're given the chance on the big stages. Orton has almost always had sleeper matches in the midcard which surprised a lot of people (he dragged KANE to a good match a few years back. Even Cena had issues doing that) and Rollins is someone who can

work well against anyone and has established himself as a main event caliber guy.

The more I think about it, the more I'm going with Rollins. Orton already got his big beatdown segment, so it would be pretty anti-climatic to have him just beat Rollins up again and then pin him after the RKO. Since this isn't going to be a gimmick match (because the calendar says we can only have those next month), there's really no reason to have Orton go all psycho again here and get his revenge. Also, it would be nice to see Rollins get the big win, especially if he's going to cash in later in the night (more on that later).

This match has the potential to be the best worked match on the card, as Orton always gets a reaction and the Stooges have been awesome as Seth's inept backup. I'm thinking they offer a distraction and Rollins gets the big Curb Stomp for the win, as there's really no logical reason for Orton to go over here....and that probably should swing my vote to the other side shouldn't it? I'll stick with Rollins in one of the few matches I'm looking forward to, really stupid build (imagine that on this show) aside.

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Reviewing the Review: Monday

Night Raw – March 16, 2015

There are three weeks to go before Wrestlemania and the big question is simple: will anyone dare insult the memory of Andre the Giant, thereby ticking off the company's top villain and having Stephanie rip them to shreds in a segment that has nothing to do with what's going on at the moment and only serves to get Stephanie TV time? Let's get to it.

We crank up the stupid right off the bat this week as Orton and the Authority opened the show. Here's the REALLY short version of what happened: Orton threatened them, told them his plan to get revenge on Rollins, said he was kidding, and then, through a series of very convenient coincidences, carried out his plan later in the night and destroyed Rollins to end the show.

Does this company have any idea how to even do the most basic stories correctly these days? Randy Orton is a psycho, he comes back and hurts Rollins, Seth wants revenge at Wrestlemania. Or Orton comes back nice and calm, says he's seen the error of his ways, infiltrates the Authority and takes them out one by one before it's only Orton vs. Rollins at Wrestlemania.

Instead, this is what we get: Orton returns as a psycho, calms down and infiltrates the Authority (thanks to Stephanie yelling at him because that's the ultimate power in WWE), tells them their plan, gets lucky that Stephanie ejected Big Show and Kane earlier in the night, then beats Rollins to a pulp, leaving almost no logical reason to set up the match at Wrestlemania and giving us no reason to have a match without a gimmick, which we'll likely get anyway.

This whole story has been a mess because they don't seem to know what they want to do. It's a simple idea of just setting up an idea and then executing it. Look at this [Reviewing the Review](#). I knew what I wanted to do with it and then started writing it out. I didn't start talking about Raw, break into a recipe for how to baste a turkey, talk about Raw some more and then end by pasting the third act of the script to Con Air. Just please WWE, stop making up these stories week by week and then thinking

trying to fill in the gaps in your horrible logic after you're done.

Daniel Bryan beat Bad News Barrett and Dean Ambrose beat Stardust in your Intercontinental Title shenanigans of the week. They've finally calmed down with the stealing the title and just let the people fight each other, which calms me down quite a bit. The wrestling was nothing to see but what do you expect with two matches not combining to last fifteen minutes?

Connor the Crusher is getting the Warrior Award at the Hall of Fame. If you don't smile at this at least a little bit....eh I've got nothing here. You should like it.

Heyman and Lesnar came out to say the exact same things they've said for two months. There's no reason for these guys to be fighting other than Reigns won the Rumble. They might have something with Reigns just doing what people says he can't, but we're WAY too late for that to work. It also doesn't help when it's a gladiator doing what other gladiators can't do, but at least it's something.

Big Show knocked out Kane by mistake (this is different than the time a few weeks ago when he knocked him out on Smackdown and it was never mentioned again) for a loss to Ryback and Rowan. Somehow they've linked Survivor Series to the Andre battle royal. That's just impressive.

Mizdow rapped about Miz. This wasn't funny.

Wiz Khalifa rapped. This wasn't funny or necessary.

The Bellas made Flintstones puns about themselves. This wasn't funny, necessary, or anything but a way for me to extend this bit to a third entry.

AJ pinned Summer in a match that accomplished nothing, other than allowing me to look at Summer Rae.

"Sting" narrated a video about his match with HHH. I've listened to Sting talk for 25 years and I've never heard him talk like that.

Cena yelled at the Russians and told them to respect America. Rusev then

beat Curtis Axel in 26 seconds. Axel didn't get to do his schtick and was completely destroyed. In other words, this was WWE getting annoyed that someone got over with a clever idea and made sure to crush (see what I did there?) him right before our eyes.

The big story here was that Cena came out and massacred Rusev, quickly putting him in the STF and knocking him out before doing it again and making him tap. The only way he let it go was for Lana to give him a US Title shot. Rusev yelled at Lana, sending her to the set of some movie. Rusev could be in major trouble but we'll get to see how strong he is on his own.

Tyson Kidd and Cesaro lost because they're champions. What makes it even worse is they lost to New Day, who I like but their momentum is dead. This transitioned into Naomi beating Natalya and Los Matadores beating the Usos. We're probably getting a four way at Wrestlemania, or at least we would have if Jey hadn't busted his shoulder.

Bray Wyatt had the urn and talked a lot until Undertaker sent lightning to set Bray's chair on fire and make their match official. This was fine.

Reigns beat Orton and Rollins to set up Orton's beatdown on Rollins.

This show was better than last week's, but it's still just another entry in a really bad build to Wrestlemania. At the end of the day, they have no focus and it's showing more and more every week. Look at the Orton story again. He was angry, then he was calm, then they went with angry again. Pick something and go with it, just like they need to do in the main event feud. This week was indeed better, and a lot of that was due to less talking. Fight already.

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Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: February 9, 2015

We have a new direction for Fast Lane now as for some reason there was a controversy regarding the Rock, which comes off more like “we’re scared because the smarkiest city in the world didn’t like what we were doing so here’s Fast Lane to give Bryan a shot.” Other than that there isn’t a ton of stuff to talk about because Fast Lane doesn’t need to exist. Let’s get to it.

We opened with the required Reigns/Bryan chat which didn’t get us anywhere, so the Authority came out and made Reigns/Bryan vs. Big Show/Kane. The monsters wound up getting disqualified in a match longer than it needed to be which should have ended with Kane tapping out but that would be a waste of his incredible heat so they kept the giants looking strong instead. Bryan and Reigns had issues post match so HHH made a rematch with Rollins/Noble/Mercury being added to the giants’ team.

Somehow, this whole thing took about half an hour and it showed the one major problem with the main event scene at the moment: IT’S REALLY BORING. We’re seeing these giant fight Bryan and Reigns in every possible combination and there’s no reason to see them fight all over again. Bryan vs. Reigns is being shoehorned in when Bryan was eliminated from the Rumble 100% clean.

They screwed up at the Rumble by having Bryan dumped out so early and now their solution doesn’t add up either. The match should be good, but that’s getting into TNA logic: if we have a good ending, the journey there doesn’t matter. At this point, they’re not just getting the fans to calm down but rather getting the fans to stop caring about anyone. Yeah they pop for Bryan, but this story is killing the momentum they had going. It got even worse on Smackdown when Big Show knocked out Kane,

likely setting up a feud between the two. Because they're big and old you see.

Ryback beat Rollins via DQ when the Stooges interfered. Somehow, this was STILL Survivor Series fallout because that's still a thing.

Sheamus is coming back. A lot of people seem to be complaining about that, but imagine him in Kane's current role. Does that make things sound a bit easier to sit through?

Paige beat Brie Bella because WWE still thinks the Bellas are interesting. That's their major flaw: their characters are so basic as the stuck up heels that they can't carry the division on their own. It also doesn't help that we're watching Sasha Banks, Charlotte and Bayley having great matches in addition to having just as defined, if not more defined, characters down in NXT.

One of the big segments of the show was Lana and Rusev mocking Cena for being old and past his prime. There's a story to be told about Cena needing to face the impending end of his career, but calling someone that can throw both Stooges on his shoulders at the same time and go toe to toe with Brock Lesnar over the hill is a huge stretch, especially when they still look like Cena. Just do the Hogan vs. Nikita Koloff formula (it would be an insult to Rusev to compare him to Nikolai Volkoff) and let the fans chant USA for the whole feud. As usual, why mess with something that's almost guaranteed to work?

Bray Wyatt beat Dolph Ziggler in a loss probably designed to make Ziggler eventually snap and turn heel. In theory the idea is that he's worked so hard and isn't getting anywhere because of it, which of course causes another problem: all the momentum he got from the Survivor Series win and subsequent success are thrown away for ANOTHER losing streak angle. We get at least three or four of these a year and they almost always lead to a turn. There a dozen other ways to turn someone heel, but for some reason this is the company's favorite.

On the other hand you have Bray, who is clearly being set up for a Wrestlemania showdown with Undertaker, assuming he's capable of going of course. My guess would be Wyatt wins, because there is zero reason for

Undertaker to win. What is Cole going to say? "THAT'S THE START OF A NEW STREAK!"?

Wyatt being the bigger freak and overwhelming Undertaker because he's lost his identity and can't keep up with the younger generation, ultimately leading to his retirement, is an interesting story that would give Wyatt a huge rub, but unfortunately I think we're heading for an Undertaker win to make us feel better about last year's loss because WWE is afraid of hurting our feelings in exchange for thinking for the future.

Heyman and Lesnar came out to cut a basic promo on how neither Reigns nor Bryan has any chance to win the title at Wrestlemania and is just fighting for second place. There was absolutely no reason for Lesnar to be out there for this segment and it was a total waste of an appearance. I like seeing the title out there for a change, but Brock didn't need to be there for this one.

Goldust and Stardust did their usual schtick and the New Day got a pin. Get to the feud already.

Reigns and Bryan had a cliched backstage bit where they said they'll work together and then fight at Fast Lane. This is a very by the numbers feud and that's not helping things.

HHH said he wanted to confront Sting at Fast Lane. The lights flickered, a fake Sting popped up in the ring, and the words I ACCEPT showed up on screen. Somehow this took nearly five minutes.

Then we got to the stupid moment of the show, as the Usos lost to Kidd and Cesaro. Not only is this stupid because it's the exact same idea we see far too often, but it was also preceded by Cole saying he had heard a rumor that a win over the Usos could give Cesaro and Kidd a future title shot. This is the team that I believe has won two matches leading up to this past Monday, and now they're the #1 contenders? Off a rumor? This was your standard overbooked and overthought WWE mess that only they care about and no one really benefits from.

Rikishi is going to the Hall of Fame. For some reason people are

complaining about this, despite him being a pretty successful midcard guy who was WAY over in 2000 with Too Cool. I have no problems with his induction.

Sin Cara beat Damien Mizdow, because WWE doesn't understand that the right move is to have Mizdow keep one upping Miz until he beats him in the showdown. Instead it's turned into a battle of who sucks less, making everyone look weaker than they should.

Bray Wyatt did his usual cryptic promo, which is about the Undertaker.

Dean Ambrose squashed Curtis Axel but was told he gets no Intercontinental Title shot. This was fine, but hearing Axel being called a third generation sports entertainer made me cringe. Does WWE really believe that anyone outside the company boundaries calls it sports entertainment? A little over a year ago in NXT, Bo Dallas was trying to sound stupid and said he had been sports entertaining around the world. Is that what we're supposed to call it? A sports entertainment contest instead of a match? That's what we're going with? Again, stop overthinking things.

The main event saw Reigns and Bryan get beaten up until Ryback, Ziggler and Rowan interfered and took out Big Show, Kane and Rollins, allowing Reigns to spear Mercury for the win. Just like in Miz/Mizdow, why are we having the guys we're supposed to cheer for look helpless and leave us with two guys who look lame to cheer for? Oh that would be because we have to keep Big Show and Kane looking strong for reasons.

That idea of "for reasons" is something that needs to be addressed. Look at what's going on in WWE right now. Why did the Authority make Reigns and Bryan vs. five guys? I know they're heels, but what is the motivation for going after Reigns and Bryan? There's a history with Bryan so that checks out, but they don't have a clear reason to feud with Reigns. If it's still over Reigns as part of the Shield then fine, but TELL US THAT.

At the moment it's coming off as people doing things because, in the words of Mark Henry, that's what they do. The opening tag was clearly just made because it's what they wanted to do that night and they didn't feel the need to have a logical reason to do so. The same was true of the

main event. There's no storyline reason for these matches to be happening and there doesn't seem to be anything for the Authority to gain from it, so why do they keep doing it?

The stories are going in circles and there doesn't seem to be an end game other than "title match at Wrestlemania", after which I would assume it's more of the same: winner vs. Authority's monster of the month. It's like they don't know where they want to go with things and just expect Wrestlemania to bail them out. I hate to say this but TNA is currently far more logical and well written than this mess. Yeah the stories can still be messy and unnecessary at times, but there's a clear path there for them and they know how to get to their goal. I'm not convinced WWE has a goal at this point.

Oh and Reigns speared Bryan after the match and got booed. Nothing wrong with that, but they're running the risk of making Lesnar a huge face at Wrestlemania and they better have something ready to combat that or it's the ending of Wrestlemania X7 in reverse. That's not how you want the next face of WWE (again because reasons instead of common sense) coming off on his big stage.

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Reviewing the Review – Monday

Night Raw: February 2, 2015

The big idea coming into this week was HHH promising to shake up the WWE and end the controversy that ended the Royal Rumble. That led to the big question: what was the controversy? Reigns won the Rumble by eliminating Rusev and is going to Wrestlemania, but as usual the fans wanted Daniel Bryan. That's the best theory we have coming into this show so let's get to it.

The big announcement opened the show and I'll give a very quick recap: Rock interfered in the Rumble before Rusev was gone so Seth Rollins and Daniel Bryan will fight in the main event for the right to face Reigns at Fast Lane for the Wrestlemania title shot. Rusev was never mentioned once in the promo. This led to Big Show vs. Roman Reigns with Big Show pinning Reigns for his first pinfall loss in a singles match in less than three minutes (with an assist from Rollins and the briefcase).

We're now going to jump to something a bit different. A few hours after the show ended, I was talking to my fiancée, who has been watching wrestling for over twenty years. I looked at her and explained the first thirty minutes of this show. Her face went from its usual smile to confusion, awe and bordering on shock. She didn't know how to respond to anything I explained to her and eventually just said "what". Not a question, but a statement. What.

That's somewhere around where I am too. Read over what happened and explain to me how the decision makes sense. For those of you that have ever taken a logic class, the premises make sense but the conclusion doesn't fit. Yes, there was some controversy to end the Rumble. Yes, Rusev might have a claim to an unfair loss. Yes, Daniel Bryan deserves a rematch for the World Title as he never lost the belt. Solution: Bryan vs. Rollins with Rusev not being a factor. THAT DOESN'T ADD UP!

Just....it doesn't make sense. If they haven't set up Rusev vs. Cena already, you could set up Bryan vs. Rusev instead of Bryan vs. Rollins tonight and have Cena cost Rusev the match (by countout of course), giving you Bryan vs. Reigns and Cena vs. Rusev with logical stories

instead of this mess. But instead, they rushed into the matches without enough thinking, meaning the whole thing is a mess that doesn't make a ton of sense and leaves fans talking about the buildup instead of the end goal. Short version: slow down and think instead of just barreling into the matches without using some logic.

That brings us to Reigns vs. Big Show, which gives me a similar reaction. The more I think about it, the more I don't hate the idea. Giving Reigns a loss is a good way to build some adversity for him and keep him from being just another Superman. As I've said before, Roman Reigns needs to be Roman Reigns, not a Samoan John Cena. Having him lose early is actually going to be a relief to him later on and also takes away some of the certainty of him winning at Wrestlemania.

But.....WHY WAS THE LOSS TO THE BIG SHOW??? Of all the people on the roster, they felt that he needed to be the first man to defeat Roman Reigns? There was no one, like say Seth Rollins, that would have gotten more out of such a win? I can't believe WWE thinks this is a hot feud and it almost has to be just sticking it to the fans at this point. On top of that though, there is almost no logical reason for them to have fought again. Reigns pinned him clean on Smackdown, so why are they fighting again? Bad match, questionable at best booking, and a way to tick the fans off. As was said earlier, what.

Oh yeah other stuff happened on this show.

Curtis Axel has a new catchphrase: Don't change the channel. As much as I like Axel and think his potential has been wasted, that line made me chuckle, which says a lot after the mess I've seen so far tonight. Anyway, he thinks he got ripped off at Wrestlemania and ate Dirty Deeds from Ambrose for his opinion. Dean wants the Intercontinental Title, which is as good as anything else he could get around this time.

Stardust and Goldust are having issues and lost to Ascension. People have been asking for this feud for like ever so why not now. Oh and Stardust doesn't like being called Cody.

Cena came out to recap his feuds with Rusev and the Authority but Stephanie came out to make matches for the three guys that were fired for

Survivor Series. I've said this far too many times now, but can we PLEASE move on past Survivor Series? That show was two and a half months ago and it's still a major driver of stories. Can't they come up with something fresh by this point? I'm over the idea of seeing these three guys being tortured because of one match that doesn't mean anything, but WWE seems to think it's the most interesting idea they've ever seen.

Ryback beat Luke Harper because Harper is a former Intercontinental Champion and therefore doesn't get to have much success.

Cesaro beat Jimmy Uso because of something about a double date and because Cesaro and Kidd winning one match makes them the next challengers for the titles. With all that talent they have, there's no room to bring people up? They can't throw Itami and Balor together on the main roster like they've thrown them together in NXT? Get them onto the main roster and then let them go their separate ways after giving us a decent title program? No, instead it's the same "well we won a match!" build that people have been complaining about for years now but WWE doesn't seem to be able to correct.

Miz fired Mizdow and made him a personal assistant. It's about time on this one as the stunt double thing stopped making sense about ten seconds after it started. Miz has basically been fighting a bunch of handicap matches while Mizdow hasn't been allowed to contribute anything. It's like hiring a chef but not letting them cook anything because you think you're better in the kitchen. The whole thing never made sense and Mizdow is over for all the wrong reasons, which to be fair is better than not being over at all.

Wyatt beat Ziggler in a decent match, which seems to be the start of a rumored Ziggler heel turn. I've heard of worse ideas as he's been abused by the Authority for months, so why not have him give up? I mean, we can't have him get revenge on the Authority and make them look bad, because WWE is little more than an Authority vanity project when they're involved.

While talking to the Authority, Rollins name dropped Randy Orton. That's going to be an interesting return as it could open up a lot of doors in

the main event scene.

Paige beat Alicia Fox and was attacked by the Bellas to further set up her title shot. The Bellas have just drained whatever energy this division had going for it. Yeah they're better than they used to be and I'll take this a million times over "and I've never told anyone about this", but my goodness the Bellas just aren't interesting.

Mizdow cost Miz his match against Sin Cara, which I don't think surprised anyone.

Rusev beat up Rowan before their match and Accoladed him. The Russian flag messed up but the announcers actually covered it by saying Cena might have sabotaged it. It's nice to see them tie a mistake into a bit of a storyline advancement.

Bryan came in to talk to Reigns and was basically told to get out before he was thrown out. This was the kind of emotion and aggression we haven't seen from Reigns in a long time and it was a good sign for him.

Bryan beat Rollins with an unintentional assist from Reigns. It was probably the only way they could have gone and the match was the best thing that happened all night. There isn't much else to say here as it was Bryan vs. Rollins for seventeen minutes. What more do you need to hear?

Overall this Raw felt like getting punched in the jaw to knock out a sore tooth. Yeah your problem is solved, but now you're annoyed and sore instead of just in pain. I'm really not sure how this was the best option they could come to, but at least we're getting Reigns in a major singles match before Wrestlemania. A win over Bryan could take away some of the heat on him, especially if it's a clean win in a good match.

The first half hour of this show really drained me, but it's not quite as bad looking back at it a week later. Still though, this is a really weird way to get where they needed to go and could have been handled a lot better if they had just stopped and thought for a minute. Again, why not just have Rusev vs. Bryan with Cena costing Rusev the match and set up the Rollins stuff later? It makes sense and keeps Rusev involved, which

was the whole point of the controversy in the first place.

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New Column: On Whose Authority

Looking at the Authority, the authority, and NOT Roman Reigns for a change.

<http://www.wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-whose-authority/33709/>

Monday Night Raw – January 19, 2015: Old School Never

Dies. It Just Keeps Going.

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 19, 2015

Location: American Airlines Center, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Booker T., Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

This is a special episode as it's not only the go home show for the Royal Rumble but also the Raw Reunion with some big names being brought back in for an appearance. Those are almost always at least somewhat interesting, though there are other times where the legends are just there without doing anything special. Let's get to it.

We open with a tribute to Martin Luther King, which WWE airs in some form every year.

Opening sequence.

Here are Heyman and Lesnar to get things going. Brock cuts off Heyman's intro and says he's here to fight Seth Rollins. He gives Rollins ten seconds and the crowd is nice enough to count it down for him. Instead, here's HHH to address the champ. He understands that Brock is upset about getting Curb Stomped into the ground. However, wouldn't Brock have done that if he had the chance?

After all, he suplexed Rollins first, so maybe Seth's actions are understandable. Maybe we should just go to the back and get Brock a steak while he and Heyman talk about things. Brock isn't pleased and asks if HHH is here to fix this or fight. Heyman loses his mind but here are Stephanie with Big Show and Kane to intervene. Lesnar and the Authority have a standoff but Rollins pops up on screen (prompting Heyman to grab his own head and shout OH NO).

He'll be getting his shot at Lesnar soon enough, right before he takes Brock's title. Heyman says let the adults talk about things and wants the Authority to put a leash on their puppy. If they don't fix things, the roster is going to be destroyed and Lesnar is walking out Sunday with the champion. Cue Cena (now in a blue shirt and hat) to say that they're

going to beat each other up on Sunday. However, he's here to talk to the Authority.

They offered him a spot on the team a few months back but he politely declined. Every week, the Authority tries to make him quit, but he wants them to keep it up. Every single thing they say and do lights a new fire in him that he's taking to the Rumble this Sunday to get the title back. The Authority used their power and politics to get three people fired, so he's going to enjoy sticking it to them this Sunday.

Stephanie cuts off his exit and says Cena reached a turning point when he brought back the Authority. Now he's a loser and a liar and no one wants to cheer that. Rollins says Cena will fail again on Sunday because Cena's time is up. He should just duck out of the match on Sunday and walk off with whatever dignity he has left.

Cena of course mocks Rollins for saying "tuck his legs between his legs" before saying everyone will respect him after Sunday. Cena offers to sweeten the pot: if he wins the title Sunday, Ryback, Rowan and Ziggler get their jobs back. HHH seems intrigued but wants one more stipulation: Cena has to have a match tonight and if he wins, all three of them get their jobs back. If he loses though, they stay fired and he's out of the triple threat. We're still not done though because HHH wants to make it an App poll.

How to download the App.

This opening segment was ridiculous. First of all, you bring out Stephanie as the mediator? Of course, because Stephanie is the greatest thing in the history of ever and her mere presence can soothe the savage beast. Then you have even more of Cena vs. the Authority because it worked with Austin vs. McMahon and.....well it worked well enough with Austin vs. McMahon to mention it twice.

The stipulations are stupid and make sure you know Lesnar isn't walking out, but it does leave the door open for a Rollins cash-in after the match. Thankfully they've changed it up so those guys can get their jobs back tonight, thereby making the last two weeks totally pointless. I'm so glad we saw the Authority make those three people mildly annoyed and

inconvenienced instead of destroying their lives.

Daniel Bryan vs. Bray Wyatt

Cole says it's been nearly a year since Bryan wrestled on Raw. More like eight and a half months but close enough. Cole never has been very good at counting. Bryan starts fast by knocking Bray to the floor and hitting a huge dive...and here's Kane, leading to a break less than two minutes into the match. Stephanie wants to talk? All the time in the world. Rematch of a Match of the Year candidate? Two minutes and we NEED a break.

Back with Bray missing a charge into the middle buckle but still being able to knock Bryan off the top rope. Bray puts on a nerve hold before hitting his flying body block to put Daniel down again. The announcers start speculating about Bryan's potential Rumble spot and him not having the cardio to get through the whole match as Bray drops knees and goes to a chinlock. Back up and Bray hits a HARD clothesline, sending Daniel out to the floor, holding his neck.

We return from another break with Bray getting two off a backsplash. Bryan scores with a running clot, followed by the running dropkick in the corner. A top rope hurricanrana gets two and it's time to unleash the kicks. Wyatt gets clotheslined to the floor and the Flying Goat takes him down again. Kane gets in a cheap shot on the way back in though, allowing Bray to send him into the buckle, followed by Sister Abigail for the pin at 16:13.

Rating: C+. The match was physical and violent....at least what we saw of it was. You knew Kane was going to interfere and cost Bryan the win, but it doesn't really matter as long as Daniel beats him on Smackdown. Bray winning is a nice moment for him and it's cool that Bryan has a big name he's never been able to beat. You could bring that up at a later date for a major match.

Kane chokeslams Bryan post match and hits some bad looking right hands.

HHH is on the phone when Scott Hall and Kevin Nash (in NWO shirts) come into his office. They mock him for wearing a suit and ask him to come out

with them tonight. Shawn Michaels pops in and offers HHH a spot on the legends panel. HHH should drop the suit, bring back the three fired guys and make their lives miserable here. HHH: "I don't tell you how to shoot defenseless animals."

Nash wonders where X-Pac is and here's Damien Mizdow in X-Pac attire. The real one comes in and they do the poses until Miz comes in to take Mizdow away. Nash: "What kind of show are you running?" You knew this was coming and it was fine. Mizdow's history with DX wasn't mentioned, even though it was the high point of his career back then.

We recap HHH putting the Cena match to a fan vote.

It's time for the Royal Rumble Legends Panel with guests Hulk Hogan, Ric Flair and Shawn Michaels. The first question is should Cena put his title shot on the line to get the three jobs back. Only Flair says no and only Hogan's answer is more than one word long with "definitely yes." Ric says winning the Rumble was still the greatest night of his career and defeating people like Shawn Michaels, Undertaker, Roddy Piper and Randy Savage made it even better.

Shawn is asked about winning back to back Rumbles and the famous shot of his foot dangling above the ground. He talks about the Rumble being the future and the winner's future being Wrestlemania. Shawn says the two men next to him wouldn't be where they are now without the Rumble and there wouldn't be a Mr. Wrestlemania without the Royal Rumble. Hogan goes last and says he remembers the competition in the Rumble and defeating super talent after super talent to win the matches. Thankfully he had Hulkamania in his corner to help him survive.

As for this year's picks, Shawn goes with Bray Wyatt and Hogan isn't pleased. Shawn gets annoyed and wants a rematch of Summerslam 2005. Hogan: "You don't want any of that again do you?" Shawn: "Nah probably not." Hogan picks Daniel Bryan and Flair goes with Ambrose, but here's Big Show because where would we be without him. He says all three of them are jealous of him and brings up beating Hogan at Halloween Havoc 1995. Then he beat Flair for the World Title on Nitro a few months later. Then he showed up in the WWF and Shawn retired (not quite) because he knew Big

Show would eat him alive.

Now the three of them are washed up has been out here begging for a bit of attention. He's going to win on Sunday and no one in the back can stop him. The fans are already looking up for Reigns. Show threatens to beat them all up so Flair takes his jacket off and starts throwing punches, only to take the KO Punch. Cue Reigns to check on the legends and clothesline Big Show out to the floor. Show comes up favoring his arm and bails.

The votes are in and Cena is going to put his title shot on the line to save the jobs by a vote of 85% to 15%. Cena says the most important part of the WWE is the WWE Universe and tonight he's fighting for his friends.

Bad News Barrett vs. Dean Ambrose

Non-title. Dean takes him to the mat to start before running Barrett over with an elbow and clothesline. A power drive elbow gets two but Barrett comes back with a kick to the throat and another to the jaw. Ambrose comes back by knocking Barrett to the floor as we take a break. Of note here, the bottom line said that the series finale of Rivalries is airing tomorrow night on the Network. There have been six episodes and they're already canceling it? It's a good idea for a show and they can only come up with six shows, but they can have twenty Monday Night Wars shows? Really?

Back with Dean laid across the top rope and getting forearmed in the back for two. It's already off to the chinlock until Dean fights up with a bulldog out of the corner. The standing elbow drop gets two but the knee gives out, meaning Dean can't hit the running dropkick. He can however hit the rebounding clothesline and goes up top, only to get caught in the Wasteland. Dean fights out of that and Dirty Deeds pins Barrett at 8:16.

Rating: C-. There was no possible outcome here where the fans were going to be pleased. The champ loses but Dean gets a win back, even though his career was completely crippled or whatever shortsighted fans said after he lost the Wyatt feud. The match wasn't anything to see but I really wonder what Barrett did to get this role as the champion that always loses. I know it's a running joke, but no one has it as bad as Barrett.

It's time for Rumble by the numbers.

30 men

782 entrants eliminated

2 feet must hit the floor

39 eliminations for Shawn Michaels, the all time record

38 eliminations for Kane, second place

15 years that Kane has eliminated someone

11 eliminations in 2001 to give Kane the record for a single matching

12 eliminations in 2014 for Roman Reigns to break the record

216,577 or 108 tons in the Rumble over the years

9 won in Rumble debut

43 Hall of Famers have competed

26 nations have been represented

1 time the Rumble has broadcasted on the Network

170 countries have the Network

170,822 people in attendance

3 Steve Austin victories

1 second that Santino Marella lasted to set the record

62:12 that Rey Mysterio lasted to set the record

3:51:32 that HHH has spent in the Rumble, the longest all time

2 winners from both #1 and #30

Here's the New Day to say they're always positive to keep the rage under control. They're here to make sure everyone has a smile on their face and

they're doing it for the day. Woods is out with an ankle injury so it's just a tag here.

Kofi Kingston/Big E. vs. Cesaro/Tyson Kidd

Rose is on the floor as well because he feels forgotten by WWE, just like Kidd and Cesaro. Big E. throws Kidd into the air for a dropkick from Kofi, but Rose offers a distraction so Cesaro can sneak in an uppercut. A suplex/side slam combo (called a Blockbuster by Booker) gets two on Kofi and the Cesaro Swing into the dropkick gets the same with Big E. having to make a save. Cesaro picks Kofi up to drive him into the corner but Kofi kicks off of Kidd and rolls up Cesaro for the pin out of nowhere at 2:59. It's nice to see them change the formula up for once instead of the same thing over and over. It keeps it a bit exciting.

Here's the NWO (Hall, Nash and Waltman) for a chat. The fact that Hall is allowed on live TV is proof that DDP should be canonized. Nash says the NWO created the Monday Night Wars, which you can relive on the WWE Network. "You're welcome Hunter." They're responsible for Austin, DX and the Attitude Era. Nash acknowledges they have egos, but you have to admit they created every single good thing ever. Waltman gets the mic but here's Ascension to interrupt.

They see the NWO as three dogs ready to be put out of their misery, because Ascension was born and bred to rip and shred. No team from the past, present or future is better than they are, especially not one from WCW. The NWO is ready to fight but JBL won't have any of this. He takes off the jacket and tie and says wearing spikes doesn't make you a legend any more than painting yourself green makes you a frog. He was afraid this would happen, so he made a phone call. JBL takes off his shirt to reveal an APA shirt and here's Ron Simmons.

Before anything happens though, here are the New Age Outlaws in Dallas Cowboys jerseys to interrupt. Dogg says an old school party doesn't stop and the brawl is on with only the Outlaws getting physical. Billy hits a nice tilt-a-whirl slam and JBL starts stretching his arm. The Clothesline knocks Viktor silly and Waltman pulls off the NWO shirt to reveal the DX colors. This was every bit as fun as I thought it was going to be and was

one of the better old school reunion segments. Also, anyone for JBL in the Hall of Fame?

The Authority announces Cena's opponent for later tonight. Complete with a drum roll, it's Cena vs. Seth Rollins, Big Show and Kane. A bugler comes up to play Taps.

Paige/Natalya vs. Summer Rae/Alicia Fox

The Bellas are on commentary and will be facing Paige/Natalya at the Rumble. A double suplex gets two on Summer but Natalya goes after Alicia, allowing Rae to spin kick her for two. Natalya gets over for the hot tag to Paige and things speed up with Alicia eating a superkick for two. Everything breaks down and another superkick sets up the PT0 for the submission at 2:55. I'm glad they're not doing the Nikki vs. Natalya title match as we've seen it so many times already that whatever appeal it had is long gone.

The Kickoff match this Sunday is New Day vs. Cesaro/Kidd/Rose in an elimination tag.

Rusev vs. R-Truth

Only Truth gets an entrance and he's a step off on his rap. Truth says everyone is coming for Rusev on Sunday and that's the whole truth. "Whomp there it is." Truth quickly knocks him over the top but eats the jumping superkick. The Accolade makes him tap at 46 seconds.

Rollins and Lesnar meet up in the back and Brock suggests that Seth take Cena out tonight. Then Brock can take Rollins out on Sunday. Unlike last week, Rollins looks shaken.

Jey Uso vs. Miz

Gah do something else already. Miz spends too much time looking at Mizdow and gets rolled up for two. Some choking sets up the Reality Check for two and we hit the chinlock. The top rope ax handle drops Jey but he avoids a charge, sending Miz into the post. A superkick and the Superfly Splash are good for the pin on Miz at 2:56. I can't imagine Miz and Mizdow are still together this time next week.

Hogan says it can only get better for Cena from here.

The New Age Outlaws vs. the Ascension has been added to Sunday.

John Cena vs. Kane/Big Show/Seth Rollins

One fall to a finish and it's Cena vs. Big Show to start but John wants to go after Rollins. Show scores with a big chop and it's off to Rollins to hammer Cena down. Rollins gets in some stomps in the corner but Cena's bulldog sends him rolling out to the floor. Kane gets the top and sends Cena into Big Show's boot before the bigger giant comes in for a corner splash. Cena's slam attempt fails (of course it did this early on) and we take a break.

Back with Rollins putting Cena in a sleeper before a Blockbuster gets two. Rollins misses the top rope knee though and Cena scores with the shoulders. The ProtoBomb puts Rollins down again but the Stooges break up the AA attempt. Rollins blasts him with a low superkick for two but the AA connects, only to have Kane pulls Cena outside. Big Show adds a spear and the Authority is literally standing over Cena gloating. He dives in at nine though and gets chokeslammed for two. Rollins loads up the Curb Stomp....and STING shows up on the screen. He walks into the arena and Cena rolls up Rollins for the pin at 13:08.

Rating: D+. Sting just showed up on Raw for the first time ever. I still need a minute. Ok I'm good now. I really liked this better than having the trio show up because there's no reason for them to be there other than storyline, but Sting showing up is an awesome surprise. I'd keep going but we're not done.

Cena goes into the crowd and HHH shouts that Sting doesn't belong here. Cue Lesnar for right hands to Rollins, an F5 to Kane and an AA (yes an AA) to Big Show. Heyman holds up the title as Rollins runs away to end the show. Lesnar looked like and was received like a superhero here.

Overall Rating: C-. I know I'm going to catch flack for this but I really didn't hate this show. They kept things moving fast enough that I was stunned when it was nearly 10pm. The reunion stuff was fine and they beefed up the card for Sunday. The lack of wrestling is by far the

biggest thing holding this show back though and it was really telling when there had been one match an hour in. I know a lot of people wouldn't like this one, but it was nice to see a show that didn't drag for a change.

Results

Bray Wyatt b. Daniel Bryan – Sister Abigail

Dean Ambrose b. Bad News Barrett – Dirty Deeds

New Day b. Cesaro/Tyson Kidd – Rollup to Cesaro

Natalya/Paige b. Alicia Fox/Summer Rae – PTO to Fox

Rusev b. R-Truth – Accolade

Jey Uso b. Miz – Superfly Splash

John Cena b. Kane/Big Show/Seth Rollins – Rollup to Rollins

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