

# NWA TNA Weekly PPV #4 (2024 Redo): Feel The Fingerprints

## NWA-TNA Weekly PPV #4

Date: July 10, 2002

Location: Nashville Auditorium, Nashville, Tennessee

Commentators: Mike Tenay, Ed Ferrara, Don West

The promotion is still getting started and still in search of a top story. We have Brian Christopher turning on Scott Hall so Jeff Jarrett could be a bigger villain, Ken Shamrock doing whatever he has going on and AJ Styles and Jerry Lynn being partners who can't stand each other. That makes for a bit of a mixed bag around here, but odds are we'll be seeing a bunch of dumb ideas to go with those. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

We recap how AJ Styles and Jerry Lynn won the Tag Team Titles in their first match as a team (minus Low Ki that is).

Tag Team Titles: AJ Styles/Jerry Lynn vs. Disciples Of The New Church

The Disciples (Slash/Tempest, with James Mitchell) are challenging. Slash shoulders Lynn down to start but a powerslam is escaped. Lynn runs the corner for a bulldog and Styles comes in for a running flipping splash to the back. Tempest (better known as Crowbar) comes in and gets his arm cranked, followed by a kick to the face for a bonus. Back up and Tempest runs him over, only to be sent outside. That doesn't last long as Tempest is back in to take over, including an ankle scissors out of the corner.

Styles gets backdropped to the apron but comes back in with a

springboard missile dropkick, allowing the tag back to Lynn. Everything breaks down and the Disciples pull a diving Styles out of the air. Lynn makes a quick save and Styles adds a Lionsault for two on Tempest. Back up and Tempest's Death Valley Driver gets two on Styles so Slash can come back in for some rams into the buckle.

What would become James Storm's Eye of the Storm sends Styles flying but he's fine enough to catapult Slash into the corner. Lynn comes back in to start the comeback, including a sitout bulldog for two on Tempest. Another Death Valley Driver is broken up and Lynn hits the cradle piledriver, only for Slash to kick him in the face. Styles tags himself back in and (kind of) hits the Spiral Tap to retain at 10:37.

**Rating:** C+. This was a way to show that the champions who don't quite get along can get along well enough to retain the titles, even if they were still having issues. It's still probably the top story in the promotion at the moment, or at least the most interesting, though I'm not sure how much ground that is covering. The New Church is already looking like a bunch of losers and odds are that is going to continue without much to make it better.

Post match a bunch of pyro goes off, which seems like quite the celebration for a title defense. Lynn isn't pleased with Styles' celebration and walks out.

Commentary shows us the end of last week's show, with Brian Christopher turning on Scott Hall, leading to a big Jeff Jarrett beatdown. Hall calls in and swears vengeance, with the audio from the replay drowning out his interview, because this promotion doesn't know what it's doing.

Here is Christopher to say it's time for his to transition from a child to a man. For his entire life, he has been known as Jerry Lawler's son and now, screw Jerry. His dad was a terrible father and last week, Christopher took Hall out. He

tells Jerry to go to h\*\*\* and goes on a rant about how Jerry was never there so now it's time to be his own man. From now on, it's all about Brian LAWLER. So Jerry shows up soon for a fight right? Otherwise, that would be a pretty big waste of a promo.

### Brian Lawler vs. Norman Smiley

Lawler jumps him to start but Smiley gets in a shot of his own and stops to dance. The Big Wiggle ensues so Lawler plants him down to cut that off. A running shoulder in the corner has Smiley in more trouble but he avoids another one, with Lawler going shoulder first into the post. Smiley hammers away in the corner, only for Lawler to get in a low blow. The Hip Hop Drop (he does at least take off the goggles) finishes Smiley at 4:48.

**Rating:** C. It's a heel turn, but unfortunately it's a heel turn for Brian Lawler. You're just only going to get so much out of that and I'm thinking we've already seen the peak of the whole thing. The Jerry promo was just weird and the match itself was just ok.

Post match Lawler calls out Scott Hall, who is next on his list.

Jeff Jarrett is told that he doesn't have a World Title shot. He shoves Bill Behrens (How many authority figures does this show need?) and gets suspended before storming off. As this goes on, we can hear James Mitchell yelling at the New Church but the door is shut before we see anything.

### K-Krush vs. Hermie Sadler

Before the match, Krush threatens the fans for liking NASCAR too much. They yell at each other to start before Krush hammers away, only to be sent outside. Sadler gets in a few shots and then rains down some right hands inside for two but Krush is back with the ax kick for an arrogant near fall of

his own. A suplex gives Krush two more and a powerslam gets the same (with one finger). The Figure Four goes on but Sadler turns it over for the break, because he knows how to do that. Krush dives into a sitout powerbomb but Krush rolls him up with feet on the ropes for the pin at 5:06.

**Rating:** D+. What is there to say about this? It's been one of the worst parts of the company for the first four weeks and it was bad again here. Sadler isn't a wrestler and isn't interesting but he's the closest thing to a celebrity that they have who can get in the ring. The match was pretty bad even by celebrity standards and the Krush just cheated to beat him. Nothing to this one and hopefully it's over.

Then Krush hits Sadler after the match and the decision is reversed. Victory?

Takao Omori, the #1 contender to the World Title, pays Alicia off.

### Hot Shots vs. Briscoes

That would be Cassidy O'Reilly/Chase Stevens vs. those Briscoes, the latter of whom don't get entrances. Jay headscissors Stevens down to start and it's off to Mark, who gets spinebusted down. Mark comes back in with a springboard missile dropkick to the back but gets backdropped hard to the floor. The Hot Shots hit stereo dives...and cue Malice of the New Church to jump Stevens for the DQ at 2:10. This was rather fast paced but just a bunch of moves until the quick ending.

Post match Malice wrecks everyone as James Mitchell and the New Church approve. Mitchell says they aren't leaving until Ken Shamrock's blood is on Malice's hands. There is no Shamrock, so Mitchell has the Disciples beat up the timekeeper. Now Shamrock runs in but gets beaten down, with Takao Omori running in for the save before their title match later.

The Dupps are rather disgusting but are ready to beat up the Flying Elvises. If the shoe fits, it's probably the right size.

We're ready for a tag match but adult film star Jasmin St. Clair interrupts instead. She knows what the letters TNA really stand for so who wants to see the real thing tonight? A chair is thrown in and ring announcer Jeremy Borash (described as her "little sex toy") is sat down for a dance (with his eyes bugging out in a hilarious visual. Bill Behrens comes in with a towel and Ed Ferrara runs in to spear him down (ok points for a funny bit). St. Clair is taken out with the towel anyway to end an unintentionally funny but stupid segment.

### Flying Elvises vs. Dupps

Fluff is here with the Dupps. It's a brawl to start and Siaki is put down with a spinebuster as Mortimer Plumtree comes out, because something has to happen in every single match. Estrada gets sent into the corner as Plumtree says the Johnsons needed discipline after last week. Stan's Alabama Slam out of the corner doesn't even get one due to a foot on the rope but Siaki fakes a tag and takes over on Bo. The split legged moonsault gives Siaki two but Bo plants him back down. Stan comes in as everything breaks down, with Estrada hitting a springboard spinning Swanton for the pin on Stan at 5:03.

**Rating:** C. I'm not sure if you could have Vince Russo's fingerprints on a match more than this one. Not only do you have a lowest common denominator gimmick like the Dupps, but you have another goofy thing in the Elvises, plus someone walking out without having much to do with the match, which is not exactly great in the first place. It's a case of too much going on and the stuff that is going on not being very good anyway. Much like a lot of this show.

Jerry Lynn and AJ Styles are brawling throughout the back, with Lynn sending him into the barricade and hitting a cradle

piledriver onto an anvil case.

### NWA World Title: Takao Omori vs. Ken Shamrock

Shamrock is defending and fires off some knees to the ribs to start. A figure four headscissors has Omori in more trouble as Harley Race is watching at ringside. That's broken up and the bigger Omori fights out of the corner and hits a running spinwheel kick. The chinlock doesn't last long so Omori whips him into the corner, where the spinwheel kick misses.

Shamrock chokes on the rope but Omori grabs a running neckbreaker (though he seemed to come in from the wrong direction for a weird visual). Omori shrugs off some kicks to the bad leg (as injured by the missed kick) and hits a clothesline for two. A kneebar has Omori in more trouble so he makes the rope, meaning the ankle lock goes on...and here is Jeff Jarrett to chair Shamrock for the DQ at 7:53.

**Rating:** C. Of course that's how it ends. This was another good example of what's going wrong with a lot of this show: who is Omori, why should I care about him, and is this going to lead anywhere for him? Omori was named (not shown) last week and suddenly gets a World Title shot based on his reputation in Japan. You could have had him do a squash match or something last week to show us even a glimpse, but instead he's debuted and loses his focus in less than eight minutes. That doesn't make me want to see more, but rather wondering why I'm supposed to be interested.

Post match Jarrett beats up both of them, plus security.

Jerry Lynn won't talk about what he did to AJ Styles. James Mitchell and the Disciples of the New Church come in, looking for Jeff Jarrett and the sin he just committed. Did he try the ring? As in where Jarrett just was? Anyway, we cut over to Bill Behrens, having been bound and gagged with FU written on his stomach, just like Jim Miller last week.

Low Ki vs. Elix Skipper vs. Kid Romeo vs. Christopher Daniels vs. Jerry Lynn vs. Tony Mamaluke

This is an elimination match to establish the X-Division rankings (the first wrestler eliminated is #6, the next is #5 and so on) and thank goodness there are tags. Romeo and Daniels start things off with Romeo working on the arm before switching to a headlock. A dropkick puts Daniels down again so it's off to Skipper to kick him in the face. Mamaluke comes in to help double team Skipper down as commentary goes over some WCW history.

Skipper gets his leg dropkicked out to cut him off again but he hands it off to Lynn for a monkey flip. Ki comes in and kicks Mamaluke's head off for two (that should have been an elimination) but Mamaluke is back with a suplex. It's back to Romeo to chop away at Daniels until Lynn comes back in and sunset flips Romeo for two. A middle rope tornado DDT gives Lynn two more but Daniels monkey flips Lynn outside.

The Arabian moonsault drops Lynn again, setting up a big dive from Romeo. Ki and Skipper hit stereo flip dives of their own and everyone is down. Back in and Lynn hits his slingshot Fameasser over the ropes to Daniels, only to get crotched on top. Actually that's it for Lynn, who is eliminated via...countout at about 10:15? That's quite the stretch after EVERYONE WAS ON THE FLOOR JUST A FEW SECONDS AGO.

Anyway, Mamaluke gordbusters Daniels and grabs a Koji Clutch but Skipper comes back in with a running clothesline. The Play Of The Day gets rid of Mamaluke at 11:29 and we're down to four. Ki comes in and stomps away on Skipper before sending him hard out to the floor. Back in and a Ki Crusher into the corner knocks Skipper silly for two, as these kickouts on Ki are a bit ridiculous. Skipper is back up with a backbreaker and a missile dropkick but it's back to Daniels to slug away. Matt Hardy's Ricochet drops Daniels and the Last Rites (something like Cross Rhodes) gets rid of Skipper at 14:54.

Romeo faceplants Daniels for two and dropkicks Ki off the apron, leaving Ki holding his arm. Daniels takes Romeo up top, only to get pulled into a super Air Raid Crash (that looked good) for the...not pin as Daniels' foot was on the rope. Ki comes back in with the dragon sleeper to make Romeo tap at 17:03 and now we're down to Ki vs. Daniels.

They trade chops in the corner until Daniels grabs a Downward Spiral for the double knockdown. The Best Moonsault Ever gives Daniels a delayed near fall and they trade cradles for two each. The dragon sleeper has Daniels in trouble again but he flips out in time. Daniels grabs an Iconoclasm (Fall From Grace) out of the corner for two more but a quick Ki Crusher gives Ki the win at 21:41.

**Rating:** B. Shockingly enough, this was the most entertaining match of the night, which probably comes from it getting more time and allowing the people involved to do their thing for a good while. I like the idea of having rankings in the division, but that isn't going to matter if they don't stick. It would not shock me at all to see Ki getting a shot and then Lynn jumping into a title match because of personal reasons, making most of the concept pointless, but at least they had a very fast paced match on the way there.

Post match the Flying Elvises run in to clean house because they wanted in the match (fair point). Tony Mamaluke and Kid Romeo run in for the save.

Commentary previews next week's show...and here is Jeff Jarrett, who was suspended earlier tonight and it means nothing. He wants the World Title shot next week and yells at fans until going after some Tennessee Titans, who jump the barricade for the brawl. Cue the Disciples of the New Church, with Malice brawling with Jarrett into the crowd to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. Believe it or not, the X-Division is



carrying this show, but at the end of the day, there is only so much that you can get out of them when the rest of the show is pretty horrible. As has been the case, it doesn't feel like there is much in the way of focus around here and the show feels all over the place as a result. There are stories going on, but they're not exactly things that I want to keep watching. The Lawler stuff feels like it could get stupid in a hurry and Jarrett whining about wanting a title shot has already lost its appeal. There's good stuff in there, but there is a lot of bad to sit through to find it.

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**Monday Nitro – March 26, 2001  
(2016 Redo, Final Episode,  
Final Thoughts On Nitro):**

# Everybody Have Fun Tonight

## Monday Nitro #288

Date: March 26, 2001

Location: Boardwalk Beach Resort, Panama City, Florida

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Scott Hudson

I can't believe I actually typed that. After over five and a half years, we've actually arrived at the final episode of Monday Nitro. Tonight is the Night of Champions show with every title being defended. Other than that there's been an open call to all former WCW World Champions to show up and bring their gear. That could be interesting or a big disappointment and I'll let you guess which I'm expecting. Let's get to it.

We open with Vince McMahon standing in front of the Raw interview set. There had been rumors that something big was coming but if you thought WCW was going to survive after this, you really were in denial. Vince gives us the famous quote of "the very fate of WCW is in my hands" and that's pretty much it for WCW. Yeah there were plans for WCW to continue, but you had to know that Vince was going to crush them given his track record.

Opening sequence.

The outside sets are still really cool and look so different than anything else most companies would do.

The announcers aren't sure what to think. It's so strange to hear his name mentioned on Nitro.

Here's Ric Flair, instantly a face for the final show, with something to say. Ric thinks he heard Vince McMahon say he would hold WCW in the palms of his hand. So he's going to hold Jack Brisco, Dory Funk, Harley Race (none of whom actually wrestled in WCW but close enough), the Road Warriors, Lex Luger and Sting in the palm of his hand? Not on Flair's watch.

Flair is a fourteen time World Champion (as the title count is a different number here despite him winning no more titles and despite him saying he's a 20-something time champion because it's all over the place) and this is a company that has run neck and neck with Vince for years. Yeah I think it's like two or three years but whatever. Vince's dad voted for Flair to be the World Champion (you don't often hear Flair break kayfabe like that) back in the 1970s and he's been flying around the world ever since.

This company has always been about the boys and Vince can't hold them in his hands. Vince hasn't bled for forty five minutes and wrestled for an hour before going to the next town and doing it all again the next night. In closing, Flair says his greatest opponent has been Sting. Tonight, he wants Sting one more time as it's his last chance to beat the man.

This was a really passionate speech and Flair was the only one who could give it due to his history and resume in wrestling. The problem is that he's wrong about how WCW is going to be remembered. A lot of people are going to remember it as the wrestling based company (and it was) but a lot of people are also going to remember it as the company that set the standard for being the biggest money pit that wrestling has ever seen.

Now Flair is definitely in the previous camp of the two as he really never was in with the crowd that brought WCW down and always stood for tradition. I liked the idea here and Flair sold it very well but it's hard to accept WCW as this great company that Vince just pulled the plug on one day.

Macho Man Slim Jim ad, just for old times' sake I guess.

WCW World Title/US Title: Scott Steiner vs. Booker T.

Title vs. title. Booker starts fast with a spinning kick to the face for an early two. Scott Hudson asks when the last time the US Champion faced the World Champion as he's supposed to do "every single night". That's why I've never liked that rule and was glad when WCW stopped enforcing it. If the US Champion is the #1 contender by definition, wouldn't that be the only World Title match we ever get?

Booker hammers away in the corner until Scott sends him outside but misses a pipe shot by hitting the post by mistake. Hudson: "He almost split the post with that pipe!" No Scott, he didn't. A belly to belly gets two on Booker. Steiner cranks on both arms but gets dropkicked down. The Ghetto Blaster and Spinarooni set up a side kick, followed by the Book End to give us a new World Champion.

**Rating:** C. Well that happened. This felt like a quick TV Title match for the sake of getting the titles on the show instead of something big. I know they wanted to give the title to a top face but opening the show with a five minute match? I'm curious to see what else they feel deserves this time instead of this match.

Video on Spring Break. Eh it's a sponsor thing so I guess they have to do this.

Vince is on the phone with his attorney and laughs at the idea of WCW holding its last show in the Florida panhandle.

#### Jung Dragons vs. 3 Count vs. Kidman/Rey Mysterio

Winner gets a Cruiserweight Tag Team Title match later tonight. Kidman headscissors Yang to start but everything breaks down in the first thirty seconds. Everyone heads outside with Shannon hitting a big corkscrew dive, leaving Yang to hit Yang Time for two on Rey as Kidman makes the save. Bottoms Up plants Kidman with Kaz making the save this time. Karagias hits a 450 on Kaz for two more but Kidman knocks him out to the floor. Back in and Rey hits a quick springboard legdrop to pin Moore and get the title shot.

**Rating:** C. This is another hard one to grade as it's about three and a half minutes long with everyone flying all over the place and no structure whatsoever. They probably could have been cut off the show without missing anything and the time could have been giving to the World Title match but I've heard worse ideas. That being said, I would have liked to see 3 Count, Noble/Karagias or the Dragons get a title shot, if nothing else as a thank you for everything they did for six months.

Trish Stratus comes in to see Vince and I think you can guess what

happens.

Cruiserweight Title: Chavo Guerrero Jr. vs. Shane Helms

Shane is defending. Chavo drives him into the corner to start but gets caught in the fireman's carry facebuster for two. A belly to back puts the champ down but he pops back up top for a sunset flip. Chavo gets two more off a northern lights suplex and ducks a superkick. The second superkick connects though and the Vertebreaker retains Helms' title.

**Rating:** C+. Another short match but I like the idea of putting Shane over again. Helms has been awesome and deserves to go out as champion. It's good that both of these guys had long careers as they're two of the only guys who looked like they were trying every single night in the last six months of WCW's run. It's even more impressive when you consider how different Shane's character would become in the next few years.

We're off to a commercial before Tony can even say who won.

Booker says he's not done yet and is ready to fight anyone.

Trish has lost her jacket and here's Michael Cole to interview Vince. Guess what his thoughts are on WCW fans' concerns.

Tag Team Titles: Lance Storm/Mike Awesome vs. Sean O'Haire/Chuck Palumbo

Palumbo and O'Haire are defending after losing a non-title match last year. Sean and Storm start things off with O'Haire taking over and bringing in Chuck. That goes badly for the champs as Awesome slingshots in with a splash for two. Back to Storm who is catapulted into the buckle and staggers back into a sunset flip for another near fall. The hot tag brings in O'Haire to clean house and the reverse AA gets two on Awesome. Everything breaks down and the Jungle Kick into the Seanton Bomb puts Awesome away to retain the titles.

**Rating:** C. This show is moving fast and the longest match so far is the opener. That being said, the wrestling is far from the point tonight with most of the show being about the atmosphere and making sure every champion gets one more match. Team Canada were good designated victims for O'Haire and Palumbo, who should have been bigger deals than they

wound up being.

### Shawn Stasiak vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

THIS warranted a spot on the show? They really couldn't have thrown this on Thunder instead? If Stasiak loses he gets tattooed. Stacy teases stripping before the match but just introduces Stasiak. Bigelow's early offense goes nowhere but he ducks a top rope clothesline. Stacy gets on the apron to distract the referee as Bigelow hits the top rope headbutt. Greetings From Asbury Park is broken up by the blonde and the neckbreaker puts Bigelow away in a nothing match. This really didn't need to be on the show.

William Regal tries to talk Vince out of buying WCW. I still love that Wrestlemania X7 baseball jersey.

Diamond Dallas Page has loved the ride and wants to know what's next. Page thanks everyone who has been there for him but gives most of the credit to the fans. It's time to take this to the next level.

Package on the WCW/NWA World Title. That's a nice touch.

Vince says it's about that time.

### Cruiserweight Tag Team Titles: Kidman/Rey Mysterio vs. Kid Romeo/Elix Skipper

Skipper and Romeo are defending. Skipper jumps Kidman on the way in as Tony rips on Regal because THAT needed to be done on this show. Kidman holds Skipper up for a springboard dropkick from Mysterio as they're clearly going very fast. A quick double team puts Kidman in trouble and Skipper Matrixes out of a cross body.

Romeo misses a high cross body of his own and the hot tag brings in Rey to clean house. Everything breaks down and a baseball slide low blow sets up the Bronco Buster on Skipper but Romeo saves him before Rey can go up top. Rey's springboard falling headbutt gets two and the Kid Crusher on Elix gives us new champions.

**Rating:** C+. That's it for the belts and really, it's not like they meant

anything in the first place. Romeo and Skipper had a total of maybe five matches together so it's cool to see Kidman and Mysterio winding up as the final champions. They've been around for so long that they deserve one last title reign before this company goes under.

Sting is here and says there's no way he would miss this night. As for his future, nothing's for sure. IT'S SHOWTIME FOLKS!

Another Spring Break video.

Vince struts down the hall.

### Ric Flair vs. Sting

Flair is wrestling in a t-shirt, which is probably in our best interest. Hudson puts over Sting as the only guy who never jumped. Sting shoves him down to start and Flair is already complaining of a hair pull. The announcers talk about the history between these two as Flair keeps bouncing off Sting. A quick thumb to the eye has Sting in a bit of trouble but, as has been the case for thirteen years, the chops have no effect. It wouldn't feel right if they did. Ric heads outside for a breather before bailing from Sting's...leapfrog?

Back in and Sting hits the gorilla press before raining down right hands in the corner. There's the Flair Flop and Sting takes a quick bow. Flair gets in the required low blow but goes up top for one more slam. The clothesline train is broken up and there's the Figure Four on Sting. A few bangs of the chest allow Sting to turn the hold over and it's time to no sell some more chops. Sting grabs a superplex and throws on the Scorpion Deathlock to make Flair give up and end the final Nitro match.

**Rating:** B. That's pure nostalgia and there really was no other option to end the show than Sting (well maybe one but we'll get there in a second). Sting and Flair have a special connection to each other and even their TNA match felt somewhat special. This was all you could ask for out of a final match between them or from WCW and I smiled a lot as it went on.

On a side note though: is there a better way for WCW to go out? Not with the young guy winning the title back from the veteran monster. No,

instead we have two guys past their primes as both athletes and draws but they're having the main event slot because that's how we did it in the old days and they're the real stars. Oh and one of them was so out of shape that he had to wear a shirt instead of his regular gear. Of course it's very different than the times that killed WCW but it's kind of poetic in a way.

Sting and Flair hug and it's time to go to the simulcast of Raw.

Vince is in the ring and says for the first time ever, this is being broadcast on both TNT and TNN. As you may have heard, he's bought his competition and acquired WCW. However, the deal isn't quite done yet because no one knows what to do with WCW. Time Warner has signed the contract but Vince is going to sign his part at Wrestlemania. Oh and he wants Ted Turner himself to walk down the aisle at Sports Entertainment Mania.

Vince has conquered wrestling and become a billionaire all by himself. Once Turner brings him the contract, Vince is going to have him sit in the corner and watch what Vince does to his son. This turns into a promo about Sunday's McMahon vs. McMahon match and oh yeah this is about WCW. Vince brings up some WCW history and just lets out a lot of (never all of it) his bragging about finally beating them.

Maybe they could turn WCW into a big conglomerate but that brings up the question of who should be part of this new WCW. Fans: "GOLDBERG!" Hulk Hogan gets a very lukewarm reaction, Lex Luger gets NOTHING, Buff Bagwell actually gets a pop, Booker T., gets a bigger pop, Scott Steiner gets a roar (that's a surprise) and the Goldberg chants cut Vince off. Sting gets another pop (though smaller than Bagwell's actually) and Goldberg gets the loudest pop of the bunch.

Vince gets back to business and says he could have gone down to Florida and given everyone a piece of his mind. By piece of his mind, he means telling them that they're fired of course. That's what's going to happen anyway because WCW is going on the shelf and it's buried for good. Anyone who attempts to compete with him, including his son Shane, will be buried just like WCW. Vince yells a lot but here's Shane.....ON NITRO!



Shane is down in Panama City, Florida while Vince is in Cleveland and as usual, Vince's ego has gotten the best of him. Vince wanted to finalize the deal at Wrestlemania but the deal has already been finalized. The name on the contract does say McMahon, but it says SHANE McMahon because he now owns WCW. Ignore the fact that Vince said Time Warner didn't know Vince hadn't signed yet so this doesn't make a ton of sense. Just like WCW did in the past, Shane is going to take care of Vince at Wrestlemania. I lost it seeing this live and it still works very well all these years later.

Nitro wraps up with a graphic....for Austin/The Rock vs. Undertaker/Kane.

Oh wait we do get a good night and goodbye message....with the word satellite underneath for some reason. One last production glitch for the road I guess.

**Overall Rating:** B. I really don't know what to think of this show. The wrestling certainly wasn't the point and they did a good job of making this feel like a fun show. Stasiak was the only heel to win all night and everything felt either fun or important with the titles (and Flair vs. Sting) being the only things that mattered. This show flies by and feels like an appropriate finale.

You could say that WCW could have brought in some more former stars and previous World Champions, but really that wouldn't have made a lot of sense. WCW is going out of business because of how bad things were in the previous era. Do you really want to bring back those people and celebrate them? With all the horrible things people like Hogan and Nash caused for WCW, they really don't belong on a show that is the closest thing to a celebration of the company we're going to have.

As for the final storylines, many of which were abandoned, I was interested in finding out who was attacking the Magnificent Seven (never mentioned on this show) but I didn't have a lot of hope for the storyline long term. At the end of the day, your top heels were Ric Flair, Lex Luger, Buff Bagwell, Jeff Jarrett and the Steiner Brothers. Same guys, same big heel stable, same cruiserweight division stealing the show and being treated like nothing more than a warmup act. It was the same thing,

as it always was again and again, just like Nitro was for years.

Now on to the final thoughts on the show as a whole, which are probably going to ramble a lot.

I liked the last Nitro and one major reason was because it felt completely different than any episode in years. Instead of a show that needed to be put out of its misery, it was actually fun for the first time in way too long. Yeah fun. Of all the problems Nitro had over the years, a big one was a lack of entertainment. Other than stuff from Jericho or a few one off lines from various people, how many fun things do you remember about this series? With that idea in mind, let's go ahead and get to the big final thoughts on the series.

It's safe to say that Nitro was definitely more adult oriented and serious than Raw but that doesn't always work. There have literally been books written about how badly WCW screwed up over the years and I'm sure you're familiar with all their various blunders, flat out stupid decisions, title messes and any other possible dumb thing they could have done so I won't bother rehashing all of that again. Just remember: Vince Russo is MANLY.

Here's what I find interesting: Nitro really was a change of pace for WCW. Do you remember how things were before it came on the air? Say, back in 1993? Remember how those shows went? With stuff like the British Bulldog main eventing and Sting vs. Nailz or the NWA being around for reasons that still make no sense? Even in 1994, it was Hogan vs. people like Brutus Beefcake, Earthquake and Kamala.

Then Nitro came along and changed things, but the first few months were hardly anything interesting. You had Hogan vs. the Dungeon of Doom (I still like them) and Ric Flair vs. the Giant but it took the Outsiders invading to take the show to new heights. Once Hogan showed up as the leader (which he didn't do until eight days after Bash at the Beach, which is still ridiculous) and took the whole place over, there was no turning back for about a year.

Unfortunately, that was the peak of the show. Sting chasing Hogan and the build towards Starrcade 1997 was great but there was nothing after that.

Goldberg winning the title was a great moment for one night but the show overall was turning into a mess as WCW scrambled to figure out what they could do to get back into the fight with Raw. By early 1999, Nitro was basically done as a real challenge and it only got worse after that.

So let's say the good times started the night Hall jumped the barricade (May 27, 1996) and ended with the Fingerpoke of Doom (and that end date is a big stretch) on January 4, 1999. That's less than three years where Nitro was good (Assuming you consider the 1997 shows to be good. I can go with must see TV but that doesn't equal quality.) and the rest of the time ranged from not bad to some of the worst television in the history of wrestling.

That's what people often forget about Nitro: in less than six years on the air, they were only good for about half their run. It's really fascinating to me that Nitro is almost this fabled program that everyone remembers but Impact has been around twice as long as Nitro was and that's more of a nuisance than anything else.

The point though is that Nitro was a game changer for WCW, but it was a short term change. WCW really wasn't doing very well until Hogan came in and he could only carry them so far. They overtook the WWF on the strength of the NWO feud but once that ran out, the WWF came right back and WCW never came close again. Nitro was indeed a big deal, but it wasn't something that put them on top for years and years, which shows you how rare it is for something to challenge Raw. To only be around that long and be the undisputed second biggest show ever in this era is quite an accomplishment.

Before I wrap this up, I have to mention some of the main reasons fans stuck around with Nitro. Over the years, there were WAY too many great matches to count between combinations of Eddie Guerrero, Raven, Diamond Dallas Page, Chris Benoit, Booker T., Saturn, Ric Flair and so many other names of workhorses who were the backbone of WCW and held the show together with great wrestling while the big names got the glory after putting in almost no quality work. Those guys are the forgotten heroes of Nitro and I'm glad that so many of them got to go elsewhere and have another run in their careers.

In addition to those bigger name wrestlers, Nitro also showcased a bunch of guys who almost never got any recognition in America. These guys were all talented and could put on a really fun show when they were given the chance. One of the best examples of this would be from June 7, 1999 with Ciclope/Damien vs. La Parka/Silver King in a hardcore match. These guys knew they weren't going to get much TV time aside from this so they beat the heck out of each other and had one of the best surprise matches you'll ever find. Check this out if you want to see four guys just beat each other up and have a great time doing so.

That's why people stuck with Nitro as long as they did: sure the main event scene was going to be a bogged down mess that might offer one or two watchable matches a year but the undercard had the potential to offer you a show stealing classic on any given week. You never knew what the likes of Kanyon, Mysterio, Kidman, Malenko, Jericho, Guerrero and so many other names could pull off. There was even the hope that the new generation might rise up and become something, but once so many names left for the WWF in a year's time, they took that hope with them. For me, that's when WCW really died: when the hope left.

Overall, Nitro was a show that came, made a huge splash and then exploded into a huge fireball like nothing else in wrestling history. It definitely had some good moments (the Sting Army always springs to mind) and I was a huge fan growing up but by the middle of 1997 it was clear that the WWF was on the rise and WCW was going to have to step up its game to hold on. It gave fans another choice though and lit a very necessary fire under Vince that gave us some great Raw content as a result. If Nitro had one positive lasting legacy, it's how good it made things on Raw and in a way we should be thankful for it.

That being said, Nitro really wasn't the best show. The wrestling wasn't great (though there were some bright spots, including some very good Eddie Guerrero/Chris Benoit vs. Ric Flair matches and of course Benoit vs. Hart) and it was high on drama which was hit or miss, but there was an aggressiveness and an attitude in the early days that made you take notice. Once that left though, it was basically Impact with a bigger budget: copying whatever the WWF was doing and hoping to steal enough of an audience for one more big move.

There comes a point where you have to deliver something good on its own though and I don't think WCW really knew how to do that. They knew how to have a big idea (or variations of that same big idea) and have a great start to a story but after that it would fall apart again due to a combination of incompetence, people with too much creative control, stupid politics or just bad wrestling.

That's a major reason the WWF won in the end: all the stuff they would build up often resulted in a great payoff match at the end. With WCW, it usually led to Nash/Hogan/Luger/someone else having a bad match and bragging about how awesome it was while the fans changed the channel to see what Austin was up to next. Other than a few occasions, WCW never had that must see guy who could have the big match that people wanted to see. When they did, they stuck a taser in his chest so Nash could win the World Title.

I'm not going to miss watching Nitro, though I do miss part of having it around. As a kid I watched every week no matter what, but looking back it's amazing that the show lasted as long as it did. It was put out of its misery at the end though and I have no reason to believe it was going to get any better (long term that is) under new ownership. It was WCW's nature to find a way to mess things up and they had nothing to counter everything going on in the WWF.

Nitro may not be the whipping boy that the WWE likes to remember it as, but it's also hardly this great show that was killed off too soon. That company ate itself alive and you could watch a lot of that happen every single week on Nitro. There are some good things to remember but there are far more moments where you wonder how they actually got this bad and still stayed on the air as long as they did. I can't say I'm glad its gone but I really don't miss sitting through that kind of self destruction week to week. That's what Smackdown is for.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's WWE Grab Bag at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01IH70904>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

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# Thunder – March 21, 2001 (Final Episode): How Many Times???

## Thunder

Date: March 21, 2001

Location: O'Connell Center, Gainesville, Florida

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Mike Tenay

We've arrived at the final shows. We'll start off the final episode of the corporate mandate that was Thunder, which has somehow gotten even less important over the years. The big story coming out of Monday is Ric Flair's face being pressed onto the back of a donkey and the upcoming Night of Champions on Monday. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Monday and most of the major stories. I'm still curious about who was attacking the Magnificent Seven. For some reason this recap starts with Dusty vs. Flair, goes to Booker vs. Steiner being announced and goes back to Dusty vs. Flair.

## Air Raid vs. Jung Dragons

That would be Air Paris/AJ (now Air) Styles, now in matching G-Suits on the way to the ring. Yang and Styles get things going and hit the mat almost immediately with Yang getting two off a rollup. A headscissors gets Styles out of what looked like a Tombstone and it's Paris sneaking in for a superkick. Everything breaks down for a few seconds before

Styles hits the yet to be named Styles Clash (very little reaction from the announcers) for two on Kaz.

Yang comes back in and knocks AJ out to the floor but Raid double teams Yang down to take over for the first time. It's off to Paris for a double faceplant, only to have Yang hit a running Liger Bomb out of the corner for two. The tag brings in Kaz to clean house with some martial arts but he walks into a Burning Hammer of all things from Paris. Styles dives into a dropkick but he gets up to counter Yang Time.

Air Raid loads up what looked like a superbomb/neckbreaker combo. Well for all I know they might have broken down into a Charleston dance off as the camera cut to the crowd so I'm assuming a botch. Something like an H Bomb gets two on Kaz with Yang making the save. Kaz gets back up and loads up something like Sister Abigail but jumps forward for something like a reverse bulldog for the pin on Styles.

**Rating:** C+. This was fun while it lasted and a good way for these four to go out. The Dragons went from a pretty generic high flying Japanese team to a downright above average high flying Japanese team. Styles is another name on the list of stars that WCW had though a few matches in a low level tag team aren't really enough to blame WCW for screwing up again.

We recap the Rhodes Family beating Jeff Jarrett/Ric Flair on Sunday.

Here's Dustin Rhodes with a bag of goodies and something to say. We see the clip of Flair and the donkey again so Dustin pulls out a game of Pin the Flair on the Jackass. To go with it: mouthwash, chapstick, and a hotel key for Flair and the donkey in case the idea wasn't clear enough yet. Cue Flair to the screen to make Dustin vs. Jarrett/Scott Steiner for later tonight. Flair rants a lot so Dustin holds up the Horsemen sign but says it means to kiss the donkey again (Four words: Kiss My Daddy's....)

### Jason Jett vs. Cash

That would be Kid Kash. They trade arm holds to start and then flip each other around a bit with Jett being set out to the floor. A good looking slingshot hurricanrana has Jason in trouble but he dropkicks Cash out of the air to take over. Thankfully the announcers stop previewing Bam Bam

Bigelow vs. Shawn Stasiak to talk about this match.

Kash sends him outside for a big flip dive off the top and an ECW chant. Back in and a double clothesline (with Kash coming off the middle rope and Jeff flipping into his) puts both of them down. Jett grabs a reverse kneeling piledriver but Kash runs the corner for a bad looking hurricanrana. The Crash Landing is broken up and the Moneymaker (double underhook lifting piledriver) gets two. Jett pops right back up and hits the Crash Landing for the pin.

**Rating:** C-. And so ends the Jason Jett story. There was potential but he was a far cry from what people like Guerrero and Helms were doing at the time. It could have gone somewhere with more time but alas Jett was another victim of the curse that was WCW going out of business for not knowing how to push people like Jason Jett. Among many other reasons of course.

Flair tries to calm Rick Steiner down after the team accused him of being the attacker.

Cat gives M.I. Smooth a pep talk.

#### The Cat/M.I. Smooth vs. Animal/Kanyon

Cat kicks Kanyon to start and drives some right hands into his head for good measure. It's off to Smooth vs. Animal for the power brawl with Animal no selling a clothesline. Smooth no sells a clothesline though and it's off to Cat, who walks right into a powerslam. A powerbomb out of the corner allows the tag off to Kanyon for some elbows, followed by a swinging neckbreaker.

Animal grabs a neck crank before handing it off to Kanyon for a chinlock. Kanyon's middle rope Fameasser is countered with a powerbomb out of the corner but Animal breaks up the dancing elbow. Smooth comes in and cleans house on Kanyon as Cat kicks Animal on the floor. A trip puts Kanyon down and a splash gives Smooth the pin.

**Rating:** D+. Well at least Animal didn't get the pin. Of all the things WCW did in its final months, hiring Animal is one of the most annoying.



It's such a WCW standard: bring in some name from the past that people don't care about without his partner when you have people on the roster who could fill the role just as well. I'm sure Animal's brother booking the show has nothing to do with it.

### Rick Steiner vs. Hugh Morrus

Morrus has Konnan with him. As is so often the case in Rick matches, they're on the floor in about thirty seconds with Steiner not selling Morrus' offense. Hugh clotheslines the post by mistake so Rick throws him inside for an Angle Slam of all things. The cover only gets two as Rick has to yell at some fans. Well at least he's doing something right. Rick's bulldog gets two with Morrus getting his foot on the ropes.

That earns him a Steiner Line but Morrus comes back with a spinwheel kick. Steiner kicks him low (referee is fine with it) and gets in a chair shot (no complaints from the referee). He loads up some Pillmanizing (this referee is incompetent) but calls out Shane Douglas. Shane comes out for the brawl (HOW IS NONE OF THIS A DQ???) and hits Rick in the head with his cast, knocking him into a German suplex to give Morrus the pin.

**Rating:** D. Even on the final show Rick Steiner can't pick things up a little bit? I'm assuming this was designed to set up Rick vs. Shane on Nitro (How appropriate: a Walking Dead match on the final Nitro.) or at some point in the future so I'll actually give them some credit for trying to have some more angles for beyond Monday in case they were around.

Post match Douglas hands Dave Penzer a video. Shouldn't he hand that to the production truck?

After a break, the tape shows Douglas challenging Steiner to a fight on Nitro. Was there a reason he just didn't do this live on the mic?

### Kid Romeo/Elix Skipper/Chavo Guerrero Jr. vs. Rey Mysterio/Kidman/Shane Helms

Kidman and Chavo start things off but Guerrero goes after Shane on the apron, allowing Kidman to grab a neckbreaker. Shane comes in for a tilt-

a-whirl backbreaker but a Skipper distraction lets Chavo take over. It's off to Romeo for some dancing until Shane kicks him in the face. A Samoan drop into a springboard legdrop keeps Romeo in trouble until Skipper gets in a cheap shot from the apron and comes in to take over.

Everyone heads outside for the series of dives in a nice sequence. Back in and Skipper plants Rey with a dragon suplex before handing it off to Chavo without bothering to cover. A Gory Bomb gets two for Chavo but Rey gets in a running DDT to drop Romeo. Kidman's top rope elbow gets another two as everything breaks down. Chavo saves Romeo from the Vertebreaker so it's the Kid Crusher to put Romeo away.

**Rating:** C+. One more good cruiserweight six man to go out on. I'm always a fan of combining two feuds into one match and they did fine here, especially with a challenger pinning a champion (fine as it was a six man and not a regular tag) to wrap it up. There isn't much to say here but it was exactly what you would expect from these six.

Rick still isn't happy. Was he ever?

Chuck Palumbo tells Lance Storm to stay out of this match.

#### Mike Awesome vs. Chuck Palumbo

They're all alone here as Chuck starts off with that good right hand of his. Mike sends him outside and hits a great looking springboard clothesline, followed by a slingshot splash for two back inside. A camel clutch doesn't go anywhere so Mike sends him outside again with Chuck's knees going into the steps. Chuck takes a chair away and blasts Awesome in the back but can't manage to jump over him in the corner. Not that it matters as Mike drops him anyway, making the whole thing look bad.

With the wrestling not working they head outside for the third time with Mike being whipped into the barricade. Awesome comes back in with a top rope shoulder but takes WAY too long setting up the Awesome Splash, allowing Palumbo to roll away just in time. Cue Storm and O'Haire to fight at ringside, leaving Palumbo to hit the Jungle Kick for the pin.

**Rating:** C. I like these guys and it's nice to see them getting a push

near the end. O'Haire was the star of the team but Palumbo was good enough to keep a job in WWE for years and have a nice little career of his own. It was certainly bigger than any other Thrillers after leaving WCW, which was probably quite the surprise.

### Dustin Rhodes vs. Scott Steiner/Jeff Jarrett

Before the match, Jeff says Booker will be dead after this match, just like his daddy's career. We go to a break before Dustin's entrance and come back with Animal finding Flair laid out in the back. Dustin hammers on Jeff in the corner to start but Scott's distraction lets Jeff escape the Dust Buster. So why didn't he just climb out on his own earlier? Scott ties Dustin in the Tree of Woe for a bit before Jeff crotches himself on the ropes. The bulldog gets two on Jeff but a pipe shot to the back sets up the Recliner for the quick submission.

**Rating:** D. What a perfect way for Thunder to go out: heels winning a fairly short, meaningless handicap match with an old face that doesn't get much of a response from the crowd. Dustin didn't do anything wrong in this run but time has shown that people don't really care about Dustin Rhodes on his own. He's just a guy in trunks who has done an above average job of separating himself from his famous father. That's commendable, but it's not that interesting. Goldust is someone people care about while Rhodes is just there and that's a common problem in wrestling.

Booker comes out for the save and says he's taking the title.

A group shot of the Thunder production crew ends the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. This felt more like any given episode of Thunder, which really isn't surprising given how little Thunder meant. The cruiserweights were good (shocking) and the main event didn't mean anything so it was all business as usual. Most of this stuff doesn't matter anyway as Monday is a special show but it was nice to see at least some effort as they close it out.

So that's Thunder. It's no secret that the show wasn't WCW's idea and only existed because Turner Sports told them to put on a second show. For

once you actually can't pin this one on WCW but it's not like they did much to help themselves. Looking back at Thunder, in all 147 episodes, I didn't rate anything, be it match or show overall, higher than a B. In three years and three months, you would think they would somehow have something that high but nothing ever broke that barrier.

Over 147 episodes, a grand total of five received an overall rating higher than a C+. Five. As in less than twice a year this show delivered what I would consider to be a strong episode. In those same 147 episodes, I rated a total of thirty three matches above a C+. Of those thirty three, nine didn't involve the cruiserweights. Think about that for a minute.

In almost three and a half years, a weekly wrestling show produced nine heavyweight matches that were better than slightly above average. Shockingly enough, every single one of those nine matches involved Chris Benoit, Booker T., Raven or Diamond Dallas Page. So in reality, those four and the cruiserweights were the only people delivering good matches on this show and even they weren't doing it on a regular basis.

If you want to know why Thunder was such a nothing show, that's where you start: on a show that had let's say 900 matches (147 shows at six matches a show would be 882 so we'll round up a bit), about three percent of the matches were even a little bit above average and nothing would be considered great. At some point, you need to offer something that makes people stick around. Wrestling that is just ok with a bunch of older names having horrible matches to close the shows aren't going to do it.

Thunder just wasn't a very good show and much like Smackdown in recent years, you almost never needed to watch it because almost nothing ever happened there. Let's do a quick comparison with Monday Nitro regarding title changes and look at how many times each title changed hands from the time Thunder debuted until the end of the promotion (not counting the title being vacated):

World Title:

Nitro – 15, Thunder – 4 (Two of which were Kevin Nash awarding himself the title and losing it in the same night, a third being David Arquette

and the final one being Nash winning the title, only to give it to Flair the following week on Nitro.). Now to be fair, maybe the bigger problem is that there are nineteen World Title changes on TV alone in just over less than three and a half years.

TV Title:

Nitro – 5, Thunder – 1

United States Title:

Nitro – 15, Thunder – 1

Tag Team Titles:

Nitro – 14, Thunder – 5 (Two of which were on a single show)

Cruiserweight Title:

Nitro – 11, Thunder – 5

Hardcore Title:

Nitro – 9, Thunder – 4

In total, that's 69 for Nitro and 21 for Thunder. (Again, part of the problem is having ninety title changes on TV in twenty one months. By comparison, in the history of Monday Night Raw, there have been 259 title changes in the history of Monday Night Raw. WCW had more than one third the number of title changes on two TV shows in less than three and a half years than the biggest wrestling show of all time has had in over twenty three years spread over thirteen championships).

That's the grand summary of why Thunder didn't work: average at best wrestling most of the time, few major events and a bunch of horrible main events featuring either old wrestlers far past their primes or low level stars in matches people didn't want to see. Thunder was a horrible idea from the beginning and never got any better. Monday Nitro going away was a major story. Thunder going away was a reminder that Thunder was a show that existed.

Oh and there's this still active website:

<http://cgi.superstation.com/sports/thunder/index.htm>

I know TBS saw WCW as a long term investment but this is a bit much.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's WWE Grab Bag at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01IH70904>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

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# **Greed (2016 Redo): From A Flair For The Gold To Burritos**

## **Greed**

Date: March 18, 2001

Location: Jacksonville Municipal Coliseum, Jacksonville, Florida

Attendance: 5,030

Commentators: Tony Schiavone, Scott Hudson

After all that, we've come down to this. Seventeen years ago, the first WCW (NWA at the time) super show aired and it was called Starrcade. The main event of that show saw Ric Flair win the NWA World Title from Harley Race in a changing of the guard, only to be challenged by Dusty Rhodes before the show ended as part of a legendary feud that would headline the

next two Starrcades. Now it's a show called Greed and Ric Flair and Dusty Rhodes will be facing off in a featured match with stipulations involving the loser kissing a certain part of the winner. Sometimes wrestling is funny but this is sad. Let's get to it.

The opening video focuses on Diamond Dallas Page, who is still standing after everything Scott Steiner has thrown at him.

Tony: "If it's professional wrestling, it must be greed!"

### Jason Jett vs. Kwee Wee

Bonus match. Kwee Wee jumps him during his entrance though to be fair Jason was taking his sweet time going around the ring high fiving fans. Jett comes right back and goes to the top to dive onto Kwee Wee and take over. They head inside with Jason grabbing a reverse Boston crab but also pulling Kwee Wee up by the arm. Tony says he's never seen anything like it but it's been seen in WCW before, from Konnan I believe.

Kwee Wee gets out and throws Jason to the floor by the hair. That's a new one, or at least a painful one. Jett charges at him and gets backdropped onto the apron for something like a Tajiri handspring into a DDT onto the floor. Cool spot. Totally contrived looking, but cool. Back in and Jett is backdropped out to the floor for a big crash and it's time to choke with a cord. As is always the case, Kwee Wee continues to be so far beyond this gimmick that it's kind of sad.

Kwee Wee covers on the floor, prompting Hudson to mention that the main event is falls count anywhere. I don't remember that being mentioned anywhere leading up to this show and unfortunately that's probably the first time it was announced. We hit the chinlock to slow things down a bit (well earned at this point) and we're told that the falls count anywhere stipulation was indeed added to the main event on the pre-show. Actually make that the END of the pre-show.

I'd be more mad about that if the company had ten days left, or if Jett wasn't on top for a superbomb that was countered into a super hurricanrana for two. Kwee Wee calls for the piledriver but Jett reverses and hits the Tajiri elbow. The Crash Landing is escaped (I wonder if Kwee

Wee's hair can be used as a flotation device) and Kwee Wee gets two off a northern lights suplex. Jett sends him outside and lays down to play possum, causing Kwee Wee to miss a top rope legdrop. Serves him right to get hurt after not actually doing anything to put Jason down. The Crash Landing gives Jason the pin.

**Rating:** B+. I don't know if it's the low expectations or just being happy that I don't have another WCW pay per view after this but I dug the heck out of this match. These two were all over the place with big spot after big spot and I wanted to see what they were going to do next. It's a shame that both guys were basically done after this (save for Kwee Wee wrestling women in TNA) due to not arriving soon enough and having a horrible gimmick.

We recap the Cruiserweight Tag Team Title tournament.

#### Cruiserweight Tag Team Titles: Elix Skipper/Kid Romeo vs. Kidman/Rey Mysterio

The titles are vacant coming in and Kidman throws a curveball by wearing a gray shirt for a change. That's WCW's version of mind games I suppose. Kidman and Romeo start things off with Romeo hitting an Alley Oop of all things to take over. Skipper comes in and slams his partner onto Kidman for two but it's quickly off to Rey for a springboard legdrop to take over.

They fight up the ramp with Mysterio and Kidman hitting stereo dives off the stage for a good looking spot. Back in and Skipper knees Kidman out to the floor in a crash. Romeo spends too much time chopping though and gets beaten up in the corner, only to have Romeo back with Mysterio's sitout bulldog. We hit the chinlock for a bit before it's back to Skipper to choke on the ropes.

Elix takes him to the top until Kidman takes him down with a sitout powerbomb and a round of applause. The hot tag brings in Rey to clean house and send Elix shoulder first into the post. Kidman hits a top rope shooting star to the floor to take out both Romeo and Skipper. Back in and a reverse suplex gets two on Romeo with Skipper making the save. Skipper dragon suplexes Rey into a guillotine legdrop from Romeo with



Kidman diving in for a save.

The good guys one up them with a powerbomb into a top rope splash for two on Skipper, followed by the Bronco Buster. It's nonstop action at this point. Kidman and Skipper head to the floor, leaving Rey to moonsault into the Last Kiss to give Romeo and Skipper the inaugural titles.

**Rating:** A-. Sweet goodness this show is on fire to start. This was the kind of match you would expect from the previous generation of cruiserweights which didn't seem to be possible until a few months ago. Outstanding stuff here with four guys flying all over the place to show off for the crowd and make the titles look like something special.

More documentary stuff Buff saying he's doing this so he can get his face on TV. Basically Flair says they'll all win tonight. Animal actually talks a bit here, only showing how worthless of a signing he was. Can anyone explain to me why Mike Awesome couldn't have played the exact same role? Other than giving Animal a payday of course.

We recap Shawn Stasiak vs. Bam Bam Bigelow which has had all of six days' build. Basically Shawn doesn't like bald tattooed people and you can figure out the rest for yourself.

#### Shawn Stasiak vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

Stacy is back in the Miss Hancock gear and I forgot how well that look worked. She introduces the Shawn and Stacy Show with Shawn doing the same horrible insults that didn't get him over in the first place. Bigelow drives him into the corner to start but Shawn nips up. That is the extent of the comparisons that will be made between Shawn Stasiak and Shawn Michaels.

A shove sends Stasiak outside and that means we need a timeout. Bigelow knocks him to the floor again as this is already horrible. Shawn comes back in with a high cross body and some posing, only to have Bigelow destroy him again for the top rope headbutt. This brings Stacy to the apron for the hair down distraction, allowing Shawn to spray Bigelow in the eyes with some perfume. The neckbreaker puts Bigelow away.

**Rating:** F. We get two great matches to open the show and then have to sit through the latest attempt to make Shawn Stasiak mean something. It doesn't help that Stasiak's offense is move, pose, move, pose, cheat to win with a neckbreaker. We would have been much better off with just having Stacy stand in the ring reciting the alphabet for six minutes instead but that might be too complicated for WCW.

Shawn and Stacy kiss post match.

Cat tells Miss Jones to stay in the back but she won't stand for it.

Romeo and Skipper put the belts on each other.

We recap Hugh Morrus/Konnan vs. Team Canada which is basically I hit you, you hit me.

#### Team Canada vs. Hugh Morrus/Konnan

There's no Canadian national anthem for Storm so we get the dramatic head turn as Hugh Morrus' music plays instead. It's a brawl to start (duh) with Awesome and Morrus but it's quickly off to Storm. Hudson brings up the fact that Storm and Morrus were supposed to have their final battle but "the heat was too great." The double teaming continues on Morrus with Konnan punching Storm from the apron, only to knock him right into Hugh to prevent the hot tag.

The locker room leaders ladies and gentlemen. Konnan gets the tag a few seconds later but Awesome runs him over a few seconds in to keep the Canadians in control. Morrus gets to play cheerleader as Storm gets beaten down in the wrong corner. Awesome's clothesline gets two and Konnan's small package gets the same. A top rope shoulder knocks Konnan into his own corner but thankfully Awesome is smart enough to pull him right back. Storm's dropkick hits Konnan in the hands so clearly that even the announcers have to acknowledge it.

We hit the chinlock for a bit, followed by the referee missing the hot tag. A piledriver from Awesome sends Konnan back first onto Awesome's legs but Storm's awkward looking top rope...something lands on Konnan's raised boot. That was really weird looking as Storm seemed to be going

for a swan dive (not exactly a standard move for him but had to move forward to hit Konnan's foot. Either way it's enough for the hot tag to Morrus, only to have Storm superkick him down. Konnan and Storm fight to the floor but Lance is able to break up No Laughing Matter, setting up the Awesome Bomb for the pin.

**Rating:** D+. The match was longer than it needed to be but this could have been a lot worse. That being said it's also not any interesting match and I'm also not sure why these teams were fighting in the first place. It also doesn't help that they weren't exactly putting in the strongest effort, though it's kind of hard to blame them at this point.

Dusty Rhodes orders 240 burritos to get ready for his match later. See, if Flair loses he has to kiss Dusty's....yeah you get the idea.

Buff interviews Rick Steiner, who isn't sure why Scott is so freaked out. It's probably Midajah though.

Chuck Palumbo and Sean O'Haire look at something several feet away from the camera as they talk about how they'll die to keep the Tag Team Titles.

#### Cruiserweight Tag Team Titles: Chavo Guerrero Jr. vs. Shane Helms

Chavo is def....what's that? Oh WCW put up the wrong graphic because they can't go five minutes without screwing something up? Let's try this again.

#### Cruiserweight Title: Chavo Guerrero Jr. vs. Shane Helms

Chavo is defending for reasons that the announcers can't cover because they're too busy talking about Dusty and his burritos. Ignore them saying the wrong number of burritos because they can't remember something Dusty said five minutes ago. Chavo beat Shane back in January but Shane has gotten much better (and put on trunks instead of pants) since then and earned another title shot last month.

A headlock gives Chavo early control and a clothesline cuts off Shane's attempt to increase the pace. Shane gets in a middle rope fist drop for two as the fans aren't exactly thrilled by this. It's almost like those

two really boring matches killed the crowd's enthusiasm or something. A high angle t-bone suplex gets two for the champ and it's off to an STF. The idea they're going for is Chavo taking away Shane's rhythm and not letting him get anything going so at least there's an idea here.

We hit a Muta Lock for a bit before they can't bridge into a backslide. Shane comes back and sends Chavo outside, only to have the champ slide back in and hit a dive off the top. You don't see Chavo fly often but he looks good when he does it. Back in and Shane grabs a swinging neckbreaker to put both guys down.

The Sugar Smack knocks Chavo off the apron but he comes right back with a sitout reverse inverted DDT. Helms grabs the Nightmare on Helms Street for two but Chavo crotches him on top, only to pick Shane up instead of cover. Ever the overconfident one, Chavo tries his own Vertebreaker and is promptly reversed into the real thing to give Shane the title.

**Rating:** B-. This was much more entertaining than good but the important part was the story they told to get here. Shane started off as the unpolished talent and then moved on to become the champion after honing his skills. Chavo was a great champion and more than made the title feel important again but his reign was over and it was Shane's time. Not a great match but a really good story.

Flair and Jarrett say they'll win.

Booker T. says he's coming for the only title he's never won.

We recap Sean O'Haire/Chuck Palumbo vs. Totally Buff which is your standard new school vs. old school feud. The champs have beaten Luger and Bagwell for weeks now so the signs point to new champions here.

Tag Team Title: Totally Buff vs. Sean O'Haire/Chuck Palumbo

Totally Buff, challenging here, have individual entrances. Before the match we need to hear about Luger and Bagwell getting rid of Goldberg all over again because that hasn't been touched on enough. The champs come to the ring and it's a superkick into the Seanton Bomb for the pin to retain in less than a minute. Hudson: "That was a Georgia Championship Wrestling

squash!" I guess it takes the company dying to have Luger put someone over this strongly like he should have done two years ago. As glad as I'll be to see WCW finally finish, I'd still really like to see what they did with O'Haire. That guy had it.

Scott Steiner yells about beating Page tonight.

We recap The Cat vs. Kanyon which started when over Kanyon laying out Miss Jones, attacking her in a hospital and then not being able to stop the angry limo driver, who came off as looking like the big star out of all this thing.

Buff is still down in the ring but gets up pointing at his neck.

### The Cat vs. Kanyon

Kanyon goes after Jones again and is sent into the barricade a few times. Apparently Kanyon broke his hand on Monday night (not Tuesday Tony). They head inside for the first time with cat electric chair dropping Kanyon off the ropes but Kanyon starts hitting him with the cast.

That just earns him a powerbomb because a cast shot to the head merely annoys Cat. Kanyon gets two off a top rope clothesline, which Hudson says wasn't worthy of a cover. The middle rope Fameasser gets the same and we hit the chinlock, followed by a swinging neckbreaker for two. Cat's superplex gets two and it's time for the dancing martial arts.

Kanyon can't do his snap sitout Alabama Slam for some reason so he settles for a Boston crab instead. A Feliner out of nowhere gets two as Kanyon puts his foot on the rope because this match needs to keep going. Kanyon's cast shot gets two more (that's a horrible cast) and the referee goes down. Jones comes in and kicks Cat by mistake, only to kick Kanyon away, setting up the Feliner for the pin.

**Rating:** D. The ending was the only possible choice but that doesn't mean it was the right way to get there. Kanyon clearly wasn't trying and you don't want to have the Cat be the one responsible for carrying a match. Boring match here but at least we got one more appearance from Miss Jones for the road.

Post match Kanyon gives Cat the Flatliner but Smooth comes out to save Jones.

Totally Buff argues over the loss.

Dusty has eaten a lot of burritos and promises it's going to smell bad. This isn't funny.

We recap Booker T. vs. Rick Steiner which is really just to give Booker something to do before he can fight Scott for the World Title.

#### US Title: Rick Steiner vs. Booker T.

Booker is challenging. Rick punches him to the floor to start and sends Booker into the crowd because this is about making Rick look strong. Back in and a Pearl River Plunge gets a delayed two for the champion but Booker grabs an Angle Slam of all things. That's it for his offense at the moment though as Rick gets in a belly to belly for two. We hit the chinlock because Booker can't be on offense for more than ten seconds in a row.

It's also too much to ask for Rick to actually crank on the hold. Booker comes back again and hits the ax kick (now the Ghetto Blaster) but the referee gets kicked by mistake so Rick can take over AGAIN. Cue Shane Douglas to hit Rick with the cast but Rick is fine enough to miss a swing, setting up the Bookend to give Booker the title.

**Rating:** F. That's entirely on Rick as Booker wasn't even on offense for a minute in this whole thing. I don't know what happened to Rick in the last few years but he has turned into the most selfish worker I've ever seen. Booker is one of the best of all time but you have to give him SOMETHING to work with other than a bunch of chinlocks and a beating.

Buff has been laid out and Lex accuses Animal.

We recap the Rhodes Family vs. Ric Flair/Jeff Jarrett. Dustin wouldn't join the Magnificent Seven so Ric has gone after him. The only option was to bring in Dusty Rhodes because it's not like there was anyone else they could have gone with here. It's not like they could have gone with O'Haire, Palumbo, or any of the other young guys. No, they had to have a

long feud with Lex Luger and Buff Bagwell remember. I mean, you get a nice nostalgia moment with Dusty and Ric but WCW needs to have people like Flair and Dustin giving what rubs they can to someone at this point, not being the focal points.

### Jeff Jarrett/Ric Flair vs. Dustin Rhodes/Dusty Rhodes

Losers have to, shall we say, kiss up to the winners. Flair is wrestling in a Hawaiian shirt for reasons that aren't quite clear. Actually Ric says he won't wrestle, which results in Animal being ejected. Jeff jumps Dustin to start but gets punched in the corner several times. Dustin crotches him against the post with Tony saying "the Yellow Rose of Texas." No real context to that one unless he's changed Dustin into David Von Erich.

Flair comes in for some chops and it's off to Dusty for some strutting. Dustin is back in but the Dust Buster is broken up to give the heels control again. Jeff does the sleeper and they go through the standard counter package. It's time to work on Dustin's knee but Flair get small packaged for two.

Jeff comes right back in and puts on the Figure Four. That goes nowhere as Dustin escapes and hits a belly to back for the tag to Dusty, who apparently is full of burritos and ready to go. Dusty drops the big elbow for two on Flair and it's back to Dustin as everything breaks down. Double Figure Fours are broken up and Dustin rolls Flair up for the pin.

**Rating:** D. I'm not wild on Dustin and Jarrett as the young pups for this match but it was a one off match and fun enough match for what it was. The fans reacted to it and while they would have been better off giving someone young a rub here, it could have been much worse. Also the show needed something much more lighthearted after the string of lame matches that people didn't want to see.

Ric bails so Jeff has to take a very weak Stinkface from Dusty.

We recap Scott Steiner vs. Diamond Dallas Page with the idea of Page being the last hero standing. Well save for Booker who came back after this match was made.

## WCW World Title: Scott Steiner vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Page is challenging, anything goes, and this is falls count anywhere, which was announced less than three hours ago. Midajah is here with Steiner, making her attack on Monday seem a bit pointless. Steiner knocks him outside to start but Page comes back in with a top rope clothesline for two. The champ takes over on the floor and gets in some yelling at fans.

They fight over the Spanish announcers' table (oh it's so funny) with Scott breaking a kid's crutch over Page's back. The same kid throws Page his other crutch for a shot to Steiner's back so Page can drive an elbow through a table for two. Back to ringside with Page hitting him in the head with a breakaway plate of some sort for another near fall. A t-bone suplex drops Page and it's off to the bearhug.

Steiner puts his boot between Page's shoulders and pulls back on the arms until a DDT plants the champ. Back up and Page gets the Diamond Cutter, only to have Rick Steiner pull out the referee. The bloody Page is put in the Recliner but makes sure to do the Austin in the Sharpshooter pose before reaching the ropes. Some shots to the ribs with a pipe set up another Recliner to knock Page out and retain the title.

**Rating:** C+. This was a match where they put too much stuff in at the end and it bogged the rest down. Page was as good as you would expect him to be as he's one of two stable main eventers (the other being Booker T.) for months if not years now. The falls count anywhere stipulation didn't need to happen but the bloody collapse near the end suited Page well. Shame they can't follow up on it though.

A recap of the night's events wrap up the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. I know the line is that the cruiserweights often carry a WCW show but I never remember it happening to this kind of an extreme. Main event aside, the cruiserweights were the only good things (save for a 54 second squash) on this entire show. The middle portion of this show was an absolute disaster and the best proof you'll find of how understaffed WCW was around their final few shows. The Cat is treated as a big star, Booker T. gets squashed until he wins off a fluke, Ice Train



is a conquering hero, and something about Dusty Rhodes eating burritos.

Now let's talk about the good for a bit. That opening half hour with the two cruiserweight matches is as good a stretch as WCW has put on in a very, very long time. It's fast paced, it's high quality and it's half of exactly what the show should have opened with. This is a standard problem with WCW: they load most of the exciting matches on the top of the show and then let things die throughout the middle. Swap Cat vs. Canyon with the Cruiserweight Tag Team Title match and see how much better it feels, if nothing else due to having the titles seem more important.

No matter how you look at it though, that's the final WCW pay per view and it's still the same batch of problems that their shows had for a long time, mainly stemming from the talent near the top not being great. I know Dustin is still around today but that doesn't mean he should be in the second biggest match on a pay per view. This show worked due to how hard the young guys worked but it was just far too little too late.

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## **Monday Nitro – March 5, 2001:**

# And Down The Stretch They Come

## Monday Nitro #280

Date: March 5, 2001

Location: Bi-Lo Center, Greenville, South Carolina

Commentators: Tony Schaiivone, Scott Hudson

After last week, it's really hard to say what we should expect here as Nitro worked very well but Thunder was every bit the show you would have expected it to be. I'm liking Scott Steiner vs. Diamond Dallas Page but the rest of the show is so all over the scale that it's hard to guess what you'll get. Let's get to it.

We open with Rick Steiner in the ring ranting about how Booker T. was nothing without his brother. Booker eventually comes out and it's time for a match.

### Rick Steiner vs. Booker T.

Non-title I believe. Booker starts in with his kicks but Rick no sells most of them (of course) and does his brawling punches in the corner. Some right hands to the head actually stagger Rick but he gets caught in a belly to belly for two. A tiger bomb gets two more on Booker, who escapes the Steiner Driver by pulling Rick down in what looked like a botch. Not that it matters as Scott comes in for the DQ.

**Rating:** D. Booker did what he could here but as usual there's only so much you can do when Rick is barely doing anything but punching and that sloppy offense of his. He's taken the US Title hostage just like Scott did before as there's almost no way he's dropping it to anyone other than a big star, leaving most of the midcarders to have nothing to fight over.

Diamond Dallas Page comes out for the save and clears the ring. Insults are exchanged and a tag match is made for later.

We recap the Cruiserweight Tag Team Title tournament.

## Cruiserweight Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: Elix Skipper/??? vs. AJ Styles/Air Paris

The mystery partner is....Kid Romeo. Wow what a bombshell. Romeo and Styles start things off with Romeo being sent to the floor, only to catch a sliding AJ and drop him face first onto the announcers' table. All four wind up on the floor and Romeo dives off the steps to clothesline Paris. Apparently that's enough for a tag as Romeo takes over on Paris back inside. A superkick puts Skipper down as Hudson talks about NWA Wildside announcer Steve Prazak and I wonder if he's talking about ROH's Dave Prazak.

The hot tag brings in AJ as everything breaks down and we hit the big dives to the floor. The announcers would rather talk about an upcoming (as in on Thunder) Mike Awesome vs. Lance Storm match which really puts these titles in context. Romeo powerslams Paris off the apron as Chavo Guerrero comes out to watch. Back in and Skipper dropkicks Air into a Snow Plow for the pin.

**Rating:** C+. Lack of star power aside, this was a fun match and a more low key high flying match. Romeo was nothing special and Paris continues to not really offer anything great but Styles and Skipper were doing all their flips to make up for it. As usual though, as is almost always the case in tournament matches, there's no story and it all relies on the action. On that standard this match was good but not excellent by any stretch.

Sean O'Haire says Lex Luger is in for a real fight tonight. His promos could use some work.

## Lex Luger vs. Sean O'Haire

Luger runs him over with a clothesline to start as he's already gone through a good chunk of his offense. Sean's clothesline gets two of his own but Lex calmly pounds him down again. A whip into the corner sees Sean backflip over Luger's head but he tweaks his knee on the landing. Cue Chuck Palumbo to check on his partner and punch Luger in the face a few times. This brings out Buff Bagwell with a few chair shots but that's still not enough for the DQ. Instead Sean grabs a small package for two

before having to sidestep a Blockbuster which takes Luger down instead. The Seanton Bomb gives O'Haire the pin.

**Rating:** D+. I'm assuming this was supposed to be a big win for O'Haire but all the shenanigans to go with Luger's offense held it back quite a bit. That being said, this is what Luger should be doing: jobbing for the young up and coming stars instead of being given completely unnecessary wins that only help himself.

Bagwell gets in a Blockbuster on O'Haire.

Shawn Stasiak and Kanyon arrive in Shawn's limo. Kanyon is going to visit Miss Jones in the hospital so Stasiak gives her an autographed picture as a present.

Chavo thinks Shane Helms should be the one who is scared.

Team Canada beats Konnan down but Hugh Morrus makes the save.

#### Jeff Jarrett vs. Dusty Rhodes

And it's a guy in a Dusty mask. Jeff does some signature Dusty stuff and finishes with the Bionic Elbow in less than a minute. Is there ANY POINT to this story that I'm just missing? They're so desperate for content that they're making fun of someone who made one cameo a few weeks ago?

Jarrett promises to make Dusty kiss a certain body part but here's Dustin Rhodes for the save. Dusty gets up and rips off some makeup to reveal Ric Flair for a double beating. The real Dusty comes out for the save with Ric and Jeff running. Ric yells a lot and wants to know why Dusty is in his building. Dusty goes on a rant about Jeff Jarrett's dad and laughs about getting to call Ric fat boy. He calls Ric an extra in WCW so Ric sets up a tag match for Greed. Did I mention this was the start of the second hour and what was opposing Raw?

#### Chavo Guerrero Jr. vs. Shane Helms

Non-title again. Shane has a huge entrance now with dancing girls (the Nitro Girls, who I didn't know were still a thing), a lot more lighting and new music. Chavo jumps him at the bell and scores with a belly to

back suplex, only to charge into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. The announcers talk about Rhodes vs. Flair and apparently the losing team will have to, ahem, kiss up to the winners.

Shane makes his early comeback with a dive to the floor as Kid Romeo and Elix Skipper come out to watch. Skipper trips Shane up to cut off the comeback but Helms gets two off a backslide anyway. A superkick gets two on Chavo and Shane dives onto Skipper and Romeo to keep them away. That draws them into a ring and we STILL CAN'T GET A DQ. Romeo is sent outside while Skipper helps Chavo hit a Hart Attack. The brainbuster puts Shane away.

**Rating:** C. What was the point of this one? Shane gets the big entrance and looks like a star (as well as a face in a turn I must have missed) but loses here to set up the pay per view match? Have Shane win via DQ due to the interference and then clear the ring but don't have him lose like this.

Spring Breakout video.

Kanyon is in Miss Jones' hospital room (why she's in a Greenville, South Carolina hospital after getting injured in Huntsville, Alabama isn't clear) when the Cat, minus a shirt, comes in for the brawl. Crutches and bottles are broken over both guys as Jones keeps screaming for a nurse. Not security mind you, but a nurse. Cat makes sure to tell Kanyon that he hates him while also getting in a few "I'M THE GREATEST" lines. Kanyon gets electrocuted by the defibrillator to wrap this up. My goodness this was stupid.

Hugh Morrus vs. Mike Awesome

Mike kicks him in the face to start and drops a leg for an early two count. They head outside with Morrus being sent into the post, followed by a slingshot splash for two back inside. Morrus catches him coming off the top and grabs a suplex, only to miss a charge into the post. Cue Lance Storm to beat on Morrus (with the referee seeing it and still not doing anything about it). That's not enough to set up the Awesome Splash though as Morrus rolls away and drops Mike with a DDT. No Laughing Matter puts Awesome away.

**Rating:** C-. This could have been worse as both guys can hit the other hard enough to keep this entertaining. Awesome jobbing again is a bit annoying but you kind of have to expect that at this point. I'm not sure why we're getting Morrus/Konnan vs. Team Canada but at least it's something for all of them to do.

Konnan comes out to save Morrus from a post match beatdown.

### Booker T./Diamond Dallas Page vs. Steiner Brothers

The Brothers have separate entrances. Before the match, Rick accepts a challenge from Booker T. (who isn't actually here to make said challenge), presumably for Greed. Scott on the other hand calls Page a coward who will get what's coming to him at the pay per view. Booker comes out and seems to like the idea of being US Champion at Greed. It's a big brawl to start with Scott being sent to the floor for a dive from Page.

Back in and Scott ties Page in the Tree of Woe for some choking. The discus lariat puts Rick down and the hot tag brings in Booker to clean house. Scott grabs a belly to belly for two as the announcers talk about the new owners again. Booker slugs away but walks into another suplex. A double clothesline puts Rick down and there's the hot tag to Page. Everything breaks down with Booker and Scott fighting to the back where Booker gets beaten down by the Magnificent Seven. A German suplex drops Page but he grabs the Diamond Cutter for the pin.

**Rating:** C. It was basically a formula based match until the screwy ending and that's a good thing. You would think the Steiner Brothers' return would be a bigger deal but it was barely mentioned by the announcers and the match was really just a run of the mill TV main event. Page pinning Rick is a logical ending and it's not like the US Title has any real value to lose at this point.

Page bails from the Seven but Scott jumps him in the crowd to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This was hit and miss all night long and that seems to be the norm once again for WCW. There's definitely good stuff and it

was nice to not have the cruiserweights stuck in the opening spot for a change. The wrestling was the standard fare but the booking was a bit tighter tonight and that's the more important thing going forward. You know, for the next three weeks. Unfortunately there's so much bad stuff like the Rhodes segment or the hospital scene as WCW really can't put on a complete show without something stupid holding it back.

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