

# Smackdown – December 26, 2002: He's Got Guys

## Smackdown

Date: December 26, 2002

Location: Tulsa Convention Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

It's the final show of the year as we're getting ready to start the build towards the Royal Rumble. We also have Brock Lesnar vs. Paul Heyman/Big Show/Kurt Angle in a feud that is likely to lead to a major feud down the line, though Lesnar is likely going to need some help along the way. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's Angle heel turn and the announcement of Angle vs. Big Show for the title this week.

Opening sequence.

Here's Stephanie, who seems to be a face again, to open the show. She's not going to lie to us and say the World Title match is going to happen because it's been canceled. Last week, after Smackdown went off the air, Brock did something to Angle and now Kurt is out of action for a good while, potentially all the way until the Rumble. She won't tell us what happened but she'll show us later tonight. Since there's no reason given for the delay, here's Big Show to interrupt.

He's not happy with the idea of waiting until Royal Rumble but he's even more annoyed at the fact that Stephanie didn't name him #1 contender. She was just about to make that match though, RIGHT? Show tries to intimidate her and for once, Stephanie actually sounds scared as she threatens to suspend him. He'll have a chance to be #1 contender when he faces Chris Benoit in the main event. That's not cool with Show either but here's Benoit to interrupt. Benoit says he'll break Show's neck later tonight but Show plays the size card. That just earns him a low blow and Benoit leaves with a smile on his face.

## Crash vs. Bill DeMott

DeMott is now all mean and angry, which the announcers tell you as often as they can. He works on Crash's arm before the match and

sends it into the post but of course the referee starts the match anyway. DeMott slaps on an armbar as Tazz praises his psychology. A powerbomb and the moonsault finish Crash in a hurry.

Al Wilson and Dawn Marie exchange gifts: a bottle of Viagra and a camera. Both are for the honeymoon. Again: why is this such a bad thing for Al? Can I get some clarification on that?

Here are Matt Hardy, who was MVP in the 1999 No Mercy ladder match and always sticks to his New Year's resolution, and a badly damaged Shannon Moore with something to say. They want to talk about something destroying WWE: Brock Lesnar. After that belly to belly injured Moore last week, Shannon didn't stop but someone must stop Lesnar. Next week, Hardy wants Brock one on one and has a special plan for him. Matt beats Shannon down, though it feels like a lesson instead of a turn.

Heyman and Angle arrive with the latter on crutches and with a big cast around his leg.

#### Tag Team Titles: Los Guerreros vs. Edge/Billy Kidman

Edge and Kidman, who seems to get a shot at these titles every other week, are challenging. Kidman hiptosses both champs to start before snapping off a headscissors on Chavo. The champs take over with some chicanery and it's Kidman in early trouble. Eddie's slingshot hilo connects but so does an enziguri, allowing the tag to Edge. A double missile dropkick puts both champs down and a flapjack to Chavo makes things even worse.

As usual though, Eddie is smart enough to go after the bad knee but Kidman breaks up the Lasso From El Paso. A quick spear gets two on Eddie and the champs tease leaving, only to have the referee say a countout will give us new champions. Back from a break with Edge missing a charge into the corner to put the champs back in control. Chavo's chinlock works as well as any other chinlock (aside from Kevin Owens' of course) and the Edge-0-Matic gets Edge out of trouble.

A double flapjack really gets him out of trouble and it's off to Kidman, who is suplexed down almost immediately. Eddie misses the Frog Splash and Kidman drops the shooting star on Chavo, only to have Eddie pull the referee out for the DQ. And again never mind as the referee is restarting this as a No DQ match.

Chavo is in trouble to start the second fall but Eddie breaks up another shooting star attempt. Edge hits Chavo with the belt (which Chavo brought in) for two and heads to the apron for a tag for some reason. Cue A-Train with the backbreaker on Edge though, allowing Eddie to Frog Splash Kidman to retain.

**Rating:** B. Gah they were rolling here until the A-Train interference. Edge vs. A-Train isn't interesting but these four going on for nearly twenty minutes certainly was with Los Guerreros' cheating not working for a change. I was digging this match as Kidman continues to show that cruiserweights are more than capable of hanging with the big guys, making the division kind of a waste of time.

Here's the footage from after last week's Smackdown. Angle talks trash and beat on Brock bit more until Lesnar fought back and beat up Kurt and Big Show. Kurt took a chair to the head and back to back F5's on the floor with his knee hitting the post both times. Trainers came out but Lesnar dropped Angle's knee onto the barricade just to be sure. This would be a way to write Angle off for knee surgery, which makes you wonder why they put the title on him in the first place. Then again, an injured Angle is probably worth more than Big Show at this point.

Back from a break with Heyman in the ring to blame Stephanie for Kurt's injuries. This brings out Angle on crutches to compare his rookie year to Lesnar. They both won the World Title in their first year but Angle did it without Heyman helping him out. Kurt: "AND I'M AN OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST! WHO SUCKS NOW???" Fans: "YOU SUCK!" Angle has an agent because he's a very important person. More importantly though, he's the kind of man that Lesnar could never be. He'll defend the title at the Royal Rumble and then he'll take Lesnar down like the punk that he is.

Heyman agrees, but he has a surprise for Kurt: Team Angle. That would be Charlie Haas and Shelton Benjamin, a pair of All-American wrestlers, with Shelton being Brock's former roommate at the University of Minnesota. Angle tells Lesnar that's checkmate. This is a great idea and something that could do a lot of good. If Team Angle is kept strong, they could be a great addition to the tag division, which suddenly needs a burst of energy. The segment was long but it did its job, which is far more important.

## B-2 vs. Rikishi

Cena's rap says that B-2 is the physical version of R2-D2. Rikishi sends B-2 into the steps before the bell as Cena sits in on commentary. That lasts all of ten seconds until he gets up to break up the Stinkface. Back in and Buchanan (mostly) hits his top rope spinning clothesline. Cena tries to bring in a chair but uses the distraction to throw B-2 the chain. That just earns B-2 a superkick and the Rump Shaker for the pin.

Torrie Wilson isn't sure she'll be here for the wedding. Her dad comes up to yell at her for being selfish and says he's getting married next week no matter what. After the wedding, he and Dawn are going to have a child and he hopes it won't be a disappointment like her.

Los Guerreros celebrate their win when they run into Cena and B-2. Eddie and Chavo speak Spanish but Cena goes into a rap. Eddie mocks Cena's voice and says they still have the title. This was completely bizarre and yet still rather funny.

Benoit says he'll win and then go on to win the World Title that has always eluded him.

Angle fires Big Show up.

## Chris Benoit vs. Big Show

The winner gets Angle at the Rumble. Show doesn't waste time by throwing Benoit into the corner, followed by a big boot to make things even worse. Benoit chops away and tries the Crossface but gets tossed away with ease. More power offense sends Benoit flying into the corner before Show pulls off a turnbuckle pad. Benoit goes for the knee for a breather, followed by muscling Show up for a German suplex. The Swan Dive (a splash this time as Show is too close to the corner) gets two but the chokeslam is countered into a rollup (with feet on the ropes, though it might not have been intentional) for the pin.

**Rating:** D+. This was as good as Big Show throwing Benoit around for a few minutes before getting caught at the end was going to be. Benoit as the #1 contender is a great thing and the story of him never winning the title is a strong story. The match wasn't bad and they made sure to keep it short to make sure Big Show didn't mess anything up.

Show tries a chokeslam but gets countered into the Crossface (I always love that counter). Cue Team Angle for the superkick into a German suplex and the debut of the Haas of Pain (kind of a Liontamer/Indian deathlock combo). Show adds a chokeslam as the fans don't get their requested Brock. Angle comes out to talk trash and chokes Benoit with a crutch to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. They were very heavy on the storylines this week with several long explanations about what's going on in the main event. However, we also got a long title match, a World Title match set up for a month away and the debut of a new team. They covered a lot of stuff tonight and that's the best thing you could have after the mess that Raw has become.

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# Main Event – May 25, 2017: Pick Something Already

## Main Event

Date: May 22, 2017

Location: Van Andel Arena, Grand Rapids, Iowa

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Corey Graves

Dang it just when I'm getting used to Graves and Phillips being on every show together, or at least feeling like they are. They leave NXT and are now on one of the main shows each, 205 Live and this one. It's allowed these two to develop a great chemistry together and that makes the shows so much easier to listen to. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

### TJP vs. Gran Metalik

Joseph points out that this is a rematch from the finals of the Cruiserweight Classic, which of course is taking place on this show instead of anywhere else. Metalik starts fast with his flips off the ropes and an armdrag to send TJP outside for a big dive. Back in and a springboard elbow gets two but it's way too early for the Metalik Driver.

Instead it's time to go for the mask but TJP settles for just throwing him off the top for two. TJP grabs a modified crossface chickenwing before switching over to a regular chinlock. Back up and TJP kicks him in the face a few times, followed by the top rope splash. A moonsault misses though and TJP hits the Detonation Kick for the pin at 5:27.

**Rating:** C. Completely watchable cruiserweight match here, which is really not saying much given the history between these two. Metalik has fallen all the way through the floor lately and I really hope there's a big reason for it instead of something petty that was holding him back, like some mistake six months ago.

To Raw for the first time.

Here's Finn Balor for a match but first he has something to say. At Extreme Rules we have a Fatal Five Way (he said Final Five at first) but here's Paul Heyman to interrupt. Paul lists off Lesnar's potential challengers and says Brock would make them all victims. Finally we have Balor himself, who Heyman thinks is the most talented performer in WWE today. Paul wants to see them fight and Balor agrees, even though Brock isn't here tonight.

And again from Monday.

### Sheamus vs. Matt Hardy

The winner gets to pick the stipulation for the title match at Extreme Rules. Matt clotheslines him to the floor to start but Sheamus takes over in the brawling. The ten forearms set up a running knee to send Matt into the barricade. Back in and Matt avoids a charge into the corner but gets caught in a Regal Roll for two.

We come back from a break with Sheamus fighting out of a chinlock and using a Jeff distraction to elbow Sheamus in the head. The Side Effect gets two on Sheamus and a jumping knee to the face gets the same on Matt. Sheamus knocks him to the floor but stops to kick at Jeff, allowing Matt to grab the Twist of Fate for the pin at 12:07.

**Rating:** D+. Are we done yet? Like really, are we done with this feud yet? They've been doing the same stuff over and over again now with the Hardys never even seeming to break a sweat against these two. I'm liking Sheamus and Cesaro more and more but they need to actually beat the Hardys at some point to make it actually matter. Matt makes it a cage match.

### Heath Slater/Rhyno vs. Curtis Axel/Curt Hawkins

Wait Axel is heel again??? Hawkins and Axel argue over who gets to start with Slater but it's quickly off to Rhyno for a HUGE pop. A clothesline gets two on Curt and it's back to Slater for a much more modest pop. Slater falls for a distraction though and gets shoved out to the floor, allowing the villains to take over as we take a break.

Back with Hawkins putting Slater in a sleeper before it's off to Hawkins for an armbar. A good looking dropkick gets Axel booed again but Slater flapjacks Hawkins, allowing the tag off to Rhyno. Everything breaks down with Heath diving onto Hawkins, leaving Rhyno to hit a spinebuster on Axel for the pin at 11:07.

**Rating:** D. Rhyno's level of overness never ceases to amaze me. The guy goes out there and does his thing every single week, despite not

really changing anything in his offense for the last twenty years or so. Maybe it's the Michigan thing but sweet goodness he was as popular as free beer in a frat house.

And the final Raw clip.

### Roman Reigns/Seth Rollins vs. Samoa Joe/Bray Wyatt

As usual, Reigns is hated. Joe and Rollins start with Seth getting in a few jabs, only to be sent crashing to the floor as we take an early break. Back with Reigns giving Bray a Samoan drop but getting dropped by Joe. A chinlock and enziguri keep Reigns in trouble and Bray throws him outside.

That doesn't go quite as well as Reigns sends Joe into the barricade, allowing the hot tag to Rollins. House is quickly cleaned with Seth nailing a double suicide dive, only to get caught on top. A double high crossbody takes the villains down but Reigns runs into Rollins by mistake. Rollins and Reigns get into an argument and it's the Kokuina Clutch to knock Seth out at 14:58.

**Rating:** C. This would be the latest in the long line of matches that mean nothing but feature people who are going to be important later on and therefore are supposed to make you care. It would have done them a lot of good to slowly announce the participants and give us something to bridge the gap between now and Extreme Rules but that's just not how WWE operates.

**Overall Rating:** D+. Just a run of the mill show here though the new commentator could have been a lot worse. He has a smooth voice and makes the show a bit easier to sit through. The Raw clips didn't help things though, which is what drives this show every single week.

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# Monday Night Raw – May 22, 2017: The Longest Steps Of The Year

## Monday Night Raw

Date: May 22, 2017

Location: Van Andel Arena, Grand Rapids, Iowa

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T., Corey Graves

Somehow we're less than two weeks away from Extreme Rules and that means it's time to start building the pay per view card. We already have a five man main event for the #1 contendership to Brock Lesnar's Universal Title but a pay per view needs a bit more than that. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the five way being announced last week.

Here's Bray Wyatt to tell us all to stand up. The Beast is all around us and he's the only one who can protect us all from him. At Extreme Rules, four souls will fall before him. Bray lists off the four men who will fall, finishing with Roman Reigns. This may be Reigns' yard but Bray owns the world. Eh it was better when HHH said Undertaker's yard is in the middle of HHH's world. Cue Reigns who promises to win and then beat Brock Lesnar. They bicker a bit until Kurt Angle comes out to make a match right now.

### Bray Wyatt vs. Roman Reigns

Roman starts with a shoulder block using the bad shoulder and has to fight out of Sister Abigail. A big boot sends Bray to the floor but he grabs a release Rock Bottom back inside. Bray adds the running body block but here's Samoa Joe to attack Reigns for the DQ at 4:40.

**Rating:** D. This didn't have time to go anywhere but I like the idea of Samoa Joe coming in and attacking these guys. It makes him feel like a bigger star to be attacking the stronger names and that's the best thing that can happen to him. The match wasn't the important thing here and there's nothing wrong with that.

Post match Joe chokes on both of them until Seth Rollins makes the save. Just announce the tag match already.

Back from a break and Angle does in fact make the tag match. Rollins and Reigns leave but the Drifter comes in. Angle gives him a match with Dean Ambrose later.

### Akira Tozawa vs. Ariya Daivari

Brian Kendrick is watching in the back and giving Tozawa some tips. They trade some shots to start with Kendrick talking about how Tozawa isn't a serious enough competitor. Tozawa comes back with a big boot and a top rope backsplash for the pin at 2:05.

Noam Dar and Alicia Fox laugh at Sasha Banks for the loss last week but Sasha blows them off.

### Elias Samson vs. Dean Ambrose

Non-title and Samson gives us a quick song before we're ready to go. In case that's not enough, Miz and Maryse are on commentary. Samson actually takes over to start with some elbows to the jaw, followed by a running knee to the face as we take a break. Back with Ambrose fighting out of a chinlock and cutting off the comeback with a Fujiwara armbar. Dean fights up and gets his swinging neckbreaker but a hard knee to the jaw puts him down. Ambrose comes back again but here's Miz for the DQ by attacking Samson (just a single tap to give Dean the loss) at 9:49.

**Rating:** D+. Nothing to the match again but the ending was somewhat

creative. Miz just lightly hitting Samson for the loss made sense and advances the story, which could make for an interesting title match. Having Maryse trying to get Ambrose disqualified makes it hard for Dean to retain and that's how you build up a story. Bad match, good story advancement.

Samson saves Ambrose with the reverse swinging neckbreaker.

Enzo Amore has been attacked.

Here's Finn Balor for a match but first he has something to say. At Extreme Rules we have a Fatal Five Way (he said Final Five at first) but here's Paul Heyman to interrupt. Paul lists off Lesnar's potential challengers and says Brock would make them all victims. Finally we have Balor himself, who Heyman thinks is the most talented performer in WWE today. Paul wants to see them fight and Balor agrees, even though Brock isn't here tonight.

#### Finn Balor vs. Karl Anderson

Joined in progress with Balor hitting a basement dropkick and hammering on the back. Luke Gallows gets in a cheap shot from the floor and Anderson grabs a chinlock. Balor comes back with a kick to the head and another dropkick, only to get caught in a spinebuster for two. That's about it for the offense at the moment though as Balor sends him outside for a flip dive. Back in and the Sling Blade into the Coup de Grace is good for the pin at 6:19.

**Rating:** D. This was as exciting as Karl Anderson holding a chinlock for three minutes was going to be. I'm not all that interested in seeing the Club reunite but this is certainly going to bring up more talking about the possibilities. At least Balor won clean, as he should be doing most of the time.

#### Sasha Banks vs. Alicia Fox

Rematch from last week. Banks tries an early Bank Statement but has to deal with a Noam Dar distraction, allowing Fox to kick her in the face for two. The running knees in the corner stagger Fox and the double knee drop gives Banks the pin at 2:13.

Post match Dar yells at Banks, allowing Fox to lay her out.

Kalisto, in what looks like a rejected Kane mask, thinks Apollo Crews is changing and even accuses him of attacking Enzo. Titus O'Neil comes in and says he's fine with an international member of the team but tonight, Crews is taking Kalisto out.

We look back at Goldust turning on R-Truth.

Goldust says gold is the purest mineral because its shine never fades. He's back in the director's chair and gets to decide how his next film ends. The Golden Age is back.

Alexa Bliss says last week's attack on Bayley was just the beginning. There's no happy ending at Extreme Rules because Bayley doesn't have it in her.

We recap Reigns putting Braun Strowman on the shelf two weeks back.

#### Apollo Crews vs. Kalisto

Crews kicks him in the face to start, followed by an enziguri for two. The Toss Powerbomb is countered into a rollup for two and a quick Salida Del Sol gives Kalisto the pin at 2:46.

#### Sheamus vs. Matt Hardy

The winner gets to pick the stipulation for the title match at Extreme Rules. Matt clotheslines him to the floor to start but Sheamus takes over in the brawling. The ten forearms set up a running knee to send Matt into the barricade. Back in and Matt avoids a charge into the corner but gets caught in a Regal Roll for two.

We come back from a break with Sheamus fighting out of a chinlock and using a Jeff distraction to elbow Sheamus in the head. The Side Effect gets two on Sheamus and a jumping knee to the face gets the same on Matt. Sheamus knocks him to the floor but stops to kick at Jeff, allowing Matt to grab the Twist of Fate for the pin at 12:07.

**Rating:** D+. Are we done yet? Like really, are we done with this feud yet? They've been doing the same stuff over and over again now with the Hardys never even seeming to break a sweat against these two. I'm liking Sheamus and Cesaro more and more but they need to actually beat the Hardys at some point to make it actually matter.

Matt makes it a cage match. I'm stunned it's not another ladder match.

We look at the opening segment.

#### Austin Aries vs. Tony Nese

Aries starts fast with the elbow to the back but Nese comes right back with a shot to the knee. A catapult sends Aries into the ropes and he gets elbowed out of the air for good measure. Nese's suplex is reversed into a guillotine, followed by the Last Chancery to make Nese tap at 4:31.

**Rating:** C-. Just a short match here to show that Aries can win with a submission before we head to the submission match at Extreme Rules. Nese could have been any given jobber here and it would have been the same story. At least he's not being pushed as anything special on 205 Live at the moment.

Neville beats Nese up and gives him the Rings of Saturn. Aries applauds him.

#### Mickie James vs. Alexa Bliss

Non-title. Mickie wastes no time and sends Bliss into the corner to start before hitting a string of forearms to the champ's face. A basement dropkick actually gets no cover but Bliss breaks up the hurricanrana out of the corner. One heck of a right hand drops Mickie though and the DDT wraps her up at 3:02.

**Rating:** D. So Mickie goes from being this big talent acquisition to being cannon fodder for a three minute loss on Raw? Bliss' rocket push continues and there's nothing wrong with that. She's so completely awesome in this role and is easily one of the most improved wrestlers in the world over the last few months.

Post match Bliss uses the kendo stick on James, only to have Bayley run in and take it away. She doesn't swing it though as Bliss bails to the floor.

#### Roman Reigns/Seth Rollins vs. Samoa Joe/Bray Wyatt

As usual, Reigns is hated. Joe and Rollins start with Seth getting

in a few jabs, only to be sent crashing to the floor as we take an early break. Back with Reigns giving Bray a Samoan drop but getting dropped by Joe. A chinlock and enziguri keep Reigns in trouble and Bray throws him outside.

That doesn't go quite as well as Reigns sends Joe into the barricade, allowing the hot tag to Rollins. House is quickly cleaned with Seth nailing a double suicide dive, only to get caught on top. A double high crossbody takes the villains down but Reigns runs into Rollins by mistake. Rollins and Reigns get into an argument and it's the Koquina Clutch to knock Seth out at 14:58.

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Balor comes up to Angle in the back and wants to be in action next week. Angle gives him a triple threat with Joe and Wyatt. He throws in Reigns vs. Rollins as a bonus.

**Overall Rating:** D+. Even though they set up a lot of stuff for the pay per view, it still feels like they're treading water on a lot of the show. This really did need to be a two hour version as the extra sixty minutes didn't do them any good. At least the build to the pay per view worked, but it felt like it took forever to take a few steps.

### Results

Roman Reigns b. Bray Wyatt via DQ when Samoa Joe interfered

Akira Tozawa b. Ariya Daivari – Top rope backplash

Elias Samson b. Dean Ambrose via DQ when Miz interfered

Finn Balor b. Karl Anderson – Coup de Grace

Sasha Banks b. Alicia Fox – Double knees in the corner

Kalisto b. Apollo Crews – Salida Del Sol

Matt Hardy b. Sheamus – Twist of Fate

Austin Aries b. Tony Nese – Last Chancery

Samoa Joe/Bray Wyatt b. Roman Reigns/Seth Rollins – Koquina Clutch to Rollins

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# Smackdown – December 19, 2002: They're Better Than This

## Smackdown

Date: December 19, 2002

Location: St. Pete Times Forum, Tampa, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

We're past the last pay per view of the year and that means we only have two Smackdowns left. The big story on the Smackdown side is Kurt Angle becoming the new Smackdown World Champion, having defeated Big Show in a match that was way better than it had any right to be. That puts us on the road to the Royal Rumble, where Chris Benoit might be the new #1 contender. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's tag match with Big Show pinning Angle and then Angle winning the title thanks to Brock Lesnar's help. This eats up over three minutes.

Opening sequence.

Here's Angle, with a belt that still says Big Show, to open things up. He lists off his accomplishments but this title win was different. Angle isn't sure if he could have won the title without Lesnar so he'd like Brock out here now. Cue Brock to one heck of a reaction. Angle agrees to give him a shot at the title anytime, any

place. That's what Brock wanted to hear because he wants his shot tonight. Actually that doesn't work for Kurt though because he has a non-title match with Chris Benoit. Lesnar will get his title shot next week though, which Lesnar begrudgingly accepts.

Big Show is livid about Lesnar getting the first shot and rants to Paul Heyman about it. Don't worry though because Heyman has a fan. Again, this takes way too long to accomplish something very simple.

#### Eddie Guerrero vs. Billy Kidman

Non-title. Eddie goes right for him and grabs a belly to back suplex to take over. A very fast tilt-a-whirl backbreaker looks to set up the frog splash but Kidman bails away and hits an enziguri. The BK Bomb gets two and the shooting star connects, only to have Chavo pull Kidman away. That's not a DQ for no apparent reason though and Eddie grabs a Gory Bomb for the pin.

Matt Hardy walks into Stephanie's office to explain the concept of MF'ers (Mattitude Followers). She's worried that he won't be able to face Lesnar tonight but Matt is ready to go.

#### John Cena vs. Chuck Palumbo

Cena's rap calls the Buccaneers a rather surprising slur which rhymes with beers. The announcers start talking about the Torrie/Dawn Marie footage as "Bling Bling Buchanan" gets in a few shots on the floor. Cena grabs a seated full nelson (it's better than the same old chinlock over and over) but Palumbo fights up for the comeback. A belly to belly sets up the discus punch and Chuck heads to the top, only to have Cena roll through a high crossbody and grab the trunks for the pin.

Chuck punches Cena out but gets hit by Buchanan's change. Cue Rikishi for the save because THIS STORY IS STILL GOING!

We get a long, LONG recap of the build to Torrie/Dawn in the hotel room (same as the one from Sunday I believe) and then see about ten seconds, all of which we saw at the pay per view.

We get a sitdown interview with Torrie at her mom's house in Idaho where she says she's more proud than anything else. She's willing to

do anything for her father but he's the one person she's embarrassed her. As for being a sexual predator, she's certainly a sexual person, but Dawn is going to find out what kind of a predator she can be. Cue Dawn and Al as Cole suggests that Al has no idea what's going on. You mean getting to be with a woman WAY out of his league who doesn't seem to mind being with him in exchange for tormenting his daughter? I still don't quite get how Al is hurt in all this. Anyway Dawn calls Torrie a nymphomaniac and says her relationship with Al is sacred. They never run out of things to say and enjoy their late night encounters. She's never seen a more handsome and virile man than her "Al-sy Wal-sy." The wedding will be here on Smackdown in two weeks. Torrie storms off because they deserve each other.

Raw Retro: Rock challenges Hogan. That's one heck of a moment.

#### Brock Lesnar vs. Matt Hardy

This is over Brock throwing Matt, who has wrestled in 44 states, through a wall. However, Matt comes out holding his good eye and has Shannon Moore tagging along. We've got a substitution due to Matt getting something in his good eye, rendering him temporarily blind.

#### Brock Lesnar vs. Shannon Moore

Brock wastes no time in belly to bellying Shannon OVER THE TOP AND DOWN ONTO THE FLOOR in one of the sickest landings you'll ever see. Moore somehow doesn't have a broken leg as he takes the F5 for the pin in less than a minute. Great bump to go with the complete destruction.

Blind Matt gets beaten down as well.

Stephanie tells Angle to clear this up or she'll do it herself.

Here's Angle to explain whatever it is that Stephanie was talking about. Angle talks about having integrity and if it were up to him, he'd face Angle and Benoit in the same night. He has a lot on his plate though and he needs good representation. That's why he's now represented by.....Paul Heyman.

Paul comes out for a hug and says no one should be surprised by

this. There was no way Lesnar was ever getting close to the title again and Heyman made sure of it. The plan started when Angle suggested he could get Lesnar's suspension lifted and Heyman convinced Stephanie to let Brock come back. Angle played Lesnar like a violin (How?) and now the Angle vs. Lesnar match is postponed indefinitely.

Cue a livid Big Show to yell at Heyman and glare at Angle. Heyman says Show isn't dumped because Show is still his favorite client. To make it up to him, Show can have a shot next week. Kurt isn't happy but Heyman says it's cool as long as either of them is champion. Just keep it away from Lesnar you see.

Ok.....I need a minute on this one. So Heyman worked together with Show to get the title off of Lesnar and then signed Angle as an insurance policy to give him more leverage to keep the title away from Brock? Ok, fine. And Angle had to get Lesnar's suspension lifted because Angle couldn't beat Show on his own? If that's not it, I have no idea why Lesnar had to be reinstated. Why would Heyman want him back in the first place?

I'm not really sure I get the idea. I guess Heyman thought Angle could beat Big Show so he bought Kurt off before he could, but Angle could only do it with Lesnar's help? Show can beat an injured Lesnar with Heyman's help but it takes Angle/Lesnar to beat Big Show? I'm probably missing something in there because this is already far beyond how complicated it needs to be. Just have Show vs. Lesnar go to a double DQ at Survivor Series and then do a triple threat so Angle can take the title from Show and announce Heyman's plan after. Either way, it sets up an eventual Angle vs. Lesnar match and that's just glorious sounding.

#### Bill DeMott/Crash vs. Jamie Noble/Nunzio

DeMott is teaming with Crash because he respects Hardcore Holly. Bill beats on Nunzio and then pulls Jamie in to beat on him as well. A release German suplex sends Noble flying and DeMott makes him tag Nunzio back in. Noble is thrown into Nunzio in the corner and a powerbomb sets up the moonsault to put Jamie away. Crash was never

in. So Nunzio debuts one week and gets squashed the next by BILL DEMOTT. I'm so glad to know this show has a plan for everyone.

DeMott beats Crash down as well.

Edge is ready to beat up A-Train again tonight.

#### Edge vs. A-Train

A-Train charges straight at him to start but Edge slips out of a gorilla press. It's already time to go after the knee though as A-Train lays on it and then grabs a half crab. Back up and Edge hits an enziguri followed by a missile dropkick due to the bad knee. The bicycle kick gives A-Train two and it's right back to the half crab. The chokebomb is broken up and Edge spears him for the pin.

**Rating:** D. This was as good as A-Train doing half crabs for five minutes was going to be. I still don't get the idea behind pushing him like this but it seems to be time for the big guys to get their pushes. Edge sold the leg well enough but there's only so much he can do in a story like this.

Josh Matthews recaps Angle vs. Lesnar and it still doesn't make a lot of sense. Lesnar comes in and says his state of mind is a good question.

#### Kurt Angle vs. Chris Benoit

Non-title. Benoit takes him to the mat for an early hammerlock and a very fast armdrag. They head outside with Benoit chasing him back inside for the first suplex. Angle gets in his own overhead belly to belly as the announcers marvel at Heyman's brainwashing abilities. Heyman even gets in a belt shot to Benoit for two and it's time to trade some chops. A chinlock keeps Benoit down for a bit and a release German suplex drops him again.

Angle is right backup but a double clothesline puts both guys down. It's Benoit up first with the seven rolling German suplexes, causing Heyman to put his head in his hand, as if he knows there's nothing that can be done at this point. The Swan Dive sets up the Crossface but Big Show lumbers down for the DQ.

**Rating:** C+. Good match as usual but you could see the ending coming

from a mile away. They've done this match too often lately though and it's starting to get tiresome. It's still entertaining but there are other options out there. Put Angle in there with Edge (because Heaven forbid we don't get the A-Train match in there) or anyone else to save Benoit for later.

Lesnar runs in for some suplexes but gets beaten down as well to end the show. My only other thought here: Heyman reminds me of Louie De Palma in far too many ways.

**Overall Rating:** D. Really big step down here as this whole thing was about two stories with a few other matches filling in the rest of the time. The Heyman stuff is more complicated than it needs to be and the Dawn/Torrie stuff is clearly going nowhere. If you're over fourteen years old here, you know you're never going to see more than you saw at the pay per view and after that you have whatever disaster the wedding and ensuing match are going to be. This really wasn't a good show and Smackdown should be better than what they did here.

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# Smackdown – November 21, 2002: The Big Stupid Coward

## Smackdown

Date: November 21, 2002

Location: Hartford Civic Center, Hartford, Connecticut

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

We're in the Big Show era now as he defeated Brock Lesnar to win the Smackdown World Title at Survivor Series. Hopefully this one doesn't last too long as I'm not sure I can handle sitting through it.

Unless Lesnar gets a rematch, it would make sense to have one of those tag guys get the next shot as they've been the hottest thing in the company for months. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Brock Lesnar's WWE career leading into his feud with Big Show. Paul Heyman is prominently featured, setting up his heel turn at the pay per view.

Lesnar is waiting for Big Show. What is with wrestlers always arriving late? It seems to happen every week.

Opening sequence.

## Rey Mysterio vs. Jamie Noble

Mysterio starts fast with the dropkicks and a headscissors for good measure. A trip to the floor seems to clear Jamie's head as he sends Rey into the buckle and dropkicks him in the back of the mask. Rey keeps up the trend with a dropkick and a flapjack for two. The 619 looks to set up the West Coast Pop but Rey has to go after an interfering Nidia.

Back in and Jamie throws Rey into the air, only to have Mysterio springboard right into the hurricanrana for the pin. I remember taping this show and thinking that was so cool I actually showed it to a friend. Jamie standing there waiting on Mysterio to bounce back and looking up so he can take the hurricanrana doesn't help but it's still cool enough.

Lesnar is still angrily waiting and goes into the locker room. For some reason Matt Hardy thinks it's a good idea to give him some criticism. Maybe if Brock had a few more Mattributes, he wouldn't have suffered such an unfortunate twist of fate. Matt is then thrown through a wall, leaving a hole so big that Crash Holly can be seen on the other side.

Post break, Stephanie comes to check on Matt. Eddie Guerrero tells her that Brock did it, which surprises Stephanie. So wait: not only is she not watching the show but she sees a grown man thrown through a wall and doesn't ask WHAT HAPPENED HERE? Basically everyone is scared of Lesnar so Stephanie will take care of him. Eddie asks if Brock will listen to a woman, setting Stephanie up for exactly the response you would expect from her.

Noble doesn't know what to do but decides to call his crazy cousin Nunzio. Nidia is very worried about this choice.

Stephanie says Lesnar can have a rematch when he's healed up but he's suspended if he attacks anyone else. Somehow this takes a minute and a half because of that weird way Stephanie speaks.

#### Cruiserweight Title: Billy Kidman vs. Tajiri

Maybe the winner gets Torrie. Kidman is defending and offers an early handshake, earning himself a hard kick to the head. More kicks get more two counts before Tajiri mixes it up with the Tarantula. Kidman seems to hurt his head on a hurricanrana so Tajiri makes it worse with another kick to the head. The announcers find ways to praise Stephanie as Kidman gets in a spinebuster, followed by the shooting star to retain.

**Rating:** C. My head is hurting from those kicks as Tajiri was blasting Kidman every time. That's why I like Tajiri so much: he's not going to shift from that one idea very often but he does that thing very well. He doesn't try to do anything out of his wheelhouse and it still works. It's like Rhyno, which is why they've both had such long careers.

#### Chris Benoit vs. Chavo Guerrero

Eddie is ejected before the bell, just in case Chavo thought he had any chance. Benoit starts fast by sending Chavo chest first into the corner but can only hit one German suplex. A gutbuster drops Benoit and his shoulder goes into the post as Chavo takes his pick of the body parts.

Not that it matters as Benoit SNAPS him down into a Crossface attempt but Chavo makes the ropes. Back in and Benoit rolls three straight German suplexes to set up the Swan Dive for two. Benoit is so annoyed that he allows Chavo to fire some shoulders into the ribs. Chavo tries a springboard clothesline but dives straight into the Crossface for the tap.

**Rating:** C+. This made perfect sense as Chavo tried everything he could but just wasn't in Benoit's league. Seeing Benoit grab the suplexes and the Crossface from pretty much wherever he wanted made him look awesome with the hold looking better than it has in a long time. Chavo tried here but was in over his head, which made for a good story.

Stephanie tells Lesnar to stay in the back while Heyman and Show go to the ring. If Lesnar goes to the ring, she'll suspend him.

Here's Heyman, coming out to Lesnar's music and wearing the title, complete with the bounce on the stage. Cole: "I think Heyman is mocking Lesnar." Heyman talks about having the it factor that separates you from the rest of the locker room, which applies to himself of course. He prepared Lesnar for everything he was going to do and is responsible for all of his successes.

Then the monster stopped listening to Dr. Frankenstein because it takes more than physical attributes to be on top of the mountain. He orchestrated the greatest inside job in sports entertainment history (How can anyone hear that wording and think it sounds good?) and look at the success he's created.

Here's Big Show, with Heyman kneeling down to hand him the title. Show thanks Lesnar for the opportunity and heaps praise on Heyman. Edge has a shot later tonight but there's no way he's losing the title just yet. Oh and one more thing: Lesnar is officially fired

and there's a no rematch clause in the contract. As they go to leave, here's Lesnar with a chair to lay Show out. The worst part is Lesnar running right at him and Show turning around to run. So he's big, stupid, and a coward. Sounds like your typical heel champion. During the break, Stephanie yells at Lesnar some more because that's what she gets to do.

#### Eddie Guerrero vs. Kurt Angle

During the entrances, Cole announces next week as "an all new Smackdown with special guest star Scott Steiner." Just in case you thought it was a rerun with Milton Berle. Chavo is ejected as well so we can have consistent refereeing for once. An early headlock sends Eddie outside as thinks slow down.

Back in and Angle busts out a monkey flip of all things before a suplex puts Eddie outside again. Angle follows this time and gets sent back first into the steps as Eddie cheats to take over. Eddie does the old "grab two chairs so the stupid referee only sees one", allowing him to smack Angle in the back with the other. A northern lights suplex gets two as the dumb fans chant USA. Thankfully Cole points out that Eddie is from Texas as we hit the camel clutch.

Angle gets a DDT for a breather and here's Chavo to watch from the stage. We hit the rolling German suplexes until a low blow breaks Angle's momentum. As I wonder how the referee didn't see that, Chavo comes down and gets in a few stomps. Cue Benoit to just stare at Chavo, even as he goes down to stomp on Angle some more. They trade submission attempts until Angle throws him with a release German suplex. Chavo gets forearmed off the apron, leaving Angle to run the corner for a super Angle Slam and the pin.

**Rating:** B. Like these two aren't going to have a really good match. The Benoit stuff adds a new layer to the story and you can feel the big Angle vs. Benoit feud building very nicely. Eddie and Chavo getting beaten up like this is fine as all they have to do is hold up the belts again and everything will be back to normal. Good match here, filling the quota for the week.

Angle gives Chavo the ankle lock post match as the champs are easily dispatched. Benoit offers Kurt some applause.

We look at Scott Steiner beating up Christopher Nowinski and Matt Hardy. Nowinski is one thing but Hardy's role in that segment is just dumb.

Edge is ready for Big Show but Funaki thinks Show is like Godzilla. That makes Edge King Kong but he's willing to fight for the title.

Another Raw moment: This is Your Life Rock. That's still amazing.

### John Cena vs. Rikishi

Actually hang on a second as Dawn Marie and Al Wilson come out to invite us to their wedding. The match is joined in progress with Cena hitting a belly to back suplex, followed by sitting on Rikishi's chest. That earns him a toss to the floor and a Samoan Drop, followed by a belly to belly for the pin.

Post match Rikishi loads up the Rump Shaker but Bull Buchanan comes in to save Cena. I might be thinking about this too hard but it might have been better to have Cena WIN THE MATCH and then have Buchanan show up.

Show says he can't wrestle tonight because of Lesnar's attack. Heyman isn't about to go anywhere with Lesnar around.

We recap Lesnar and Show's night.

Heyman is in Stephanie's office but can't get Show out of the main event. If Lesnar gets involved, she'll suspend him. Heyman: "Like you did before?" Lawsuits against Stephanie and company are threatened so she throws him out. In case you haven't figured it out, this was the 14<sup>th</sup> or so segment tonight to show you that Stephanie RUNS SMACKDOWN. Let's say it together shall we? Stephanie runs Smackdown. Now don't you forget it or more lectures will ensue.

### Smackdown World Title: Big Show vs. Edge

Edge is challenging and is thrown into the corner almost immediately. Show launches him with ease and stands on Edge's head (not to be confused with the Edgeheads) as this is already in slow

motion. An Edgecution attempt is countered as easily as you would expect it to be and Show posts edge to keep the pace. We hit the bearhug as Heyman tells Edge he'd be good representation.

A turnbuckle pad was removed somewhere in there and Edge sends him face first into the buckle, followed by a low blow for good measure. Edge gets two off a tornado DDT and three spears finally drop Show. Heyman breaks up the pin though, allowing Show to grab the chokeslam. We're not done yet though as Heyman wants Show to treat Edge like he's Lesnar. That means a second chokeslam but here's Lesnar for an F5 before a third can connect. I guess the match was thrown out.

**Rating:** D+. Edge's comeback was good but when you watch him tear the house down with everyone else, it's really hard to sit through Big Show's eight mile an hour offense. He's the current monster champion and hopefully that means his days with the title are numbered. This really wasn't interesting and I have no interest in watching him doing his "hey, I'm big" promos and bad matches while I know the roster is capable of so much more.

Lesnar chases Heyman through the crowd to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. There's nothing terrible here and they kept the bad stuff short but there's nothing that really offers a spark to make me want to keep watching. The tag stuff seems to be coming to an end and that leaves Rikishi, Big Show, Al/Dawn and whatever Los Guerreros are doing. Now the latter of that list is fine but the rest...egads the rest. The show was still fun but this didn't really leave me optimistic.

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# Main Event – March 16, 2017: Another Forgettable Show

## Main Event

Date: March 16, 2017

Location: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Byron Saxton

I'm hoping that things pick up a bit as we get closer to Wrestlemania but there's a good chance that it's just not going to happen. Main Event continues to be one of the most difficult to predict shows around as it seems to be the same thing, only to have a curve thrown in every so often. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

## Bo Dallas vs. Curtis Axel

Do you think these people get tired of facing each other in these nothing matches? Axel takes him into the corner to start but is quickly put over the top rope for the swinging neckbreaker. It's off to a cravate until Dallas forearm him in the face for two. We go to a wide shot for some reason as Bo gets two off a clothesline. That earns him a clothesline from Curtis but the PerfectPlex is countered into a small package for two. Not that it matters as the PerfectPlex gives Curtis the pin at 4:23.

**Rating:** D+. Standard match between these two and that's not the best thing in the world. You're only going to get so much out of these guys with the same matches over and over, which is kind of the point of this show: keep them doing something to validate their employment

without actually having them do anything important. I like both guys so that's a bit frustrating but at least they're around.

To Raw!

Here are Paul Heyman and Lesnar to open things up. Heyman can't believe that something happened last week because Goldberg was supposed to be unstoppable. In twenty nights at Wrestlemania, Lesnar is going to prove the world wrong and destroy Goldberg in short order. Heyman teases Goldberg being here but says the champ isn't in the arena. Every time Lesnar has run into Goldberg it's been spear, Jackhammer, Goldberg. Last week though it was F5, Lesnar. At Wrestlemania, it's an F5 to end the great comeback because the F5 means Goldberg goes down.

To Raw again!

Roman Reigns calls Undertaker out and we take a break. Back from a break with Reigns still in the ring and Shawn Michaels coming out. Reigns says it's nice to see him but he wanted to see the Undertaker. Shawn says he saw Reigns get distracted by the gong and that can't happen going into Wrestlemania. We're twenty days from Wrestlemania and Undertaker is already in Reigns' head. At Wrestlemania, Undertaker is going to eat Roman alive.

Reigns says that's not happening because Undertaker needs to be wondering what it's going to be like to be in the ring with him. Shawn says he's in Reigns' yard but Roman needs to get his head on straight. That's not enough for Roman, because he remembers Undertaker retired Shawn at Wrestlemania. Come Orlando, Reigns is retiring Undertaker. Reigns goes to leave and gets run over by Braun Strowman, who earns himself a THANK YOU STROWMAN chant.

Jack Gallagher vs. Noam Dar

Gallagher quickly takes him to the mat for a leglock before they fight over arm control. The headstand in the corner confused Dar until a kick to the chest puts him on the floor. Back from a break with Dar still working on the arm until Jack easily pulls him down to the mat by the leg. The headbutt into the corner dropkick is good for the pin on Dar at 7:08.

**Rating:** C-. Not much here other than Gallagher being amused by Alicia Fox's level of craziness. I'm glad that Gallagher is back to being his normal self but they need to do something with Dar. The

guy is talented but the whole Fox story hasn't done much for him. Maybe it'll be interesting when we find out who is sending her stuff (Gallagher would be an amazing choice) but until then, there's not much to go on.

Here's Stephanie to introduce Foley for the firing announcement. Foley hadn't been able to think of anyone all night but in the last ten minutes, someone's name came to him and he knows what to do. After thanking Stephanie, he announces.....Stephanie should be fired. Stephanie isn't pleased (of course) and rips into Foley, who talks about how Stephanie lied to him six months ago when she said she had nothing to do with HHH interfering.

Foley goes on about how HHH makes an army for himself but Stephanie cuts him off mid-insult. Cue HHH to say Foley can say this to his face. Foley says that's fine but he didn't think HHH really existed. HHH laughs him off and they go back and forth about how Foley doesn't need this job and HHH uses his position to abuse his power. HHH says Foley needs to leave and go around the world again telling his sad story, but if he does, his kids can forget about working for WWE.

What Foley needs to do is go backstage and have an epiphany about how much he loves his job before doing whatever Stephanie tells him to do. Foley turns to leave but stops as Stephanie rants against the people for not respecting their bosses enough. HHH goes after Foley and gets Mr. Socko for his efforts. Stephanie makes the save with a low blow and HHH unbuttons his sleeves. Cue Seth Rollins on a crutch but it's quickly thrown to the side. Rollins comes in and hammers away but HHH grabs the crutch and hits him in the bad knee. HHH even busts out a reverse Figure Four to make Rollins scream to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This was your usual skippable show but as is almost always the case around here, Main Event is the easiest thing in the world to sit through. There's no time spent on the original matches (most of which we've seen multiple times) so you can get the big Raw segments in a hurry, which makes for an easier time than three hours with commercials.

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# Smackdown – October 17, 2002: That's Not How A Shower Works

## **Smackdown**

Date: October 17, 2002

Location: Air Canada Centre, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

It's the go home show for No Mercy and after the disaster that was Raw, this could be two hours of Edge having a meatball sandwich and paying his water bill and it would be more entertaining. The focus tonight will be on the Tag Team Title tournament and hopefully not so much on Undertaker's fake affair. Let's get to it.

We look at the accusations against Undertaker last week, resulting in him attacking Lesnar.

Opening sequence.

Tag Team Title Tournament Semifinals: Edge/Rey Mysterio vs. Ron Simmons/D-Von

Simmons takes Edge into the corner to start and hammers away before a flying forearm puts him down. D-Von comes in and takes a springboard seated senton as the good guys are flying so far. The 619 misses though and Simmons plants Rey with the spinebuster to take over. D-Von misses a middle rope elbow though and Rey's

spinwheel kick allows the hot tag to Edge. It's time for some double teaming as D-Von is placed on top with Edge launching Rey up for a hurricanrana. There's a spear to Simmons and the Edgecution ends D-Von.

**Rating:** C-. Not exactly the most shocking ending in the world but it's just a warmup to set up the finals with all the action coming at the pay per view. I'm really not sure why D-Von and Simmons weren't Billy and Chuck but I'm sure there's some reason that someone over thought for some reason.

Eddie and Chavo run out to beat on Edge and Mysterio.

Tonight we've got Nidia vs. Jamie Noble with Tajiri as guest referee for no apparent reason. Nidia comes up and flirts with him in Spanish before Jamie comes up. Some sex related talk ensues and Nidia slaps him in the face.

#### Jamie Noble vs. Nidia

Tajiri is guest referee. Nidia kicks Jamie low and jumps on his back before getting flipped down to the mat. Jamie doesn't want to hit her so he sidesteps a dropkick and tells Nidia to stop it. Nidia tries a sunset flip but Jamie rolls her up for the pin. I have no idea what the point of this was and I forgot Tajiri was guest referee.

Nidia slaps Tajiri and Jamie beats him up.

Undertaker says he isn't a liar but he lied about now knowing Tracy. Apparently something did happen with her but it was years before he met his wife. Vengeance is guaranteed. This was nothing.

Eddie and Chavo go into their locker room and find Benoit waiting on them. Benoit isn't happy with what happened last week and stares them down so Eddie begs for forgiveness and goes into their history, dating all the way back to the Radicalz. Eddie starts crying about how Benoit was there through his personal issues and now Benoit is hurting his feelings!

Benoit still doesn't move so Eddie goes into a rage with his arms waving and daring Benoit to hit him. Chavo finally drags Eddie away after one of the most manic, entertaining performances I've seen in a long time while Chris never says a word. Eddie was on another planet here.

#### John Cena vs. Billy Kidman

This is over their loss last week in the tournament. Cena seems to blame Kidman for the loss and might be teasing a heel turn. An armdrag and headscissor stagger Cena to start but he launches Kidman out to the floor for a big crash. Back in and some whips into the corner have Kidman in trouble and Cole makes sure to point out the lack of a smile on Cena's face. A pair of suplexes give Cena back to back near falls and the fans are all over him. Kidman reverses a powerbomb into a sunset flip but Cena grabs a backslide and throws his feet on the ropes for the cheap pin.

**Rating:** C. Well it's not like Cena was lighting the world up as a face anymore. Turning him heel is a good enough idea here, especially after how far he's fallen since his debut. Then again, WWE hasn't exactly done anything with him so it's not like it's his fault. Just build him up one step at a time and things should be fine.

Heyman, Lesnar and Tracy storm into Stephanie's office to say that Tracy slept with Undertaker ten days ago. Stephanie ejects her so Heyman goes into a rant about how Lesnar and Matt Hardy are the future around here instead of Undertaker. It would behoove Stephanie to force Undertaker to take that cast off for Sunday. Stephanie makes sure to get in a line about Heyman disrespecting her before putting Lesnar in with Chuck Palumbo.

Post break Undertaker yells at Stephanie about Tracy and about possibly having to take the cast off. Stephanie thinks Heyman makes a good point because it would be unfair to have the cast INSIDE THE CELL. Undertaker breaks stuff due to the high levels of stupidity.

#### Brock Lesnar vs. Chuck Palumbo

Non-title. Chuck goes with some hard right hands to start so Brock just takes his head off with a clothesline. The beating is on and Palumbo starts bleeding from the mouth. A belly to belly suplex sets up the waistlock and Chuck is in trouble. Palumbo is tied up in the Tree of Woe but Brock misses a charge and crashes into the corner. Heyman: "IS THAT LEGAL???" Chuck gets in a superkick of his own and a belly to belly gets two. Brock gets tired of this nonsense and gives Chuck a belly to belly of his own before finishing with the F5.

**Rating:** D. This was exactly what you would expect here and that's not a good thing. They did keep it short at least but that's still

not exactly the best idea in the first place. I do however like the idea of Lesnar steamrolling someone before heading into the Cell as you can only have Undertaker chase him off so many times.

Speaking of Undertaker chasing Lesnar off, that's exactly what we get again after the match, including a cast shot to bust Lesnar open.

Torrie Wilson is stretching when her dad comes up. She wants to talk to him about the stuff with Dawn Marie but he ignores her and gives him flowers. Torrie has to go to the ring so she asks one of the backstage women to keep an eye on the flowers.

### Torrie Wilson/Rikishi vs. Dawn Marie/Matt Hardy

It's a great night as we get the debut of the Matt Hardy search video, complete with your first Mattitude Fact: Matt Has Beaten Undertaker Two Straight Times. When you look at this and the Broken stuff, it really is amazing to think about what kind of complete nonsense Matt has gotten over. He doesn't get enough credit for that stuff. The ladies start things off but Matt tags himself in. That brings in Rikishi so I'm sure you can get the idea. Dawn slaps Rikishi and gets gorilla pressed.

We get some Melina-level screeching before it's back to Torrie for a horrible swinging neckbreaker. Dawn gets two off a boot in the corner with Cole saying Torrie managed to pop out. Taz: "What popped out???" Rikishi comes back in but misses the sit down on Dawn's chest. Matt bails before Rikishi can try it on him so Rikishi settles for a spinebuster. With nothing else working, Dawn comes in and jumps on Rikishi's back to no avail. A double Stinkface has Matt's face eyes bugging out but he's still able to turn over a small package to give Dawn the pin on Torrie.

**Rating:** D-. Eh I can't call anything with Torrie and Dawn in there a total failure but this story is killing a lot of the show. Then again, so is Rikishi and Matt Hardy having random matches like this one. That's the case for so much of this show though: nothing matches that don't make me want to see the pay per view and just fill in time between Lesnar and Undertaker segments.

Post match Rikishi crushes Matt so Torrie loads up a Stinkface, including hiking up the shorts. Of course Rikishi takes her place when Matt closes his eyes.

Lesnar is getting his cut looked at and sends Paul to get Stephanie to ban the cast. Like I said: the matches are just filling in time between the segments.

After a break, Heyman demands that the cast be taken off before the Cell. Again: IT'S THE CELL! WHY IS A CAST SUCH A BIG DEAL???

We run down the No Mercy card.

Kurt Angle accuses Benoit of wanting his gold medals. Actually hang on. Angle thinks Benoit had something to do with the attack last week. That's nonsense because Angle would come after Benoit face to face so they better get along out there. Again, Benoit didn't say a word.

Torrie finds out that there was a card with the flowers and they were for Dawn. Someone backstage tells her that he's in the locker room with Dawn so Torrie finds them in the shower together. Dawn is not exactly clothed and Al is....thankfully in his full clothes. I think he might need a few pointers there.

Tag Team Title Tournament Semifinals: Kurt Angle/Chris Benoit vs. Chavo Guerrero/Eddie Guerrero

Edge and Mysterio run out and jump the Guerreros to make up for the earlier attack. Just to keep things fair, Benoit and Angle take a beating as well. Back from a break with Eddie stomping Angle in the corner until Kurt gets annoyed and throws the family around. It's off to Benoit for a hard elbow to the jaw and a backbreaker for two. Chavo comes in and eats a suplex from Kurt, followed by a hard Benoit knee to the ribs.

The family finally gets Chris down and stomps away, only to have Benoit snap off the fastest Crossface I can ever remember for a near submission on Eddie. Some double teaming sets up a chinlock on Benoit before Eddie goes with the simple kick to the face. Chavo takes too long going up top though and one heck of a superplex brings him back down. The place is going nuts for Angle and the hot tag oddly quiets them. It's time for the German suplexes all around but Chavo catches Angle in a brainbuster.

Eddie adds the frog splash for two but Benoit slaps on the Crossface. That's broken up so Angle tries to Slam Eddie, only to have the referee get bumped. Eddie gets the El Paso Lasso, which Angle quickly reverses into the ankle lock for the unseen tap. Chavo

tries to bring in a chair but Benoit takes it away and, after teasing turning on Angle, clocks both Guerreros. That means an Angle Slam to Eddie for the pin to send Angle and Benoit to No Mercy.

**Rating:** A-. This is a great example of take four guys, tell them to go have fun and turn them loose. They had nonstop action here with all four beating the heck out of each other and some great mat work. There's almost no way these guys aren't going to have a blast out there and it gets more entertaining every time. That match on Sunday has serious potential.

Stephanie has come to a decision and we'll hear it in the ring. This was a totally pointless scene.

Speaking of pointless, here's Stephanie to announce if Undertaker can use his cast in the Cell where ANYTHING GOES. First though, here are Heyman and Lesnar to pay close attention. Stephanie agrees that it's anything goes in the Cell but Undertaker has been behaving very badly. Eh it's cool though and he can wear the cast.

Lesnar gets right in her face (that would earn him a castration today) but here's Undertaker...who charges right into a spinebuster. Lesnar stomps on the cast and leaves but Heyman makes sure to get in one last gloat. Cast shots to Heyman and the returning Lesnar allow Undertaker to beat Heyman up even more (drawing some good blood) to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. That main event is more than enough to carry the show but sweet goodness I never need to hear Stephanie talk to Heyman and Lesnar again. The fact that the whole show was built around a weapon being used inside the most violent match in the company and wound up going nowhere tells you a lot of this show's problem. The stuff aside from the tournament and the cast stuff felt worthless and that's not good when there's so much awesome in the ring.

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# Monday Night Raw – March 13, 2017: Marching on Together

## Monday Night Raw

Date: March 13, 2017

Location: Joe Louis Arena, Detroit, Michigan

Commentators: Michael Cole, Byron Saxton, Corey Graves

It's the final show in the famous Joe Louis Arena and we're getting closer to Wrestlemania XXXIII. The big story seems to be Undertaker vs. Roman Reigns, which was made official earlier in the day. That leaves the Universal Title match between Brock Lesnar vs. Goldberg, assuming one or both of them are actually booked for the show. Let's get to it.

In Memory of Ron Bass.

We open with a recap of Lesnar taking Goldberg out last week.

Here are Paul Heyman and Lesnar to open things up. Heyman can't believe that something happened last week because Goldberg was supposed to be unstoppable. In twenty nights at Wrestlemania, Lesnar is going to prove the world wrong and destroy Goldberg in short order. Heyman teases Goldberg being here but says the champ isn't in the arena. Every time Lesnar has run into Goldberg it's been spear, Jackhammer, Goldberg. Last week though it was F5, Lesnar. At Wrestlemania, it's an F5 to end the great comeback because the F5 means Goldberg goes down. I still don't know why I'd want to see

this match again.

Stephanie McMahon and Mick Foley are in the back with Stephanie talking about how Foley isn't the best businessman. She's his manager and needs to develop him so he can grow in abilities. Tonight it's time for Foley's first lesson: by the end of the night, he needs to fire someone.

#### Sasha Banks vs. Dana Brooke

Dana takes her into the corner to start but gets rolled (with a handful of tights) for the pin at 1:18. It's as sudden as it sounds. Post match Charlotte gets in the ring and yells at Dana for losing. She sounds like she's about to fire Dana but Dana hits her in the face and the beating is on. Charlotte eventually gets away from a yelling Dana.

Eric LeGrande, a former Rutgers football player who suffered a spinal injury, is getting the Warrior Award.

#### Brian Kendrick/Tony Nese vs. Akira Tozawa/TJ Perkins

Kendrick trips Tozawa to start but gets sent to the floor for a kick from Perkins as we take a break. Back with Nese forearming Tozawa in the face and grabbing a bodyscissors. Tozawa finally gets up and dives over for the tag as everything breaks down. Nese knees Perkins in the face for two but gets caught by a good looking springboard DDT for the same. Another knee sets up some face communication though as Perkins crashes into Tozawa, setting up a rollup with a handful of Perkins' tights for the pin at 9:00.

**Rating:** C. Let me make sure I've got this straight: Raw has however many writers and bookers and we get two straight matches ending in a rollup with a handful of tights? You can't throw feet on the ropes or something like that? The match itself was a bit disjointed and longer than it needed to be, though I'm still interested in Kendrick vs. Tozawa.

Anderson and Gallows don't know why they can't get any attention in the tag team division.

Here's Kevin Owens (in a snazzy KO Mania II shirt which looks like a

Wrestlemania II shirt and a good piece of masking tape) for a tag match. Before anyone else comes out though, Owens says it's time to get the spotlight back where it belongs. After a clip of the Festival of Friendship, Owens says Jericho was never his friend and the feeling was mutual. Then he'll take the US Title at Wrestlemania, leaving only the tears of Jericho. "Cry them out man." Besides, who needs Jericho when you have a destroyer on your side?

#### Kevin Owens/Samoa Joe vs. Sami Zayn/Chris Jericho

Owens starts with Jericho but Kevin tags out instead of fighting (like a good heel is supposed to do). Sami comes in and takes a beating of his own, including a backsplash from Joe. It's back to Owens who catches Jericho with a superkick off the apron, only to have Sami hit a big flip dive but he comes up holding his knee. Owens goes right after the knee and it's time for some double stomping, drawing a DQ at 3:45.

**Rating:** C-. I always fall for the selling but the fact that they went to a DQ so fast doesn't give me good feelings about Sami. You could see the knee hit the ground and then they went to a very fast finish in a match that feels like it should have gone a lot longer than four minutes. It was good while it lasted but this has me worried.

Post match Owens and Jericho go at it until the double teaming gets the better of Chris.

Stephanie suggests that Foley fire Sami Zayn when Nia Jax comes in. Nia wants justice by being added to the Women's Title match. Stephanie gives her a match with Bayley tonight.

Jinder Mahal demands that he's not fired tonight because Rusev was holding him back. He wants a match to prove himself, so Foley gives him Roman Reigns.

New Day has their own talk show segment called New Day Talks, which means Big Show as their first guest. Big Show talks about the Jetsons movie until Titus O'Neil comes in to call the show stupid. Titus shoves Show as New Day eats popcorn. Woods: "Here's your

lesson: Titus O'Neil ruins everything!"

### Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Cesaro/Sheamus

The winners get Anderson and Gallows at Wrestlemania. Before the match, Enzo shills his cuppa haters coffee cup and Cass talks about how they're not the #1 seed but rather the bracket busters. Cesaro and Sheamus clean house to start before a standoff takes us to the first break. Back with Cesaro blasting Enzo with a clothesline and the double teaming begins. Enzo slips away and makes the hot tag to Cass, who eats a top rope clothesline. Sheamus can't get the ten forearms as Cass kicks him to the floor, only to have Anderson and Gallows come in for the no contest at 8:01.

**Rating:** D+. ENOUGH WITH THE FREAKING TRIPLE THREATS ALREADY!!! JUST PICK A TEAM OR DROP THE WHOLE THING BECAUSE NO ONE CARES ABOUT THESE TITLES IN THE FIRST PLACE!!! This is the first match I would cut from the 13 or 14 match Wrestlemania card and now it's likely going to be a three way instead of just giving Enzo and Cass the belts the next night on Raw which would guarantee a huge pop and also let the pay per view breathe a little bit.

Anderson and Gallows destroy both teams.

We look back at the end of last week's show.

Post break Anderson and Gallows laugh at Foley for getting one over on him because there were no winners. Say it with me: triple threat match.

### Roman Reigns vs. Jinder Mahal

An early Samoan drop gets two on Mahal and Roman pounds away in the corner until the Undertaker's gong strikes. The distraction lets Mahal getting a knee to the face and a sitout slam gets two. Not that it matters as back to back Superman Punches put Jinder away at 2:54.

Post match Reigns calls Undertaker out and we take a break. Back from a break with Reigns still in the ring and Shawn Michaels coming out. Reigns says it's nice to see him but he wanted to see the Undertaker. Shawn says he saw Reigns get distracted by the gong and

that can't happen going into Wrestlemania. We're twenty days from Wrestlemania and Undertaker is already in Reigns' head. At Wrestlemania, Undertaker is going to eat Roman alive.

Reigns says that's not happening because Undertaker needs to be wondering what it's going to be like to be in the ring with him. Shawn says he's in Reigns' yard but Roman needs to get his head on straight. That's not enough for Roman, because he remembers Undertaker retired Shawn at Wrestlemania. Come Orlando, Reigns is retiring Undertaker. Reigns goes to leave and gets run over by Braun Strowman, who earns himself a THANK YOU STROWMAN chant.

Stephanie is pleased but Foley is still upset over the firing order. Mick doesn't want to do it because we're so close to Wrestlemania (and there's NO OTHER WRESTLING SHOW for anyone to wrestle on) but Stephanie says do it or she will.

We look back at Austin Aries decking Neville last week and defeating Tony Nese the next night on 205 Live.

#### Austin Aries vs. Ariya Daivari

Aries forearm him in the face to start before snapping off some armdrags. A nasty backdrop sends Aries face first into the apron. Not that it matters though as Aries hits a neckbreaker onto the knee, followed by the roaring elbow for the pin at 3:48.

**Rating:** D+. Not enough time for this to go anywhere but I'm glad they're setting up the Cruiserweight Title match by actually having Aries win a few matches. It's clear that we're getting Aries vs. Neville for the title but there's no need to just throw it out there. Let them build something up instead and make Aries into something serious.

We look at Heyman's speech again.

Emma is coming.

#### Titus O'Neil vs. Big Show

A chop, a slam and three chokeslams end Titus at 1:52. That's all it needed to be.

Billy Jean King Women's History Month video.

Bayley and Sasha are ready for Nia Jax.

Chris Jericho wants to show the world the real Kevin Owens so next week, the REAL Kevin will be the guest on a special edition of the Highlight Reel. Chris calls the interviewer Tom Phillips but it's Mike Rome. Jericho doesn't buy it and puts Tom Phillips on the List.

#### Bayley vs. Nia Jax

Non-title. Nia throws her into the corner and then out to the floor for a whip into the steps as we take a break. Back with Bayley wrapping the knee around the ropes for a few kicks. Nia pops back up and stomps away in the corner for the DQ at 7:15. Not enough to rate but that's two DQ's to go with two pullings of the tights and a no contest tonight.

Nia throws Bayley into the barricade for good measure.

Next week it's the Highlight Reel and Braun vs. Roman.

Here's Stephanie to introduce Foley for the firing announcement. Foley hadn't been able to think of anyone all night but in the last ten minutes, someone's name came to him and he knows what to do. After thanking Stephanie, he announces.....Stephanie should be fired. Stephanie isn't pleased (of course) and rips into Foley, who talks about how Stephanie lied to him six months ago when she said she had nothing to do with HHH interfering.

Foley goes on about how HHH makes an army for himself but Stephanie cuts him off mid-insult. Cue HHH to say Foley can say this to his face. Foley says that's fine but he didn't think HHH really existed. HHH laughs him off and they go back and forth about how Foley doesn't need this job and HHH uses his position to abuse his power. HHH says Foley needs to leave and go around the world again telling his sad story, but if he does, his kids can forget about working for WWE.

What Foley needs to do is go backstage and have an epiphany about how much he loves his job before doing whatever Stephanie tells him to do. Foley turns to leave but stops as Stephanie rants against the

people for not respecting their bosses enough. HHH goes after Foley and gets Mr. Socko for his efforts. Stephanie makes the save with a low blow and HHH unbuttons his sleeves. Cue Seth Rollins on a crutch but it's quickly thrown to the side. Rollins comes in and hammers away but HHH grabs the crutch and hits him in the bad knee. HHH even busts out a reverse Figure Four to make Rollins scream to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This was a really different kind of show as they were getting ready for Wrestlemania so most of the wrestling and action wasn't important (hence all the DQ's etc). They pushed towards Wrestlemania here and that's exactly what they needed to do. We already know most of the card so there's not much of a point to adding anything new (save for a triple threat match of course). The show wasn't the best but it did its job, which is much more important.

### Results

Sasha Banks b. Dana Brooke – Rollup with a handful of tights

Tony Nese/Brian Kendrick b. Akira Tozawa/TJ Perkins – Rollup with a handful of tights

Sami Zayn/Chris Jericho b. Kevin Owens/Samoa Joe via DQ when Joe and Owens double teamed Jericho

Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Cesaro/Sheamus when Anderson and Gallows interfered

Roman Reigns b. Jinder Mahal – Superman Punch

Austin Aries b. Ariya Daivari – Roaring Elbow

Big Show b. Titus O'Neil – Chokeslam

Bayley b. Nia Jax via DQ when Nia attacked in the corner

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# Smackdown – October 3, 2002: This is the Good Half

## **Smackdown**

Date: October 3, 2002

Location: CajunDome, Lafayette, Louisiana

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

I don't know what lit the fire underneath Smackdown as of late but they've been on fire. Last week was one of the best episodes of TV I've ever seen and while there's a good chance things will go downhill tonight, at least things are on a roll coming in. We've got about three weeks before No Mercy and it should be time to announce a Smackdown match or two. Let's get to it.

Stephanie McMahon does the seizure inducing intro to talk about tonight's card, including Edge vs. Kurt Angle, Matt Hardy vs. Undertaker in a falls count anywhere match and the start of a tournament for the Smackdown Tag Team Titles with the finals at No Mercy. This is your first (of many) ways to put Stephanie on screen and remind us that she's just so darn cool.

Smackdown Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: Rikishi/Mark Henry vs. Eddie Guerrero/Chavo Guerrero

The cousins try to get in a sneak attack to start but the big guys throw Chavo onto Eddie. That goes nowhere though as it's basically a high crossbody, meaning Eddie pops back up and hammers on Rikishi. Cole: "You've got to take your hat off to Smackdown GM Stephanie

McMahon!"

Eddie comes in and walks into a Samoan drop, followed by a superkick to Chavo. It's time to start in on Mark's knee with both Guerreros taking a few shots, only to have Mark keep kicking them away. Rikishi comes in and is immediately forced out by the referee, allowing Chavo to hit Henry in the knee with a chair. Eddie slaps on a leglock for the tap out.

**Rating:** C-. You can see the greatness in Eddie and Chavo as a team and the monsters were a fine choice for some monsters they needed to cheat. This was a good way to get around one of the nothing teams and advance the talented guys, which is exactly how this should have gone. When you get the right opponents, there's going to be a classic for the Guerreros somewhere in this tournament.

Torrie Wilson arrives...with her dad Al. Oh geez it's this mess. They run into Billy and Chuck when Dawn Marie comes in and hits on Al.

Paul Heyman and Brock Lesnar are watching a clip of Lesnar attacking Undertaker when Heyman says Stephanie has made a rematch at No Mercy. The thing is she won't tell him the stipulation and Heyman is worried. Lesnar laughs it off when Matt Hardy comes in to say it won't be falls count anywhere.

#### Matt Hardy vs. Undertaker

Falls count anywhere. Undertaker slugs him into the corner to start and takes it outside to throw Matt into various things. A low blow breaks up a chokeslam through the table but Undertaker shoves him into the barricade for a breather. More right hands send Matt through the crowd and Undertaker gets a soda thrown in his face. They head to the back with Matt getting in a cheap shot so Undertaker rams him into a wall. Matt runs off while shouting that they'll meet again and here's Lesnar to jump Undertaker. An F5 sends Undertaker onto what looks like popcorn (seriously) to give Matt the easy pin.

**Rating:** F. Unless I'm missing something, Undertaker took a total of some right hands, a low blow, forearms from Lesnar and an F5 onto a glorified stack of pillows. That's enough for him to do a job for Matt Hardy but the fight he and Lesnar had wasn't enough to do a job to Brock on pay per view? Horrible stuff here as Hardy got squashed until the stupid ending.

Post match Lesnar crushes Undertaker's hand with a propane tank.

Survivor Series ad.

Undertaker's hand is being iced and he walks away from an interview attempt. The trainer thinks the hand is broken.

#### Cruiserweight Title: Crash vs. Jamie Noble

Jamie is defending and they start with a fight over a wristlock. The announcers are of course more interested in talking about Undertaker's hand injury, which isn't all that surprising given how worthless the title has become in the last few months. Noble takes him into the corner before cranking on a camel clutch. Crash fights up with some basic stuff, including an O'Connor roll to knock Nidia off the apron. The Crash Landing (Styles Clash) is countered into a rollup and Noble grabs the rope to retain.

**Rating:** C-. Crash made this better with a nice comeback but unfortunately the fans really didn't care. Like I said though, the division is just nothing at this point and there's no reason to care about Jamie Noble vs. Crash in a four minute match serving as a backdrop for all the Undertaker vs. Lesnar talk. That switch from Raw really did wonders for Crash's career though.

Kurt Angle brags about how awesome he is and thinks Chris Benoit will lose to Rey Mysterio tonight. Angle says he's awesome when Edge comes in and makes bald jokes but at least ties it back to their hair vs. hair match. A sucker punch puts Edge down.

#### Edge vs. Kurt Angle

We get a replay of the sucker punch from five minutes ago during Kurt's entrance. Angle takes him down by the arm to start and kicks Edge off the leg without much effort. Back up and Edge goes after an arm as well, this time with a hammerlock, both standing and laying down. See that's versatility. Angle finally gets tired of the beating and hammers away in the corner, only to have Edge reverse into the same.

They head outside with Angle's arm going into the post as Edge is in a lot more control than you would expect. Back in and Edge is thrown over the top for a big crash to the floor. A drop onto the barricade makes things even worse and an overhead belly to belly gives Kurt two. We hit a chinlock with a bodyscissors for a bit before Angle knees him in the banged up ribs.

Since Angle is smarter than the average wrestler, he grabs an abdominal stretch to keep Edge in trouble. Edge fights up and hits an overhead belly to belly (good one too) to set up some clotheslines. The half nelson faceplant gets two but the spear hits the referee. The Edgecution should get the finish but there's no count. Therefore, the Angle Slam connects as well, only to have another referee come in for the two.

The ankle lock sends Edge bailing to the ropes and he goes up top, only to have Angle superplex him down. They interlock their legs into a small package though and it's a double pin. Naturally the referees disagree (with Mike Chioda nailing Mike Sparks) to send us to a break and a restart. Cole: "Don't adjust your sets! This match has been restarted!" Does Cole think that adjusting the sharpness is going to rewind a video or something? Angle misses a charge and flies out to the floor, leaving Edge to dive off the top for a big crash.

Back in and a missile dropkick gets two on Kurt as the crowd is losing their minds on these near falls. A very hard German suplex drops Edge and Angle rolls some more for good measure. Cue Chris Benoit for a distraction, allowing Edge to cradle Angle for two. That would have been the finish in today's WWE. The ankle lock is easily broken up and Angle grabs a chair. Benoit offers a distraction though, causing the chair shot to hit the top rope and bounce back into Kurt's head. The spear gives Edge the pin.

**Rating:** A-. This was one less referee fight and false finish away from being a classic. As it is, this was just another great match to be added to the recent string of them on this show. Edge is getting hotter and hotter every single week and thankfully seems to be getting somewhere as a result. I love it when you see someone work hard and get rewarded for it, which is far rarer than it should be. Benoit thinks it's hilarious.

Rey Mysterio video.

Post break Angle goes into the locker room to go after Benoit but Stephanie is RIGHT THERE to break it up and put them together as partners in the tournament. If they fight while they're partners, they're suspended without pay for a year. Angle sucker punches Benoit (that's two tonight) but Stephanie SCREECHES at them to shake hands right now. Lesnar gives Heyman another pep talk when Matt

Hardy interrupts. Since Undertaker is injured and Matt just beat him, he should probably be #1 contender. Makes sense actually. Matt leaves and Heyman whispers to Lesnar: "I'd be careful. He could kill you." Laughter ensues.

Raw Roulette is coming. That has way less potential than they're building it up to have here, though to be fair that's kind of the point.

#### Smackdown Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: Billy and Chuck vs. Faarooq/Reverend D-Von

Billy asks Faarooq if he's actually associating with D-Von and gets mic'd in the head for his efforts. Chuck gets jumped from behind but manages a butterfly suplex on D-Von. Faarooq beats him down again though until Chuck gets in a shot and makes the hot tag to Gunn. Everything breaks down and Faarooq gets in a spinebuster on Billy to give D-Von the upset pin.

**Rating:** D. Nothing to see here and that's not really surprising. I'm not sure why you have Billy and Chuck lose here as I can't imagine anyone is thinking much of D-Von and Faarooq. You're trying to establish some new titles and it might help to have a multiple time Tag Team Championship combination in the later rounds.

Dawn shows Al her bikini.

It's time for the bikini contest and let's see how fast we can get this over with: Dawn looks great but Torrie looks better and has a sucker so she wins. Dawn offers a handshake and throws Torrie outside.

Stephanie gets to tell Heyman and Lesnar that Undertaker's hand is broken. Undertaker is insisting to fight at No Mercy though and it's going to be Hell in a Cell. That's quite a speedy trip to the hospital (when you remember Undertaker refused treatment), x-ray, diagnosis, phone call to Stephanie and decision since Undertaker got hurt all of an hour and fifteen minutes ago. Heyman looks nervous but Brock looks eerily pleased.

#### Chris Benoit vs. Rey Mysterio

Benoit wastes no time and sends Mysterio into the corner, followed by what looks to be a Razor's Edge attempt, only to have Rey reverse into a hurricanrana. Chris is sent outside for a big flip dive but comes right back with those hard suplexes that only he can throw. A

cross arm choke keeps Rey down until a sunset flip gives him two. Back up and Benoit sends him into the corner over and over before grabbing a surfboard hold.

Rey fights up and slips out of a dragon suplex, only to get caught in a wicked wheelbarrow suplex instead. A dropkick gives Rey a breather and a springboard split legged moonsault gives him a near fall. The 619 is countered into a shoulder breaker though and the Swan Dive gives Benoit two more. Rey is quickly out of the Crossface and a springboard Fameasser sets up the 619. Cue Angle to snap Benoit's throat across the top so Rey can grab a hurricanrana for the pin.

**Rating:** B. Were you really expecting this to be anything but solid? Smackdown has figured out the secret to an exciting in-ring product: stop trying to do anything too complicated and just let us have a fun match with some minor angle advancement. You can see these two plus Angle and someone else (probably Edge) in the tournament and that's going to be awesome. Talented wrestlers can do something like this when given the chance and that's what we got here.

Benoit Crossfaces Angle until security breaks it up to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B+. What does it say when this is one heck of a downgrade over the previous week? Those two matches more than made up for the horrible Undertaker stuff and the fact that it's setting up a Cell match does make things a little easier to sit through. I'm having a blast watching these shows every week and it's amazing that Raw is such a polar opposite from this. How can one company be so totally different? Either way, great stuff here, again.

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# Main Event – February 23, 2017: Keeping Me Guessing

## Main Event

Date: February 23, 2017

Location: Staples Center, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves, R-Truth

I'm not even sure what to expect from this show anymore as it really could be anything from week to week. That's not exactly a good thing either as the show can be an entertaining hour but at the same time it can be something so uninteresting that I don't know how I survive every week. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

### Sin Cara vs. Bo Dallas

Bo takes him down to start and poses a lot, as you would expect him to do. A clothesline sets up a chinlock before Bo hammers away in the corner. That earns him a monkey flip as Cara starts his comeback, including a headstand into a headscissors out of the corner. Dallas gets sent outside for a running Swanton off the apron but he rolls through a high crossbody and grabs the tights for the pin on Cara at 4:53.

**Rating:** D. It's going to be one of those weeks isn't it? I really don't know why Dallas isn't on the main roster. You really can't do something with that grin and the extra aggression that he's been showing from time to time? It's not like the main roster is flush with jobbers to the stars so throw him on there and let us have something fresh for a change.

We open with a long recap of the Festival of Friendship and Kevin Owens turning on Chris Jericho. Sweet popcorn baked into a pie that was an amazing segment.

Owens is sitting in the ring in the dark in a chair to get things going. When he was growing up, if anyone had told him he would be

defending the World Title against Goldberg in the main event of a pay per view, he would have thought you were crazy. Of course he'd be in the main event of a pay per view, but against Goldberg? The Goldberg chants start up and Owens thinks that's exactly what he wanted to hear.

That's the chant that makes Goldberg think he's invincible as they head into their match at Fastlane. At the pay per view, all Owens has to do is outlast and outsmart Goldberg because the longer a Goldberg match goes, the weaker and weaker he gets. Owens is the master of outsmarting opponents and no one knows how to play the game like him.

Goldberg can say Owens is next all he wants but as far as Owens is concerned, Goldberg is nothing. As for what happened last week with Jericho...Owens drops the mic and walks out. This is the Owens that we've been waiting to see on the main roster for a long time and that's nothing but good as we head into the final stretch to Wrestlemania. Owens was great here and that's awesome to see.

Our second Raw moment.

Cole is in the back for a sitdown interview with Brock Lesnar and Paul Heyman. We get straight to the point with Goldberg but Heyman cuts Cole off and says Lesnar isn't interested in questions like this one. Heyman says Lesnar isn't interested in hearing about Goldberg winning the title so Lesnar scares Cole away and stares straight into the camera.

Paul talks about Owens attacking Jericho last week because Lesnar disagrees with Owens being the most violent champion in years. Lesnar isn't interested in hearing about Owens but Heyman talks about Kevin's greatness anyway. A lot of people want to see Owens pull it off but Lesnar disagrees because if Owens loses, it's Goldberg vs. Lesnar for the title. That's just one more thing for Lesnar to conquer at Wrestlemania and that's what he wants to do.

Diamond Dallas Page Hall of Fame announcement.

TJ Perkins/Cedric Alexander vs. Noam Dar/Tony Nese

Nese throws TJ around to start so Perkins grabs a headlock instead. With that not working, a jumping spinning kick to the face puts Nese into the corner, followed by the Detonation Kick to send him outside. Back from a break with Perkins snapping Noam's arm back but

some heel double teaming takes over. Perkins fights out of a waistlock and hits a gutbuster to set up the hot tag to Cedric. Everything breaks down and a Lumbar Check ends Dar at 9:37.

**Rating:** C-. Still not good but at least there was some better action. You're still only going to get so much out of these random cruiserweight tags though and that's rather tiresome. I know Dar and Alexander were feuding a few weeks back but that hasn't really been the case recently. I need more than just a random tag match to keep my attention and I'm not getting that here.

We'll wrap it up here.

### Braun Strowman vs. Big Show

And yes, this really is the main event. Show grabs a wristlock to start but Braun rolls around and nips up to escape. Now that's going to get him noticed. Show shoves him down but gets punched in the jaw and dropped for his efforts. Strowman charges into a choke but easily reverses into a DDT for two. A clothesline drops Show for two and it's all Strowman so far.

Show reverses a suplex into one of his own and grabs the chokeslam for two. The powerslam doesn't work so Show puts him on top for the superplex. Strowman escapes that but dives into the KO Punch for two. Show loads up the Vader Bomb, only to have Strowman get up for the powerslam (doesn't look great) for two of his own. Not that it matters as Braun hits another powerslam for the pin at 12:10.

**Rating:** C. Right here is a great example of a match that doesn't need to be good to get the point across. Much like last week, this was about Strowman showing that he's the new star instead of the old guard like Show or Mark Henry. It's a very simple idea but they're telling the right story, which is all you can ask for.

Post match Reigns comes out and gets in a few Superman Punches but Strowman hits the powerslam to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. This was one of the weeks where the original stuff wasn't enough to carry the show, despite the fact that the Raw replays were much better. I still don't get why they can't throw in a bigger name for all of a match, even if they're appearing on the main show that week. I know there's a point to this show but they could at least try.

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