

On This Day: September 30, 1996 – Monday Night Raw: Just Surrender The Wars Now

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 30, 1996

Location; Hershey Park Arena, Hershey, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 3,923

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Kevin Kelly

We're in an interesting time for the WWF at this point. By interesting I mean WCW is absolutely murdering them and WWF is clinging to whatever they can find. It's about a week after Mind Games, meaning Shawn is still WWF Champion and the main feud is now Undertaker vs. Mankind as we head into Buried Alive. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of JR's recent heel turn. Man alive I have to put through this in the 1999 series and now I have to do it again here? This was right after he brought in Fake Razor and Fake Diesel debuts tonight.

Steve Austin vs. Jake Roberts

Austin was already the King of the Ring but he wasn't a huge star yet because Bret Hart hadn't been there to give him the big rub. Jake is feuding with Jerry Lawler at this point. Austin takes him into the corner to start so Jake does the exact same thing to him. Off to a headlock by Steve as JR rants about management some more. Austin stalls a lot before charging into the corner, only to have to bail to the floor to avoid the DDT.

A Lawler distraction doesn't help Austin so he goes with the elbows to the chest to take over. JR continues to rant about how much his job sucks as Austin goes after the ribs. The middle rope elbow gets two for Austin

and we take a break. Back with Austin missing an elbow to the back of the head and Jake starting the DDT sequence, only to be clotheslined down for two. Lawler gets up with two bottles of booze (for the alcoholic Jake) as Jake hits the DDT on Steve. Jerry spits whiskey in Jake's face, allowing Austin to hit the Stunner (much slower than it would become but it works that way too) for the pin.

Rating: C-. More of an angle than a match here. It's always interesting to see the original Austin though since he was a totally different yet awesome wrestler before the neck injury. The Stunner as a slow move that stops someone dead in their tracks is an interesting take on the move rather than having it be a big move like it became.

Austin and Lawler beat up Jake but Savio Vega and his leather strap make the save.

Mankind digs a grave by hand but Bearer says Undertaker has buried his own grave.

Here's the blueblood HHH to call out Mr. Perfect.

The Grimms vs. Godwinns

The Grimms are gimmick #6000 for the Harris Twins. HHH jumps in on commentary as Phineas walks around ringside with a goat. Jason Grimm starts with Phineas by grabbing a quickly broken headlock. Off to Henry vs. Jared Grimm with the Godwinn hitting a big clothesline to send Grimm to the floor. Mr. Perfect jumps in on a split screen as the twins take over on Henry. Perfect says he'll accept the challenge but he'll give HHH a few weeks to get ready. Jared's chinlock is quickly broken and it's hot tag to Phineas to clean house. Phineas escapes a backbreaker and lays out Jared with the Slop Drop (reverse DDT) for the pin.

Rating: D. The match was just a backdrop for the Perfect/HHH angle which

gets annoying after awhile. It always amuses me when I see the Harris Brothers going from generic gimmick to generic gimmick like this. Almost none of them are any better than the other so why constantly change it without putting any effort into the thing?

Video on Jeff Jarrett lip synching, meaning he jumped to WCW so we need something to move his heat to Road Dogg. Back when he sang in 1995 it was clearly Road Dogg's voice which was supposed to set up a feud between the two of them but the contract came up so we'll just reveal it here instead. Not a big loss to be fair.

Fake Razor Ramon vs. Savio Vega

JR says he brought back Razor Ramon but not Scott Hall, which is an interesting take on the idea. It's a nice jab at Hall and Nash but I don't think most of the fans cared for the most part. WWF President Gorilla Monsoon joins commentary to complain about the angle. JR of course complains about Vince and no one cares at all. It's very strange hearing Monsoon talking about Scott Hall and Kevin Nash. I can feel my childhood dying away.

Savio pounds away to start but gets sent into the corner for right hands. Razor avoids a charge into the corner as the great debate about Ramon continues on commentary. The fallaway slam puts Vega down and it's off to an armbar by Razor. The hold stays on for a good while and you can hear Lawler getting annoyed at the argument. In the back, Doc Hendrix is going to try to get an interview with Diesel. Back to the armbar as this just keeps going. Savio gets two off a small package as Hendrix can't find Diesel.

We take a break (complete with Lex Luger's WCW music over an ad for the WWF Hotline) and come back with more armbarring and more complaining from JR. Now he's complaining about Doink having a job and how Monsoon should hate it too. Savio makes a comeback and Fake Diesel (Kane, though he actually looks a lot like Nash in the attire) comes in for the DQ.

Rating: F. The idea of “anyone can play the characters” was a nice jab at WCW, but the match was HORRIBLE. It was about ten minutes of armbars and JR ranting and raving about how stupid this was. One lesson here though: Kane is a great example of repackaging until you find the right gimmick. They tried him as a knight, a dentist and Fake Diesel until they FINALLY got it right with Undertaker’s brother. The key thing though was they recognized the talent and kept at it.

Undertaker is in the graveyard and says he knew Bearer would stoop to this. He’ll be glad to dig Mankind’s grave and bury him alive.

Vader/Jim Cornette vs. Jose Lothario/Shawn Michaels

For some reason we look at a video of Marc Mero vs. Faarooq during the entrances. The wrestlers start us off as JR complains AGAIN about Diesel getting a match against Marc Mero next week but not being in the advertisements. Shawn pounds away to start but gets his head taken off with a clothesline to give the monster control. A running splash in the corner crushes Shawn and a standing fallaway slam sends him flying.

Shawn punches out of the powerbomb and actually takes Vader down with a hurricanrana, only to be launched to the floor. Back in and Vader pounds away in the corner before bringing in Cornette. He takes too much time warming up though allowing for the tag to the ancient Lothario. Corny goes to the eyes and brings in Vader but it’s back to Shawn before we get the old man death.

Shawn speeds things up with the forearm and nipup followed by the elbow. Vader ducks the superkick though and takes Shawn’s head off with a clothesline. Back from a late break with Vader changing his mind between the moonsault and the Vader Bomb, only to jump onto Shawn’s legs. Shawn actually slams him down but his back gives out on a second attempt. The powerbomb and Vader Bomb are enough to pin Shawn.

Rating: C-. The tag match was an excuse to keep this from officially

being one on one but that's all it was for all intents and purposes. The match was nothing special but it kept Vader looking strong, even though it was just to be fed to some superhero down the line. It's a good choice for a main event but there's nothing much to see here.

Vader stays on Shawn until Sid makes the save to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. I think I get why WCW was dominating at this point. This was AWFUL with the best matches being ok at their very best. The Razor/JR stuff was horrible and I can't imagine anyone cared. It's a nice idea for a jab but all it's going to make people do is watch the real thing on Nitro without JR's whining. Terrible show and it's a long road to February when Raw was completely changed into the show we know today.

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Jim Ross Officially Retires

Wasn't he pretty much retired already anyway? Nothing major here but I'd be surprised if he doesn't pop up every now and then.