

Monday Night Raw – February 17, 1997: Three World Title Matches...Sort Of

Monday Night Raw

Date: February 17, 1997

Location: Bridgestone Arena, Nashville, Tennessee

Attendance: 5,876

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Jim Ross

It's the night after In Your House: Final Four and we have a new world champion in the form of Bret Hart. However as a condition of him being champion, he has to defend the title tonight against Sycho Sid, who didn't get his title shot against Shawn due to losing his smile. We're coming up on Wrestlemania 13 in about five weeks so the buildup will begin tonight. Let's get to it.

I've already done the next two weeks worth of shows and links to the reviews can be found at the bottom.

WWF World Title: Bret Hart vs. Sycho Sid

That's quite the way to open up a show. Before the bell we're told that Undertaker will meet the winner of this match at Wrestlemania 13. They stare each other down but here's Steve Austin to attack Bret. Referees and backstage personnel break it up but Sid takes a shot to the knee somewhere in there, putting him down on the mat for some swearing. Austin is taken away and Sid gets back inside, but Patterson and Brisco (some REAL Americans) and some referees won't let the match start like this. More on this later.

We look back at Shawn vacating the belt last Thursday, because of a "knee injury." I'm sure that wouldn't be a case of

Idon'twanttojobthetitlesoI'mfakingthiswhoething-itis.

We get some shots of Final Four last night which is still an awesome match.

Sid is freaking out in the back (moreso than usual) but says nothing is going to keep him from winning the title tonight.

Marc Mero vs. Savio Vega

Apparently Sable has been being much more aggressive lately to help Mero win some extra matches. Savio has the Nation with him, other than Farrooq who is in the balcony, looking down on the arena. Things start fast with Mero snapping off some armdrags and a dropkick sends Savio into the waiting arms of Crush. Mero dives over the top rope to take them both out but Vega takes over as they get back inside. A spinwheel kick in the corner has Mero in trouble and Vega chokes away on the ropes.

Marc gets a quick two off a crossbody and he pounds away with rights and lefts in the corner. Savio comes back with a snap suplex and sends Mero to the floor for a beating from the white rappers known as PG-13. Sable will have none of that and fires off some martial arts kicks to dispatch the white boys. Back inside and Mero hits a Samoan drop but the Nation chases Sable into the ring for the DQ.

Rating: C-. This was fun while it lasted but the ending hurt it a bit. Mero and Vega were both guys that could go when they were motivated and Mero was at his best around this time. This didn't have time to go anywhere with less than five minutes, but at least they were trying.

Ahmed Johnson, in what appear to be orange pajamas, clears the ring with a 2x4.

Bret says he can't worry about Austin and has to defend the title against

Sid tonight. After that, he'll be waiting on his next opponent. Lawler accuses Bret of overlooking Sid but Bret says he's just looking out for #1.

Intercontinental Title: Leif Cassidy vs. Rocky Maivia

Cassidy, more famous as Al Snow, lost to Mero last night but is getting this shot tonight. Such is life in the WWF. Rocky is still billed from the South Pacific here which makes me picture him singing show tunes. He won the title from HHH last Thursday and beat him again in a rematch last night. Before the match starts, here's Sunny in a barely there pink outfit to hit on Rocky.

They slug it out to start until Rocky clotheslines Cassidy out to the floor. Back in and a cross body gets two for Rocky and we hit the armbar. We go split screen for an interview with HHH who says Maivia is just a lucky punk. These two really were joined at the hip for their entire careers. HHH blames Goldust for costing him the title last night and promises it's not over with him. Cassidy finally fights out of the armbar and elbows Rocky in the face to take over.

A quick rollup gets two for the champion but Leif pokes him in the eye to take over again. Cassidy uses a nice forward leg trip to take Rocky down and put on another armbar. The fans think this is boring and I can't say I blame them. Lawler compares Rocky to some other hotshot rookie that hasn't proven he can do anything yet: Tiger Woods. Back up and Leif DDTs the arm and hooks yet another armbar. A top rope shot to the head gets two for Leif but Rocky slams him down when Cassidy tries another. The high cross body sets up the shoulder breaker to retain Rocky's title.

Rating: D. Rocky was still brand new at this point and it was really showing badly. Cassidy is a very talented guy but there was nothing for him in something like this. He was part of the New Rockers at this point but it was clear that such a gimmick wasn't going to take him anywhere. Who would think that these two would feud over being Mankind's best

friend someday?

We go to the announcers where Lawler rants about how stupid ECW is. He issues a challenge for them to show up next week if they're tough enough. Lawler also throws in a jab at WCW, saying a friend of his took a Lawler sign to a WCW show in Memphis but they took it away from him.

We see a clip from the national anthem of all things.

Here are Goldust and Marlena to address HHH making a pass at Marlena. Goldust says he's from Hollywood but this is reality. HHH has crossed a line and now this is personal. All the money in the world can't buy Marlena and the only way that HHH is going to get closer to her is over his dead body.

Marlena clears up a few rumors about Goldust, saying that he is all man from the top of his head to the bottom of his feet, making him more of a man than HHH could ever be. Cue HHH with a cheap shot to Goldust, allowing him to pound Goldie down into the corner. There's a Pedigree so Marlena slaps HHH in the face, drawing in the yet to be named Chyna to shake Marlena like a toy, earning her another trip to the pokey.

Headbangers vs. Hardy Boys

Yes it's them and yes they're still really new around here. On the other hand you have the Hardy Boys who are REALLY young, with Matt being 22 and Jeff only 19 here. Jeff scores with a running clothesline on Most before bringing in Matt to drop an ax handle on the arm. We go split screen to hear Farroq saying he'll finish Ahmed Johnson whenever he feels like it and lists off a bunch of expensive stuff that Johnson owns that he doesn't want the fans to know about. Their match at Wrestlemania should just be a Chicago street fight.

The Headbangers take over and pound away on Matt including Most hitting a

springboard cross body to the floor. Back in and it's off to Thrasher who stomps Matt down into the corner before lifting him up into a suplex/side slam combo for no cover. Jeff gets the tag and almost immediately is clotheslined in half, setting up a powerbomb/guillotine legdrop combo for the pin.

Rating: D. This is much more of a historical anomaly than anything of note. The Hardys would become a regular low level tag team soon after this while the Headbangers would look like the bigger deal for a good while. The match was just a squash but it's always fun to see these future stars in their early days.

WWF World Title: Sycho Sid vs. Bret Hart

Sid has a bad knee due to the Austin run-in earlier tonight. We cut to the back and Austin is attacking Bret Hart in the back, ramming him into a steel door and even Vince McMahon is helping break it up. No match again.

Gorilla Monsoon says the title match will happen tonight, period.

Flash Funk vs. Owen Hart

Flash Funk is 2 Cold Scorpio and Brodus Clay minus about 100lbs. Both guys flip out of wristlocks to start before Owen catches a kick, only to have Flash flip him over with the foot Owen caught. That's a hard one to describe. They keep countering each other until Owen clotheslines him down but Funk is right back up. Both guys try dropkicks at the same time and we have a standoff.

We get to the interesting part of the match: Paul Heyman of ECW calls in to talk to Jerry Lawler. They try a test of strength as Heyman accepts the challenge on behalf of ECW. Lawler makes fun of some of the big ECW names such as Sabu, Sandman and Blue Meanie. Owen tries the Sharpshooter

but Flash gets a sloppy rollup for two. Clarence Mason, the annoying attorney that managed Owen around this time, comes out to get Owen's attention for some reason.

Owen goes to the floor so Flash can hit a big dive as Owen's partner British Bulldog comes out to yell at Mason. We take a break and come back with Owen bridging up into a backslide for two. Hart gets another near fall off a German suplex and there's a spinwheel kick to put Funk down again. We cut to a split screen with Steve Austin who says he went over the edge a long time ago.

Austin won the Rumble a long time ago and Shawn quit because he's afraid to face someone like Austin. Owen suplexes Funk down but Flash fights back with some shots to the face and a backdrop. The high cross body gets two on Owen and a great looking moonsault gets the same. They run the ropes a bit and Bulldog gets in a cheap shot with the Slammy, allowing Owen to hit a spinwheel kick for the pin.

Rating: C. I don't ever remember a match with so much stuff going on besides a match when Vince Russo wasn't in charge. Think about it: we had something going on with Mason, interference, a phone call and an interview, all in a ten minute TV match. The match was solid from what I could see, but there was too much going on to keep track of what was going on.

Bart Gunn vs. Hunter Hearst Helmsley

Honky Tonk Man is on commentary as he's still looking for a protege. After the bell we get a promo from HHH, saying he doesn't know who Marlina is and he doesn't care. HHH grabs the arm to start but Bart counters into a wristlock of his own to take over. Gunn scores with a dropkick and takes HHH down into an armbar. Back up and Helmsley misses a charge into the corner and we're right back to the armbar. Helmsley gets up again and takes him down with a jumping knee to the face but here's Goldust to chase HHH into the crowd for a countout.

Rating: D. Another boring match here which was only there for the ending. Goldust vs. HHH continues to be an interesting story but the matches never quite lived to the story. Bart Gunn was such a forgettable guy after splitting from Billy until the Brawl For All of all things gave him some notoriety.

We go to Dr. James Andrews to talk about Shawn's knee. Apparently it's badly twisted but surgery isn't a requirement just yet.

WWF World Title: Bret Hart vs. Sycho Sid

Let's try this one more time. Bret is defending in case that was lost in this whole mess tonight. Sid takes him into the corner and pounds away to start before whipping Bret hard into the corner to work on Bret's bad back. Bret has a bad back? Apparently so for the sake of the match. Sid takes him down again with a hard clothesline before stomping down onto Bret's chest a few times. All challenger so far.

Bret comes back with some punches to the ribs and a backbreaker, causing JR to say Sid isn't 6'9 now. Unless a backbreaker involves cutting Sid's foot off, I'll have to disagree. Sid fires off more shots to the back and hits a backbreaker of his own (Lawler: "YAHOO!") for two. Bret comes back by taking out the leg and drops some elbows onto the knee for good measure. The leg is wrapped around the post and there's the Figure Four around the post (making its TV debut).

We take a break and come back with Bret bending the knee around the ropes and kicking away at the thigh. Sid fights out with some forearms to the chest and a legdrop for two. Sid (with the knee looking perfectly fine) goes to the middle rope for another legdrop but Bret blocks a chokeslam. Bret misses a charge into the ropes but is still able to backdrop Sid over the top. Austin tries to come in through the crowd but Sid punches him down. There's the Sharpshooter but Austin sneaks in with a chair shot to break it up. The powerbomb (dude sell the leg!) is enough to give Sid the world title.

Rating: D+. I remember Benoit having the same problems with Sid two years later: there's only so much Bret can do when Sid won't sell the freaking knee injury. Sid had a knee injury coming into the match, had it worked on during the match, then got caught in the Sharpshooter but can hit the powerbomb fine? That doesn't work and it's not Hart's fault at all.

Undertaker comes out to stare down Sid to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. This is a very simple concept: the stuff involving Bret vs. Austin is awesome and the rest of the show is about as dull as you can get. That was WWF's biggest problem for a long time: they couldn't fill in a full show with interesting stuff and there was no reason to watch. Things would get better, but for now it was the main event scene or nothing.

Here's the February 24 show if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2012/03/14/monday-night-raw-february-24-1997-ecw-invades-raw/>

Here's the March 3 show if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2012/02/05/2557/>

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On This Day: November 3, 2008 – Monday Night Raw: Raw Turns 800(ish)

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 3, 2008

Location: St. Pete Times Forum, Tampa, Florida

Attendance: 12,000

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

This is the REAL 800th episode, at least according to WWE and is a three hour show. It means I'm probably wrong about some of the previous centennial episodes but does it really matter? Anyway we have a big long card and a bunch of highlights from the first 799 episodes which I'm sure we haven't seen a million times before. Oh and Batista defending against Jericho in a cage. Let's get to it.

DX fights Miz/Morrison tonight.

Here's Orton to open the show. He says to either fire Adamle as GM or he's walking. Shane and Stephanie won't fix things so he's going to put a stop to it. If you think he's bluffing, try him. Orton gets a chair and sits between the announce tables.

Hardys vs. The Brian Kendrick/MVP

Matt is ECW Champion and Jeff is about a month and a half from winning the WWE Title. We get a clip from Episode #764: Jeff diving off the tower onto Orton from earlier in the year. Jeff vs. MVP gets us going with not much at all. Off to Matt so the Hardys can screw up some basic stuff. Back to Jeff for Poetry in Motion as the fans aren't that interested so far.

Off to Kendrick who jumps onto Jeff's back and kicks away at

it. Sliced Bread is countered and Jeff hits the sitout gordbuster and brings in Matt. Matt cleans house, knocking Kendrick to the floor and hitting the Side Effect on MVP for two. MVP gets a shot in and it's off to Kendrick. The referee didn't see it so while he's being put out, the Twist and Swanton get the pin MVP.

Rating: D+. Pretty dull match here as I think the Hardys were there to give us some kind of a nostalgia feeling, but it doesn't quite mean much when the team hasn't meant anything in years at this point. Also the lack of doubt as to who wins here kind of hurt things too. Kendrick's push started and stopped in about the course of a month.

We get a clip of the first episode where Heenan couldn't get inside among other things.

The Kid beats Razor Ramon on Episode #17. That really was a huge deal.

Battle Royal

William Regal, Manu, JTG, Shad Gaspar, Cody Rhodes, Jamie Noble, Snitsky, Ted DiBiase Jr.

Orton is still at ringside. The winner gets an IC Title match next week. Santino is on commentary as he's champion. He declares himself champion of the world as this match is going nowhere. Snitsky the Bald is sent out by all three members of Priceless, but DiBiase throws out Manu and Rhodes in a nice move. Regal and Noble go to the floor but not over the top. Oh ok Noble is out. We have Cryme Tyme, Regal and DiBiase left. DiBiase fights the tag team and throws out JTG. Shad misses a boot so Ted can toss him, but Regal sneaks in to throw out Teddy for the win and the title shot, which I think he would win.

Rating: D-. Really boring match here with an ending that you've seen a million times before. Well you've probably not

seen a million battle royals but you get the idea. Still though, boring match and it was about as cheap of a way as you could get to give Regal the title shot. Nothing else to say here.

Shane and Stephanie arrive. Stephanie says Shane can handle this, referring to Orton I think.

Episode #409: Vince buys WCW but Shane steals it from under him. Still a huge moment, still amazing how much they screwed that up.

Orton is in the ring again and talks about how Adamle slapped him in the face. Therefore, either Adamle goes, or Orton goes. Cue the dancing McMahon who says he doesn't appreciate this. Orton says that Vince would get this done immediately. Shane says he's not his father but they have the same last name. Cue Adamle who says everyone in charge of Raw has always had an agenda. He wanted to be the first unbiased GM, but unfortunately that hasn't been happening. Therefore, he's quitting, and also drawing the biggest pop of the night.

Orton however wants an apology still. Shane says Orton should apologize to Adamle. Orton has had an excuse of a bad shoulder lately, but Shane thought Orton looked fine at Cyber Sunday. Shane thought something was up so he went to Orton's doctors, who said that Orton has been cleared to compete for months. Orton doesn't want to come back until Survivor Series, but Shane thinks it should be tonight. Randy says he doesn't have his gear, but Shane says he'll take care of that. It's Orton vs. Punk tonight.

Senator Barack Obama asks if you know what he's cooking. Senator John McCain wants to know if you know what he's cooking.

Vladimir Kozlov vs. Charlie Haas

This is during Charlie's imitation period so he's Bret the

Hitman Haas here. He even cuts a quick promo but the voice doesn't work at all. The fans didn't screw Vladimir at Cyber Sunday. Vlad screwed Vlad. Boot to the chest, suplex, headbutt, pin in 25 seconds.

After a clip of Batista winning the title at Cyber Sunday, Big Dave says he'll keep the title tonight.

Episode #257: DX invades WCW. HUGE moment here.

D-Generation X vs. John Morrison/The Miz

HHH is WWE Champion. DX does their intro and we get a clip from ECW where Miz/Morrison made fun of them for being old and then beat up some DX impersonators. Shawn points out that the impersonator has a huge nose. Maybe Shawn just got used to it over the years but THAT THING IS HUGE! They also mocked his chaps. You can punch his wife, you can spit in his face, BUT NO ONE MOCKS THE CHAPS!

HHH points out them making fun of Shawn for losing his hair. Shawn doesn't remember this. HHH: "Well I'm pretty sure..." Shawn: "No they didn't." HHH: "Shawn I'm sure..." Shawn: "Drop it!" HHH: "Well ok..." Shawn: "WE WILL NEVER SPEAK OF THIS AGAIN!" HHH makes fun of Miz/Morrison's high school pictures. Miz looks like a horse and Morrison enjoys rest stop sex. Shawn says he's ready, the fans say they're ready, we get a clip of Big Dick Johnson giving Miz a lap dance for some reason which traumatizes Shawn, and now we get to the DX intro, complete with more gay jokes from the Game. Funny stuff.

Oh yeah we have a match to get to. This is joined in progress with Morrison getting two on HHH. HHH takes his head off with a clothesline and it's a double tag. Shawn knocks Miz down and hits the elbow to set up the Kick. Morrison breaks that up and Miz takes over via a clothesline. Miz whips Shawn into the corner where Shawn flips, followed by Miz's corner clothesline.

Morrison comes in and pokes Shawn in the eye so Shawn kicks him in the head. Off to HHH who cleans house with the knees to the face. Facebuster looks to set up the Pedigree on Morrison but Miz breaks it up, only to walk into the spinebuster. Morrison imitates Shawn with a forearm, nipup and then tuning up the band, with the kick connecting on HHH. Miz and Morrison do crotch chops and Miz loads up a Pedigree, which is easily countered. Shawn kicks Miz's head off and the Pedigree ends this.

Rating: C+. Not a bad match at all as Miz/Morrison got to show off a bit here. There was never any doubt as to who would win as the non-degenerates didn't mean much yet. Seeing them imitate DX's stuff was good though and that's what popped the fans for the most part. Fun little match.

JBL is with Shane and says he should be the new GM. Shane says he'll think about it and has an idea about putting JBL in a match tonight. JBL thinks he means making the cage match a triple threat for the title, but Shane says it's against the Undertaker.

Episode #243: Mike Tyson is here. Another HUGE moment.

Face Diva Team vs. Heel Diva Team

It's a sixteen Diva tag. Do you really think I'm listing off all of them in what's going to be a two minute match at longest? There are only seven good Divas so here's Mae Young to be #8. Beth pounds on Kelly to start but Kelly uses her screaming headscissors, which is her only offense three and a half years later. Here's Mae and Beth sells WAY too much for her. She knocks down everyone but falls down. A brawl breaks out and Beth rolls up Mae for the pin. As usual, three girls were in the match. If I remember right Mae was legit hurt in this.

Smackdown ReBund of the casket match with Taker vs....Chavo Guerrero? Big Show interfered but Taker won anyway.

Episode #456: Rock challenges Hogan.

CM Punk vs. Randy Orton

Punk and Kofi are tag champions here in a reign I don't think anyone remembers. This is as a result of Orton punting Punk at Unforgiven and costing him the world title, which somehow wouldn't have a proper blowoff match until 2011. Punk takes him into the corner to start but Orton pounds him right back down. Here's the Orton Stomp and a knee drop for two. Off to a chinlock which is broken up quickly. Punk avoids a charge in the corner and hits the springboard clothesline. Orton comes back with a clothesline in the corner and loads up the RKO...and here's DiBiase for the DQ. Too short to rate.

DiBiase pounds on Punk and Orton punts DiBiase all the way into The Marine 2. Ted gets stretchered out.

Rhodes and Manu yell at Randy about it and Randy says if you have a problem do something about it right now. No one moves.

Episode #772: Floyd Mayweather is thrown over the top. This wasn't exactly what I'd call a huge moment.

Stephanie is looking very good in her office when Adamle comes in. He says he's leaving because she micromanages. Stephanie says being in charge is her birthright. He leaves and Shane comes in. He has a major announcement about Survivor Series but he won't tell her.

Episode #475: Undertaker vs. Jeff Hardy in a ladder match for the title.

Here's JR to call the next match and probably the rest of the show. Unfortunately it's him and Tazz instead of him and Jerry like it should be.

Undertaker vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

Taker grabs a headlock to start and hits a quick Old School.

JBL shoulders him down and punches Taker in the corner. That doesn't last long as the punching comes from Undertaker now, followed by a big boot and legdrop. The chokeslam hits and Taker does the throat slit. JBL escapes the tombstone and they collide with JBL falling to the floor. John looks to get back in but Taker sits up, so JBL bails for a countout for another short match.

JBL tries to walk out but Shawn throws him back in for a tombstone.

Jericho comes in to see Shane and the announcement is that the winner of Batista vs. Jericho gets to defend against the returning Cena at Survivor Series in Boston.

Episode #304: Ausitn and the beer truck.

Here's Kung Fu Naki for a demonstration in the ring. Ok so I have his song on my iPod. Sue me. Horny comes in to dance with him. Boogeyman comes in to terrorize them and dances a bit too. Goldust, Jesse, Festus, Hacksaw, Slaughter, Lillian, Dusty, Cole and King all get in and dance too. Why is this happening? Oh ok, it's so Ron Simmons can get a line in.

Episode #775: Flair retires. I can't watch that anymore.

Episode #630: Edge and Lita's wedding.

Kofi Kingston/Rey Mysterio vs. Mark Henry/Kane

Kofi is a tag champion with Punk but for some reason he's in this match instead. Rey vs. Kane to start and It hink you can figure out what's going on here: Mysterio moves around a lot and gets in a few shots but Kane runs him over. Off to Henry who runs him over even more. A splash misses and here's the tag to Kofi. His kicks don't do anything as Henry just throws him around. Kofi manages to get in a shot to send Henry to the corner and he knocks Kane off the apron. Henry gets tired of being on defense and catches a top rope cross body in the

World's Strongest Slam for the pin. Basically a squash.

Kane throws Mysterio out...and here's Khali. He chops down both other monsters and Rey's music plays for some reason.

Video on Raw being a longer running show than ANYTHING, except for World Championship Wrestling on Saturday Night which ran over 20 years without missing a week but we don't count that because it makes us sound bad.

Video on Cena, who is coming back at Survivor Series. It's kind of a career retrospective.

Shane and Stephanie say nothing of note.

Episode #761: Tribute to the Troops 2008.

Raw World Title: Batista vs. Chris Jericho

Batista won the title at Cyber Sunday, 8 days earlier. Pin, submission or escape as usual. Jericho charges straight at him which goes about as well as anyone else charging straight at Batista goes. He tries to run over the top but Batista catches him and hits a suplex followed by a clothesline for two. Jericho gets rammed into the cage and screams in pain. Or is it laughter? He's always been a complicated guy. Batista rams him into the steel again and we take a break.

Back with Jericho hooking the Walls of Jericho on the apparent injured knee of Batista. There's some tape on there but you would have to know to look for it. Batista kicks him off but he kicks him to the door so Batista has to make a diving save. They fight near the open door and in a smart move, Jericho throws Batista's leg out the door so he can slam the door on it. Nice move.

We're told that the knee injury took place at Cyber Sunday. That makes sense. Back in the middle of the ring Batista hits a spinning Bossman Slam for two. Jericho goes right back for the knee and loads up the Codebreaker, but Batista rams him

into the cage instead. A spear misses though and Batista is right back down after hitting cage. Jericho goes up to escape but climbs down in front of the door which Batista throws open and pulls him back in. That was creative.

Spinebuster puts Jericho down but the Batista Bomb is countered as Jericho grabs the cage and tries to climb out again. Batista manages to throw him off but gets crotched to put both guys down. They go up again and Jericho almost gets caught in a top rope Batista Bomb. He manages to pull something off the cage and rams it into Batista's head which allows him to get over the top. Batista grabs the top of Chris' head but can't stop him and Jericho wins the title.

Rating: B. I liked this a lot more than the Edge vs. Cena cage match that I did recently. The best part here was that they actually came up with some creative spots and we got a surprise ending. Why they gave Batista an 8 day reign is a little unclear but I'd assume it was so they could give us a surprise here, which is fine. Good main event.

Overall Rating: C+. I liked this show but it wasn't great. The problem was that they didn't seem sure if they wanted to do a regular show with nostalgia thrown in or vice versa which makes the show feel uneven. It's entertaining enough though and that's the important idea. Coupling that with a good main event and the show is definitely more good than bad, but it's not a great show or anything.

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Monday Night Raw – February 3, 1997: The Night That The Lights Were Out In Toronto

Monday Night Raw

Date: February 3, 1997

Location: SkyDome, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Attendance: 25,268

Commentators: Jim Ross, Vince McMahon, Doc Hendrix

Happy birthday KB! My birthday present: the first two hour Raw. I would have turned nine years old on the night of this show and luckily for me things were picking up in the title picture around this time. We're closing in on Final Four which means we need to start printing up lost and found posters for a certain smile. These are dark times for the company though as WCW is crushing them so it's hard to say how many people have seen this stuff. Let's get to it.

Keep in mind there was no February 10 show and the next episode is on Thursday February 13.

Vince calls this Royal Rumble Raw, which means we're going to get a lot of highlights. If I remember right the ads suggested showing the ENTIRE Rumble match but it's clips a go-go instead.

We open with a clip of the end of the Rumble with Austin sneaking back inside and stealing the Rumble from Bret.

Vader vs. Steve Austin

The arena is half dark to cover up the fact that so many seats are empty. Yeah there are 25,000 people there, but Wrestlemania VI had 67,000 in the same building. Bret comes out before the match and jumps Austin but Vader goes after Hart for no apparent reason. Bret is finally taken out and the match gets started. Austin jumps Vader as he gets in the ring and stomps Vader into the corner in a rare visual. Steve makes the mistake of spitting at Vader though and the monster runs him over.

Now it's Vader slugging Austin down in the corner but an early Vadersault attempt is blocked by a low blow. They slug it out again but Austin is whipped into the referee as we take a break. Back with the referee back up and Vader getting two off a slam. Vader misses a seated senton and Austin casually slams him down (ignored by the announcers).

Vince promises no bait and switch tactics tonight and guarantees two title matches. That's probably a jab at Nitro which isn't the best idea for the WWF right now. Another low blow puts Vader down and Austin chokes away. The referee tries to break it up and gets a Stunner for the DQ once the referee wakes up.

Rating: C. Not much of a match but it was a solid brawl. Austin and Vader could punch as well as anyone so it was fun enough. I loved the slam to Vader which was treated like nothing special here but most of the time got a huge reaction from the announcers. You could see the star in Austin kicking at the door and the hinges were about to break.

Thursday Raw Thursday (no idea why they called it that) ad.

Savio Vega vs. Flash Funk

Savio has recently joined the new Nation of Domination. He goes after the arm to start but Funk (2 Cold Scorpio) easily nips up, only to be pounded

right back into the corner. Funk gets a sloppy sunset flip for two but Savio chokes him down for a few four counts. More forearms to the back have Funk in trouble but he Funks Up to a nice pop. Vega is rammed into all four buckles and a rotating splash from the top gets two. Funk dives off the top to take out the Nation but Savio avoids a moonsault and scores a fast pin.

Rating: C-. I like Scorpio but he wasn't working as the dancer/funky man. Vega was still in the red attire here and the look didn't fit with the new character. The Nation would take awhile to really find its rhythm and Savio wasn't exactly a part of its ultimate success. Nothing much to see here but Scorpio flew well enough.

Vince interviews Peta Wilson, a very good looking blonde actress, of La Femme Nikita. Nothing to see here but Vince talks about sex of course.

Here's former WWF Champion Sycho Sid for a chat. JR talks about Sid beating Shawn and Bret in the span of thirty days before losing the title to Shawn in a rematch. They're scheduled to face each other at Thursday Raw Thursday so Sid makes his usual nonsensical comments about being evil. When the smoke clears he'll still rule the world.

Owen and the Bulldog don't want to talk about Owen eliminating Bulldog from the Rumble. Bulldog called him an idiot and they're about to argue again.

Tag Titles: Doug Furnas/Phillip LaFon vs. Owen Hart/British Bulldog

Furnas and LaFon mainly teamed in Japan but they're here to try to breathe some life into the tag titles. LaFon grabs a headlock on Bulldog to start before taking him down into a side leg lock. Bulldog grabs the rope and catches a diving LaFon in the powerslam but can't quite slam him down. Off to Owen for some right hands to the head but LaFon rolls through a monkey flip and takes Owen into the corner.

Furnas comes in despite having the flu tonight. Owen tags out and we get a test of strength between the very strong Bulldog and the former champion powerlifter Furnas with Doug taking him down with relative ease. The arena is so dark you can barely see the first few rows. Owen gets in a cheap shot from the apron and comes in to rake Furnas' eyes. Back do Davey Boy to stomp away a bit before drawing in LaFon with a shot to the face.

Owen comes in sans tag and is immediately caught in a sunset flip so he tags right back out. Bulldog goes after Furnas' back but when Owen does the same, Doug lifts him up into a nice electric chair drop. He still can't make the tag though as Bulldog comes in for the save, only to be caught in a small package for a very close two. Owen comes back in and pounds away but Bulldog is too busy posing to make another tag. Bulldog finally wakes up due to Owen screaming at him as we take a break.

Back with Furnas being clotheslined down for two before snapping off a great looking overhead belly to belly, sending Bulldog to the mat. LaFon finally comes in with clotheslines all around as everything breaks down. A bad looking jumping DDT gets a three count on Owen but his foot was on the rope. The champions double team LaFon but Bulldog turns his head and backdrops Owen to the floor. Smith powerslams LaFon down but Owen gets countered out.

Rating: C. Nice match here but it was more about the champions' troubles than the match itself. Furnas and LaFon are both solid in the ring and could more than hold their own, but the way the arena looks with the lights almost off is really dragging the show down. That's rather pathetic and it's not fair to the guys in the ring.

Owen is fine and it was a ruse, even though Bulldog could have gotten the pin.

We go to the Rumble again to see Ahmed Johnson eliminating Farrooq with a big board.

Ahmed says he's off his Prozac so you don't know what he's going to do. Undertaker, Johnson's partner for the night, says stay out of the next match or he'll be going out there alone.

Crush vs. Goldust

No real reason for this other than getting both guys on the show. Goldie grabs a wristlock to start before clotheslining Crush out to the floor. Back in and we hit a quick armbar on Crush and the match is already boring. The interesting part however is the commentary, as JR and Vince talk about upcoming shows. It's always fun to hear Vince promote shows as he can go from commentator to expert salesman at the drop of a hat. Listen to him do it if you can and you'll hear the love for it in his voice.

The armbar stays on until HHH comes out to distract Goldie, allowing Crush to knock him to the floor. Goldust is dropped throat first across the barricade before they head inside for some very slow pounding from Crush. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Crush has to suplex Goldust down. Goldust avoids a middle rope punch and DDTs Crush down before scoring with a clothesline. A bulldog gets two but the Curtain Call is broken up by an interfering Savio when the referee is distracted. Crush's heart punch (exactly what it sounds like) is good for the pin.

Rating: D-. This was REALLY dull stuff with almost the entirety of the match being spent in an armbar or in really boring periods of offense from Crush. The whole match was just a way to set up the HHH interference which doesn't make for the best match in the world. Nothing to see here at all.

The Blackjacks are coming. Great.

We come back from a break with a shot of the half empty upper deck. Nice job tech guys.

Here's WWF Champion Shawn Michaels who certainly has his smile at the moment. The fans aren't exactly thrilled with him due to the natural Bret vs. Shawn rivalry but Vince wants to talk about Sid. Shawn says the title used to represent everything that was good in the WWF but after listening to Sid talking about how evil it was, Shawn thinks Sid is right. If being bad is what it takes to be the WWF Champion, he'll be as bad as you can be. Bret is seen watching in the back as Shawn says it's cool if the Canadian fans like Bret more than him. He doesn't worry about being popular anymore because he's the WWF Champion.

This brings out a ticked off Bret to a big reaction from the Canadian crowd. Bret says that he's tried to like Shawn but it's getting harder and harder all the time. Shawn said it best himself when he called himself a degenerate (there's a word for the future) and a brawl is imminent when Austin comes in to sneak attack Bret. This draws in Sid to stare down Shawn and we go to a break. Back with Shawn and Bret in the ring with the other guys in the back already. They keep staring each other down until Bret picks up the title belt. He holds it out to Shawn but drops it down when Shawn reaches for it. Nice segment.

We see the contract signing for Tiger Ali Singh. If there has ever been a bigger dud, I can't think of him off the top of my head.

Intercontinental Title: Marc Mero vs. Hunter Hearst Helmsley

HHH is defending and this is Mero's last shot at the title. Also Sable and Mr. Hughes are banned from ringside. Mero runs the champion over to start and scores with a few armdrags to keep his early control. Helmsley rams him into the buckle but walks into a backdrop and gets clotheslined out to the floor. Mero's dive to the floor misses but he lands on his feet and stays on HHH. Back in and Mero's second dive hits Helmsley's knees to give the champion his first advantage.

A not great looking vertical suplex (he almost dropped Mero) gets an easily broken two count and the knee drop gets the same. Mero escapes a

suplex and gets two off a rollup, only to get caught in a facebuster. We take a break and come back with both guys down and Mero slamming HHH face first into the mat. Mero scores with a clothesline and knee lift as the match is picking up a bit. HHH is sent out to the floor for a big flip dive over the top from Mero.

Back in and a somersault legdrop gets two on the champion and Mero pounds away in the corner. He charges into a boot in the corner but still manages to crotch Helmsley down on top. A top rope hurricanrana puts HHH down but a delayed cover is only good for two. Helmsley comes back with a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker to put both guys down. Why did he stop using moves like that? He gets back to form by taking the pad off a buckle but walks into a Samoan drop. The Merosault is good for two and the referee sees the exposed buckle. The distraction lets HHH pull out a foreign object for the retaining knockout.

Rating: C+. This started slow but got a lot better as we went along. Helmsley took awhile to find his footing as a heel but the soon to debut Chyna would help him out a lot. The Goldust feud didn't do anyone any favors though and dragged on for far too long. HHH winning clean here wouldn't have been horrible either.

We get another clip from the Rumble with Lawler jumping into the ring and getting eliminated by two punches from Bret. Jerry going back to commentary and finishing the sentence he started when he jumped into the ring was awesome.

Farrooq/Mankind vs. Ahmed Johnson/Undertaker

This is anything goes and a way to combine two feuds into one match. Ahmed brings out his 2x4 to even the odds against the Nation. It's a brawl to start with Undertaker and Mankind fighting to the floor and up the aisle. Ahmed comes off the top with a clothesline but getting caught in a sleeper of all things. The Dead Man comes back in to break it up and the pairs switch off.

Undertaker clotheslines Farrooq down and Johnson rams Mankind back first into the post. The original pairings hook up again as Crush and Savio Vega stroll down to the ring. Back from a break with Mankind hooking the Mandible Claw on the champion. This time it's Ahmed making the save and planting Mankind with the Pearl River Plunge. Farrooq comes back in with a Dominator to Johnson but Undertaker breaks up the pin. Mankind kicks Undertaker low but the Dead Man kicks a chair into his face.

Johnson goes to the floor and pounds away on the rest of the Nation. Undertaker chokeslams Mankind down but Farrooq breaks up the cover. Johnson fights the Nation up the aisle but comes back with his 2x4 to take Farrooq out. Mankind scores with a neckbreaker on Undertaker and here's Vader to splash the Dead Man. Vader accidentally hits Mankind with the chair and his shot to Undertaker just ticks the Dead Man off. A Tombstone onto the chair puts Mankind away.

Rating: C+. This is the kind of match the show needed to breathe some life back into it. The four guys here just destroyed each other for about ten minutes with no rules or story whatsoever. Sometimes that's the best way you can run a match at all and the fans were completely into it. Nice showing here.

Overall Rating: C-. The wrestling was just ok until the end when things picked up, but the atmosphere just crippled the show. It felt like we were in a building that held about 2000 people because the place was so dark. That's the kind of stuff you expect from a really low level company and not worthy of Monday Night Raw.

Here's the February 13 show (Thursday Raw Thursday) if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/02/21/monday-night-raw-february-13-1997-thursday-raw-thursdayshawn-loses-his-smile/>

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Monday Night Raw – November 4, 2013: A Little From Column Good, A Lot From Column Suck

Monday Night Raw

Date: November 4, 2013

Location: Bon Secours Wellness Arena, Greenville, South Carolina

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're back to the red show after last week's solid outing. There are a lot of things going on at the moment so it's hard to guess what the focus is going to be tonight. Maybe they'll even explain why or how Big Show has been doing everything he's been doing. It would be nice for a change. Let's get to it.

CM Punk vs. Luke Harper

Punk fires off some right hands to start but Harper easily runs him over with a hard forearm. Naturally Punk fires away as well as he can, backdropping Harper up and over the ropes to the floor. The suicide dive is broken up by a forearm to the head, stopping Punk cold again. Harper puts on the Gator Roll (rolling front facelock) and stops Punk's comeback with a HARD shot to the face. Punk avoids a charge in the corner though, sending Harper to the floor. Now the suicide dive connects and we take a break.

Back with Harper ripping at Punk's face before choking him with a boot for a bit. We get another Gator Roll into a chinlock but Punk fights up with some elbows. They slug it out a bit until Punk takes him down with a leg lariat. They blow the swinging neckbreaker spot so Punk hits the running knee in the corner but dives on Rowan instead of hitting the Macho Elbow. Punk loads up the springboard clothesline but dives into Harper's boot. Luke loads up the discus lariat but Punk ducks underneath and rolls Harper up for the pin at 11:12.

Rating: C. This was fine. I have no problem with Punk beating the help because they're just impressive minions for Wyatt himself. Harper got to look good out there and that's what Punk is good for in this feud. The monsters will have their day soon enough and the blowoff match with Wyatt himself will be awesome.

Post match the beatdown is on but Bryan makes the save with a chair to a BIG reaction.

We get a clip from a sitdown interview with HHH where he bans Big Show from WWE for life.

You can pick Orton's opponent tonight. It's either Dolph Ziggler, Big E. Langston or The Miz.

Post break Punk says he's not the only one who hates the Wyatts and he know what it's like to be outnumbered.

Paul Heyman calls in to say he's in Europe due to the injuries he suffered at Punk's hands on top of the Cell. He has herniated discs in his back, bruised kidneys and a broken nose. Heyman starts crying and hangs up.

Earlier tonight Ryback messed with Hornswoggle and Santino until Khali intervened. Ryback called them freaks.

Ryback vs. Great Khali

This is a pretty far fall for Ryback. Khali shoves him down to start and there's the loud chop in the corner. Ryback is picked up by the ear and chopped over and over in the corner. He comes back with a clothesline but Khali kicks him in the face. The big chop misses and Ryback hits the Meat Hook for the pin at 2:26. This was what it was.

Post match Ryback goes after Hornswoggle and Santino.

We get another clip of Big Show coming in when he was banned. I sense a theme here tonight.

Kofi Kingston vs. Alberto Del Rio

Alberto fires off kicks to the leg to start and easily stops a comeback attempt. Kofi's jumping back elbow puts Del Rio down and a clothesline puts him on the floor. Kingston totally overshoots a flip dive and only grazes Del Rio with his arm. Back in and Del Rio blocks the pendulum kick in the corner and hits a nice double stomp to the chest. The enziguri gets two and we hit the chinlock.

That goes nowhere so Alberto gets two off a German suplex. Del Rio mocks Kofi's hand slap and gets two off a snap suplex. The tilt-a-whirl backbreaker gets the same and we're off to the chinlock. Back up again and Del Rio's corner enziguri misses, allowing Kofi to hit an ax handle from the middle rope for two. Kofi's middle rope cross body gets two more and things speed up a bit, only to have Del Rio kick him in the ribs. A rollup gets two on Alberto but he counters into the armbreaker for the submission at 6:50.

Rating: C. Not bad again here but the ending was never in doubt. That's what Kofi is best at: making people look good while losing almost all the time. He's fine with not getting a major push up the card because his

legacy is already firmly set. Del Rio is still the same guy he's been for years though and that's not good.

We get a video on Big Show's reasons for a lawsuit, including individual charges.

The announcers tell us all the cool things we can do on the WWE App.

Randy Orton vs. ???

Lawler goes to announce the winner of the poll but Orton says hang on a second. The people don't have a choice because they're all failures. All they can do is pick his next victim, which is Langston in a major landslide. Non-title of course. Langston runs Orton over to start, sending him out to the floor. Back in and Langston puts on a front facelock before ramming some forearms into Orton's face. The champ bails to the floor again and gets knocked HARD off the apron as we take a break.

Back with Orton being rammed into the steps but avoiding another charge from Langston, sending the big man out to the floor. Back in and Orton very slowly stomps away before putting on a chinlock. Langston fights up and rams Orton back first into the buckle before hitting a hard shoulder in the corner. A belly to belly puts Orton down and the Warrior Splash gets two. Orton's backbreaker gets the same and there's the Elevated DDT for no cover. The RKO is countered with a big clothesline but Orton escapes the Big Ending and the RKO gets the pin at 12:07.

Rating: C+. This worked though they booked themselves into a corner (again) because you don't want to job Langston but you also can't have Orton get pinned without setting up a title program. At least Langston looked good before jobbing, but he shouldn't have been an option in the stupid poll either.

We see HHH banning Big Show again in case you didn't get the idea already. We also get more clips of Big Show defying HHH's regime.

Here's Cena vs. Rock from Wrestlemania 29...in WWE 2K14.

Fandango/Summer Rae vs. Natalya/Tyson Kidd

Naturally we get to look at a clip from Total Divas before the match starts. The guys get us going with Fandango getting kicked in the ribs. Off to the girls with Summer slapping Natalya in the face and catching her in a body scissors. The announcers spend part of the match reading Tweets, including one from Natalya.

The hot tag brings in The guys with Kidd flying around and pulling Fandango to the floor. A HARD kick to the face from the apron drops Fandango again but a Summer distraction lets Fandango drop Kidd onto the apron. Back in and the guillotine legdrop is countered into the Sharpshooter on Fandango for the win at 3:43.

Rating: D+. Kidd looked good and Summer's legs were as amazing as ever, but this was a four minute ad for Total Divas and nothing more. That's been the theme tonight: what can we showcase with wrestling as a backdrop? We've gotten plugs for the reality show, the video game, the App, and any other WWE product they can think of other than focusing on the stories.

Damien Sandow looks at a clip of losing his cash-in last week. He's been looking at himself and doesn't see an intellectual savior but rather someone who is doing whatever he has to do to get what he wants. The Real Americans come in with Zeb praising Sandow before their six man tag tonight.

The announcers continue their Big Show debate. Seriously, each is getting to present evidence of whether he should be banned or not.

Here's Cena for his match but beforehand he talks about how great WWE is for partnering with the Susan G. Kommen Foundation to help cure cancer. Some breast cancer survivors are here tonight.

John Cena/Goldust/Cody Rhodes vs. Real Americans/Damien Sandow

Rematch from the great main event on Smackdown. Colter and Del Rio are on commentary so the bickering can continue. Cena and Sandow get us going but it's quickly off to Cody with a sunset flip out of the corner for two. Off to Goldust who cranks on Swagger's arm before bringing in Cody for a double back elbow. Tyson Kidd is the #1 trending topic in the world, which Cole says, and I quote, "shows the power of Total Divas."

Anyway, Cesaro comes in for a showdown with Cena as the announcers continue their mindless bickering. Cesaro shoves him into the corner for an uppercut but walks into a fisherman's suplex for two. We hit a chinlock on Antonio before Goldust comes back in with a bulldog for two. Cena comes back in and chases Sandow to the floor as we take a break. Back with Cesaro hitting Swiss Death on Cena for two. Swagger comes in with the Vader Bomb for the same and it's quickly back to Sandow.

Cena takes him down with a shoulder but Swagger breaks up the hot tag attempt. The announcers are now using one word Spanish insults on each other, making it sound like a bad sitcom. Swagger's Patriot Lock doesn't last long on Cena so it's back to Antonio, only to have Cena score with a hurricanrana. Sandow breaks up the tag attempt again by going after the bad arm for two. Cena powers out of a top wristlock but can't hit the AA. Sandow clotheslines him down but Cena counters another one into a powerbomb of all things. There's the hot tag to Goldust as things speed up.

Cesaro gets caught by the top rope crossbody for two as everything breaks down. Everyone hits their finishers with Swagger and Cena being sent to the floor. There's the Cesaro Swing to Goldust with JBL counting in Spanish for absolutely no apparent reason. Goldust falls to the floor so

Cena sends Cesaro into Colter. Back inside and Goldust hits the ugliest springboard bulldog ever for two. Cody's moonsault press puts Sandow down and Cena hits a high cross body on Cesaro. Goldust's Final Cut (spinning suplex into a neckbreaker) pins Antonio at 15:20.

Rating: B-. The original on Smackdown was better but I really liked the action here. On the other hand, the commentary was absolutely horrendous. It wasn't funny, it didn't add ANYTHING to the match, it distracted me from what was going on in the ring, and ignored the match for the sake of stupid Spanish jokes. The commentary felt like a scene from a sitcom which was trying WAY too hard. Absolutely horrible waste of a solid match.

In case you didn't get the idea earlier, here's the EXACT SAME VIDEO on Big Show's lawsuit.

Big Show, the man banned for life about five times now, is of course here.

HHH is furious but Stephanie comes in and says she let him in at the board of directors' insistence. It's not about HHH and Stephanie anymore but rather the business. Stephanie throws in a line about HHH never minding to take the McMahon money but not liking the responsibilities that come with it.

Curtis Axel vs. Dolph Ziggler

Non-title again. Axel takes him down to start and drops some elbows to the back of Dolph's head and we hit the chinlock. The announcers continue the debate about Big Show's charges because the fans watch wrestling to hear a legal debate, right? Ziggler fights back and pounds away in the corner but gets caught with a clothesline to the back of the head for two. Not that it matters as the Zig Zag connects for the pin on Axel at 4:47.

Rating: D+. The match wasn't horrible but there's no value in beating Axel anymore. I'm guessing the story is that Axel can't win because he doesn't have Heyman to guide him, but considering he hardly ever wins anyway, why is this supposed to be anything of note? Ziggler continues to float around doing nothing of note.

We recap the opening segment. Bryan says he was out for payback tonight.

Vickie doesn't bring Big Show to HHH's office as ordered but says Big Show wants to meet HHH in the ring.

3MB vs. Usos

Slater and McIntyre here with 3MB starting off fast with Slater hitting a springboard dropkick of all things. A double suplex puts Jimmy down and we hit a quick armbars on the Uso. Back to McIntyre who gets kicked in the face, allowing for the hot tag to Jey. The Superfly Splash is good for the pin on Drew at 2:20. Absolutely nothing here.

Los Matadores are in the back with Renee Young when Torito comes in. Apparently he's horny and might gore Renee in the knees. She is WAY too talented for this.

Bella Twins/Eva Marie vs. Aksana/AJ Lee/Tamina Snuka

Tamina starts with a Samoan Drop to Nikki before it's off to AJ for a guillotine choke. Nikki slams her down and brings in Brie to clean house. Tamina will have none of that though and runs over Brie and Eva, only to miss the Superfly Splash. Eva tags herself in and steals the pin on Tamina at 2:45. I really think WWE expects us to care about this.

Here are HHH and Stephanie to call out Big Show. The giant trades a few jabs with them before saying this isn't about money, but rather just wanting his job back. Stephanie gives it back to him so Big Show starts a

YES chant. Oh and he wants a huge bonus too. He doesn't want money though, but rather to be the face of the WWE since he's been here 18 years (It's 14. He debuted 18 years ago). This brings out Shield and we take a break.

Post break Big Show tells HHH to tread lightly because of what he's got hanging over HHH's head (the lawsuit I believe?). Big Show demands a title shot at Survivor Series but HHH gets in his face and threatens to leave Big Show laying if he doesn't drop it. Big Show leaves but threatens to sue WWE for ownership of the company. HHH gives him the title shot after Big Show makes him say it four times. On top of that, HHH makes a match right now.

Big Show vs. Shield/Randy Orton

Show is in a suit and Orton's music hits at 11:04pm. The four of them swarm Big Show and there's a spear about 15 seconds into the match. Shield beats him down and Orton tells them to pick him up. Show fights out of an attempted TripleBomb and chokeslams Reigns down. The other Shield guys are taken down by a double suplex, leaving us one on one.

This brings out Kane in a suit with some very short hair (the look really works for him actually) for a distraction, allowing Seth to hit a top rope knee to the head. The RKO connects but Orton wants a chair, drawing the DQ at 3:07. If you're expecting a rating you haven't been paying attention.

Post match Orton wants Big show put through the table. The TripleBomb (not a bad looking one either) through the table ends the show.

Overall Rating: C-. This is a REALLY tough one to grade. I actually liked most of the wrestling tonight which kept some stories going and came off more like an episode of Smackdown in a good way. On the other hand though, there's everything else. To begin with, the constant plugging of everything on the planet is annoying, though understandable. WWE is a

business after all and they need to shill stuff. I can live with that.

Then there's the stuff that you might have noticed getting on my nerves tonight. Above all else, there's the commentary. It has reached the point where it's making good matches a misery to sit through because of how unbearable it is. Cole, JBL and Jerry aren't funny and have the most unnaturally forced "chemistry" I've ever heard. They spend WAY too much time on unfunny jokes that most people aren't going to get and even fewer people are going to care about at all. It needs to stop and stop soon. I understand the idea of trying to sound like people watching the show, but it's not working in the slightest.

Finally there's the story that dominated the show. This Big Show vs. HHH story is just not working and a lot of that is due to the overuse of the lawsuit idea in recent months. I can probably come up with four different instances of someone in WWE suing someone else in the last year and a half. That's reaching the level of stable wars in TNA and that's not good.

We had to sit through video package after video package about Big Show being suspended and then he just strolls into the arena, making the rest of the show a waste of our time. That's not going to get people to watch and it's hard to sit through. Good wrestling, bad everything else tonight.

Results

CM Punk b. Luke Harper – Rollup

Ryback b. Great Khali – Meat Hook

Alberto Del Rio b. Kofi Kingston – Cross armbreaker

Randy Orton b. Big E. Langston – RK0

Tyson Kidd/Natalya b. Summer Rae/Fandango – Sharpshooter to Fandango

John Cena/Goldust/Cody Rhodes b. Real Americans/Damien Sandow – Final Cut to Cesaro

Usos b. 3MB – Superfly Splash to McIntyre

Bella Twins/Eva Marie b. Tamina Snuka/AJ Lee/Aksana – Rollup to Snuka

Big Show b. Randy Orton/Shield via DQ when Orton and Shield used chairs

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Thank You All – E-Book Edition

Thank you all for picking up my e-books. In August my sales were higher than I had ever expected them to be and then in October they were 20% higher than that. They're already selling well this month and every time I check the figures I shake my head. Thank you all for taking a chance on my stuff and I'll be putting more of them out as long as you guys want them. Hopefully there should be a new one out by the end of the month.

In case you haven't seen them or haven't heard of them, here's my Amazon author page with links to all five books I have out, including:

Complete 1998 Monday Night Raw Reviews
Complete 2001 Monday Night Raw Reviews
History of Starrcade
History of the WWE Championship
Complete Monday Nitro Reviews Volume 1 (1995-1996)

Please check them out as they're only \$4 each with the shortest being about 200pgs.

On This Day: October 31, 2011 – Monday Night Raw: The Greatest Raw Of All Time

Monday Night Raw

Date: October 31, 2011

Location: Philips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

Guest Stars; The Muppets

I'm not going to lie: I'm a diehard Muppets fan. I'm going to absolutely lose it when they come out and I don't care who knows about it. As for the show, I really don't care as it's going to pale in comparison to all of the stuff with them. Henry vs. Punk is happening tonight and if Punk wins, he gets the shot at Del Rio in New York. Let's get to it.

We open with Rock on satellite from earlier today. This is his response to Cena's request for Rock to be his tag partner. Rock is pretty calm here. He says they both represent a generation and Rock (with some gray in his beard) says no. Why would he join up with the Fruit Loop Troop when Cena has been going after Rock for years?

However, the people started talking about how Rock had to do this. With that, he listened to the people and in that sense, Cena's wish is coming true and at Survivor Series they'll be a team for one night only. Also though, Rock is doing this so that Cena can witness what is waiting for him at Wrestlemania. The match is on.

Cena vs. Miz later.

CM Punk vs. Mark Henry

We get some exclusive footage from Vengeance, which is just the ring collapsing. They showed this on Smackdown ads last week but it's called "never before seen". So they don't even watch Raw anymore? Before the match starts here's Johnny Ace who says that if Punk can beat Henry he gets the shot at Del Rio. They probably needed to tell the live crowd that.

Punk tries to fight down the monster but gets caught in a powerslam for two. Punk sends him into the corner and hits a slingshot clothesline and the Macho Elbow for two. Alberto and Ricardo come down with Alberto giving Ricardo some specific instructions. Ricardo comes in and attacks Henry who shoves him off. That isn't a DQ so Ricardo comes in with a shoe and that's enough for the DQ at 2:35. That fits in the story so I can't complain here.

Punk beats on Ricardo a bit and throws him in for the Slam.

THE MUPPETS ARE NEXT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

In two weeks, it's the return of Rock to Raw. What is this, his third return special in 9 months?

HERE THEY ARE!!! It's Kermit and Miss Piggy and I can't stop smiling. They come up from behind a stage and are kind of cheered. Piggy calls herself the original Diva and that brings out Vickie and Dolph. Swagger says it ain't easy being a plate of frog legs

and a ham sandwich. Kermit tries to play peacemaker and says they don't want trouble from Swagger and his mother. Piggy and Vickie get into a shoving match and here's Santino to a pop. He announces himself vs. Swagger later but Swagger closes Kermit's mouth for him. Kermit faints from a lack of air. Santino says there will be no Dolph in Jack's corner tonight because he has to face Ryder. Kermit and Piggy say WOO WOO WOO You Know It.

Here's Kelly for no apparent reason in...some kind of costume. She has a cowboy hat and a sword. Kelly kisses Kermit and Piggy is MAD. There's a Divas costume battle royal next.

Battle Royal

They're all in costumes and I'm not going to list off what they're all in. Eve is Robin, the Bellas rule all as Mario and Luigi. AJ is a chick from Mortal Kombat. The match of course is junk as are most battle royals. Natalya is in there as...some kind of queen I guess. Kaitlyn is Dog the Bounty Hunter and is out.

We're down to Nattie, Kelly, the Bellas and Eve. Eve beats up both Bellas and Alicia is in this still too. There go the twins after a Stinkface from Kelly. Natalya tries a cover out of instinct which Beth got on Eve for earlier. There goes Alicia as well as Kelly, but Eve dumps Nattie for the win at 2:45. She's #1 contender now.

The good chicks stand down the evil ones and the bad ones leave.

OFF TO MUPPET LABS!!! Bunsen Honeydew has a potion for Santino and sends Beaker after him. Beaky runs into Christian instead and the Canadian steals the potion, pouring it out. Sheamus pops up behind Beaker who now has his head stuck inside his shirt. Christian leaves and Sheamus fixes Beaker. Beaker talks to Sheamus...who says he can't make the family reunion, but tell Aunt Teresa he says high. Sheamus fixes Beaker's hair to

look like his.

Air Boom vs. Cody Rhodes/Wade Barrett

The bell rings after a break. Bourne vs. Rhodes starts us off but it's off to Kofi about ten seconds in. Kofi hits kind of a spinning pendulum kick in the corner but gets taken down by Rhodes kicking the rope on a springboard. Off to Barrett (in dark gray instead of black) who hits a Bossman Slam and then a chinlock. Barrett actually throws some punches and it's back to Kofi. Kofi is beaten on for a bit until it's a hot tag to Bourne. He speeds things way up and counters Wasteland into a DDT for two. Everything breaks down and Kofi is sent to the floor. Bourne gets caught in Wasteland and we're done at 5:22.

Rating: C-. I don't get that at all. What is the point in having the champions lose clean again to a thrown together heel combination? The match wasn't horrible, but why did they need to lose twice like that? I don't understand at all and it's book like this that makes the tag division and champions in general look weak.

Post match Christian comes out for some reason to help beat down Kofi but Sheamus makes the save and kicks Cody's head off.

STATLER AND WALDORF ARE IN THE BALCONY!!!! Statler does the WHAT chant to annoy Waldorf.

Punk comes in to see Ace, who he makes fun of. Ace says Punk can have the title match, if he can convince Alberto to give him one.

Brodus Clay is here next week.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Big Show

Show pounds away in the corner and Del Rio is in trouble early on. It's domination for the first few minutes with Del Rio only managing a few kicks to the legs. Show misses a charge

but hits a clothesline to keep his momentum. Alberto grabs a sleeper which shifts into a chinlock. Show breaks it up and we head to the floor where Show pounds away on him. The bald one misses a charge into the barricade and Del Rio misses an enziguri which is sold anyway.

Alberto hooks a front facelock back in the ring but Show throws him off with relative ease. Both guys are down now. For some reason, Del Rio wants to slug it out with Show as they're on their knees. Somehow Show is knocked down for two but he easily shoves out of it. Show sends him to the floor again and we take a break. Back with Del Rio working on the leg as this is needing to end soon. Speaking of that, Del Rio is sent to the floor and when he comes back in, he walks into the punch for the pin clean at 14:00. Another champion loses.

Rating: C-. The psychology was there for the most part but parts of this were way boring. Show is a guy you have to wrestle a certain way which I think Alberto did here for the most part. Not a bad match, but it needed to have about three and a half minutes cut out of it for the match to work.

Post match here's Punk while Del Rio is still out cold. He pours water on Del Rio to take him up. Punk wants a clean answer and says before he gets that answer, Punk is going to put on the Anaconda Vice. There's the hold and Del Rio agrees to the match. His mic goes out again but Punk shouts into the other one that HE SAID YES.

FOZZIE AND GONZO ARE IN THE BACK!!! They talk about how big the guys are and Gonzo says he could be a champion if he tried. Team Vickie comes up and pulls Gonzo's arms through his shirt to tie him up, saying stay out of Ziggler's match later. Gonzo is cool with it and Fozzie isn't sure what to say.

Muppet Movie promo. Oh yes.

Animal is the guest time keeper for the next match. He's as crazy looking as ever.

Jack Swagger vs. Santino Marella

Swagger beats him down quickly and does pushups on Santino's back. The fans want Ryder. Swagger grabs the ankle lock but Santino rolls through it. Here's Beaker with the energy drink to give to Santino. He winds up spitting it into Swagger's face for the rollup pin at 2:37. Harmless fun.

Zack Ryder vs. Dolph Ziggler

This is non-title. Basic start with a missile dropkick missing and we head to the floor. Dolph is put down and we take a break. Back with Ziggler in control, working on the neck. A neckbreaker puts Ryder down and Dolph nips up. Ryder catches him in a slingshot and they slug it out. A flapjack puts Ziggler down and here's the Broski Boot for two.

Ryder gets a double knee to Ziggler's chest in the corner for the pin but Ziggler's foot was on the rope. The bell rings but it gets waved off due to the feet. Zack chases him around the ring but Vickie interferes. A superkick puts Ryder down but he avoids the Zig Zag. The Rough Ryder pins Ziggler clean at 8:54.

Rating: C. Do they know if they want Ryder or Ryan to take the title off Ziggler yet? It's really unclear at times but maybe that's the point. You do have to give them credit for giving Ryder a push due to his crowd reactions lately. Not a horrible match, but they need to either have him win the title or move him on to something else.

We recap HHH/Nash from last week. It's 10:47 and we have Miz vs. Cena and Cole's Challenge to go. Doesn't Nash have a contract already? Why would he need another one? HHH will be out five weeks and Nash has been re-signed.

Cole gets on the announce table and says Ross isn't here tonight due to something regarding his bowels. Yeah yeah here we go again. Adult diaper jokes are made and the Challenge is

moved to next week due to having too much on the show I guess.

Statler and Waldorf make fun of Cole but the laugh isn't quite right.

Miss Piggy is rubbing Morrison's abs and Morrison isn't sure what to make of this. She hits on him but Morrison says he has a friend for her. It's Horny, who now has a Piggy tattoo on his ankle. He kisses her but gets karate chopped for his efforts. Kermit comes up and Horny is in love. Cody comes in and bags Kermit. SOMEBODY SHOOT THAT MAN!!!

So yeah, no Cole vs. Ross tonight despite it being pushed harder than anything most of the week.

John Cena vs. The Miz

Statler and Waldorf make fun of Miz a bit. This has easily been the weakest part of the Muppet part of the show. We go to a break before the bell...at 10:55. The bell rings after 11pm so this is going to be short. Totally basic match so far and we're over five minutes into it. There's just nothing to say because they're flying through it for the sake of time. Miz hits some of his basic stuff until Cena fires back with a big running clothesline which gets two. Cena hits a superplex for two and we head to the floor. A guy in a Scream mask hits Cena and back in the ring...it means nothing as the STF ends this at 9:00.

Rating: C-. Hard to fault them here because they had to rush things and the match didn't mean much at all. Cena is always good for a quick one though, even though this would have fit better at a house show more than on Raw. For a main event though, especially for a fun show like this, I can't fault it much.

Post match the Scream guy comes in again and takes an AA. It's Truth.

Overall Rating: B. Ok now that's likely high because of the Muppet involvement but they're my reviews so who cares? The Muppets fall squarely under the category of "if you don't like this at least a tiny bit, you have no soul." This was designed to be a fun show and that's exactly what it was. Rock/Cena was officially set up, the traditional Survivor Series match was planned and that's all that needed to happen. The Muppets were fun and that's all there is to this show.

Results

Mark Henry b. CM Punk via DQ when Ricardo Rodriguez interfered
Eve Torres won a battle royal last eliminating Natalya

Wade Barrett/Cody Rhodes b. Air Boom – Wasteland to Bourne

Big Show b. Alberto Del Rio – WMD

Santino Marella b. Jack Swagger – Rollup

Zack Ryder b. Dolph Ziggler – Rough Ryder

John Cena b. The Miz – STF

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More On The Ending To Raw And Problem With Big Show vs. Orton

This isn't something that has me on my toes. Coming out of Raw, it appears that the title feud going forward will be Big Show vs. Randy Orton, with the two fighting at least at Survivor Series. The idea is supposed to be that Big Show has lost everything, including his home and has nothing left to lose. However, now he's right back where he was, challenging for the world title and likely in the main event of a major PPV. Let's pause here for a minute and jump back to the 80s, in particular 1984 in Georgia Championship Wrestling.

Around this time, the top feud over the NWA TV Title was between Jake Roberts and Ron Garvin. Roberts defeated Garvin for the title and Garvin of course wanted a rematch. For weeks and weeks he begged Roberts for the title shot but Roberts kept saying no. Finally Roberts agreed if Garvin could come up with \$10,000. Garvin didn't have that kind of money so he mortgaged his home and came up with the money. Ronnie won the title back in an emotional moment and was able to fix his financial situation.

Now compare this to the Big Show story. We were told that Big Show lost everything, told that HHH bought Big Show's house and told that Big Show was suspended. Now Big Show is back, still with music, still coming down the entrance, still with new merchandise, and apparently still fighting at house shows and presumably at Survivor Series. Where's the heartache? Where's the reason for us to care about him?

The key difference between Big Show and Garvin: we saw Garvin being hurt by the loss and we've been told about Big Show being hurt. Secondly, Big Show lost his house what, a month ago? He's been back with nothing to lose and hasn't once even seemed sad. There's no reason to feel his pain and therefore, the story isn't quite working. It's just Big Show saying he's had problems but having it not change anything at all. That doesn't work.

On This Day: October 26, 1998 – Monday Night Raw: Austin In An I Quit Match

Monday Night Raw

Date: October 26, 1998

Location: Kohl Center, Madison, Wisconsin

Attendance: 10,220

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're another step closer to Survivor Series here and hopefully for Vince his month of terror ends. At the moment Austin is still fired so odds are we're going to get some updates on his career options tonight. Also there's a chance we're going to get some of the brackets for the tournament at the PPV. Let's get to it.

Here's Vince and company to start and there's a band setup in front of the Tron. Austin is here apparently and Vince holds him responsible for everything that happened last week. Vince doesn't like the people and wants to know where they were when Austin was doing all this stuff last week. My guess would be they were here in Madison while Austin and Vince

were in Milwaukee but maybe I'm missing something.

Vince goes over the stuff he was made to do last week, including ruining a perfectly good Armani suit. He'll never forgive Austin for what happened last week. As for the letter that Austin gave him last week, it was a legal document. Austin better take stock of himself before he goes further. Austin pops up on screen and says Vince should take stock in adult diapers.

European Title: X-Pac vs. Steve Blackman

Apparently Chyna has taken a leave of absence from the company until her legal issues with Henry are over. The match is after a break and as we come back, Vince is telling his guys to look into the document that Austin gave him last week. He wants it broken. Blackman kicks Pac down to start and hits a side slam to put him down even longer. Off to the chinlock followed by a flying clothesline by Blackman. This has been a squash so far. Steve Regal comes out for no apparent reason and beats down X-Pac. The Outlaws come out and it's a big brawl. The match is thrown out and was too short to rate, but it was nothing of note.

Vince is talking to his lawyers again and says they wrote the document so they can break it.

Cole is outside Austin's locker room and we'll hear from Austin after the next match.

Darren Drozdov vs. The Rock

I don't see this being incredibly competitive. Rock is officially in the tournament. He takes Droz into the corner and pops him in the face to take over. Rock and those sideburns are so over it's unreal. Droz armdrags him down and puts on an armbars, which has to be the highlight of his wrestling career. Sunset flip gets two for Drozdov until Rock realizes he's The Rock and he's facing Darren Drozdov. A low blow puts Droz down and they slug it out a bit. A powerslam gets two on Rock but a middle rope shoulder misses. Rock Bottom, Elbow, done.

Rating: D+. See, this is what you NEVER get anymore. This was a match for

Rock to get on TV and get a win over a guy that has no business beating him. This doesn't hurt Droz because he doesn't mean anything and doesn't lose anything by getting beaten up by Rock. Also, Droz got in some offense so it wasn't even a squash. Can you imagine Cena doing this with say Titus O'Neal? Of course not.

Hawk gets left behind again.

Austin has been advised not to say anything tonight. "We" will have a statement later on though.

Vince's meeting is over. Vince doesn't get something apparently.

Here are the Outlaws for the celebrity appearance of the week. The band equipment was for Motley Crue who the Outlaws and Pac will perform with. They perform and that's about it. The only wrestling related thing here is a bodyguard they have named Test.

Vince yells some more, talking about a contract and opportunities.

Kane vs. Gangrel

Kane is in the tournament also. Christian is at ringside and it doesn't really mean much at all. Kane runs him over and is apparently popular now. Christian's interference doesn't do much good as Kane hits the top rope clothesline and the chokeslam gets the pin. Total squash.

Christian dives off the top at Kane but it only staggers him. He and Gangrel can't do anything to slow Kane down but Edge makes it 3-1 and they get him down. Kane sits up and the group that would become known as the Brood runs.

Cole tells us that after the break, we'll hear from the McMahon Family.

Here's Austin who doesn't know why Vince is so mad at him. He told the cops that the gun was a toy and he told Vince that there wouldn't be any pain. Austin told Vince he wouldn't feel anything and he didn't, so maybe Vince should believe Austin when he says something. Or maybe he shouldn't. Austin pulls out a paper which he says is a new contract, which guarantees him at least one world title shot. The only way he's

leaving is if he quits, and that isn't happening.

Here's Vince with his cronies who yells at Austin and says that Austin is in a match tonight whether he likes it or not. Austin points out what the fans are chanting at Vince which ticks Vince off even more. Vince closes his eyes and hates the way Austin got his contract, however that was. He talks about driving a wedge between something...and here's Shane in the ring. Vince has no idea what's going on but Austin hands Shane a mic and seems calm with it.

Shane says he doesn't listen to Vince anymore and that he's a stockholder in this company. He hired Austin back to get Vince's attention. Shane goes into a huge rant about how nothing he ever did was good enough for Vince. It was always about Vince and how to get his ego stroked. Shane was always called Vince's Boy instead of Shane and he's sick of it. Shane is a man now and he's no longer Vince's Boy. Vince and Shane are both about to cry so Patterson hugs Vince. This was a big moment as this was more or less Shane's national debut other than being a commentator on Heat.

Post break Shane is leaving and Austin throws him a beer.

Tiger Ali Singh vs. Godfather

Godfather runs him over to start and Singh runs to the floor. He sends Godfather into the barricade but gets his leg sent into the apron. This is much more a fight than a match. Back in and Singh works on the arm a bit but Godfather clotheslines him down. The move that would become the Ho Train hits Singh and but he comes back with a bulldog for one. Godfather dumps him to the floor and Babu gets shoved down. The referee goes down too and it's thrown out.

Rating: D. For the life of me I do not get what they saw in Singh. The guy just wasn't anything interesting at all and he was around for a few years. He's the Million Dollar Man but the Indian version, which isn't something I care to see at all. This was much more of a brawl than a match which is probably the best thing they could do here.

Oddities vs. Kai En Tai

This is an eight man tag with the Oddities being the ICP teaming with Kurrigan/Golga. Golga starts with I think Funaki, who is blonde here. Teioh comes in and gets crushed along with Funaki in the corner. Taka comes in as well and all three of them combine to get Golga down. Togo joins his partners and all four drop elbows on Golga before it's off to Kurrigan. Violent J comes in and pounds on Funaki as the embarrassing part of the match begins. Everything breaks down and the Clowns double team Funaki and throw the referee down for the DQ.

Rating: D. The crowd popped for the Clowns but they always got on my nerves. They're fine when they're doing their JCP thing which is basically a big joke on the idea of wrestling, but when they're taking up time on Raw to have fun imitating wrestlers, it gets annoying. The match was short though so it wasn't that terrible.

Shamrock talks about his I Quit match tonight against Austin. He says he quits, and that's the last time you'll hear him say that tonight.

Marc Mero vs. Goldust

Goldust takes him down with a clothesline to start and pounds away in the corner. He hits a slingshot belly to back suplex for two but Mero gets in a low blow while Jackie offers a distraction. Goldust comes back and hits Shattered Dreams for the quick DQ. Not much here.

Post match here's Sable to talk to Jackie even more. There's a challenge for Survivor Series and I guess Jackie accepts.

Mankind is confident that he and Snow can win the titles tonight. They argue over whose prop is dumber.

Tag Titles: New Age Outlaws vs. Al Snow/Mankind

Mankind is in the tournament as well. Snow starts with Gunn and gets press slammed for his troubles. Off to Mankind who waves as he comes in. Road Dogg comes in with a wide variety of punches followed by the shaky knee drop. Snow cheats and I think dances on the apron. After a brief beating on the floor by Snow, Roadie gets sent back into the ring for Mankind's Shake Rattle and Roll. It's as ugly as you could imagine it as.

Double arm DDT looks to set up Socko but Billy breaks it up. The challengers fight over Head but no one swings it. Billy and Mankind go to the floor as Snow hits the Snow Plow on Dogg. The challengers argue over whether to use Socko or Head for the pin and it lets Roadie roll Snow up to retain.

Rating: D. This was another boring match in a long running series of them over the last two weeks. The ending was the usual swerve as one team was dominating and the other wound up winning on a fluke. Then again that could be the case for almost every Outlaws match for a long stretch of time.

Post match Henry and D'Lo run in to beat up the Outlaws.

Snow has Socko and Mankind has Head until they trade back.

Ken Shamrock vs. Steve Austin

This is an I Quit match, so if Austin loses he's done. Shamrock is in the Tournament too, giving us four of the sixteen entrants. Austin doesn't have his wrist tape which is a nice touch as he wouldn't be ready to go here tonight. Shamrock jumps Austin as he gets off the ropes to take over quickly. Austin fights back and finally gets the vest off. Shamrock gets dumped to the floor and it's time to fight.

Ken gets rammed into the announce table and choked by a cord as Lawler is freaking out. Shamrock comes back and they go into the crowd. That goes nowhere so they head back to the ramp with Shamrock still in control. Back inside and Austin is in trouble, being sent into the corner. Off to a chinlock which is quickly broken. There's the Thesz Press but Brisco trips up Austin and gets beaten up for his efforts. Cue Mankind with the Claw on Shamrock and Austin adds a big chair shot to the head, giving Austin the win by knockout.

Rating: D+. These matches continue to be really dull. The I Quit aspect here was just a way to have Austin seem like he was in danger but it never got close to that at all. Like I've been saying with the majority of the matches lately from this time period: there's not enough here to get me interested and the in ring stuff isn't working at all for the most

part.

The Stooges all get Stunners to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. These shows are suffering from the same problems they've been suffering from all year: when Austin and Vince aren't on the screen, things aren't all that interesting. Rock is still a work in progress and HHH is out with a knee injury. Other than that, there isn't much going on here and it makes things less interesting to watch. The matches are just bad on top of that, with Russo being at his peak of insanity and bad endings. This would be the peak that would be made to look like 1986 AWA within a year of course but we'll get to that later.

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On This Day: October 23, 2000 – Monday Night Raw: When “Creative Has Nothing For You” Were Bad Words

Monday Night Raw

Date: October 23, 2000

Location: Hartford Civic Center, Hartford, Connecticut

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the night after No Mercy and the big story is Kurt Angle shocked the

world by beating Rock to become the new WWF Champion. Angle has only been around for about a year at this point and is still a goofy character so this was a pretty big surprise. Other than that Austin didn't quite get his revenge on Rikishi for nearly killing him eleven months prior but you know that's not over. Let's get to it.

We open with an In Memory graphic for Yokozuna. Ignore them incorrectly listing him as a three time world champion.

Here's a bandaged up Rikishi to open things up. He wants to know where Steve Austin is despite knowing that Austin was arrested for trying to crush Rikishi with a car last night. Rikishi talks about the crime that was committed last night but he's talking about Rock losing the WWF Title. Rikishi was down there to help Rock and even though they lost the battle last night, they'll win the war. He asks Rock to come down here to hear what Rikishi has to say so here's the Brahma Bull.

Rikishi apologizes for last night and that he didn't mean for Rock to lose the title. Rock says that the two of them have done a lot together over the years, but Rock wants nothing to do with him or his apology. Not that it matters as Rock will be the WWF Champion again on his own, meaning without Rikishi's help. Rikishi understands that Rock is upset, but he's starting to hurt the big man's feelings.

That doesn't really sway Rock who says Rikishi can wipe himself with his feelings. Rock talks about Rikishi having a stomach ache from eating so many hamburgers and hot dogs and suggests Rikishi leave for good. Rikishi says he'll be there for Rock whether he likes it or not, so Rock says he has to do what he has to do. A Rock Bottom lays the fat man out.

Trish pitches a Women's Title match against Lita if it's under bra and panties rules. Commissioner Mick Foley goes over the rules and accepts the idea.

Women's Title: Lita vs. Trish Stratus

Lita is defending and remember that this is bra and panties. Lita tackles her down to start and takes it into the corner before this becomes a catfight. This is about two years before Trish was even remotely good in the ring so this isn't going to be anything more than what you would expect. Trish rips off Lita's top so Lita does the same to Trish. The champ is about to fall out of her top before suplexing Trish down, hitting the moonsault and completing the stripping to retain.

This brings out the furious Right to Censor to complain about how bad women like Lita and Trish are for America. Steven Richards brings out the newest member of the RTC: Ivory, dressed in something a Puritan would find too conservative. She's in a white collared blouse and a long black skirt while ranting about the clothing women wear today being too revealing. Trish laughs the ideas off and we've got a new monster heel Diva.

Michael Cole is in the back with the new WWF Tag Team Champions, Los Conquistadors. This is a little complicated but I'll get to the explanation later. Anyway, Edge and Christian come up to them to congratulate them on their win and prove that they're two different teams. Remember that, as it becomes important later.

Here's Benoit with something to say. He's noticed that talent, will and determination are useless. Being the best technical wrestler in the world today doesn't mean a thing. HHH may have beaten him last night but the only game that won last night was HHH getting help from his wife last night. Starting tonight, things are different because no one and nothing will stop him because his time is now. Prove him wrong.

Chris Benoit vs. Road Dogg

Benoit drives him into the corner to start and stomps Roadie down with ease. A backbreaker gets two but Benoit misses the swan dive, allowing Road Dogg to hit a few left hands. Dean Malenko comes out for a distraction though and the Crossface gets a quick submission. Basically a

squash.

Cole tells Rikishi that no one wants him here but he says he'll be here all night no matter who likes it.

HHH doesn't like that people thought his era was over. Last night he proved Benoit wrong by showing he's a better technical wrestler than Benoit is. Coach asks HHH about Stephanie helping Angle win the WWF Title last night but HHH says that's his own business. However, Angle put Stephanie in harm's way, so now it's time for HHH to take it out on Angle.

We get a clip from last night of Austin trying to run over Rikishi and getting arrested last night.

Crash is in charge of the APA's office while they're out hurt. Test and Albert come in and kick him out.

Jericho gives a stagehand a Fozzie CD and plugs an upcoming performance on Heat. He turns around and spills his coffee on Kane, saying he hopes he didn't burn him. You don't talk about burning Kane and the Canadian is destroyed.

European Champion William Regal is in the ring and calls most of the fans uncivilized. He's in the capitol of Connecticut which produces more handguns which kill more people than any other state. Cue Jericho to interrupt, apparently not dead at Kane's hands. He does have a bad left arm though.

European Title: Chris Jericho vs. William Regal

Jericho gets the mic to insult Regal but decides Willy isn't worth it and charges in to get us going. The bell rings and Jericho fires off chops followed by a spinwheel kick and a clothesline for two. Regal avoids a

charge to send Jericho shoulder first into the post and gets two of his own off a spinning powerbomb. A tiger bomb is countered into a suplex by Jericho but Regal goes after the bad arm to take him down. They slug it out a bit but Regal blocks a clothesline by going after the arm again. Regal loads up a neckbreaker but the not very nice Jericho kicks Regal low. There's the Lionsault but Kane comes in for the DQ.

Kane lays out Jericho with a chokeslam and lights up the corners of the ring.

T&A (Test and Albert) can't figure out how the initials for Test and Albert Protection Agency should be spelled.

Stephanie and Angle arrive and are greeted by paparazzi.

Here are Stephanie and Kurt for their first public appearance with the title. Stephanie gives him a long winded (I'm as shocked as you are) intro before confetti and balloons rain from the ceiling. The balloons are popped as Angle talks about how America is falling apart. For most people it's overcoming poverty but for most people here it's about overcoming being born in Hartford, like Stephanie has done. Angle brags about winning the gold medal in Atlanta but that wasn't enough for him. Most people would just give up, but he's not most people.

Four years later (it was three) he came to the WWF and now he's proven that he's the best in this company as well. Two months after he got here, he won the European Title and tourism grew by 38% in Europe. We get an over the top highlight package with Angle narrating. He won the Intercontinental Title two months later, becoming the first Eurocontinental Champion in history. "Well except for D'Lo Brown who doesn't count." Then he won King of the Ring, sending sales of crowns and scepters up an amazing 40%.

Last night was the crowning achievement though by winning the WWF Title. Angle's rookie year really is incredible and I can't think of a better

one in wrestling history. Angle has a poem for us called What Makes A Guy Super Great. He gets about two lines down until Foley interrupts. JR: "THANK GOD!" Mick asks for an ovation for Angle on his title win, but says there's something he didn't get last night: a celebratory hug.

Stephanie was unable to give him one due to being unconscious from a Rock Bottom. Mick is one heck of a hugger, so he'd be willing to offer his services. Foley gets all teary eyed and announces Angle's first title defense.....right here in Hartford, Connecticut...against HHH and the Rock in a triple threat. Awesome segment here with Angle at his very best. Goofy Angle is one of my favorite characters ever and this was some of his best work.

Chyna goes looking for Eddie but finds the two women she caught him in the shower with last week. She shuts the door and a lot of violence can be heard. Chyna leaves and the bodies are shown laid out everywhere. One of those girls is Victoria/Tara.

Too Cool vs. Tazz/Raven

Tazz and Raven formed a short lived ECW tag team around this point because there was nothing else for them to do. Scotty kicks Raven in the face to start and Grandmaster adds a middle rope dropkick to take Bird Boy down again. Tazz walks into a powerslam and Raven is kicked out to the floor. The distraction lets Tazz suplex Grandmaster down and the heels take over.

Raven bulldogs him down for two and it's already back to Tazz as the announcers ignore the match to talk about a cookbook. Raven jumps into a boot to the face and it's off to Scotty to speed things up. A superkick gets two on Tazz and everything breaks down. Raven accidentally hits Tazz and Grandmaster hits Raven with the guillotine legdrop. Tazz makes the save and Raven returns the favor by breaking up Worm with a DDT to Scotty for the pin.

Rating: D. Just a match here really and as basic as you could ever get. Just throwing people together into a team because they used to work for another company doesn't really work that well. They wouldn't o anywhere as a team as there's just nothing interesting about them together.

Christian isn't sure which glasses to wear in the match tonight. Pete Gas from the Mean Street Posse of all people comes in and asks to see Edge.

After a break Edge comes back into his dressing room and finds the place wrecked and Christian put through a table. Apparently the Dudleys attacked him and injured his shoulder. Edge says it's just Los Conquistadors so he'll win the titles himself.

Billy Gunn vs. Val Venis

Chyna is with Billy here so Eddie comes out before the match. Billy stops her from killing him, allowing Val to jump the Gunn (I'm here all week) and get things going early. A knee drop gets two for Venis and he peppers Billy with forearms. Billy grabs a quickly broken sleeper but gets countered into a blue thunder bomb for two. They clothesline each other down before Billy hits a Stinger Splash and a Jackhammer, only to have Steven Richards break up a Fameasser. Richards is pulled in for a bit but the Fameasser hits for the pin anyway.

Rating: D. Why Billy Gunn kept getting pushed is beyond me. He was athletic but there are some people that just don't work as a singles guy. Billy just didn't have it, but I'd be curious to know how much of that is because of his nickname. You can only get so far with his name and gimmick and he crashed into that ceiling far before this.

Stephanie isn't sure whose corner she should be in tonight. She asks HHH what he wants but he says he just wants her safe.

Video on Jerry Lawler at Las Vegas Outlaws cheerleader tryouts. I think

you can figure this one out.

Tag Titles: Edge vs. Los Conquistadors

Edge looks confused as the champions come to the ring. We'll say Uno starts but is easily punched down. Uno grabs a quick small package for two and Edge is furious. Los Conquistadors both come in and hit Poetry in Motion as the fans suddenly get it. A Twist of Fate and the Swatons connect for the pin to retain the titles.

Post match the champions of course unmask as the Hardys. Cue Mick Foley to wonder how the Hardys can be the Conquistadors when they wrestled the Conquistadors last night. Foley has some footage from earlier which shows Edge and Christian admitting they were in the Conquistadors costumes last night. The problem with that is Edge and Christian weren't allowed to challenge for the tag titles, but since they fooled him, the tag title change from last night stands. Unfortunately for Edge and Christian, tonight's title change (there was a change?) stands as well, meaning the Hardys are YOUR Tag Team Champions.

Rikishi tells Cole to tell Rock that he's helping him get the title back.

WWF Title: The Rock vs. HHH vs. Kurt Angle

Stephanie is in the back with Kurt and tells him to wait before going to the ring since he's the champ. He finally gets in and the challengers both deck him in the face for making them wait. Kurt clotheslines HHH down but celebrates too long, allowing Rock to drop him with a clothesline of his own. HHH is knocked to the floor and Kurt pounds away on Rock in the corner while he has a chance. Rock comes back with a quick Samoan drop but HHH dives in for the save.

Now it's Rock being sent to the floor to give us another mini-match. HHH stomps the champion down in the corner and gets two of his own off a

neckbreaker. Angle comes back with a gorgeous German suplex but Rock pulls him out to the floor. Everyone goes outside and Rock and HHH get into a contest to see who can slam Kurt head first into the announce table the hardest. Stephanie tries to break it up so Rock stares her down, causing HHH to get in Rock's face. Angle has the ring bell but Rock ducks and HHH gets blasted in the side of the head instead.

That leaves Rock vs. Kurt in the ring for a bit with Rock hitting a DDT but the referee is checking on the Game. Kurt suplexes Rock down for the same result as a stretcher is brought out for HHH. Angle hits the Olympic Slam out of nowhere and Hebner FINALLY slides back in to count two. HHH gets off the stretcher and stumbles back to the ring for a quick Pedigree on Kurt. Rock saves and clotheslines HHH down before hitting a Rock Bottom on the champion. This time it's HHH with the save but Angle breaks up a Pedigree with a belt shot to the face. Rikishi comes out to beat up Angle and that's a DQ somehow.

Rating: C+. This picked up at the halfway point but why did we have a DQ when Rikishi came in but not for a bell or title shot to HHH's head? Either way, good stuff here as Angle fits this role perfectly: the guy who isn't all there at times but can be a killer in the ring. Good stuff here.

Post match here's Austin to go after Rikishi. He clotheslines Angle on the way down the ramp before pounding away on Rikishi, only to have Kurt come back in to go after Austin for the clothesline. I like that as it's better than just having Angle come in for no apparent reason. Rikishi escapes and a Stunner to Angle ends the show.

Overall Rating: B-. The key difference between today's shows and this episode is how many different ideas there were back in 2000. You don't see the same finishes or repetitive matches or the same stories being used over and over again until we get to a PPV to shake things up. There's an idea to everything going on and instead of using a batch of jobbers over and over again, you get some fresh matches. It makes the

show WAY easier to sit through and far more enjoyable as a result.

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On This Day: October 21, 2002 – Monday Night Raw: There's No Easy Way Here. It's Katie Vick.

Monday Night Raw

Date: October 21, 2002

Location: Bridgestone Arena, Nashville, Tennessee

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Oh look: a Raw from 2002. This is I think the twelfth episode I've done from this show, and you would think it would be something fun. Instead, it's the KATIE VICK EPISODE! Yep, this is the show where HHH climbs in a casket and rapes a mannequin, because this is a wrestling show baby! I think that about covers it. It's the night after No Mercy and HHH is the champion of all that is Raw as the IC Title has been knocked out for the next eight months or so. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the Katie Vick story. HHH claims Kane is a murderer, but Kane says it was an accident. This is the night after HHH

beat Kane to unify the IC and World Titles but the feud must continue for some reason.

Here's HHH along with Flair to open the show. HHH talks about how he's proven the writers wrong when they said he didn't deserve to be handed the title. He ended the IC Title last night and there's no one that can do anything about it. HHH calls himself unstoppable and says that he might be the greatest world champion ever. Flair has a video that explains the Katie Vick ordeal. Oh boy. Kane isn't here yet, but apparently tonight it's Kane/RVD vs. HHH/Flair. This brings out Hurricane, Kane's other partner, to beat up HHH and take the tape, but HHH beats Hurricane down and takes it back.

Jeff Hardy vs. Christopher Nowitski

Chris takes him down to start and Jeff is getting frustrated, which would be a recurring theme for him for the next few weeks. Jeff sends him to the floor and hits a big flipping dive to take over. Nowitski gets in a shot back inside and gets a few two counts. Hardy comes back with a Thesz Press and actually uses it as a pinning combination. Nowitski chokes away in the corner and gets two off a rolling side cradle.

A gutbuster gets another two on Hardy and this match isn't going anywhere. Jeff fires away but walks into a hot shot for two. A spinning double underhook slam gets two for Chris and here comes Jeff's real comeback. He fires away with right hands and a jawbreaker but Chris moves before the Swanton launches. Chris brings in a chair but Al Snow comes in to break it up. The chair winds up hitting Chris in the head but Snow pulls Nowitski away from the Swanton. It hits the chair and Chris steals the pin.

Rating: D. This just kept going. Nowitski was a great base for a character but he never got off the ground. The guy just wasn't that good. He wasn't especially bad but he just wasn't that good. This match didn't work well for the most part and Hardy would start turning heel soon after this, which didn't work at all.

Eric Bischoff, the GM, is watching Big Show intimidate him recently. Stacy comes in to ask to referee a match tonight. Eric says yeah whatever

but not the main event. Stacy leaves and here's Show. Eric gives Show Jamal, Rico and Rosey tonight.

Snow talks to Dreamer about costing Dreamer a match recently. They have a Singapore cane match tonight. Dreamer leaves and Nowitski comes up. Nowitski doesn't want/need Al's help. Ok then.

Lance Storm/William Regal vs. Bubba Ray Dudley/Spike Dudley

The winners get a title shot against whoever the champions are now. Apparently it's Christian/Jericho. Storm runs down American before the match. Spike vs. Storm to start things off with the smaller dude taking over quickly. The fans want tables but other than that things are mostly silent. We've lost commentary for some reason and by the time that sentence is finished JR is back.

Off to Bubba who takes Lance down with a neckbreaker but Regal hits Bubba in the back of his recently concussed head to give Storm the advantage. Regal comes in as Kane arrives in the back. Everything breaks down and Spike rans Storm off the top. Bubba catches the superkick from Storm and hits the Bubba Bomb. Spike hits the Dudley Dog on Regal for the win and the title shot.

Rating: C-. This was one of those matches that was too short to go anywhere of note. Regal and Storm as the Unamericans were a solid team but the gimmick was only going to go so far, especially with Test weighing them down as their third man. Nothing to see here and thankfully D-Von would reunite with Bubba the next month.

Storm kicks Bubba in the head post match and Spike gets hit in the ribs over and over by Regal's brass knuckles.

Trish is having her picture taken and has to talk to the photographer about her match with Victoria from last night. Jericho and Christian pop up and call Trish a w****. Apparently Jericho thinks Trish wants him. Geez is this some extreme foreshadowing? I really doubt it.

Here's Eric with something to say. He praises last night's HIAC match with Brock vs. Taker (it really was good) but he's going to top it. How

is he going to do that? Something called the Elimination Chamber. No word on what that is yet.

Test vs. D'Lo Brown

Stacy is referee so she can wear a revealing outfit. Test looks like an idiot with long hair and short tights. Stacy slaps Brown and rings the bell. Test launches him over with a big backdrop and pounds away in the corner. Brown gets his feet up to block a charge followed by a flying forearm. Brown drops a leg but Stacy interferes again. The Sky High hits but Stacy is tying her shoe instead of counting. The big boot from Test and a fast count give the Canadian the win. Stacy jumps in Test's arms post match.

Victoria says that she isn't lying about Trish sleeping her way to the top. Victoria is still insane here. Goldust pops up behind her to make fun of her in a Dustyesque voice. Booker shows up as well to do the same, minus the American Dream part.

Trish Stratus/Booker T/Goldust vs. Victoria/Chris Jericho/Christian

Trish has her full entrance and look down now. Jericho and Christian are tag champions which I think I mentioned earlier. The girls brawl to start and Trish fires off her kicks in the corner. Victoria drop toeholds her onto the bottom rope and it's off to Christian vs. Trish as the genders don't have to match here. Booker comes in to make this a bit more fair for Christian. A forearm puts Christian down and a side kick gets two. Victoria and her awesome rack distracts Booker and the Canadians take over.

Off to Jericho who pounds away but gets caught in the spinning sunset flip out of the corner. The fans are way into Booker which is a good sign. It means HHH has someone to beat at Wrestlemania for no other reason than HHH wants to win at Wrestlemania. Back to Christian who takes Booker down so Jericho can hit a top rope knee drop.

A spinebuster takes Jericho down and it's off to Goldust. He cleans the lower level of the house, hitting a middle rope bulldog for two on Jericho. Trish comes in with a cross body to Jericho and Goldust kisses

Victoria. Booker and Christian take each other out and Jericho takes Trish down and finishes her with the Walls of Jericho.

Rating: D+. This started off as ok but boring and evolved into a messy comedy (I think?) match. There was nothing of note going on here which is the problem with Raw at this point: it isn't terrible but there's no interest in it at all. The tag titles meant nothing at all at this point and wouldn't for a very long time. Thankfully we had the Smackdown tag titles established last night and they tore the house down for a long time.

Booker saves Jericho post match.

Terri is at Kane's door and we cut to HHH who says roll the footage. I'm sure you've at least heard of this before. It's of a funeral home with a date of 1992. Kane (clearly HHH in a Kane mask and t-shirt that wouldn't be released for another 9 years) comes up to the casket and talks to the dead "body" of Katie Vick. It's a mannequin if that's not coming through. Kane (it's HHH the entire segment so don't get confused. I know this segment can make you stupid but hang with me here) says that if Katie had let him touch her in the car, this wouldn't have happened.

The idea is that Kane was driving and crashed, killing Katie. Katie "talks" to Kane, saying that apparently now that she's dead she wants Kane. Kane talks about getting excited watching Katie cheerlead and he fondles her chest which is mosaiced. This is supposed to be something like a hidden video of a sex tape. Kane takes his shirt off and starts undressing the mannequin. He takes off her underwear and says he loves the smell of formaldehyde in the morning. Kane takes his jeans off and gets in the casket. Sounds are heard and we cut to shots of candles and flowers.

Usually I would give a long winded explanation of how awful this is for wrestling and how terrible it is, but I think the segment speaks for itself: it's simulated necrophilia. I think that sums it up. When you look at the unemployment figures in this country, remember that someone came up with this idea and was paid to do so.

Al Snow vs. Tommy Dreamer

Singapore Cane match. We start with a cane duel and Snow gets in the first connecting shots to the legs. Out to the floor and Dreamer fires away more cane shots but Snow headbutts him down. Back in and Dreamer kicks Al low, followed by a missed cane shot from an interfering Nowitski to give Dreamer the pin. Nothing to see here.

Big Show vs. Rosey/Jamal/Rico

The big guys jump Show to start but he shoves all of them away with ease. The heavies are clotheslined to the floor and Show goes after Rico's sideburns of doom. JR makes gay references about Rico and Show destroys more people. There's a chokeslam to Jamal (Umaga) for the pin. Total squash for Show.

Post break Eric announces that Big Show has been traded to Smackdown. He would get the world title the next month over there. After Show leaves, Hurricane arrives (did he leave?) and stands in front of his own car. Ok then.

We get some clips of Shawn getting destroyed after his match with HHH at Summerslam. Shawn is in a wheelchair at The World (WWF New York) and says his rehab is going slowly. The final match he had with HHH can stand on its own merit as not only a great match but a tribute to God. HHH did indeed put him in a wheelchair like he said he would but Shawn vows vengeance and stands up. He's coming for HHH again.

HHH/Ric Flair vs. Rob Van Dam/Kane

The good guys pound away on their respective feud partners (Van Dam beat Flair last night) in the corner and both heels get kicked in the face. Van Dam and Flair start and it's the cartwheel moonsault to Naitch. A middle rope kick to the face puts him down again as HHH knocks Kane off the apron and it's the barricade. Van Dan kicks the Game down but Flair breaks up the Five Star.

Van Dam gets sent into the post and seems to have hurt his ankle. That gets two back inside as we're finally into a normal tag team match. JR and King debate necrophilia, which isn't something I expected I'd have to write. Off to Flair as JR is sounding ticked off. Flair and Van Dam slug

it out but it's off to HHH with the knee to the face. King tries to convince JR that necrophilia is funny but Captain Oklahoma isn't convinced. HHH puts on the sleeper and Van Dam is in trouble.

The hold is broken and it's off to Flair. Van Dam superkicks him down and Flair goes up and with JR verbally rolling his eyes, Flair gets slammed down. HHH comes in and beats on Van Dam, but Rob escapes and tags Kane. Never mind as the tag isn't seen so it's time to go back to the not interesting match.

Back in and Van Dam takes Flair down and makes the real tag. Kane cleans house as the announcers debate if necrophiliac and Hulkamaniac rhyme. This is what Raw has sunk to people. Van Dam goes up and gets crotched as Kane and HHH fight on the floor. They head up the ramp with HHH being rammed into the set. Van Dam kicks Flair in the face, hits Rolling Thunder and adds the Five Star for the pin.

Rating: C-. Not only was the match not that good, but it was based on necrophilia. I can't emphasize that enough: this feud is continuing because HHH dressed up like Kane and pretended to have sex with a mannequin representing a corpse. JR sounded legitimately angry in this match and can you blame him at all?

In the back Kane destroys HHH in the back and throws him into various metal objects. Hurricane is standing next to his car with the trunk open. HHH tries a Pedigree but gets catapulted onto the hood of the car. There's a chokeslam onto the hood and Kane throws HHH into the trunk and slams it shut. Kane sends Hurricane away and says to the trunk, and I quote, "Now I'm going to screw you. The only question is will you still be alive, or will I just wait until you're dead." Kane drives away with HHH in the trunk to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. Ignoring the white elephant on this show, it wasn't a good episode. There weren't any good matches and a lot of the stuff felt like it was there to fill in two hours. The Elimination Chamber was mentioned but after the announcement it was barely mentioned again. This show was based around one of the stupidest stories of all time and it's even worse than it seemed at the time. It's in poor taste, it's not

funny, and it makes you embarrassed to be a wrestling fan. Terrible show.

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