

Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: December 15, 2014

It's finally time to start the build to the Royal Rumble and Lesnar vs. Cena III, which no one really wants to see but WWE has decided that it's what we're getting and we're going to like it. In theory Lesnar is going to be here tonight so maybe things can get going. TLC was just a step above a disaster but there were a few bright spots so hopefully this picks things up a bit. Let's get to it.

Jericho opened the show and talked about how awesome the crowd was. He wanted his Slammy back from Fandango, who stole it last week when Jericho wasn't there. Instead he got Paul Heyman, who thinks he should be in charge tonight. Jericho said Heyman owes him \$200 from a Best of Jericho tape in ECW. This brought them to Seth Rollins, who came out and said he beat Cena last night but had another win stolen from him, just like Sting did at Survivor Series.

Cena came out, said Rollins hasn't learned to be a man yet, and made a cage match for later. Jericho wasn't done yet though and made a match between himself and Heyman with the fans picking the stipulation (no holds barred, extreme rules or street fight). I think you all know where this is going, likely because this took nearly twenty five minutes to get through.

Big Show and Harper beat Rowan and Ziggler when Big Show knocked out Rowan. Again. At least it wasn't a champion for a change.

Big E. apparently sweats on everyone. That's the big idea about the character. Let that one sink in for a bit. Later in the night the New Day would beat the Dusts in a long match where they were clearly just filling in time.

Alicia Fox and Natalya beat the Bellas when Natalya made Brie tap out. The only thing of note here was Kidd checking on Nikki after the match.

Rusev and Lana were the guests on the Highlight Reel where Jericho

implied that they wanted each other in a funny bit. Rusev actually showed some emotion here and it was actually working. The important part here was Ryback came out as Rusev's next challenger. I could totally get behind that feud.

Kane destroyed Adam Rose in about a minute. The Bunny took a tombstone for good measure. This was a way to kill a few minutes.

Heyman and Jericho's match never happened as we got the obvious ending of Brock returning to destroy Jericho. The best part though was Heyman saying he had no tricks up his sleeve, meaning he isn't the Jew in jiu-jitsu.

Fandango came out to gloat but Reigns returned and knocked him out. Show tried to come out as well for revenge but Reigns Superman Punched him off the apron. This was how to make Reigns look like a monster and it worked really well.

Jimmy Uso beat Miz in an upset which made sense. After a break, Miz offered Naomi a spot on MizTV on Smackdown to continue the story.

Rollins still wants the Authority back.

The main event was a good cage match between Cena and Rollins which ran nearly twenty five minutes. There were several near escapes and near falls, but after Cena hit an AA from the top, Lesnar came out and destroyed him with German suplexes. Heyman shook Rollins' hand, making it unclear of how long they had been working together, if at all. Rollins hit a Curb Stomp for the win.

Overall this show really needed the hour cut out. You could clip out five to ten minutes from the opening, the Kane vs. Rose stuff, a lot of New Day vs. the Dusts and some other stuff here and there to get this down to two hours and make it a very solid show. Unfortunately this wound up being the usual overdone episode of Raw which weighs down all the good things they had going on.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on the History of the Royal Rumble at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00PZ1GR7E>

And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for under \$4 at:

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

Finally, I'm holding a Holiday Special for my e-books: any two of them for just \$5. Check out the details here.

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2014/11/28/holiday-sale/>

2014 Awards: Promo of the Year

NOW we've got some competition.

We'll start with the most recent, on December 4's NXT. This was the final push before R-Evolution with Neville saying Sami has had a great career and has a lot to be proud of. Zayn wasn't going to accept that though and cut the promo of a lifetime, talking about how no one, including Neville, could tell him what he could be proud of because nothing he did mattered without that NXT Championship. I was drooling to see these two go at it for the title the next week and they blew the roof off the place.

I would put Rock, Lana and Rusev in this, but that promo just killed Rusev's heat and there was no way he'd ever win another match again and would wind up selling meat out of a truck in Moscow right?

In the height of the "Where's Punk" spring, Paul Heyman came out to Punk's music in Chicago and sat down in the middle of the ring. The fans were begging to see Punk, but within a few minutes, Heyman had them thinking about the Undertaker vs. Brock Lesnar at Wrestlemania. It took a master to get them off that topic but he was able to do it in a matter of

minutes. That's pure talent and only Heyman could have pulled it off.

Speaking of Heyman, he might have topped himself a month later in New Orleans. The previous night he had led Brock Lesnar to victory over the Undertaker, doing the unthinkable of breaking the Streak. This was evil winning and getting to give the mother of all victory speeches. Heyman talking about how Lesnar was here to put tears in children's eyes was glorious and bragging about Undertaker collapsing and going to the hospital in a "shoot" is about as evil as you'll ever find. He capped it off by talking about how Lesnar is the one to do everything he says he's done and now he's the 1 in 21-1. "So many people have come up and says "I could have broken the Streak." "WELL WHY DIDN'T YOU???"

The night wasn't done yet because the Ultimate Warrior came out and gave literally the final promo of his life, talking about how his spirit will live forever and how one day every man breathes his last breath. And then he DIED. There is no way you can ever top that drama, no matter what you do.

We have to get Daniel Bryan in here and we'll go to Memphis to do it. Bryan wanted a shot at the title at Wrestlemania and was willing to do whatever he had to do to get it. His idea was to hijack the show by having about 100 fans in Bryan shirts take over the ring until HHH agreed to a match with Bryan at Wrestlemania, as well as a spot in the WWE Title match if he won. He kept pushing and pushing until HHH finally snapped and gave Bryan everything he wanted. This set the stage for Wrestlemania and gave the fans everything they wanted all in one great package.

But this one topped them all.

On April 6, 2014 in the New Orleans SUPERdome, Hulk Hogan was in the ring to open Wrestlemania XXX as the official host. He talked about how there are Wrestlemania moments and you never know when one is going to happen. And then the glass shattered.

I've been to a lot wrestling shows over the years. I've seen a LOT of wrestling over the years. I've seen almost everything there is to see in wrestling and am a very jaded fan as a result. When that glass shattered though, my heart skipped a beat and my jaw actually fell open. The pop

was incredible and they somehow topped it when the Rock came out a few minutes later. The three biggest stars in the history of wrestling standing in the ring together for the first and only time ever.

There's a famous photo of Elvis Presley, Jerry Lee Lewis and Johnny Cash (plus Carl Perkins) at Sun Studios in Memphis called the Million Dollar Quartet. That shot of Austin, Hogan and Rock together could be called the Billion Dollar Trio and there will never be a better collection of talent in one place.

2014 Awards: Non-Wrestler of the Year

Remember this one from last year?

Ok so just like last year, it's going to Paul Heyman but I'll go over some of the honorable mentions.

Lana was just ok this year as her main line continued to be SHUT UP. That being said, I'd much rather look at her in a short skirt than almost anyone else on the list so she gets a few points.

Dario Cueto is good but I need to see more of him.

The only other option was the Authority. They nailed their roles perfectly and I didn't mind Stephanie in tight dresses or the short skirt at Wrestlemania. What I did mind however was the return of the twenty minute opening promos. Seriously, cut those out.

That being said, Heyman's promos this year never stopped being good and the one from the Raw after Wrestlemania is as perfect of a heel promo as I've ever heard.

Monday Night Raw – December 15, 2014: Detroit Raw City

Monday Night Raw

Date: December 15, 2014

Location: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

TLC was last night and it didn't quite live up to the standard set by R-Evolution. By "didn't quite" I of course mean not in the slightest as it was mainly a bunch of matches with different weapons swapped in without much changing. Hopefully Lesnar is back tonight to finally get the main stories moving forward. Jericho is the guest host as well so let's get to it.

We immediately open with Jericho's countdown and the guest GM is here. He's happy to be in Detroit rock city because he's in charge tonight. Tonight is all about the fans because last week they gave him a Slammy for diving off the top of a cage. Jericho stops for another Y2J chant but says he'll get in trouble if he doesn't move this along. Last week Fandango accepted his award for him and that's not cool with the boss. Therefore, he demands that Fandumbo get out here right now and bring the trophy with him.

Instead he gets Paul Heyman with a mic in hand. He's used to being the power in the arena, but tonight is Raw Is Jericho. If you're going to have a guest GM, why not have someone known for running the most exciting promotion of all time? However, that's not why Heyman is here tonight. He isn't cool with the idea of Jericho winning the Extreme Moment of the Year because he's kind of the extreme guy around here.

Jericho calls him a walrus and says that Heyman owes him \$200 from selling a Best of Jericho tape in ECW. He gets in Heyman's face but Paul says he's an advocate. Therefore, he's here to talk about Seth Rollins,

who had a chance to knock Cena out of the Royal Rumble spot last night. Cue Rollins as Jericho looks interested in where this is going.

Seth gets right in Heyman's face but Paul literally backs down as Rollins talks about putting Cena through a table and having his hand raised. That victory was taken away though, just like at Survivor Series. The Authority would still be in power if not for the vigilante Sting. Last night it was Roman Reigns costing him the match, which everyone knows he won. Everyone knows Cena can't beat him on his own (Stooges applaud) because Cena is a coward. Rollins issues a challenge for a rematch when he's healthy enough, but here's John to cut him off.

Cena tells Rollins to shut up and let the adults talk. Just because Seth has a mic in his hands it doesn't mean he has anything in his pants. Last night they had a match and Rollins lost, but now he's out here running his mouth. That means Rollins hasn't learned to be a man, because he hasn't learned to dust himself off and continue to fight. Cena turns to Heyman and starts talking about fighting the Beast at the Royal Rumble in a great fight.

Back to Rollins, Cena says he's wanting a fight tonight. Rollins mentioned a rematch and Cena had the same thing in mind. Tonight Cena needs help because he can't make matches. Therefore, he needs someone with the power to make that match happen. The look on Jericho's face is hilarious here as you can see the lightbulb go off over his head. Jericho of course makes the match and puts it in a steel cage, which just happens to be hanging above the ring.

Cena leaves and Rollins calls Jericho the worst GM of all time. "You're worse than that stupid computer!" He says Jericho is jealous because he's not as important as Rollins. Jericho is out of shape and couldn't even beat the popcorn guy. "Well of course I couldn't because the popcorn guy is a ninja." Jericho thinks he can beat Heyman though and Paul readily agrees. Chris isn't convinced though and makes himself vs. Heyman for tonight. We're STILL not done yet though because Jericho tells us to vote on the App for the stipulations in his match with Heyman.

Your choices for Jericho vs. Heyman: Extreme Rules, No Holds Barred or

Street Fight.

Erick Rowan/Dolph Ziggler vs. Big Show/Luke Harper

Ziggler has to run away from Big Show to start but eventually gets thrown into the corner. Some right hands and a dropkick stagger Show but he just tosses Ziggler down with ease. A hard shoulder sends Ziggler out to the floor and he barely beats the ten count back in as we take our second break in seven minutes.

Back with Harper nailing Dolph in the jaw for two. Off to Big Show for his slow motion offense as we get a split screen still package of the ladder match last night. Harper catapults him throat first into the bottom rope for two but misses a charge into the post. The hot tag brings in Rowan to clean house as everything breaks down. Harper and Ziggler go over the announcers' table and Big Show KO's Rowan for the pin at 10:02.

Rating: C-. They're trolling us right? I mean, they can't seriously think this is the best possible option. I'm assuming this is to set up Big Show vs. someone later on and I'm sure that BIG SHOW of all people needs some wins like this to set up his push. You know, because all those titles over the years are just forgotten right? I can't get over this and it's making me lose my sanity more every week.

I mean, why bother even setting Rowan up as a monster with a new character in the first place? They made a target and destroyed it in the span of like a month and for what? To make Big Show stronger? You would think knocking JOHN CENA and Mark Henry cold would have proven it, but no that's not enough. Instead they need to tease the fans with Rowan and then have him get beaten down twice in two days. You know, for Big Show!

Jericho tells Fandango to shut up in the back and go to the ring.

Video on TLC last night.

New Day isn't afraid of the Dusts' darkness. Soon, you'll feel their power. Big E. freaks out so much that he sweats on everyone.

Bella Twins vs. Alicia Fox/Natalya

Total Divas match. Fox hammers on Nikki to start but eats a spinebuster. We're already in the chinlock for a bit before Brie comes in for one of her own. A jawbreaker sets up the cold tag to Natalya and Brie slaps her in the face, earning her a Sharpshooter for the submission at 2:13.

Tyson checks on Nikki for some reason until Natalya sees him.

Roman Reigns will be in action tomorrow night on Super Smackdown Live.

It's the Highlight Reel with guests Lana and Rusev. Lana immediately brags about Rusev still being undefeated by crushing Swagger again before allowing Chris to ask any intelligent questions he has. Jericho mocks Lana for wearing the same outfit on TV twice in a row before asking if it's the tight bun hairstyle that makes her so angry all the time. Maybe Rusev needs to release some of his stress by showing Lana his Sputnik.

Jericho thinks there's something going on between the two of them and starts singing about them in a tree together. "It's the US Champ and the communist tramp!" Lana freaks out until Rusev takes the mic. Maybe he should just crush Jericho right now. Jericho tries to figure out why someone always wants to beat him up. Speaking of which, there's someone that wants to fight Rusev right now. Cue Ryback for an actually fresh feud but Rusev backs down, as is his custom.

We look at Big Show interfering in the tables match last night but getting taken out by the returning Roman Reigns.

Ascension is coming.

Goldust/Stardust vs. New Day

Big E./Woods here as Kofi jumps in on commentary. Xavier drops Goldust with a dropkick and legsweep before it's off to Big E. for a Vader Clothesline. Goldie bails to the floor for a breather and it's Stardust in. The commentators talk about E.'s sweating as he hits a pair of backbreakers on Stardust. Back to Woods for a quick arm wringer before Big E. comes in with a slam. Big E. drops Woods onto Stardust for two before Woods sends both Dusts to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Goldust tagging himself in to snap Big E.'s throat across the

top rope. Stardust does the same and we hit a chinlock from Goldust. E. charges into a spinebuster for two and the CM Punk chant begins. The match keeps dragging on so the fans chant for NXT. The Dusts take turns with various kinds of locks before Stardust kicks Big E. in the face. E., presumably out of boredom, takes Stardust's head off with a clothesline.

The hot tag brings in Woods for his rolling clothesline but he walks into a Goldust powerslam for two. An enziguri knocks Stardust to the floor and E. offers himself as a launch pad for a flip dive onto both Dusts. The Midnight Hour FINALLY ends Goldust at 13:33. Kofi's wild celebration for the pin helped.

Rating: D+. It's not even that the match was bad but it felt like it went on for about four hours. This is what I mean when I talk about them stretching something out to fill in time, because they don't have enough material to fill in three hours. You would think a twenty three minute opening segment would eat up enough time that this isn't necessary, but somehow it's still happening almost every week.

Miz (with Mizdow) isn't worried about facing Jimmy Uso on his own tonight. The only way Jimmy will ever be on a red carpet is if he's with his wife. Jimmy's story ends tonight.

Adam Rose is in the back and promises the Rosebuds the biggest after party ever tonight. Kane pops up, says he doesn't like Rose, and says he's Adam's opponent tonight.

Adam Rose vs. Kane

Kane quickly throws Rose to the floor where the Bunny plays cheerleader. Back in and Rose runs away from Kane until he nails a clothesline in the corner. Rose stops to dance though and eats a big boot, but the Bunny comes in off the top, only to dive into a double chokeslam for the pin at 1:32. Side note: Jimmy Jacobs was part of the Rosebuds.

The Bunny gets tombstoned.

We look back at the opening segment.

Chris Jericho vs. Paul Heyman

Heyman comes out wearing workout gear and carrying a mic. He knows Jericho is expecting a bunch of tricks up his sleeve but Heyman doesn't have anything. Heyman doesn't even have a witty comeback like "I'm the Jew in ju-jitsu." Instead he wants to keep this PG because he gave Jericho his first break. Now Jericho is a world famous star who wants to fight Heyman over \$200 from nearly twenty years ago. Paul offers him the \$200 in lieu of a horrible beating and busts out the checkbook. Jericho slaps it out of his hand and shows us the results:

Extreme Rules – 39%

No Holds Barred – 18%

Street Fight – 43%

Heyman doesn't understand why Jericho thinks it's fair to get into a fight with....BROCK LESNAR. Cue the champ (no belt) as reality sets in on Jericho. He gets in the ring and stares Jericho down but Jericho tries a Codebreaker. Brock just stands there and lets Jericho fall before planting him with the F5. The fans chant for Cena but Lesnar just leaves without a match ever taking place.

Here are Fandango and Rosa with Jericho's Slammy. Before he can say much though, here's Roman Reigns to interrupt. A big right hand and the spear drop the dancer and Reigns smirks a bit. Now it's Big Show's turn to cut Reigns off but Roman says if Big Show gets in the ring, he'll get hit in the mouth. Reigns is a step ahead of him as the Superman Punch knocks Show off the apron but not out. He throws some stairs around and that's that.

Miz vs. Jimmy Uso

The fans want Mizdow but get Miz running out to the floor. Back in and a slam drops Miz as Naomi is watching backstage. Some chops have Miz in even more trouble and Jimmy just pounds away with right hands. Miz finally snaps Jimmy's throat across the top rope and goes up, only to dive into an uppercut. They head outside with Mizdow ramming Jimmy's back into the apron before putting on what looks to be the Last Chancery of all things back inside.

The Reality Check gets two but Jimmy fights up and knocks Miz to the floor for a big dive. Mizdow of course falls down as well because he's dedicated to his craft. Back in again and a high cross body gets two for Jimmy. He easily breaks up the Figure Four and hits a Samoan drop, only to have Mizdow come in and dive into the corner as well. Jimmy throws him to the floor, gets a quick assist from Jey, and hits the superkick and Superfly Splash for the pin at 6:15.

Rating: C-. You know, Miz can actually have a decent match when he gets away from the Figure Four stuff. Jimmy winning here makes the most sense given the story, even though Naomi has wound up meaning nothing in this entire story other than setting it up, making her one of the first Maguffins in WWE history.

Post break Naomi is walking in the back when Miz comes up to offer her a spot on MizTV tomorrow night. As usual, Naomi looks unsure.

Rollins says his issues with Cena are getting ridiculous. He has to step inside a cage with Cena again tonight because the Authority is gone and everything is crazy. Jericho wouldn't be here tonight running his mouth and then winding up in a hospital if the Authority was around and Rollins is going to teach Cena a lesson tonight.

The cage is lowered.

Seth Rollins vs. John Cena

In a cage of course with pins, submissions or escape. Rollins charges up the cage wall to start but John pulls him back down. The LOUD dueling Cena chants begin as Rollins drives him face first into the cage for two. Cena comes right back by catapulting him into the cage but Seth catches himself and climbs, only to be pulled back down onto the top rope.

A big bulldog drives Seth down for two and John climbs, only to have Mercury run interference. Rollins stops him from getting out the door and almost gets out himself but Cena powers him back in. Back up and they go up the corner, only to have Rollins sunset flip into a running buckle bomb for two as we take a break.

Back with Cena fighting back and knocking Mercury off the cage. The AA gets a very close two and Cena is stunned. He knocks Noble off the door and goes up top, only to have to fight out of a superplex attempt. Rollins gets knocked off the top and the Fameasser gets two. Another AA attempt is countered and the top rope knee to the face gets two for Rollins. Seth shouts that this is what Cena wanted and rams him face first into the cage. John does the same to him and both guys are down.

It's Cena up first but Mercury slams the door on his head for two more. The Curb Stomp misses and the STF goes on but he crawls over to the door. Cena has to pull him back in but the Stooges pulls the other way. John wins but Noble throws in the briefcase. Rollins doesn't need it though as he enziguris Cena down but Seth comes up limping. A briefcase shot is countered with a hard clothesline and both guys are down again.

Another AA is countered and the briefcase shot gets two. Seth climbs up and gets over the top but Cena catches him by the hair. A top rope AA is enough for...not a cover actually. Instead here's Lesnar with both guys down as Cole actually points out that Lesnar has business with Rollins after what happened at Night of Champions. Brock rolls Germans on Cena and plants him with an F5 as Rollins gets up. Heyman gets in and hands Brock the belt before offering Rollins his hand. Seth shakes it and we might have a new Paul Heyman guy. Rollins nails the Curb Stomp, collects his briefcase, and walks out for the win at 23:33.

Rating: B. This was far more about storytelling than anything else but that's exactly the right ending. See, this was a way to make Cena look good but protect Rollins at the same time. I was worried they would have Cena win and then do the Lesnar stuff, but out of all this, Cena doesn't lose face because of the interference and Rollins beats Cena in an entertaining match. What more can you ask for?

The announcers aren't sure if Heyman and Rollins were working together all along or if they just have common enemies.

Overall Rating: D+. The show showed some signs of getting better, but there's still so much stuff dragging this show down. I can dig Reigns having his first major win over Big Show, but there is zero reason to

build Rowan up just to have him get knocked out twice in a row to prove whatever point they're going for. Send Swagger out there if you have to, as Rusev has already destroyed him to the point where it's going to take time to salvage him. Or, just a thought here, IT'S FREAKING BIG SHOW AND HE DOESN'T NEED TO BE BUILT UP BY KNOCKING PEOPLE OUT!

The good thing here though is the future looks better. Cena looks like he has a good chance of beating Lesnar to set up the FAR more interesting Cena vs. Reigns title match at Wrestlemania. Ryback vs. Rusev has a lot more potential than Rusev squashing people that have no chance of beating him. I'm digging a lot of what's going on in WWE right now, but there are just so many stupid decisions dragging them down.

Results

Big Show/Luke Harper b. Dolph Ziggler/Erick Rowan – KO Punch to Rowan

Natalya/Alicia Fox b. Bella Twins – Sharpshooter to Brie

New Day b. Goldust/Stardust – Midnight Hour to Goldust

Kane b. Adam Rose – Chokeslam

Jimmy Uso b. Miz – Superfly Splash

Seth Rollins b. John Cena – Rollins escaped the cage

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book on the History of the Royal Rumble at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00PZ1GR7E>

And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for under \$4 at:

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

Finally, I'm holding a Holiday Special for my e-books: any two of them for just \$5. Check out the details here.

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2014/11/28/holiday-sale/>

Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: September 15, 2014

This week's episode of Raw was the final push to the Night of Champions PPV, meaning the whole show was really about one thing because that's all this pay per view is going to be about. The interesting thing about this show was the structure which we'll focus on as a whole later on. Let's get to it.

We opened with the big story of the week as Heyman came to the ring but Cena showed up, ready to fight Brock Lesnar. This led to Cena promising to back up his threat from last week, giving Heyman "until halftime" to produce Lesnar. Later in the show, Cena would lock Heyman in a room with Great Khali standing guard.

This was the interesting structure that I was talking about: when Cena said halftime, he meant halftime of the Monday Night Football game. Eventually, right around halftime of the game, Cena brought Heyman out and threatened to beat the tar out of him unless Lesnar showed up. Heyman bought time by saying that he had wanted Cena to be violent and aggressive, which could make him a Paul Heyman Guy. He begged Cena to embrace the hate one time and finally got Cena to shove him by talking about Cena's mom.

Lesnar came out immediately and circled the ring before actually getting in and suplexing Cena out to the floor. John got back in and had a fight with Lesnar, actually getting the better of him on the floor. This was intense, violent and exactly what the match on Sunday needed. It made me believe that Cena could win the match, even though I don't think there's a real chance of him getting the belt back, at least not yet.

Putting this on during halftime of the football game was the right idea, as WWE could have Hulk Hoga vs. Undertaker vs. Cena vs. Austin vs. Rock in a first blood Hell in a Cell Iron Man match and not beat Monday Night

Football. Why would WWE try to win a fight where they have no chance? Instead they made sure to get the biggest audience possible which was a good idea in theory, even though it doesn't seem to have played out that well in the numbers. That being said, I like that they're actually trying something different instead of doing the same stupid stuff over and over again.

We'll jump back to the stuff in between the opening and the showdown. The first match saw Jericho beat Kane in a nothing match after sending him face first into an exposed turnbuckle. Kane is worthless at this point and I have no interest in seeing him do anything on TV anymore. MAYBE have him talk but leave the wrestling to people that can still move. Jericho wasn't much better either and thankfully he's wrapping up his run this Sunday.

Roman Reigns promises to end Rollins tonight.

Jack Swagger made Bo Dallas tap out. Nothing to see here but you would think this might have been the pre-show match on Sunday.

Paige and Nikki Bella beat Brie Bella and AJ with Nikki destroying Brie for most of the match. This was just a way for the sisters to argue post match and Paige and AJ to do their "mind games", whatever they're supposed to be.

Bray did his stuff about Big Show before Show beat him by DQ. Wyatt got to show off a bit but Harper ran in for the save. This was another waste of Bray but at least it wasn't a clean pin. I have a bad feeling we're setting up yet another Big Show push that no one wants to see and a match that he has no chance of winning. I mean, Lesnar beat him in just over two minutes at the Royal Rumble. How can WWE believe that's something worth headlining another show?

Sheamus and the Usos beat Cesaro and the Dusts in your standard "take two feuds and call me in the morning" match. There isn't much to talk about with this one but it wasn't bad.

Orton promises to give Jericho the beating of his life on Sunday. That would be the third or fourth time he's done so.

Naomi beat Cameron after Cameron tried to cover Naomi when her face was on the mat. I really hope it's character schtick but I have a bad feeling it isn't. Just let Naomi be the athletic freak of the division like she should be instead of making her do this Total Divas nonsense.

Dolph Ziggler and R-Truth beat the Miz and Damien Sandow in the same match they had on Smackdown, minus most of the comedy and with Miz taking the fall instead of Sandow.

Rollins pretended to be a neanderthal like Reigns.

Reigns then beat Rollins in a good match that is going to happen again on Sunday. Why that's the case is beyond me but WWE hasn't made a ton of sense in a few weeks now.

The big closing segment was Mark Henry rallying America before his match with Rusev on Sunday. Again I'm assuming this is their way of giving up the night to the NFL, but they could have had Reigns vs. Rollins close the show instead of this. The viewership plummeted for this segment and I can't imagine anyone was surprised.

Raw this week had the same problems it's had for a long time now: there's clearly no effort other than with Cena vs. Lesnar. Not that that wrestlers aren't trying, but they're being given nothing to work with. Everything feels meaningless coming into Sunday outside of the main event and that's not good. This is the annual fall lull and it really doesn't make me care about the product. There's a house show this weekend five minutes from my house and a main event of Cena vs. Kane isn't enough to make me go. The show was watchable but nothing I'm going to remember by Friday.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of on the History of ECW Pay Per Views at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00LWSOTGK>

And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for under \$4 at:

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

Monday Night Raw – September 15, 2014: The New Battle Plan

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 15, 2014

Location: Cajundome, Lafayette, Louisiana

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

It's the go home show for Night of Champions and the World Champion is in the building. Last week a fired up John Cena called out Lesnar to appear here tonight, threatening Paul Heyman with violence if Brock didn't show up. It should be interesting to see Cena get his hands on Lesnar to put a seed of doubt in Brock for Sunday. Let's get to it.

We open with Heyman in the ring for his weekly address. He talks about Cena coming to the ring (complete with singing Cena's music) and waving to the fans before Brock comes out to kill. Cena cuts Paul off before he can get much further and has the black shorts on so you know he's serious. John asks where Brock is and Heyman starts panicking. If Brock isn't here then Heyman is taking Lesnar's beating.

Heyman gets some cheap pops from the crowd and talks a lot, seemingly stalling for time. He points to the entrance and Cena is ready but Heyman starts laughing. Brock flies on a private plane because he doesn't like anyone and the plane is delayed. He'll be here tonight but not until later. Heyman thinks Cena knew Brock was late though because he knows what's coming when Lesnar arrives.

Paul applauds Cena for being a hero and tries to leave but John grabs him by the neck. Cena doesn't buy what Heyman said and give Heyman until the show is half done to produce Lesnar. Heyman goes to leave but Cena cuts him off because he doesn't trust Paul. He's guaranteed these people a fight and grabs Heyman in a headlock to drag him to the back.

We look back at the Authority beating down Reigns to end last week's show.

After a break we see Cena taking Heyman into his dressing room and having Great Khali guard the door.

Kane vs. Chris Jericho

Jericho quickly low bridges Kane to the floor and nails a big dive. Kane pops up and uppercuts Jericho down before sending him into the steps. Back in and Jericho gets two off an enziguri and slaps on a cravate. That's fine with Kane who sends him out to the floor and we take a break. Back with Jericho hitting a middle rope missile dropkick but not being able to follow up. Kane knocks him right back down and puts on another chinlock. The sideslam gets two on Jericho but he dropkicks Kane out of midair on the clothesline attempt.

There's a top rope ax handle to put the big man in trouble. Jericho hammers away in the corner and gets two off a high cross body. A turnbuckle pad was pulled off somewhere in there. The Walls are easily countered but Jericho bulldogs him down. Kane blocks the Lionsault with a chokeslam attempt but Jericho sends him face first into the exposed buckle for the pin at 13:20.

Rating: D+. Kane is just slow at this point and it's getting to be a major problem. He isn't terrible yet but that seems to be the way its trending. There's only so much you can do when age catches up with you and unfortunately Kane's in ring abilities aren't going to be enough to make up for the change.

Heyman tries to call Lesnar.

We look back at Rusev attacking Henry on Smackdown. Some Olympians wish Henry luck in rallying America tonight.

Roman Reigns looks at Rollins turning on him a few months back and says this ends tonight.

Jack Swagger vs. Bo Dallas

Jack drives him into the corner to start but Bo fights back with right hands. Dallas takes him down and puts on a chinlock as the fans aren't sure what they want to chant. Jack fights up and is put right back in the chinlock. Another attempt at a comeback with a belly to back suplex works but Bo gets two more off a neckbreaker. Dallas misses a middle rope knee drop and Jack makes his real comeback with shoulders in the corner. The Vader Bomb doesn't get to launch as Dallas rolls to the apron and snaps Jack's neck across the top rope. Jack rolls through a sunset flip and puts on the Patriot Lock for the submission at 6:00.

Rating: C-. This was an interesting match and I'm surprised Swagger won clean. Bo tapping out is a questionable choice but his gimmick should be fine as he just has to ignore what happened and keep coming back with the same stuff over and over again. It looks like his major push is over though.

The announcers hype up the Network's schedule for the week.

We look back at the Springer segment from last week.

Nikki Bella/Paige vs. Brie Bella/AJ Lee

Brie's new music starts off with the words Brie Mode. So she's going to be drunk and dance a lot? Nikki starts with her sister but tags out before there's any contact like a heel should. Paige drives knees into Brie's ribs to take over and mocks AJ for not being able to make a tag. Brie gets in a quick rollup for two so Paige headbutts her down. A jawbreaker almost allows the hot tag but Nikki takes AJ down. The Rampaige pins Brie at 2:58.

Post match Nikki lays her sister out while the other girls have a skip off.

We look at Big Show stopping Bray Wyatt from making it to the ring on Smackdown.

Bray talks about David slaying Goliath but the giant still lives today in the form of misery and sorrow. Bray has been left with the burden of having to fix everything. He'll fix the Big Show. Follow the Buzzards.

Heyman tries to leave because he can't get cell reception. Khali takes the phone and breaks it before throwing Heyman back inside. He picks up the phone and tries to call someone to no avail. This was a waste of time.

Bray Wyatt vs. Big Show

Wyatt hammers away to start but Show shoves him into the corner. The chop is loaded up but Bray shoves him off, only to make Show chop him even harder. Bray hits some corner splashes and stops himself before charging into Show's boot. A kind of jawbreaker to the ankle and a clothesline have Big Show in trouble. Bray DDTs him for two and we hit the chinlock to slow things down. Show suplexes him way out and nails some clotheslines but Bray hits his cross body for two. Rowan gets on the apron but Bray is whipped into his minion. Big Show nails the Final Cut on Bray but Harper runs in for the DQ at 4:49.

Rating: D+. That could have been far worse. Bray losing by DQ is far better than him losing via pinfall for the sake of the annual "build up Big Show for a match he has no chance of winning" title shot and there was a legitimate chance he could have kicked out anyway. In theory this could be a match on Sunday as I don't think either guy has anything to do at the moment.

Show chokeslams Harper and Rowan post match, making Bray laugh.

Cesaro/Goldust/Stardust vs. Usos/Sheamus

That's quite the odd heel partnership. Sheamus and Goldust get things going with the threat of a Brogue Kick sending Goldust out to the floor. Stardust goes to check on him and meows for....luck I guess? Back in and Jey comes off the top to go after the arm but Goldust drives him into the corner for a tag to Stardust. Cesaro grabs Jey from the apron for ten forearms to the chest.

Jey shrugs it off and tags in Jimmy to clean house with a Samoan drop to Goldust. Off to Stardust with a shot to the head for two before throwing Jimmy to the floor. Back from a break with Cesaro dancing a jig and getting two off a double stomp to Jimmy. A gutwrench suplex puts Jimmy

down and it's off to Stardust for some shots in the corner. Back to Cesaro who poses a lot and puts on a front facelock.

Jimmy powers out and makes the hot tag to Sheamus who immediately cleans house. Cesaro gets caught in a series of forearms to the chest but Stardust makes the save with a rollup. Sheamus knocks both of them to the floor and hits the battering ram off the top. Back in and Sheamus Brogue Kicks Stardust but walks into the Neutralizer. Jimmy makes a last second save and superkicks Cesaro down, setting up the Superfly Splash from Jey for the pin at 13:10.

Rating: C. Nice six man here and there's nothing wrong with putting two feuds together into a single match. I'm not wild on Cesaro taking a fall but they back themselves into a corner with the booking here. There wasn't a good way to end the match with a pin but at least the action before the pin was good.

We look at Ambrose being put out of action last month.

Orton says he had to attack Jericho last week because Jericho said Orton has been handed everything in WWE. This Sunday, Jericho gets the beating of his life.

Cena thanks Khali and drags Heyman to the ring. He says produce the beast or be ready to lose your teeth. Heyman starts talking and says this is the beast that he's been trying to drag out of Cena but he knows Cena won't be ready on Sunday. Paul has been trying to get Cena to become the beast that can stop the beast of Brock but Cena just can't do it because of his inner code. Heyman says Cena can't be a bully because Cena can't even punch him in the face when Heyman deserves it. That means Cena will never be champion again because he can't beat Brock Lesnar.

John takes the mic from him and says if there was a human being that deserves to have his face rearranged, it's Heyman. Paul says do it and become a Paul Heyman Guy but Cena still won't do it. Cena is about to leave but Paul plays his ace and says Cena's mother raised a son with some testicular fortitude. That's enough for Cena as he shoves Heyman to the floor....and here's Brock.

Cena is all fired up and wants a piece but Lesnar calmly walks around the ring. He takes the belt off but just puts it over his shoulder. They start walking off but Brock hands the title to Heyman. Cena says let's go and Brock walks to the ring and gets on the apron. He actually gets in and the fight is on. Brock puts Cena down with a release German suplex and kicks him to the floor with ease. John gets up and knocks Brock to the floor. Brock is sent into the apron and barricade before they fight on the ground. Lesnar covers up until security drags them apart. The champion leaves and might have a busted up nose.

Cameron vs. Naomi

This is based on something that happened on Total Divas last night, which still happened at least two months ago as Daniel Bryan's neck surgery was announced on the same episode. Naomi gets tired of waiting on Cameron to look in her mirror and goes after her, only to be sent to the floor when trying her stupid hip shake headscissors. Cameron gets two (after trying to cover Naomi with her face down) off a snap suplex before cranking on Naomi's arms. Back up and Naomi grabs a sunset flip before putting on a freaky looking leg choke for the submission at 4:32.

Rating: D. The bad is almost all on Naomi here as she can't even cover someone right. Do you have any idea how hard it is to not be able to cover someone the right way? Kamala used to do that with the gimmick of being a savage that didn't know what he was doing. The problem is Cameron is supposed to be a competent wrestler and looks that dumb in the process.

Yeah it might be character, but when her development is on Total Divas and consists of dancing, looking at a camera and talking about "chingle chingle" (the scene where Bryan tries to have a conversation with her is hysterical), it's hard to buy it as being put on. Naomi was trying here and has something with that choke though.

Dolph Ziggler/R-Ziggler vs. Miz/Damien Mizdow

They did this on Smackdown already as R-Truth is playing Dolph's stunt double, down to the same gear and moveset. The joke though is no one can tell them apart (JBL: "Like the Beverly Brothers!") Old school fans will

get why that's funny) and the announcers play it seriously. Ziggler works on Sandow to start before it's off to Truth for stereo elbows.

Truth gets taken down by Miz and it's off to Mizdow as the announcers can't tell them apart either. Truth finally escapes Miz and makes the diving tag to Ziggler. Miz gets two off a quick rollup but gets caught in the Fameasser for two. Everything breaks down and Miz hits his partner, allowing Dolph to hit the Zig Zag for the pin at 5:08. Oddly enough Lawler was cheering for Miz and Mizdow.

Rating: D. This is another reason why I regret watching Smackdown. Not only did they do this EXACT SAME JOKE over there, but the idea was fresher and better because it was the first time. It also helped that Sandow took the pin instead of Miz, meaning it didn't affect the title match on Sunday. I'm hoping Miz wins the title as I'm liking this Hollywood star character.

Rollins won't take anything away from Reigns but Roman is nothing without him. He calls Reigns a neanderthal and imitates Roman walking on his knuckles like a gorilla. Reigns is part gorilla, part Samoan and part rhinoceros. A rhinoceros is one of the most powerful animals in the world but they're not that smart. Tonight Rollins is going to show Reigns why he led the Shield.

Roman Reigns vs. Seth Rollins

Don't these two already have a match at Night of Champions? Seth speeds things up to start and snaps Roman's throat across the top rope. A hard clothesline sends Rollins running to the floor but Roman catches him trying to come back in and sends him face first onto the concrete. Back in and another shot puts Rollins on the floor as Reigns is dominating. Rollins is thrown over the announcers' table and we take a break. Back with Reigns missing the Apron Kick and getting caught by a suicide dive into the barricade.

Reigns quickly fights back and nails him in the face before hitting the Apron Kick. The Superman Punch looks to set up the spear but Seth leapfrogs him and nails a low superkick for two. Back up and Seth tries what looks like a Pedigree off the top but gets countered into a slow

motion backdrop, only to have Rollins catch him in an impressive running buckle bomb across the ring for two more. Reigns gets back up, ducks a charge and hits the spear for the pin at 11:23.

Rating: B-. The match was good but why in the world do you have this match in full with a clean ending before they have the same match six days later? That's some very odd booking and a sign that they don't have enough people to fill in a three hour show every week. This is even worse when you consider how many people they have on the roster but how few they put any effort into.

We recap Cena vs. Lesnar as 11pm passes.

It's time for Henry to rally America before his match on Sunday. He talks about having a second chance to represent the United States after he was injured at the Olympics. For all the fans waving the American flag, he can't let you down. Henry says Lana couldn't make all her statements without living in America, so here are Lana and Rusev to cut him off. Lana says American intelligence is dropping faster than President Obama's approval ratings.

She brings up Henry competing in the 1992 Olympic Games but Russia actually won that year. We get a picture of that year's winner and Lana goes on about how Henry fakes his injury in 1996 to avoid being defeated again. Henry tries the Pledge of Allegiance but Rusev comes in for the brawl. Rusev kicks him down but Henry powers out of the Accolade and chokebombs the Russian. Old Glory is waved to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. Very strange choices in the last twenty minutes aside, this was an interesting episode. It seemed like they were trying to book around Monday Night Football as Cena kept using the word halftime when talking about Heyman. I wasn't looking at the clock, but I would bet that the segment took place during halftime of the football game. If that's true, it's one of the smartest things WWE has done in a long time.

WWE cannot contend with the NFL, so don't try to. Don't put some big moment at the beginning of the show, because fans are going to pick the football every time due to lesser interest, the ton of recaps and the bunch of other shows you can see the segment on again during the week. By

putting it on when there's no choice to be made, you ensure the far bigger audience is available. That's actually thinking for a change instead of just ramming your head into a wall and being surprised when the wall doesn't move.

The ending segment was a very odd choice, but I'd assume it's the same mentality: why try to fight the NFL with a big segment when it's going to be wasted? As I'm writing this, the game is a tie in the fourth quarter so it looks like WWE is playing it smart. The show was good overall and I'm liking some of the stuff I'm seeing anymore. I'm still leaning towards Lesnar on Sunday, but there's actual doubt there now and that was the goal of this show. Good stuff tonight with a lot of the dumb being cut out and replaced with entertainment.

Results

Chris Jericho b. Kane – Rollup

Jack Swagger b. Bo Dallas – Patriot Lock

Nikki Bella/Paige b. Brie Bella/AJ Lee – Rampaige to Brie

Big Show b. Bray Wyatt via DQ when Luke Harper interfered

Sheamus/Usos b. Stardust/Goldust/Cesaro – Superfly Splash to Cesaro

Naomi b. Cameron – Leg choke

Roman Reigns b. Seth Rollins – Spear

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of on the History of ECW Pay Per Views at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00LWSOTGK>

And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for under \$4 at:

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

Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: September 8, 2014

This was a special episode billed as the season premiere. For those of you new to wrestling, that would be WWE code for “AHHH!!! MONDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL IS BACK AND OUR SHOW SUCKS!!!” WWE had a few weapons to fight the NFL, including Jericho vs. Wyatt in a cage, Orton vs. Reigns II and Jerry Springer, because Vince continues to be out of touch with reality. Let’s get to it.

We opened with a very good cage match between Wyatt and Jericho with Jericho hitting a huge dive off the top of the cage (and possibly breaking his toe in the process) for the big spot. He also tweaked his knee in the process though, allowing Bray to pound on it enough to escape. This was a better match than I was expecting and seems to completely write off the feud. Bray got to look evil and won almost entirely clean, save for the Family blocking Jericho from climbing down at one point. Bray needs to move up a notch with his next feud and a midcard title might be just the ticket.

Orton asked for and received permission to do something evil tonight. This would wind up being attacking Jericho in the trainer’s room, likely setting up a placeholder match for both guys at Night of Champions.

Time for the WWE’s favorite comic idea: fake pictures of a wrestler. This is their jab at the massive celebrity photo leak ordeal from a few weeks ago, because nothing makes me want to cheer someone more than mocking crime. The idea was Ziggler had photos of Miz, including Miz in a facial mask and getting his chest shaved. After Miz and Sandow came out for a brawl, Ziggler showed us the last one: Sandow spray tanning a less than clothed Miz. The segment probably made Vince laugh but I just don’t get it. They’re not offensively bad or anything but the joke doesn’t get more than the occasional chuckle from me.

Paige and AJ Lee beat Natalya/Rosa Mendes in the first Total Divas commercial of the week. The idea here is neither team could get along, but at the end of the day Rosa just isn't very good and it caught up with her team. Apparently Natalya has taken Rosa under her wing, even though this story should have taken place about four months ago under the Total Divas timeline and we're just now hearing about it. AJ and Paige both kissed the title belt post match.

Next up was the big segment of the week with Cena talking about how awesome he was before Heyman interrupted and tried to turn John to the dark side, saying it was the only way Cena could beat Lesnar. Paul explained that if Cena finally told the fans to shut up when they were booing him and saying CENA SUCKS that he would be able to take Lesnar out and get his title back. Cena teased it for a bit before going off on Heyman, talking about how he would never give up on what he believed in. He capped it off by telling Heyman to have Lesnar come here next week for a fight, or Cena will beat on Heyman instead.

This was a fifteen or twenty minute back for forth segment between two guys that are born to talk on a mic. The whole thing worked perfectly and Cena finally going toe to toe with Lesnar again next week is going to rock. They've done a good job of making me want to see Cena try his luck against Lesnar again, but the interesting part is going to be Cena dealing with better than his best not being good enough to stop Lesnar. They were getting close to this with Bray at Wrestlemania but it didn't really go anywhere. This has potential though as Cena tries to define his legacy before he finally rides off.

Cesaro cost Sheamus a match against Rollins. There isn't much to see here and the match wasn't all that good. Cesaro beat Sheamus up post match to cap things off. It's nothing new but this is one of the better builds they've had to a midcard title match in a long time. Unfortunately they've run this match so many times before that I don't have much of an interest in this showdown. It's the danger of running the same matches over and over again on TV.

Lana and Rusev did their thing. Nothing to see here, save for Lana of course.

Now we got to one of my favorite parts of the show: an NXT showcase match with Adrian Neville and Sami Zayn beating Tyler Breeze and Tyson Kidd. The interesting thing here was the commentary, as the announcers spent the entire five minute match hyping up the Takeover special and treating this like the only thing that mattered in the world. I know they can't do that all the time but it was very nice for a change. Neville blew the crowd up with the Red Arrow for the pin on Breeze.

The stupid segment of the night was the Jerry Springer summit with the Bellas. This was basically a way to show clips from Total Divas and have the Bellas' parents and brother talk about how horrible this fight was. The girls fought and Springer got taken down in the brawl. Here's the good part though: this was the ONLY Bellas segment of the night and it made all the difference in the world. If they have to do this stupid story then so be it, but don't make me sit through five segments a week. I can live with something like this where they're out there like ten minutes total.

The Dusts beat Los Matadores in a nothing match but the Usos took them out post match.

Adam Rose beat Titus O'Neil. The story here was the Bunny, who superkicked Slater and hit a Superfly Splash after the match. I could go for an unmasking story.

Orton and Reigns had a good twenty minute match until Kane and Rollins came in for the DQ. There isn't much to say about the match as a lot of it was the same as Summerslam, meaning it was good stuff. I like the booking though as there's no need to have Orton lose clean twice in a row and Reigns already has the big win over Randy so there's no need to do it again.

Post match Rollins and Kane had the cage lowered (with Rollins nearly getting stabbed by one of the poles in a genuinely scary moment) and Reigns, after fighting back for a bit, taking the Curb Stomp on a chair to end the show. This is the kind of adversity Reigns needs to face on his rise. It's ok to have him get beaten down as long as he comes back and wins the big match in the end.

Raw this week was WAY easier to sit through as they kept the Bellas stuff contained to a single segment. That's been the biggest complaint in the last few weeks and the show was much better once that was solved. The show wasn't the best in the world, but after things have been this boring for so long, I'll gladly take an ok show.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of on the History of ECW Pay Per Views at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00LWSOTGK>

And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for under \$4 at:

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

Monday Night Raw – September 8, 2014: Two Bellas, A Bunny And A Springer Walk Into A Season Premiere

Monday Night Raw

Date: September 8, 2014

Location: Baltimore Arena, Baltimore, Maryland

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

It's the season premiere (code for a gimmick name to try and fight off Monday Night Football) and the show is actually kind of stacked. We have

Jericho vs. Wyatt inside a cage and Orton vs. Reigns II, but there's something else with an even bigger hype: Jerry Springer's intervention with the Bellas, because WWE thinks it's 1998. Let's get to it.

The cage is lowered to open the show.

We get a Season Premiere video with the focus on Jerry Springer and then the two big matches.

Chris Jericho vs. Bray Wyatt

In a cage and you win by pinfall, submission or escape. Bray says the town's name again. Jericho hammers him down to start and catapults Bray throat before getting two off an enziguri. They slug it out in the corner but Bray pulls Jericho off the top to prevent an escape. A top rope shot to the head puts Bray down but Bray pops up and send shim into the cage. Bray splashes him against the cage and we take a break.

Back with Bray running Jericho over for two. He tries to climb but gets taken down in an electric chair drop. They slug it out with Jericho getting the better of it and taking Wyatt down with a bulldog. The Lionsault looks to set up the Walls but Bray kicks him off. Jericho sends him into the cage and dropkicks Wyatt's head into the steel. Bray stops another escape attempt and they slug it out on the top rope until Wyatt superplexes him down.

Both guys are on the mat but Bray Spiders up and crawls for the door, only to get caught by the legs. Bray kicks him away again and hits a release Rock Bottom for two. He tries a catapult into the cage but Jericho catches himself on the ropes and tries to climb. Bray catches him again and hammers away on the top rope before nailing a top rope hurricanrana.

Jericho goes to the top of the cage but the Wyatts get in his way. Instead he goes back up and dives onto Bray but comes up holding his knee. Chris takes his knee brace and pad down but can barely get over to the door. Bray tries a charge but Jericho low bridges him into the steel. He's still able to stop Jericho with shots to (the wrong) knee. They're on top of each other half out of the cage and elbowing each other in the

head. Bray finally starts hitting the correct knee and crawls over Jericho to escape at 17:00.

Rating: B. I was digging this one and it was almost all Bray's work winning it. The Wyatts stopping the win was fine and Jericho caused the knee injury himself. The ending worked quite well and made sense so the whole thing was on. I'm assuming the knee injury writes Jericho off TV and onto his concert tour.

Bray slams the cage door onto Jericho's knee to further the damage. He crushes it against the steps and takes him back inside for Sister Abigail.

Rollins and Kane are very excited about what they just saw when HHH and Orton come in. HHH wants to do something special tonight so Orton offers to do something to Orton that makes what happened to Ambrose look like a day at Sunday School. HHH gives him permission to do something.

Here's Dolph Ziggler with something to say. Cole confirms Miz vs. Ziggler for Night of Champions. Ziggler talks about how big of a week it was in Hollywood last week with the release of all the personal photos. This gives us one of WWE's favorite comic tropes: wacky wrestling photos!.

We get stuff like Miz wearing a facial mask and shaving his chest (JBL: "So who was taking the pictures?") but Miz and Sandow interrupt. Miz rants about the invasion of privacy, with Sandow mimicking his hand gestures almost perfectly. They threaten to go after Ziggler so Dolph says she might as well show the last photo: Sandow tanning a less than clothed Miz. Sandow comes in and gets dropkicked and Zig Zagged while Miz walks away.

Paige/AJ Lee vs. Natalya/Rosa Mendes

Natalya takes Paige down to the mat to start and the Total Divas hit a double suplex on the Canadian. The idea here is that Natalya is mentoring Rosa, which I'm sure you know about after watching Total Divas last night. Pay no attention to the fact that the story would have started just after Wrestlemania but we're just hearing about it now. Paige comes back on Rosa because she's Rosa but misses a legdrop. Rosa won't tag so

Paige drives knees into her ribs. AJ grabs Paige's hair for a tag and puts on the Black Widow to make Rosa tap at 2:36.

Post match the winners take turns kissing the Divas Title until AJ skips off.

We look back at the cage match and its aftermath.

Jericho is getting his knee looked at when Orton attacks him. "It's the season premiere!"

Here's Heyman for his weekly speech. He talks about walking through the valley of the Cenation, but he fears no thuganomics because he's the advocate for Brock Lesnar. Heyman goes into his usual about Cena so here's John to respond. The pose he makes on the stage with his hands on his hips really does make him look like a superhero.

Cena says that if Heyman wants to say something to his face, he's right here. Heyman wants to give Cena some inside information: how to beat Brock Lesnar at Night of Champions. Cena says he knows how to do that already and it's because of three simple words. Lesnar beat the Undertaker at Wrestlemania and we haven't heard from him in six months. Then Lesnar beat Cena at Summerslam but Cena was ready to fight again. His three words are never give up and he hands Heyman a towel saying just that.

Heyman laughs and asks the fans if Cena just can't help doing himself. He throws the towel down and says that's Cena's biggest problem: he lives to be John Cena. John is the kid that waits to come to the live events and chant LET'S GO CENA. But when Lesnar steps into the ring, he doesn't hear anyone but the referee, Heyman, and his latest victim.

Paul has a gift for Cena tonight and tells him how to survive Lesnar: give in. Listen to those fans that chant CENA SUCKS and there's no reason to fight anymore. Doesn't Cena want to give in to that hatred when a fat unemployed man tells Cena that he sucks? Just one time doesn't he want to tell them to shut up. Heyman offers to help Cena tell them to shut up and wants him to bust a rap on the fans.

Heyman demonstrates with some yo yo yoing and gets down on his knees to beg Cena to do it one time. He doesn't need to sell his soul to the devil. All Cena has to do is forget this hustle loyalty and respect idea and then he can be the one that beat the 1 in 21-1. Or he can just be one of many victims that fell at Lesnar's hands. Heyman gets in Cena's face and says he believes in him, but Lesnar says Cena just doesn't have it in him.

Cena actually goes to the ropes like Heyman wanted him to but comes back in. The dueling chants begin but Cena tells Heyman to shut up. Cena talks about how he's not going to drop down to Heyman's level to pop the fans in the second row and give them a reason to have a good laugh and then run back to the internet to tell Cena how much he sucks. Heyman lives in a world of "eat sleep conquer repeat" and he'd stab Lesnar in the back to get a chance to get himself forward.

Cena admits that Heyman is intelligence but he has no idea what it's like to live a life with meaning. John's world is "Eat, sleep, be John Cena, repeat" because that's what he was born to be. He doesn't want to change even if he could and loves to be the guy that makes that kid right there do his homework early so he can come here and cheer.

Cena does like being the guy the fathers come up to and say they don't like him but thanks for doing right by his kid. He likes being the guy that a Make-A-Wish kid wants to spend the day with. He likes being the guy that gets to meet Purple Heart recipients on some Friday night who tell him that Cena inspires him and hands Cena the Purple Heart.

Now Heyman wants Cena to throw all that away to win one match. Paul backs off but Cena says this is what Heyman must love. This is the chance to get all that rage and hatred out of John Cena. John isn't going to beat up Heyman here because it's not worth it, but he'll give Heyman one week to produce Lesnar for a fight. But if Lesnar wants another week off and let Heyman do his business for him then Cena is going to fight Heyman himself. Awesome exchange between two masters here.

Sheamus vs. Seth Rollins

Non-title. Sheamus elbows Rollins out to the floor where Rollins picks up

the briefcase and lays it in the corner. Back in and a knee lift and suplex get two for Sheamus. The rolling fireman's carry sets up a clothesline to put Rollins on the floor but here's Cesaro for a distraction as we take a break.

Back with Rollins holding a chinlock before Sheamus fights up with elbows to the ribs. He tries the top rope shoulder but only hits mat, allowing Rollins to put the hold back on. This time Sheamus fights to his feet and drops Rollins onto his back for another escape. A tilt-a-whirl powerslam gets two for Sheamus but Cesaro picks up the US Title for another distraction. Seth grabs a rollup for two and walks into another powerslam. Now Cesaro gets up on the apron, allowing Rollins to drive him into the buckle. The Curb Stomp gets the pin on Sheamus at 10:00.

Rating: C-. The Curb Stomp didn't look good at the end but at least the win wasn't clean. Sheamus vs. Cesaro is actually getting a build this time instead of just throwing it out there for a match. The problem is we've seen it so many times that it's harder to care again. At least they're getting a big stage for it.

Post match Cesaro does Sheamus' pose and Neutralizes him.

We recap Henry and Rusev from last week.

Here are Lana and Rusev to make fun of the national anthem before having the Russian version played.

Video on NXT Takeover II.

Sami Zayn/Adrian Neville vs. Tyson Kidd/Tyler Breeze

Well this is a surprise. Sami snaps off some armdrags on Breeze to start before spinning him into an armbar. It's off to Kidd for a chinlock before Breeze comes in with a series of forearm. A neckbreaker gets two on Sami and it's back to Tyson for another chinlock. Sami jawbreaks his way to freedom and spins over for a hot tag to Neville.

The fans don't seem to care that much but Neville's rapid fire kicks wake them up a bit. A standing shooting star gets two and Kidd is sent to the floor for a big dive from Sami. Neville flips forward twice in a row and

kicks Breeze in the head, setting up the Red Arrow for the pin on Breeze at 4:23.

Rating: C. Just a showcase match here to get people to watch on Thursday. No one really knew who these people were but the fans waking up for the offense from Neville is a good sign. I got to see Sami at a live event a few years back and he did the exact same thing. That's the sign of talent and it was on display here.

Here's Stephanie to talk about her history in this arena. She even fought her father in this building about ten years ago, but they've since made up. Now it's time to bring the Bellas back together and there's one man that could do just that. The fans chant for Jerry and here's Springer himself. Springer recaps the Bella drama and brings out both girls for the big talk.

Brie blames Nikki for all the problems and uses the "died in the womb line" again, drawing the same dead silence it got the first time. Nikki talks about how tired she is of being a second class sister and brags about her show having such good ratings. Brie talks about how this started at Summerslam but Springer shows us a montage of them having very stupid arguments over petty things on Total Divas.

Nikki blames Brie for their dad leaving and we get quick videos from the parents saying they never knew Nikki was this unhappy. Brie tries to bring this back to wrestling stuff but drags it down again by saying she has their brother JJ in their corner. JJ is here of course (billed as JJ Garcia after Jerry called him JJ Bella) and has to come out to the Total Divas song. JJ tells Nikki to stop acting like a victim and the brawl is on. Nikki accidentally slaps JJ so Brie spears her down. The Bellas, Springer and Stephanie get in a big pileup as this just keeps going. Referees break it up and Springer is taken out on a stretcher.

Goldust/Stardust vs. Los Matadores

Stardust takes Primo into the corner to start but the masked man knocks him outside. The Dusts tease taking a walk and get caught with a big double dive. Back inside and Goldust throws Diego into the corner before tagging in Stardust for Dark Matter and the pin at 2:10.

The Usos jump the Dusts on the stage, sending the golden ones running.

We get a tribute to Joan Rivers.

Adam Rose vs. Titus O'Neil

The guys slug it out in the ring as the camera stays on the bunny. Titus throws Rose down but goes after the Bunny who wants to fight. Slater misses a dive and gets superkicked by the Bunny, allowing Rose to hit the Party Foul for the pin at 1:20.

The Bunny hits a Superfly Splash for good measure. Cole and JBL are STUNNED.

Roman Reigns has the antidote for the Viper and holds up his fist.

Video on Lesnar's dominance of Cena.

Lesnar will be on Raw next week.

Randy Orton vs. Roman Reigns

This actually gets big match intros. Reigns punches him to the floor to start but Randy sends him face first into the steps for two. A quick suplex gets the same for Roman and he runs Orton over with a clothesline. Orton bails back to the floor and we take a break. Back with Orton holding Reigns in a chinlock before taking it outside again. Reigns fights back and rams him back first into the apron and barricade.

They head to the apron with Randy sending him into the buckle and nailing a superplex for two. Back with Reigns fighting out of a chinlock and nailing a Samoan drop for two. He hits the ropes but charges into a powerslam to give Orton a near fall of his own. The Elevated DDT is countered into the Apron Boot and the jumping clothesline gets two. Orton comes back with the backbreaker for the same but charges into a boot.

Reigns dives into another powerslam for another two and the second attempt at the Elevated DDT connects. The RKO is countered though and Roman nails a Superman Punch out of nowhere. Reigns can't cover though so Orton calls out Kane and Rollins who bring security with them for the DQ

at 20:24.

Rating: B. Nice long main event here and I kind of like the non-finish for a change. Reigns has already beaten Orton clean so there's no need to see him do it again. The opposite is true for Orton as he has no need to lose twice in a row to Reigns. Also this helps to set up Rollins vs. Reigns at Night of Champions, though I'm not sure what Orton does at the show.

The guards are actually tech guys who lower the cage and lock it into place. Reigns fights back though and cleans house, leaving him alone with Orton and a chair. Rollins pulls a Jericho and dives off the top of the cage to take out Reigns but he might have hit the chair as well. Kane gets back in and sends Roman into the cage a few times before planting him with a chokeslam. Orton gets the chair and destroys Reigns while shouting that it isn't Roman's day. Rollins puts Reigns' head on the chair and says that he made Roman. A Curb Stomp onto the chair ends the show.

Overall Rating: C+. The show wasn't great but this was a HUGE improvement over last week's mess. First and foremost, they kept the Bellas to ONE segment instead of the five or so from last week. The Springer stuff was a waste of time but at least it was short. The main event felt big and the NXT guys were a nice treat. You couple that with a good cage match and the show was much easier to sit through. It wasn't a great show or anything and cutting out an hour would have helped, but it's good enough.

Results

Bray Wyatt b. Chris Jericho – Wyatt escaped the cage

Paige/AJ Lee b. Natalya/Rosa Mendes – Black Widow to Mendes

Seth Rollins b. Sheamus – Curb Stomp

Sami Zayn/Adrian Neville b. Tyler Breeze/Tyson Kidd – Red Arrow to Breeze

Goldust/Stardust b. Los Matadores – Dark Matter to Diego

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of on

the History of ECW Pay Per Views at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00LWSOTGK>

And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for under \$4 at:

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

Adam Rose b. Titus O'Neil – Party Foul

Roman Reigns b. Randy Orton via DQ when Kane and Seth Rollins interfered

Checked Out Some WWE Network Specials

And got some mixed results. First up was the Cena vs. Lesnar prelude. This was good but we've seen about half of it on Raw already. It runs 28 minutes and has one really good moment.

Heyman: "Let me explain to you what it means for Brock Lesnar to beat the Undertaker at Wrestlemania. Let's say you've been elected President of the United States. WOW! What an honor! You're the most powerful man in the world....but about forty people have done that. It's a great accomplishment yes, but it's not exclusive.

Then let's say one day you run for God and actually win. Well there's only been one being to hold that position. Brock Lesnar did that."

It's not bad but it would be much better for someone who hasn't seen any WWE TV in the last month and wasn't around in 2002.

Next up was the main event: the Shield's Journey to Summerslam. I had a blast with this and it's an awesome documentary. It covers each guy individually and shows their paths to the WWE, even showing ROH, CZW and Dragon Gate USA clips. Where else are you going to see that in something from WWE? It's really entertaining and interesting and made me want to see these three succeed. The fact that they're all about 28 years old and this polished is incredible. It runs just under an hour and it's more than worth checking out.

Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: August 18, 2014

WWE is coming off the pretty awesome Summerslam pay per view and the question now is where do we go from here. Night of Champions is in five weeks and in theory we're coming up on Brock vs. Cena III. It's hard to say how Cena is going to do, but there's a chance that Cena is going to get the title back already and I can see why they would go that route. Let's get to it.

In what almost has to be a rib, Stephanie (again looking gorgeous in jeans and a tight t-shirt) started the show to talk about Brie Bella. This led to Stephanie bringing out Nikki Bella to explain why she turned on her sister. It's exactly what you would expect: she was angry at Brie for making everything about herself and abandoning her. Brie came out and did the big heartfelt plea to her sister and got slapped in the face for her efforts. In case you didn't get this, don't worry as this would air FOUR TIMES on Monday.

Here's the thing and I've said it several times before: the

majority of the fans do not care about the Bellas fighting over whatever their issue is. The match is going to be a disaster and the promos are going to be even worse, but the worst part is that this opened the show. With everything else that happened at Summerslam, this is what opened Monday Night Raw. Is it any shock that the ratings were down this week?

Big Show/Mark Henry beat the Wyatt Family in a pretty good power match. Erick Rowan slammed Big Show in a very impressive power display. Other than that this was the usual back and forth match that you would expect with Henry World's Strongest Slamming Rowan for the pin. In theory this sets up the giants vs. the Usos and eventually Henry vs. Big Show because that's how tag team wrestling works.

Ric Flair had a cameo with Dolph Ziggler. As long as that's the extent of their association, I'm fine.

Seth Rollins was bragging about winning the lumberjack match but Dean Ambrose poured a bucket of ice water over his head. Ambrose: "It's for charity!" A brawl ensued but didn't go anywhere. After the break, the Authority made Rollins vs. Ambrose again for tonight with the fans picking the stipulations.

AJ cost Paige a win over Natalya (now wearing shorts) because that's the only thing the writers know how to do.

The big segment of the show was HHH bringing out Lesnar and Heyman to present Brock with the new WWE World Title belt. Heyman's promo was the usual awesome performance where he talked about Cena being a tough guy and THE guy for the last ten years, only to have him lose to Brock on Sunday. Lesnar conquered Brock Lesnar just like he should have done. Nothing much to say here but it was as good as you would expect it to be.

The Miz beat Dolph Ziggler via countout in a rematch for the Intercontinental Title. This seems to set up another match

between them, but it's nothing I want to see again.

Cesaro beat Jack Swagger in a short but intense match. The idea here is that Swagger is disappointing himself after his loss on Sunday. Bo Dallas came out post match and told Swagger to Bo-Lieve. I can dig Swagger vs. Dallas.

Jericho is still talking about Wyatt. A third match with a gimmick wouldn't be the worst idea in the world.

RVD/Reigns/Sheamus beat Ryback/Axel/Orton. Again it seems like we're setting up Orton vs. Reigns II with a gimmick and that's not the worst idea in the world. Reigns didn't get the pin for some reason, which you would think would be the right idea on a match like this. The only interesting thing in the match was Ryback getting a big hometown pop. I'd still love to see him get a nice push as a face again.

Orton threatened Flair after a break. Please, no more Flair.

Bray Wyatt declared himself the face of salvation.

Goldust/Stardust beat the Usos in a non-title match. Methinks we're getting a multi-team match in the future.

Lana and Rusev talked and Mark Henry made the save. It's not a good sign that they have Henry in two stories at the same time.

The main event was Ambrose vs. Rollins II in a falls count anywhere match. This was a great brawl with both guys beating the tar out of each other and a bunch of near falls. There was an insane spot with Rollins powerbombing Ambrose onto a pile of chairs for two. Kane interfered because that's what he does anymore and cost Ambrose the match. It ended with Rollins hitting a Curb Stomp onto a conveniently placed stack of cinder blocks. The story after the show ended has Ambrose running away from medics and disappearing. It's a way to let him make a movie because that's more important than a hot feud

on WWE TV.

Raw was a good but not great show as they set up some stuff for the next rematch PPV with gimmicks attached. Lesnar and Heyman were as awesome as ever and Heyman can more than carry the act in Lesnar's absence. The return of Cena next week should be interesting and we get to hear some great promos along the way. This wasn't the best followup show in the world but the fall looks so much better than last years.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of on the History of ECW Pay Per Views at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

And check out my Amazon author page with wrestling books for under \$4 at: