

Monday Night Raw – July 1, 1996: Of Course It's Shawn

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 1, 1996

Location: Brown County Expo, Green Bay, Wisconsin

Attendance: 4,660

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Jerry Lawler

It's Shawn-a-Mania running wild here as Shawn is the undisputed king of the company and rolling over anyone who dares challenge him.

Unfortunately this isn't exactly saving them in the ratings but there's only so much they can do against Nitro and the Outsiders at this point, especially with British Bulldog as his top challenger in the previous few months. Let's get to it.

Shawn Michaels vs. Marty Jannetty

Non-title. Shawn has the Kliq Cam with him to make sure he's even less interesting than he already was. Jim Cornette is on the floor with the New Rockers to help set up Shawn vs. Vader. They do the big lockup to start as Vince talks about Canada Day. Feeling out process to start with Shawn nipping back up off an early takedown. Some armdrags put Shawn down again and it's actually all Marty early on. You know Shawn isn't going to sell for that long though and he makes a quick comeback with a few armdrags of his own, followed by a clothesline.

Leif pulls his partner out of the way of Sweet Chin Music and offers a distraction so Marty can take over again. There's a backdrop to drop Shawn on his back but Marty spends too much time posing. Back from a break with Marty getting two off a snapmare (yes a snapmare) and putting on a chinlock. Shawn's comeback is cut off when his shoulder goes into the post. Marty lands on his feet to escape a monkey flip and nails a quick clothesline. Again Shawn will have none of that and hits the forearm but doesn't go straight for the superkick.

Instead he tries a powerbomb which is countered into a hurricanrana which

is countered into a sunset flip for two on Marty. We take another break and come back with Marty scoring with the Rocker Dropper but missing the top rope fist drop. Shawn goes old school with a piledriver (which, along with the teardrop suplex were completely abandoned once he went to the superkick) and the top rope elbow, followed by Sweet Chin Music for the pin.

Rating: B. These two always worked well together, dating back to their great feud in 1993 over the Intercontinental Title. Marty continues to be a very underrated performer who could have been much better remembered if he wasn't partnered with Shawn Michaels earlier in his career. Really good TV match here though which you could easily put on yet another Shawn DVD.

Leif tries to interfere and gets a superkick of his own. Shawn's manager Jose Lothario punches out Cornette, who did nothing here.

We look at Sunny suckering Phineas Godwinn in to admit he loved her before ripping him apart and sending the Smoking Gunns in for the beatdown. Hillbilly Jim and Henry Godwinn made the save, leaving Sunny to be slopped. Sunny looked great here, before the slopping that is.

Mankind vs. Duke Droese

Jake Roberts is on commentary, which isn't something you often hear. Lawler makes drunk jokes about Roberts as Mankind beats the heck out of Droese to start. We take a very early break and come back with Mankind cranking on the arm as the slow beating continues, only to be cut off by Jake asking what closet Lawler came out of. A quick spinebuster gives Duke a breather but Mankind grabs the Mandible Claw to break up....something that isn't important as Droese is out.

Rating: D. This was just a squash and it makes sense that Droese was gone after this, save for a few matches on Superstars. The guy was a wrestling garbageman though and he's only going to get so far in the company. At least things are starting to shift though and that's a really good thing for the WWF's future.

Lawler and Roberts get in an argument with Jerry slapping him, only to

have Mankind put Jake down with the Claw.

Marc Mero vs. Goldust

Steve Austin is on commentary before his match with Mero at In Your House IX. Goldust is feuding with Undertaker so a cameo isn't out of the question. During the entrances, Austin starts yelling at Vince for cutting him off and you can almost hear 1998 from here. Mero punches him out to the floor to start as Austin goes off on Roberts for being old. Goldust is sent outside again as the stalling continues.

We take a break and come back with Mero knocking Goldust around ringside before he gets caught in a chinlock. Make that three chinlocks as this just keeps going. Goldust drops a fist to the head and we hit ANOTHER chinlock as we go to a second break. Back with Mero missing an elbow drop and Goldust hammering away with right hands. That's enough excitement so it's off to a REVERSE chinlock.

Mero gets back up and charges into a back elbow, setting up a powerslam for two. A double clothesline puts both of them down because this match hasn't involved enough laying around. Marlena gets very close to Sable as Mero makes his comeback. The camera stays on the women and cuts back to see Goldust hitting the Curtain Call for the pin.

Rating: D-. Oh sweet goodness what a boring match. This was a bunch of sitting around waiting on anything interesting to happen and then not being surprised when nothing happened. These guys are better than this and I have no idea why they had such a horrible match with such little effort involved.

Overall Rating: C-. The opener is really good but it's not enough to save the rest of the show. This show went up against the go home show for Bash at the Beach 1996 (as in the Third Man) so the follow up from this mess is going against Hogan's big first appearance from this show. Well at least it should as Hogan didn't debut in the Black and White until the NEXT week for reasons of WCW is stupid. Either way, this show sucked, save for Shawn of course, which is just how things worked in 1996.

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Monday Night Raw – October 14, 1996: Rock Bottom

Monday Night Raw

Date: October 14, 1996

Location: Hersheypark Arena, Hershey, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 3,923

Commentators: Kevin Kelly, Jim Ross

It's the go home show for Buried Alive but more importantly than that we have a major showdown with Steve Austin vs. Shawn Michaels in a non-title match. I really don't think a show needs much more than that but we're also going to get the blowoff between Jerry Lawler and Jake Roberts in the Roberts is a drunk angle. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks at Austin vs. Michaels.

Opening sequence.

Phineas Godwinn vs. Vader

There are A TON of empty seats opposite the camera, as in to the degree

that WCW would laugh at them over it. Vader pounds him into the corner and onto the floor to start as JR goes on another rant against Vince which wouldn't go anywhere since Vince would be back on commentary the next week. Cue Sid to distract Vader, allowing Phineas to run him over with a clothesline. Vader is knocked outside for a bit before Phineas hits an impressive slam. The Slop Drop doesn't work as Vader grabs the rope and the Vader Bomb ends this a few seconds later.

Rating: D. Another not great match here but at least they kept it short so all the fans left in the arena won't fall asleep in their chairs. Vader vs. Sid isn't an interesting match for the pay per view with Sid popping up after that splash last week but maybe they can have the match that Starrcade couldn't pull off back in 1993.

Here's Mr. Perfect for a chat. He's ready for a challenge from Hunter Hearst Helmsley and he'll be right here next week to face him one on one. Not much to say here but keep an eye on this one.

Jerry Lawler vs. Jake Roberts

Lawler comes out for his pre-match comedy routine but JR WILL NOT SHUT UP about how much he hates doing commentary with Vince. Jake finally stumbles out with a paper bag behind his back and JR messes it up again by saying "If I didn't know any better, I'd think he's drunk!". Lawler keeps making jokes and here's Gorilla Monsoon to say Roberts can't wrestle. With Lawler's back turned, Jake stands up straight and tells Gorilla that he's fine. They actually take a break and come back with Jake hitting the DDT for the pin in thirty seconds. Good grief they managed to screw up the fake drunk idea twice in a single match!

Post match Jake pours whiskey onto Jerry's face and wraps the snake around him.

More from Jesse Jammes, who is re-releasing With My Baby Tonight later this year. Jim Johnston (third Double J in this story) is impressed with his talents you see.

Freddie Joe Floyd vs. Hunter Hearst Helmsley

I would bring up JR complaining about Vince again but the point is buried into the ground by now. Helmsley actually handcuffs his valet to the ring so Mr. Perfect can't come out and woo her away again. That's actually kind of awesome. Floyd takes him to the mat to start and grabs a headlock before Helmsley pounds him down with forearms in the corner.

Cue Mr. Perfect as Helmsley gets in a suplex and he just happens to have a key. Freddie hammers away as Perfect leaves with the lady. The Pedigree finally plants Floyd but HHH goes after perfect and gets punched in the face for the countout. So the referee was paying enough attention to count but not enough to see him get knocked down?

Rating: D. All storyline here as Perfect vs. HHH is turning into a great midcard story and a really strong example of what a veteran rub can do for someone like HHH. It might not be the best match but above all else it's making HHH look important which is more anything else he's done since his debut.

Austin is ready to beat Shawn tonight as a message to Bret Hart.

Here's Sunny to debut a massive poster of herself. JR: "We're wasting time here."

Mankind says he'll win on Sunday.

Faarooq vs. The Pug

Sunny is on commentary and hits on Kevin Kelly until he says he "does ok" financially. Now JR rips on Vince for Faarooq's stupid looking headgear. Ok I'll give him that one. A spinebuster and the Dominator end Pug in a hurry.

We see Faarooq and Ahmed Johnson having an argument over the phone earlier this week on Livewire.

Undertaker says it's the calm before the storm.

Steve Austin vs. Shawn Michaels

Non-title. Austin takes him into the corner to start and we cut to

Cornette and Vader watching in the back. Cornette promises to crush Sid on Sunday and Vader barks a lot because he's a bit out there. They trade hammerlocks early on with Shawn holding him down with a headlock.

Now we go to Sid who is WAY too excited to go to Buried Alive to face Vader for the title shot. Shawn grabs a chinlock for a bit before a pinfall reversal sequence sends Austin to the floor for a breather. Back in and the Stun Gun slows Shawn down but it's too early for the Stunner. We take a break and come back with Vader coming in for the DQ less than thirty seconds later.

Rating: D+. This wasn't designed to be anything more than an overhyped match with the rug being pulled out from underneath the fans. In other words it was a WCW style match and those have very rarely felt like anything important. These two would have a few more important matches but this wasn't a great starting point for them.

Savio Vega comes in and is quickly dispatched but here's Sid to clear the ring. Fake Diesel and Fake Razor come out to watch as Shawn and Sid yell at each other. Austin and Vader get back in and are dispatched again to end the show.

Overall Rating: D-. These shows are just horrible and it definitely starting to take its toll with this show drawing the lowest rating (1.78) in the history of the show. People were just not liking what they were selling at this point and it was high time to change things up, which is exactly what would happen next week. The less said about this show the better though.

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Wrestler of the Day – October 27: Henry Godwinn

Today is one of those gimmick characters: Henry Godwinn the hog farmer.

Godwinn started up in the late 80s and his first big break came in 1993 when he debuted with WCW as Shanghai Pearce. We'll start things off at Beach Blast 1993.

Tex Slazenger/Shanghai Pierce vs. Marcus Bagwell/2 Cold Scorpio

The heels are more commonly known as the Godwinns. The faces are another young team that wasn't very good but they were allegedly really good so they got the tag titles at least once. Bagwell was finally shedding the rookie status but he was still just annoying as all goodness. Scorpio was a guy that was always good but always jumped around a lot. The Godwinns are just big and annoying as all goodness.

This is ok stuff but it's really just a way to put the faces over and get them a win on PPV. There's almost nothing of note here as this could be on any television show that you cared to name. Just nothing interesting here as it's standard formula stuff with Bagwell being beaten on until he makes a tag then Scorpio is beaten on before another tag to Bagwell so Scorpio, the illegal man, can hit his top rope stuff for the pin.

Rating: D+. Just boring as heck here with nothing of note going on. This is the biggest problem that most PPVs have: matches that belong on TV being put on PPV where you have to pay for them. I don't want to pay for bad matches like this one, so why should I have to in order to see the

rest of the card?

Next up is Fall Brawl 1993.

Shanghai Pierce vs. Ice Train

Pierce has Tex Slazenger with him. They would move to the WWF in about a year and become the Godwins. Ice Train is more or less Big Zeke but with even less talent. I always liked him for some reason. Oh and Pierce is in a mask. They're from Texas but are being booed anyway which is appropriate somehow. Power vs. power here with Train being the stronger of the two.

This is one of the least interesting matches I've seen in a very long time. Basically imagine every power vs. power cliché you can think of and add in some heel lariats and you more or less have the entire match. The heels try to use a bullrope but he runs right through it and a bad powerslam ends it. This was nothing. No rating as I have nothing to say about it at all. Let that sink in for a bit.

One last WCW match at Starrcade 1993.

Cactus Jack/Maxx Payne vs. Tex Slazenger/Shanghai Pierce

Payne is a grunge rocker while Slazenger and Pierce are big Texans with Pierce wearing a mask. They would wind up in the WWF as the Godwinns if you remember them. Cactus is fresh off a world title feud with Vader and is one of the hottest stars in the company. Payne and Shanghai get things going and collide in the middle of the ring, sending both guys staggering back a bit. Pierce takes him down with a running shoulder block and let's stop to look at each other.

Maxx slams him down, causing Shanghai to bring in Tex. Jack gets the tag as well and they stare at each other a bit more. Cactus takes him into the corner but walks into a right hand to slow him down again. A boot to Tex's head puts him down again and it's back to Payne. Maxx hits a BIG clothesline to take Slazenger down as the match continues plodding along. Tex charges out of the corner and hits a kind of bulldog to take Maxx

down. Off to Shanghai who is immediately caught in a belly to back suplex for no cover.

Back to Cactus who pounds Pierce down before charging into the heel corner. Everything breaks down and the Cactus Clothesline puts Jack and Pierce on the floor again. Slazenger goes over the top to the floor as well, so Payne backdrops the 300lb Jack over the top onto Tex. Back in the ring and Maxx puts on the Payne Killer armbar but Tex makes the save. A double clothesline puts the Texans down and it's back to Cactus. He ducks a Pierce clothesline which winds up hitting Tex, allowing Cactus to hit his double arm DDT on Pierce for the pin.

Rating: D+. This wasn't horrible and it was a step above the other tag match, but man alive this show isn't doing anything well right now. These four guys are all big and mostly slow, which made for a dull and slow match here. Cactus was insanely popular though and kept the crowd interested in the match for the most part.

It's off to the WWF now, starting at In Your House II.

Henry Godwinn vs. Bam Bam Bigelow

Henry is an associate of DiBiase but not a full member of the Million Dollar Team. Bigelow runs him over to start and catches him in a belly to back suplex to take over. Another belly to back sets up a shoulder block to send Henry out to the floor. Back in and a DDT drops Godwinn again but he low bridges Bigelow to the floor. You can easily see the lack of effort or interest from either guy here.

Henry slams Bigelow on the floor before a clothesline gets two for Godwinn back inside. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Henry grabs the slop bucket. That goes nowhere so here's even more choking as the match just keeps going. A slam gets two on Bam Bam but he comes back with some slow motion headbutts. Bigelow misses a top rope headbutt but avoids a middle rope knee drop before quickly pinning Henry. I'm pretty sure that was a legit injury, leading to the fast pin.

Rating: F. If they don't care, why in the world should I either? It was clear that neither guy had any interest in the match and it was very slow

and dull as a result. Bigelow would be gone soon and Henry would become a loveable country boy with Hillbilly Jim as his manager which was the best thing that ever happened to him.

Henry would become a bigger deal, even getting onto Undertaker's Survivor Series team in 1995.

Royals vs. Dark Side

King Mabel, Jerry Lawler, Hunter Hearst Helmsley, Isaac Yankem

Undertaker, Fatu, Henry Godwin, Savio Vega

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

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

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

Lawler comes in and gets Savio which is a clash of styles if I've ever heard of one. Vega pounds away on Jerry as does Fatu. Yankem gets in a

knee to Fatu's back and the evil King takes over. Isaac comes in to slam Fatu and a legdrop follows. Mabel comes in but misses a splash in the corner. Vega pounds on Mabel in a rematch of the KOTR final. A side slam kills Vega but there's no cover.

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

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

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

If there's one thing WWF liked doing, it's a culture clash feud. Here's the big match of Godwinn's at In Your House V.

Hunter Hearst Helmsley vs. Henry Godwinn

This is a hogpen match, meaning there's an actual hog pen with pigs and mud near the entrance and the winner is the first man to send his opponent into said pin. Why is this match happening you ask? Simply put it's because Godwinn is a hog farmer so he associates with hogs. One note characters like him had a lot to do with the downfall of the WWF at this point, as there's no interest to such characters, meaning there's no reason to stick around and watch them. The guest referee is 1980s crowd

favorite Hillbilly Jim.

Godwinn slops the ring announcer before the match starts for no apparent reason. Helmsley jumps Godwinn but is quickly sent to the floor for his efforts. Back in and Henry ties him in the ropes so he can rub more slop in Helmsley's face. After nearly retching, Helmsley takes it back to the floor, only to be bulldogged face first into the steps.

They head up the pen with Henry being whipped into the gate but still managing to block a Pedigree attempt with a backdrop. Helmsley lands on the edge of the pen and kicks Henry down before dropping an elbow to the chest. Lawler makes Jeff Foxworthy style jokes about being from Arkansas as they head back inside where Godwinn hits a big wheelbarrow slam. Helmsley is whipped to two corners and out to the floor for another handful of slop. Henry hits the Slop Drop up by the pen but can't follow up. Instead he charges at Helmsley and gets backdropped into the slop to end things.

Rating: C-. This actually wasn't that bad as it was a regular match until the ending. Again though, why am I supposed to care? It's the lowest level of comedy and storytelling possible, which doesn't mean it's necessarily bad, but we have no reason to care about either of these guys so why should I be interested in the match?

Time for a tag team with Henry's cousin Phineas forming the Godwinns. Here they are at In Your House VII.

Tag Titles: Godwinns vs. Body Donnas

The Body Donnas, the champions, are fitness enthusiasts Skip and Zip and managed by the absolutely gorgeous Sunny. The Godwinns are Henry and his cousin Phineas (Middle initials O and I respectively, meaning their full initials are H.O.G. And P.I.G.) with the latter having a big crush on Phineas. The Body Donnas won the titles in a tournament final at Wrestlemania so this is a rematch.

Henry throws Zip around to start but has to double clothesline both Donnas down. Off to Phineas who bites Zip's arm and cranks on it a bit before tagging Henry back in. Skip, the more talented of the champions,

comes in and jumps into something vaguely resembling John Cena's Attitude Adjustment (fireman's carry slam). A nice wheelbarrow suplex sends Skip out to the floor as this is one sided so far. Zip tries to sneak in but the referee catches them since the Body Donnas aren't exactly twins.

Back in and it's Phineas vs. Zip with Phineas getting some kicks to the head and grabbing a headlock. Skip low bridges the hog farmer to the floor and the champions take over for the first time. The Donnas get two off a slingshot suplex as the camera keeps looking at Sunny but I can't say I blame them much this time around. Off to a chinlock from Skip followed by a standing hurricanrana for two.

Phineas gets all riled up (Vince's words) and cleans house as everything breaks down. Sunny runs to the back and comes back with a framed photo of herself to give to Phineas. Why he's fascinated by the photo when the real thing is right in front of him isn't explained but Phineas wasn't all that bright. Henry hits the Slop Drop on Zip but the distraction at ringside allows Skip to sneak in and small package Henry to retain the titles.

Rating: D. Much like most of the Body Donnas' matches, Sunny was the best thing going on. She was just so good at being evil and the looks didn't hurt anything at all. The tag division was just such a mess at this point though and this didn't do it a lot of favors. The division wouldn't be fixed for years to come either.

Here they are again for the titles at King of the Ring 1996.

Tag Titles; Smoking Guns vs. Godwins

These two are fighting for the tag belts so it must be the mid 90s. The country boys bring animals with them. Geez Hillbilly Jim was an awesome character. We go to the back where the Guns and Sunny are with Doc. We see a clip of the Body Donnas and their new manager who is a guy in drag named Cloudy. Sunny is dressed as a cowgirl and that's all you need to know. The Guns are the champions here.

These were some of the weakest gimmicks of all time. The Guns

are going heel here as Ross insists he saw them turn down autographs for some kids earlier at the hotel. Well at least the fans weren't at an airport asking about the NWO. Phineas likes Sunny here too. Billy implies he's slept with Sunny, which he likely did since he was in the WWF in the 90s. We cut to a random interview with Cloudy who can't even fake a girl's voice.

This is Vince's weird idea of humor I think. It lasted all of a month I think. The match is boring as all goodness so it doesn't mean anything. These two fought so many times and while it was ok, it was never really all that great. This match just isn't that entertaining. Henry puts an arm lock on Bart who taps like crazy but that wouldn't mean anything for about two more years. So this goes for about ten minutes and nothing of note happens.

I kept looking for something to talk about but this is just ten minutes of pure unadulterated average wrestling. It's not that good and it's not that bad but it's not interesting or anything. It would be fine on any TV show or house show but on a PPV, I doubt it. We of course go to a massive brawl that ends with Bart hitting Phineas with something that resembles a cowboy boot but it's not entirely clear for the pin.

Rating: C. That's the epitome of what this match is: average. It's just there. It's not bad, it's not good, it's just a ten minute tag match where the faces acted like faces and the heels acted like heels. There was no appeal to this match at all. These two teams feuded for what seemed like ever and it never went anywhere. The tag division was more or less dead until 99 when the Hardys and Edge and Christian became the answer to the cruiserweights.

Here they are on the first episode of Shotgun Saturday Night in a bizarre feud.

Godwinns vs. Flying Nuns

The Nuns are Sister Angelica and Mother Smucker. They're women

in case you couldn't tell. We see a video of them coming out of a cathedral. The ropes are yellow and the mat is black. Also, WHY DOES EVERYTHING HAPPEN ON JANUARY 4TH? That was the Fingerpoke of Doom and Foley winning the title and the debut of this show and Impact moving to Mondays and Shawn and Bret reuniting. Is it like November 5, 1955 in Back to the Future?

The Nuns jump the Godwins and are rather powerful it seems. Apparently men vs. women is fine now? Angelica and Phineas start and we get a HOLY CENSORED chant for no apparent reason. Wow those women are large. Hard punch and I think one Banged her Head on the mat. Sunny thinks these two are from the Nun Wrestling Federation.

Hillbilly Jim isn't sure what's going on. Angelica has facial hair it seems. Smucker takes over and Vince wonders how the WWF sanctioned this. Vince if you can't remember why you did it you may want to lay off the hard stuff. The lights are really low I'm guessing to make sure the size of the place isn't notable, which is fine. Brother Love of all people comes out and is the manager of the girls I guess.

We take a break and come back to more of the same. The girls beat up Henry, who is about 6'7 and over 300lbs. Those are some big old girls. LOUD ECW chant as well. We hear about some rookie that Sunny likes named Rocky Maivia. Eh I'm sure he'll never mean anything. Top rope legdrop from Smucker misses and hot tag to Phineas (Mideon). Smucker complains about him trying to slam her as apparently she doesn't like the hand placement. That's kind of funny. Love blasts Phineas with whatever is in his hand for the pin.

Rating: D. This was a long comedy match and the joke got old quick. In case you didn't get the reference, the Nuns are of course men and would soon be VERY repackaged as the Headbangers. This went nowhere at all though and was FAR too long, at nearly 13 minutes counting commercial.

The Godwinns opened Wrestlemania XIII.

Godwinns vs. Doug Furnas/Phillip LaFon vs. Headbangers vs. New Blackjacks

This is under elimination rules and the winner gets a tag title shot tomorrow on Raw. Why not have the title match here and the #1 contenders match earlier is beyond me but the WWF is running scared of WCW at this point so common sense is thrown out the window. The Blackjacks are Barry Windham and Bradshaw. We get some clips of the originals for the sake of old school. The new ones say they're back and they'll beat up all the small people.

Naturally it's a big brawl to start with all eight guys fighting at once. We finally get down to Henry vs. Bradshaw which is a match that has haunted many of my nightmares over the years. A big clothesline puts Bradshaw down and it's quickly off to Thrasher. Bradshaw still has his vest on. He runs over Thrasher though and there goes the vest. In an interesting bit of strategy, Bradshaw tags in Phineas and then punches him in the face.

Phineas pounds on him a bit more but brings in Mosh to face Thrasher. Jerry makes fun of Vince's knowledge of rock music, saying Vince's favorite rock band is Mount Rushmore. After some slam dancing for lack of a better term, it's off to LaFaon who gets caught in a double flapjack for two. That doesn't last long as it's off to Furnas vs. Windham with the former hitting a quick rana for two. Windham hits a kind of powerbomb to take over but Bradshaw comes in and helps his partner beat down LaFon.

With the help of his partner, Bradshaw suplexes Phil out to the floor. The four members of the two teams head to the floor where Bradshaw shoves the referee and LaFon and Furnas are counted out, giving us two eliminations. So we've got the Headbangers vs. the Godwinns now and Thrasher gets to be in trouble first. It's pretty clear that Vince has no idea which of the Headbangers is which.

Thrasher starts to fight back so he and Phineas spit on each other. Vince implies that Phineas is into bestiality which is an image I really didn't need. Off to Mosh vs. Henry but a clothesline by the Godwinn puts both guys out on the floor. Mosh gets back in as Henry is only on the apron, allowing the Headbanger to hit a springboard clothesline to take Henry

back down. Lawler keeps up the rock music jokes by saying Vince thinks Fleetwood Mac is a new burger at McDonald's.

Thrasher misses a moonsault and it's off to Mosh vs. Phineas again. Phineas loads up the Slop Drop (reverse DDT) on Thrasher but Mosh makes the save. Everything breaks down and a top rope seated senton by Mosh is enough for the pin on Phineas to send the Headbangers to Raw.

Rating: C-. This shows you where the tag division was at this point. There were indeed several teams fighting over the titles but that doesn't always make for an interesting series of matches in the division. The Headbangers were different but not a great team at all and the Godwinns were WAY past their expiration date at this point. Not much to see here but it was fast paced.

They would turn heel in mid 1997 and become the evil pig farmers which didn't work very well. Here they are at Summerslam 1997.

Godwinns vs. Legion of Doom

The Godwinns are in Deliverance mode at this point and the LOD are done with the war against the Hart Foundation and in need of a good feud. Unfortunately there wasn't a good team for them to feud with so we're stuck with the Godwinns. Henry had his neck broken in a Domsday Device months ago, prompting an attack on the LOD. The LOD has sworn revenge to set this up.

The LOD are actually referred to as Road Warriors here which is rare for the WWF. LOD cleans house to start, sending the Godwinns to the floor with Hawk hitting a clothesline off the apron. We get started with Phineas vs. Animal with the latter missing a charge into the corner, allowing the hog dudes to double team him. Animal comes back with a double clothesline of his own to send the Godwinns to the floor.

Off to Henry vs. Hawk with Henry trying to hurt Hawk's neck as a receipt. Hawk sends him into the steps before dropping some legs for two back inside. Back to Phineas for a hangman's choke on Hawk to no avail. Animal comes back in to work Henry's arm before a Cactus clothesline from Animal puts both guys on the floor. Henry knocks Animal into the barricade as

they come back in to shift momentum. Lou Albano is in the front row.

Back in and Phineas puts Animal in a bearhug as the crowd gets hot all over again. As the hold continues, Lawler talks about Blue Ball, Arkansas. I really don't have a joke there but you have to mention that name. Animal breaks free but Henry breaks up the hot tag attempt. Phineas goes up but jumps into a clothesline and now we get the hot tag off to Hawk. House is cleaned as everything breaks down but Phineas breaks up the Doomsday Device on Henry. Not that it matters as the LOD hit a spike piledriver on a guy recovering from a broken neck for the pin.

Rating: D+. This was supposed to be about revenge but the match never acted like that at all. The Godwinns were horrible as heels and this was a very dull match as a result. LOD still had a little bit in the tank here but they were going to explode in the next few months but almost no one cared.

That was enough to get them in the title hunt so here's their shot at In Your House XVIII.

Tag Titles: Godwinns vs. Headbangers

The Headbangers are still champions after winning them last month. The Godwinns now have their Uncle Cletus (wrestler Tony Anthony, most famous as the Dirty White Boy) as a manager. It's a brawl to start with the champions sending the hog farmers out to the floor. We start with Mosh vs. Phineas after a quick spitting contest. Phineas gets sent back to the floor very quickly, allowing Thrasher to hit something the camera doesn't find important enough to show us. Apparently it was a springboard clothesline to the apron. Good to know.

Back in and we get some miscommunication, as the Headbangers try a double flapjack but Phineas drops his head down like a backdrop, nearly breaking his neck in the process. Things slow down again until we get Thrasher vs. Henry and a rollup gets two for the champion. Henry bails to the floor as the match stalls even more. Back to Phineas who is taken down, allowing Mosh to suplex Thrasher down onto Phineas for two. A middle rope clothesline from Thrasher puts Phineas down again, but Henry scores with a clothesline of his own to give the Godwinns control.

Thrasher gets crotched on the top rope and clotheslined to the floor again with Phineas coming in for more stomping. Lawler tries some lame redneck jokes to save this boring match but even his corny one liners have no effect. A bunch of knee drops get two for Phineas but Thrasher comes back with a sunset flip, only to have Henry distract the referee.

Phineas hits a wheelbarrow slam for another near fall on Thrasher but a splash in the corner only hits buckle. The hot tag brings in Mosh to clean house, including powerbombing Thrasher onto Phineas for two. Everything breaks down and Mosh's top rope seated senton is caught in a sloppy powerbomb by Phineas for the pin and the titles.

Rating: D-. Not only was this sloppy, but it was really dull stuff. The tag team division is just horrific at this point with nothing interesting and random title changes like this one that don't help anything. Really boring match here with WAY too much stalling and nothing special in the ring at all.

Here's a match that exists for reasons I don't understand. From In Your House XX.

Godwinns vs. Quebecers

The Quebecers (Jacques and Pierre) were a glorified comedy tag team from 1993 who came back for a few weeks in 1998. No one is really sure why as they were nothing special and a very random team to bring back. It didn't help that they lost their signature Mountie outfits and are now just generic guys. Henry and Jacques get us going with the fans booing both heel teams. After a minute of stalling it's Henry grabbing a headlock but Jacques suplexes him down.

Off to Pierre to trade some wristlocks until Henry grabs an armbar. Back to Jacques who gets clotheslined down and screams a lot during a wristlock. This match is already boring and it doesn't help after the fans haven't been interested in anything tonight. The Godwinns double team Jacques as Lawler implies he wants Bill Clinton shot. Jacques gets a quick two off a sunset flip to Phineas but it's back to Henry to keep control with a chinlock.

Phineas comes in to headbutt Jacques in the ribs but Jacques comes back with an elbow to the jaw. The ice cold tag brings in Pierre as things break down. A bad looking piledriver puts Phineas down and the Cannonball (assisted top rope flip splash from Pierre) gets two with Henry making the save. Not that it matters as Henry clotheslines Pierre from the apron to give Phineas the pin.

Rating: D-. It was long, it was boring, and the fans didn't react to anything in the entire match. I'm not sure why the Quebecers were hired again but it never worked for the most part. The tag division still isn't great from top to bottom but the Outlaws have definitely helped things out a lot.

The Godwinns because Southern Justice and acted as Jeff Jarrett's bodyguards and occasional partners. Here they are in a six man at In Your House XXIV.

Jeff Jarrett/Southern Justice vs. DX

Jarrett has changed his gimmick around, now basically just a jerk with an attitude. He's also cut his hair and dropped Tennessee Lee which is definitely the best thing that's happened to him since he's been back. It's the Outlaws and X-Pac here and the Outlaws(Tag Champions again) sneak up on their opponents for an early advantage. X-Pac officially starts with Jeff and powerbombs him down for two before bringing in Road Dogg. An atomic drop sets up the shaky knee drop on Jarrett but Jeff tags off to Mark Canterbury (Henry Godwinn) to take over.

Canterbury slams Road Dogg down and drops an elbow for two before bringing Jarrett back inside. They hit heads in the corner though and both guys go down to give Dogg a breather. The tag brings in X-Pac for a spinning clothesline but Canterbury gets a blind tag and catches him in a powerslam. Off to Dennis Knight (Phineas Godwinn) for a delayed vertical suplex for two. Jarrett comes back and gets two off a powerslam before avoiding a charge in the corner to put X-Pac down again.

Back to Canterbury as Billy keeps trying to come in but getting held back by the referee. Jeff hooks a chinlock but X-Pac fights back to his feet and suplexes Jarrett down. Billy gets the hot tag and cleans house,

allowing X-Pac to hit the Bronco Buster on Jeff. Canterbury takes X-Pac's head off with a clothesline but Billy steals Jeff's guitar. The referee takes it from him but drops it, allowing Jarrett to shatter the guitar over X-Pac's head. Gunn hits a quick Fameasser on Canterbury for the pin.

Rating: D. This was another slow and rather dull match with the finish being less polished than it should have been. X-Pac can take a good beating and it was the right choice to have Gunn clean house. The guy may not have been the best in the world but he could speed things up when he needed to.

We'll wrap it up on Raw, September 28, 1998.

Tag Titles: Southern Justice vs. New Age Outlaws

The Outlaws are just ridiculously over. Jerry says that he's not going to talk about an alleged incident with Jim Carrey on the set of Man on the Moon which of course is kayfabe. Canterbury vs. Gunn to start things off and a flapjack gets two on Billy. Knight comes in to double team but it doesn't last long. Now he comes in legally but walks into a neckbreaker for two. Off to Roadie for the shaky knee but Canterbury hits a knee to the back and a clothesline to take over. Back to Billy who cleans house and hits the Fameasser but Jarrett comes in with the guitar. Roadie steals it and hits Knight with it for the short DQ.

Henry Godwinn is a good example of a guy who got stuck with a gimmick but made the most of it. At the end of the day, there's only so far you can take a hog farmer from Arkansas but he managed to get four years out of that thing. Eventually though, it ran out of steam and Henry was just a big brawler. Again, that can only take you so far and he reached that long before he was gone. I've seen worse though.

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