

Monday Night Raw – April 11, 1994: A Cameo Fit For A King

Monday Night Raw

Date: April 11, 1994

Location: Memorial Auditorium, Utica, New York

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Randy Savage

The big idea tonight is the fan vote for a shot at the Tag Team Titles. In other words, it was a way to get the fans to pay money for the sake of picking a match, even if it wasn't the hardest decision in the world. Translation: a good idea that I'm surprised they only did a handful of times. Let's get to it.

The Bushwhackers, Men on a Mission and the Smoking Gunns want you to vote for them.

Opening sequence.

The announcers welcome us to the show and thankfully that awful green screen is gone.

Diesel vs. Virgil

Diesel wastes no time in hammering the bald one down and starts in on his back. A side slam sets up a bearhug, which Vince thinks might be a submission maneuver. Virgil fights out but gets caught in the same hold (which may be of the submission variety) again. Diesel sends him into the corner and grabs the third version of the alleged submission hold (as opposed to a countout hold). That edition is broken up fairly quickly though and Virgil gets two off a dropkick. Diesel kicks him in the chest though and the Jackknife is good for the pin.

Rating: D-. This match wasn't even six minutes long and we had the same submission hold (yes submission Vince) three times. If nothing else though, it makes sense to have Diesel beat a somewhat bigger name (work with me here) in Virgil, as beating up the nameless jobbers is only going to get him so far, which it's already done.

Vince pimps the number to pick the challengers again.

It's time for the King's Court with the jobbers dropping the throne near the ring. Lawler freaks out as only he can, including yelling at one of them who is none other than D'Lo Brown. After a break, Lawler's crown is shoved down on his head for an even more ridiculous look than usual.

Lawler's guest is Lex Luger, who mocks the style of the show. When Lawler glares at him, Luger sits down on the throne to make Lawler even angrier. Lawler finally gets to the point and brings up Mr. Perfect allegedly costing Luger the match. We see the clip and again, Perfect has a point: Luger shoved him and that should be a DQ.

Luger says that was clearly personal and if Perfect had a problem with him, he should have been a man and settled it man to man instead of waiting until the most important night of Luger's career. He'd love it if Perfect grew some guts and got in the ring with him like a man. Keep wishing Lex.

Thurman Plugg vs. Barry Horowitz

Barry grabs a wristlock and pats himself on the back as Savage talks about wanting to have eggs over easy in the morning. That leads to a discussion of wanting Undertaker to go to a mall in Worcester, Massachusetts to beat up a guy who punched a guy in a Barney the Dinosaur costume. As the boring match continues, Mr. Perfect calls in and Savage says he's a coward. Perfect and Savage argue as Holly finishes with a top rope knee drop.

Rating: D. There was so much else going on with this match that I had almost no idea what I was supposed to be paying attention to. That being said, the fact that one of the wrestlers was named Thurman Plugg tells you almost everything you need to know about it. The commentary was more interesting and it's not like the match meant anything in the first place.

The Quebecers want to know who they're facing. Patience champs.

Tag Team Titles: Quebecers vs. Men on a Mission

Men on a Mission is challenging. The champs try to get in a cheap shot to start but Jacques knocks Johnny Polo to the floor and gets sent outside as we take an early break. Back with Pierre in trouble as Mabel drops the huge leg to the back of the head. Jacques comes in and kicks away at the monster's leg for some success, only

to have Pierre walk into a Boss Man Slam. Moral: don't let Pierre wrestle as he's not very good.

Mo comes in and is somehow even worse, allowing Pierre to beat him down. Back from a break with Pierre suplexing Jacques onto Mo for two. Mo avoids a charge in the corner but still can't get over for a tag. Instead it's a double clothesline to put both guys down and there's the hot tag to Mabel.

The fat man gets dropped again but manages to run over Jacques. The champs do the switch behind the referee's back but Mabel crushes Pierre anyway. A splash in the corner gives Mo two, only to have him go flying over the ropes in a crash because, again, he's not very talented. Everything breaks down and Mabel slams Polo, leaving Mo to eat the Cannonball to retain the titles.

Rating: F+. Sweet goodness this was bad. The tag division was such a mess at this point and they decided to have Men on a Mission in there instead of rigging the poll for the sake of having the Gunns in there? Terrible match here with the far too long running time dragging the thing even lower.

The Bushwhackers, Doink and Dink were at the White House Easter Egg Roll.

IRS wants Tatanka to pay his taxes.

Overall Rating: D-. That tag match just killed the show, which wasn't exactly any good in the first place. This show is dying for some better star power and some better wrestlers, which should be aided when Bret Hart is back next week. When the highlight of the show is Lawler falling and a D'Lo Brown cameo, the show is in real trouble and I think a lot of people knew it.

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Monday Night Raw – January 24, 1994: Somebody Do Something

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 24, 1994

Location: Richmond Coliseum, Richmond, Virginia

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jim Ross

Here's a rare one as we have a TV show taped before a pay per view yet serving as the fallout show. There's a chance that the commentary has been updated (remember that the Rumble was on a Saturday so they would have extra time) but this could be an interesting case. Let's get to it.

Lex Luger vs. Austin Steele

The commentary has indeed been done post-Rumble as the announcers talk about Luger being a co-winner. Steele has a great name but looks like Buddy Landel, which isn't the best thing in the world in 1994. Luger starts with the right hands and a pair of hiptosses but Steele actually gets in a few shots to the ribs to take over. Lex grabs a belly to back followed by a regular superplex for the pin. I don't think I've ever seen him use that as a finisher and...well it was just a superplex so there isn't much to say about it.

Rating: D. Just a match here and the ending didn't exactly do much. It's a smart move to have Luger on here two nights after he won a major match. I know the fans didn't get that at the time but at least they're keeping him on TV to keep him hot. You would think he'd be a bit more upset but he can't actually say that until next week.

We hit the Royal Rumble recap to cover everything major. Todd does screw up and say the show was last night (it was two nights ago).

Jeff Jarrett vs. John Paul

Jeff starts with a dropkick but gets small packaged and sunset flipped for two each. The comeback doesn't take long though as JR brings up a good point about Jarrett: for someone who wants to be a country singer, he certainly dresses oddly for his wrestling matches. Jarrett misses an elbow and gets rolled up for two, followed by some uppercuts to the jaw. Jeff comes right back with a rollup and a handful of trunks for the pin.

Rating: D+. Well it was better than Luger's match. I know his later stuff wasn't the most interesting in the world but DEAR GOODNESS Jeff was so much worse back at this point. The gimmick, the look and the wrestling itself really didn't work and that's a dangerous combination. It's bad enough when one of them isn't up to par but with 1994 Jarrett, I'm not sure any of them were.

Men on a Mission vs. Headshrinkers

Men on a Mission are replacing the Harts, which is annoying as I wanted to see the original match. Mo sends Fatu into the corner in one of the only successful things you'll ever see him do. The Samoans head outside for a breather as this is already dragging. For some reason Mo tries a faceplant and is almost immediately superkicked down.

It's off to Mabel to scare Fatu, who actually tries a slam. A pair of superkicks actually bring Mabel down to a knee but for some reason Fatu tries a suplex. That earns him a big boot to the face before it's back to Mo as we take a break. Back with Mo taking a double clothesline and giving one of the most bewildered faces I've ever seen. Mo is sent into the steps and chopped down but does manage to get in a sunset flip.

Fatu is right there for a save, which probably isn't necessary considering it's freaking Mo (Did I mention I'm not a fan of his?). A double headbutt gets two more but Mo manages to fall into the ropes to crotch Fatu. The hot tag brings in Mabel for all of his usual stuff, only to have the Samoans knock him outside. Mo takes another double headbutt and a top rope splash for the pin.

Rating: D-. Who decided that Men on a Mission should have gone this far? Being a big Headshrinkers fan helped a bit but this was hardly the easiest thing in the world to watch. Mabel was good for a big man but....yeah Mo was horrible. Like horrible horrible. The look on

his face when he got beaten up was amusing though.

Adam Bomb vs. Tommy Angel

Angel shrugs off some offense and scores with a few dropkicks, only to get shoved into the corner for a stomping. Bomb dropkicks him in the ribs as the announcers take shots at Bill Clinton. JR switches over to blaming Harvey Wipelman for screwing up Bomb's career as Adam hits a top rope clothesline. The Atom Smasher (powerbomb) puts Tommy away.

Rating: D. Angel was a regular jobber around this time so he was able to put on a watchable match. The same could be said for Bomb, who was a good power guy but with a gimmick based on being the result of a nuclear disaster who sounded like he was from southern Alabama was a bit too much for him to overcome.

Sparky Plugg loves cars.

Doink the Clown vs. Joey Stallings

Dink has an invisible dog...and the jobber actually sells for it. JR: "Stallings is a sandwich or two short of a picnic." Doink gets two off a belly to belly and it's off to an armbar. Back up and Stallings grabs a bad looking side slam, only to miss a dropkick. Doink grabs a powerslam and finishes with the Whoopee Cushion.

Rating: D-. I'm not sure what there is to say about this one. Do you really brag about beating someone who was attacked by a non-existent dog? I know 1994 was kind of a dumb time but are we really to the point where jobbers are scared of a tiny clown's invisible dog. I....can't believe I actually had to type that.

Tyrone Knox vs. Shawn Michaels

Knox has a good look. They run the ropes to start with Shawn taking him down and dropping an elbow across his back. Knox's offense doesn't go very far as Shawn gets in a hiptoss and stomp to the head. We hit the chinlock and Vince confirms that the WWF will NOT be replacing the NFL on CBS. Thanks for that boss. Knox gets in a few headbutts (JR: "YOU GO TYRONE!") but it's a superkick and the piledriver (good one too) for the pin.

Rating: D+. Shockingly Shawn has the best match on the card. It helps when you have someone who doesn't look like a complete loser and Knox at least looked good at times. It's still just a squash but when you have a decent opponent and one heck of a piledriver to end

the show, things are at least a bit better.

Overall Rating: F. Oh yeah this one was bad. They knew they had to be careful with what they could say in the arena and that makes for a REALLY dull show. Just long and boring here, which really shouldn't be the case on a show that is only about forty five minutes long when you take out commercials. The new cycle should help but this was really boring.

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Monday Night Raw – May 29, 1995: Get The Flashlight!

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 29, 1995

Location: Broome County Arena, Binghamton, New York

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jerry Lawler

We're wrap up the month here as the company is just getting worse and worse as the weeks go by. The Undertaker is back tonight though so maybe we can get a little relief. Unfortunately he's facing Jeff Jarrett, who could somehow bring him right back down to reality. This tournament is showing how weak the heel side of this roster really is. Let's get to it.

Jeff Jarrett is in the ring to say he's ready to face Undertaker but

he panics when the lights go out. Jeff: "GET THE FLASHLIGHT! GET THE FLASHLIGHT!" Funny line, but what's even funnier is Vince and Jerry making little comments about Jeff's promo but you can see them sitting there in silence.

Opening sequence.

Sid vs. Mike Khoury

Sid has Tatanka and Ted DiBiase in his corner. Isn't that a bit excessive for a squash? Powerbomb ends this in about a minute.

We look at Diesel injuring his elbow at In Your House and having surgery to fix it up. He should be back soon and won't miss any significant time.

Adam Bomb vs. Bob Cook

Vince mentions that there will be a broadcast version of Wrestlemania this weekend and says he's proud as a peacock about it. I'm not sure why he can't say it's on NBC (whose logo is a peacock) as they're willing to air it but won't let him market it? Bomb starts in on the arm and punches away before scoring with the top rope clothesline to end it quick. He never recovered from that Mabel match.

King of the Ring Control Center with Diesel and Bigelow promising to bankrupt and close the Million Dollar Corporation.

Hakushi vs. John Snakowski

Hakushi comes out with a bag containing.....A BRET HART HEAD. You can hear the crowd freak out over that and I can't blame them. That was actually creepy. Hakushi chops a lot, hits a Vader Bomb and finishes with a running flip splash.

Antonino Rocca, Ernie Ladd and Ivan Putski will be inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Alundra Blayze wants to fight Bertha Faye. For some reason this takes three minutes.

Men on a Mission vs. Aaron Ferguson/Gary Scott

Scott fires off kicks to Mo's fat gut to start but Mabel comes in and destroys him as you would expect. Aaron comes in to start on Mo's arm but gets punched in the face for his efforts. It's back to Scott so Mabel can splash him in the corner, setting up another splash for the pin.

Rating: D-. I'm running out of ways to describe these squashes. Mabel is huge and crushes people and Mo is just there because Mabel needed a partner. For the life of me I don't know what Vince saw in Mabel to push him like he did but maybe he thought it was another Yokozuna. You know, without the talent, intimidation factor or anything else positive.

We look at the incomplete King of the Ring brackets.

King of the Ring Qualifying Match: Jeff Jarrett vs. Undertaker

As you might expect, Jeff is terrified but tries some right hands to start. That earns him the jumping clothesline and Old School. Just like last time, Roadie's interference doesn't work and Jeff has to avoid an elbow drop. Another Roadie distraction actually does work though and Jeff starts stomping away with a dropkick getting two. Jarrett starts in on the leg and we take a break. Back with the Figure Four going on until Jeff gets caught holding the ropes. A swinging neckbreaker keeps Undertaker in trouble but he grabs Jeff out of the air for a chokeslam. The Tombstone sends Undertaker to the tournament.

Rating: C. For once I'm ok with a champion losing clean because despite not being a champion, Undertaker is a much bigger deal than Jarrett could ever hope to be. This was a totally watchable match as Jarrett is more than capable of wrestling a simple match and making it look fine. The problem is when he's asked to be interesting out of the ring because he's just boring otherwise.

A preview for next week's show and Bob Backlund raging against modern music wrap us up.

Overall Rating: D+. It's really interesting how much one match not being horrible can help a show. Jarrett vs. Undertaker certainly isn't great but it kept the show from leaving a bad taste in my mouth and that's more than you usually get from any given episode. The King of the Ring is starting to take shape and that's probably why I'm desperate to get out of this month.

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Monday Night Raw – May 1, 1995: It Just Keeps Going

Monday Night Raw

Date: May 1, 1995

Location: Civic Auditorium, Omaha, Nebraska

Attendance: 5,800

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jerry Lawler

Sweet goodness I might as well just do the rest of 1995 at this rate. We're just past Wrestlemania XI (close enough) and we're about two weeks away from the first In Your House, meaning it's time for Diesel vs. Sid. Yeah like I've said many times, this really isn't a good period for the company. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Tatanka costing Bam Bam Bigelow the WWF World Title last week, causing Ted DiBiase to fire him. Bigelow fought back and said he quit, earning himself a big beatdown including a horrible powerbomb from Sid. Diesel ran out for the save and a Jackknife on Tatanka. Bigelow and Diesel shook hands to end the show.

Opening sequence.

We look at Sid powerbombing various people to send him into the main event.

Lawler has a contract for Bret Hart.

Allied Powers vs. George Anderson/Tom Hagan

That would be British Bulldog/Lex Luger. Anderson starts with Lex and gets hiptossed for trying to run the ropes. Bulldog comes in and eats a forearm to the face so it's off to Hagan. As Bulldog beats on

Hagan, I have to describe Tom's attire, which looks like a birthday party store exploded. Anderson misses a charge and gets powerslammed for the squash pin.

We look at Jeff Jarrett cheating to retain the Intercontinental Title over Bob Holly on the Action Zone, resulting in the match being restarted. Holly got the pin but Jeff's foot was on the ropes. Bob was named the new champion but the title was held up. Holly's win isn't considered an official title reign.

Bob Holly vs. Butler Stevens

Stevens takes him into the corner to start but gets armdragged and hiptossed for his efforts. A few knees to Bob's ribs don't do much and Holly's high cross body is good for the pin.

We go to the In Your House Control Center with Todd Pettengill plugging the idea that the show is only \$15. That really should be the selling point for this show: it's 2/3 the length of a regular pay per view but only half the price. The big story here: Razor Ramon will be facing Jeff Jarrett/the Roadie in a handicap match due to a very real neck injury to the 1-2-3 Kid. Oh and they're giving away a house in Orlando.

Mantaur vs. Sonny Rogers

Mantaur, the half man/half bull, has Jim Cornette with him. It's the squash you would expect with Mantaur throwing him around, hammering away in the corner, shrugging off a comeback attempt and winning with a World's Strongest Slam. They were just so lost at this point and Mantaur is a great example.

A cop from NYDP Blue accuses Man Mountain Rock of pretending to be a wrestler. Hey now he wasn't horrible.

Sycho Sid vs. Razor Ramon

And no match as Sid jumps him through the pyro and destroys Razor in fantastic fashion. I remember watching this as a kid and thinking Sid was amazing for jumping through the pyro. Like, that's crazy. Diesel makes the save.

Adam Bomb vs. Dave Sigfried

Bomb throws him around as you would expect and grabs a snap suplex. A clothesline breaks up Dave's hiptoss attempt and Bomb lets this go a bit longer. Some really basic offense (clothesline, hiptoss, right

hands) keep Sigfried in trouble and a top rope clothesline ends the goof.

Rating: D. I always liked Bomb so we'll call this a little better than the normal dull jobber squash. He was a horrible talker or otherwise he might have been a good choice for a midcard power guy. But then he got squashed by Mabel at In Your House because KING MABEL could not be stopped.

Bomb throws his toy footballs into the crowd. That's always going to work.

Razor gets medical treatment.

Hunter Hearst Helmsley is snooty and rich.

Men on a Mission vs. Bill Duke/Kevin Kruger

Mabel throws Kruger around (way too common tonight) and chokes him in the air. The jobbers' double dropkick has no effect so it's off to Mo for a change. A knee to the ribs drops Duke but Mo misses an elbow drop. It's back to Duke as this squash just keeps going. We actually hit a chinlock for a bit before Mabel finally ends it with a belly to belly.

Rating: F. WAY too long here as it took the better part of five minutes to get rid of these goofs. Men on a Mission just wasn't interesting as a heel team (or anything more than a comedy face team for that matter) but it was even worse when they turned Mabel into a monster heel for reasons of genuine stupidity.

Here's Bret Hart to answer Lawler's contract offer. Vince does Bret's pose for a funny visual. Apparently Lawler thinks Bret signed to face Hakushi to get out of a match against Jerry at In Your House. Bret will fight Hakushi at In Your House but he'll fight Lawler on the same night as a bonus. Pyro goes off to end the show.

Overall Rating: F. This was the kind of horrible show that you grew to expect around this time, which should tell you why no one talks about this era. I was bored out of my mind with most of these matches and it's all building towards Mabel vs. Adam Bomb? That's my big reward after all this? Nitro can't come around to light a fire under Vince soon enough.

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Monday Night Raw – November 8, 1993: DOWN GOES VINCE!

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 8, 1993

Location: Fernwood Resort, Bushkill, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Bobby Heenan, Randy Savage

We're creeping towards Survivor Series and hopefully things are better this week after such a disaster last time around. The big story is of course the Foreign Fanatics vs. the All Americans and tonight we'll be seeing Ludvig Borga vs. Scott Steiner in a preview match. Let's get to it.

Borga talks about how much he hates America so Steiner says he doesn't like Borga talking about how much he hates America. Well no one ever accused this of being the most exciting era.

Opening sequence.

Heenan is wearing what looks like a parachute because recently someone parachuted into a big boxing match. As usual, topical jokes really aren't funny. Savage promises to destroy Crush if he gets the chance.

Vince plugs a phone number where you can select Pierre's opponent for next week. Your options are: Doink the Clown, the 1-2-3 Kid or Lex Luger. After that obvious set of choices, Vince pulls the cord on Bobby's parachute, which he has on backwards.

Scott Steiner vs. Ludvig Borga

Borga jumps him before the jacket can come off and scores with a good looking top rope clothesline. Scott demonstrates the American abilities to suplex foreigners, followed by a pumphandle slam to send Ludvig to the floor. We hit the pause button while Borga yells a lot, followed by a shot of Savage yelling about Crush again. Borga grabs a headlock as Savage rants about not caring about legal issues, even promising to slap Jack Tunney if it means he can get his hands on Crush.

Steiner avoids an elbow drop but here are the Quebecers to offer Borga some advice. Vince: "This is patently absurd!" Back from a break with Steiner suplexing him back inside as Rick Steiner comes out to even things up a bit. Borga finally makes the ropes to break up a Boston crab so Scott goes with a bad looking top rope dropkick for two. Rick gets on the apron for no logical reason and Borga pulls him inside. The Quebecers get in as well and the match is thrown out.

Rating: D+. This didn't go anywhere and you knew they were going to have the big nothing finish as soon as Rick came out there. Borga could have been a great heel if he hadn't been as crazy as he was but he was really cool while he lasted. Scott wasn't a great singles guy anymore at this point but he was still a very appropriate choice to face Borga here.

Jeff Jarrett is still in Nashville and it's time to go to the Grand Ole Opry. Country music is corrupt or something. This turns into a discussion of Undertaker being in shambles. Jarrett just keeps going and it gets worse and worse every minute as no one cares in the slightest.

Men on a Mission vs. Steve Smith/Cory Student

Mable is still dancing when Smith taps him on the shoulder for no logical reason. That earns him a trip around the ring before a double dropkick (with maybe one foot combined making contact) puts him down. Mo's sunset flip gets two on Student (what a name) as the announcers make jokes about an upcoming USA movie. We hit the chinlock for a bit before the double splash puts Student away.

Rating: D. I never know what to say about these squash matches as they're just beatings until we get to the inevitable pin. Men on a Mission were entertaining in a way but they haven't exactly aged well. It doesn't help that Oscar is one of the worst wrestling

rappers this side of PN News.

We go to the Survivor Series control center as we run down the card, including the Hart Family facing Jerry Lawler and his Knights, which of course wouldn't happen. Bret can't wait to get his hands on Lawler for everything he's said about the family.

Still in the control center, we see the Headshrinkers finding out that they'll be facing a pair Doinks. Oh just.....no.

Undertaker tells us that drinking and driving is bad. That's not something you expect to see.

Rick Martel vs. John Paul

Martel starts with the usual as Vince speculates that Savage might replace Tatanka on the All Americans team. Paul grabs a headlock but gets suplexed down. Martel ducks a middle rope cross body and the Boston crab wraps it up in a hurry.

Crush vs. Dan Dubiel

Vince immediately has to calm Savage down by waistlocking him but Savage THROWS VINCE DOWN! IN 1993!!! Savage erupts on Crush with referees and suits not being able to break it up.

Bob Backlund vs. Barry Horowitz

How weird is it that Backlund is still around nearly 23 years after his comeback in his forties here? They trade armdrags to start before Backlund takes him down with ease. Cue Savage back to the announcers' desk as the technical display continues. And never mind as we cut to Crush breaking out of his locker room, sending Savage to the back. They fight onto the streets as the match is completely forgotten to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. It's nice that they have a direction going towards Survivor Series though the ridiculous amount of changes they're making to the card isn't doing them any favors. The big match wasn't exactly thrilling but Savage vs. Crush is a hot angle that they somehow waited five months to blow off. Not much of a show here but 1993 isn't the best time.

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Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania X: One Of The Great Ones

Wrestlemania X

Date: March 20, 1994

Location: Madison Square Garden, New York City, New York

Attendance: 18,065

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jerry Lawler

Anyone that has read my stuff over the years knows that I believe Wrestlemania X7 to be the undisputed best show ever. This is one of the small handful of shows that I actually think about for awhile before saying X7 is better. On this show are two of the best matches of all time and two world title matches, all without Hogan. This show feels like a major show and it more than lives up to the hype. Let's get to it.

We open with a clip from the first Wrestlemania. That still holds up to this day.

Little Richard and a choir sing America the Beautiful. The first version is just Richard but the choir kicks in on the second one, making for an awesome performance.

We recap Bret vs. Owen. Expect to hear the words "we recap" a lot tonight, because there is A LOT of backstory to this show. Back in mid to late 1993, Owen was getting annoyed at Bret getting all of

the spotlight, but he went along with Bret and two more brothers on a Survivor Series team against Shawn Michaels and the Knights. The Knights were easily dispatched, but late in the match Owen was knocked into Bret, sending the elder brother (Bret) into the barricade. As his family went to check on him, Owen was rolled up and pinned, making him the only Hart to be eliminated.

This sent Owen into a tirade about how Bret was always hogging the spotlight. Owen challenged Bret to a match but Bret said no way. Instead, Bret offered to team up with Owen to win the tag titles, which was enough to appease Owen. At the Royal Rumble during the title shot, Bret injured his knee and refused to tag late in the match, causing the referee to stop the match due to the injury. Owen finally snapped and kicked Bret's bad leg out from under him, fully turning heel in an awesome and totally justified moment.

Later in the night, Bret was in the Royal Rumble. He and Lex Luger were the last two men in the match and they both went out at the same time. No one could tell who hit the ground first, so they were declared co-winners. Therefore, both guys get title matches tonight. A coin toss was determined who would get the first shot at champion Yokozuna, which was won by Lex. Therefore, Lex gets a title shot first tonight, but Bret has to face suitable competition so he doesn't get an unfair advantage in the later match. His opponent is his brother Owen (Luger would have faced Crush if Bret had won the toss). Got all that?

Owen Hart vs. Bret Hart

For reasons I'm not clear on, the Fink isn't the announcer tonight. They lock up to start and Owen shoves Bret away, earning himself some celebrating. Bret takes him down to the mat but Owen escapes and celebrates again. Back to the mat for some amateur stuff but Owen grabs the rope. Owen tries to take it to the mat but Bret easily counters to send him out to the floor. Back in and Owen slaps him in the face to fire up his older brother.

More amateur stuff ensues and Owen gets to do his spinning counter to a wristlock, only to pull Bret down by the hair. Bret channels

his inner Shawn and nips up before getting two off a rollup. Bret takes over with an armbar and a clothesline to send Owen out to the floor. Back in again and Bret slaps the blonde Hart before rolling him up for two. Bret hooks the armbar again before getting two off a crucifix. We're about five minutes into this now and there is absolutely nothing to complain about. They get up again and Owen hits a sweet spinwheel kick to take over before stomping Bret to the floor.

Owen rams Bret back first into the post as the anger is starting to seep out. A backbreaker sets up a camel clutch back inside as Lawler is loving this. Owen yells at his brother in a great touch to the evilness. Bret breaks it pretty quickly but walks into a belly to belly suplex for two. A cross body by Owen is rolled through by Bret for two but Owen goes straight to the back again. Owen hits a German suplex for two and drops a leg on the back of Bret's head for two more.

Bret tries to spin out of a suplex but gets caught in a tombstone. Owen goes up top but misses a swan dive, giving Bret the breather that he's been needing. Bret starts firing back and gets two each off a clothesline and a Russian legsweep. There's the backbreaker followed by the middle rope elbow for two more. It's Sharpshooter time but Owen pops up and hits the enziguri to put Bret down.

Another Sharpshooter attempt is countered by Owen and a rollup gets two on Bret. This is very fast paced stuff. Owen heads to the floor and we get LUCHA BRET as he takes out his brother. He hurts his knee in the process though and Owen is very happy. Back inside and Owen goes for the leg, wrapping it around the post a few times because that's what villains do. Off to an inverted Indian Deathlock by Owen but he lets it go before too long.

There's a yet to be named dragon screw leg whip followed by a Figure Four (wrong leg of course) as Bret is in big trouble. Bret reverses and rolls into the ropes to break the hold but his knee is gone. An enziguri finally puts Owen down and buys big brother a breather. A headbutt puts Owen down again and there's the chest first into the

buckle bump for Owen. A bulldog gets two on Owen as does a sweet piledriver.

There's a superplex for a delayed two as Jerry Lawler is freaking out. A sleeper is quickly broken up by a hidden low blow from Owen and it's time for the Sharpshooter on Bret. The older Hart slaps the mat but it doesn't mean anything yet. Bret reverses into a Sharpshooter of his own but Owen is right in front of the ropes. Owen charges into a boot in the corner so Bret loads up a rollup, but Owen counters into a cradle for the 100% clean pin.

Rating: A+. If there's a better opening match anywhere, I'd love to see it. This was Owen's coming out party and he looked excellent in doing it. Bret has no shame in losing here as he didn't so much get beat as much as he got caught. This set up a great feud over the summer for the title between these two, but it never reached this level again. There was some DEEP psychology going on out there with Bret being hesitant to fight his brother and Owen using the advantage to catch Bret in a wrestling move, all on top of the leg injury. Excellent match and one of the best ever.

Owen says he told us all he could do it and he's absolutely right. We look at the Wrestlemania II battle royal.

Sy Sperling of the Hair Club for Men debuts a hairpiece for Fink. I'm thinking no on this one Howard.

Bam Bam Bigelow/Luna Vachon vs. Doink the Clown/Dink

Bigelow runs over Doink to start with a clothesline and a dropkick to silence the crowd. A headbutt misses though and the Clown pounds away a bit. Bigelow misses an elbow drop and it's off to Dink, meaning Luna has to come in as well. This is your usual "comedy" but Luna does hit a running hip attack in 619 position but Dink starts running around in circles. The small clown goes up top but misses a dive.

Vachon goes up but misses a BIG splash, allowing the big boys to come back in. Doink pounds away but is clotheslined to the floor with one shot. Dink annoys both heels but Doink comes back in, only

to be sat on in a sunset flip attempt. A charges misses the big clown though and a jumping DDT puts Bigelow down. The Whoopee Cushion (top rope seated senton) completely misses and Dink is knocked to the floor. Doink tries a suplex but Bigelow falls on him for two. The top rope headbutt is enough to finish off the clowns.

Rating: D. This was bad but not completely terrible. Doink wasn't doing his stupid comedy and thankfully Bigelow didn't have to look all that stupid, which is the worst thing they could have done. The match wasn't much but to be fair they needed something to give the crowd a breather after the awesome opener. This wasn't horrible.

Bigelow tries to crush Dink but Doink makes the save.

A Bill Clinton impersonator is here. Somehow I.R.S. gets a spot in the presidential box.

Wrestlemania III was awesome!

Randy Savage vs. Crush

This is the result of a big heel turn by Crush where he cost Savage his broadcasting job. The idea was Yokozuna injured Crush but Savage didn't come visit him, so Crush turned on him. This is a twist on the falls count anywhere match, but the deal is you have to pin someone out of the ring and the pinned guy has 60 seconds to make it back to the ring, making it more like a last man standing match actually. It's also no holds barred.

Savage charges at Crush in the aisle but gets dropped on the barricade for a pin in about 40 seconds. Of course Savage makes it back in (despite some Fuji interference) but that's a nice quick introduction to the concept. Savage is put in the Tree of Woe where Crush stomps away. Fuji hands Crush some salt but Randy knocks it into the evil one's face. A top rope double ax has Crush in trouble and there's the big elbow, but Savage has to send Crush to the floor before pinning him. Smart indeed. Crush beats the count after Fuji pours some water on his face.

Crush comes back with a kind of hot shot to send Savage to the floor, but Randy immediately comes back by sending Crush into the

post. They fight into the crowd where Crush superkicks Savage's head off. A piledriver doesn't work on Savage so they fight into the back. Savage rams Crush into various metal objects and gets a pin, but instead of leaving he ties Crush's feet up with a rope and hangs him upside down. It doesn't quite work as Crush falls just after Savage leaves, but the clock was running the whole time and Savage wins.

Rating: C. Keeping in mind that this was 1994, this was pretty good. Sixty seconds was too long of an interval as it was too long before the guy was in danger. If they cut it down to about thirty, this would have been much better. Either way, not bad here and more proof that Savage was still a very valuable asset to Vince, but for whatever reason (not Stephanie), he was let go.

Fake Clinton says he's a fan. I.R.S. congratulates him on raising taxes.

We see videos from Fan Fest, which was the forerunner to Axxess.

Savage celebrates with the fans. He also won a tournament for the world title at Wrestlemania IV.

Women's Title: Lelani Kai vs. Alundra Blayze

Kai was at the first Wrestlemania if that tells you anything. Blayze is the new champion after the belt was resurrected for no apparent reason. Kai, a Hawaiian/something else hybrid, runs Blayze over but gets caught in a sunset flip a few seconds later for two. Lelani comes back with a chokebomb for no cover but a bad splash gets two.

The champ comes back with a hurricanrana before there was a name for such a thing in America. Either way it gets two and we head to the floor. That goes nowhere so Kai hits a butterfly suplex for two. Blayze comes back with some basic strikes and some hair drags for two each. Alundra hits her bridging German suplex to retain a few seconds later.

Rating: D. Was there a point to this? I didn't think so either so let's see what was stupid about it. First of all, the "division" had two regulars in it: Blayze and a Japanese monster named Bull Nakano.

Based on that, it's pretty clear why the division was done in just a few months, not to be mentioned again for about four years.

Roddy Piper sprayed a non-celebrity with a fire extinguisher at Mania V.

Tag Titles: Men on a Mission vs. Quebecers

The Quebecers are defending and have Johnny Polo with them. About a year later, Polo would become Raven. The Men on a Mission are Mabel (Viscera) and perhaps the most worthless wrestler that I can think of at the moment, Mo. They were purple and gold and rap with their manager Oscar. That's about it. Before the match, here's some big chested blonde talk show host for Shawn to hit on. Burt Reynolds, pretty clearly bombed, shows up to steal her. From what I've heard, Reynolds was the biggest jerk on the planet backstage at this show.

The Quebecers are the Mountie and another Canadian who dress like Mounties. True story: the Royal Canadian Mounted Police yelled at the WWF and said they had to have their song (it might have been just the Mountie actually. Not that it matters) changed to say "We're NOT the Mounties" because the RCMP was worried about people believing they were real corrupt Mounties. Wait why am I spending this much space on this match?

Anyway the champions jump the Men before the bell but 500lb+ Mabel runs them over and brings in Mo. Since Mo is the most worthless wrestler I can think of at this moment, he's easily beaten down and not many people care. Mo is sent to the floor and Pierre backdrops Jacques over the top and onto the worthless one. Back in and a double hot shot gets two on Mo. This is going nowhere.

Mo comes back with a forward roll attack but the tag isn't seen. Wait yes it is and Mabel cleans house. The champions try a double suplex on the fat man but hurt their backs in the process. They try it again and actually get it to work as Polo celebrates. Pierre hits the Cannonball (assisted Swanton Bomb) for two and Mabel starts firing back. The Men hit their double splash but there's no referee. END THIS NONSENSE ALREADY! Mabel splashes Pierre on the floor...and it's a countout.

Rating: F+. There was no structure, there was no flow, Mo is worthless, Mabel is fat and worthless, the ending sucked, and there was entirely too little Johnny Polo. Was there ANYTHING good about this match? Oh wait the suplex was good. To give you an idea of how bad Men on a Mission were, they accidentally won the titles at a house show around this time as Mabel was too fat to get up on a cover and Jacques couldn't kick out.

Wrestlemania VI had the Ultimate Challenge.

We do the "celebrities" for the first title match. Basically it's the aforementioned talk show host and a member of New Kids on the Block. Seriously, that's it. There's a guest referee though: Mr. Perfect. Now remember last year when Luger knocked out Mr. Perfect? Well there was never any retribution for that....but I'm sure it won't mean anything here right?

WWF World Title: Lex Luger vs. Yokozuna

Yoko is defending of course and there's also backstory to this. The idea here is that last 4th of July, Yokozuna held a bodyslam challenge on board the U.S.S. Intrepid. No one could slam him and the contest was closed, but a helicopter landed on the ship and out stepped Lex Luger. He hit a running forearm and slammed Yokozuna to get the biggest face turn in years. He then went around the country on a bus, begging for a title shot because he was MADE IN THE USA.

Anyway, he got the shot at Summerslam with the catch that it was his ONLY shot. Luger did indeed beat Yoko...by countout. Therefore he was frozen out of the title picture, unless he could win the Royal Rumble. We've already covered that though so here's the first title match. Luger gets a bit intro with fireworks, but do you really think New York City is going to cheer him? Especially with BRET HART in the wings? You should know better than that.

Luger pounds away like any AMERICAN hero worth his (certainly not Japanese) salt. A big right hand sends Yoko out to the floor and there's an ax handle to the back of the head. Luger busts out a freaking TOP ROPE CROSS BODY for two and a jumping elbow for the

same. Since it's early in the match, a slam completely fails and Yoko falls on top for two. Yoko rips a buckle pad off but we hit the nerve hold for a bit instead. Luger fights out of it but Yoko rams into him to stop any comeback.

Back to the nerve hold which has been running for about five minutes total now. Luger fights up but Fuji pulls the rope down to send him to the outside. Back in and BACK TO THE NERVE HOLD. After about 87 years Luger fights up and makes his comeback...only to be knocked down by a chop. Yoko tries to send Luger into Chekov's buckle but gets sent into it himself of course.

Luger makes his REAL comeback and hits a clothesline to put Yoko down and there's the "slam" (more like he picked up Yoko and dropped him). The forearm knocks Yoko out but Luger has to beat up Fuji and Cornette. Perfect won't count so Luger shoves him...AND THAT'S A DQ! Holy screwjob! That's clearly what the fans are chanting: screwjob, not some other word that starts with s and often comes after holy.

Rating: D+. It's rare to see Luger as the star of a match but that's certainly the case here. That nerve hold was RIDICULOUS as it was about 80% of the champion's "offense", although a case can be made that he was saving strength for later tonight which is understandable. This was a callback to something that most people didn't remember, but that doesn't mean it isn't fair game. Unfortunately Perfect would injure his back again after this and not be able to payoff this feud. Either way, Luger is officially a choker in the WWF and was done as a world title contender after this.

Luger and Perfect yell at each in the back.

At Wrestlemania VII, Savage and Liz reunited. The moment given here is the Blindfold match but screw that.

Here's Harvey Wippleman to yell at Fink for having a stupid hairpiece. They get in a shoving match but Adam Bomb comes out to scare Fink. This brings out...EARTHQUAKE?

Adam Bomb vs. Earthquake

This is barely a match as Quake hits his powerslam and the Earthquake gets the pin in less than 40 seconds. This is what you call "being way over time and needing to hurry up." I'm shocked Earthquake had a job at this point.

Cornette goes on a rant against Lex Luger and cats while also calling Todd Pettingill "Petting Zoo" before yelling about Bret Hart. Then he talks about fish and Bret starting a feeding frenzy of sharks. I could listen to Cornette ramble while still staying on point for HOURS.

The Wrestlemania VIII moment is the Undertaker. Seriously, that's it. No mention of his match, whether he won or lost, his opponent, or anything shown other than a closeup of him walking to the ring. Just the Undertaker.

Ready for some more backstory? Back in 1993, Shawn Michaels was Intercontinental Champion but failed a drug test. To this day Shawn says he didn't do it but that's beside the point. We needed a new champion so Ramon won a battle royal and then a match to win the title. Shawn came back with the original belt and said he never lost, so he was still the champion. The solution? Put both belts on a ladder and let them climb up to pull them down in a classic match that might be the match of the decade.

Intercontinental Title: Shawn Michaels vs. Razor Ramon

Shawn has Diesel with him here. Diesel is told to leave but just doesn't because that's the kind of guy he is. Basic stuff to start with Shawn blocking a hip toss but getting chokeslammed instead. They hit the ropes to build some speed and Shawn hits a neckbreaker. Razor gets sent to the floor and there's a clothesline from Diesel, earning him another ejection which actually works this time.

Anyway Shawn gets punched in the jaw and Razor takes over again. Shawn is knocked into the corner before a BIG clothesline puts him on the floor. Razor exposes the concrete but we head back inside before he can use it. The Razor's Edge is loaded up but Shawn backdrops Ramon over the top and onto the concrete, possibly injuring an elbow. Shawn gets the ladder but Razor jacks his jaw to

stop it. The ladder is slid inside but Shawn hits a baseball slide to knock it into Ramon's ribs.

Back inside again and the ladder is rammed into Razor's ribs both in the corner and on the mat. Shawn throws the ladder onto Razor's back which looks SICK. He tosses it at Razor against the ropes and goes for a climb, only to have Razor pull Shawn's tights down and give us a rather unpleasant (or pleasant depending on your preferences) view. Not that it matters as Shawn knocks him down and climbs again, this time hitting a pretty famous splash to crush Razor again.

Razor saves another climb by shoving the ladder over, sending Shawn onto the top rope. We get a camera shot from above the ring, showing both guys laid out on the mat. Cool shot. Back up and Michaels is whipped into the ladder in the corner, knocking him out to the floor. Razor rams the ladder into Shawn's chest with his back against the post. If that's not enough, Razor launches Shawn into the ladder against the apron to keep Michaels in agony.

Back in and Ramon BLASTS Shawn with the ladder to knock him to the outside again. Razor climbs up but Shawn dives off the top rope to knock him down. The ladder falls onto Shawn in the process to keep both guys on the mat. They both start to climb but the ladder is bent. Shawn is higher up but can't hang in a slugout with Razor. Michaels gets punched down but the ladder gives way under Razor, sending him down.

Ramon climbs again but Shawn dropkicks the ladder which doesn't topple over this time. In a smart move, Shawn pushes the ladder over onto Razor's back to take control again. A big piledriver puts Razor down so Shawn goes to the corner. In another famous visual, Shawn rides the ladder down onto Razor, crushing him yet again. Since he's a jerk though, Shawn puts the ladder over top of Razor, but Ramon gets up and knocks Shawn off the ladder. Michaels gets tangled in the ropes, allowing Razor to climb up to unify the titles.

Rating: A+. This is one of the matches that reignited the midcard scene after things had died down for a bit. It also paved the way for the insane style that would start to dominate about five years

later. That being said, it's still a freaking AWESOME match with some iconic spots such as the splash. It also started Shawn on the roll of a lifetime, as the next year he would be in the world title match at Wrestlemania then win the title the following year. This match is required viewing for fans.

I.R.S. and company argue in the back, so let's just cancel a ten man tag. In other words, we're running long and don't have time. It happened on Raw the next night and no one remembers it.

Ted DiBiase tries to bribe Mr. President.

Wrestlemania IX's moment is Fuji throwing salt in Bret's eyes. We don't see the pin for some reason though.

Videos on Bret and Yoko set up the main event.

Burt Reynolds is guest ring announcer and my goodness he makes Scott Hall look like a poster boy for AA. Oh and Jennie Garth from Beverly Hills 90210 is timekeeper. The guest referee: Roddy Piper (pause for the huge ovation) who may or may not hate Bret because of what happened at Mania 8. Nice touch.

WWF World Title: Bret Hart vs. Yokozuna

Yoko is defending if you can't tell. Burt is barely able to read lines off a card. Hart is STILL selling the leg from earlier, because that's how awesome he is. Yoko jumps Bret to start and the fans are already fired up for this. Bret tries to fire back with some punches but Yoko stomps him down. Piper and Cornette get in an argument as Yoko blasts Hart. The splash misses though and Bret pounds away, only to hurt his head on a headbutt.

Hart actually manages to punch Yoko down and gets two off an ax handle to the back. The champion comes back with fat man offense and drops the big leg for two. A headbutt puts Bret on the floor but he gets back in at eight. Yoko misses a charge in the corner and there's a bulldog out of the corner to put the big man down. That only gets two though, as does the middle rope elbow. Bret keeps limping and hits the Hart Attack clothesline for a delayed two.

The belly to belly puts Bret down but Yoko won't cover for no

apparent reason. Instead he loads up the Banzai Drop, only to fall victim to the powers of gravity. It knocks the wind out of the monster, allowing Hart to hook the leg for the pin and the title as the roof is blown off of Madison Square Garden for about the fifth time tonight.

Rating: B-. While it isn't a classic, the fans were WAY into this and it's a feel good moment to end the show. Bret was fighting a very different kind of match here rather than he did the previous year, as here he was taking it straight to Yoko instead of sticking and moving. Very solid match here all things considered and a great way to get the giant out of the title scene.

The locker room empties out to celebrate with Bret but Owen stands in the aisle and stares down his brother to end the show.

Overall Rating: A-. This is one of those shows where the bad stuff is bad, but on the other hand the good stuff is absolutely outstanding. With two of the best matches of all time on one show it's easily one of if not the strongest Wrestlemanias from an in ring perspective. On top of that, the show had long lasting impact as the company focus shifted to the smaller sized guys and longer matches. This was an excellent show but some of the bad stuff can be fast forwarded.

Ratings Comparison

Owen Hart vs. Bret Hart

Original: A+

Redo: A+

Bam Bam Bigelow/Luna Vachon vs. Doink the Clown/Dink

Original: F

Redo: D

Randy Savage vs. Crush

Original: C+

Redo: C

Alundra Blayze vs. Lelani Kai

Original: D-

Redo: D

Men on a Mission vs. Quebecers

Original: F

Redo: F+

Yokozuna vs. Lex Luger

Original: F

Redo: D+

Earthquake vs. Adam Bomb

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Razor Ramon vs. Shawn Michaels

Original: A+

Redo: A+

Bret Hart vs. Yokozuna

Original: C+

Redo: B-

Overall Rating

Original: A

Redo: A-

I was a bit too nice to the middle part of the show last time.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/03/17/history-of-wrestlemania-with-kb-wrestlemania-10-maybe-the-best-mania-ever/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the Complete Monday Nitro Reviews Volume IV at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01AXP08DK>

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Wrestler of the Day – February 12: Viscera/Mabel

This is a last second change for obvious reasons. Today is Viscera/Mabel.

Mabel debuted as part of a tag team called Men on a Mission whose mission was never quite clear. I think it was supposed to be helping children but they went about it by doing bad raps and looking like they were caught in a Life Saver factory explosion. This is their Raw debut from July 19, 1993.

Men on a Mission vs. Hank Harris/Rich Myers

The jobbers try to jump the overly large men but Mo drop toeholds Myers down and Mabel drops a big fat leg. Mabel LAUNCHES Rich across the ring and a double splash crushes him even more. Off to Harris who bounces off Mabel's shoulder before Mo drives Mabel onto him for the pin. Literally a squash.

After squashing jobbers for the better part of a year, Men on a Mission would get a Tag Team Title shot at Wrestlemania X.

Tag Titles: Men on a Mission vs. Quebecers

The Quebecers are defending and have Johnny Polo with them. About a year later, Polo would become Raven. The Men on a Mission are Mabel (Viscera) and perhaps the most worthless wrestler that I can think of at the moment, Mo. They were purple and gold and rap with their manager Oscar. That's about it. Before the match, here's some big

chested blonde talk show host for Shawn to hit on. Burt Reynolds, pretty clearly bombed, shows up to steal her. From what I've heard, Reynolds was the biggest jerk on the planet backstage at this show.

The Quebecers are the Mountie and another Canadian who dress like Mounties. True story: the Royal Canadian Mounted Police yelled at the WWF and said they had to have their song (it might have been just the Mountie actually. Not that it matters) changed to say "We're NOT the Mounties" because the RCMP was worried about people believing they were real corrupt Mounties. Wait why am I spending this much space on this match?

Anyway the champions jump the Men before the bell but 500lb+ Mabel runs them over and brings in Mo. Since Mo is the most worthless wrestler I can think of at this moment, he's easily beaten down and not many people care. Mo is sent to the floor and Pierre backdrops Jacques over the top and onto the worthless one. Back in and a double hot shot gets two on Mo. This is going nowhere.

Mo comes back with a forward roll attack but the tag isn't seen. Wait yes it is and Mabel cleans house. The champions try a double suplex on the fat man but hurt their backs in the process. They try it again and actually get it to work as Polo celebrates. Pierre hits the Cannonball (assisted Swanton Bomb) for two and Mabel starts firing back. The Men hit their double splash but there's no referee. END THIS NONSENSE ALREADY! Mabel splashes Pierre on the floor....and it's a countout.

Rating: F+. There was no structure, there was no flow, Mo is worthless, Mabel is fat and worthless, the ending sucked, and there was entirely too little Johnny Polo. Was there ANYTHING good about this match? Oh wait the suplex was good. To give you an idea of how bad Men on a Mission were, they accidentally won the titles at a house show around this time as Mabel was too fat to get up on a cover and Jacques couldn't kick out.

We'll get back to Mabel for a big here with a singles match from October 10, 1994 on Raw.

Reno Riggins vs. Mabel

Riggins tries everything he can on Mabel but the big guy just stares at him. Reno is willing to try a test of strength from the middle rope and actually gets in some cheap shots, only to be slammed down. Mabel misses an elbow drop but comes back with a big leg for the easy pin.

Men on a Mission would turn heel a few months later and Mo would become more of a manager. This led to.....blast it all it led to the 1995 King of the Ring. We'll look at all of Mabel's matches from that night.

KOTR Quarterfinals: Mabel vs. Undertaker

Mabel is interviewed on his way to the ring and cuts the most generic uninteresting promo of all time. He looks like a freaking idiot too in case you were wondering. I think Hendrix is trying to be like Jerry Lawler and of course it's just completely failing. Taker has no urn here thanks to Kama so he's weak or something. Remember all of those really not great Undertaker vs. Big Show matches?

One of those would be great compared to this. Mabel is just a complete and utter joke of a wrestler to put it mildly. He can't move, he can't do much of anything as far as offense, he's tired after about two seconds, and he doesn't sell a thing. Naturally Mabel's "power (read as elbows, splashes and chinlocks)" offense wears down Taker as Vince and Doc try so hard to convince us that Mabel is a monster.

This just needs to end with Taker beating him and taking the crown. BREAKING NEWS: MABEL CAN PICK UP UNDERTAKER! For some reason this is a big deal and I have no idea why at all. Why in the world would that be a surprise? Mo is more annoying than Santino ever dreamed of being.

Oh great the referee went down after they both laid around for a few minutes. That means it's going to go on even longer. Taker hits a chokeslam that was pretty good considering he was picking up a beached whale. Kama runs out and kicks him in the head and a legdrop sends Mabel to

the finals, to meet the winner of Road Dogg and Savio Vega. I hate this show so much.

Rating: D+. This was just putting me to sleep. What was the point of this anyway? Seriously, Mabel and freaking SAVIO VEGA are going farther in this than Undertaker and Shawn Michaels. Does Vince really think that this is a good idea? Shawn vs. Diesel at Summerslam wouldn't have been good? It just headlined Mania but it can't be on Summerslam? This just needs to end now and have people come out from nowhere and say it was all a big joke then let us see the real show.

KOTR Finals: Mabel vs. Savio Vega

Smell those buyrates baby. The problems instantly become apparent here: first of all, these two both suck and there was no logic at all behind pushing them as the focal points of the show. Second, the fans hate them. Neither guy gets anything resembling a good reaction either from a heel perspective or a face perspective. Third, how in the heck is Savio supposed to win here other than a fluke rollup or something like that?

This match again follows as basic of a formula as you could possibly imagine: Savio starts hot and Mabel knocks him down and goes into his basic moveset: punch, stomp, punch, bearhug, chinlock. Seriously, I just covered the first 8 minutes of a ten minute match. Savio of course gets some token jobber, because that's what he is here in case you didn't realize it, offense in including that pesky fluke rollup attempt.

Here's the real point of this match as far as we're concerned though. Just after the chinlock that nearly goes for a minute, the crowd turns on the match and start LOUDLY chanting ECW. It's so loud that Vince actually acknowledges it. This wasn't planned or anything, but it was so loud that Vince stopped his commentary, I think out of shock. He

really and truly believed what he was putting out there was getting over, and sadly enough I would bet he blamed the wrestlers for the failure here.

Savio's spin kick gets two, and it's over soon thereafter. I know this was really short again, but honestly there's just nothing at all to talk about for any of these matches, period. It's just so basic and phoned in that it's sucking the life out of me. Razor gets beaten up and 1-2-3 Kid runs out and gets beaten up too. There was a tag match at the next In Your House that no one cared about either. Yes, Mabel joins Owen and Bret and eventually Stone Cold as KOTR winners.

Rating: D. Dang it just end this nonsense already! No one likes this stuff, no one cared about Mabel. No one cared about Savio. YOU HAD FREAKING SHAWN MICHAELS IN THIS FREAKING THING and you picked MABEL. Seriously, here's your tournament: Shawn beats Kama and Mabel while Yoko beats Savio and gets the bye so he only wrestles twice. Shawn kicks him in the face and wins the tournament so the fans are happy.

Instead though, Vince has to decide what we like and tell us that Mabel is our new top heel, and shockingly, IT BOMBED. Mabel was complete and utter crap as a big heel and there's no shock at all as to why. We had to watch Diesel vs. Mabel to main event the worst Summerslam of all time because Vince is fascinated with big men. At the same time we had Hogan vs. Giant in a monster truck match. Do you see why the NWO was considered a gift from God? DAng I hated this tournament.

The coronation might save this garbage though. It literally goes on for five minutes with bad music playing and Mo reading a proclamation. The only good part here are the fans, who are booing so loudly and chanting ECW so loudly that you can barely hear Mo. Savio comes up and gets pulled

back, and the fans pelt both guys with garbage. No one bought this, plain and simple.

This win gave Mabel a World Title shot at Summerslam 1995.

WWF World Title: King Mabel vs. Diesel

Diesel is defending and Mabel has Sir Mo with him. The idea here is Mabel has some kind of a Royal Plan to take the title off Diesel. Diesel fires off right hands to start but gets taken down by a big clothesline. The champion comes back with running clotheslines in the corner but can't pick the fat man up. More clotheslines stagger Mabel and a running shot sends him out to the floor.

In the ONLY interesting spot of the match, Diesel dives over the top to take Mabel out. Mabel no sells it and sends Diesel into the post but has to stop for a Twinkie break. He finally charges into a boot and Diesel pounds away back inside. Mabel reverses a whip and hits the worst Boss Man Slam you'll ever see. It looked like Diesel was hitting a DDT on the arm. The buckle pad was ripped off somewhere in there.

Mabel sits on Diesel's back for another breather before hitting a slam. Mo gets on the apron as Mabel misses an elbow drop...and the referee is bumped off camera. Mo comes in for a double team and Luger runs in for the save but gets nailed by Diesel who thinks Luger is on Mabel's side. Diesel is knocked to the floor and Mabel drops a leg before throwing the champion back in. Luger beats up Mo in the aisle as Mabel gets two off a belly to belly. A middle rope splash misses and a middle rope shoulder from Diesel is enough to retain the title.

Rating: F. Just....yeah. I'd love to know what Vince was on when he came up with this idea but it's one powerful drug. Mabel was one of the worst heels of all time as he couldn't move and was waddling around in shiny purple and gold. This was a terrible match as Diesel couldn't do anything with the fattness. This might be the worst main event of all time. Luger would be in WCW in eight days on the debut of a show called Nitro.

Mabel's last big feud in this run was against Undertaker, with the best of their matches being a Survivor Series match in 1995.

Royals vs. Dark Side

King Mabel, Jerry Lawler, Hunter Hearst Helmsley, Isaac Yankem
Undertaker, Fatu, Henry Godwin, Savio Vega

Mabel is on a throne carried by about five guys, all of whom look like they're about to have hernias. The idea here is you have King Mabel, King Lawler, the blue blood and the Royal Dentist Isaac Yankem. About two years later, Isaac would put on a mask and remember that he's Undertaker's brother named Kane. What exactly is dark about Taker's partners isn't really clear. Fatu is MAKING A DIFFERENCE and is supposed to be some kind of hero for kids in the projects. He was very happy to become the Sultan a year later.

Taker's entrance of course is huge. He has this skull looking mask on now which would eventually be purple and look very stupid. Fatu and Hunter Hearst Helmsley start things off. The Dark Side has matching t-shirts that say Rest In Peace. Fatu throws Helmsley around to start but we almost get a Pedigree, which is only broken up by a glare from Undertaker. Off to Godwin who was feuding with Hunter at this point in the standard culture clash feud.

Off to Lawler who immediately tags in Yankem. A big hop toss puts Isaac down but he sends Henry into the corner to escape. Back to Helmsley, which I'm getting tired of typing. If only there was a shorter version of his name. Perfect: "You know Helmsley likes to be called Triple H." Thank you Mr. Perfect. Anyway, Godwin gorilla presses HHH, holding him up for a LONG time.

Lawler comes in and gets Savio which is a clash of styles if I've ever heard of one. Vega pounds away on Jerry as does Fatu. Yankem gets in a knee to Fatu's back and the evil King takes over. Isaac comes in to slam Fatu and a legdrop follows. Mabel comes in but misses a splash in the corner. Vega pounds on Mabel in a rematch of the KOTR final. A side slam kills Vega but there's no cover.

Vega gets beaten on in the corner to fill in more time. Yankem is

listed as 6'8 or 6'9 here, which means he would have grown about three or four inches by the time he became the Big Fried Freak. A HHH knee drop gets two on Vega as the crowd is silent because none of this means anything. This is all just filler until we get to the Taker tag when the place is going to erupt.

Lawler's piledriver on Vega gets two. Well it's not Memphis so it's understandable. Lawler knocks Vega into the corner....and here's Taker. Jerry gets thrown around by the throat and no one will tag him. Tombstone and pin on Lawler, tombstone and pin on Yankem, chokeslam and pin on Helmsley, and there's just Mabel left. He immediately belly to belly suplexes Taker down and drops the face crushing legdrop before dancing a bit. There's the situp and Mabel runs for the countout.

Rating: D+. This whole match ran just under fifteen minutes and about two of those meant anything. Everything was waiting for Taker to come in and dominate, which he did quite well, but getting there was pretty dull stuff. This match is more fun for looking at what these people would become rather than what they are now. Taker would lose the mask soon enough thank goodness.

Mabel would leave the company for about four years, eventually returning in 1999 and almost immediately joining Undertaker's Ministry of Darkness as Viscera. There aren't a lot of highlights here as Viscera was really just the big guy that others beat. He continued in that role after the Ministry broke up and fought a newcomer on December 20, 1999.

Kurt Angle vs. Viscera

This is during Kurt's goofy period which was hilarious. Before the match he talks about the Three I's: Intensity, integrity and intelligence. The goofy look on his face is great. Angle starts by trying to go behind Viscera but is easily bulldogged down. Viscera easily overpowers him and hits a Samoan Drop for no cover. Angle comes back with some dropkicks including one off the top. Steve Blackman, who has been having issues with Angle lately, comes out and blasts Viscera with a kendo stick for no apparent reason,

allowing Kurt to hit the not yet named Angle Slam for the quick pin. Viscera would leave again in the summer and hit the indies for a few more years. He would return in 2004 as a jobber to the stars, including this match on November 1, 2004.

Shelton Benjamin vs. Viscera

Shelton has bad ribs here. Viscera hits him in the ribs and takes the tape off. This goes very slowly because that's as fast as Viscera can go. Shelton rams him into the middle buckle and splashes him, but the T-Bone isn't going to work. Choke bomb is countered and Shelton wins with the Dragon Whip.

Rating: F. What in the world was the point of this? Was it supposed to make us want to see Shelton vs. Christian? There's no history between Viscera and Christian but apparently just saying they work together now means something. The match sucked on top of that and Viscera was gone soon thereafter.

Viscera would eventually change into his most famous gimmick: the World's Largest Love Machine. This included a match at Backlash 2005 against Kane.

Kane vs. Viscera

Kane runs into Viscera and bounces off of him. He kicks Viscera to the floor and dives onto Visc to take over. The fans still want Matt. Back in and Viscera hits the wheel kick and we get a pelvic thrust. Kane goes after Trish for some reason but gets splashed and caught in a Samoan Drop for two. Sidewalk slam gets the same. Kane gets in a boot to the face and the top rope clothesline looks to set up the chokeslam, but Visc elbows out of it.

A clothesline puts Kane on the floor but Viscera runs into the post. Trish goes after Kane with a chair for some reason but Lita blasts her with a crutch (Lita had a bad knee). Back in Kane goes up but dives into a choke bomb for two. Lita gets in the ring for some reason and Visc tries to kiss her, but Kane comes back with a big boot and a chokslam for the pin.

Rating: D. This was a boring match for the most part and I really

don't get what the idea of this was supposed to be at all. So did Trish want to sleep with Visc or something? Why else would she have gone after Kane like that? Either way it made little sense and the match wasn't any good either.

Trish yells at Viscera post match and says even if he had won, she wouldn't have slept with him. She says she'll get a real man so he picks her up, shakes her, and then splashes her, which I think was supposed to be a face turn. Trish is taken out on a stretcher.

The next year didn't have much for Viscera as he formed some forgettable tag teams with Charlie Haas and Val Venis. Eventually he would turn into the monster heel again as Big Daddy V and terrorize ECW for a bit. He earned an ECW Title shot against CM Punk at No Merch 2007.

ECW Title: Big Daddy V vs. CM Punk

V is challenging and has Striker with him. This was supposed to be Dreamer vs. Punk but GM Estrada did something to stop that. Punk is the hometown boy so you know he gets a big pop. V immediately throws Punk to the floor and back in it's anal raping time. Look up the Visagra and you'll get the idea. Punk comes back with some kicks but they have no effect at all. A corner splash misses and a missile dropkick puts V down....and here's Striker for the DQ. This was like 90 seconds long.

We'll close it out with a win from Armageddon 2007.

Mark Henry/Big Daddy V vs. Kane/CM Punk

Punk is ECW Champion here and is having to stick and move against the monsters. Kane is here to help even out the size stuff. Punk vs. Henry to start us off. Punk fires off some kicks and then tries to pick up the leg because faces are idiots in this company. Off to Kane whose strikes do a bit better. He gets a shot to the knee and Henry is actually in trouble. Back to Punk who gets flattened by a clothesline.

Off to Big Daddy V and the girth of death. Punk gets sent

to the floor where Striker, the manager of V, gets in a shot. Henry pounds on him for awhile until a corner splash misses. Moderately warm tag brings in Kane who cleans a few rooms. The Big Bald hits the top rope clothesline to put Henry down but V breaks up the chokeslam. Sitout chokebomb gets two for V. I thought it was tea for two and two for tea but whatever.

V pounds away while in whale humping position. He splashes Kane and it's off to Henry for some bearhuggery. Better than buggery I suppose. V comes in for Kane to fire away but another fat boy clothesline takes him down. Kane channels his inner deadman and hits a running DDT to put both guys down (Henry in this case). Double tag brings in V and Punk and everything breaks down. Punk and V are alone in the ring so Punk tries the springboard clothesline. He lands in a Samoan Drop though and we're done.

Rating: C-. I guess this is the only thing they could put on the show. Having Punk lose is ok here because that was the point of the angle: he can't beat either of the monsters. This wasn't too bad but it could have been a main event on ECW TV. Either way, the big man vs. big man stuff got old after awhile which hurt the match a bit.

Mabel never was a great worker or anything close to it, but he had an awesome look and a win over him could make someone look impressive. I don't know of anyone who was a fan of the guy back in 1995 but he had success and main evented the second biggest show of the year. Like him or not, 43 years old is too young to pass away no matter what. Hopefully it gets some people to take their health a bit more seriously.

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