

ECW Born To Be Wired: A Famous Main Event And A Big Mess

Born To Be Wired

Date: August 9, 1997

Location: ECW Arena, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentator: Joey Styles

This isn't a PPV but it's the next big show after Barely Legal. We have a main event of Terry Funk defending the world title against Sabu in a pretty famous barbed wire match. On top of that there isn't anything of note on the card but then again it's ECW so a lot of the card was probably announced an hour before the bell. Let's get to it.

Little Guido vs. Pablo Marquez

No intro here and we jump right into the match. This is the home video version so I have no idea what's going to be cut and what isn't. Guido is part of the FBI and Marquez is a guy from Ecuador. Before the match, fellow FBI guy Tommy Rich, says that Guido is an F'n Beautiful Intelligent man. Thanks for that Tommy. The fans chant homosexual insults at Guido and the camera work is awful as it can barely stay on the guys.

Marquez rana Guido to the floor and there's a big suicide dive. Back in and Pablo springboards into a clothesline for two as Guido takes over. I forgot how annoying I found Joey's commentary with how much he says exactly what's going on in the match and offers nothing more. Marquez gets sent to the apron and hits a springboard missile dropkick for two. A suplex gets the same for Guido and Marquez hits a Russian legsweep for two.

Guido works on the leg (notice how fast this is changing momentum) but

Marquez comes back with a sunset flip and clothesline for no cover. Marquez sends him to the floor and botches a dive, resulting in him just grazing Guido with his feet. Back in and Pablo dives on the FBI, resulting in Rich hitting him in the back with a flag for the pin by Guido.

Rating: C-. This was your usual fast paced opener but it was a total spotfest with the lack of selling driving me crazy as usual. Marquez was around for awhile in ECW and he didn't ever get much higher on the card than this. Guido and the FBI would stick around for years, all the way up to the end of the company. The idea of the opener here was fine but the execution didn't work at all.

Mikey Whipwreck vs. Louie Spicolli

Since this is the home video, they cut from the end of one match to the start of another which is a nice perk. Louie slams him around a few times and they stand around a lot. Mikey speeds things up a bit and slams Louie so much that Louie crotches himself on the post. A Stunner, the move which Mikey kind of might have invented, drops Mikey here and Louie takes over. The fans swear at Spicolli like they did to Guido early but that's normal for them.

An enziguri takes Mikey down for two and it's off to the chinlock. This is already in the same problematic area that a lot of ECW shows get into: There's no story to it (at least that we're told) so it's just a match for the sake of having a match. That's fine when you have guys that can tear the house down, but Mikey Whipwreck vs. Louie Spicolli isn't exactly Austin vs. Rock you know?

Mikey comes back with a rana but the second is countered into a powerbomb for two. Spicolli misses a Swanton and Mikey speeds things up, only to get sent to the floor. Mikey whips Louie into the barricade and hits a HUGE dive from inside, crashing his legs into the railing in the process. Back inside and a top rope rana gets the pin for Whipwreck.

Rating: C. Better than the opener because Mikey is a lot better than Guido or Marquez. Louie is a guy who was just kind of around for awhile and then he wasn't anymore. He left for WCW in a month or so. Then he died in February due to a drug overdose. The match was nothing of note for the most part and it might have been Spicolli's last ECW match.

Spike Dudley vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

This is before the Giant Killer phase for Spike. Spike beats up a chair before the match due to reasons of drugs. We're eight days from Hardcore Heaven and we're told that we'll learn Bigelow's opponent later in the hour. Bigelow asks the fans what section he should throw Spike into. Spike grabs a leg which gets him nowhere at all. Well scratch that as it gets him launched halfway across the ring and through the air.

Bigelow picks Spike up again and teases the fans about throwing him into the crowd but just drops him down instead. A BIG suplex puts Spike down and Dudley sells like only he can. The guy can't do much because of his size but he's great at looking like a rag doll. Spike gets posted and he's busted open. Bigelow splashes him in the corner but the moonsault misses. Spike fires away with a bunch of forearms which finally drop Bigelow for two. The Acid Drop is blocked as Bigelow launches Spike to the mat. Spike hits Bigelow low and hooks a victory roll for the shocking upset.

Rating: D+. This is Heyman 101: when a guy is a huge underdog, he'll get slaughtered for almost all of the match and then hit one move out of nowhere for the pin. Watch ECW and see how many times you get that exact ending. Spike would wind up as a kind of a cult favorite (inside the cult that was ECW) and he would be the opponent at Hardcore Heaven, where Bigelow MASSACRED him.

Chris Candido vs. Chris Chetti

Blast it now I can't use two names for each guy. Chetti is billed as The

Rookie here, which he would be for like two years. Feeling out process to start with Candido taking him down in a rollup for two. Chetti hits some armdrags into an armbar to take over as things slow down a bit. Candido comes back with rapid fire punches to take over in the corner but Chetti fires right back with some of his own.

Chetti hits a cross body out of the corner for two as again there's no story to this match at all. Back to the armbar (Candido: "HE'S TRYING TO KILL ME!!!") as things slow down again. Candido hooks a rana to put both guys on the floor and Chetti gets posted. Back in and Candido hits a middle rope legdrop for two. Off to a chinlock which is one of the last things they should have done here.

The fans want Taz who was feuding with Candido at this point and would have a great match with him at the PPV. Candido suplexes him down and does Taz's pose. A top rope sunset flip gets two for Candido and it's back to the chinlock. Candido spits at him and they slug it out, won by the non-rookie.

Chetti hits a German suplex for two and a dropkick takes Candido down. Chetti powerslams him down but doesn't cover, instead misses a flipping legdrop off the top. Candido goes up and gets crotched, resulting in a superplex for two for Chetti. Candido powerbombs him down and a double underhook superplex pins the Rookie.

Rating: C+. Another match with no story to it and in this case there was even less of a doubt as to who was going to win given how Joey kept hyping up Taz vs. Candido at the PPV. Chetti was doing fine here but he was in over his head with Candido, who was one of the top guys ECW had.

Here's Shane Douglas to run his mouth about Terry Funk and wanting the world title. If Funk survives tonight, Shane gets the title match at Hardcore Heaven. If Sabu wins, Shane wants a title match at Hardcore Heaven. Shane talks about how a few years ago they got ECW noticed with a match called the Extreme Three Way Dance, so how about a rematch for the

title at the PPV? I always found the original overrated. It just wasn't nearly what they made it out to be.

Lance Storm vs. Shane Douglas

Gee I wonder who's going to win. Storm has a tiny blonde ponytail at this point. Shane is the leader of the Triple Threat and at some point Storm wanted to be a member but only made it to the prospect level. Feeling out process to start with Storm taking Shane to the mat by the arm. Storm chops away and it's back to the arm. A superkick puts Douglas down and a botched Francine distraction allows Lance to get a rollup for two.

Shane hot shots Storm and stomps away in the corner. With Storm seated in the corner, Douglas baseball slides him into the crotch. Off to a camel clutch by Shane to taunt Sabu. Francine throws in some chairs and Storm gets suplexed down onto an open one for two. Douglas gets backdropped to the floor and crotched on the barricade.

Back in and a springboard cross body gets two for Storm as does an enziguri. A few rollups get a few near falls for both guys and Storm speeds things up. Storm misses a guillotine legdrop but counters the belly to belly into a DDT. The second attempt at the suplex hits for Shane and gets the pin.

Rating: C+. As is usually the case with ECW, the matches have more of a point and get better as the show goes on. The problem with that is that the first forty minutes or so are usually really dull and they don't really make you want to stick around for the rest of the show. Oh and one more time: Joey needs to stop just saying the moves. It adds very little to the match at all.

TV Title: Taz vs. Al Snow

Snow is challenging and is on the verge of the push of a lifetime which

would result in Heyman completely screwing up and not putting the world title on him because Shane Douglas must be champion forever in ECW. Snow rips into the fans for saying that he's not Leif Cassidy (role he played in WWE) but Al Snow. The fans want Taz to murder Snow which is the norm for them most of the time.

After a long stall Taz takes it to the mat to take over. The fans want Snow's neck broken. The champ cranks on the arm and does it again after Snow escapes. Snow tries to fight up and gets caught in an ankle hold. This is all mat stuff so far and it's pretty good as well. After Snow bails to the floor he comes back in and is immediately caught in an Alabama Slam but he hits a kind of enziguri to the face of the champ to take over.

A suplex puts Taz down and the fans are still all over Snow. Taz is like screw this wrestling stuff and takes Snow down to pound away, but Snow rakes the eyes. Now Taz is like screw this brawling stuff and suplexes Snow down. Snow slams him down and fires off some kicks but gets pounded in the face for his efforts. Taz comes back with a German suplex but walks into a suplex from Snow. That gets no sold and it's the Tazmission to retain the title.

Rating: C+. This never quite clicked as they were didn't seem quite sure what they were going for as Taz kept switching from wrestling to brawling. Maybe that's what they were going for but it didn't quite work. Snow as a guy completely hated by the fans because he used to be in the WWF worked fine and it worked even better when he turned into the psycho head shaking guy. Not terrible here but it was your usual Taz match from this time period. The mat stuff was good though.

The Dudleys are in the ring and it's time for their long intro. We have D-Von, Bubba, (the two in the match) Big Dick, Sign Guy and Joel Gertner. Joel talks about possession being 9/10 of the law but I can't quite understand him. The Dudleys are tag team champions. This is one of the funniest parts of the show and always has been. Bubba is Dudleyville's

most eligible bachelor.

Dudley Boys vs. Axl Rotten/Balls Mahoney

Mahoney has short hair here. I think this is non-title. That would be the case because the Gangstas are tag champions but the Dudleys have stolen the belts. If the Gangstas can't defend them on Sunday, the Dudleys get them anyway. The Dudleys take a walk before the bell but then come back to fight. Ok then. It's Bubba vs. Axl to start but it's off to D-Von before anything happens. Axl and D-Von used to be tag partners so there's a history there.

Big Dick trips up Axl to start the match with a little cheating. Off to Balls to crank on the arm a bit but he gets punched in the corner for his efforts. Big Dick interferes again and we stall a bit. D-Von charges at Balls and gets punched in the face. Dick low bridges Mahoney and the Dudleys take over again. Axl whispers something to Balls and they walk to the back. The fans chant for New Jack but they get the returning Hack Meyers instead and it's a six man tag now.

Meyers pounds on Big Dick in the corner with the non-Dudleys taking over. All three guys pound on Dick (with the fans chanting AXL! BALLS! SHAH!) which finally knock him to the floor. It's a brawl with no wrestling at all which is what you would expect from this. Axl cracks D-Von with a chair and they head into the crowd. Make that into the back of the arena. Now make that back to ringside. D-Von cracks Axl with a chair, bringing the sequence full circle.

We haven't looked at the other four guys for awhile but here are Bubba and Balls again. Back in the ring Balls hits a sitout tombstone on D-Von followed by a guillotine legdrop for a delayed two count. Axl cracks Bubba with a chair (Joey: "BINGO!") and Meyers heads back inside. Meyers rolls up D-Von for two as Balls cracks Dick with a chair on the floor. The Dick grabs the Balls and chokeslams him through a table and it's a 3D to Meyers for the pin.

Rating: C-. This was a big brawling mess but it was what the fans wanted to see. The six man part only lasted about four minutes but that was what the fans were the most excited for. Meyers was a guy who was basically just a brawler but he was insanely popular with the fans. The Dudleys would do whatever they wanted for about two more years before bailing to the WWF.

Rob Van Dam vs. Tommy Dreamer

Dreamer was in the middle of a major feud with the invading Jerry Lawler while Van Dam was wrestling like a WWF wrestler to make him one of the most hated people in the company. Van Dam does the finger point so Dreamer grabs his ponytail and hooks a headlock. Van Dam will have none of that and kicks Dreamer down. The splits are broken up by a Dreamer dropkick to the back of the head and a clothesline to send Rob to the floor. There's a plancha and Van Dam is in trouble.

A fan throws Dreamer a no parking sign and Van Dam gets whacked in the head. Then he gets whacked in the head again but off the apron this time. Back in and Van Dam gets two off a sunset flip and kicks Dreamer right back to the floor. Rob hits (I think he did at least as the contact wasn't shown and Dreamer was a few feet away when they were both laying on the ground) a big flipping dive and Dreamer is in trouble.

Rob crotches him on the barricade and with the help of Fonzie we get a modified Van Daminator to rattle Dreamer's skull a bit more. Back in again and Van Dam dropkicks a chair into Dreamer's face and then skateboards the chair into Dreamer's face in the corner. Rob's offense is a bit repetitive no? There's the Five Star and we're....not done? No we're not as it only gets two. That's a new one.

Van Dam slams Dreamer down on the chair but misses a split legged moonsault, crashing into the chair instead. Tommy hits a kind of Van Daminator and loads Rob into the Tree of Woe. After the baseball slide into the chair, Dreamer hits a frog splash of his own. Beulah and Fonzie

get in a fight, although it's not the famous one that they had which everyone raves about. Due to the distraction, Van Dam hits a Van Daminator but Dreamer pops up and DDTs Rob. Sabu pops up for no apparent reason and another Van Daminator (this one with a trashcan) and a corkscrew legdrop onto the can onto Dreamer gets the pin.

Rating: C. I wasn't wild on this but it wasn't terrible. Van Dam wrestling a WWF style didn't come through here at all as it looked like any of his usual matches in ECW. Also I don't get the idea of pinning the hero that is going to be fighting off the invading villain in a week but Heyman's booking never quite made sense.

Post match here's the Triple Threat (Bigelow, Douglas and Candido) to destroy Van Dam and Sabu. Why? Because it's what the Triple Threat does. Dreamer is getting beaten down too and a bunch of jobbers come in to try to break up the fights but it turns into a big brawl. The Dudleys are in there now too and they clear the ring other than Dreamer. Mahoney and Rotten run in with weapons to clean house.

Big Dick rises up and destroys them.....and here are the Gangstanators (Kronus and New Jack). They get chokeslammed down immediately and it's crippled Perry Saturn for the real save as the Eliminators and New Jack finally beat up the Dudleys. Dreamer, Rotten and Mahoney get back up and eventually it's Gertner that gets destroyed. The Gangstas (New Jack and Mustafa, the latter of which isn't here tonight) wouldn't fight the Dudleys at the PPV and it would be the Dudleys vs. PG-13, a Memphis tag team. This beating goes on for a long while.

ECW World Title: Terry Funk vs. Sabu

Sabu is challenging and this is a barbed wire match, which means the ropes have been replaced by barbed wire. Terry heads to the corner to start but Sabu dropkicks the knee out and we head to the mat. Funk tries to throw him into the wire but Sabu puts the brakes on. Sabu does the same as Terry but Terry rolls to the floor to escape. Back in and Sabu

puts on a quick camel clutch which goes nowhere.

Funk hits a neckbreaker and a scary looking piledriver for two. They both try to ram the other into the wire and it's Sabu getting the advantage, but Terry gets his hands up and avoids the pain. Sabu hurricanranas Terry down for two but Funk kicks him off and into the wire for the first gasp from the crowd. Terry rakes Sabu's eyes into the barbed wire which is pretty sick stuff.

An Irish whip sends the challenger into the wire again and Funk crotches him on it for good measure. Sabu's tights are ripped up and man are his legs skinny. After some more pain for the guy from Bombay, he sends Terry into the corner and the wire as a result, followed by a chair shot. Funk's face gets sent into the barbed wire and Sabu finds a spike from somewhere to pound into Funk's head. This is getting violent in a hurry.

With Funk up against the wire, Sabu hits Air Sabu to drive him further into said wire for two. Air Sabu (it's a running diving leg attack using a chair as a springboard) misses on its second attempt and Sabu is hung up in the wire. In a famous spot, Sabu's bicep is sliced open and things slow WAY down. The solution to the cut? Fonzie brings in a roll of tape and tapes the GAPING WOUND closed to keep the match going.

A neckbreaker puts Sabu down but Terry can't follow up. Sabu goes NUTS and starts pounding on Funk but Terry just punches him in the face to take over again. They both head to the floor and slug it out but are quickly back inside so Funk can put on the spinning toe hold. Fonzie (Sabu's manager in case you're not familiar with ECW, which makes me wonder why you're reading this) tries to interfere but gets pulled across the wire as well.

Funk slices open Fonzie's shirt and cuts his back with it. The champ gets some wire cutters from somewhere and clips some wire off, which he whips Sabu with to slow him down even more. Fonzie gets beaten up some more and it's back inside for more brawling. Sabu cuts more of the wire down and

here's RVD to pound on Funk. He takes Terry to the floor and wraps him in barbed wire so Sabu can drive Terry through a table.

Now Dreamer comes out to take out Van Dam (literally) and the guys in the match head back inside. Sabu pulls off a big section of wire and wraps himself in it before diving through Funk through a table. To complete this mess, they're stuck together because Funk was wrapped in wire as well so they get back in the ring in a big ball and Sabu gets two. They're still stuck together and since there's nothing else they can do, Sabu shoves Terry's shoulder back down and gets the pin and the title.

Rating: D-. To the shock of no one who is paying attention, this was a major mess. It was a total freakshow and the ending made it even worse as they couldn't even do the right ending because they got stuck. Also this would wind up meaning NOTHING as Douglas got the title a week later because in ECW, Shane Douglas MUST be world champion. Just a mess here and it had almost absolutely nothing to do with wrestling.

Overall Rating: D+. Much like most ECW shows, most of this didn't mean much and was there to fill in time. The main event is a mess and like I said, this means nothing as we're a week from the second PPV so this whole thing is more or less a big house show before the real show. This isn't the worst ECW show ever, but man alive it wasn't much to see. It's more dull than bad though, and that's an upgrade for these guys.

Here's Hardcore Heaven if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2010/12/26/hardcore-heaven-1997/>

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