

Smackdown – July 19, 2013: Deja Vu All Over Again

Smackdown

Date: July 19, 2013

Location: Dunkin' Donuts Center, Providence, Rhode Island

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

With Money in the Bank passed we're now in the period of waiting for Sandow to cash in. After Monday night we have some of the main events set for Summerslam which means we need some blue matches to balance it out. Also Ziggy is officially a face after breaking up with AJ and being destroyed by Langston. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence again, which I think is the norm now.

Here's Teddy Long to get things going. Tonight there's going to be a new general manager named and Teddy wants to throw his name in the hat. He doesn't know how good he'd be but he'll be better than Vickie Guerrero. Vince will be here in person tonight to give Teddy a job evaluation. Teddy polls the crowd who seems to like the idea of Long being the boss long term.

This brings out the returning Booker T to thank Teddy for filling in while Booker was out getting triceps surgery. Booker is back to be the GM now but here's Vince with something to say on the subject. Vince asks Teddy what match he would make to impress the fans so Teddy suggests Axel vs. Jericho for the Intercontinental Title. Booker's offer is Del Rio vs. Orton, which brings out Raw GM Brad Maddox. He thinks he should be GM of both shows because he was going to suggest both matches as well as the Smackdown return of RVD.

Vince's pick for the permanent Smackdown GM: Vickie freaking Guerrero.

Well of course she is, because if there's one thing WWE needs it's ANOTHER heel boss character. She blames the fans for getting her fired from Raw so she hates us all. Vickie goes into crazy mode, yelling about how she runs this show and is going to take everything out on the fans. You know, because we haven't done this same idea for the last year or so on Raw.

Jack Swagger vs. Dolph Ziggler

Before the match we get a clip from Raw of Ziggler breaking up with AJ and then having her cost him a match against Del Rio. A rollup sends Swagger to the floor as AJ and Langston are watching in the back. Back in and Dolph pounds away in the corner and takes Jack down with a dropkick. Cesaro trips Dolph off the apron and hits an uppercut, earning him an ejection along with Colter. Back in and a sunset flip gets two for Dolph but he has to escape the Patriot Lock. The Zig Zag is good for the pin at 3:13.

Rating: D+. Ziggler was fine here and the fans loved him which is the right idea. It's a lot easier to get behind a feud with Langston instead of Del Rio as the matches and promos will actually be entertaining. This is a big upgrade for Dolph as he can go after the title later on and get some character development against Big E.

Post match Ziggler says he's sorry he dumped AJ on Monday because he should have done it a lot sooner. That's the kind of stuff he's been needing to say to help cement his face turn.

AJ freaks out in the back and throws a lot of chairs. Langston grabs her to calm her down and they look at each other but he kisses her on the forehead.

Seth Rollins/Roman Reigns vs. Usos

Non-title. The Usos charge the ring and the fight is on before the bell. Ambrose comes in as well until Mark Henry comes out to clear the ring. The good guys stand tall and Henry is a face.

Daniel Bryan vs. Wade Barrett

The place goes NUTS for Bryan. Barrett catches a cross body and puts Bryan stomach first on the top rope for some forearm to the back. A slingshot into a backbreaker gets two and it's off to a bow and arrow submission. Bryan fires off kicks in the corner and backflips over Barrett, only to be caught in the Winds of Change which are countered into a crucifix into the YES Lock for the submission at 1:54.

Maddox runs into Vickie in the back and Vickie slaps him in the face for taking her job.

Time for MizTV with guest Paul Heyman. Heyman says he doesn't want to answer any of Miz's questions but is cut off by a CM Punk chant. The fans don't realize how hard this is for Heyman because he still loves Punk. He advises Punk to stay down and leave the WWE Universe behind because if he comes back Brock Lesnar will take his head off. Miz doesn't believe a thing Heyman is saying because he swore on the life of his children and still lied. He walks out but Heyman introduces Axel as the man who beat Miz at MITB.

Intercontinental Title: Curtis Axel vs. Chris Jericho

Axel takes over with a headlock to start but Jericho dropkicks him down. A top rope elbow to the jaw gets two for Jericho but Axel punches him back down. Axel cranks on an armbar but gets caught in a northern lights suplex for two. Jericho tries to jump over the champion in the corner but gets clotheslined in the back of the head for two instead. The Codebreaker is countered into a spinebuster for two but Jericho sends him into the corner as we take a break.

Back with Jericho fighting out of a chinlock but going shoulder first into the post to stop his comeback. Axel misses a middle rope elbow and Jericho gets two off a quick enziguri to make Heyman even more nervous. Axel comes back with the McGillicutter for two but misses a dropkick, allowing the Lionsault to get two. Axel blocks the top rope ax handle into a PerfectPlex but Jericho counters into a Walls attempt.

Heyman distracts Jericho into dropping the hold but the second attempt has Axel in a lot of trouble. Curtis hangs on for a very long time and finally crawls over to the ropes. He goes to the floor but gets caught by a suicide dive from the Canadian. As they head back in though Heyman shouts at Jericho, allowing Axel to hit the neckbreaker/cutter for the pin at 9:15 shown of 12:00.

Rating: C. This was a decent back and forth match but Jericho going after the Intercontinental Title is hard to get into anymore. Axel still isn't where they want him to be but he's not a total disaster either. This was a fine enough way to kill fifteen minutes and the fans got into the Walls so there isn't much to complain about here.

Post match Ryback comes out and destroys Jericho with a Shell Shock. This is Jericho's last appearance for awhile as he's going to be on tour with Fozzy.

Here's Damien Sandow to talk about forgiveness with quotes from Gandhi. He did NOT screw Cody in the Money in the Bank match, which makes him wonder why Cody attacked him on Raw. We get a clip from Raw but Sandow says he isn't going to hold this against Cody. That would make him a mouth breathing knuckle dragging halfwit like the audience. He invites Cody out here to talk through this because they're still best friends.

Cody gets in the ring but Sandow says there's no explanation required because he's forgiven. Damien did prevent Cody from being Mr. Money in the Bank but Sandow has an olive branch for him: Cody can be the keeper of the case until Sandow is ready to cash it in. Cody has earned this but

he hits Sandow in the head with the case, sending Damien running off. Rhodes throws the case at him and the fans seem quite pleased.

Rob Van Dam vs. Darren Young

Darren takes him down with an armdrag worth millions of dollars. Van Dam hits his step over kick and a standing moonsault for two, sending Young out to the floor. Back in and Titus distracts RVD's Rolling Thunder attempt, allowing Young to take over for a bit. Van Dam comes back with a kick to the head and a springboard spinning cross body for two. A springboard kick to the face puts Young down and after kicking Titus to the floor, Van Dam hits the Five Star for the pin at 3:16.

Rating: D+. Not much to see here again but Van Dam getting another win makes sense. Also it's nice to see people like the Players being used to put over bigger stars. A loss to a former world champion doesn't hurt their credibility at all so why not do it more often? I still don't see the appeal of Young but Titus at least has charisma.

The Raw ReBound focuses about the Wyatt Family.

Vickie offers to bury the hatchet with Teddy but she's just kidding and has Teddy escorted out by security.

Big Show returns on Raw.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Randy Orton

Non-title again. Orton rains down punches in the corner to start but Del Rio counters into the armbreaker over the ropes. He stomps away on Orton and chokes on the ropes for a few seconds. Orton bails to the floor to hold his arm but he drops Del Rio ribs first onto the barricade. Alberto whips him into the steps but Orton dropkicks Del Rio out of the air back inside. He loads up the powerslam but Del Rio holds the ropes to send

Orton to the mat.

The armbreaker doesn't go on full as Orton is in the ropes and Del Rio is getting frustrated. A backbreaker gets two on the champion but the Elevated DDT is countered by an enziguuru for two. Del Rio kicks him in the shoulder and loads up an RK0 of his own, only to be countered into the powerslam for two. The Elevated DDT connects but the RK0 is countered into a Backstabber for two. Not that it matters as Orton rolls out of the armbreaker, ducks the superkick and hits the RK0 for the pin at 8:50.

Rating: C. Del Rio is officially a jobber to the stars. There was almost no chance he was going to beat Orton here and he lost clean to the RK0 after two straight wins where he escaped through interference. The match was ok but nothing more than that as the ending was barely in doubt at all. Both guys were their usual selves here and didn't seem all that interested in trying.

Overall Rating: D+. The show was just there this week with some ok matches but nothing we haven't seen before. This is the kind of show that made Smackdown very boring for a long time and I really hope that doesn't become the standard again. Vickie being GM again made me roll my eyes as this is her fourth stint as full time boss of a show. That sums up this episode: we've seen all this before.

Results

Dolph Ziggler b. Jack Swagger – Zig Zag

Daniel Bryan b. Wade Barrett – YES Lock

Curtis Axel b. Chris Jericho – Neckbreaker into a cutter

Rob Van Dam b. Darren Young – Five Star Frog Splash

Randy Orton b. Alberto Del Rio – RK0

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my

book on the History of Starrcade from Amazon for just \$4 at:

On This Day: July 17, 2011 – Money in the Bank 2011: Cena and Punk's Masterpiece

Money in the Bank 2011

Date: July 17, 2011

Location: Allstate Arena, Rosemont, Illinois

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T, Jerry Lawler

It's Money in the Bank and I'm rather clueless as to who is going to win three of the four main matches. The MITB matches themselves are total tossups and the Punk vs. Cena match could go a bunch of ways. It'll definitely be interesting and will set the stage for at least the next few months worth of shows, if nothing else due to the MITB cases, assuming one isn't cashed in tonight. Let's get to it.

Opening video is of course mainly about Punk vs. Cena, which to be fair is by far and away the biggest match on the card.

Sin Cara vs. Justin Gabriel vs. Heath Slater vs. Sheamus vs. Cody Rhodes vs. Wade Barrett vs. Kane vs. Daniel Bryan

This is going to be a big insane match so it's almost impossible to call what's going on in these things. I'm really not sure who to predict in this. I went with Cody as a more or less random choice mainly out of a lack of anyone else. Big

mess to start as these really should only have six people in them. Kane, Barrett and Sheamus clear the ring out and it's a three way staredown.

The Europeans...wait Kane is from Spain. Ok the two guys not named Kane go down and it's ladder time already. Bryan dropkicks Kane down as Slater and Gabriel team up a bit. Cara, who is in white/gray here, gets taken down but the former tag partners fight already. Slater goes for the ladder and is loudly booed. Gabriel goes up but the ladder is way off center. Bryan dropkicks him off but Cody goes up.

Kane sends Sheamus and Cody to the floor but Barrett stops the Big Bald. Kane throws a ladder at Sheamus to take him down. Slater vs. Kane and guess who wins that one. Cara pops up out of nowhere to drill Kane and break up the clothesline. Bryan hits a big dive and Gabriel does the same. Sorry for all the play by play stuff but it's all you can do in these things for the most part.

Cara is like screw you guys I'm the flier here and takes out Sheamus with a huge one. He follows that up by kicking Bryan in the head and hitting the top rope C4 to take Bryan down. Sin tries to go for the briefcase but can't pick a ladder up and into the ring. Barrett kicks his head off so it doesn't matter. They do the whole set up a ladder as a bridge from the ring to the table thing as is customary.

Cara avoids going through it though and Barrett clotheslines the post. For some reason the masked guy goes in again without a ladder and gets his head kicked off by Sheamus. Not a good night for the Mexican dude. Cara gets powerbombed through the ladder to more or less kill him. BIG pop for Sheamus for that one. Sheamus is controlling almost everyone here as Cara is taken out on a stretcher.

Kane and Sheamus are in the ring and fighting over a ladder. Scratch that as all three go to the floor. Bryan, Kane and

Cody are all in the ring with ladders now. The small guys work together to take Kane down and there goes that partnership. Cara is gone now, as in out of the entire arena via a stretcher. Kane has the big ladder set up in the ring and everyone comes in. Cody makes an attempt but all the small guys make a save.

The former Nexus triple teams Bryan and then the tag team tells Barrett to go ahead. Barrett proves why British wrestlers are stupid as he goes up and is pulled down just a few seconds later. Both of them go up but Rhodes shoves the ladder down. Cross Rhodes takes someone down and it's time for Barrett and Rhodes to fight over the ladder. Cross Rhodes takes Barrett out but Sheamus makes the last second save.

There's an Irish Curse and pasty goes up, only for Bryan to make the save. Bryan rams him into the ladder a few times and goes up at the same time. Sheamus and Kane combine for a Doomsday Device to END Bryan. Kane and Sheamus are alone in the ring now. Well other than a ladder but that doesn't count I don't think. The big ladder is in the ring and a regular one is set up as a bridge against the middle buckle.

Kane escapes though and chokeslams various small people. Big Bald goes up but Bryan makes ANOTHER save despite being legally deceased I believe. Bryan goes up and almost gets the LeBell Lock on the ladder. That would be awesome. Bryan manages to knock Kane to the floor but Slater stops him. Bryan saves AGAIN as he's been insane so far tonight.

Slater goes up one more time but Barrett saves. Time for Barrett vs. Sheamus which doesn't sound all that appealing. Thankfully they team up and stop Slater, using a ladder like a fork to stop Slater and shove him off the top. That was cool. Sheamus goes nuts and takes out a lot of people so he can climb. Naturally he's not that smart so he sets up another ladder on the top rope.

Sheamus is just beating people up at the moment and not really trying to go after it. Even Booker is saying GO FOR IT. Ok now he's going up but Kane pops up from nowhere to stop him. Sheamus has a bridge ladder beneath him. He goes onto it but doesn't break it. FREAKING OW MAN! Wasteland hits Kane and Gabriel climbs a ladder and hits 450 in the tightest space possible. That was AWESOME.

Bryan and Cody go at it on the ladder as everyone but Barrett is down. Wade comes up as Bryan tries to choke Cody out because he's an idiot. Cody goes down and Wade takes an elbow to knock him backwards a bit. Bryan is alone up there and Wade is on the bridge. Bryan kicks him down and WINS THE CASE! Totally didn't see that one coming.

Rating: A. I liked the storytelling aspect of this as Bryan was the MVP of this thing. He made a ton of saves and certainly deserved to win it in the end. The spots in this were great and Cara going out might have been due to prevent him from botching something major, which says a lot. I'm not sure I can see Bryan winning a title but stranger things have happened. GREAT match though.

Vince is here. Hokey smoke that's Johnny Ace with him.

Apparently Punk hasn't signed yet but is in a meeting for a last second negotiation.

Divas Title: Kelly Kelly vs. Brie Bella

Booker says he never dressed like his brother in Harlem Heat. Is his memory failing or something? No idea what you want me to say here. They're both hot, they're both inept, the match is slightly longer than a regular match they have on Raw. Kelly is champion in case you're reading this like three years from now. It's a totally boring match and it's a total food break for the crowd. Oh and Eve is with Kelly at ringside

here. Crowd is dead here. K2 ends this at like four minutes. Total filler and it knows it.

Rating: D. What do you want me to say here? This match was nothing but the girls looked good so I can't call it a failure. The division is horrible since Kharma got pregnant and Laycool went down at the same time. Not a horrible match but just an extended Raw thing really. It served its purpose though I guess.

Summerslam ad. It's in the summer you know. Eh Divas in bikinis is never a bad thing.

We recap Henry vs. Show. They're both big, they're both strong, they both hurt people. Yeah that's about it.

Mark Henry vs. Big Show

Henry is in blue here. They slug it out to start and Show JUMPS at him with a shoulder block to take Mark down. Out to the floor early and Show loads up a chokeslam through the table but Henry breaks it up. Show shoves him over the steps and the bald one is in control. Scratch that as Henry sends him into the steps and Show goes back in. Henry goes for the knee with a chop block and Show is in trouble.

Boot to the head gets two. Half crab goes on which makes sense for once. Henry? Psychology? What's in this lemonade I'm drinking? Show grabs a rope and manages to kick Henry off which looked rather cool. Splash/running clothesline hits Show in the corner and Henry is all angry and such. Show GOES UP and hits a shoulder block off the middle rope but he hurts his knee again.

Both guys are down now and the count gets like three. Show loads up the chokeslam but Henry kicks him in the knee to break it up. World's Strongest Slam but it only gets two. Dang I would have thought that was the ending. Another World's Strongest Slam and a pair of splashes and Show is finally done.

Rating: C+. Call me crazy but I liked it. They were going at it out there and more importantly than anything else, it was short. That's a very key thing to this match and it made things work a lot better overall. Henry's push probably won't go anywhere (at least I hope not) but a win like this is perfectly fine.

Post match Henry Pillmanizes Show's leg with a Vader Bomb. Show goes out on a stretcher saying it's broken to fill in some time.

Vince is saying this is a nightmare as Josh comes in to ask if Punk has re-signed. He hasn't apparently but Vince offered him a huge contract. Vince talks for a bit and ultimately says if Punk leaves with the title, may God have mercy on Cena's soul.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Kofi Kingston vs. Jack Swagger vs. Evan Bourne vs. R-Truth vs. Alex Riley vs. The Miz vs. Rey Mysterio

Everyone grabs a mini ladder as they come into the ring. Rey comes out last and gets almost ZERO reaction. Everyone has a ladder and they surround Del Rio, beating him down rather easily. Booker picks Evan Bourne which Lawler is surprised at. Some of the guys are out of the ring now and Swagger is thrown out for the second time. Truth and Miz have a stand off and duel a bit.

Swagger takes them both out because that's just smart. He sets up a ladder but Kofi and Bourne run in at the same time for an attempt to go up. Now they team up and take out some heels.

Rey gets a rana to take Swagger to the floor again and Truth takes Kofi out. Riley crotches him on a ladder and is the only one standing. Miz comes in for the save but all the ladders are too short anyway so it's not like it matters.

Riley dives over the top and takes out Swagger and Miz in a nice spot. Truth dives over to take out all three of them. Kofi and Rey do a double dive to take all of them out. Bourne goes up and everyone gasps. SHOOTING STAR PRESS ONTO ALL FIVE GUYS!!! Bourne goes up a big ladder but Miz makes the save. Bourne gets a hand on it but so does Miz. Del Rio pops up and shoves it down as Miz may have hurt his knee.

He landed on it coming down and may have jammed it. I think it's worked but it doesn't look right AT ALL. This might be legit actually. Miz is carried out but can't seem to put any weight on the knee. I think he might be actually hurt if the visual is any sign of it. Truth and Del Rio are both climbed over (literally) by Rey and Bourne. The faces hit stereo ranas to take out the heels. That looked SWEET.

Swagger is all alone but Kofi is like screw that and jumps over him onto the ladder. Swagger puts an ankle lock on him instead and Riley tries to steal the case but fails. Rey vs. Truth at the moment with Rey taking a ladder to the ribs. He climbs onto a ladder but falls onto it face first. Kofi goes up and uses a ladder as a step down for a Boom Drop onto Truth. Booker of course criticizes him for dancing too much.

This match is a lot more choreographed and you can tell it a lot. Truth messes up a see-saw spot to Swagger. Good thing Swagger was nice enough to sit there and let Truth do it again. Rey and Riley slug it out on the ladder but Bourne and Del Rio get ladders of their own. Down goes Alberto and Rey has his hand on it. All seven guys are on ladders in what looks like a clothed orgy, which kind of defeats the purpose but you get the idea.

Down goes Del Rio and there goes Jack too. Bourne is tossed but the other four are all there still. Truth goes down and Kofi gets a swinging kick to knock Rey off. He's all alone but Swagger makes a last second stop. They both fall and it looked VERY bad as Kofi's knee landed on Swagger's throat. HERE'S MIZ! He literally hops down the aisle on one leg but Rey stops (to huge booing).

Rey and Del Rio fight a bit but down goes Del Rio. Never mind as he's coming back up again. Briefcase to Alberto's head but Rey still can't get it. REY'S MASK IS OFF! Everything falls down and Rey has to cover his face. Alberto goes up as Rey is all terrified. Alberto is all alone and it's over. Didn't see that one coming.

Rating: B. Good, but nowhere near as good as the SD one. The spots here were awesome to say the least but the sloppiness hurt it a good bit. Miz coming back in was great and an awesome false finish. Rey losing his mask was rather surprising and I'm seriously wondering how badly hurt Swagger is because that didn't look like a planned fall at all. Messy but fun, which is about par for the course in MITB to be honest.

You get a relatively clear shot of Rey's face during the highlight package.

We recap Christian vs. Orton, which is more or less Christian can't beat Orton and turned heel because his initial title loss to him was unfair. If Orton gets disqualified or if there's a "bad decision", Orton loses the title.

Del Rio says he shouldn't have had to win but this is his destiny.

Smackdown World Title: Christian vs. Randy Orton

After some big match intros we're ready to go. Christian shows off some nice psychology as he throws a chair in immediately and tries to get Orton to snap. The chair goes to the floor and Orton takes over with relative ease. The crowd is totally behind Christian here. Out to the floor with Orton in control but Christian takes over back inside. These two have had some very good matches so this should be awesome.

They slug it out a bit with Christian mostly in control. Orton grabs a rollup for two. Killswitch doesn't work and they clothesline each other to the floor. Back in and Christian jumps over him and blocks an RK0. Jackknife cover gets two for Randy. There's the Thesz Press as the fans aren't pleased. Elevated DDT doesn't work but Christian tries his spinning dive out of the corner, only to jump into a dropkick to the ribs.

Christian takes over again as he's done a lot in this match. Top rope headbutt gets two. Killswitch hits out of almost nowhere but Orton gets out at 2.999. Even the crowd is into this now. Christian loads up a spear but he hits the post instead. Orton puts Christian in that over the shoulder backbreaker into the neckbreaker (LOVE that move) for two. He sets for the Punt but Christian moves. Randy settles for the powerslam instead.

There's the elevated DDT and Christian is in trouble. Christian spits in Orton's face to tick him off and Orton goes off on him. He breaks at three though so it's not a DQ. Orton kicks Christian low...and it's a DQ! CHRISTIAN WINS THE TITLE!!! THAT STIPULATION ACTUALLY WORKED!!!

Rating: B-. Good match here but not as good as their usual stuff. I can't believe that ending actually worked either as I've never seen anything like it before. Granted it's probably

so Bryan can come out and cash in but that is what it is. Either way this was fine and they continue to have great matches together.

Orton destroys Christian post match, hitting a bunch of RKOs on the table while Teddy tries to calm him down.

Ok if Bryan doesn't come down now, he's an idiot. Apparently he's an idiot because he's not here.

We recap Punk vs. Cena. If you don't know this, you're an idiot. Basically, Punk went on a massive rant against WWE and Cena in a worked shoot. This is his last night with the company and Vince is involved too. If Punk leaves with the title, Cena is fired.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. CM Punk

And here we go. Punk has an epic reaction as he's the hometown boy. He even has a new shirt. The crowd is rabid for Punk. He sits in the ring and is a total face in the eyes of the crowd. HUGE CM Punk chant goes up as we wait on Cena. I seriously worry for Cena's safety if he wins. OH MAN that heat is ONS levels. Punk goes out to be near the crowd for Cena's entrance. Total stoic Cena here as everything he does is booed out of the building.

They do big match intros and Punk is as over as free beer. Here we go. I'm so fired up for this it's unreal. TON of time for this too. Punk grabs a headlock and the YOU CAN'T WRESTLE chants start up. We actually do some chain wrestling and Cena is booed out of the building for a snap mare. They do some obvious spot calling while Cena has a headlock. Punk tries to fire off a spin kick but Cena ducks.

YOU CAN'T WRESTLE chants start up and Punk points at himself and asks the fans if they mean him. Punk almost gets an

Anaconda Vice but Cena reverses into an armbar. They're working slow here but that's perfectly fine given that they have over 45 minutes if need be. Jerry tries to make Punk out to be the heel here and it's just failing completely. There's the duel and it's all CENA SUCKS rather quickly.

Even Cole is against Punk here. Headlock goes on again as Cena has mostly controlled here, but we're only like 5 minutes in. Hip toss by Punk sets up a dropkick and Punk speeds things up a bit. There's a headlock of his own and Cena is down. We reference Montreal because that's just what we do here in WWE. Punk does You Can't See Me to Cena and they both try their finishers but it's a stalemate.

HUGE CM Punk chant goes up which is par for the course tonight. Punk goes for the knee and takes over again. Cena fires back with the bulldog for two. Off to a front facelock and Punk shakes his finger no. I've never seen as many spots called in a single match. Cena hits a clothesline and Punk might have lost a tooth. Off to an arm trap chinlock which is close to a Crossface with Cena on his back.

Punk gets up and suplexes his way out of it for two. Cena does a Bret Hart chest to the buckle bump which gets two. All Punk at this point. Cena gets something going and hits a release fisherman's suplex for two. AA is reversed again and Punk gets a quick DDT for two. Triangle choke goes on Cena and we slow it down again. It seems like they're saving energy. They've been at it nearly ten minutes and it's 10:22 so that's a very likely scenario.

Cena counters out of it but Punk throws him to the floor. Punk teases going up but just climbs out instead. The fans applaud Punk just for picking Cena up. The fans chant for Colt Cabana and there's a knee to the back of the neck of Cena while he's hanging off the apron. That gets two back in the ring. Punk charges at Cena but his arm hits the post to buy Cena a few seconds.

And never mind as Punk hits a clothesline for two. Back to the chinlock as this needs to go a long time since the rest holds are getting a bit boring. There are actually some Cena chants and Punk comes off the middle rope with a spinning cross body. Cena might have hurt his knee as he's going to the apron a bit. Punk goes after him but can't suplex him back in. Cena manages to suplex him to the floor and the fans clap for a bit.

I think the knee was a work as he's not even holding it at the moment. Oh wait yes he is. That was more or less an FU off the apron. Back in the ring that gets two as he's rubbing the knee now. He can stand on it and hits another release fisherman's. Elbow drop gets two. Cena sets for what looks like a powerslam but flips Punk forward into a sitout slam for two.

It's only 10:30 and they've been going at it over 15 minutes. The knee looks fine. It's boo/yay time and the yays are winning it. We go WAY old school with an abdominal stretch. HE EVEN HOOKS THE LEG PROPERLY! Punk hip tosses out of it and it's a double clothesline to put them both down. Cena up first and he initiates the ending sequence. The Protobomb is reversed though and Punk gets the loudest reaction for a rollup you'll ever here.

Protobomb hits this time but You Can't See Me results in a kick to the head. Suicide dive takes Cena down and the fans erupt again. Punk high fives a fan while he's still on the ground in a cool moment. Punk misses a cross body and now he Can't See Cena. Five Knuckle Shuffle hits at about 20 minutes. AA is countered and Punk uses his martial arts for two.

Punk is looking towards the entrance and smiles for no apparent reason. GTS is loaded up but Cena counters into a gutwrench suplex for two. Punk fights back with some knees to the jaw and a bulldog. Springboard clothesline gets two and the fans are still totally into this. The replay shows how sweet those knees were. Out of nowhere Cena grabs the STF and

Punk is in trouble! Oh of course he makes the rope but it takes awhile for him to get there.

As Cena goes for Punk again he gets caught in the side of the head with a big old kick for two. Cena rolls through a cross body but the AA is countered into the GTS but Cena grabs the leg and the STF is back on again! Punk can't make the ropes but Cena pulls him back to the middle again. Cole says it's a matter of time and he's right. It'll just be multiple more minutes because Punk manages to counter from the mat into the Anaconda Vice. SWEET!

Cena gets back up there's the AA for TWO. This is getting awesome as they used the slow build. I'm glued to my screen which hasn't happened since a few years ago with Taker vs. Shawn. Top rope legdrop is countered via something like a powerbomb for two. Punk almost Hulks Up and says it's time to Go To Sleep. He loads it up but Cena grabs the rope and clotheslines him on it.

The top rope legdrop hits this time but it only gets two. These kickouts are incredible. They're not going to end the match but they've built it up so well and the audience being so into them is making up the difference. Cena is getting his 19th wind and looks like he wants the AA. It hits clean again and PUNK KICKS OUT. Cena tries an AA off the middle rope but Punk fights out of it.

He manages to get a top rope hurricanrana but Cena goes to the corner to escape. Corner knee sets up the GTS and Cole is scared to death. The knee only hits the ribs and Cena manages to fall out of the ring instead of being in pinning position. And here's Vince with Johnny Ace. The distraction lets Cena get the STF and Vince sends Johnny Ace to ring the bell. Cena hits the floor and blasts Ace, saying he doesn't want it that way. Vince and Cena have a staredown in the aisle and Cena says it's my way. He charges back into the ring and there's the GTS and PUNK WINS!

Rating: A+. Excellent match as I'm sure you got here as the whole thing came off as completely epic. Cena almost had to lose here due to the sake of his own safety. Vince screwing himself over is a great thing because that's how it had to be. Great stuff here and the show ending with Punk being as popular as anyone imaginable is excellent. Awesome stuff here and an awesome show.

Vince jumps on commentary and says to kill the music. He wants Alberto out here NOW to cash in. Alberto runs out and Punk kicks him in the head almost immediately to take him down. Punk goes into the crowd and that's probably the safest place in the world for him. The bell didn't ring and Del Rio never cashed in officially.

Overall Rating: A. Well that was incredible. From top to bottom this was great stuff and nothing was bad on it at all. Even the Divas had looks going for them so you can't complain there. Great stuff overall and a shocking ending, which was exactly what this needed. Zero complaints and it more than lived up to the hype. Can't wait for tomorrow now, which is the whole point of the show. Loved it.

Results

Daniel Bryan won the Smackdown Money in the Bank Briefcase

Kelly Kelly b. Brie Bella – K2

Mark Henry b. Big Show – Splash

Alberto Del Rio won the Raw Money in the Bank Briefcase

Christian b. Randy Orton via DQ – Orton kicks Christian low

CM Punk b. John Cena – GTS

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my

book on the History of Starrcade from Amazon for just \$4 at:

Monday Night Raw – July 15, 2013: Take My Money For Summerslam Now

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 15, 2013

Location: Barclays Center, Brooklyn, New York

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

It's the night after Money in the Bank and the main stories are Orton and Sandow winning the briefcases. Cena retained his title, meaning that Orton is lurking in the shadows for whomever the champion is over the next year. We also saw Heyman screw Punk after berating Axel for screwing Bryan, with only the latter being a surprise. The road to Summerslam begins tonight so let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Brad Maddox opens the show by announcing Ziggler vs. Del Rio in an MITB rematch. He's about to explain why he'll be the greatest GM of all time but Cena interrupts. Cena says Brad has already made history because this is the only time during his administration that he won't be the most hated person in the ring. The jury is still out on Maddox so we should give him a chance. Maddox sucks up to Cena and has been a fan of his since he was a teenager. Therefore, Cena gets to pick his own opponent for Summerslam.

The fans immediately start the YES chants but Cena thinks he could face anyone from Michael Cole to a Bella Twin. Cue Randy Orton who says Cena might not be champion at Summerslam. Orton says he isn't cashing in

tonight because he doesn't want to make the same mistake Cena made last year. He isn't going to cash in when Cena is ready though, and Cena will never see it coming.

This brings out Fandango of all people to send the crowd into the dance. Fandango says he's Orton is going to cash the case in against him because the people want to see Fandango vs. John Cena. He does his name but Orton jumps him to start a fight. Fandango....actually sends Orton the floor but Orton comes back in and lays out the dancer. Maddox makes a match between them right now.

Randy Orton vs. Fandango

This is joined in progress with Orton in control but missing a knee drop. Fandango gets in some shots to the face but Orton sends him to the floor and into the barricade. Orton sneaks up on him with a big clothesline and gets two off the belly to back suplex onto the barricade. Fandango takes over again with a cravate and the Randy Savage chant begins. Randy pounds away in the corner and gets two off a dropkick. Fandango gets a kick to Orton's head to take it to the floor. Randy is sent into the steps and we take a break.

Back with Fandango getting two off something we didn't see. Fandango hooks another cravate but has to counter the backbreaker into a belly to back for two. Orton comes back with a clothesline in the corner and a t-bone suplex for no cover. A superplex puts Fandanago down but Randy hits some clotheslines and the powerslam instead of covering. The Elevated DDT is countered by a kick to the head but Fandango is crotched on the top. Now the Elevated DDT connects and the RK0 is good for the pin at 13:05.

Rating: C+. This wasn't bad but did anyone believe Fandango was going to take out Orton the night after that big of a win? He didn't look bad out there but losing again isn't going to help him at all. Then again Fandango had the nerve to get something over with the crowd so of course he's going to lose every match he's in.

Ziggler FINALLY breaks up with AJ over last night. AJ stares off into the distance.

Here's Mark Henry with something to say. He gave it all he had last night and he came this close to winning the title. Henry has no regrets about what he did but wants to face Cena again at Summerslam. He took Cena to his limits once and he can do it again. Instead of Cena he gets the Shield of all people to surround Henry. Mark fights them off as well as he can but the numbers finally catch up to him. Henry fights them off for a bit but a Reigns spear finally puts him down. They actually hit the TripleBomb to leave Henry laying and impress the crowd.

Maddox is on the phone when Jericho comes in. He knows Jericho wants to be champion and the best way to do that is to impress Cena. Jericho could do that by facing say....Rob Van Dam? Chris likes the idea and Maddox smirks a bit.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Dolph Ziggler

Non-title here. Ziggler scores with a quick dropkick and a neckbreaker for two followed by the ten elbow drops. The champion comes back with a kick to the ribs and the reverse superplex. Dolph pounds away but gets caught in a HUGE backdrop to the floor as we take a break. Back with Del Rio still in control but missing the low superkick. Instead Del Rio launches him into the air before stomping his head.

Del Rio tries a charge into the corner but gets caught in a tornado DDT for two. They slug it out but Del Rio BLASTS him with a right hand to take over. Ziggler ducks a charge and hits a big dropkick for two but can't this the Fameasser. A German suplex gets two for Alberto and he fires off some headbutts to daze Ziggy. The cross armbreaker is countered into a swinging neckbreaker but Del Rio comes back with an enziguri for two.

Alberto puts him in the Tree of Woe but misses a charge to send himself shoulder first into the post. Now the Fameasser hits for two out of the corner....but the bell rings. Yep it's AJ with the evil look on her face and the distraction lets Del Rio hit the low superkick for the pin at 13:43.

Rating: C. This was decent but not as good as last night. The WWE formula of "guy gets over so let's have him lose every big match he's in". Why

they think this makes people care about him is beyond me but it's what we're going to get no matter what. Ziggler has now lost twice in a row but I'm sure it makes him look stronger or something like that.

Post match AJ goes nuts on Dolph until Langston comes out to run Ziggler over. The Big Ending leaves him laying and AJ kisses his unconscious mouth.

R-Truth comes out for a match but is cut off by the Wyatt Family. The Family takes Truth down and send him to the floor. Harper looks to Wyatt for approval and Bray gets into the ring. He says there's no such thing as a hero anymore but the people have become addicted to the illusion of what a hero is. The people need someone to tuck you in bed at night and kiss you on the cheek. Everything isn't alright because the man who made everyone is a liar. Your own flesh and blood turned his back on you but Wyatt will never turn his back on you. Maybe he's been the answer all along.

Truth gets back on the apron with a chair but Bray sends the monsters back. He offers Truth a free shot with a big smile on his face and his eyes closed. The monsters sneak up on truth but Wyatt hits a splash in the corner. The beatdown is on and Truth is destroyed before Bray kisses him on the head and hits Sister Abigail (swinging Downward Spiral). Bray says that's not the truth he seeks and that Kane needs to follow the buzzards. The lights cut out and we go to a WWE App poll for who gets to face the Real Americans.

Video on the Performance Center.

Zeb Colter and the Real Americans rant about the American melting pot and tell Cena to pick one of the Real Americans for his match at Summerslam.

The WWE App vote selects the Usos to face Swagger and Cesaro (other options were Tons of Funk and the Prime Time Players).

Usos vs. Real Americans

Jey starts by punching Cesaro into the corner before bringing in Jimmy off a tag. Cesaro hits a quick gutwrench suplex and brings in Jack for a

Vader bomb. Jimmy dives into the corner for a tag and everything breaks down. Cesaro's gutwrench is countered into a rollup for the pin by Jey at 2:17.

Damien Sandow vs. Christian

Sandow bails to the floor to start before catching Christian coming back in. The Canadian loads up a tornado DDT but gets shoved out to the floor to give Damien control. Back in and the tornado DDT connects for two on Sandow and a high cross body gets the same. The Terminus is countered and a middle rope back elbow puts Sandow down. Sandow hits the Russian legsweep but the Wind-Up Elbow is countered into a rollup for the pin for Christian at 3:07.

Rating: D. Again let me get this straight: you have a guy win a major match after losing everything for months and he loses the first match he has as the briefcase winner. Yet this company continues to wonder why no one can get over as either a face or a heel in this company. The match was nothing of note.

Post match Sandow declares himself still the savior of the briefcase but Cody Rhodes runs in to chase him off.

Vickie Guerrero was asking people to sign a petition for her earlier today.

Naomi vs. Brie Bella

Naomi hits a quick high kick to send Brie to the floor but Brie trips her up for two. A hair drag sends Naomi down and Brie cranks on her head a bit. Naomi comes back with some dropkicks that miss so badly the announcers have to acknowledge it. The Rear View sets up a high cross body for the pin on Brie at 4:11.

Heyman bailed from the arena as soon as the show was over last night.

Here's a ticked off CM Punk. He knows Heyman and Lesnar are here tonight and wants them here right now. He only gets Heyman who says he's looking at an empty ring. Heyman says Punk was nothing when he got to WWE but Heyman built Punk into something. The two of them were WWE Champion for

434 days and nearly beat the Undertaker's Wrestlemania streak. Without Heyman though, Punk isn't the best in the world anymore.

All day people have been calling Heyman a Judas but here's the truth: Punk let everyone down by losing to Undertaker and then walking out on the company. Now Punk has found himself and thinks he's better than Paul Heyman. Heyman played him and now history is going to say that he dumped Punk instead of the other way around. Punk wanted things to be personal so Heyman made it personal last night. Punk has no wife, no children and is estranged from his mother and father.

All Punk has is the WWE Universe and their respect and affirmation. All Punk needs is the WWE Championship but Punk took Heyman's best friend away. So Heyman took the chance at the WWE Championship away from Punk and the WWE Universe. Punk made Heyman swear on his children but it was Heyman's children who made it clear. They asked him why Punk didn't listen to their daddy and Heyman said it's because CM Punk can't beat Brock Lesnar.

Punk says he made the mistake of trusting Heyman and all he's got to show for it are 13 staples in his head. Heyman knows how relentless Punk can be because he won't stop if there's something he wants. Punk wants Heyman and swears on Paul's children that he'll get him and will go through every one of Paul's associates to do it. Heyman has no future because Punk is going to take everything he has until it's just the two of them left.

Heyman knows Punk is telling the truth but writes Punk's future on the ground. He shouts IT'S CLOBBERING TIME and here's Lesnar. Heyman tries to jump Punk but Punk fires off forearms to Brock. Lesnar takes him down with knees to the chest but CM keeps fighting. Punk is LAUNCHED over the announce table but he dives at Brock anyway, only to be rammed into the post. Brock lays him out on the table with an F5 and stands over his prey. Punk can't breathe and is holding his throat. Absolutely amazing segment here and one of the best in a LONG time.

Khali asks Cena for the title shot and Cena answers in whatever language Khali speaks. Khali is pleased.

HHH and Stephanie come in to see Maddox and mess with him about the main event tonight. They tell him he only got the job because he was standing there.

Rob Van Dam vs. Chris Jericho

Feeling out process to start with van Dam firing off forearms to take over. The fans tell him he's still got it but he walks into a dropkick from Jericho. The ECW chants start up and Van Dam takes Jericho down with a spin kick to set up the monkey flip. Jericho comes back with the enziguri for two and a belly to back suplex puts Van Dam down as we take a break.

Back with Jericho escaping a bodyscissors and trying the Walls. RVD escapes but gets kicked to the floor but catches Jericho in the face with a spin kick for two. Back to the body vice but Jericho counters into a powerbomb to escape. Jericho rolls away to escape Rolling Thunder but hits a moonsault off the apron to take Jericho down as we take another break.

Van Dam runs Jericho over but Jericho comes back with shoulders of his own. A top rope elbow to the head drops Van Dam but he avoids the Lionsault. Now Rolling Thunder connects for two but Jericho gets the same off a DDT. The Walls are countered and RVD superkicks Jericho down. The split legged moonsault misses and Jericho hits the Lionsault for two more. Van Dam kicks Jericho in the face but the Five Star attempt is broken up. A top rope front flip takes Jericho down but a standing rana is caught in the Walls. He makes the ropes and kicks Jericho down again before hitting the Five Star for the pin at 21:30.

Rating: C+. This is firmly in the category of long rather than good. It wasn't a bad match at all but getting over twenty minutes is a big stretch. Thankfully it was a completely clean win which is what Jericho is best at: putting people over. Both guys looked solid and Van Dam can still go, but you could have cut five minutes out of this easily.

The roster is on the stage for Cena's decision. Cena talks about how the fans don't always agree with what Cena does but it's because they're honest with him. A decision this big needs help from the WWE Universe.

The fans immediately chant for Bryan but Cena wants to list off some names. The fans aren't impressed with the birthday boy Heath Slater or any member of 3MB.

They're a little more interested in Randy Orton but even less in Great Khali. Del Rio is booed out of the building and Jericho gets some polite applause. RVD of course gets a good reaction but the fans aren't interested in Fandango or Sheamus. No on Ryback as well so Cena asks if there's anyone he's forgetting. The YES chants begin but Cena says he has his decision. The Daniel Bryan chants cut Cena off but he says he respects the beard. Cena's pick is.....Daniel Bryan, drawing the biggest cheer Cena will EVER get in New York. Cue Bryan and the place goes NUTS. He does the chant in Cena's face to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. This was an interesting show as there were definitely parts that dragged, but the stuff that was good was REALLY good. The Wyatt Family was amazing and thankfully the WHAT chants were pretty silent as most fans were interested in what they were watching instead of chanting. Summerslam has me drooling at a rate that I haven't seen since last year's Wrestlemania. Punk vs. Heyman and friends is going to be amazing and Cena vs. Bryan should rock as well. This was a solid show and much more entertaining than last night's PPV.

Results

Randy Orton b. Fandango – RK0

Alberto Del Rio b. Dolph Ziggler – Superkick

Usos b. Real Americans – Rollup to Cesaro

Christian b. Damien Sandow – Rollup

Naomi b. Brie Bella – High Cross Body

Rob Van Dam b. Chris Jericho – Five Star Frog Splash

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my

book on the History of Starrcade from Amazon for just \$4 at:

Money in the Bank 2013: Can I Get My Money Back?

Money in the Bank 2013

Date: July 14, 2013

Location: Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

This is one of the funnest shows of the year more often than not so I have high hopes for tonight. The main events are of course the two ladder matches along with Henry challenging Cena for the Raw Title. This is one of those shows where you can just turn your brain off and enjoy some wild action so hopefully things are as fun as they have the potential to be. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Tag Titles: Usos vs. Roman Reigns/Seth Rollins

Shield is defending. Rollins starts with Jey with the Uso quickly getting two off a backslide. Off to Reigns who gets chopped down and caught with a double suplex for two. The fans are already chanting for RVD. A double spinebuster gets two for Jey as this is one sided so far. Seth pulls Roman out of the way of a superkick as we take a break during the pre-show. Back with the Usos still in control but Rollins avoids a charge and brings in Reigns to take over.

A clothesline sends Jey off the apron and out to the floor as Shield starts making fast tags. Rollins kicks Jey in the back for two and puts

on a chinlock. Jey keeps fighting back but can't make the hot tag. Seth is sent to the floor and Reigns is kicked away but Rollins dives to break up the hot tag. Jey is knocked tot he floor for a hard clothesline from Reigns. We take ANOTHER break and come back with Jimmy diving over the top to take out the Shield. Not that we got to see the hot tag or anything, but we needed a trailer for Dead Man Down right?

Jimmy gets a VERY close two off a high cross body and the Samoan drop gets two on Rollins. Seth comes back and loads up a superplex on Jey but the other two come in to make it a Tower of Doom with Jimmy taking the worst of it. Jimmy superkicks Rollins down and hits the Superfly Splash but Reigns makes a last second save. The fans correctly think this is awesome. Rollins counters a middle rope Samoan drop into an across the ring buckle bomb, setting up the Reigns' spear for the pin to retain at 14:50.

Rating: B. WOW this was better than I was expecting. The near falls in this were off the charts and the Usos actually had me believing they were going to win. The Shield has insane chemistry out there and the Usos proved that they can hang with them move for move. Excellent stuff here and by far the best pre-show match they've ever had.

The opening video is of course about money with the briefcases being loaded into an armored car. Cena and Henry get a generic video package as well.

Fandango vs. Cody Rhodes vs. Damien Sandow vs. Jack Swagger vs. Antonio Cesaro vs. Dean Ambrose vs. Wade Barrett

Colter does his usual anti foreigners rant about being in one of the founding cities of America. "Maybe Betsy Ross should have put a taco and a burrito on the flag." It's a huge brawl to start and I'm not going to be able to keep up with most of the action in the ladder matches tonight. The two teams lay everyone else out and bring in a ladder each. Cesaro hits the gutwrench suplex to send Cody into the ladder before shouting WE

THE PEOPLE. The Scholars take Cesaro the floor but Ambrose stops Swagger from climbing.

Ambrose, the crowd favorite, is left alone in the ring but Barrett makes the save. Barrett kicks Ambrose in the face, knocking the ladder on top of him in the process. Fandango kicks the ladder into Barrett's face and hits a slingshot legdrop onto the ladder onto Barrett. Sandow makes the save as Dean knocks Rhodes off the top rope with another ladder. Fandango is sent face first into the ladder and suplexed onto the one in the corner for good measure. Cesaro makes a climb but has to stop Ambrose with a hanging chinlock off the ladder.

Cody makes the save and hits a Samoa Joe MuscleBuster to send Cesaro into a ladder. Barrett makes the save with a broken rung of a ladder in a new idea. He and Swagger go up now with Wade BLASTING him with the elbow to knock Swagger off. Fandango makes the save but Ambrose catches him with the bulldog driver off the bottom rung. Dean does the windmill spot with the ladder on his head but the Real Americans grab either end to break it up. They lift Ambrose in the air to choke him out but Ambrose skins the cat in mid air in an AWESOME spot. The Americans dump him to the floor but there's no ladder left.

Cesaro gets on Swagger's shoulders but Cody hits a springboard dropkick to take them both out. Cross Rhodes lays out Fandango and Barrett but he shouts instead of getting a ladder. He finally gets the big ladder but is met on top by Ambrose for a slugout. Cody rams him face first into the ladder over and over but Rollins and Reigns come out to break it up.

They run interference of everyone else in the match but here are the Usos to take the tag champions out. Cesaro and Swagger get in on the brawl as well but Ambrose is going up. Rhodes makes the save and shoves the ladder over, sending Ambrose onto everyone else. Cody is all alone but Sandow comes in out of nowhere to steal the case at 16:40.

Rating: B. This was solid but it was a step below a lot of these matches.

The Ambrose and Shield stuff was great but I'm really not feeling the winner. Sandow hasn't won a thing of note in like a year but he wins one match and we're supposed to buy him as a main event level guy now? It doesn't work that way but WWE can't get that through their thick heads. Fans don't forget wins and losses like the writers do.

Here's Brad Maddox with something to say. He's glad to be the GM and even though he can't replace Vickie ("I don't look good in high heels") he's put Vickie on the expert panel. She gets a spotlight followed by a video tribute to her on the Titantron. It's a lot of her embarrassing moments followed by a standing boo for her. This is finally broken up by the start of the next match.

Intercontinental Title: The Miz vs. Curtis Axel

Axel is defending. Miz gets a quick cover off a shoulder block but Axel takes him into the corner for control. Curtis is sent to the floor and caught by a baseball slide before Miz sends him back inside. Miz stares Heyman down, claps his hands and falls down. The referee looks at Heyman and ejects him for allegedly hitting Miz. Smart move there. Axel takes over with a dropkick but the fans are MUCH quieter now. The Hennig necksnap gets two and we hit an armbar.

Back up and Miz avoids a charge in the corner but the fans do not care at all. A big boot puts Axel down and the corner clothesline sets up the top rope ax handle for two. Axel comes back with a PerfectPlex for two but Miz hits his one kick to the leg and puts on the Figure Four. Curtis reverses but gets turned over again, only to be right in the ropes for the break. Axel bails to the floor for a second before coming back in for his neckbreaker into a cutter for the pin to retain at 9:20.

Rating: D+. The match wasn't bad but it had no heat at all. People just don't care about Miz at all and the Figure Four is a big reason why. It's just a horrible move for him and comes off like a lame Ric Flair tribute, which is pretty much what it is. Nothing to see here but it was a way to

let the fans breathe a bit after the big match.

Summerslam ad, which is basically All Grown Up from Wrestlemania a few years ago.

Divas Title: Kaitlyn vs. AJ Lee

AJ is defending and this has been a very well built feud. They used to be friends but Kaitlyn went after the title instead of helping AJ when she was having relationship issues, so AJ turned on her and has taken everything Kaitlyn cares about. Kaitlyn has a bad elbow coming in and is with Layla here. Kaitlyn gets a quick two off a gutbuster but is sent into the post on the floor. AJ works on the arm with a bridging armbar (almost a one arm Cattle Mutilation) before hooking a crossface chickenwing of all things.

Back up and Kaitlyn fires off a dropkick and a big shoulder followed by the reverse DDT for two. AJ slaps her in the face so Kaitlyn takes her head off with a clothesline. Kaitlyn knocks her off the apron but Langston catches her in midair. The spear connects back inside but Kaitlyn hurts her elbow again. AJ hooks the Black Widow submission out of nowhere and Kaitlyn taps at 7:03.

Rating: C. Very basic match here but it worked well enough. Kaitlyn looked good with the power stuff (and the tight outfit) while AJ needed to be a bit more evil. I doubt this is over yet because that's how WWE works, but the matches and story have been WAY better than anyone expected them to be.

The expert panel (Big Show, Kofi Kingston and Vickie) talk about the show so far.

Chris Jericho vs. Ryback

The fans go back and forth from Jericho to Goldberg chants. Ryback bails to the floor because he's a coward now and Jericho takes him down with a baseball slide. Back in and Jericho hits a forearm to the back of the head but Ryback drills him with a shoulder. Jericho goes after the formerly bad leg but gets his neck snapped across the top rope for two. We hit the chinlock before Ryback gets two off a middle rope splash. Jericho is punched off the apron and lands between the two announce tables.

Back to the chinlock but Jericho escapes into a northern lights suplex and a failed Walls attempt. A top rope ax handle is caught in a Ryback belly to belly overhead suplex. The Meathook puts Jericho down and the Codebreaker is countered into a kind of spinebuster. A powerbomb gets two on Jericho but he comes back with an enziguri for two.

Ryback rolls to the apron and gets caught in a Codebreaker but he's back in at nine. A high cross gets two for the Canadian but he walks into a gorilla press. Ryback drops him down into a fireman's carry but Jericho counters into a DDT for two. Jericho misses the Lionsault and Ryback grabs a quick rollup for the pin at 10:20.

Rating: D+. The match wasn't terrible but man alive it's pathetic what they've done to Ryback. They took everything good and interesting about him and turned it completely around to make sure the fans didn't care about him at all. This was also the first match he's won on PPV since last year's MITB, yet WWE still wonders why no one cares about him.

Video on the opening of the WWE Performance Center.

We recap Ziggler vs. Del Rio. Ziggler won the world title through his MITB case the night after Wrestlemania then got injured on Smackdown. Del Rio went after Ziggler's head to win the title at Payback so tonight it's about revenge and the title for Dolph.

Smackdown World Title: Dolph Ziggler vs. Alberto Del Rio

Ziggler gets an AMAZING pop. Feeling out process to start until Ziggler gets two off a dropkick. Ten straight elbow drops (with the fans counting along) have Del Rio in trouble and he falls out to the floor. Back in and Del Rio scores with a running enziguri before sending Ziggler hard into the barricade. We hit the chinlock as the fans are nearly comatose for Del Rio. Can you blame them? There's NOTHING interesting about him at all. Ziggler misses a splash in the corner and Del Rio does that stupid smile of his.

Del Rio pounds on the back but misses a charge, sending him out to the floor. He tries to come in off the top but gets caught in a top rope X Factor for two. A Ziggler neckbreaker gets two and a Del Rio German suplex gets the same. The corner enziguri misses and Ziggler gets a close two off the Fameasser. It's amazing how much the crowd is into Ziggler. Del Rio gets two off a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker but Ziggler gets the same by dropkicking Del Rio off the top.

Cue AJ to skip around the ring before Ziggler counters another tilt-a-whirl into a jumping DDT for two. Ziggler tells AJ to leave but the distraction allows Alberto to crotch him on the top. A reverse superplex gets two on Dolph and the low superkick gets the same. Del Rio lowers his knee pad to reveal the knee brace but Ziggler avoids the shot....and AJ hits Del Rio with the Divas Title for the DQ at 14:27.

Rating: C+. This was getting good until the stupid ending. I have no idea what WWE's obsession is with dragging out stories for as long as they can anymore but they need to get over it. This feud isn't doing anything for anyone and it just keeps going. Either split up AJ and give Dolph the title or move on to something else. The match was good though.

Dolph yells at AJ post match and walks away, making Ziggler look like the jerk in the whole thing.

Video on WWE supporting the military.

Recap of Henry vs. Cena with Henry faking retirement and laying Cena out. He said the WWE Championship is the only thing he's never won and he wants that one big run with the title. One thing WWE has done right in the last few years is make the WWE Championship seem like a MUCH bigger deal.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. Mark Henry

Cena is of course booed out of the building. The champion charges at Henry and bounces off of him like a wall. Henry shoves him into the corner and a running splash gets two. Cena is front suplexed onto the steps for two as this is one sided so far. The fans chant Sexual Chocolate because that's what smark crowds do for a Henry match as Mark drops a leg on the back of Cena's neck. Henry throws Cena down and then out to the floor as the domination continues.

Back in and Henry stands around but misses a charge in the corner. Cena can't slam him so Henry cranks on the neck a bit. John gets back up and hits the shoulder blocks followed by the Shuffle but Cena still can't hit the AA. Henry falls on top for two but Cena counters a slam into most of a spinning DDT. Cena FINALLY hits the AA but it's only good for two. The high cross is caught in a World's Strongest Slam for two so Henry pulls the turnbuckle pad off. He also brings in a chair but as the referee is dealing with that, Henry pulls off another buckle.

Cena counters a whip into the buckle and hooks the STF but Mark easily gets to the rope. Henry gets two off a low blow but another World's Strongest Slam is countered into the STF with Cena dragging Henry back to the middle of the ring. Henry taps out to retain Cena's title at 14:40.

Rating: C. This was exactly what you would expect from this match. Henry came off like a monster of the month for the entirety of the buildup and that's exactly what he was here. Nothing in this match made me care about it because no one believed Cena was in any real danger. It wasn't horrible or anything but it came and went and nothing more.

We hear from the expert panel who have nothing interesting to say.

Video on the Wyatts attacking Kane.

CM Punk vs. Rob Van Dam vs. Christian vs. Sheamus vs. Daniel Bryan vs. Randy Orton

RVD, Bryan and Punk get good reactions but the fans aren't impressed with the others. Everyone goes after RVD to start and knock him to the floor. The remaining four go after Sheamus before pairing off themselves. We're quickly down to Bryan vs. Punk and the fans go nuts in a hurry. Van Dam is knocked off the apron and into a ladder as the two stars go at it. Bryan almost botches the backflip but counters the GTS into a YES Lock attempt, only to have everyone not named RVD make the save with a ladder.

Van Dam is back in now to clean house and pose a bit. Some baseball slides drop Punk and Sheamus before Rob drops Christian onto a ladder. Rolling Thunder onto Bryan onto the ladder takes Daniel out but it's Orton sending Van Dam to the floor. Rob kicks him down and loads up the Five Star onto Orton onto the ladder but Christian breaks it up with a short ladder. Christian loses a fight to Sheamus over a full sized ladder but Van Dam breaks up the pale one's climb with Sheamus landing on the ladder on the way down.

Sheamus is up almost immediately and rams various people into the barricade before bridging a ladder between the apron and the announce table. Bryan escapes a powerbomb through the ladder and hits a running knee to the face from the apron. Punk is loading up a ladder but Orton makes the save. Another ladder is brought in and all six climb up on two ladders with the briefcase being knocked away. All six fall down and Orton is holding his knee.

It's Sheamus on his feet first and cleaning house before going up, only to be caught by Bryan. We get the ten forearms on the top of the ladder but Punk stops Sheamus from pulling down the case. Sheamus and Punk slug

it out in the corner but Punk hits the running knee to take him down, followed by riding the ladder down onto his back. Orton comes back in and suplexes Punk into the ladder followed by the Elevated DDT.

Christian comes back in and spears Randy down but Van Dam knocks him off the ladder. The fans of course want tables as Christian goes up again. Van Dam is cut on the forehead. They both go up but Van Dam jumps to another ladder as Christian falls. The splash off the top of the ladder crushes Christian but Sheamus shoves Rob off the ladder. Bryan is back in to kick both of them before going into his usual insane rush.

He throws Sheamus THROUGH a ladder and goes up top....but Curtis Axel of all people comes out with a chair to beat him down. He lays Bryan out with his finisher on the floor but walks into a GTS. Heyman comes out to yell at Axel because he wants Punk to win. CM starts a very slow climb while holding his neck....and Heyman of course screws him by ramming another ladder into him. Punk is busted open BAD and here's Van Dam going up the ladder, only to have Orton make the save with an RK0. Orton pulls down the case to win at 26:31.

Rating: B-. Well that happened. Seriously that's about all there is to it. Everyone was about the same but the winner wasn't terribly obvious for most of the match. It wasn't bad or anything but you expect more when you have this level of talent in the match. At the end of the day though there was no hatred between these guys and that makes for a duller match. The Heyman stuff was pretty obvious but it sets up Lesnar vs. Punk at Summerslam.

Overall Rating: C. This show wasn't terrible but aside from maybe the ladder matches, there's nothing interesting on here at all. Everything felt like it was just there to fill in a spot on the card which isn't what you expect from a show like this. It's not a horrible show but there's nothing worth going out of your way to see here. Believe it or not, Payback blew the doors off this show.

Results

Shield b. Usos – Spear to Jimmy

Damien Sandow b. Cody Rhodes, Antonio Cesaro, Jack Swagger, Fandango, Dean Ambrose and Wade Barrett – Sandow pulled down the briefcase

AJ Lee b. Kaitlyn – Black Widow

Ryback b. Chris Jericho – Rollup

Alberto Del Rio b. Dolph Ziggler via DQ when AJ Lee interefered

John Cena b. Mark Henry – STF

Randy Orton b. Rob Van Dam, Sheamus, CM Punk, Christian and Daniel Bryan – Orton pulled down the briefcase

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my book on the History of Starrcade from Amazon for just \$4 at:

Money in the Bank 2013 Preview

We've arrived at one of the biggest shows of the year and for once I'm excited. The card is STACKED and the feuds have all been well built. Let's get to it. We'll start with the pre-show. I'll take the Shield to retain. I'm a fan of the Usos but come on. It's been two months since Shield won the belts and they're not about to lose them to a team who was release

fodder for the majority of last year.

Cena to retain of course. This is the WWE's bread and butter: take a superhero and put him against a big old monster, enjoy the crowd reactions. Well in most cities but you get the idea. Cena wins here and I don't think there's a cash-in yet.

Del Rio keeps his belt but it likely sets up another match in this feud. Ziggler is popular and will be a god in Philadelphia, but WWE seems obsessed with keeping the title on Del Rio for some reason. The match should be good but I have zero interest in Del Rio whatsoever.

In the surprise of the show, AJ keeps the belt via interference from Layla. It's not a surprise that AJ wins, but that I actually care about the match. They've done a great job at actually setting up the feud and giving us a reason to care about Kaitlyn getting her revenge on the evil AJ. Those INSANE spears that AJ sells so well help a lot too. This should be entertaining though, which I can't believe I'm saying.

Axel beats Miz. I don't think this needs an explanation.

Ryback over Jericho. Ryback hasn't won a PPV match since last year's MITB, yet WWE still wonders why no one is interested in him. It appears that Ryback is going to hook up with Vickie which might make people care about him a little bit so at least he has some hope. The match should be good and there's no need for Jericho to win. This is a classic case of putting two guys in a match because they have nothing else to do and there's nothing wrong with that thinking at all.

Now for the important matches.

I'll go with the seemingly obvious choice and say Bryan wins the Raw MITB match. RVD will be RVD, Sheamus and Orton would seem to cancel each other out, Christian just isn't winning this match, and Punk will likely be taken out by Brock or

Heyman to set up the Summerslam match. There are rumors that Bray Wyatt will be replacing Kane but for the life of me I can't see that happening.

That leaves us with the BIG wildcard of the show: the Smackdown MITB match. However we do have a major clue: Ambrose hasn't interacted with the other participants for the majority of the buildup, and in WWE terms that's the cue for him to win. Looking at the other contestants, we can immediately eliminate the Scholars for obvious reasons. Fandango simply isn't ready and has cooled WAY down since his concussion. The Real Americans intrigue me but I could only put Cesaro at a distant second best option. Barrett is interesting as well as WWE has been ready to pull the trigger on him for years now and it's normal for them to job a guy to death before giving him something like MITB. That leaves Ambrose which would be the right move.

Overall MITB looks very good for the most part. There isn't a match I'm not interested in other than the IC Title, the crowd is going to be white hot all night and the ladder matches are always entertaining. WWE has turned it way up in the last few weeks and the shows have been the most fun they've been all year. This should be a solid way to keep the summer rolling before we get to the important stuff at Summerslam.

Thoughts/predictions?

Smackdown – July 12, 2013: Raw Part II And That's Just Fine

Smackdown

Date: July 12, 2013

Location: Hampton Coliseum, Hampton, Virginia

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's the final show before Money in the Bank and the card is entirely set. Tonight is going to be about trying to gain momentum heading into the PPV, so expect a lot of singles matches between the guys in the ladder matches. Hopefully the World Heavyweight Championship ladder match can get some attention for a change instead of the All-Star match dominating the shows. Let's get to it.

Also before I get going, this morning I won some house show tickets from my local radio station. I know the wrestling expert used to read stuff from here, so in case he is again, thanks for not knowing your music videos Shorty.

Opening sequence again. I could go for that being a normal thing.

Daniel Bryan vs. Christian

Not a bad way to start things up. Bryan grabs the arm to start but is taken down by a shoulder block and a middle rope dropkick gets one for the Canadian. Bryan comes back in with kicks to the arm and some knees to the chest for two. Christian kicks out of a bow and arrow hold and hits a spinebuster of all things for two. The middle rope back elbow gets two more and a backdrop sends Bryan to the floor. Christian misses a baseball slide and gets caught by a clothesline and the running knee from the apron as we take a break.

Back with Christian getting two off a missed Bryan dropkick in the corner. Christian cranks on the neck but misses a charge and falls to the floor but a right hand breaks up the suicide dive. Bryan sends the already damaged arm into the steps and they head back inside with Christian damaged. Bryan backflips out of the corner but gets caught in the spinning sunset flip for two. They slug it out (kicks for Bryan vs. punches for Christian) with Bryan taking over, only to have the back of his neck snapped against the top rope.

Christian misses his high cross but Bryan misses the flying headbutt. Both guys are down but it's Christian getting up first. Bryan fires off the kicks to the chest but Christian ducks the big one to the head and hits the reverse DDT. The spear is countered by a pair of kicks to the head for two but the spear hits from out of nowhere for two more. The crowd is WAY into this. The Killswitch is countered and Christian tries another sunset flip out of the corner but he dives into the (once again) YES Lock for the submission at 9:25 shown of 12:10.

Rating: B. There wasn't much to talk about in this match because both guys were on point the entire time. Christian was his usual solid self while Bryan had the crowd eating out of the palm of his hand. Changing the name back to the YES Lock is a good idea for the chants and it should make Bryan even more over with the crowd. The psychology in the end with Bryan learning from the past mistake was a nice touch.

Dolph Ziggler comes in to see Teddy Long but is told he has the night off. Ziggler wants to be out there competing but Teddy doesn't want interference in Del Rio's match with Sin Cara. Dolph accuses Del Rio and Teddy of being in cahoots together but forgets about it because he'll win the title on Sunday.

Seth Rollins vs. Jey Uso

No intro for Jey. They fight over a lockup to start until Jey sends him into the corner to take over. Rollins pulls him off the middle rope for

two and a belly to back suplex gets the same. We hit the chinlock but Jey is up quickly and no selling rams into the buckles. Jey fires off elbows to the face and the running Umaga attack in the corner but Reigns distracts him. Jimmy superkicks Roman down as Jey hits a Samoan drop, only to have Reigns offer another distraction, allowing Seth to crotch him. A running knee to the back of Jey's head (the Black Out in NXT) is enough for the pin at 4:08.

Rating: D+. The match was ok but I don't see the point in having Jey lose here when his team is a big underdog in the title match on Sunday. The Usos continue to look good but they don't have much of a chance on Sunday at all. It's a good sign for the future of the Shield that all three can hold their own in the ring as Rollins did here.

We get a clip of Vickie being fired and Brad being named as the replacement. Why couldn't the segment on Monday been 20 seconds like it was here?

Chris Jericho vs. Curtis Axel

Non-title again as this is a rematch from Monday where Jericho won by pin. The champion takes him right into the corner for a mudhole stomping fifteen seconds into the match. Jericho comes back with a middle rope dropkick for two but Axel hammers him down again. Chris jumps over a charge in the corner, sending Axel shoulder first into the post. The Codebreaker is countered with Jericho being sent face first into the buckle as we take a break.

Back with Axel getting two off a middle rope elbow. Axel rubs his forearm over Jericho's eyes and chokes him on the ropes. He ducks his head though allowing Jericho to kick him in the face, followed by a northern lights suplex for two. The Walls can't go on and Axel hits a snap Saito suplex for two. Jericho sends him face first into the buckle and hits a high cross for two but can't hit the Lionsault. Axel knocks Jericho off the apron and gets two off a neckbreaker back in the ring.

Another Walls attempt is countered into a small package for two but Jericho comes back with an enziguri for a near fall of his own. Curtis is backdropped to the floor but Jericho misses a baseball slide and Axel hits a clothesline. Bryan and Christian did that exact same sequence in their match. Axel yells at Jericho and sends him back inside but Jericho hits the Codebreaker on the way back in. Unfortunately for Chris it knocks Axel to the floor and it's a countout at 7:25 shown of 10:10.

Rating: C+. This took some time to get going but Axel picked it up a bit in the end. I don't like the idea of Axel losing twice in a row, especially when Jericho has a worthless match with Ryback on Sunday. Such is life for the Intercontinental Champion, but I guess we'll forget all about this when Axel beats him with a rollup after interference from Heyman right?

Post match Axel freaks out but Heyman calms him down.

As a sidebar, during the match JBL was talking about Jericho's career and said Jericho has gone toe to toe with and defeated Vader. I've never heard of this match and can find no evidence that it ever happened. Does anyone know anything about this? Odds are it would have been in Japan or Germany.

Ryback vs. The Miz

This is a rematch from two weeks ago where Ryback gave up due to his knee injury. I'm not sure when they did it but Feed Me More has been dropped from Ryback's entrance. Miz makes Ryback miss to start and low bridges him to the floor. A baseball slide actually connects tonight, followed by an ax handle off the apron. Back in and Miz tries a sunset flip but gets caught and tossed into the corner. A powerslam puts him down and Ryback drops down onto Miz's back to work on the ribs. Miz is whipped hard into the corner but slips out of another powerslam attempt to get in a shot to the knee.

Ryback runs Miz over and rams his head into the mat a few times but a splash hits knees. A dropkick to the knee puts Ryback down and a big boot sets up the corner clothesline and the top rope ax handle for no cover. The Figure Four is blocked so Miz hits a DDT on the leg to soften it up even more. A Stunner on the leg out of the corner has Ryback screaming in pain but he says not to stop the match. He has the referee help him to his feet but fires off a Meathook and the Shell Shock for the pin at 5:54. I can appreciate some good goldbricking.

Rating: D+. This is another good example of how stupid WWE's booking is. Inside of fifteen minutes, both people in the IC Title match on Sunday have lost matches. Who is the favorite in that match? The guy who didn't lose as badly? No one cares about the title or the champion because WWE gives us no reason to care about the title or the champion. Also wasn't Ryback the guy who went through a war with Cena for the WWE Title but can barely make it through a six minute match now? The lack of consistency in this company is pathetic.

Sheamus can beat Orton because an Irishman drove out all the snakes. As for Sunday, he isn't known as someone who carries a briefcase but maybe he can put his cornbeef and cabbage in there. Once he wins, the pints are on him. Oh and he thinks Renee is cute. It was as added on at the end as it sounds.

A bunch of the Divas are in the ring for the contract signing between Kaitlyn and AJ. AJ picks up the pen but addresses the "sequined sisters of the sparkling pants." She knows none of them like either her or Kaitlyn, but no one cared about the division until she won the title. AJ wants to be congratulated by everyone but Teddy says we don't have time for that. The champion signs but she doesn't think Kaitlyn should do that. Kaitlyn signs and AJ smiles. AJ pulls out her phone and reads off some of the texts that Kaitlyn sent to her secret admirer.

Apparently she doesn't trust Natalya, thinks the Funkadactyls don't care about anything but the reality show and that she's tired of being put

into a mold just for bodybuilding. AJ offers her a chance to tear up the contract but Kaitlyn says she'll never let another needy, clingy man crazed psychopath destroy her again. She'll be champion again while AJ is locked in a padded cell rocking back and forth. AJ slaps her but Kaitlyn shoves the table and AJ's chair into the corner, giving AJ a terrified look. Langston makes the save so Kaitlyn slaps him too and spears AJ in half. This was a great segment and actually has me wanting to see the match.

Wade Barrett vs. Fandango

This is a result of Barrett knocking Fandango out for saying his name when told not to. Colter and company are at ringside and are now known as the Real Americans. That's much better than Colter's Militia or whatever their name was for like a day. Cole makes political jokes as Barrett kicks Fandango in the face for two. Colter questions Sadow's citizenship and Barrett hits a backbreaker for two. Barrett pounds on Fandango in the corner but the Scholars come out to yell at Colter. The distraction allows Fandango to kick Barrett in the head and roll him up for the pin at 1:47.

In case you're wondering, yes that's all the time the Smackdown MITB match is getting tonight.

Kane is out of the All-Star match due to the Wyatt Family's attack.

We get an extended Wyatt Family vignette leading into a video of the attack on Kane from Raw.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Sin Cara

Sin Cara comes out second for some reason. Cara goes right after Del Rio with forearms to the head and is WAY more aggressive than usual. JBL thinks something is up and Sin Cara hits the Zig Zag on Del Rio. Cole

thinks there's nothing going on and JBL goes into full ARE YOU KIDDING ME mode. It wasn't quite La Parka vs. Randy Savage but I love a good masked man segment.

Cara poses on the ramp but here's Vickie Guerrero to screech at us. No one has shown her any respect since Monday and she even had to buy a ticket to be here tonight. She rips up the ticket and is marching around ringside so here's Teddy with security to get her out of here.

Teddy catches up to Sin Cara in the back and demands an explanation. Dolph Ziggler pops up next to both of them and Teddy is very confused.

Randy Orton vs. Sheamus

They fight over a lockup to start before it turns into a fist fight. Sheamus takes it into the corner with forearms but the referee gets him away, allowing Orton to get in some right hands of his own. A quick suplex gets two for Sheamus as the dueling chants begin. Sheamus powerslams him down for two but Orton sends him out to the floor. Sheamus rams him into the announce table but Orton comes back with a clothesline as we take a break.

Back with Orton holding a chinlock with a bodyscissors. Back up and they slug it out again with Orton going down off a clothesline. Sheamus starts firing off the ax handles to the head but Orton comes back with his clotheslines and the powerslam for two. Orton kicks Sheamus in the face but walks into the Irish Curse. White Noise is countered into the backbreaker for two and both guys are down. The Elevated DDT is countered with a backdrop, setting up the ten forearms.

Sheamus hits the rolling senton and calls for the Brogue Kick but Orton ducks away. Sheamus goes to the middle rope but gets caught in the Elevated DDT out of the corner. An RKO attempt is blocked and Sheamus loads up the top rope shoulder but Orton crotches him down. A superplex attempt by Orton is blocked into both guys falling out to the floor...and

here's Daniel Bryan with a ladder. Both guys get back in and Bryan lays them out for the double DQ at 9:40 shown of 12:20.

Rating: C+. This was a good match for the most part but the ending was clearly going to be inconclusive. Bryan continues to act like a heel despite being the most over guy on the roster, which makes me think WWE either has a convoluted plan for him or they have no idea what they're doing. Either way this was good stuff but the ending hurt it.

Post match Bryan goes up the ladder but Sheamus pulls him down. Christian comes in too and all four guys go for the case. Bryan shoves Christian off but walks into an RK0, allowing Orton to climb the ladder and unhook the case to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. We had good wrestling here and the PPV matches were built up (albeit some far less than others). What more can you ask for out of a go home show? The World Heavyweight Championship MITB match is being given no love at all but it's such a wide open field that several people could win it. The whole show worked pretty well with nothing bad and a very good Divas segment in the middle. Very good show this week and MITB should be awesome.

Results

Daniel Bryan b. Christian – YES Lock

Seth Rollins b. Jey Uso – Running stomp to the head

Chris Jericho b. Curtis Axel via countout

Ryback b. Miz – Shell Shock

Fandango b. Wade Barrett – Rollup

Randy Orton vs. Sheamus went to a double DQ when Daniel Bryan interfered

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on the History of Starrcade from Amazon for just \$4 at:

On This Day: July 5, 2011 – NXT: Starring The Not So Ready For Prime Time Players

NXT

Date: July 5, 2011

Location: Tucson Arena, Tucson, Arizona

Commentators: Todd Grisham, William Regal

We're at episode 18 here and I'm truly starting to wonder something. I'll be at the Smackdown/NXT tapings on August 2 and I'm honestly not sure if the new season will have started yet. This is already the longest season of the show so far and now all of a sudden we have three finalists instead of two. This could go on for awhile. Let's get to it.

We recap the eliminations this season and the return of Derrick Bateman and his pro Daniel Bryan from last week. I still don't get how this is fair or really needed.

Striker and Maryse bring out the rookies and pros. We go over the Redemption Points with Bateman of course in third place. Time for the Talk the Talk Challenge with the topic of why should you win. Young talks about how unfair it is to put Bateman back in after Young has spent 17 weeks working to get here and now without a pro.

Titus says he's dominated the competition all over and actually makes it rain redemption points. That was kind of funny. Bateman says O'Neil said his football team is better than the local one. Bateman says he and Bryan are the best things to happen to the internet since kitten videos. He gets booed loudly and Titus wins, further proving that these Redemption Points are totally pointless.

We get a quick recap of Yoshi freaking over the broken action figure last week. Can't say they're repeating stuff with that one.

Yoshi Tatsu vs. Tyson Kidd

Well it was great last week so I can't complain on a rematch. Grisham says it was five stars. The show is on the internet so that fits perfectly. Yoshi fires off some kicks (actually called Kawada kicks by Regal) and we go to the floor for a bit. Back inside Tyson hammers him down in the corner but can't get a rollup. They head to the apron and Kidd blocks a suplex.

Kiss manages to kick him off the apron back first into the post. We take a break to talk about That's What I Am which really shouldn't stun me. Back with Kidd working on the back until Tatsu reverses a suplex into a cross body for two. Kidd hits a suplex and locks on a double chickenwing on the mat. Yoshi fights up and chops away including a kick to put Kidd down.

Tatsu goes up so Kidd tries the Kurt Angle run up for a (vertical in this case) suplex but gets dropped. Spinwheel kick catches Kidd in the hands so badly that Regal has to say it didn't really hit. That gets two and Kidd dropkicks the shin. That sets up a Moss Covered Three Handled Family Credenza for the pin at 9:09. For those of you unfamiliar with the general insanity of Perry Saturn, it's a fisherman's

suplex but instead of bridging back you spin the guy around like a neckbreaker.

Rating: C+. Well it wasn't bad but to say the other match was better is a huge understatement. Too much resting going on here and nowhere near enough near falls to make this one work. Not bad, but given what they did last week it was going to be pretty hard to top it here. Still good though.

Profile on Derrick Bateman, who really shouldn't have been eliminated last season, especially not while Johnny "so bland that white paint on growing grass calls you bland" Curtis was around.

Horny is still trying to give Maryse flowers. They happen to be dead and include Twizzlers and banana peels. She says that should get him a kiss but she hits him with the flowers instead. Titus can't console him.

Titus O'Neil/Darren Young vs. Daniel Bryan/Derrick Bateman

According to Todd, Bateman was supposed to be part of this season but tore his MCL. Bateman and Young start us off with Bateman sending him to the floor. Off to Bryan for a little Nexus on Nexus violence. DB and DB work on Young's arm but he's able to fight off Bateman and bring in Titus.

That doesn't last long and neither guy really gets anything going. Back to Young for a chinlock. Grisham says Regal could make a burning orphanage sound funny. When I woke up today, I didn't think I'd hear that line. Titus slams Bateman down as the beating continues.

Young doesn't do as well, allowing the hot tag to Bryan. He hits a running dropkick in the corner to Young, followed by a suplex and swan dive headbutt. Bryan backflips out of a suplex and staggers into the corner, tagging Bateman which I'm not

sure was intentional. Bryan takes out O'Neil and Bateman grabs a headlock and drives Young's head into the mat like a Skull Crushing Finale for the pin at 6:22.

Rating: C. Just a tag match here and not a very interesting one at all. The Bateman finisher was pretty weak and it's pretty clear that they're going to have Bateman vs. O'Neil in the final two, assuming there is a final two. Nothing special here, but then again Bateman never was anything special in the ring.

The last 13 minutes of the show are used to completely reair the Vince/Cena closing segment from last night, which was good but I don't want to see it all over again just 24 hours later.

Overall Rating: D+. Didn't like this one at all as the whole show felt like filler. No mention of another elimination so based on the track record of this show so far, that means we'll be here at least two more weeks. I was only half kidding earlier when I mentioned August 2 but it's looking more and more possible. Didn't like this as both matches were pretty bland and $\frac{1}{4}$ of the show is a segment from Raw. Nothing to see here at all.

Results

Titus O'Neil won the Talk the Talk Challenge

Tyson Kidd b. Yoshi Tatsu – Fisherman's neckbreaker

Derrick Bateman/Daniel Bryan b. Darren Young/Titus O'Neil – Headlock into a facejam to Young

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my book on the History of Starrcade from Amazon for just \$4 at:

On This Day: July 3, 2012 – Smackdown: They Call This Great?

Smackdown

Date: July 3, 2012

Location: American Bank Center, Corpus Christi, Texas

Commentators: Booker T, Josh Matthews, Michael Cole

It's another live show here and in this case it's the Great American Bash. The main event tonight is a 20 man battle royal with the winner getting to be GM next week on Friday. That's up in the air and only offers a few interesting options, which means one of them is likely going to win. These shows are very hit and miss so hopefully this is the former of the two. Let's get to it.

We open in the back with a big party. There are girls in small outfits, Hornswoggle in the tub and Teddy in a Kiss the GM apron. Eve is going to be the cleaning lady tonight. Santino is brought forward to light the barbecue to officially start things off. Teddy and Santino back off from lighting it as Kane is here. He lights the fire for them in a cute bit.

Do You Know Your Enemy? Mine is having guests that are going to keep me from seeing Dark Knight Rises for another week.

Cole says he's going to get inside AJ's head tonight.

Here's Del Rio to open the show. He's going to talk about himself, namely his match at MITB with Sheamus. Sheamus is going to be sent back to Ireland because he's just like all these people: a hooligan trying to take advantage of people like Del Rio. Alberto came here legally and is making money both here and in Mexico, unlike everyone here. He wants to send everyone here to the place where they belong, so he asks to see some

people's papers. One guy doesn't have them so Alberto asks for security to take him out. The guy says this is Texas, not Arizona.

Cue Sheamus for the save and they brawl in the aisle. The champ throws Del Rio off the stage and into the barricade a few times. Ricardo keeps trying to help and eventually it allows Del Rio to kick Sheamus in the head. Ricardo opens the hood and Del Rio slams it down onto Sheamus' back over and over.

Post break we look at most of the attack all over again. Sheamus is taken out and has some blood coming down his head.

Great Khali/Layla vs. Aksana/Antonio Cesaro

This is punishment from Teddy because he's a sore loser. The guys start and it's time for a chop in the corner to Cesaro. Khali misses a big boot and Antonio takes him down in the corner. Khali throws him around some more and it's off to the girls. Layla isn't exactly Trish or Lita but she's by far the better in ring worker of the two here. Cesaro breaks up a cover and is thrown to the floor. Layout gets the pin at 1:45, and that means Layla pinned Aksana in case you can't figure out that LAYla uses the LAYout and you can't check the results below if you're not sure.

Cody brags about having another qualifying match later tonight but Teddy informs him that it's against Christian. Cody isn't happy.

Raw Moment: Foley wins the title. They spend about as much time talking about WCW spoiling it and 600,000 people changing the channel than about the title change itself.

Money in the Bank Qualifying Match: Cody Rhodes vs. Christian

Non-title. The idea is that Cody has never beaten Christian so he's in over his head here. Cody sends him to the apron and hits a Disaster Kick for two. Rhodes looks at the case a lot and we take a break. Back with Cody holding a hammerlock before hitting a release gordbuster for two. Christian comes back with a middle rope missile dropkick and gets fired up.

He slingshots to the floor and uppercuts Cody followed by a running

seated dropkick. Top rope cross body gets two for the champ. Cody's Alabama Slam is countered into a sunset flip for two. He goes to unhook the buckle but Christian grabs him with a reverse DDT for two. The spear is countered but Cody misses the Disaster Kick. Killswitch is countered into the Cross Rhodes for the completely clean pin at 9:12.

Rating: C+. Well that was kind of anti-climactic. Naturally there was NO ONE that Cody could beat other than Christian to qualify right? I mean, there was no one else that could job out there other than a champion. The match was good but it makes the title look weak again which they had been changing for awhile.

Backstage Ryder starts a dance party after Slater is run off. Brodus takes center stage.

Money in the Bank Qualifying Match: Dolph Ziggler vs. Alex Riley

Riley immediately hits a great dropkick for a fast two. Ziggler DDTs him down for a fast two and takes over. Riley makes a fast comeback with a clothesline in the corner and a spinebuster for two. The crowd continues to be into Riley which is interesting. Inverted DDT is countered but Ziggler's Stinger Splash misses, giving Riley a rollup for a close two. Zig Zag gets the pin at 2:28.

Cole is in the ring to interview AJ. That theme song of hers' is catchy. Cole says he's fair and balanced, unlike AJ who is clearly unbalanced. We get a long video recapping everything AJ did last night. Cole cuts her off and says AJ wasn't thinking. He calls her a teenager (she's 25) and asks if she's ever thought about pursuing a real man. One with power and influence and a former war correspondent who became the voice of the WWE.

Cue Bryan before this gets too weird. He calls Cole a sexist and says AJ didn't mean for him to go through a table last night. It was all a misunderstanding. Cue Punk who angrily throws Cole out. He says AJ did something last night that directly affected both Bryan and himself last night. Punk isn't going to pretend it didn't happen just because AJ is guest referee. She's not in a good place mentally and maybe some of that is Punk's fault. Punk says AJ needs professional help but Bryan cuts him off.

Bryan says that Punk is trying to be tricky because AJ is the guest referee. The only thing Punk cares about is having AJ as guest referee because he needs her to retain the title. AJ kisses Bryan for awhile and Punk shakes his head and leaves. She goes after him and kisses him too. Bryan looks stunned and Punk looks confused. AJ skips off and does a YES chant on the stage.

Santino Marella/Sgt. Slaughter/Jim Duggan vs. Hunico/Camacho/Drew McIntyre

Camacho and Slaughter start things off and it's quickly off to Santino. He gets in trouble in the evil dirty foreign corner and Drew pounds away a bit. A slam is countered and it's hot tag to Duggan. There's the Three Point Clothesline but everything breaks down. The ring is mostly cleared and the Cobra gets the pin on Hunico at 2:25.

Back to the party where Little Jimmy is jumping up and down. Sandow comes in and unplugs the cord. He says this isn't what our founding fathers fought for. Ryder gets in his face but Sandow has a speech ready. A fight breaks out with the people chanting Ryder. Zach gets the punch bowl but it goes onto Eve. Everyone laughs at her and it's time to keep dancing.

Hawkins and Reks both think they can beat Ryback but Hawkins won the coin toss and gets to face him.

Ryback vs. Curt Hawkins

Hawkins tries a sleeper but gets caught in the Over the Shoulder Boulder Holder. Ryback slams his head into the mat and hits an overhead choke suplex. Hawkins gets his head taken off by a clothesline and the Shell Shock gets the pin at 1:08.

Sheamus is out of the battle royal tonight.

Raw Moment: Vince Appreciation Night. Donald Trump made it rain money.

Here's Teddy to thank the fans for letting him be the GM this week.

Battle Royal

Alberto Del Rio, Kane, Jack Swagger, John Cena, Heath Slater, Daniel Bryan, CM Punk, Big Show, Great Khali, Brodus Clay, Damien Sandow, Tensai, Ezekiel Jackson, Justin Gabriel, Dolph Ziggler, Kofi Kingston, Zach Ryder, Santino Marella, Cody Rhodes, Christian

Only the big names get entrances as per usual. At the moment I'm probably missing some names but i'll fill them in as we go. Show throws out Justin and Brodus quickly. A bunch of people team up to throw out Khali. I'm missing one guy but I'm not sure if Sheamus was replaced or not. Ryder knocks out Sandow and Cody throws out Santino. Oh Christian is #20. Show shoves out Kofi and Cody as we take a break.

Back with ten guys to go as Bryan and Punk slug it out. Bryan stands in front of the ropes and Punk charges at him, eliminating both guys. Ok so we have Kane, Ziggler, Cena, Christian, Del Rio, Tensai, Ryder and Big Show to go. Big Show chokeslams Cena but Kane chokeslams Big Show. Tensai goes after Kane and pounds him into the corner. Cena erupts and beats up everyone before tossing Del Rio. Kane takes an AA but Tensai slows Cena down.

Christian and Ryder work on Big Show but that gets them nowhere. Cena dumps Tensai but Show dumps Cena immediately thereafter. So it's Big Show, Ryder, Christian, Ziggler and Kane. Show spears Ryder down and easily tosses out Christian to get us down to four. Ziggler puts Show in the sleeper but Kane kicks Show in the head to put them both out.

It's Ryder vs. Kane now which isn't the pairing I was expecting. Kane pounds him down but runs into the corner knees and the Broski Boot. Ryder tries the Rough Ryder because he's not that bright, but he escapes the chokeslams and low bridges Kane for the elimination and the win at 10:50.

Rating: C+. Why not? Seriously, why not? You can't say this was predictable and it was pretty fun at the same time. Ryder has nothing to do and it's good to give him a featured spot on next week's show. This is probably Ryder's second biggest win ever and maybe it'll be the start of a new push for him. Nothing special here but I had a good time with it.

Overall Rating: C+. This is one of those shows that's more based around fun than quality. That's ok but I'd kind of like to see something that

actually matters on Smackdown once in awhile. This felt like any other episode and the live aspect didn't really change anything other than the day it was airing on. As for the American aspect of it, there was almost nothing here other than some standard comedy bits and Duggan/Slaughter's required appearances. Nothing to see here but it was nothing particularly bad so we'll go with a little above average.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on the History of Starrcade from Amazon for just \$4 at:

On This Day: July 2, 2012 – Monday Night Raw: Daniel Bryan Says YES A Lot

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 2, 2012

Location: Laredo Energy Arena, Laredo, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

We're in the second half of the year now with Raw again. We have four MITB contestants so far and there's a rumor of a fifth showing up. I believe it'll be a former champion but it's hard to say given how this company keeps its stipulations straight. Lesnar is supposed to be here tonight too so we'll get more of him vs. HHH. This is one of those shows that is going to be used to build towards the PPV. Let's get to it.

After more technical difficulties, here's Cena to open things up. He talks about how last week was his crash course in MITB because you never know when someone is going to come and break things up. He'll win the case and the title and all the stuff you would expect him to say. Cue Bryan chanting YES. Cena: "See? Even Bryan agrees with me." Bryan says

he'll win the title at MITB so Cena won't be the next champion.

Cue Punk who says he disagrees with Bryan's claim that he'll win. He asks people if they disagree with Bryan, getting a lot of YES chants. For some reason only Cena has had theme music so far. Punk says that Bryan's ex-girlfriend will be counting the shoulders down, and then it's Punk vs. Cena all over again. Cue Jericho (with music) who says he's tired of people stealing his catchphrases. Bryan cuts him off and is told to shut up as only Jericho can say it.

Jericho welcomes us to Raw Is Jericho and says that after tonight no one will evver be the same again. He says he'll win MITB and dares anyone to come out and say otherwise, and of course he's Kane. Kane says otherwise in something that made me chuckle. Cue Big Show and it's a big brawl. Kane beats on Jericho and Cena goes after Big Show while Bryan and Punk are both going to the floor. Kane goes after Big Show but Show knocks everyone down.

David Otunga/Cody Rhodes/Prime Time Players vs. Kofi Kingston/R-Truth/Christian/Santino Marella

Christian and Young start things off and a middle rope missile dropkick gets two for the Canadian. Off to Truth for his first action in months after a broken foot. Young tries a right hand but gets gyrated at instead. Off to Kofi who hits a middle rope shoulder for two. Boom Drop is broken up by Titus who pulls Darren to the floor. Kofi dives onto Titus but gets clotheslined down by Young as everything breaks down.

We take a break and come back with Cody holding Kofi in a surfboard. AW is mic'd up now for some reason. Titus comes in and slams Kofi for two. Kofi gets in a shot and it's off to Santino vs. Otunga. Santino hits that quick suplex and a Stunner for two. Everything breaks down again and the Prime Time Players walk off. Santino hits his usual and Cody walks out on Otunga. Cue Brodus Clay of all people as Santino loads up the Cobra. Otunga keeps trying to run but gets thrown into the Cobra for the pin at 6:24. Too short to rate given what we saw but this was organized chaos at its best.

Otunga takes a bunch of finishers post match and we get a big dance

party.

Teddy (in charge tonight) is dancing in the back when Alberto and Ricardo come in. Alberto earned his one on one title match and he wants it by Jorge. The Board has said that Alberto gets his title match at MITB but tonight, Alberto has a surprise opponent.

Stephanie talks about her dad getting ready for the 99 Rumble. It was basically a Rocky parody mixed with a way to show off that Vince was in great shape.

Alberto Del Rio vs. ???

Cole talks about how the car was driven here from Alberto's home near Mexico City. That makes me wonder: how does he get these cars everywhere? Does he have a big fleet of people driving/transporting them all over the country? If so....that's kind of awesome. The fans GO OFF on Alberto with some Spanish swearing. Here's the opponent.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Sin Cara

Think Cara is popular in south Texas? Cole calls Mexican wrestlers lucha libres. Mike Tenay he is not. Del Rio jumps Cara as he comes into the ring and goes insane on him. The bell hasn't rung yet. Del Rio destroys Cara on the floor and puts him in the armbreaker so Cara taps. There was no match.

Bryan is in the back and steals a flower from a random bouquet. He comes up to AJ and apologizes, even though AJ has Punk X's on his hands. She says that's sweet and of course has nothing to do with the title match at the PPV. Tonight she's going to win and run into the arms of her soul mate. She destroys the flower and leaves.

Heyman is live via satellite instead of Lesnar being here.

There's a 20 man battle royal tomorrow on Smackdown. The winner is next week's GM of Smackdown. Ok then.

After a recap of the Heyman/HHH challenge to Lesnar, we're told by Heyman that Brock will deliver his answer to HHH in person at the 1000th Raw.

Lesnar wants to face HHH at Summerslam but not for the reasons people think. HHH will do it because he needs money for the lawsuit. Also, it's his exit strategy for his career, because after this HHH will never be able to wrestle again. After Summerslam, he can be the executive that everyone says went down in a blaze of glory.

Kane vs. Big Show later on in a No DQ match. Heaven help me.

Vickie Guerrero/Dolph Ziggler vs. Sheamus/AJ

This looks odd on paper but when you think about it all of the connections are there. The guys start us off after Sheamus puts AJ on the apron. Dolph dropkicks him down but gets launched into the air soon thereafter. A running ax handle gets two for the champ but Dolph takes him down into a chinlock. Sheamus breaks that up and hits White Noise. He loads up the Brogue Kick but Dolph tags Vickie before it can hit. Sheamus kicks his head off to send him to the floor and AJ comes in. Shining Wizard kills Vickie at 3:27.

Rating: C-. This was VERY short but DANG that Shining Wizard was awesome. AJ continues to be insane but it looks like we're heading up to the payoff at MITB which is the right play. This was barely long enough to grade and I'm not sure what the point was in basically destroying Ziggler like that. Still though, that Shining Wizard was awesome.

AJ does the YES chant and heads to the back. She finds Punk who is on the phone with his sister. He missed the match and AJ is crushed.

We get a video of Slater's destruction at the hands of old people, leading to this.

Heath Slater vs. Doink The Clown

This is basically a squash with Slater hitting his spinning sleeper mat slam (didn't that have a name?) for the pin at 1:20.

Post match, here's DDP to a BIG reaction and a Diamond Cutter.

Video on John Cena and Alicia Fox visiting sick/injured troops.

Kane vs. Big Show

This is No DQ. Show controls to start and sends Kane to the floor. He pulls Kane up from the floor BY HIS HEAD, only to knock Kane back to the floor again. Show misses a charge into the barricade but he throws Kane into the steps to take over. They fight over a chokeslam onto the announce table but Show superkicks him down instead. Show brings a chair in but walks into a DDT for two. The top rope clothesline misses but Kane grabs the chair. Show spears him down and chokeslams Kane onto the chair for the pin at 3:44.

Rating: D+. This was probably the best possible idea for them: keep things short. This wasn't horrible but I'm not sure what the point of the stipulation was. It came out of nowhere, but to be fair it probably made the match as watchable as it was. These two have never had good chemistry together so keeping it short was probably their best option.

Teddy runs into Eve in the back and she sucks up to him. Teddy gives her a nametag in a funny bit. She rips it up and runs into AJ, telling her to leave the mind games to the big girls and telling AJ to go sit in the corner and cry. AJ wants to know who Eve is going to brown nose next. Eve will do anything to get attention, so AJ says she'll show everyone how to do just that.

DX invading WCW was a big deal as well. This one actually was.

Tyson Kidd vs. Tensai

Tensai takes him into the corner and fires off the headbutts but misses a charge. Kidd rolls him up.....AND GETS THE PIN AT 20 SECONDS???? WOW.

Tensai beats up Sakamoto post match.

Jericho and Bryan debate jackets and a catchphrase duel breaks out. YES vs. EVVVVVVVVVVVVVVER is hilarious.

Punk tells Cena to follow his lead out there.

Tensai destroys Kidd in the locker room.

Chris Jericho/Daniel Bryan vs. CM Punk/John Cena

Punk and Bryan start things off. They speed things up of course and Punk takes control. He sends Bryan into the corner and it's a double tag. Cena dominates Jericho as he is known to do, knocking him off the apron as we take a break. Back with Jericho getting two on Cena and taunting him for not being able to tag Punk. The Lionsault misses but Bryan breaks up the tag again.

The corner dropkick gets two for Bryan and it's off to Jericho again. The dueling chants begin but Jericho blocks the fisherman's suplex. The AA is countered into a DDT but Cena fires Jericho into the corner to put both guys down. There's the diving tag to Punk, who comes in with a springboard clothesline to take over on the fresh Bryan. Powerslam gets two and Bryan gets put in the Vice. Jericho FINALLY makes a save but Cena fights him up the aisle and into the back.

Punk and Bryan are the legal guys left, as well as the only two still in the ring. Bryan moonsaults out of the corner but gets caught in a sunset flip for two. Bryan starts firing off the kicks and a big one to the head gets two. Bryan goes up but gets superplexed down for another two. And here's AJ to skip around the ring. No one looks at her so she gets on the apron as Bryan fires off kicks to Punk.

No one looks at her still so she gets down as the guys hit cross bodies at the same time. AJ goes under the ring and pulls out...a table? She sets it up at ringside and very slowly climbs the steps. AJ goes up top but Bryan gets in front of the table. Punk gets up on the ropes to stop her as well, so she kisses him. Then she shoves him through Bryan through the table and starts a YES chant. The match ends at we'll say 17:30.

Rating: B. The match was great and while the ending was confusing, it's certainly intriguing. This certainly keeps things interesting as she still hasn't picked anyone. She's the most interesting character in the company right now by far, because in short you don't know what she (AJ for you idiots out there) is going to do next. Good ending to a good match.

Overall Rating: C. The first hour was similar to having a blind monk with

Parkinson's Disease brand me with an iron while Chinese torture masters ripped out my fingernails. The second hour was better, to the point where I was really getting into things before the show ended. Kidd pulling off that upset was the perfect move as it gives him even more momentum going into the PPV. In short, very good second hour, pretty bad first hour.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my book on the History of Starrcade from Amazon for just \$4 at:

Smackdown – June 28, 2013: Smackdown Goes International

Smackdown

Date: June 28, 2013

Location: Colonial Life Arena, Columbia, South Carolina

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole

After Monday we have a lot more of the card set for Money in the Bank. Tonight we'll find out who the Smackdown MITB guys are as well as having a Fiesta Del Rio to celebrate Alberto winning the World Heavyweight Championship again. WWE has picked things up lately so hopefully the positive trend continues. Let's get to it.

We open with the theme song for the first time in months.

There's a pinata above the ring for the fiesta later.

Sheamus vs. Damien Sandow

This is a Dublin street fight which hopefully ends this stupid feud once and for all. Sandow says that South Carolina was the

first state to secede from the union and now he wants out of here too. Ya'll isn't a word. It's pronounced you all, as in you all are a bunch of ignoramuses. Sandow pounds away to start and hits Sheamus with a green kendo stick before we head to the floor. Sheamus whips him into the barricade and puts him over the bar at ringside (Irish people like to drink you see) for the ten forearms to the chest.

Sandow blocks a suplex on the floor and sends Sheamus into the post to take over. Sheamus comes back by throwing Sandow into another bar and pelting a keg at him. Now Sandow has a bag of Irish potatoes dropped onto him as we're in the "comedy" portion of the match. Damien sends him into the steps to put Sheamus down again as we take a break.

Back with Sandow running Sheamus over for two back in the ring. Sandow throws in some chairs with one being wedged between the ropes. Sheamus comes back with a green bar stool to the face and the Irish Curse for two. A running knee life puts Sandow on the floor and there's the rolling senton for good measure. Sheamus gets two off the top rope shoulder block but Damien comes back with straight right hands.

The Terminus gets two and Sandow pounds away with the kendo stick. Sheamus easily kicks out and throws a chair at Sandow's face to take over again. Now it's Sandow being beaten with the stick for two but he still fights out of White Noise. Sheamus hits another kendo stick shot to send Sandow into the open chair, followed by the Brogue Kick for the pin at 9:28 shown of 12:58.

Rating: C. To recap this feud: everyone said Sheamus would dominate Sandow, Sheamus did dominate Sandow, and the final match (hopefully) was a match in which Sheamus should have destroyed Sandow and he did just that. How this does anything to elevate Sandow or help Sheamus is beyond me but thank goodness it's over.

Sheamus takes the kendo stick with him and throws the potatoes to the fans.

We look back at the main event from Raw with Bryan making Orton tap out.

Bryan is whistling in the back but Kane gets in his face and tells him not to brag. Kane congratulates Bryan on his win but calls it an upset which sets Bryan off. The big man shuts Bryan up before he can get anywhere with it but Daniel just chalks it up to nerves and hugs him. It's Kane vs. Orton with Bryan on commentary later.

We recap Heyman and Punk's segment from Raw.

Time for MizTV with special guest Paul Heyman. Miz asks about Punk and Lesnar being a tag team but Heyman doesn't want to talk about his personal life. Miz wants to know about Heyman bullying Renee Young last week but Heyman says he's just an advocate. Heyman turns the tables saying Miz is a former WWE and Intercontinental Champion by bringing out Curtis Axel. Miz says that Heyman fooled him just like Heyman fooled Punk on Raw. Heyman says he invited Axel and this interview is over unless Miz isn't intimidated by Curtis.

Miz says that Heyman is the walking version of Star Wars: he talks like Yoda, smells like Chewbacca and looks like Jabba the Hut. This makes Axel the WWE version of Luke Skywalker: Luke, you are not your father. Miz says he's going to win the title and Axel says he takes that threat seriously. A fight is about to break out but Heyman says if Miz wants to fight there needs to be a contract and Axel needs to be paid. Heyman makes fun of Miz's catchphrase but Miz cuts him off, only to have Axel lay Miz out with a neckbreaker into a cutter.

AJ Lee vs. Natalya

Before the match Kaitlyn comes out dressed like AJ to make fun of AJ's issues with men. Apparently AJ even dated the

timekeeper, the ringside doctor and Lillian Garcia.

Unfortunately we get no more elaboration on that as the bell rings. Natalya takes AJ down but AJ escapes a slam and slams Natalya's head into the mat. Kaitlyn skips down to the ring to distract AJ, allowing Natalya to get a rollup pin at 1:05. Kaitlyn in the AJ outfit works VERY well.

Kaitlyn spears AJ down post match.

Bray Wyatt vignette.

Teddy is in the back when Vince comes in. Since Raw is having an All-Star MITB match (Vince's official term for it), Teddy is going to look to the future. His picks are Wade Barrett, Jack Swagger, Antonio Cesaro, Fandango, Dean Ambrose, Cody Rhodes and Damien Sandow. Vince is impressed and they practice saying Fandango.

Randy Orton vs. Kane

Bryan is on commentary. Kane grabs a headlock to start but Orton fights free with right hands. He charges into Kane's boot in the corner to put him down as the match slows up a bit. The low dropkick gets two for Kane but Orton whips him into the corner. The announcers ask Bryan if he would cost Kane the briefcase at MITB but get no answer. Kane goes up for the top rope clothesline but gets punched out of the air to give Orton control again.

Orton stomps away and drops a knee for two but ducks his head to get caught in the running DDT. We take a break and come back with Kane putting on a nerve hold. Orton fights up as Bryan gets on the announce table to play cheerleader. Orton hits the backbreaker to escape and Bryan's chant becomes NO. A Thesz Press puts Kane down but he kicks Orton's head off for two. Back up again and Orton hits a dropkick for two of his own, only to get caught in a side slam. This back and forth stuff is working very well.

The top rope clothesline is broken up again, but Kane fights out of the superplex and hits the clothesline on the third try. A back elbow blocks the chokeslam attempt and Orton's powerslam gets two. The Elevated DDT is countered but neither finisher can hit. Instead it's the Elevated DDT to send Kane to the floor where Bryan encourages his partner. Bryan helps Kane get back in but he walks into the RK0 for the pin at 9:13 shown of 12:13.

Rating: B. I've always been a fan of the chemistry between these guys and this is another good example of them working well together. The back and forth stuff with both guys hitting bigger and bigger stuff was a good story capped off by Orton finally hitting his home run move for the win. Bryan accidentally costing Kane the match fits their story very well and advances them towards Money in the Bank. Good stuff.

Ryback vs. Justin Gabriel

Gabriel fires off some kicks to start but Ryback comes back with a hard kick to Gabriel's chest to take over. Ryback misses another big boot and catches himself on the top rope, allowing Justin to fire kicks into the leg. Gabriel charges into the corner but dives into the Shell Shock for the pin at 1:51. Much like Monday, this was basically a face match by Ryback as he fought through trouble to win.

Immediately after the match here's Jericho to talk about how Ryback may be a killer, he's also a whiner, a complainer, a butcher, a baker and a giant excuse maker. Ryback shouts that he's injured so Jericho starts a Cryback chant. Jericho says he's going to give something to make Ryback cry about and goes after the big man, only to have Ryback bail from the Walls. Ryback whines that he should be WWE Champion and leaves.

I'll never get WWE's theory of turning guys like Ryback. "Well this guy is over as a face, so let's change everything that got him over and wonder why he isn't over as a heel." It works

for people when they've had great success, but Ryback never actually won anything, so you're taking the only things he has going for him away and making him less of an intimidating monster and more just pathetic.

Bray Wyatt vignette.

Shield vs. Usos/Christian

Shield beat down Christian again on Main Event but the Usos made the save. Jey and his cousin Roman quickly fall to the floor and we take an early break. Back with Ambrose stomping on Jey before it's back to Reigns. The big guy hooks a front facelock but lets go to Superman punch Jimmy off the apron. The double tag brings in Ambrose and Christian cleans house with the jumping back elbow.

Rollins breaks up the spear but Christian backdrops him on the floor. Back in and Dean rolls through a cross body for two, only to get caught in a tornado DDT for the same. Reigns comes back in and sends Christian to the floor but gets taken out by Jey. Rollins dives on both Usos and Dean looks to do the same but he walks into a spear from Christian for the pin at 5:18 shown of 8:48.

Rating: C+. This was a good fast paced tag match but did Shield really need to lose another match in such a short span of time? The good thing though is the titles are now the main focus for the team once the big loss was already out of the way. The match was entertaining enough and it sets up the PPV as well so there isn't much to complain about here.

It's time for Fiesta Del Rio so here are the mariachis to play the champion to the ring. Ricardo does the full entrance and insults the crowd for some good cheap heat. There are red white and green balloons and a big bowl of chips and salsa. The pinata has Ziggler's face on it which makes more sense than most pinatas (sidebar: I've never understood the mentality behind pinatas. "Hey kids, here's one of your

favorite cartoon characters. Now let's beat it with a stick until it busts open and you can eat whatever comes out!").

Del Rio says it's time to celebrate him being a four time champion and we're going to do it his way. He says he's going to speak Spanish tonight, drawing a USA chant. Del Rio speaks Spanish and says this is a party for him and not for any of the people. When he won the title, he didn't need to use a Money in the Bank contract like Ziggler did. The fans chant USA so Del Rio calls them ignorant and switches back to English.

We'll start the games with the pinata. Del Rio busts it open with two swings and says he broke it open like he bashed Ziggler's head in. He'll do the same thing again at MITB to retain the title. Del Rio poses and wants to know where Ziggler is. This brings out Dolph for the brawl but Del Rio throws him into the salsa. Ziggler throws Ricardo through the food table and hits the Zig Zag on the champion. Dolph swings a guitar at Del Rio but Alberto runs away, leaving Ricardo to take El Cabong. Ziggler plays guitar with the mariachis as balloons fall to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. I really liked the show tonight as we had some good matches and some solid angle advancement throughout the night. Ziggler looked like the hero they want him to be tonight and there's a reason to hate Del Rio with the head injuries. WWE has flipped a switch in the last few weeks and their shows have been on fire ever since with this being their latest good effort.

Results

Sheamus b. Damien Sandow – Brogue Kick

Natalya b. AJ Lee – Rollup

Randy Orton b. Kane – RKO

Ryback b. Justin Gabriel – Shell Shock

Christian/Usos b. Shield – Spear to Ambrose

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on the History of Starrcade from Amazon for just \$4 at: