

# Monday Night Raw – December 19, 2016: The Holiday Blues

## Monday Night Raw

Date: December 19, 2016

Location: Schottenstein Center, Columbus, Ohio

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

It's the night after Roadblock and we're less than six weeks away from the Royal Rumble. That means it's still the lull period as WWE knows the audiences will be smaller over the holidays, meaning there's a good chance this is going to be a burn off show. If nothing else we can get more from Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho vs. Roman Reigns/Seth Rollins in that fresh main event story. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Owens and Jericho are in the ring to start things off with the champ welcoming us to the Chris and Kevin Show. Kevin says he'll do whatever it takes to retain the title, including taking a Codebreaker from his best friend. "MONKEYS! SHOW US THE PICTURES!" They talk about the devastating Codebreaker, which was only so huge to make everyone believe.

Jericho thinks they're so close now that Owens can have the Hug of Jericho as a special gift. Chris isn't happy though because someone else named Chris has stolen his gimmick. Yeah, that Kris Kringle makes lists and gives people gifts so HE JUST MADE THE LIST. That brings Mick Foley (so much for the hip surgery at the moment), who reveals a Christmas shirt with a leather vest over the top.

Mick sets up a tag match for later but gets the city wrong, completely destroying the aura of the cheap pop. Going forward though, Owens is going to defend the title against Reigns at the Royal Rumble, with Jericho locked in a shark cage above the ring. Owens: "It's not even safe!"

Due to general stupidity, Jericho gets inside the cage and demands that Foley prove it safe. Owens: "Uh Chris, get out first." Foley locks him in and can't find the key (though he does find a New Day shirt, a Dude Love wallet and a key that doesn't fit). Mick says it's fine because the cage doesn't go up until he does this signal....so Jericho goes up, presumably for a good while.

Back from a break and Jericho is down, though he's dizzy and sick.

#### Big Cass vs. Rusev

Cass pounds away in the corner and that's a DQ at 1:01.

Here's Sasha Banks with her leg wrapped up and walking on a crutch. Last night she was defeated by the better woman and she's not feeling much like a boss right now. Sasha wants Charlotte to come out here so she can congratulate her to her face. Instead it's Nia Jax, who says Sasha will never be a boss because she's just a little girl. The crutch is kicked out and Sasha is thrown around like she's not even there.

Foley congratulates Sheamus and Cesaro for winning the Tag Team Titles because he feels like a proud papa. He even has a present for them: new title belts, with an identical design to the Smackdown belts but with red straps. A referee comes in and tells Foley there's an emergency.

We cut to the hallway where Braun Strowman is destroying things. Foley comes up and Strowman demands Sami Zayn tonight. Mick says Sami is about a hundred miles away so Braun has to wait a bit.

#### Cedric Alexander vs. Noam Dar

This is over Dar hitting on Cedric's girlfriend Alicia Fox with Austin Aries on commentary. A forearm puts Dar on the floor and it's off to a break thirty seconds in. Back with Dar missing a dive off the top and possibly twisting his ankle. Cedric comes in with a springboard clothesline of his own, followed by the Lumbar Check for the pin at 5:10.

Post match Dar says they're not even because Alexander still has Alicia.

Here's New Day to address their title loss. They're cool with losing the titles because Ric Flair couldn't become a sixteen time champion without losing fifteen times. Big E.: "And that's Charlotte in a month." After declaring that they still rock, here are the new champions to interrupt. Sheamus and Cesaro are already bickering over who won last night so New Day insults Sheamus a bit more.

Cesaro on the other hand has catlike reflexes and is strong like a.....someone help Big E. out. Cesaro: "Like an ox?" Kofi was thinking more like a carpenter ant who can lift seven times his own weight. They bicker a lot with Woods talking about how much merchandise they have at the moment. Cue Anderson and Gallows to talk about how sick they are of the New Day nerds, only to be cut off by the Shining Stars. A brawl breaks out and you can book the eight man tag from here.

#### Shining Stars/Anderson and Gallows vs. Cesaro/Sheamus/New Day

This is joined in progress with Epico hitting a nice double underhook gutbuster on Kofi. Gallows and Anderson take turns on Kingston as Saxton thinks Cesaro and Sheamus had one of the greatest accomplishments in the history of the division last night. This is why people make fun of you Byron. Anderson spikes Kofi and we take a break.

Back with the Shining Stars diving onto the champs and the Boot of Doom getting two on Kofi. Big E. comes in to clean house but Sheamus tags himself in, setting up an assisted White Noise for two on Epico. Cesaro comes in and swings Primo into the Sharpshooter for the submission at 10:46.

**Rating:** C. That's your tag division people: the bickering champs, the bald guys who put "ski" at the end of random words, the jobbers and the team that is better than all of them put together. New Day is in a weird place now as they need something new to do but I'm not sure how they're going to go fight outside of the division.

We recap the opening segment.

Enzo and Cass are talking about what they're doing tonight when Enzo

gets a letter. Due to exposing himself in the workplace on November 21, Enzo has to undergo sensitivity training.

Here's Neville to brag about beating down TJ Perkins and Rich Swann last night. What he can't understand is why people cheered him. Normally they only cheer for him because they feel sorry for him but he doesn't need their pity. Neville will obliterate the division and can show up on 205 Live anytime.

Cue Swann to ask what was up with last night. Neville cuts him off and talks about mentoring Swann in Japan and getting no gratitude. This brings out Brian Kendrick to say he respects Neville. The double beatdown is on with TJ Perkins making a failed save attempt. Neville was GREAT here and maybe the best thing about the show so far.

It's time for sensitivity training with Darren Young, Bob Backlund, Bo Dallas and Jinder Mahal joining Amore. Enzo gets to go first and starts in with his usual promo. He blames his partner for being here, which the therapist interprets as Enzo and Cass being married. Mahal goes next and the therapist asks how to spell his name. Enzo stands up and says exactly what you would expect him to say.

#### Titus O'Neil vs. Sin Cara

Strowman comes in for the no contest at 40 seconds.

Braun drags Cara to the stage and throws him through a Christmas tree and a bunch of presents as Foley looks on helpless.

Jericho is annoyed at being stuck in the cage because he's arachnophobic. Owens: "That means scared of spiders." Jericho: "I'm scared of them too!" After asking if Owens knows what it's like to hang above the ring like a sexy pinata, they agree to work together tonight because Reigns and Rollins need to get.....IT!

Here's Charlotte to address winning the title back last night. She goes into a big speech about how no one is on her level because she's a guaranteed win on pay per view. This brings out Bayley and Charlotte isn't pleased. Bayley knows Sasha vs. Charlotte was the greatest rivalry of all time but now it's time for the Bayley vs.

Charlotte rivalry to begin.

Last night was all about the scoreboard and Bayley is 2-0 against Charlotte, including at Survivor Series earlier this year. Charlotte put up four fingers last night for the Four Horsewomen but Bayley didn't come up with the rest of them because she just wasn't good enough. The challenge is issued and Charlotte actually agrees to fight right now.

### Bayley vs. Charlotte

Non-title. Charlotte works the arm to start and puts Bayley in trouble with the figure four headscissors. A headlock gets Bayley out of trouble and she rides Charlotte on the mat. We even get a little strut before Charlotte is sent outside. Back from a break with Charlotte ramming Bayley face first into the mat over and over.

A chinlock keeps Bayley in trouble but she fights out of the corner and gets in her sliding clothesline. Charlotte sends her into the corner again but the moonsault only gets two. Bayley reverses a chop into a backslide (with Charlotte's shoulder clearly up) to put Charlotte away at 14:45. Graves points out the shoulder being up and replays confirm it.

**Rating:** D+. This was actually one of the sloppier matches I've seen in a good while. Maybe it was nerves or Charlotte being a bit tired after last night but this really didn't work as well as I was expecting. I don't think Bayley gets the title at the Royal Rumble but the big match at Wrestlemania has a lot of potential.

More from sensitivity training with Enzo making fun of Mahal but not hitting him, which shows progress.

Emmalina is sick of hearing about the Four Horsewomen and will be here when she feels like it.

The sensitivity class graduates. Enzo unsuccessfully hits on the teacher until Rusev comes in. Mahal blocks the other way out and the double beatdown is on. Lana comes in for a slap to Enzo's face.

### Seth Rollins/Roman Reigns vs. Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho

Rollins gets caught in the wrong corner to start and the Canadians

take turns stomping him down. A quick Sling Blade puts Jericho down for two and the bad guys try to leave, only to get caught from behind. Back from a break with Reigns hitting his running clothesline on Owens, only to get decked so Jericho can take over. The slow beating continues and we even get one of the suddenly favorite crowd reactions shots, showing a very bored looking girl. Owens puts on a chinlock of his own until Reigns gets free off a Samoan drop. Rollins comes in with a DDT/neckbreaker combo, earning himself two more crowd reaction shots. Jericho blocks a Pedigree and the frog splash to set up the Walls, sending Seth over to the ropes. Reigns gets in a Superman Punch and reaches for the hot tag, only to have Strowman run out to go after Roman for the DQ at 15:04.

**Rating:** D. Strowman getting involved is at least a little more interesting but DANG I'm bored with the main event scene right now. People were ready to cheer for Jericho, only to have the carpet pulled out from underneath them because SURPRISE, we're right back where we were when these matches were announced.

A powerslam plants Reigns as Jericho and Owens watch from the ramp.

**Overall Rating:** D+. There was some effort this week but you could tell they weren't putting forth their best try. Stuff like the sensitivity training felt like the old, bad comedy bits and the main event, save for Strowman, was just horrible. My guess is this is due to the holidays but they didn't do themselves any favors this week. Not a good show but not a complete waste of time.

### Results

Rusev b. Big Cass via DQ when Cass wouldn't stop attacking in the corner

Cedric Alexander b. Noam Dar – Lumbar Check

Cesaro/Sheamus/New Day b. Shining Stars/Anderson and Gallows – Sharpshooter to Primo

Titus O'Neil vs. Sin Cara went to a no contest when Braun Strowman interfered

Bayley b. Charlotte – Backslide

Roman Reigns/Seth Rollins b. Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho via DQ when Braun Strowman interfered

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# Roadblock: End of the Line: Feel Free to Try Something

## Roadblock: End of the Line

Date: December 18, 2016

Location: PPG Paints Arena, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

We'll wrap up the pay per view calendar with this show, our third pay per view in about a month. This isn't the hottest card in the world with a fairly lame main event of United States Champion Roman Reigns challenging Kevin Owens for the Universal Title. There's also an Iron Man match as Sasha Banks defends the Women's Title against Charlotte. Let's get to it.

## Pre-Show: Rusev vs. Big Cass

This is over Big Cass defending Enzo Amore, who tried to sleep with Rusev's life. Before the match, Enzo says something about Lana owing him money and Rusev playing Jumanji in the hotel room. Enzo puts on

a red nose and Cass lists off the eight reindeer. Cass kicks Rusev in the face and we take a break less than thirty seconds in.

Back with Cass hammering away and dropping the Empire Elbow for no cover. They head outside Rusev taking him out into the crowd, leaving Enzo to go after Lana. Rusev defends his wife while Cass checks on Enzo, leaving Rusev to beat the count at 4:33. Not enough for a rating but this was rematch bait.

The opening video has a police chase theme with the idea being that everything ends at the end of the line.

#### Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Cesaro/Sheamus

New Day is defending. Big E. is confused about what the show is called because he thinks it's a rather different, very un-PG kind of blocking. I'll let you figure out what the joke there is. Woods suggests that the challengers should be called Swing Low Irish Chariot. Cesaro dropkicks Kofi at the bell for two and it's already time for the uppercut train. It's too early for the Swing so Sheamus clotheslines Kofi instead.

The slingshot shoulder gets two on Kingston and Swiss Death is good for the same. This has been completely one sided so far. Kofi breaks up the ten forearms and brings in Big E. for the spear off the apron. The Warrior Splash gets two on Sheamus and everything breaks down. Sheamus kicks Cesaro by mistake and Woods kicks Cesaro by design, setting up the Big Ending for a very close two.

The Midnight Hour is broken up and Big E. gets the Brogue Kick. Cesaro Swings Kofi into the Sharpshooter for the submission....but Woods has the referee. Cesaro lifts Kofi up into a suplex and rolls into the Neutralizer for two with Big E. making the save this time. That was some scary power, as is always the case with Cesaro.

Woods sacrifices himself to take the Brogue Kick and the SOS gets two on Sheamus. Cesaro comes in without a tag (though Sheamus was right next to him), meaning Kofi kicks Cesaro for no count. Instead Sheamus sneaks in and rolls Kofi up for the pin and the titles at 10:00.

**Rating:** B-. The ending was really good but I have no interest in Sheamus and Cesaro holding the belts. It's more than fine to take them off New Day now but you really couldn't do this at the Rumble against Enzo and Cass or ANYONE that might draw some interest? People didn't care about Cesaro and Sheamus at first and I doubt they will now, but this was going to happen no matter what.

New Day gets the big show of respect and we get the battle for the spotlight from the new champs.

Kevin Owens doesn't care about New Day because that will never happen to him. After insulting the interviewer, Owens flags down Chris Jericho and gives him a present. Jericho isn't impressed with his holiday scarf.

#### Sami Zayn vs. Braun Strowman

Ten minute time limit as Raw GM Mick Foley is scared for Sami's health. The ring announcer says Sami must last ten minutes though, which makes things a bit unclear. So can Sami not even go for wins? Sami dodges for the first thirty seconds and Braun no sells a chop. Braun gets his hands on Sami for a big toss and kicks him in the ribs for good measure.

We're down to eight minutes as Sami knocks Braun over the top, only to have Strowman come back in and hammer away with ease. The referee starts to check on Sami with about six minutes to go but Zayn wants to keep going. Braun lets Sami stumble around as we get down to five minutes. Some very hard clotheslines take us to four minutes and here's Foley with a white towel.

Sami is thrown down at Mick's feet and Braun goes outside to talk trash. Zayn grabs the towel and throws it into the crowd with two minutes left. Strowman promises to finish this himself but misses a charge into the post. Another missed charge sends Braun through the barricade but Strowman beats the count with 47 seconds left. A third missed charge hits the post and Sami gets two off a high crossbody. Sami is knocked to the floor but comes back in for the Helluva Kick as time ends at 10:00 (really 10:12).

**Rating:** D+. Corey sums it up perfectly: Sami didn't win anything here. He just didn't get killed. This really belonged as an angle on Raw to set up the pay per view match instead of being the match itself. Sami hitting his finisher (which didn't knock Braun down) to end the match was a nice touch but I really have no idea where this goes outside of Braun beating Sami in another match.

Package on the UK tournament.

We recap Chris Jericho vs. Seth Rollins. Jericho lost to Rollins several times but then started costing Rollins matches against Owens. This earned Jericho a Pedigree on top of a car and that means a match.

### Seth Rollins vs. Chris Jericho

Jericho headlocks him to start and does the Gift of Jericho pose. Chris stops him with a raised boot and the missile dropkick gets two. A rake of the eyes slows Rollins down (he even makes like he can't see for a bit, which you almost never see anymore) but he's easily able to catapult Jericho into the buckle.

Jericho gets in a clothesline and we hit the ASK HIM chinlock. Back up and Rollins fires off some right hands followed by the Slingblade. A Blockbuster gets two and Jericho gets shoved out to the floor. Rollins' springboard knee is countered into the Walls which last about as long as you would expect them to. Now the Lionsault is good for two and Seth's Falcon's Arrow gets the same.

Rollins tries the Pedigree but Jericho powers out and gets in a hurricanrana, which transitions into the Walls. Seth counters that with a small package for two, followed by the frog splash. Cue Owens for a distraction, just as Jericho grabs a small package. The Pedigree is countered again but Jericho stops to yell at Owens, allowing Seth to get in the jumping knee. Rollins gets the Pedigree for the pin at 17:12.

**Rating:** B+. I really liked this one as Jericho's roll continues. You can almost pencil in Jericho vs. Owens for the Rumble and that story is going to write itself very well. Rollins getting the pin makes

sense and maybe we can FINALLY do the blowoff between him and HHH so Rollins can move on with his career.

Pre-show recap. Cass vs. Rusev II is set for tomorrow night.

Cruiserweight Title: Brian Kendrick vs. TJ Perkins vs. Rich Swann

Swann is defending and Austin Aries is sitting in on commentary. One heck of a forearm puts Kendrick on the floor, leaving Perkins to take the champ down. Swann hurricanranas both guys down at the same time (Aries: "I've done it before.") but gets caught in the Captain's Hook.

Perkins makes the save with the kneebar but Swann makes a save of his own. Cole: "Who is the favorite now?" Aries: "I would be if I was in there." Kendrick gets tossed and Perkins slaps on another kneebar, sending Swann to the ropes. That's not a break in a triple threat but Perkins lets go anyway. Back up and Swann kicks Perkins in the head to retain at 5:59.

**Rating:** D+. Can we please, please, PLEASE get Aries anything he wants? He was by far and away the most interesting thing about this match as he just commands respect and I completely buy him as the greatest cruiserweight of all time. I mean, I know he's not but he gives you the belief that he is and that's what matters.

Post match Neville makes his return to celebrate with Swann before turning heel (!) and destroying all three. Fans: "THANK YOU NEVILLE!" I can totally go for this, though the idea that Neville weighs under 205lbs is downright laughable.

Owens goes to Jericho's locker room but Chris won't let him in. Kevin tells him to put his name on the list but Jericho still doesn't open the door. That hurts Owens' feelings and he walks away.

Recap of Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte. They've traded the title for months and this is the final match.

Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Sasha Banks

Banks is defending and this is a thirty minute iron man match, though JoJo says the winner is the woman with the most pinfalls. I'm going to assume that's an error because nothing like that was ever

mentioned before. Feeling out process to start and they hit the mat for the first two minutes. Banks headlocks her down and things stay slow to start. Some chops have Charlotte in more trouble but it's too early for the Banks Statement.

Another attempt fails just as much so Banks opts for a dropkick instead. Banks: "Your daddy loves me more!" Sasha wraps her up in something like a rear naked choke but Charlotte drops her back onto the mat for two. Charlotte heads outside and takes the double knees as we hit eight minutes in. A cross arm choke has Charlotte in more trouble but she doesn't tap out as we get to ten minutes.

Sasha throws her outside for a suicide crossbody, only to be tripped face first into the steps in a bad looking crash. We're twelve minutes in now as the referee slows things down a bit to check on Sasha. Three straight knees get two on the champ but another one misses to give Sasha a breather. Charlotte does the figure four headscissors and we're at the halfway mark.

Something like a neckbreaker onto the knee gets two on Sasha and Charlotte seems to be getting frustrated. Natural Selection connects for two but Banks can't get the Bank Statement. Instead Charlotte is put on top, only to come back with a super Natural Selection for the first fall with 10:45 to go.

Charlotte talks a lot of trash but can't get another fall as we hit nine minutes left. Banks goes to the air and spins into a rollup for the tie with 8:43 to go. That means Charlotte needs to get aggressive, only to have Sasha grab the Bank Statement for the tap out with six minutes left. Charlotte gets smart by draping the knee over the middle rope and crashing down onto it as the clock keeps ticking.

Some cannonballs down onto the knee set up a leglock as we've got three minutes left. A not great Figure Four goes on with two minutes left and Sasha is in big trouble. The hold is turned over a few times until Sasha gets caught in the middle of the ring. We're down to thirty seconds left and Banks screams a lot. Charlotte FINALLY turns it into the Figure Eight and Banks taps with two seconds left,

meaning it's a draw at 30:00.

This is the END OF THE LINE though so let's do sudden death.

Charlotte gets in a shot at the bad leg before the bell rings and a small package gets two for the champ seconds into the extra period. The Bank Statement goes on but Charlotte grabs the bad leg to break the hold. It's turned into a Figure Four and Sasha (with a bloody mouth) taps to the Figure Eight at 2:58 of overtime.

**Rating:** B. Well that happened. I'm completely out of things to talk about with these two trading the title because WWE has no concept of how to wrap up a feud in an appropriate manner. Charlotte winning is fine, though the question now is who challenges her next. I know the obvious answer is Bayley, but do you trust them to do something that logical?

We recap Owens vs. Reigns. Roman beat him a few weeks ago to earn another shot here tonight but the big story is about the drama between Jericho and Owens.

Universal Title: Kevin Owens vs. Roman Reigns

Owens is defending and I'll only refer to him as champion for the sake of simplicity. Kevin quickly bails to the floor but gets punched in the mouth for his efforts. Something like a spinebuster gets two for Reigns but the threat of a jumping clothesline sends Owens outside. The champ takes over on the floor and hits the backsplash off the steps, followed by the chinlock back inside.

Owens wants to know why Reigns didn't put his title on the line but suspects it's a lack of testicular fortitude. A standing flip legdrop of all things gets two on Roman and it's back to the chinlock. Reigns finally powers out and drives Owens into the corner, only to have the champ throw him down with a German suplex. The Superman Punch is countered into a DDT for two more.

Reigns no sells the Cannonball and hits the Superman Punch for two of his own and both guys are down. Owens goes up top and gets Superman Punched again but still manages to grab the swinging superplex. A Swanton Bomb hits Roman's raised knees and it's spear

time. It might be the big scream before the spear but somehow Owens knows to bail to the floor. Reigns gets suckered in and a splash off the apron onto the announcers' table doesn't break the table.

The second attempt works though and Reigns' ribs are hurt again. Reigns dives in at nine so Owens bolts to the top for another frog splash and the accompanying near fall. Roman's sitout powerbomb and Owens' Pop Up Powerbomb get two each and the champ doesn't know what to do. He goes outside for the title belt, earning himself a spear as he comes back inside. Cue Jericho, who looks back and forth at both guy. A Codebreaker to Owens draws the DQ at 23:33.

**Rating:** B. Good, though the waiting for Jericho took a little away from it. Unfortunately this shows the problem with Reigns being US Champion coming into this match: what good does it do to tie the title up in this match with no challenger for the title in sight? Yeah Owens vs. Jericho will be fine but sweet goodness enough with the champion vs. champion nonsense.

Jericho raises Owens' hand because IT WAS A SWERVE to end the show. Uh, couldn't he just tap Reigns and get the same result? Rollins comes out and helps with the beatdown, including a DoubleBomb to put Jericho through the table. Owens goes through the announcers' table to end the show to almost no reaction.

**Overall Rating:** B+. I liked this a lot more than I thought I would but it's a great example of a show I'm never going to watch again. Other than Charlotte getting the title back like we've seen before, nothing was really interesting here, though I can always go for a night of good wrestling. That being said, they really, REALLY need something fresh in the main event scene on Raw because "oh wait they're still best friends who get beaten up by the Shield guys" was tired a month ago.

### Results

Cesaro/Sheamus b. New Day – Small package to Kingston

Sami Zayn b. Braun Strowman by surviving the time limit

Seth Rollins b. Chris Jericho – Pedigree

Rich Swann b. TJ Perkins and Brian Kendrick – Spinning kick to the head

Charlotte b. Sasha Banks three falls to two

Kevin Owens b. Roman Reigns via DQ when Chris Jericho interfered

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## **Roadblock: End of the Line 2016 Preview**

It's time for Roadblock and that means....no that doesn't mean we're a month away from Wrestlemania. No actually it means WWE is really stupid for using the same name twice in a year when there are plenty of other names available for this show. I mean, was Vengeance taken? Or No Way Out? Or We Really Don't Need to Have This Show But We're Doing It Anyway? It's a Raw show and that means we're likely in for an annoying cameo from one or both of the bosses. Let's get to it.

We'll start with the pre-show match between Big Cass and Rusev. This is one of the few matches on the show I'm looking forward to as Cass is clearly on the rise but Rusev isn't the kind of guy that is going to lose to someone who is making his solo pay per view debut. The match springs from the usual: someone beat up Cass' buddy Enzo Amore and the big man is out for revenge. There was also something about

Amore trying to sleep with Rusev's seemingly willing wife but that detail might make Rusev seem sympathetic again so we'll ignore that part.

As much as I want to go with Cass to start his rocket push, I really can't imagine Rusev losing another pay per view match. It's also a bit early for Cass to get a win like this, though I've heard of worse ideas. This really could go either way, though they would be better off having Rusev win via a Lana distraction or the threat of Amore getting hurt again. If nothing else, I want to see a mixed tag between these four down the line, assuming man vs. woman is allowed.

We'll knock out a title match next with New Day yet again defending the Tag Team Titles against Cesaro and Sheamus. New Day set the record on Monday (for all intent and purpose) and now they get to defend against these guys again because WE WILL RESPECT CESARO AND SHEAMUS!

I know the obvious move is to change the titles not but I think I'm going to say New Day retains yet again with the big change coming at the Royal Rumble. There's no reason to keep the belts on them any longer save for breaking the 500 day mark, which means a grand total of nothing. Maybe it's just that I'm really not a fan of Cesaro and Sheamus but I have no desire to have them be the ones that finally get the belts off New Day. There's a good chance I'm wrong and I probably am but I'll say no title change here.

In another title match, Cruiserweight Champion Rich Swann is defending the title against TJ Perkins and Brian Kendrick in a triple threat match. Swann beat Kendrick for the title and both of them have gotten into it with Perkins, who is the only other man to hold this incarnation of the title.

It would seem that they're setting up Noam Dar as the next challenger for the title and he would seem to match up best against Swann. I'll go with another title being retained with Swann overcoming the odds. He's a more interesting champion than both former champions and it would be a really bad idea to take the title off of him already. Either that or turn Perkins heel like he should

have been from day one, but for some reason that seems out of the question.

We'll jump towards the main events now with Chris Jericho facing Seth Rollins in a match that should be for the US Title. Jericho keeps costing Rollins World Title matches against Kevin Owens so Rollins Pedigreed him on top of a car. Instead of assault and battery charges, we get a pay per view match as a result.

I'm going to go with Rollins here, as the big match on the horizon seems to be Jericho facing Owens in some form. Therefore, with Jericho being more than ready to turn mega face for the match, the WWE is almost guaranteed to make him lose because that's how they get people to cheer for you. So yeah, Rollins goes over and it's Jericho vs. Owens, likely at the Rumble.

Now we'll move on to the first of two timed matches on the card with Sami Zayn facing the monster Braun Strowman in a ten minute time limit match. This is about Zayn wanting to be like Mick Foley (I'm still not sure how that works) and not wanting to have to be treated like a baby because Strowman will crush him.

I think this goes to the draw with Zayn showing that he can hang in there with Strowman but barely surviving at the end of the match. Zayn certainly shouldn't beat Strowman, who could be ready for a huge match down the line, but at the same time you don't want Zayn to be completely destroyed. Strowman has Zayn done but the time runs out and it's officially a draw.

In the other timed match we have Sasha Banks defending the Women's Title against Charlotte in a thirty minute Iron Man match. This is being billed as the final match between the two of them but the stipulation sets up the prospect of a draw, meaning they get one more match.

That being said, I think they'll put the title on Charlotte again because the big pay per view winning streak ending at Wrestlemania would be a better way to go rather than ending it at a nothing show like this. I like the Iron Man idea but it also brings up the problem of there not being much of a point to watching the first

twenty five minutes of the match unless the two of them tear the house down, which of course they're capable of doing.

We'll wrap it up with the main event as Universal Champion Kevin Owens is defending against United States Champion Roman Reigns. As much as I can't stand the idea of a double champion, I have a bad feeling WWE might pull the trigger on another Reigns title run for the sake of trying to be like the UFC with Conor McGregor.

That being said, I'll actually go for the long shot and say Owens retains to set up a major title defense against Jericho at the Royal Rumble. Unfortunately that match can be done with or without the title so there's no real need for Owens to hold the belt here. I really don't need to see Reigns as champion again this soon as it isn't exactly going to do much for making him into a bigger star.

Overall Roadblock is really just there, much like most Raw pay per views. The wrestling should be fine but WWE is going to manage to make it feel like it's overstaying its already limited welcome. The main event scene is ice cold right now as I can barely even remember why Owens and Reigns are fighting in the first place. There will be some good stuff but this is just a filler show until we get to the important stuff in January.

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# Tribute to the Troops 2016: It's Just Getting Worse

## Tribute to the Troops 2016

Date: December 14, 2016

Location: Verizon Center, Washington D.C.

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, John Bradshaw Layfield

I try so hard to care about this show but it feels like WWE puts in less of an effort every single year. This is the annual show for the members of the United States military, meaning almost nothing of consequence will happen and the big main event will be Americans vs. foreigners. Let's get to it.

Shane and Stephanie McMahon welcome us to the show.

Video on the history of the series with a look back at all of the shows. The ones where they went overseas just feel so much more important.

Lillian Garcia is back to sing the National Anthem.

Cole says this is a rare occasion when the Raw, Smackdown and cruiserweight rosters are on the same show. You mean like Survivor Series?

Here's Roman Reigns to get things going. Reigns says the people in this arena are the real champions of the United States but here's Kevin Owens to cut him off. Kevin thinks he should get the praise around here because he's the longest reigning Universal Champion in history. Trash talk is exchanged with Owens saying he would take the US Title and put a maple leaf sticker on it to turn it into the Canadian Heavyweight Title. So he's a Lance Storm fan. I admire the cut of this Canadian's jib.

A challenge is issued but here's Rusev to interrupt. We get a rare

kiss with Lana but Reigns wants a soldier to come out here and show Rusev how to do that properly. A brawl is about to go down but Big Cass comes out to even things up. Mick Foley comes out to make the main event, even though it's not Raw and he shouldn't have any authority.

Package on wrestlers visiting troops.

### Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Shining Stars vs. Anderson and Gallows vs. Golden Truth

The winners get New Day on Sunday with one fall to a finish. Anderson punches Goldust to start before it's off to Epico who gets beaten up as well. The Shining Stars get together to put Goldust on the floor and we take a break. Back with Gallows kicking Goldust in the face because it's beat on the old man night.

An elbow drop gets two with Sheamus making the save. The hot tag brings in R-Truth to clean house with an ax kick getting two on Primo. Cesaro comes in to clean house with his usual stuff, including the high crossbody for two more on Primo. Epico saves his cousin from the Swing but gets Brogue Kicked for the pin at 9:28.

**Rating:** D+. If they just have to give Cesaro and Sheamus the titles so be it, as long as New Day has the record once and for all. I'm still not a fan of the team but they're probably the only option out of these four. The tag division means nothing at the moment so they're as good an option as there is otherwise. Also, how weird is it to see storyline development on one of these shows?

More wrestlers meeting troops.

Here are Miz and Maryse for a chat with Miz calling himself an inspiration due to his role in the Marine movies. Anyway it's open challenge time so here's comedian Gabriel Iglesias to answer. They argue about who is out of their element until Iglesias brings out a friend to answer the challenge.

### Miz vs. Apollo Crews

Non-title. Miz starts with the Daniel Bryan mockery fast by doing the YES pose and hitting the running corner dropkick. The running

corner clothesline is countered into a belly to belly suplex as Iglesias starts taking pictures with Maryse. Neither Miz nor Maryse are pleased so Crews kicks Miz in the face, meaning another picture can be taken. The distraction lets Crews grab a rollup for the pin at 2:30.

Some troops say hello to their families.

#### Dolph Ziggler/American Alpha vs. Wyatt Family

Jordan immediately goes for the belly to belly on Harper but gets headlocked for his efforts. Luke is knocked out to the floor and we take a break. Back with Ziggler coming in to clothesline Orton and dropping him with a neckbreaker. The triple teaming puts Ziggler down in a hurry though and Orton's snap powerslam gets two. Ziggler gets away for the hot tag without too much effort and everything breaks down. That's fine with the Wyatts who clean house off a release Rock Bottom to Gable. The RKO finishes Chad at 10:55.

**Rating:** C-. Well that was rather squashy. The Wyatts completely destroyed the three of them here and that's not a good sign for Alpha's title hopes going forward. You would think they would be the best option to eventually take the belts from the Wyatts but that really doesn't seem to be the case, at least not yet. At least they're keeping the Family strong for a change.

Bayley, Charlotte and Dana Brooke meet a rescue dog. Dana isn't impressed and a match is made for later.

#### Bayley vs. Dana Brooke

Charlotte and the dog are at ringside. Dana takes her down and cranks on an arm and a leg at the same time. Bayley comes back with her spinning elbow in the corner but Charlotte grabs the leg to break up the suplex. The fans want Sasha but have to settle for Bayley throwing Dana into Charlotte. Back in and the Bayley to Belly wraps Dana up at 2:24.

Bayley celebrates with the dog just in case she's not adorable enough yet.

#### TJ Perkins/Jack Gallagher/Rich Swann vs. Brian Kendrick/Tony

## Nese/Drew Gulak

Perkins and Kendrick speed things up to start with TJ sending him outside, meaning it's time for all the dives. Gallagher goes last but opts to climb through the ropes and hit an ax handle from the apron for the pop of the night. Back in and Gulak puts Perkins in something like the Edgecator to take over for the first time.

Perkins cross bodies Nese but it's not enough for the hot tag. Gulak gets kicked away and it's off to Swann as things speed up.

Everything breaks down with Jack headbutting Nese out to the floor but shaking himself up in the process. A double superkick drops Kendrick and the spinning kick to the jaw ends Gulak at 5:33.

**Rating:** C. This was exactly what this match needed to be with the right ending. I liked the fact that they didn't do much to set up the triple threat here as this was much more an exhibition than anything involving storylines. They need to find some better heel jobbers than Gulak and Nese though as they've lost so many times now that it's starting to lose meaning.

HHH and Stephanie went to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier for a ceremony.

More wrestlers in Afghanistan.

New Day talks about their title defense on Sunday but instead opt to dance over breaking the record. Big E. thinks they're the greatest trio of all time when the Club comes in to laugh at the thought. They throw up the too sweet sign and here's the Shield to stare all six of them down. Reigns: "Nah." Well that worked.

## Big Cass/Roman Reigns vs. Rusev/Kevin Owens

Enzo is back and we hear about how the Americans are going to beat down the bad guys for every branch of the military. Rusev and Reigns get things started with the Bulgarian actually taking over. The running splash misses though and Rusev has to bail from the threat of the Superman Punch. Instead it's the apron dropkick and the good guys stand tall as we take a break.

Back with Owens getting in a cheap shot on Reigns to give the bad

guys control. Owens gets all angry with the trash talk and drops a backplash on the floor. Reigns finally throws Rusev down and a big uppercut to Owens allows the hot tag to Cass. Everything breaks down but Lana shoves Enzo into the steps. The distraction lets Rusev get in a superkick to set up the frog splash for two. Another hot tag brings in Reigns for the spear and pin on Rusev at 12:55.

**Rating:** C-. Totally standard main event to end a totally standard show. Lana laying out Enzo was the highlight of the match here and actually makes me want to see them have a wacky comedy match. I'm really happy with the idea of Cass moving higher up the card and while I don't see him beating Rusev, it's a good sign to have him in that spot on a pay per view.

A quick thank you to the troops wraps us up.

**Overall Rating:** D. Is that really what they think of the troops? This was basically an extra hour for Raw and Smackdown with nothing interesting whatsoever going on. In two hours we had maybe ten combined minutes of stuff on the troops, making this one of the lamest tributes ever. It used to be a show in the Middle East. Then it was a show at a military base. Then it was a glorified house show. Now it's something thrown in as a bonus when you went to Smackdown. To suggest this was about the troop is a joke and you almost have to know that just by paying attention. Totally unnecessary show, as it's been for years.

### Results

Cesaro/Sheamus b. Shining Stars, Anderson and Gallows and Golden Truth – Brogue Kick to Epico

Apollo Crews b. Miz – Rollup

Wyatt Family b. Dolph Ziggler/American Alpha – RKO to Gable

Bayley b. Dana Brooke – Bayley to Belly

Jack Gallagher/Rich Swann/TJ Perkins b. Drew Gulak/Tony Nese/Brian Kendrick – Spinning kick to Gulak's head

Roman Reigns/Big Cass b. Kevin Owens/Rusev – Spear to Rusev

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# Monday Night Raw – December 12, 2016: New Day Still Rocks

## Monday Night Raw

Date: December 12, 2016

Location: Wells Fargo Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

It's the go home show for Roadblock: End of the Line (because there were NO OTHER NAMES FOR A PAY PER VIEW BESIDES ROADBLOCK so they had to use the name twice) but we've got two big deals to get through before the pay per view. Tonight we have the long awaited debut of the made over Emmalina as well as New Day trying to extend their Tag Team Title reign one more day in the hopes of matching Demolition's all time record. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Anderson and Gallows vs. Cesaro/Sheamus

New Day is defending and if they keep the titles, they tie the record for the longest Tag Team Title reign in WWE history. Woods

talks about how this is their chance to elevate every New Day fan ever, along with Woods' grandma. However, Xavier doesn't get the idea of one more triple threat. Kofi says New Day IS the triple threat with Woods as the brain, Kofi as the handsome finesse and Big E. as the big, thick, meaty third leg.

Kofi and Cesaro start things off and the spinning high crossbody gives Kingston an early two. A dropkick sends Sheamus into the corner so the champs can run him over for two. Anderson and Gallows get to take over on Kofi and it's off to a break. Back with Big E. down and Anderson and Gallows hitting something like a running Demolition Decapitator (nice touch) for two on Kofi. Sheamus tags himself in and starts cleaning house with the Philadelphia fans getting way into the ten forearms to the chest.

Big E. dives in to save the cover but gets an Irish Curse for his efforts. The Boot of Doom gets two on Sheamus with Cesaro making the save this time. That's enough for the hot tag to Cesaro, who busts out all of his favorites, capped off with a high crossbody for two on Karl. Anderson gets caught in the Swing into the Sharpshooter but Big E. makes the save, only to have Cesaro hurricanrana his way out of a powerbomb. A Hart Attack with a Brogue Kick drops Anderson but Kofi runs in with Trouble in Paradise to pin Sheamus at 11:57.

**Rating:** B. I find it interesting that New Day won this clean instead of doing a heel turn, or really anything heelish for that matter. Of course there's always the chance that something is done later in the night to screw this up but for now, that's one of the unbreakable record that I never would have expected to be broken coming down.

The place goes NUTS for the record as New Day celebrates.

Back from a break with New Day arriving at their celebration party. After we stop to hug Stephanie, champagne is poured and goes right into Stephanie's eyes. She throws the big bowl of Booty0's everywhere and storms off because we haven't had enough Stephanie moments lately. We just saw (what should have been) one of the longest, most untouchable records in WWE history matched and broken but no, because WE NEED A STEPHANIE STORY!

We look back at Sami Zayn/Braun Strowman/Mick Foley's issues over the last few weeks. Sami has said he wants a match with Strowman "or else".

Back with Stephanie all covered in champagne (because we're supposed to believe that the smartest, most amazing woman that ever lived didn't realize that she might get covered with champagne in a celebration INVOLVING CHAMPAGNE BEING SPRAYED EVERYWHERE) when Owens comes in to ask for a yet to be determined favor.

#### Braun Strowman vs. Curtis Axel

Splash, torture rack, wheelbarrow slam, Braun wins at 1:14.

Braun says Foley is protecting Sami because Sami can't last two minutes against him. Foley is watching from the back when Sami comes in to demand the match on Sunday. No one saved Foley and Mick wouldn't be where he is now if someone did. Mick says he'll put Sami up against anyone on the roster but Strowman. That's interpreted as Foley believing Sami can't do it so Sami says if Mick won't give him the opportunity, then maybe he doesn't need to be on Raw anymore. Foley says he'll call Daniel Bryan and work out a trade.

#### Ariya Daivari vs. Lince Dorado

Daivari knocks him to the floor to start but here's Jack Gallagher to interfere. Gallagher has a mic though and actually announces his intentions to interfere in this match (because it would be ungentlemanly to not announce it in advance) because Daivari is a right scoundrel who deserves a proper thrashing. Jack officially comes in for the DQ at 2:37.

It's time for Seth Rollins with the Rollins Report. After saying he wants HHH again, Rollins wants to know if Kevin Owens will be in Chris Jericho's corner this Sunday so he brings out Owens as his guest. Owens comes to the stage...and sits on his own stool. Seth asks about the friendship with Jericho so Owens says they'll have each others backs. As for tonight though, Owens will be teaming with Jericho against New Day for the Tag Team Titles.

Cue Jericho to say he thinks Owens is nuts. Owens loves the idea of

stopping New Day's bid for the record but Rollins suggests that Owens is trying to order Jericho around. Rollins calls Jericho sparkle crotch and that means HE.....is going to make Jericho drop his pen. He's going to put Rollins on the disabled list instead. The Canadians head to the ring and beat Seth down. Reigns comes out for the WAY too late save and the Canadians bail.

Rich Swann recaps the incident on 205 Live that set up Sunday's Cruiserweight Title triple threat. Brian Kendrick comes in and threatens to stab Swann in the back. TJ Perkins comes in to laugh at Kendrick and it's time for a match.

#### TJ Perkins vs. Brian Kendrick

An early wristlock doesn't get Kendrick very far and he has to bail from the kneebar. The Wrecking Ball dropkick knocks Brian outside and we take a break. Back with Perkins hitting a jumping spin kick to the head and a springboard missile dropkick for two. The Captain's Hook is countered into the kneebar so Kendrick dives over to the ropes. Back up and Sliced Bread #2 gives Kendrick the pin at 8:24.

**Rating:** C-. So flash back to any time these two have fought in the last few months and update the details as necessary. This wasn't interesting because neither of the wrestlers are interesting. The triple threat has some potential but for the life of me I never need to see these two fight again.

Foley adds Rollins/Reigns to the Tag Team Title match because it's Philadelphia and we need another three way dance.

Charlotte and Sasha Banks will have no rematch after Sunday.

Video on Sasha vs. Charlotte.

#### Bayley vs. Alicia Fox

This is over a destroyed Bayley Bear. Bayley rides her to the mat to start and rides Fox for a bit, earning some HEY WE WANT SOME BAYLEY chants. The ax kick gets two for Fox but she spends too much time talking trash and walks into the Bayley to Belly for the pin at 2:45.

Here are Lana and Rusev to make fun of Enzo Amore. They've got some footage of what happened after the doors closed last week and of course we don't get to see it. They make some more fun of Enzo until Big Cass comes out to brawl. Rusev and Lana bail, likely setting up a match on Sunday.

Jericho suggests that winning the Tag Team Titles might help his friendship with Owens.

Emmalina's debut is postponed.

### Sami Zayn vs. Jinder Mahal

Sami dropkicks him to start but gets kneed in the face to give Jinder what is likely a short term advantage. The chinlock keeps Sami down until the exploder and Helluva Kick give him the pin at 3:20.

**Rating:** D+. This was just a way to possibly write Sami off Raw, assuming they send Sami over to Smackdown like he should have been in the first place. Mahal is fine for a spot like this, though I find it hard to believe that this match was already set up coming into tonight's show. Granted I can live with this though because IT'S NOT MAHAL VS. DARREN YOUNG!!!

Post match Mick comes out to say that Sami will be traded to Smackdown for a talent to be named. All he has to do is sign the deal, but first Mick offers to tell him who the talent will be. The official offer will be Sami for.....Eva Marie. Sami goes nuts because he's worth 100 Eva Marie's and he's tired of making up for Foley's mistakes. He actually grabs Mick's shirt and shoves him away because he wants Strowman so badly.

Foley agrees to make the match for Roadblock but says Sami better have the anger ready. There was never any trade proposed (the paper was blank) because Foley wouldn't trade him. The only catch is there's a ten minute time limit (earlier tonight Braun said Sami couldn't last two minutes) because that's all Mick is willing to risk Sami's health.

Video on John Cena hosting Saturday Night Live.

Recap of New Day's night.

Tag Team Titles: Seth Rollins/Roman Reigns vs. Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens vs. New Day

New Day is defending and has the chance to surpass Demolition's record reign. Again. Woods and Rollins start things off with a Sling Blade dropping Xavier. It's off to Reigns vs. Big E. with E.'s spear being blocked by a raised knee. Jericho gets smart by tagging himself in to take over on Big E., including a top rope back elbow to the jaw. Owens and Big E. are both dropped by a double clothesline so it's back to Woods.

Xavier is taken to the top and it's almost a double Canadian superplex, only to have everyone else get involved for the super Tower of Doom to send us to a break. Back with Owens holding Woods in a chinlock until he misses the backsplash. The hot tag brings in Big E. to clean house with the belly to belly suplexes. We hit the hip swivel and the Warrior splash crushes Jericho, only to have Seth tag himself in. Everything breaks down again and Seth suicide dives onto Chris.

Another one takes out Big E., followed by a third to get rid of Kofi and Big E. at the same time. Jericho's Codebreaker to Reigns is countered into a sitout powerbomb for a hot two. The Superman Punch nails Owens and Jericho rolls Reigns up for an even hotter near fall. Woods makes a blind tag and hits his really long top rope elbow for two on Roman. A knee to the face drops Woods but Rollins superkicks Owens to the floor.

Jericho crotches Rollins on top and Owens adds a Cannonball. The Lionsault gets two on Woods (I bought it for a second) and it's off to the Walls to put Xavier in even more trouble. Woods turns it over and small packages him for two but he walks into a Pop Up Codebreaker. Rollins dives in for the save by shoving Owens into Jericho to break up the pin (smart). That means CANADIAN ARGUING, leaving Rollins to Pedigree Jericho. Big E. pulls Seth to the floor and Woods covers to retain at 20:23.

**Rating:** B+. This whole match is summed up with one line: New Day

retained. That's the only logical way to end this and it's all that matters in the grand scheme of things. Now what makes it even better is they had some outstanding near falls and false finishes. New Day breaking the record makes the most sense and that's what matters, no matter how you look at it.

Post match Owens and Jericho yell at each other with Chris saying they're done. Jericho leaves and tells Owens to turn around, allowing Reigns to spear him to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B+. It really is amazing how well something can work when you tease a bad ending and then do the smart thing to send the fans home happy. I really liked the show this week as Raw has found a bit better balance. New Day retaining in two very good matches is the right way to go about things and the show was a lot of fun as a result. I don't really care about Roadblock but at least we had a great go home show.

### Results

New Day b. Cesaro/Sheamus and Anderson and Gallows – Trouble in Paradise to Sheamus

Braun Strowman b. Curtis Axel – Wheelbarrow slam

Ariya Daivari b. Lince Dorado via DQ when Jack Gallagher interfered

Brian Kendrick b. TJ Perkins – Sliced Bread #2

Bayley b. Alicia Fox – Bayley to Belly

Sami Zayn b. Jinder Mahal – Helluva Kick

New Day b. Roman Reigns/Seth Rollins and Chris Jericho/Kevin Owens – Pedigree to Jericho

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# Main Event – December 9, 2016: It's Spread

## **Main Event**

Date: December 9, 2016

Location: Frank Erwin Center, Austin, Texas

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton

We've had a steady schedule for all of a week now so of course it's time to change again. This show is now being released on Fridays on Hulu and will be available online a day or so later. If nothing else it's kind of nice to wait a little bit instead of having the show airing just a day or two after Smackdown. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Darren Young vs. Jinder Mahal

....no. No no, no no no. NO! How many times can they possibly do THIS SAME MATCH??? Young wristlocks him down to start and we hit the mat with a headlock takeover. Jinder goes after the knee to take over but some cannonballs down onto the leg only get him kicked out to the floor. The Gut Check is broken up but a second attempt is enough to put Mahal away at 5:00.

**Rating:** D+. Just a simple match but the repetitive nature is just killing the thing. I have no idea who is loving these matches so much but I really question their taste in wrestling. Just find something new already because, even though not a lot of people are watching, these shows have an audience and they deserve a bit more respect.

Back to Raw.

It's time for the big ending with Charlotte (who has accepted the Iron Man challenge) apologizing to her dad. We see her yelling at Flair (that makes three times tonight) but it was even harder to see

Flair raise Sasha's hand last week. Charlotte says no one can imagine how hard it is to be Ric's daughter because of how big his legacy really is.

Then last week she saw her dad raise Sasha's hand and she knew she had failed as his daughter. Flair comes out and hugs her but, of course (that's a trend tonight) she slaps him in the face. Cue Sasha but Charlotte Alley Oops her face first into the post. Charlotte mocks Flair crying and walks away to end the show.

From Raw again.

#### Anderson and Gallows vs. Cesaro/Sheamus

The winners get New Day, at ringside here, next week for the titles. Anderson and Gallows go outside and get in New Day's face to start but the Europeans run them over, sending the cereal flying. Back from a break with Cesaro fighting out of Anderson's chinlock and escaping the Magic Killer with some help from Sheamus. The hot tag brings Sheamus in for the ten forearms to the chest but everyone winds up on the floor for the brawl with New Day and that's a no contest at 9:58.

**Rating:** C. This was fine though the triple threat for next week was obvious. I'm really not sure who wins the thing but it's a cool feeling to have a match where I don't know the ending. The match should be fun and I really could see it going either way. This match was just a means to an end and that's fine.

#### Bo Dallas vs. Sin Cara

Another rematch. Cara starts fast by knocking him outside for a suicide dive. Back in and Bo runs the masked one over and implores that we Bo-lieve in him. Cara's moonsault seems to hit knees and he sends Bo into the ropes while trying to throw Dallas outside. We take a break and come back with Cara failing to suplex Bo out to the floor.

Dallas' belly to back suplex does work but Cara throws him into the ropes for another crash. A Lionsault press gets two for Cara and a middle rope Regal Roll gets the same. Cara fires off some knees until the referee pulls him away, allowing Bo to grab a rollup (and maybe some tights) for the pin at 10:40.

**Rating:** C+. This was much better than I was expecting with both guys actually working a lot harder than you would have guessed. Dallas

has a place on the roster but he needs the right character to really pull it off. I mean, he's beating a main roster guy here but that doesn't count because Cara is just a lowly cruiserweight and therefore meant to be beaten right?

Back to Raw one last time to wrap things up.

#### US Title: Chris Jericho vs. Roman Reigns

Roman is defending and is actually driven into the corner to start. The Superman Punch is countered with a dropkick and a clothesline puts the champ on the floor. A big dive to the floor takes Reigns out again and we take a break. Back with Reigns caught in a chinlock for a bit before being tossed out to the floor.

The Lionsault only gets two and the fans are getting WAY into Jericho all over again. A Samoan drop and Superman Punch get two on Jericho and the Codebreaker is countered into a sitout powerbomb. Roman goes shoulder first into the post though and we hit the Walls. As Reigns grabs the rope, cue Owens for a superkick. The Codebreaker gets two on Reigns but the Canadian argument sets up the spear to retain the title at 13:43.

**Rating:** B. Is there a reason why Reigns needs the US Title? Someone answer that for me. His feud is over the World Title and he doesn't have a long term challenger but he's still US Champion with no real prospects for a title feud anytime soon. Jericho vs. Rollins over the US Title could elevate the belt but Reigns is keeping it anyway. I don't think I need to explain this one being good as Jericho is still on fire.

**Overall Rating:** C-. Just a show here really and that's mainly due to how stale Raw feels at the moment. With almost nothing interesting going on Monday nights, it's kind of hard to get into a recap show with a decent featured match. I'm already missing the old Main Event format and again, that's just because Raw's roster isn't as interesting or entertaining.

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# Monday Night Raw – December 5, 2016: It's All About The WOO's

## Monday Night Raw

Date: December 5, 2016

Location: Frank Erwin Center, Austin, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

We've less than two weeks away from Roadblock and the top of the card seems to be set. The big story continues to be Roman Reigns vs. Kevin Owens but the big question is how to keep Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte going even longer. They've only had five title changes in about four months and that's just not enough. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of Seth Rollins/Roman Reigns vs. Kevin Owens/Chris Jericho, including everything last week that set up the Roadblock main event.

Here's Seth to get things going and he gets right to the point: he wants HHH. Life is about choices and one of the choices he made cost him a lot of his career. That was trusting HHH, but now he wants to get his hands on Chris Jericho. This brings out Owens, who doesn't want to talk about his best friend's health. Owens and Rollins don't like each other very much but Kevin wants to talk about his Christmas presents. First up is a US Title match when Jericho will challenge Reigns for the title. Other than that we have Jericho vs. Rollins at Roadblock and a third match taking place right now.

So wait. NOW we're going back to the HHH feud? I'm glad we're getting somewhere with it but this feels like your standard Raw storytelling: we don't have any reason to do it now but it has to be done so let's just do it now and hope for the best because the details will work themselves out. Is it that hard to do ANYTHING to make this feel a little more natural?

### Big Show vs. Seth Rollins

Show has REALLY slimmed down and is billed at 395lbs. Show tosses him around to start but Seth dropkicks the knee. More kicks to the legs set up the springboard knee to the head but Show doesn't go down. A top rope version works a bit better but Show just shrugs it off again. Owens tries to yell at Show and gets chokeslammed for his efforts, leaving Show to walk out in what seems to be a mid-match face turn. Rollins wins by countout at 5:15.

**Rating:** C-. This was fine and another good use of Big Show. He and Kane both have been around for a LONG time but they're still good for something like this. The match was more over an angle (though I'm not entirely sure what that angle is) and that's fine for a five minute match.

Rollins superkicks and Pedigrees Owens.

Video on Jack Gallagher. He debuts tonight and we're all better because of it.

### Jack Gallagher vs. Ariya Daivari

Gallagher does the spinning wristlock to start and makes sure to smooth out his hair for good measure. The handstand walk gets him out of a headlock as we hear about Gallagher's influences: Mankind, X-Pac and Steve Austin. Well he has good taste. The headbutt to the chest sets up the running corner dropkick and Daivari is done at 2:43. Gallagher is going to be a STAR if they give him the chance.

Daivari shakes his hand but takes out Jack's knee like a villain should.

Owens yells at Mick Foley and says this wouldn't happen if Stephanie was here. Foley really doesn't care and walks away. Owens goes up to

see Jericho, who just got here. He runs the matches by Jericho but Chris says the two of them aren't good.

Enzo and Big Cass are in the back when Rusev and Lana are arguing a full fifteen feet away. Enzo goes over to defend Lana's honor so she takes her ring off and throws it away. The certified G looks stunned and sends Cass away so he can pick up the ring. He asks Lana how she is doing and Lana looks sad. I'm enjoying this idea WAY too much.

Post break Enzo and Lana are still talking and she doesn't think her husband understands her. She thinks Rusev needs to be taught a lesson. Maybe he wouldn't take her for granted if another man appreciated her. This leads to an invitation to Lana's hotel room. Wouldn't that be Rusev's room too? Lana leaves and Enzo dances.

### Sami Zayn vs. Kevin Owens

Non-title as this feud just won't go away. They slug it out to start with Owens bailing to the floor. Sami follows and gets sent into the barricade, followed by a big flip dive to the outside. That's fine with Zayn as he hits one of his own, sending us to a break. Back with Sami fighting out of a chinlock and grabbing a tornado DDT onto the apron.

The dive into another DDT knocks Owens silly but he's fine enough to hit his swinging superplex for two. Back to back Cannonballs have Sami reeling so he does a third tornado DDT. The half and half suplex sends Owens flying, followed by the Blue Thunder Bomb for two. A quick Pop Up Powerbomb finishes Sami in a hurry at 10:30.

**Rating:** C+. That's the standard rating for these two and the question is how much higher can they take it. However, three tornado DDTs in a ten minute match isn't a good sign. You don't expect these two to seem like they're phoning it in but this was nothing out of the ordinary. Not bad of course but I wasn't feeling it.

Reigns comes in to see Jericho and the words STUPID IDIOT are uttered. Basically Reigns says don't get cocky.

Video on Sasha Banks vs. Charlotte from last week.

Sasha challenges Charlotte to an Iron Man match for Roadblock. As

for Ric Flair, Charlotte doesn't deserve to live in his legacy.

We look at Charlotte yelling at her dad back in May.

#### Rich Swann vs. TJ Perkins

Non-title. They shake hands to start and Swann gets taken down off a shoulder. Back up and Swann scores with a dropkick and does a little dabbing. We hit a waistlock on Perkins for a bit until he dropkicks Swann's knee out. There's a running dropkick to knock Swann out of the Tree of Woe for two. Perkins goes to the top and dives almost into the spinning kick to the face to give Swann the pin at 5:51.

**Rating:** C-. I don't know how to get into Perkins no matter how many times I try. He really comes off more as a heel than anything else but for some reason they're pushing him as the gamer geek. Then again I never was a fan of him all the way back in the Cruiserweight Classic but he's still one of the top stars in the division due to a lack of star power in the first place.

#### Bayley vs. Alicia Fox

This is over Bayley giving Cedric Alexander a Bayley Bear (yes that's a real thing) even though Fox has a thing for Alexander. Fox gets knocked into the corner to start but grabs the northern lights suplex for two. We're already in the chinlock but Bayley pops up with the Bayley to Belly for the pin at 2:20.

Enzo: "My mind is telling me no but my body is telling me bada boom go to the hotel room." Cass isn't sure but Lana texts Enzo with a picture included. Cass seems to change his mind as Enzo runs off. Rusev comes up to ask Cass where Lana is. A match is made for later. Emmalina is here next week.

#### Mark Henry vs. Titus O'Neil

Titus is marketing this as the Tussle in Texas. World's Strongest Slam ends Titus in 25 seconds.

Enzo is waiting on his Uber but gets a limo containing Ric Flair instead. Ric gives him the limo upon hearing about the foreign blonde.

Jericho wants Owens to stay in the back.

### US Title: Chris Jericho vs. Roman Reigns

Roman is defending and is actually driven into the corner to start. The Superman Punch is countered with a dropkick and a clothesline puts the champ on the floor. A big dive to the floor takes Reigns out again and we take a break. Back with Reigns caught in a chinlock for a bit before being tossed out to the floor.

The Lionsault only gets two and the fans are getting WAY into Jericho all over again. A Samoan drop and Superman Punch get two on Jericho and the Codebreaker is countered into a sitout powerbomb. Roman goes shoulder first into the post though and we hit the Walls. As Reigns grabs the rope, cue Owens for a superkick. The Codebreaker gets two on Reigns but the Canadian argument sets up the spear to retain the title at 13:43.

**Rating:** B. Is there a reason why Reigns needs the US Title? Someone answer that for me. His feud is over the World Title and he doesn't have a long term challenger but he's still US Champion with no real prospects for a title feud anytime soon. Jericho vs. Rollins over the US Title could elevate the belt but Reigns is keeping it anyway. I don't think I need to explain this one being good as Jericho is still on fire.

We look at Flair and Charlotte's split again.

### Rusev vs. Big Cass

And there's no Rusev because, as anyone paying attention could tell you, it was a trap. Cass mouths the word "oh crap" and commandeers someone's phone.

We IMMEDIATELY cut to Enzo at the hotel but he won't answer the phone because it's listed as unknown. Enzo knocks on the door and Lana opens up in a very short robe. Legs are shown and Enzo takes off the jacket despite being nervous. They both down some champagne and Lana rips off his shirt. Enzo eventually agrees to take off his pants and of course Lana reveals that Rusev is here. The beatdown is quickly on and Enzo is massacred. A vase to the head knocks him out

and Rusev throws him out in the hall.

### Anderson and Gallows vs. Cesaro/Sheamus

The winners get New Day, at ringside here, next week for the titles. Anderson and Gallows go outside and get in New Day's face to start but the Europeans run them over, sending the cereal flying. Back from a break with Cesaro fighting out of Anderson's chinlock and escaping the Magic Killer with some help from Sheamus. The hot tag brings Sheamus in for the ten forearms to the chest but everyone winds up on the floor for the brawl with New Day and that's a no contest at 9:58.

**Rating:** C. This was fine though the triple threat for next week was obvious. I'm really not sure who wins the thing but it's a cool feeling to have a match where I don't know the ending. The match should be fun and I really could see it going either way. This match was just a means to an end and that's fine.

It's time for the big ending with Charlotte (who has accepted the Iron Man challenge) apologizing to her dad. We see her yelling at Flair (that makes three times tonight) but it was even harder to see Flair raise Sasha's hand last week. Charlotte says no one can imagine how hard it is to be Ric's daughter because of how big his legacy really is.

Then last week she saw her dad raise Sasha's hand and she knew she had failed as his daughter. Flair comes out and hugs her but, of course (that's a trend tonight) she slaps him in the face. Cue Sasha but Charlotte Alley Oops her face first into the post. Charlotte mocks Flair crying and walks away to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. Raw is on something resembling a roll lately and a lot of that is due to them changing the way they're doing some stories. Consider Enzo vs. Rusev. It's a stupid story but it's not something we've seen done in awhile. In other words, it's something fresh, which doesn't happen nearly enough. I liked the show and I'm wanting to see the triple threat, which is more than I can say about the main event scene.

## Results

Seth Rollins b. Big Show via countout

Jack Gallagher b. Ariya Daivari – Running corner dropkick

Kevin Owens b. Sami Zayn – Pop Up Powerbomb

Rich Swann b. TJ Perkins – Spinning kick to the head

Bayley b. Alicia Fox – Bayley to Belly

Mark Henry b. Titus O'Neil – World's Strongest Slam

Roman Reigns b. Chris Jericho – Spear

Anderson and Gallows vs. Cesaro/Sheamus went to a no contest when all four brawled with New Day

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# **Superstars – November 25, 2016: Is It So Much To Ask?**

## **Superstars**

Date: November 25, 2016

Location: Air Canada Centre, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're past Survivor Series and that could mean some changes for WWE

and Superstars in particular. You never know what you're going to get on here, and by that I mean you never know what you're going to get to go with Jinder Mahal vs. Darren Young. Those two are destined to fight for all eternity it seems so let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

### Sin Cara vs. Jinder Mahal

The fans seem confused as to why Mahal is here and I can't say I disagree. Feeling out process to start with Cara's backdrop drawing a smattering of applause. Mahal gets in a shot of his own and does that stupid peace pose. A kneedrop sets up the required chinlock and there's that peace pose again because that's Mahal's entire character, if you can call it that. Mahal gets dropkicked out of the air and Cara's Swanton Bomb is enough for the pin at 5:02.

**Rating:** D-. I know I've made this comparison time after time but it's really annoying to see the difference between Superstars and Main Event. Every week it feels like Superstars is just having a match because they have to while Main Event comes off like they're at least trying. It helps so much and can actually be entertaining. Why be boring when you don't have to be?

Video on Goldberg vs. Brock Lesnar.

From Monday.

Here's Goldberg getting the full entrance to open things up. Goldberg thanks the fans for letting him be Goldberg again. He also thanks his wife and son for putting up with him and he got to be a star again one more time. Last night he ran into Stephanie McMahon who said he did have one more spear and Jackhammer in him (three spears and two Jackhammers if you're counting) but the question is does he have one more title run left in him. The fans go NUTS over that prospect and Goldberg says he's in the Royal Rumble.

And from Monday again.

### Raw Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Sheamus/Cesaro

New Day is defending and talk about breaking Demolition's record for longest Tag Team Title reign in just 23 days. A powerslam gives

Cesaro two on Big E. to start but Kofi escapes an early Swing attempt. Instead Cesaro sends him into the barricade and we take a break. Back with Kofi dropkicking Sheamus out of the air but getting Irish Cursed for two.

Sheamus won't tag out though and we get some heel (I think?) miscommunication with Cesaro being knocked off the apron. The hot tag brings in Big E. to clean house as everything breaks down. The Warrior Splash gets two on Sheamus but he rakes Big E.'s eyes to set up White Noise for the same.

It's back to Cesaro vs. Kofi with the Uppercut Train taking off, only to have an SOS get two. Trouble in Paradise is countered into a Cesaro Swing which goes into the Sharpshooter. The Brogue Kick puts Big E. down but Woods gets on the apron for the distraction as Kofi taps. Ever the moron, Cesaro lets the hold go and gets small packaged for the pin at 12:18.

**Rating:** C+. So they seem to be turning New Day heel. I think I can actually go with that as I'd much rather go there than have Cesaro and Sheamus stop them just before the record. Obviously they haven't gotten there yet and there's always the possibility that they'll switch the titles with two days to go, but at least they didn't do it here.

#### Bo Dallas vs. Curtis Axel

We actually get a video showing their breakup from last month. Dallas goes after the knee to start and we hit an early cravate. Back up and a few clotheslines set up a Hennig necksnap on Bo as we go to a break. We come back with the Axehole getting two on Bo as this just keeps going. Dallas blocks a suplex to the floor and hits an elevated Final Cut of all things for two. The PerfectPlex gives Curtis the same but he can't grab a super PerfectPlex. Axel settles for a neckbreaker out of the corner, only to walk into the Roll of the Dice for the pin at 11:54.

**Rating:** D. This just KEPT GOING with Axel hitting and trying everything he had and getting shut down every time. I really don't know why Dallas is getting such a strong push but it's getting

annoying to see Axel lose every single time. This show really didn't do much for Superstars' reputation though as it was boring to start and never got any better.

We'll wrap it up with Raw's main event.

#### Raw World Title: Kevin Owens vs. Seth Rollins

Owens is defending and there are no disqualifications with Jericho and Reigns barred from ringside. Kevin tries to bail to the floor and gets kicked in the face for his efforts. The springboard knee to the head gets two inside thirty seconds so it's already table time. Owens grabs the package piledriver slam and we take an early break.

Back with Owens in full control and hammering Seth in the head. A Sling Blade and suicide dive take Owens out, leading to another commercial. Back again with an exchange of strikes to the face putting both guys down. The frog splash misses Owens and it's a Cannonball into a chair onto Rollins for a close two. Owens sets up a pair of chairs for a powerbomb and you can see the backdrop counter coming before it happens.

Another table is set up in the corner and the Buckle Bomb drives Owens through it for a very close two. They fight into the crowd with Rollins getting the better of it by throwing a trashcan at the champ. Owens tries the powerbomb but Seth grabs the balcony wall and pulls himself up for a big dive. They make it back to ringside but a masked man shoves Rollins off the barricade. Of course it's Jericho and of course he gets a Pedigree on the floor. The Apron Powerbomb wipes Rollins out though and Owens throws him back in to retain at 23:07.

**Rating:** B+. Really good stuff here as it felt like a full on pay per view main event with high spots and near falls. The Jericho interference was a stretch and I'm kind of hoping it isn't used to set up another rematch at Roadblock as I'm pretty much over Rollins vs. Owens after this one. Really good main event though and I bought Rollins as a title threat.

**Overall Rating:** D. Sweet goodness this show doesn't make it easy.

Well ok so I'd never call this difficult to sit through but they make no secret about the fact that the original matches are just there for the sake of requiring original matches. They don't seem to even be trying out there and it gets really annoying to sit through week after week. Mix up the lineup or put in some kind of effort. That's not too much to ask.

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# Monday Night Raw – November 21, 2016: There Is Logic In What They Do

## Monday Night Raw

Date: November 21, 2016

Location: Air Canada Centre, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

We're still in Toronto as the big pay per view weekends are starting to feel like an old Raw TV cycle. The big story last night is Brock Lesnar's complete destruction at the hands of Goldberg, who beat him in a mind blowing 87 seconds. Tonight we get started towards Roadblock in about four weeks so let's get to it.

We open with stills of Lesnar vs. Goldberg because a match running less than a minute and a half needs to be clipped.

Here's Goldberg getting the full entrance to open things up. Goldberg thanks the fans for letting him be Goldberg again. He also thanks his wife and son for putting up with him and he got to be a star again one more time. Last night he ran into Stephanie McMahon who said he did have one more spear and Jackhammer in him (three spears and two Jackhammers if you're counting) but the question is does he have one more title run left in him. The fans go NUTS over that prospect and Goldberg says he's in the Royal Rumble.

#### Raw Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Sheamus/Cesaro

New Day is defending and talk about breaking Demolition's record for longest Tag Team Title reign in just 23 days. A powerslam gives Cesaro two on Big E. to start but Kofi escapes an early Swing attempt. Instead Cesaro sends him into the barricade and we take a break. Back with Kofi dropkicking Sheamus out of the air but getting Irish Cursed for two.

Sheamus won't tag out though and we get some heel (I think?) miscommunication with Cesaro being knocked off the apron. The hot tag brings in Big E. to clean house as everything breaks down. The Warrior Splash gets two on Sheamus but he rakes Big E.'s eyes to set up White Noise for the same.

It's back to Cesaro vs. Kofi with the Uppercut Train taking off, only to have an SOS get two. Trouble in Paradise is countered into a Cesaro Swing which goes into the Sharpshooter. The Brogue Kick puts Big E. down but Woods gets on the apron for the distraction as Kofi taps. Ever the moron, Cesaro lets the hold go and gets small packaged for the pin at 12:18.

**Rating:** C+. So they seem to be turning New Day heel. I think I can actually go with that as I'd much rather go there than have Cesaro and Sheamus stop them just before the record. Obviously they haven't gotten there yet and there's always the possibility that they'll switch the titles with two days to go, but at least they didn't do it here.

Chris Jericho is distraught that the List of Jericho was destroyed last night. Tonight, he's going to say who's to blame for this travesty.

Enzo Amore is stuck outside his locker room....and he's missing his clothes. After running into the Shining Stars and Titus O'Neil with the expected results. Enzo runs into Lana and, of course, asks how she's doing. Rusev comes in to yell and Cass comes to Enzo's defense. There's no offer of a shirt for Enzo or anything but a match is set up for later.

Mick Foley and Stephanie McMahon do their standard "we're awesome" segment and talk about needing to punish the Raw stars who lost last night. Sami Zayn comes in and gets a match against Braun Strowman. So Foley is a heel too.

#### Ariya Daivari vs. Cedric Alexander

Before the match, Daivari says Canadians are just as bad as Americans and rants in some foreign language. Alexander armbars him before the bell but Daivari takes over as the match gets started. Cedric's springboard is broken up into a big crash but he nails a handspring into a kick to the face. Another springboard into a clothesline sets up the Lumbar Check for the pin on Daivari at 3:10.

**Rating:** C+. The match was fine, even entertaining at times, but as usual I have no reason to care. I'm not sure if the 205 Live show is the solution but maybe they can get the focus back and find some of that spark that made Cruiserweight Classic so entertaining. This was better than the usual stuff at least.

It's time for the Highlight Reel with a serious Jericho wanting to find out what happened with the List of Jericho. Kevin Owens cuts him off and asks when Chris upgraded to the Jeritron 6500. Jericho isn't happy with Owens for not realizing he was there when Jericho upgraded.

We see Owens saving Jericho from the Styles Clash with the List of Jericho, sending Jericho into a rant about everything that could have been seen. Owens: "Who cares???" That seems to be a breaking

point for Jericho, because he cares. Owens yells at Jericho for screwing up by walking into an RKO a few seconds after he sacrificed himself. If that's how Owens feels, maybe they don't have much of a friendship.

Owens is never there when Jericho needs him and Chris is done with him. Kevin spins him around and they both blame Roman Reigns, setting up a big hug. The ranting goes on about Reigns and Rollins (who are hair conditioner brothers) until Seth comes out, demanding his title shot tonight. The brawl is on and here's Reigns, slowly walking to the ring for the save. Cue Foley to make the title match tonight, No DQ, with Jericho and Reigns banned from ringside.

We recap the opening segment.

#### Enzo Amore vs. Rusev

Before the match, Enzo says if Lana wanted to see him sans clothes, she just had to hack his phone. The Accolade finishes Enzo in 58 seconds.

#### Anderson and Gallows vs. Golden Truth

Winners get a shot at New Day next week. Anderson and Gallows take Truth into the corner for an early beating, including a bunch of stomping and a Gallows big boot for two. A kick to the face allows the hot tag to Goldust, who tries to go up top. That just earns him a crotching, followed by the Magic Killer for the pin at 6:02.

**Rating:** D. This was a bit more academic than it should have been and there's nothing wrong with that. It seems that New Day is going to have to run a gauntlet to get to the record, which is kind of a cool idea as long as they don't switch the belts with two days left for a slip on a banana peel moment.

Video on the Wrestlemania tickets going on sale. This includes someone making a fourteen hour drive from Houston because Houston has never heard of an online sale.

#### Braun Strowman vs. Sami Zayn

Strowman jumps him before the bell and Sami is in big trouble to start. A running splash crushes Sami again and the match is almost

stopped. Some hard clotheslines make things even worse. Strowman ties Sami in the Tree of Woe and Mick Foley comes out to stop the match at 4:00.

**Rating:** D. You really can't rate this match fairly but it did exactly what it needed to do. Sami can sell as well as almost anyone I've ever seen and that's what he did here to almost perfection. I'm really curious to see where this goes and I didn't expect that to be the case for this kind of story.

Emmalina video.

Here are Charlotte and Dana Brooke with something to say. She looks at some stills of the postmatch beatdown on Bayley before calling herself the Wayne Gretzky of WWE. Charlotte is so happy she doesn't have to deal with the Team Raw peasants but here's Sasha Banks to interrupt.

Sasha wants her rematch tonight and Charlotte agrees with one condition: it's in her hometown next week so she can beat Sasha again. Cue Nia Jax to say she dominated the Smackdown women, unlike Sasha, the short, purple headed Barbie. Dana finds this hilarious so Sasha decks her, only to get sent into the corner for the running splash. Bayley comes out for the save, meaning Sasha is thrown out to her.

#### Sasha Banks/Bayley vs. Charlotte/Nia Jax

Joined in progress with Nia throwing Bayley around and bringing in Charlotte for a chinlock. A failed monkey flip allows for the hot tag to Banks, who helps out with a double suplex to Nia. The Bank Statement makes Charlotte tap at 4:37.

**Rating:** D+. This did exactly what it needed to do and protected Nia at the same time. Jax is going to devour someone for that title eventually and whoever gets to take it off of her is going to be a star. As long as this leads to a big match with (hopefully all of) the Four Horsewomen at Wrestlemania, everything will be fine.

We look at the opening segment for the third time.

Seth Rollins is ready for his match with Owens.

### Noam Dar vs. Rich Swann vs. TJ Perkins

The winner gets Brian Kendrick, on commentary here, for the title on the debut of 205 Live. Kendrick says the new show was created for him as Dar dropkicks Perkins out to the floor, only to have Swann do the same to Noam. Perkins kicks Rich's knee out and we take a break. Back with Perkins kicking Dar in the face but getting caught in an ankle lock. Swann makes a save, followed by Dar breaking up TJ's kneebar. Another kneebar is broken up by a splash and Swann kicks Perkins in the head for the pin at 7:50.

**Rating:** C. Not bad here and Swann winning makes the most sense, which is a common theme tonight. Swann has already beaten Kendrick twice and it would be a big waste to not have him go anywhere with the title shot. It also helps that Rich has more charisma than most of the division combined so the fans can get behind him for a change.

Owens brags about beating AJ Styles and knows he's ready to beat Rollins, who failed him last night.

Enzo and Cass shill merchandise.

### Raw World Title: Kevin Owens vs. Seth Rollins

Owens is defending and there are no disqualifications with Jericho and Reigns barred from ringside. Kevin tries to bail to the floor and gets kicked in the face for his efforts. The springboard knee to the head gets two inside thirty seconds so it's already table time. Owens grabs the package piledriver slam and we take an early break.

Back with Owens in full control and hammering Seth in the head. A Sling Blade and suicide dive take Owens out, leading to another commercial. Back again with an exchange of strikes to the face putting both guys down. The frog splash misses Owens and it's a Cannonball into a chair onto Rollins for a close two. Owens sets up a pair of chairs for a powerbomb and you can see the backdrop counter coming before it happens.

Another table is set up in the corner and the Buckle Bomb drives Owens through it for a very close two. They fight into the crowd

with Rollins getting the better of it by throwing a trashcan at the champ. Owens tries the powerbomb but Seth grabs the balcony wall and pulls himself up for a big dive. They make it back to ringside but a masked man shoves Rollins off the barricade. Of course it's Jericho and of course he gets a Pedigree on the floor. The Apron Powerbomb wipes Rollins out though and Owens throws him back in to retain at 23:07.

**Rating:** B+. Really good stuff here as it felt like a full on pay per view main event with high spots and near falls. The Jericho interference was a stretch and I'm kind of hoping it isn't used to set up another rematch at Roadblock as I'm pretty much over Rollins vs. Owens after this one. Really good main event though and I bought Rollins as a title threat.

**Overall Rating:** B. I liked this show a lot more than I was expecting to and it's mainly because of the logical booking throughout (most of) the night. You can see where they're going with so much stuff and they set up three title matches in a single show while also having two titles defended. This felt like a completely different kind of Raw and while I don't believe it's going to last, this was a lot of fun and a welcome change of pace.

### Results

New Day b. Cesaro/Sheamus – Small package to Cesaro

Cedric Alexander b. Ariya Daivari – Lumbar Check

Rusev b. Enzo Amore – Accolade

Anderson and Gallows b. Golden Truth – Magic Killer to Goldust

Braun Strowman b. Sami Zayn via stoppage

Bayley/Sasha Banks b. Nia Jax/Charlotte – Bank Statement to Charlotte

Rich Swann b. Noam Dar and TJ Perkins – Kick to Perkins' head

Kevin Owens b. Seth Rollins – Apron powerbomb

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# Monday Night Raw – November 14, 2016: Nope. Send This Back.

## Monday Night Raw

Date: November 14, 2016

Location: First Niagara Center, Buffalo, New York

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Byron Saxton

We're ready for Survivor Series on Sunday and tonight is the last chance for the red show to pump things up. The big story here is Goldberg and Brock Lesnar being in the same ring before their showdown, which you may or may not find interesting. Finally we should get to hear about the big debate between Stephanie and Shane McMahon tonight...which is taking place on the Network after the show. Let's get to it.

All of the Raw Survivor Series participants are on the stage as the bosses are in the ring. Stephanie plugs the debate after the show tonight and Foley says Sunday is about proving what's better between the two shows. This leads to Foley doing Enzo Amore's dance, much to Amore's delight. Stephanie threatens to change Sunday's lineup if some people don't impress them tonight. That includes Cesaro/Sheamus vs. Kevin Owens/Roman Reigns, Chris Jericho/Seth Rollins/Braun Strowman vs. New Day and Charlotte/Sasha Banks vs. Alicia Fox/Nia Jax.

## Roman Reigns/Kevin Owens vs. Cesaro/Sheamus

Naturally Reigns and Owens have to do entrances again after being on the stage before the break. Cesaro and Reigns get things going and Owens is looking bored on the apron. A dropkick sends Reigns into the corner and it's time for an argument between the dysfunctional team over who gets to beat him up. Sheamus dives into an uppercut as I cringe at the thought of that being a World Title feud about a year ago. Owens finally gets involved, only to be taken down by a slingshot dive as we take a break.

Back with Owens clotheslining Cesaro in the corner to set up the Cannonball for two. The hot(ish) tag brings in Sheamus for the apron forearms but he loses a fight to Reigns on the floor. Apparently there was a tag in there somewhere as Reigns is allowed to come in and beat on Sheamus, including the Superman Punch for two. Owens tags himself back in and eats a Brogue Kick, only to have Reigns spear Sheamus to give Kevin the pin at 12:10.

**Rating:** D+. This is feeling like the leadup to Money in the Bank with the random matches that don't go anywhere. This was a boring tag with the "regular" team losing clean and the makeshift team seemingly setting up something after Survivor Series. I really wasn't feeling this one and the rest of the show doesn't seem like it's going to be much better.

Jericho tries to get Rollins and Strowman to calm down and work together later, ala Owens. He even has presents for both of them: scarves! Rollins declines and Strowman rips up Jericho's scarf because he doesn't like Chris.

## Sami Zayn vs. Bo Dallas

This is over Dallas not being happy with Sami getting the Intercontinental Title shot. The standard arm work doesn't last long so it's Dallas being aggressive in the corner to take over. Sami comes right back and hits the exploder into the corner followed by the Helluva Kick for the pin at 2:30.

Brian Kendrick has a speech for the cruiserweights. He knows everyone is concerned about moving to Smackdown but there's no way he's going to lose because he's the standard bearer of this division. Most of the division starts talking about how they could beat Kendrick and an argument breaks out. This really didn't need to exist.

New Day comes out for their match and they've got a merchandise cart. They've been WWE Tag Team Champions for nearly 450 days because they know how to survive. With the holidays right around the corner, you need their gear to survive, with gear such as New Day Socks. You can stuff that sock with a unicorn horn or a certain brand of cereal.

#### New Day vs. Seth Rollins/Braun Strowman/Chris Jericho

Jericho and Kofi start things off and that's not a bad thing. An elbow to the jaw puts Kofi on the mat and it's quickly off to Woods vs. Rollins with the latter coming in off a chop to the chest. That goes nowhere either as they hit the mat for Seth's headlock before it's back to Jericho as New Day takes over. The Warrior splash gets two and Kofi comes back in, only to get slammed by Braun as we take a break.

Back with Braun holding Kofi in a nerve hold before handing it back to Rollins. Some double knees put Seth down but it's Strowman running cross the ring to kick Big E. in the face. We wind up with Woods kicking Jericho in the back and Strowman plowing through the other two opponents. Woods finally kicks him in the face and forearms Rollins in the jaw. That's enough for Braun though as it's a powerslam to end Xavier at 14:06.

**Rating:** C. This picked up a lot near the end as Woods continues to be great at the last chance offense. Strowman is getting better at being a rampaging monster but he's still in need of some more experience. I liked the match well enough though and New Day will be fine with a loss like this. That being said, it's getting harder and harder to care about these one off matches between people with no animosity.

Paul Heyman interrupts the bosses and suggests that there won't be a match if Lesnar isn't happy. Mick orders more security.

Charlotte is in the back with Sasha for the weekly "women like to bicker with each other" segment. The big deal here is that Sasha has a title rematch down the line and they don't like each other.

#### Brian Kendrick vs. Sin Cara

Non-title and Kendrick jumps him during the entrances. Cara says ring the bell so Brian beats him up in the corner as we hear about 205 Live, which really isn't the best idea during this dull match.

The chinlock evolves into the choking on the ropes but a backdrop puts Kendrick outside for a suicide dive. A second dive hits the barricade and we take a break. IN THIS MATCH.

Back with Kendrick choking even more because that's what a heel cruiserweight does. Brian misses a charge in the corner and a top rope spinning splash gives Cara two. The crowd is just GONE here as Cara gets two off a sitout powerbomb. Kendrick goes for the mask and puts on the Captain's Hook (looks terrible) for the tap out at 11:05.

**Rating:** D. Was this Cara's punishment for the fight with Jericho? This was slow, boring and completely killed what little energy the crowd had left. As has been the case for months now, WWE has no idea what to do with a cruiserweight division. An eleven minute match is bad enough but having it be mostly spent on chinlocks and choking before finishing with a chinlock. This division really needs to go somewhere else and maybe its own show is the solution, but not without some major changes.

Enzo and Big Cass are in the back when Anderson and Gallows come up. They don't trust each other in their eight man tag tonight.

It's time for Lesnar and Goldberg as it's nearly halftime of Monday Night Football. Lesnar slips a bit during his jump to the apron but it's not bad. There's a wall of security as Goldberg tells Lesnar to shut up and stay out of this. Heyman gets cut off by the GOLDBERG chants before finally going on about all the people Lesnar has killed. Goldberg cuts him off again to say his name isn't on that list, only to have the chants start up again. Heyman starts to offer something but Lesnar grabs the mic and tells the fans to shut up.

The offer is for Heyman to find a replacement for Sunday's match. That means Goldberg takes off his shirt so Lesnar shoves some guards down. Heyman says the beating will be so bad that Goldberg's son will call Lesnar daddy. The security is quickly dispatched and there's no one left between them. Lesnar, with one of the palest chests I've ever seen on a wrestler, walks away. This was WAY too long but they don't have a choice because there's nothing left for them to do on the show.

Sasha Banks/Charlotte vs. Nia Jax/Alicia Fox

Bayley is on commentary. Charlotte gets to face Nia to start and Sasha bails to the floor because they're partners that don't like

each other. I didn't know if they had made that clear in the two previous matches with the same stories. The champ can't get anywhere with the monster and bails to the floor for an early break.

Back with Sasha rolling Alicia up for one and hitting the chinlock. Charlotte and Sasha finally break down and get in a fight, allowing Fox to bring Alicia back in. A big boot staggers Jax but another fight allows Alicia to come in with a high crossbody. Charlotte neutralizes Nia and the Bank Statement makes Fox tap at 7:45.

**Rating:** C-. Boring match (due to seeing the same story for the third time in just over two hours) but it makes sense to actually have them get in a fight for a change. I really don't need to see Charlotte vs. Sasha again but I'm sure they'll have one more gimmick match to really hammer home how important it is. Also, well done on having Alicia job here, which you can imagine them screwing up to try to swerve the audience.

Foley gives the Raw team another pep talk.

#### Enzo Amore/Big Cass/Anderson and Gallows vs. Shining Stars/Golden Truth

Cass throws Epico around to start and everything breaks down, leaving Golden Truth vs. Enzo and Cass. Uh, epic? We take a break just over a minute in and come back with a double Russian legsweep to Anderson. Karl pops right back up and grabs a chinlock on Truth as the fans are some combination of confused over who to cheer for and bored half to death. Primo tags himself in and gets to face Big Cass as everything breaks down. The Magic Killer plants Primo and Anderson tells to go up for the Bada Boom Shaka Lacka before just taking the pin himself at 9:03.

**Rating:** D. Yeah go back and look at one of the ratings for the same idea earlier on and substitute in the appropriate names. I don't think there's much that I can add to this one because there's almost no story here. Anderson and Gallows don't like the rest of the division and they're mean to their partners. Next segment please.

Here are all four bosses for the really long closing segment. They bicker a lot, the fans chant for Smackdown, Stephanie gets in a funny line with "YOU GUYS ARE AT RAW!", Bryan points out that Foley and Shane are known for jumping off of tall structures and they debate the cruiserweight division being on the line.

Stephanie brings out the Raw team but here's the Smackdown team through the crowd. Owens and AJ get in an argument over whose title is more important with Owens saying it's his because he holds it. AJ suggests that Owens might wind up on the list but Jericho gives him a hug to calm things down. That means AJ JUST MADE THE LIST (pop of the night). Oh and that stupid soccer mom haircut? IT JUST MADE THE LIST! Jericho still isn't done as he sees James Ellsworth, who is a weird looking guy. "Do you know what happens to weird looking guys on Raw? YOU JUST MADE THE LIST!"

Bray grabs the mic and yells at Braun for abandoning him after being given the keys to the kingdom. This Sunday, Smackdown destroys the monster that Bray created. A staredown ensues but Seth grabs the mic, only to start the brawl. Everyone goes after Braun with Shane getting to knock him outside. Orton gets back in but it's Reigns cleaning house and getting booted out of the building. A DoubleBomb sends AJ onto Team Smackdown to end the show. This got really good once the bosses shut up but it's way too late to save this dog of a show.

**Overall Rating:** D. The wrestling was acceptable (albeit boring) but the problem here was the lack of effort. This three plus hour show had two main ideas: wacky tag team partners who don't get along and Goldberg vs. Lesnar. The latter of those ideas took fifteen minutes and the other idea took up the rest of the show. Save for a WAY too long cruiserweight match (Yeah I know, I criticize the cruiserweights. Get over it.) and a nothing Sami vs. Dallas match, that's all this show was. For three hours. Two ideas.

I can tolerate a show focused on one thing or a show that is trying to accomplish a goal but this was WAY over the top. You can't showcase someone on the team against people not on the pay per view roster? Or do ANYTHING other than the same idea for most of the show? I checked out on this show as soon as I realized they didn't have anything tonight and that's not something that should ever happen. The quality wasn't the worst here and the ending segment did it a lot of favors but the lack of effort destroys it.

### Results

Kevin Owens/Roman Reigns b. Cesaro/Sheamus – Spear to Sheamus

Sami Zayn b. Bo Dallas – Helluva Kick

Braun Strowman/Seth Rollins/Chris Jericho b. New Day – Powerslam to

Woods

Brian Kendrick b. Sin Cara – Captain's Hook

Charlotte/Sasha Banks b. Alicia Fox/Nia Jax – Bank Statement to Fox

Enzo Amore/Big Cass/Anderson and Gallows b. Shining Stars/Golden Truth – Magic Killer to Primo

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