

# Battleground Preview

It's the latest filler show that no one really wants to see before we have another filler PPV that maybe a few more people want to see in three weeks. Let's get to it.

As usual we'll start with the pre-show match. I'll take Ziggler to win. The guy has fallen, but come on: it's Damien Sandow. Even Ziggler hasn't fallen that far. I have a feeling this might lead to more later though.

Give me Bryan in the main event, presumably setting up the final showdown inside the Cell next time where Orton will stand tall by embracing the CRAZY. It's a sad day when a three week title reign will completely blow away his other two reigns, but that's the WWE we live in.

I'm going to take RVD to win the title and say there's an immediate cash-in. RVD's contract is up and it would be a nice way to transition the title to Sandow. The question though is is Sandow worse than Del Rio as champion? Somehow I think so, meaning WWE will likely give Damien the title just to mess with us even more. The match should be nothing of note though.

Punk over Ryback, setting up a handicap match of some sort next show where he FINALLY destroys Heyman once and for all.

Unfortunately Brie over AJ because we're supposed to love Brie because she's sleeping with Daniel Bryan and hate AJ because reality TV is AWESOME.

The Rhodes Family wins, but by nefarious means. I heard an idea that says Big Show is told to destroy the Rhodes, but accidentally gets caught, giving them the win via DQ. That's a good way to protect everyone and get the desired result.

Axel over Truth of course.

Bray beats Kofi in an entertaining match. If this is turned into the rumored six man, the Wyatts destroy Kofi and the Usos in an even more entertaining match.

Overall, I'm really not interested in Battleground. It's clearly just a pit stop before we get to the Cell in a mere three weeks, which somehow is an improvement from past schedules. The show should be entertaining on some levels, but it's coming in with almost no hype and a main event that we've seen before. Nothing special about this show, which is the case with so much in WWE at the moment.

Thoughts/predictions?

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# Smackdown – October 4, 2013: WWE Plays Monopoly

## Smackdown

Date: October 4, 2013

Location: Riverside Centroplex, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's the final show before Battleground and the company has gone from on fire to limping into the PPV in a matter of weeks. Bryan vs. Orton is the main event on Sunday again but it feels like an afterthought. The problem is it doesn't feel like an afterthought to any specific thing as none of the matches feel like a big deal at all. The main event tonight is Big Show vs. Shield so I guess that's our focus tonight. Let's get to it.

The opening recap shows Orton laying out Bryan to end Raw. The Bellas being involved makes me roll my eyes.

Theme song.

Here's Big Show to open things up. Show says he's been embarrassed of how he's treated some people lately and we get a knockout montage. Big Show talks about Stephanie and HHH holding the job over his head and how some people can understand what it's like to have to do things they don't want to do. He knows he can't be forgiven but asks for some understanding.

After what his wife said to Stephanie he isn't even sure if he's a man

anymore. There's so much anger and frustration built up inside of him that he threatened to knock HHH out on Monday. If he had done it though he would have been fired, but just for threatening it he has to face the Shield in a handicap match. However, if he's going down he's taking Shield with him.

Cue HHH because what would an opening segment be without him? He's ashamed that Big Show doesn't like his leadership, but Big Show's frustration and financial and marital problems are all on Big Show. HHH has considered Big Show a friend for the last 20 years, meaning he knew Big Show in college, two years before Show had his first match in WCW.

HHH holds up Big Show's mortgage, which apparently he's paid, meaning Big Show owes him rather than the bank. Therefore, either Big Show gets his emotions in check or HHH moves into Big Show's house. As for tonight, since Big Show is so crazy, we'll make the main event Big Show vs. Shield/Randy Orton. And Big Show is crushed yet again, because there will be NO strong heroes in this company.

#### Rob Van Dam vs. Fandango

The announcers spend all of Fandango's entrance talking about breast cancer and how pink everything is. Fandango dances to start so RVD does the finger points, earning himself an elbow to the head. Rob comes back with kicks in the corner and a monkey flip to take over. Van Dam goes to the apron but gets knocked to the floor as we take a break. Back with Rob coming off the middle rope with a kick to the face and some regular kicks for good measure. Rolling Thunder connects but Summer breaks up the Five Star for the DQ at 2:30 shown of 5:00. This match needed a break?

Fandango goes to find some weapons post match but Rob gets the upper hand and lays Fandango out with a slingshot DDT. He finds a trashcan and Fandango gets a Van Terminator to pop the crowd.

#### Ryback vs. R-Truth

Jobber entrance for the monster. Ryback powers him into the corner to start but Truth comes back with some right hands to send Ryback to the floor. Heyman calls Truth a bully and Ryback will have none of that. Back in and Truth escapes a gorilla press before kicking Ryback down for two. The ax kick misses and the Meat Hook and Shell Shock complete the squash of Truth at 2:24. Your #1 contender to the Intercontinental Title everyone.

Post match Axel lays out Truth again to really make sure no one buys him as a contender.

Alberto Del Rio isn't worried about Dolph Ziggler tonight when a stagehand comes up with the trashcan RVD used earlier tonight. The champion isn't pleased.

#### Alberto Del Rio vs. Dolph Ziggler

Non-title of course and Sandow is on commentary to hype up his Battleground pre-show match with Ziggler. Before the match we get the top ten Van Dam moments video from Raw. Sandow refers to Ziggler as a former Mr. MITB instead of a former world champion. That tells you almost everything you need to know about Dolph at the moment. Feeling out process to start with Ziggler getting a quick rollup for two, sending the champion to the floor.

Back in and Del Rio stomps Ziggler down, only to be dropkicked out to the floor as we take a break. We come back with Alberto holding a chinlock until Ziggler fights back up. Dolph misses a charge into the post and Del Rio has a shoulder to work on. A belly to back suplex gets two on Dolph and we hit the chinlock again. Ziggler fights up and comes back with another dropkick to knock Alberto off the apron, only to have him snap Ziggler's throat across the ropes. Dolph comes right back again though with a top rope X Factor to put both guys down.

JBL tries to talk Sandow into cashing in as Dolph pounds away right hands

in the corner. A running clothesline puts Del Rio down but he still avoids the Fameasser and gets two off a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. Alberto goes up but dives into a dropkick for a close two count. The champ gets back up and hits a LOUD running enziguri in the corner for two of his own. Del Rio loads up a superplex but gets countered into a sunset bomb for another close two.

There's the sleeper from Ziggy but Del Rio rams him face first into the buckle for the break. A middle rope double stomp to the back has Dolph down again but the low superkick is countered into a rollup for two. The second attempt at the kick connects for two for the champion but Ziggler rolls through the armbreaker into the Fameasser for a VERY hot two. Not that it matters as the armbreaker goes on for the submission from Dolph at 10:30 shown of 12:50.

**Rating:** B-. This got a lot better at the end but ziggler having almost no chance at all didn't help things. That's the problem with how WWE takes guys down the card: there's almost no way to believe they could win a big match when they're on a losing streak. Del Rio as usual is much better in the ring than he is as a character but that's been the case for years. I could have gone for more arm work than just at the beginning and ending of the match though.

Los Matadores vignette.

### 3MB vs. Los Matadores

Slater/Mahal again who ranted about Toroito costing them the match. There's no McIntyre in sight for the second straight show. The bullfighters do their flips and bull stuff before the bell. Diego cranks on Slater's arm to start and shouts OLE a lot. Mahal comes in and gets his leg swept out from under him before being double backdropped.

Back up and Los Matadores hit a combination backbreaker/slingshot splash for no cover. Slater comes back in and takes over with a kick to the face

and a quickly broken chinlock. Fernando comes back with Ultimo Dragon's corner headstand before it's back to Diego vs. Mahal. Diego hits a reverse Cross Rhodes followed by the double Angle Slam for the pin at 3:20.

**Rating:** D. Remember the match on Monday? This was the same thing but with less flipping and less excitement. Los Matadores don't seem to have a long shelf life to them but at least it gives us another tag team for a few months. Nothing to see here though as the bull continues to steal most of the attention.

Post match Torito dives on 3MB.

Heyman and his Guys are ready for their matches on Sunday. Truth's dream of being Intercontinental Champion is false but at least he's not CM Punk. On Sunday, CM Punk will fight to the death but it just won't be enough. After the beating, Punk will be looking up at his lord, master and owner: Paul Heyman, the best in the world.

### Brie Bella vs. Aksana

Please for the love of all things good and holy keep this short. Brie moves away from Aksana to start before dropkicking her out to the floor. Back in and Aksana sends her throat first into the middle rope and stomps away for two. We hit the chinlock on Brie before Aksana crawls around on all fours. Brie comes right back with a middle rope Bella Buster for the pin (ignore Aksana's foot on the ropes) at 2:10.

Post match here are AJ with the psycho eyes and Tamina for whatever reason. AJ says after she keeps the title on Sunday, Brie and Bryan can go have a goat faced kid. After the doctor sees the abomination, he'll spank Brie instead of the baby. I'm still wondering why I'm supposed to cheer for the Bellas other than who they sleep with.

## Kofi Kingston vs. Big E. Langston

Before the match we get a clip from Smackdown of Bray Wyatt laughing at Kingston but not attacking him. Langston runs Kofi over to start and gets two off a running splash. Kofi goes up for a cross body but gets caught in midair, only to slip down Langston into the rollup for the pin at 52 seconds. Was there no one else that could do the job here? No one at all?

Post match here's Bray on the stage with the Family behind Kofi. Bray talks about calling a hero another facade of a failed generation. This Sunday, the first will fall so follow the buzzards. Kofi still isn't touched.

Post break Bray vs. Kofi is announced for Sunday.

We look back at the Rhodes Family segment from Raw. Word on the street is that Stephanie is ticked off for Dusty going slightly off script and putting his hand on her face. Heaven forbid everything isn't EXACTLY planned out for her for once in her life.

## Shield/Randy Orton vs. Big Show

It's Ambrose in first with Show pounding away in the corner and headbutting Ambrose down. Off to Rollins who tries a kick to the ribs before being thrown into the corner for a beating of his own. It's Reigns' turn now but he goes down when trying a shoulder block. Randy gets the tag and tries to keep Big Show away from him in a smart strategy. Show gets him in the corner anyway for the not so loud chop, sending Randy running off to Rollins.

Seth actually knocks Show down with a top rope knee to the jaw and a kick to the face gets two. Randy is out on the floor until Reigns softens Big Show up a bit more. Orton comes in for some stomping and the knee drop for two. A quick DDT gets two more for Orton and it's back to Roman. Show



clotheslines Reigns down a few times before hitting his own spear for no cover. All of the heels come in at once but Big Show fights them off until Ambrose brings in a chair, only to have it punched into his face for the DQ at 5:40.

**Rating:** D+. That's the only way you can end this if you want to save any face for Big Show. Obviously you can't have the giant go over and you don't want the heels to look weak (Heaven forbid of course) so the DQ after Show holds his own is the best option. Much like everything else on the show tonight though, this didn't mean much.

Orton hits Show in the back with the chair but there's no effect. Instead Reigns spears Big Show down as the fans chant for Bryan. There's an RKO for Big Show and Orton wraps the chair around Big Show's neck. Cue the Usos to take care of the Shield and FINALLY Daniel Bryan shows up to fight Orton. Bryan fires off kicks and hooks the YES Lock but Ambrose gets back in for the save. Dean takes the running knee and a staredown ends the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. This wasn't a bad show but what did it change about Sunday? The only thing added here was Wyatt vs. Kingston which could have been done just as easily on Raw or at the PPV itself. The wrestling was just ok and HHH is now Big Show's landlord to make sure Big Show doesn't get to grow a spine to fight back against the tyranny. Also what happened to the locker room rebellion? None of those guys have done anything against HHH and company for over a week and there's no sign that they will in the future. As usual, this story just keeps going with no real direction to be seen.

## Results

Rob Van Dam b. Fandango via DQ when Summer Rae interfered

Ryback b. R-Truth – Shell Shock

Alberto Del Rio b. Dolph Ziggler – Cross armbreaker

Los Matadores b. 3MB – Double Angle Slam to Mahal

Brie Bella b. Aksana – Middle rope Bella Buster

Kofi Kingston b. Big E. Langston – Rollup

Shield/Randy Orton b. Big Show via DQ when Big Show hit a chair into Ambrose's face

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## Thought of the Day: Who Is The Star Of Raw?

Look back at the last few weeks and this isn't very clear.

Who is the focal point of Raw? It's not Bryan, who was only on TV for about five minutes on Monday and got laid out to end the show.

It might be Orton, who is becoming his old self again.

HHH/Stephanie? Yeah probably, but they're not really even involved in the main feud.

Punk? Well he and Heyman are getting as much TV time as anyone so we could go with one of them.

In short, it's really not clear who or what Raw is focused around right now and it's making for some weaker shows.

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# Monday Night Raw – September 30, 2013: Paul Heyman's Indecent Proposal

## Monday Night Raw

Date: September 30, 2013

Location: Mississippi Coast Coliseum, Biloxi, Mississippi

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's the final show before Battleground a mere fifteen days after Night of Champions. If that's too fast for you, don't worry because you'll get another PPV just three weeks after this Sunday. Tonight will probably just firm up stuff for the show on Sunday, but there's a chance we'll get new developments in the potential locker room revolt. Let's get to it.

It's breast cancer awareness month again, meaning the middle rope is pink and there's a graphic on the ramp.

Here's Punk to open things up and we get a clip from Heyman's scheme last week, leading to Ryback's beatdown. Punk talks about how things are often unpredictable around here but once in awhile you can guess what's happening. Take last week for instance: Punk was in his hometown so of course Heyman was going to come after him. Everyone knew Punk would get jumped if he went after Heyman and that's exactly what happened.

That doesn't matter though as the story ends with Punk making Axel go to sleep, showing Ryback what happens to bullies, and when Punk gets his hands on Paul Heyman. The story could end at anytime. It could be at Battleground, or it could be right here tonight. Punk isn't leaving the ring until he gets a fight with one of Heyman's guys and he gets rid of Heyman for good.

Cue Brad Maddox (Punk: "You don't even get an entrance song?") who says this ultimate showdown isn't best for business. Punk already has his match with Ryback on Sunday so there's no need to give him another one now. Maddox is willing to give Punk a match here tonight though....and here's Big E. Langston for the first time in weeks. Big E. says he's Punk's man if Punk wants aggression and the beating is on. Punk is tossed into the corner but he misses a charge into the post and here's a referee. The bell is after the break.

#### CM Punk vs. Big E. Langston

Joined in progress with Punk firing off kicks on the floor before sending Langston back inside for a high cross body for one. Big E. escapes the GTS and slams Punk out of the corner for two. A splash to Punk's back gets the same and it's off to a half crab from Big E. CM fights up but gets run over by Langston for two more. A nice looking belly to belly suplex puts Punk down again and Langston is getting a little frustrated.

Punk comes back with a high kick for two but gets taken down by a clothesline for the same. A second splash misses though and it's Punk coming back with his kicks. Langston is taken down with a neckbreaker and there's the running knee in the corner. There's the Macho Elbow and the GTS is good for the clean pin at 5:52 shown.

**Rating:** C. This was decent but just kind of there for the most part. I'm not sure I get the point of bringing Langston back just for a job to Punk, but at least he was in there with a big star instead of having the same match with Zigler over and over. Langston was kind of lost in the

shuffle for the last month and a half so it's good to at least see him on TV again.

We recap Cody Rhodes being fired.

### Kofi Kingston vs. Fandango

Fandango is in a pink shirt, allowing Cole to list off everything he can about the Susan G. Komen Foundation. We also get part of a compilation of 30 Troubles in Paradise from Youtube, because we need to see a Youtube player on screen instead of just showing the video right? Fandango takes Kofi down with a quick suplex and puts on a chinlock as the fans chant overrated. Kofi spins out of a hiptoss and DDTs Fandango down for a breather. Kingston comes back with some double chops but gets sent into the buckle. Fandango goes up but Kofi moves before the legdrop. Trouble in Paradise is good for the pin at 3:02.

**Rating:** D. Well that happened. The match was only three minutes long and the only move that was interesting at all was the finisher. Fandango has a fun character but he has almost nothing of note in the ring. The long pants still aren't working for Kofi and if rumors are to be believed, they're why he isn't being pushed as hard anymore. Seriously.

Post match here are the Wyatts with Bray sitting on the stage, asking why these things happen to him. He promises to knock everyone down one by one, so follow the buzzards. Creepy as ever.

Ziggler vs. Sandow is the Kickoff match for Sunday.

The Bellas are in the back when Randy Orton (fangirl pop) comes up to offer some sarcastic congratulations to Brie for her engagement to Daniel Bryan. Orton wants to know the date before it needs to be scheduled before Battleground because Daniel won't be able to make it after then.

Paul Heyman chastises Renee Young for thinking Punk will be taking him out anytime soon. Heyman says Punk was a nobody who became a Paul Heyman guy before becoming WWE Champion but he forgot what made them the best in the world. Renee says that Axel and Ryback can be seen hiding off camera, meaning Heyman must be planning another trap. Heyman says he has a big plan for tonight's Raw and if Punk wants to do something about it, go ahead and try.

### Los Matadores vs. 3MB

It's Mahal and Slater here. Los Matadores are named Fernando and Diego and their graphic says they have a miniature bull with them named El Torito. After an over the top intro sequence with a bunch of flips and waving of red capes, we start with Diego (Primo) throwing Mahal around and into the corner for a tag off to Slater.

Heath is thrown around and backdropped but he shoves I think Fernando into the corner for some double teaming. A knee drop has Fernando in trouble and we hit a quick chinlock. Fernando comes back with a headscissors and it's back to Diego to clean house. Everything breaks down and something resembling a double Angle Slam takes out Slater at 3:58.

**Rating:** D. I'm not sure what to say here. I was laughing for most of the match, but it wasn't what I would call funny. It's definitely in the "so over the top it's ok" category as they're playing it completely for laughs, but at the end of the day it's still Epico and Primo which doesn't help them that much. They have potential as a comedy team but nothing more than that.

Here are HHH and Stephanie to address the Rhodes family face to face. Goldust comes out in a suit while still wearing the facepaint. Stephanie congratulates Cody on the wedding and hopes he got the Bed Bath and Beyond gift card. HHH wants to know why they're staring at him because this is what, the fourth opportunity the family has gotten? Cody failed,

Goldust failed and Dusty made it about himself. Is Dusty still upset about not being able to do anything outside of Florida or the NWA (I'd be shocked if more than 5% of the live crowd understood that)?

Stephanie says Dusty has a very important job by training new superstars down in Orlando, meaning the future is in Dusty's hands. Tonight though, the family's future is in Stephanie and HHH's hands. They'd like to give Cody and Goldust a job if they can beat Rollins and Reigns this Sunday at Battleground. If they lose though, neither of them will ever work for WWE again, including Dusty.

Big Dust grabs the mic and says he'll be in his boys' corner. Stephanie says you're on but Dusty sounds like he wants a fight. The bosses leave and here's Shield for the brawl. Dusty tries to bring in a chair but gets beaten down as well. Cody takes the TripleBomb and the Shield stands tall.

### Curtis Axel vs. R-Truth

Non-title. Axel pounds away to start but Truth comes back with kicks to the leg. He rains down right hands in the corner, only to be dropped face first onto the buckle to give the champion control again. A nice dropkick from Axel puts Truth down and we hit the chinlock. Truth fights up and hits the suplex into a Stunner for two but misses a dropkick. Before Axel can follow up, Punk's music hits and the distraction lets Truth hit the Little Jimmy for the pin at 4:20. No Punk.

**Rating:** D+. Not horrible here but it was all about the false ending which is getting a bit old as a finish to a match. How many times have you seen someone come out for a distraction and the guy getting beaten up badly loses as a result? Truth isn't horrible or anything but it was pretty obvious he was going to win because he was there as a pawn in the Punk vs. Heyman stuff.

Trish Stratus has had a son. Cool.

Video on Brie Bella and Daniel Bryan, which is an excuse to show clips from Total Divas.

### Alicia Fox vs. Brie Bella

Feeling out process to start with Alicia taking over with some choking. The northern lights suplex gets two on Brie as AJ and Tamina are watching in the back. After a quick headscissors from Alicia, Brie comes back with some running kicks and the Bella Buster for the pin at 3:19.

**Rating:** D+. It's a Divas match. You do the math here.

Axel is upset but Heyman tells him to calm down. Heyman says Punk is just messing with them but is out of their league. Ryback comes up and says there's nothing to worry about because they should just give Punk what they want. Heyman tells Ryback to go get something to eat and he'll come find him in a few minutes. Ryback leaves and Heyman says he sees the world differently since Ryback saved him. Heyman says, and this is a direct quote, that he's going to go to the ring and propose to Ryback.

We look at Big Show knocking Miz out last week as per Stephanie's orders.

Big Show, in a suit, says he's doing ok. We look at a clip from Smackdown with HHH telling Big Show there aren't many jobs for a guy like him and Big Show nearly knocking HHH out. Show talks about everyone telling him to do the right thing, but that's easy to say when they're not in his shoes. How can he pick between his job and his family?

He's a good person but he has to do evil for the sake of his family. Show rants about having to knock out Dusty Rhodes and now he can't even look him in the eye. There's only so much he can take and he's not going to take it anymore. He's going to go knock HHH out. Show's eyes are bugging out and it looks very disturbing.



R-Truth is asking for an Intercontinental Title shot when Big Show comes in and lifts Maddox against the wall, demanding to know where HHH is. Maddox is let down and goes off to find him.

### Zack Ryder vs. Alberto Del Rio

Del Rio takes him into the corner before running Ryder over with a shoulder block. Ryder comes back with a clothesline to send Alberto to the floor but misses a plancha to give Del Rio control again. Del Rio pounds away on the floor before heading back inside for a reverse chinlock. There's the tilt-a-whirl backbreaker and it's back to the chinlock again. Ryder comes back with all of his usual stuff but the Rough Ryder doesn't connect and Del Rio grabs a German suplex for two. The armbreaker gets the submission at 4:07.

**Rating:** D+. Yet another match that is long enough to grade but the length brings it down because it feels like they're just filling in time where they can. This didn't do anything for Del Rio as he didn't do anything hardcore before the match on Sunday and everyone beats Ryder anymore. Nothing to see here.

We recap the Rhodes family segment from earlier.

The breast cancer people are recognized.

Here are Ryback and Heyman for the proposal. Heyman says he was man enough to pin Punk at Night of Champions to prove he's the best in the world, but he's also an expert in political science. He owns CM Punk, so it was his obligation to squash the rebellion that Punk was starting last week in Chicago. That was getting rid of a dictator which is the right move politically. We get the same clip from earlier of Punk being beaten down by the Heyman guys in case the fans forgot it in the last hour and a half.

Heyman says he's here because Ryback decided to stand up to the bully that is CM Punk. Ryback says he hates bullies like Punk who took everything Heyman did for him and throw it back in Paul's face so he had to do something. Heyman talks about how progressive of a society we live in today and he wants more than just a client relationship with Ryback. He wants to make a commitment to Ryback from the opening match to the main event, in sickness and in health and until death do them part.

Paul wants to make an honest man out of Ryback so he takes him by the hand and drops to a knee. Paul's proposal: will Ryback be the new Paul Heyman guy? Before there's an answer we get more Punk music and here's Punk through the crowd. He jumps the barricade...and hurts his knee, collapsing down to the floor in pain. This goes on for awhile until Punk limps to the apron but can't get in. Heyman goes for it for some stupid reason, allowing Punk to pop up with a kendo stick and lay out Heyman, Ryback and the charging Axel with ease. Axel takes a GTS as Punk hops around to show how good his knee is.

Big Show is still waiting for HHH.

#### Dolph Ziggler/Usos vs. Shield

On the way to the ring we get another Youtube video to answer the burning question: which Uso is a better dancer? After that greatness, we start with Ziggler getting punched by Ambrose in the corner. Ziggler comes back with a dropkick but a rake to the eyes allows for the tag off to Rollins. The Usos come in with some double teaming and it's Jimmy hooking an armbar on Seth.

Rollins takes him into the Shield corner and it's back to Ambrose for some double teaming. Jimmy ducks a double clothesline and tries a double cross body, only to be caught in the air. Jey dropkicks Jimmy's back to drop both guys down. Everything breaks down and the Usos hit stereo dives to Dean and Roman as we take a break. Back with Seth holding Jimmy in a chinlock. A suplex puts Rollins down but it's ff to Ambrose before Jimmy

can make a tag.

Off to a chinlock from the US Champion as the fans are wanting Ziggler. Roman comes in to complete the trio of chinlockery before something like Cena's spinning side slam gets two. Jimmy superkicks out of it and FINALLY makes the tag off to Dolph to fire up the crowd. Ziggler loads up the ten straight elbowso n Dean but has to dropkick Rollins out of the air before finishing.

A Fameasser gets two on Ambrose as Reigns makes the Shield save. Jimmy shoves Roman to the floor but Dean breaks up the attempted dive. Off to Rollins as Dean is sent to the floor. Roman makes a blind tag as Dolph Zig Zags Rollins, only to be speared in half for the pin at 12:04.

**Rating:** B-. Yeah it's the same formula the Shield has used for months, but there's nothing wrong with that at all. That spear always looks great and Ziggler went flying as a result this time. Another good match here as everyone has come to expect from Shield. The Usos need to win the tag titles at some point though.

Big Show is still waiting on HHH and even throws some flowers to the floor. Instead he gets cops who don't like that he's threatening a WWE employee. Stephanie comes in to say Show is under a lot of pressure and doesn't understand the consequences of his actions. Stephanie has talked to Show's wife and implies he can't perform to her standards as of late if you get Stephanie's drift. Everyone but Show leaves so Big Show punches a HHH poster.

RVD shows us a Youtube video of his ten most extreme moments. In case you didn't get it, WWE has a Youtube channel and you need to subscribe to it or your puppy will be lit on fire and your mother will be fed to mutant pigs. Del Rio has no idea what hardcore is about because anything goes. By anything of course they mean chairs to the back, trashcan lids, the steps and a table.

Big Show vs. Shield on Friday.

### Santino Marella vs. Antonio Cesaro

Before the match we get the entire giant swing on Titus last week which is still amazing. Cesaro fires off a bunch of elbows to start and stomps on Santino's chest. A chinlock is quickly broken but Cesaro can't hook the swing. Santino comes back with his usual stuff before loading up the Cobra. Thankfully Cesaro punches him down and here's the weekly swing with Santino dropping the stupid sock. The fans are counting the revolutions as they go and we hit an insane 32. Santino stands up but immaturity falls back down, only to roll up Cesaro for the pin at 2:51. Well of course he does.

We look at the marriage announcement between Brie and Bryan again.

Lawler is in the ring to moderate the face to face meeting between Bryan and Orton. Randy talks about how he's the old Predator again and how dangerous that makes him. He's genetically superior to the B+ Bryan and will prove it on Sunday. Bryan says that's A+ all the way from Orton but asks why HHH picked him as the face of the WWE. It's because he wants Orton to be on magazines and DVDs whereas Bryan would never want to be the best because of something like that.

Orton stops the YES chants before shifting over to Brie Bella. He doesn't understand what must be wrong with Brie to make her want to be with Bryan, because one day she'll realize she's sleeping with a barnyard animal. That's enough for Bryan and the beating is on. They head to the floor where Orton takes over and sends Bryan into the steps and post. The beating continues and Orton loads up the Elevated DDT on the floor, drawing out Brie to beg for mercy. Orton of course DDTs him on the floor and loads up the announce table. An RK0 to Bryan through the table ends the show as Brie freaks out.

**Overall Rating:** C+. I liked the show a bit more than last week but the

WWE Title has gone from the focus of the show to an afterthought. Everything but the world title matches got a great buildup tonight and Battleground looks a lot better as a result. Punk vs. Heyman continues to be probably the feud of the year, the Rhodes and Big Show stuff is well done, and the Shield had another good match. Then there are the world titles though and both matches just feel tacked on. Imagine that: HHH being the focus of two stories and the world titles suffering as a result.

### Results

CM Punk b. Big E. Langston – GTS

Kofi Kingston b. Fandango – Trouble in Paradise

Los Matadores b. 3MB – Double falling slam to Slater

R-Truth b. Curtis Axel – Little Jimmy

Brie Bella b. Alicia Fox – Bella Buster

Alberto Del Rio b. Zack Ryder – Cross armbreaker

Shield b. Usos/Dolph Ziggler – Spear to Ziggler

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# Smackdown – September 27, 2013: I've Never Seen This Before

## Smackdown

Date: September 27, 2013

Location: Bradley Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

The WWE is almost on the verge of a civil war between the HHH regime and a good chunk of the midcard. Daniel Bryan continues to be the one big hope for the good guys but tonight is about Dolph Ziggler as he challenges for Dean Ambrose's US Title. Other than that we may see some new developments for Battleground which is now just over a week away. Let's get to it.

Here's HHH to open things up. He's been checking social media and doesn't like seeing terms like favoritism or abuse of power. Sometimes WWE Superstars would rather blame management for their own failures. HHH and Stephanie are fine with that burden because they simply can't make everyone happy so they do what's best for business. Then on Raw HHH puts Shield in an 11-3 handicap match, ending with Daniel Bryan pinning Seth Rollins for the final win. HHH continues to talk about how awesome the match was but here's Miz to interrupt.

Miz doesn't think there's much to this idea of being fair but HHH cuts him off by reminding Miz of all the opportunities he's been given. Miz is the classic example of what HHH was talking about: a superstar who failed but blames someone else. HHH put him in the ring with Randy Orton two weeks ago and here's a clip of the beatdown Orton gave him in front of Miz's family.

What HHH doesn't get is why the beatdown that Randy Orton gave Miz should

be on HHH's head. It's HHH's job to protect Miz, even from himself. That's why Miz only allowed Miz to host MizTV on Raw and he even threw Miz another opportunity by giving him Big Show as a guest. We get a clip of Stephanie telling Big Show to knock him out, which Miz says was ridiculous.

HHH asks Miz what he called Stephanie, with Miz repeating the castrated witch line, but he wishes he could replace the W with a B. Tempers were running high all around on Monday and HHH is sure Stephanie regrets what she said. However, let's talk about tonight. Miz must be ready to go, so tonight it's Miz vs. Randy Orton. Maybe HHH should even get in the jet and bring Miz's parents here to watch another beatdown.

### R-Truth vs. Alberto Del Rio

Non-title of course. Del Rio is very excited over what he did to RVD on Raw and he easily weathers an early Truth attack, only to miss a charge into the post. Truth's suplex into a Stunner gets two but the ax kick misses, allowing Del Rio to hit the low superkick for the pin at 1:33.

Post match Del Rio goes after Truth even more until RVD makes the save and holds up the title.

In the back Vickie and HHH make the match with Del Rio vs. RVD a hardcore match. HHH's name for the match: the Battleground Hardcore Rules match. Somehow, that might be more creative than the writing staff.

The Prime Time Players teach some stagehands the Millions of Dollars dance.

### Prime Time Players vs. Real Americans

Swagger and Titus get things going with O'Neil kicking both Americans down like they're not even there. Swagger comes back by taking out the

leg before the Americans start some rapid tags. Jack drives Titus into the corner for some shoulders to the ribs before it's back to Cesaro to stomp him down. Here's the giant swing on O'Neil for a ridiculous 27 seconds. It's one thing on a small guy like Santino but to do 22 revolutions on a guy 6'4 and over 260lbs is INSANE. Again, why in the world is Cesaro in this tag team and not fighting for world titles?

Cesaro is too dizzy to stop a tag though and Young starts cleaning house. Cesaro comes right back with a spinning Rock Bottom for two as everything breaks down. Darren gets a rollup for two on Antonio but Swagger gets in a blind tag. Young hits the Gut Check on Cesaro but Swagger comes back in with the Patriot Lock for the submission from Young at 3:45.

**Rating:** C. Any match with nearly 30 seconds of Titus O'Neil being swung around in a circle makes me it at least passable. The Players are a fine midcard team and Cesaro is awesome but Swagger is just there. He's such damaged goods at this point that he's dragging down anyone he works with. Heaven forbid we change anything about him though right? That would just be lunacy.

#### Bray Wyatt vs. Zack Ryder

Harper and Rowan throw Ryder into the ring but don't do anything to him other than that. Zack fires off some right hands so Bray just runs him over and drives in shots to Ryder's back. We actually get a chinlock from Wyatt but Ryder fights up and hits his usual stuff. The Rough Ryder is countered with Ryder being LAUNCHED into the air, followed by Sister Abigail's Kiss getting the pin at 2:21.

#### US Title: Dean Ambrose vs. Dolph Ziggler

Kofi and RVD flank Ziggler for protection. Just get to the DQ and six man tag already. Dean takes over with a headbutt and rakes Ziggy's eyes over the top rope. An elbow drop gets a quick one for the champion but Dolph comes back with punches in the corner and a dropkick. A Cactus



Clothesline puts both guys on the floor, triggering a brawl for the DQ at 2:01.

HHH makes the six man.

### Shield vs. Dolph Ziggler/Kofi Kingston/Rob Van Dam

The bell rings and we take a break literally a second later. Back with Van Dam firing off kicks to Rollins before driving shoulders in the corner. Rolling Thunder gets two but Rollins gets in a shot to Rob's bad arm to take over. Off to Dean to crank on the arm but Rob comes back with a spin kick to the face to bring in Ziggler. Dolph snaps off a dropkick and drops five elbows instead of ten. Ambrose pops up and counters the jumping DDT into a snap spinebuster to give Shield control again.

Off to Reigns for a hard clothesline for two before bringing Dean back in to work on the ribs. Reigns comes back in and slams Dolph face first into the mat in a move so simple that it's awesome. Something like a gutwrench slam has Ziggler in even more trouble but he comes back with a dropkick to put both guys down. Rollins breaks up another hot tag attempt but gets backdropped down, allowing for the real hot tag to Kofi.

Kingston speeds things up and hits the Boom Drop on Ambrose followed by the spinning cross body for two. Ziggler hits the Fameasser on Rollins but gets speared down by Reigns. Rob kicks Reigns down and clotheslines him to the floor for a moonsault from the apron. Kofi hits a springboard clothesline on Ambrose and Trouble in Paradise to Reigns, only to have Rollins hit the running knee to the head to give Dean the pin at 8:13 shown of 11:43.

**Rating:** B-. Good match for the most part with a very hot finish. Shield certainly still has it for the six man stuff as they went nuts out there with the fast spots for the ending. It's always more fun when you don't know who is going to win a match and Shield is great at those false finishes with the last second saves.

Big Show says he can't sleep at night and is a pariah in his own locker room. He starts crying again when HHH comes in and says maybe Show should just walk away. They really need to read up on what IRON CLAD means. HHH offers to help him find a job as a doorman or baggage handler since Big Show's size makes him "special." Big Show holds his fist up at HHH but doesn't do anything past that.

#### Cameron vs. AJ Lee

Non-title. Tamina comes out with AJ due to every other Diva being against her (according to AJ in an inset promo). AJ takes Cameron into the corner before hooking a cravate about 30 seconds into the match. Cameron comes back with a quick rollup and a flying leg attack which was supposed to be a cross body for two. AJ sends her to the floor and shouts that Cameron is useless. Tamina takes out an interfering Naomi and the Shining Wizard knocks out Cameron for the pin at 2:41. Still no idea who I'm supposed to cheer for here but Cameron is worthless.

Here's Heyman to show us a clip of him pinning Punk at the PPV. The fans have disappointed him because they're surprised he pinned Punk. Heyman trade secret: Punk will lose every time the fans' blood lust drives him to come after Paul. We look at the Heyman guys destroying Punk on Monday. Heyman thanks everyone for their help on Monday and that includes the fans for driving Punk to do it. Punk is crazy enough to want a match with Ryback at Battleground which will end up with Punk on his back and looking up at the best in the world.

#### Santino Marella vs. Heath Slater

Santino has Hornswoggle and Great Khali with him. Slater drops Santino with a single right hand to start and we hit the chinlock thirty seconds into the match. Santino comes back with his punches and hiptoss, only to have Slater knee him in the ribs to stop the comeback. As much of a comeback as you can have in the first minute of a match that is.

Slater gets crotched on the top and Santino loads up the Cobra....but Mahal plays a flute to hypnotize the sock. Khali plays a flute of his own to counter but McIntyre takes him down. The Cobra is about to attack Santino when Horny makes the save. Khali plays some more flute, allowing Santino to hit Slater with the Cobra for the pin at 2:58. I've watched wrestling for over 25 years and I can honestly say I've never seen anything like this.

Los Matadores arrive on Raw.

We recap the Rhodes Family troubles. Cody and Goldust (and presumably Dusty) accept an invitation to Raw on Monday.

### The Miz vs. Randy Orton

Miz charges at Orton to start and fires off left hands in the corner. A clothesline sends Orton to the floor and he goes into the post for good measure. Back in and Miz pounds away even more before kicking Orton in the face. The running corner clothesline only hits buckle though and Orton has a breather. Miz might have injured his shoulder and has to be looked at but says he can keep going. Orton immediately grabs the Elevated DDT and won't let the doctor check on Miz again, drawing a DQ at 3:05. I'm not going to bother rating it due to a good chunk being spent on the medical check but this was more of an angle than a match.

Cue HHH to say that Orton isn't getting out of it that easily so we're restarting this as a No DQ match. Orton throws Miz over the announce table and then into the steps as he's in psycho mode. Miz gets in a chair shot to the ribs but Orton gets in a shot of his own to take over again. Another Elevated DDT on the floor knocks Miz out cold but it's the RK0 for the pin at about 6:20 total.

**Rating:** C. Again this was more of an angle than a match. They're doing a much better job at getting Orton over as a heel here though and that's the important thing. Orton being all smug and holding the title isn't

going to get people to hate him but being a psycho that destroys people when they can't defend themselves certainly will. Miz is a good choice for a sacrificial lamb.

**Overall Rating:** C. This was a story building show and there's nothing wrong with that. The show flew by and never dragged, but there's nothing on here you need to see. The good for business thing was a bit better tonight with HHH screwing over faces instead of heels like he did on Monday. Not a bad show but it was a supplement to Raw which is a bad choice for Smackdown.

### Results

Alberto Del Rio b. R-Truth – Superkick

Real American b. Prime Time Players – Patriot Lock to Young

Bray Wyatt b. Zack Ryder – Sister Abigail's Kiss

Dolph Ziggler b. Dean Ambrose via DQ when Shield interfered

Shield b. Rob Van Dam/Dolph Ziggler/Kofi Kingston – Ambrose pinned Kingston after a running knee to the head

AJ Lee b. Cameron – Shining Wizard

Santino Marella b. Heath Slater – Cobra

Randy Orton b. Miz – RK0

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# Thought of the Day: One At A Time

So for the first time in forever I'm watching a WWE (Evolution of a Predator) and the DVD opens at Elimination Chamber. The narrator talks about how the Elimination Chamber is special because it only happens once a year. Not only does it happen more than once a year, it happens more than once a night. Just the sound of that on paper cuts down on how special the match should be. Make it once a year or at least give us several months between each match.

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## On This Day: September 22, 2008 – Monday Night Raw: Another Anniversary Show

### Monday Night Raw

Date: September 22, 2008

Location: US Bank Arena, Cincinnati, Ohio

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

This was on my request list for some reason. I've done a few shows from around this time lately so maybe it has to do with that. This is a few weeks after Unforgiven so Jericho would be world champion at this point and feuding with Shawn. Other than that I don't remember a thing about this time so it'll be interesting to look at. Let's get to it.

We open with the world title hanging above the ring and a ladder underneath it. Here's Jericho to some LOUD pyro. Cole says this is the 800th episode. So that's probably....WAIT WHAT??? On November 3 of the same year, they would have a big 800th episode celebration with a three hour show. Can't they even keep their continuity straight for six weeks??? I'm going to have to do every show in the history of Raw to get the right episodes aren't I?

ANYWAY, Jericho sits on top of the ladder and talks about how Shawn has convinced Mike Adamle to make their match at No Mercy a ladder match. Shawn has claimed that he revolutionized the ladder match and the mindless sheep that the fans are believed him. Just because HBK says something, it doesn't mean it's true. Jericho on the other hand is an honest man. The truth is that he's won three titles in a ladder match. He's won more ladder matches than Shawn has ever appeared in.

Jericho says the last thing you'll see at the PPV is this, and he pulls down the title. Shawn attacked him recently but he came back, because he's just better than Shawn. Jericho keeps talking and is interrupted by...Randy Orton? Jericho starts to call himself champion but Orton cuts him off. He says that if not for him kicking Punk in the head, Jericho wouldn't be champion. The ladder match doesn't mean anything because whoever wins is living on borrowed time.

Jericho asks what's stopping him from punching Orton right now. Punching Shawn's wife was an accident but this would be on purpose. Randy is still injured here. Orton has spoken to Mike Adamle and anyone that hits him is suspended immediately. Jericho says get well soon and leaves. Orton says he'll be champion again and throws the ladder out. Randy goes to leave and here's Punk. Punk gets in his face and slaps him, causing Adamle to come down and suspend him indefinitely.

Now here's Shane McMahon of all people to dance around on stage in white shoes. Now he dances in the ring a bit. He got

a big pop so I can't complain much here. Apparently he's here to evaluate Adamle later on. Shane overrules Adamle's suspension of Punk so Orton yells about that too. The suspension rule is still in effect, but it starts right now. Shane asks Orton to leave and makes Punk vs. Rhodes and Jericho/JBL vs. Batista/Shawn. Shane dances some more and it's FINALLY over. This segment ran nearly 20 minutes which is WAY too long given what we got out of it.

### Cody Rhodes vs. CM Punk

Feeling out process to start. It's amazing how much bigger this would be in just a few years. Punk uses his strikes to take over, including a spinning elbow to the face. Cody sends him to the outside but Punk kicks him through the ropes. They brawl on the floor before heading back in with Cody hitting a top rope cross body, rolled through for two. Cody hits a few knees, including a big one in the corner for two.

Punk loads up the GTS but Cody escapes and bails to the floor as we take a break. Back with Cody working on the ankle/leg after crotching him during the break. It's leg lock time as the match slows down. Punk counters that into an ankle lock of all things but Cody makes the rope. The running knee hits but the bulldog is countered of course. GTS gets the pin about a second later.

**Rating:** C. Not bad here but Cody didn't mean a thing at this point so the match wasn't going to be anything good. Punk was really just a glorified upper midcard guy at this point so this didn't mean much of anything. Somehow Punk wouldn't get the real revenge he was looking for until 2011.

DiBiase and Manu run in for the beatdown but Kofi makes the save. He and Punk would win the tag titles very soon.

Smackdown ReBound is about Kozlov attacking Jeff Hardy. He also beat up MVP and HHH.

Adamle complains to Shane about being embarrassed out there. Shane says Adamle is doing fine and that he shouldn't be worried. Kane comes in and wants Mysterio, and he'll get him at No Mercy apparently. Kane tells Shane to say hi to Linda for him. He leaves and Shane explains the history between himself and Kane.

A photographer is talking to Kelly when Beth and Santino come up. Santino has a facial injury and Kelly laughed last week, so it's time for pain tonight. He makes fun of Batista who of course pops up behind him. An awkward staredown ensues.

### Santino Marella vs. Deuce

We get the Honk-A-Meter prematch but Deuce cuts it off. This is non-title of course. Deuce goes after the injured face and drops a punch for two. Santino rolls him up for the pin out of nowhere. This was like a minute long.

Santino talks about how great Beth is post match.

### Kane vs. Evan Bourne

Evan is an ECW guy at this point and is standing in for Mysterio who is still injured. Bourne fires off a kick to the ribs which gets him nowhere, followed by an enziguri to stagger the monster. A Kane powerbomb is countered and Bourne kicks some more. Bourne keeps trying to keep things moving but Kane gets in a single punch to stop the offense dead in its tracks. A big boot misses and Kane gets caught in the ropes. A moonsault to the floor puts Kane down again and the double knees get two. Kane gets in a single uppercut and begins the total destruction. HUGE chokeslam gets the pin.

**Rating:** C. This was a lot better than I was expecting from it. Bourne is a guy who is small enough to be able to make you feel sorry for him against a monster like this so the crowd was getting into it. On top of that it plays up the Kane vs. small guys feud which is what they're going with despite it



getting annoying. Fun match.

Rey comes out and gets beaten down as well.

Jamie Noble asks Shane for another match with Regal. Dolph Ziggler comes up and introduces himself and leaves. Orton comes up for another distraction and says overturning the suspension wasn't cool. Shane says it's cool and that Orton is getting off easily. Orton threatens him so Shane says he's a fourth generation McMahon. That means something I guess.

### Beth Phoenix vs. Kelly Kelly

Beth takes him into the corner but Kelly moves out of the way for some speedy gymnastics. Beth comes back with a Buckle Bomb and yells about Batista. Candace is watching in the back. Kelly comes back with a cross body out of the corner for two. Santino's interference backfires and Kelly gets the rollup for the pin. This was when the Divas were only bad and not horrible yet.

They set to double team Kelly until Batista makes the save. Santino ACTUALLY HITS Batista. Guess how well that goes.

We recap the feud between the Dirt Sheet and Word Up, Cryme Tyme's show. They had argued for awhile on their shows, resulting in an AWESOME rap video parody by Miz and Morrison. Dirt Sheet and Miz/Morrison were hilarious at this point.

### John Morrison/The Miz vs. Cryme Tyme

JTG vs. Morrison to start things off. Miz cheats as is his nature but JTG comes back with a spinning clothesline for two. Shad comes in with a huge gorilla press to send Morrison to the floor. Shad throws JTG onto both of them and we take a break. Back with Morrison holding an armbar on JTG which is quickly broken. Off to Miz for more chinlockery as he prevents the hot tag. The tag goes through a few seconds later and Shad cleans house. Powerslam gets two on Miz. Delayed release

gordbuster puts Miz down but Morrison kicks Shad in the head which lets Miz get the pin.

**Rating:** D. This wasn't very good. The problem was that these two were better teams but for some reason neither were tag champions at this point. It's not that the belts meant anything so it doesn't really matter but it's still a pretty stupid miss. Boring match here with the majority of it being spent in chinlocks.

Jericho tries to convince Adamle that Shane is manipulating him. Jericho has an idea but we don't get to hear it.

We run down the No Mercy card.

Charlie Haas is at Dave and Busters to shill the Mr. Perfect DVD with an imitation. He does the sports bit that Perfect did which is kind of funny.

Shawn Michaels/Batista vs. John Bradshaw Layfield/Chris Jericho/Lance Cade

Jericho's idea was to make it 3-2 and I guess it worked. Shawn and Cade start things off with Shawn destroying him. Cade reverses a whip and JBL adds a right hand to really give Lance an opening. Off to Jericho for a chinlock and an enziguri puts Shawn down. Off to JBL who hits a swinging neckbreaker for two. Back to Cade for more of a beating in the corner. Jericho chokes away as this has been one sided for the most part. Bradshaw comes in and they slug it out but JBL kicks him in the face to put him right back down.

It's JBL vs. Batista at No Mercy if that clears anything up. Shawn jumps into the fallaway slam but he counters into a DDT to put both guys down. There's the tag to Batista who cleans house. Spinebuster to Jericho and a powerslam sets up the Shawn elbow. Superkick is countered into a Walls attempt but Shawn rolls him up for two. Everything breaks down and Batista spears JBL outside. Lionsault misses and it's off to Cade.

Forearm puts him down but Jericho's distraction lets him hit a sitout Rock Bottom to Shawn for the pin.

**Rating:** C. Just a main event tag match here that felt like it belonged at a house show. It wasn't bad or anything but it just wasn't interesting. There wasn't much focus on the JBL vs. Batista match at all and Batista was only in the match for about a minute or so. Not bad, but just kind of there.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This wasn't a bad show but it was nothing interesting at all. Nothing really happened and while they pushed No Mercy, this isn't a show that you would need to see to see No Mercy. Orton was in a weird place here where he was hurt, but it was clear they wanted him to be the #2 heel on the roster. That's hard to do but they tried hard. It came off as forced though and it didn't quite work. Pretty meh show.

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## WWE House Show – September 20, 2013

I took in the WWE house show tonight at Rupp Arena in Lexington, Kentucky. I know I said this about the TNA show I went to over the summer, but this might have been the most fun I've ever had at a wrestling event. The crowd was red hot all night and the matches were all

at least decent. There was even a nice surprise that I'll get to in a bit. Let's get to it.

The tickets didn't cost anything as I beat a wrestling expert on the local radio station in a trivia competition to win the seats. We were in the second row on the first level above the floor seats, which is where I've sat many times before. The view was great and you could easily see almost everything save for some brawling on the floor or in the aisle. I'm horrible at guessing attendances but I'd guess there were a few thousand people. The entire upper deck was empty but Rupp arena holds well over 20,000 people so a packed house was out of the question. As usual the empty sections started filling up as the show went on.

Also note that I'll be lighter on the ratings tonight as this is a house show, not a major show.

#### Damien Sandow vs. Zack Ryder

In possibly the biggest shock, Zack Ryder might have actually received the ovation of the night. I mean the place exploded for him and didn't stop cheering for him for nearly half of his match. It was like 2011 all over again and it was a very nice surprise for an old Ryder fan. Before the match Sandow asked up to stand for My Old Kentucky Home (state song) but said we weren't worthy of it. He also promised to drive 65 miles to Louisville to be with a real basketball team before trying to start a Let's Go Cards (hated enemy of the Kentucky Wildcats who play at Rupp) chant. He also said God bless Rick Pitino (Cardinals coach) to really tick them off.

The match was what you would expect, though there was some nice

psychology included. Ryder missed a charge and got his arm tied up in the ropes. Sandow spent the majority of the match working over the arm which is such a basic move but so many wrestlers just miss it anymore. Ryder hit the Broski Boot and sent Sandow face first into the buckle, setting up the Rough Ryder for the pin in about 6:00.

**Rating:** C. Fine opener and the crowd is very hot tonight.

The fans voted for the Divas tag to be a dance off instead of a match.

#### AJ/Layla vs. Funkadactyls

Didn't Layla turn her back on AJ recently? Anyway AJ got a high pitched pop before refusing to dance. Layla did the usual comedic dancing before slipping while going to the corners. The Dactyls did their usual routine but AJ/Layla jumped them to start a match. I sat through this entire thing and absolutely nothing happened that deserved to be written down. Horrible boring stuff and the fans didn't care at all. Cameron pinned Layla after about 7:30 with a not horrible DDT.

**Rating:** D-.

The Dactyls danced afterwards.

#### Jack Swagger vs. Sami Zayn

Since this is an ultra conservative state, Swagger was relatively over. Zayn was the one guy I was hoping would be here who wasn't advertised, though he came out to crickets. Remember that for later. This wasn't as good as their NXT match but it was still one of the better matches of the night. A few fans behind us chanted OLE which seemed to confuse many fans around us. Colter wasn't there either as was recently announced.

This was a nice match with Swagger controlling for the most part. Sami came back with his high spots, including a big flip dive over the ropes to take out Swagger. Sami's top rope cross body looked great too. He tried a second one but got caught in the second Patriot Lock of the match, only to roll Swagger up for the pin at about 10:00. The important thing to note was that while Sami came out to crickets, he had the crowd invested in the match after just a few minutes. Zayn made them care about someone they didn't care about, which is really difficult to do. That's a good sign for his future.

**Rating:** B-. This was really fun stuff.

#### Kofi Kingston/Usos vs. Wyatt Family

The Wyatts was the advertised appearance I was looking forward to most. First of all though, the Usos' entrance got a HUGE reaction. They always get a solid reaction on TV as well, which makes me hope that they get a stronger push soon. The Wyatt entrance got a nice reaction too and the reports are correct: they're just chilling in person. Bray sat in his rocking chair while the other two were in the ring when the lights came on. I've seen Undertaker, Kane and Big Show in person but those two were even more imposing. Rowan, the one with the mask, stood perfectly still during the pre-match staredown and stayed there until the opening bell. It worked really well.

Bray stayed on the floor at first before bolting into the ring to beat down an Uso, revealing some bright red pants that you have to be a brain washing swamp preacher to pull off. Bray is downright eerie in person, walking around the apron with this psychotic look on his face. They worked a regular formula match here with I think an Uso getting beaten down for the most part. You just couldn't take your eyes off Bray though as he was so creepy. The big spot of the match was a triple suicide dive from the good guys.

It was quickly forgotten though as Bray came back in and did the spot where he leans over backwards in the corner, only to drop to his hands to do the upside down on all fours walk from the Exorcist. JBL freaking out when he sees that on TV will be quite a sight. Anyway Kofi got the hot tag and everything broke down with Kofi hitting Trouble in Paradise on Harper, only to get caught with Sister Abigail for the pin at about 12:00.

**Rating:** B. REALLY fun match here with the Wyatts, Bray in particular, totally stealing the show.

#### World Heavyweight Championship: Alberto Del Rio vs. Rob Van Dam

There wasn't much to talk about here. Alberto worked on the arm, Rob came back with kicks. Del Rio went after the arm and got the armbreaker, only to not break when Van Dam got to the ropes for the DQ, just like at the PPV. Match ran just under 10:00 and was nothing special at all. Not bad, but these two have don't have much chemistry.

**Rating:** C-.

Rob got up and kicked Del Rio down, drawing out Sandow to tease a cash-in, only to be kicked in the face by Van Dam. Van Dam went around shaking hands as we went to intermission.

### Ryback vs. Santino Marella

Now we get to the comedy portion of the evening. Ryback insisted that the referee hold the ropes open for him, only to say those weren't the ropes he meant and that the referee had to open the other set. Ryback was then introduced at 305lbs, which he insisted be described as ALL MAN. Santino was ticked off about the bullying and said Ryback was just a bully, just a mean person and....much bigger than he looked from the floor.

Santino tried a series of shoulder blocks to start the match but kept bouncing off Ryback and falling to the mat. He hit the ropes again but stopped short of Ryback, said "allow me" and fell on his back without being touched. Santino couldn't execute a nip up or slam Ryback, so the big man destroyed him for a bit instead. Santino came back and hit the nip up and slam to big pops because they had been built up. Again, simple idea but no one does it anymore. Santino loaded up the Cobra but Ryback bit his fingers to block it and put on a bearhug, only to have Santino escape with a wet Willy. The Shell Shock ended Marella in 7:40.

**Rating:** C+. Fun comedy squash here and there's nothing wrong with that.

### CM Punk vs. Curtis Axel



This was kind of confusing as the match had been advertised as for the title, then as No DQ later in the show. Axel said that Heyman (not here tonight) had found a rule saying that Axel didn't have to defend the title if he had defended it in the last 30 days, so this was non-title. Axel also said there would be DQ's, because apparently he just has that authority.

There really wasn't much to this match and it was mainly punching and kicking. Punk did his usual spots, including the dive through the ropes and the Macho Elbow, but there were no weapons at all in the match. At one point Axel even grabbed a mic and said he wouldn't be using a table so stop asking for one. Punk won with a GTS in approximately 15:00 (I forgot to time it). Not much of a match but the fans were into Punk.

**Rating:** C. I'm guessing Punk is moving a bit slowly due to the injuries from the PPV.

#### Daniel Bryan vs. Randy Orton

Now this is where we'll get to the interesting part. Orton got a solid pop but Bryan...got the same at best or maybe even a bit weaker one. The fans got on their feet and did the YES chant and the finger point, but it definitely wasn't an explosion or even a huge pop. My buddy Josh suggested that a lot of the fans aren't so much into Bryan, but maybe just joining in because everyone else is doing it. I read a report from I want to say Wade Keller from a Smackdown taping a few weeks back and he said about the same thing: the fans cheered for Bryan, but he doesn't get the same reaction that other superstars get. There's time to change that, but it's very difficult to overcome.

This was about what you would expect as Bryan got in all of his usual spots. Bryan is incredibly talented, but he's getting to the point where he's using a lot of the same sequences. Those sequences are very entertaining, but other than the running knee he hasn't changed things up in awhile.

The interesting part of this was Orton might have lost a tooth due to a running dropkick in the corner. Something very large flew out and Orton was holding his mouth and nearly writhing around in pain. Bryan got the YES Lock but Orton got to the rope. Bryan missed a dive to give Orton control, meaning a lot of chinlocks. Bryan made his comeback and hit his signature spots before hitting the running knee out of nowhere for the pin at 16:50. I don't even think Orton loaded up an RK0.

**Rating:** B-. Good match but it wasn't great by any means.

Bryan went around to shake hands to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** A-. This show was a blast with only the Divas match being bad, but if the worst thing I have to sit through is Layla basically wrestling in a bikini, so be it. The fans were on fire all night, most of the big stars were there, and the matches were all solid. I believe the seats we were sitting in cost about \$20-30 and they would have been more than worth the price. I was at the show in Louisville a few months back and wasn't very impressed. This was the polar opposite and one of the most entertaining shows I've ever been to. WWE is on fire at the moment and at a level I haven't seen in a long time. Great show.

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# Smackdown – September 20, 2013: The Strangest Gauntlet Match Ever

Sorry for the delay as I was at a WWE house show. Report coming.

## Smackdown

Date: September 20, 2013

Location: US Bank Arena, Cincinnati, Ohio

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're past Night of Champions and the main story is that there's no WWE Champion. Bryan won the title on Sunday but has been stripped of it due to an alleged conspiracy between he and now fired referee Scott Armstrong. On Raw however, the roster finally came together to fight back against HHH and the Corporation, giving us an interesting battle for the first time since this began, which was somehow just over a month ago. Let's get to it.

We open with a look back at Night of Champions and Raw, set up through an interview with HHH. He compares the scandal with Armstrong to Pete Rose

hypothetically conspiring with an umpire to fix the World Series.

Here's Vickie to open things up. She says she has a thrilling and exciting show planned for us tonight, but first she has to introduce the laughing stock of the WWE. Bob Backlund held the WWE Championship for over 2,000 days, but this man held it for less than a day: Daniel Bryan. Daniel says he'd rather be champion for one day than being a shrill corporate suck-up for his entire life. Vickie gives him an opportunity to come clean but Bryan says the truth is he kneed Orton in the face for three. It could have been a twenty count because Orton was out cold.

Bryan says he should still be champion but Vickie says he should be fired. Daniel says everyone is grateful that Vickie has no real power, but Vickie would rather talk about the people that got involved at the end of the night. Those people would be Zigler, the Usos, R-Truth, Justin Gabriel, Zack Ryder, the Prime Time Players, Kofi Kingston and Rob Van Dam. Tonight it's going to be an 11-3 handicap gauntlet match. The idea is all eleven of them will come down to face the Shield 3-1 until Shield has defeated them all. Bryan is lucky enough to go last.

### Naomi vs. AJ

Non-title. Natalya is on commentary and talks about how AJ is riding the coattails of the Total Divas who have revolutionized the division. AJ easily takes Naomi down and hooks a cravate as Natalya calls AJ an opportunist for how she kept the title on Sunday. A running back elbow gets two for the champion, though Natalya is FAR more entertaining, trying to make the Total Divas sound like good people. Naomi comes back with a dropkick and the Rear View for two. AJ's sleeper is quickly broken up but she grabs the Black Widow for the submission at 3:25.

**Rating:** D+. The match was nothing but this story is ranging anywhere from so bad it's hilarious to horrible depending on how you look at it. The problem is the whole angle hinges on no one ever watching Total Divas, because there's no way to cheer for any of its cast, but AJ is being

presented as a stuck up villain who lords her title over everyone in sight.

### Jack Swagger vs. Santino Marella

Colter tells Santino to take the ravioli out of his ears and asks if he has the proper papers to own a reptile. During Santino's entrance, JBL and Cole hype up Billy Gunn as the guests on their show by saying Road Dogg's catchphrases. Swagger throws Santino down and shouts at him a lot before hooking a double armbar. Santino comes back with his usual sequence before hooking a backslide to pin Swagger at 2:02. When I'm feeling sorry for Jack Swagger, it's a bad sign.

### Ryback vs. Nick Nardone

Nardone is OVW Champion Jamin Olivencia. Before the match, Heyman talks about Punk giving him all he could handle at Night of Champions, but only one of them could come out on top. Ryback says Heyman doesn't deserve to be picked on by a bully like Punk, so he's going to treat Nick like he'll treat Punk. It's a fifty second match with the Meat Hook and Shell Shock ending Nardone, as you would expect.

Here's Orton with something to say. He talks about Bryan and Armstrong taking the title from him at Night of Champions, but that was 100% his own fault. He never should have been in that position but he's spent two years repressing who he really is for the fans. Orton locked away the Viper because that's what everyone wanted. But then Monday night on Raw, HHH and Stephanie showed Orton what he really should be. We get a clip of the attack on Miz from Raw, which Orton calls a warning to anyone who gets in his path. At Battleground, he's going to end the war with Daniel Bryan and be his own WWE Champion.

### Shield vs. Usos/Prime Time Players/Justin Gabriel/Zack Ryder/Kofi Kingston/Rob Van Dam/Dolph Ziggler/Daniel Bryan/R-Truth

It's 3-1, one man at a time, no tagging. Darren Young is first and it goes exactly as you would expect with Reigns getting the pin via the spear in 41 seconds. Titus O'Neil is in next and has a bit better luck by throwing the smaller guys around a bit. Reigns runs him down though and the big beatdown is on. Rollins grabs a guillotine with a body vice and the beating continues. The TripleBomb ends O'Neil at 1:57 (all times total).

Dolph Ziggler is in third but he charges in like a nitwit too. Ziggler speeds things up as fast as he can but Rollins and Dean finally get him to the ground. Reigns gets to take his shots including a headbutt. Ambrose takes too much time talking though and Dolph gets in some solid offense, low bridging Reigns to the floor and hitting the Fameasser on Seth. A Cactus Clothesline puts Ziggler and Ambrose on the floor for a second but Rollins knees Ziggler to the floor. Reigns spears Ziggler down and he can't beat the count at 5:39.

Here's Kofi Kingston to try his luck but Rollins comes to meet him in the aisle for some reason, allowing Kofi to snap the other twos' necks across the top rope. A quick Trouble in Paradise gets a near fall on Reigns but the numbers catch up to Kofi. The bulldog driver gets rid of Kingston at 7:13. Rob Van Dam is in next and Reigns is still down.

A banged up Rollins and Ambrose jump Van Dam but he kicks both guys down as things speed up. Ambrose is monkey flipped down and Reigns is kicked back down to the floor. Rolling Thunder hits both Rollins and Ambrose at the same time and Van Dam loads up the Five Star on Dean....as HHH comes out to call the match off at about 9:00.

**Rating:** C. The non-finish hurt this a lot because I was starting to get into it at the end. The idea of Shield fighting off everyone at once but slowly getting beaten down made sense and felt like something out of a video game. It was really doing a good job at building drama to seeing how far anyone could get without getting beaten but the ending stopped it cold.

Post break HHH yells at Vickie, asking what in the world she was thinking. After what Vickie did tonight, ten more of them would revolt next time, then ten more until we had a full scale revolt. Vickie says it was good for business, but tonight needs to be about fair competition. HHH demands Vickie to make the Usos/Daniel Bryan vs. the Shield, therefore again making Bryan the focus of the show after saying for weeks that there was no way we could have Bryan as the focus of the show.

The Raw ReBound covers the Dusty Rhodes story.

Ryder and Gabriel come in to see HHH and he gives them a match for no apparent reason.

#### Zack Ryder/Justin Gabriel vs. Wyatt Family

Harper gives Ryder a freaky look to start but Zack fires off a forearm in the corner. A big boot takes Ryder down for two as everything breaks down. Gabriel is sent to the floor and Harper hits a buckle bomb on Ryder followed by the discus lariat (JBL: "GOOD GOD!") for the pin at 1:12.

Bray hits Sister Abigail on Ryder post match and talks about keeping his promises.

RVD has a banged up elbow but HHH comes in and gives him a world title match against Del Rio at Battleground. HHH leaves and Del Rio comes in to beat RVD down, including the low superkick. Cole thinks it's odd that Del Rio was right there at that given time.

#### R-Truth vs. Alberto Del Rio

Non-title again. Truth pounds away in the corner to start and gets two off a suplex. The ax kick misses though and Del Rio hits a quick Backstabber for two. Off to a reverse chinlock but Truth comes back with some kicks to the ribs. The front suplex is good for two but Alberto hits

the corner enziguri for the same result. Truth rolls out of the armbreaker and hits the ax kick for two, only to be caught with the low superkick and the armbreaker for the submission at 3:34.

**Rating:** D+. This was about what you would expect out of these two. Truth is a jobber to the stars anymore but at least we don't have to put up with his matches being set up by dancing anymore. Del Rio still has nothing to his character other than being from Mexico as the money has been phased out, keeping him as average of a heel as you can be.

### Shield vs. Usos/Daniel Bryan

Bryan starts by firing off kicks in the corner to Rollins' chest before dropping a knee for two. Rollins tries the jumping knee but gets caught in the surfboard instead. With the hold still mostly on it's Jey in off the tag with a clothesline, only to get caught in the Shield corner and punched by Ambrose. Jey comes back with a backdrop and brings in his brother who gets two off a clothesline.

Off to a hammerlock but Dean fights into the corner, only to have Jey come back in with a big chop for two. The Usos drop a double elbow for two but Jey is driven into the Shield corner again for the tag off to Reigns for some stomping. Jey stays out of trouble by pulling Roman into the corner for the tag off to Bryan. Kicking abounds until Reigns takes Daniel down with an elbow to the jaw and a tag off to Rollins for a chinlock. That goes nowhere as Daniel jawbreaks his way out and tags in Jimmy.

Jimmy does about as well as a career tag team wrestler fighting off three guys who have been defeating main eventers for over a year now as we take a break. Back with Jimmy fighting out of a Rollins chinlock and making the hot tag off to Jey. A few rooms of the house are cleaned but Rollins enziguris him down, allowing for the real heat segment to begin.

Dean hits a running dropkick against the ropes and holds Jey in place for



a slingshot hilo, giving Rollins two. Back to Reigns for a jumping elbow drop for two and we hit the chinlock. A huge clothesline gets two for Roman and it's right back to the chinlock. Jey fights up again and fires off right hands all around followed by a Bubba Bomb on Rollins. The hot tag brings in Bryan for the real house cleaning by knocking Reigns and Rollins to the floor.

Two running corner dropkicks set up a hurricanrana to Dean for two. Jimmy dives over the top to take out Reigns and Jey does the same to Rollins. Dean clotheslines Bryan down but gets caught in the YES Lock, right in front of the ropes. Jey superkicks Ambrose into the running knee from Bryan at 14:00 shown of 17:00.

**Rating:** B. This was the same thing that you've grown to expect from every Shield match: great action, a bunch of saved near falls and a hot finish. On top of that the Shield doesn't lose anything here given that they were coming in at a disadvantage. Good match here but did you really expect anything else?

**Overall Rating:** C+. This was a hard one to grade. The gauntlet match was really fun but it was pulled halfway through for some reason. A solid main event helps of course and we got some story development, but this show felt like it was over before it started. I'm not sure if that was a good thing as only the gauntlet match felt like anything special. Still though, fun show overall and a good use of two hours.

## Results

AJ Lee b. Naomi – Black Widow

Santino Marella b. Jack Swagger – Backslide

Ryback b. Nick Nardone – Shell Shock

Shield vs. Usos/Prime Time Players/Justin Gabriel/Zack Ryder/Kofi Kingston/Rob Van Dam/Dolph Ziggler/Daniel Bryan/R-Truth went to a no contest

Wyatt Family b. Justin Gabriel/Zack Ryder – Discus lariat to Ryder

Alberto Del Rio b. R-Truth – Cross Armbreaker

Daniel Bryan/Usos b. Shield – Running knee to Ambrose

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# On This Day: September 17, 2006 – Unforgiven 2006: Hello Cena And Goodbye Trish

## Unforgiven 2006

Date: September 17, 2006

Location: Air Canada Center, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Attendance: 16,105

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

For some reason this is a very requested show, so here it is. This is a two match show for the most part as Cena goes for the world title against Edge in a TLC match where Cena will be the HUGE heel. Also here we have DX vs. the McMahons and Big Show in Hell in a Cell. I don't think I've ever seen that match all the way through so that's a nice little bonus reason to watch this show. Other than that there's just not much here, but then again 06 was only an ok year for the company. Let's get to it.

The opening video is about those two matches which is exactly what you would expect it to be about.

### Intercontinental Title: Johnny Nitro vs. Jeff Hardy

Wow talk about two different career paths. I'm not sure who gyrates more: Hardy or Melina. They mention Jeff's three year absence, which was when he was in TNA, but we can't say that name so there you are. Long feeling out process to start which is fine if they have time to work with. Nice armdrag and then another by Hardy as we get the obligatory Ricky Steamboat reference.

Nitro plays the standard heel role by hiding on the floor when Jeff gets momentum. That's such a basic thing and it worked very well. I don't get why more people don't do it. SWEET slingshot dropkick to Nitro and he hits the floor. Baseball slide takes care of him there too as it's all Hardy. Nitro hits a dropkick to Hardy while Hardy is on top to take over though. Dang Melina can scream.

He works on Hardy's knee which is rather smart given the style of offense he uses. Top rope twisting moonsault (Starship Pain but from the top rope and without the leg split) misses and we're back to even. Whisper in the Wind hits very well and Nitro is in trouble. Swanton hits clean but Jeff's leg is hurt and Nitro gets his foot on the ropes. Nitro keeps working on the knee and even gets a leg/ankle lock.

Melina gets up on the apron and down she goes thanks to Nitro which gets a rollup for Hardy for two. She can however take her boot off and apply it to the face of Hardy to make sure Nitro wins. Ross gets in a sl\*\* jab at her which is rather amusing for some reason.

**Rating:** B-. Competitive but this went nearly 20 minutes which is a very long time for these two. It's pretty good but for some reason it just never clicked. The ending is fine though as it's basic heel stuff which never gets old. What more can

you ask for in a match as far as basic face vs. basic heel stuff? Solid, Cruiserweight style stuff which is a good idea.

Marine stuff, which wasn't a bad movie.

Matt gives Jeff a pep talk and Lita shows up and insults occur.

### Kane vs. Umaga

Oh yay. It's this match again. They claim this is Umaga's PPV debut. That's idiotic as he had been at Backlash, 4 months before this. I was kind of there so I think I'd know. Estrada is annoying which is the idea so he's got that right at least. The introduction takes about 5 minutes. Who would guess that Kane would win the world title before Umaga would?

Kane punches him back into the corner to start and it's a slugout. Big boot to the face does almost nothing and then Kane sits up after a kick from Umaga. Some Estrada interference lets Umaga take over, which sucks because I was enjoying the whole neither can do anything at all. King compares this to Godzilla vs. Mothra, because both of them resemble large butterflies.

The running flying hip smash connects and Kane is reeling. And of course such a high impact move is followed up by a thumb to the throat, which is SO DEVASTATING! It appears that all Kane can do is punch. Him vs. Rocky Balboa could be amusing. A flying thumb to the head misses from the middle rope. I do enjoy that flying clothesline from Kane. Then again I like Kane in general so there you are.

Chokeslam is started but almost blocked. More striking and then Kane hits a belly to belly (!) over the top to the floor and they head into the crowd. I think you can put the rest together for yourselves. The brawl keeps going, resulting in absolutely no conclusion at all. They brawl into the set and go through a door in it, ticking off the crowd immensely.

**Rating:** D+. Kane didn't care at all at this point and can you blame him? He had no reason to as he knew he wasn't getting elevated at all no matter what he did. He was stuck in these dead end feuds with random people that meant nothing such as this one. Umaga would go on to fight Cena for the world title in a few months while Kane just did his thing over and over again. He's a company man, you have to give him that.

We go to Vince in the back who is watching a tape of him hitting and then pinning HHH on Raw. He and Shane want to destroy DX which they've been trying to do all summer now. The idea is that Vince does nothing but gets to do the pin.

### Raw Tag Titles: Spirit Squad vs. Highlanders

The Highlanders were really funny in their vignettes and then debuted to a nice reaction. This is more or less the peak of their importance. Rory (the other is Robbie) looks like Mad Dog Vachon from a facial hair perspective. Imagine Scottish Bushwackers. That sums them up pretty well. Kenny and Mikey are the Squad members here today. All Highlanders so far.

This really isn't much of a match as you can more or less feel the screwy ending coming soon. Robbie misses a dive and the three other guys beat up Robbie to take over. Crowd is DEAD. The top rope legdrop from Kenny misses as this needs to end like now. Rory gets the hot tag which is lacking heat and hits his finisher on Mikey. After a save Johnny kicks Rory in the head and an X Factor (by the beard no less) ends it.

**Rating:** D. And so what? That's what I was thinking when this match ended: so what. Who cares that the Spirit Squad has ANOTHER win using the same stuff they've used every time? It's just not an interesting dynamic for this long, and then at the end of the day Piper and Flair wound up taking the titles from them. That's the best they could do? This division was long since dead at this point and that was very clear.

We recap the Vince vs. DX feud which went on forever and was

pretty badly received. It just kept going and stupid stuff that DX was doing was "breaking" Vince. Steve Austin kidnapped Vince, destroyed his car and threatened to shoot him and Vince never broke. And yet this is enough to get us to a Cell match?

### Big Show/Vince McMahon/Shane McMahon vs. Degeneration X

Does anyone else have an issue with Vince and Shane and even Show being in a Cell match? Does that just not fit right with anyone besides me? Show is ECW Champion at this point. This is a different kind of cell too as it's not as wide but taller. Maybe it is as wide. Double low blow immediately on Show and DX takes over. I have a feeling this could go on for a very long time.

Shane gets launched into the cage as HHH beats up his father in law. Shane is busted open already. Show's balls must be throbbing since he's still down. All DX so far as Vince gets his face grated over the cage which is a great spot as it's painful looking and draws blood too. You can't beat that. Show is back up and HHH does his jump over the top in the corner which always looks good.

Shawn hits a dive but it gets caught. I love power spots like that. How can you fake catching a grown man like that when he's launching himself down at you? HHH drops a knee on Vince and it CLEARLY misses by at least 4 inches. Vince not moving an inch didn't help things. Really bad camera shot there as it totally exposed everything. It looked fine to the live fans I guess, but terrible from a TV perspective.

Apparently HHH has a bad ear, which is a rare injury. Vince is bleeding and Shawn goes into the cage. Things have slowed down a lot here. JR calls the fence a javelin catcher. Where does he get some of this stuff? The weapons are brought in, starting with a trashcan. Coast to Coast hits HHH and DX is more or less dead.

Shawn is brought back in and Vince gets to punch on him a bit.

Shane hits a slingshot on HHH to launch him into the cage. Vader Bomb to Shawn from Show. Vince picks him up though and then does it again. You imbecile. HHH comes back after a decent rest and it's low blows for everyone. From out of nowhere Shane gets a torture rack of all things into a neckbreaker on HHH.

Everyone is down until a SICK enziguri takes out Shane again. Vince of course lowers his pants to try to get Shawn to kiss up to him. HHH makes a save but too much Big Show stops that. Shawn manages to avoid a splash with a nip up and Vince takes it. DX takes out Show with a bunch of low blows and here's the big comeback. They do all their favorites and HHH gets some chairs from under the ring.

They Pillmanize Shane's neck which would have killed him in kayfabe but whatever. Show comes back to stop the kick as this is going too long. Actually it isn't as the length is helping to a degree. Chairs and steps plus chin music take Show out again. Vince is all that's left so DX pulls down Show's shorts. You know what's coming. There doesn't appear to be a thong either. You can't say he won't do whatever it takes for his company.

HHH busts out a sledgehammer just for fun. Superkick hits and HHH breaks the hammer over Vince. So between that and attempting to murder Shane, how many years in prison is that for them? Pin is academic. Shane is taken out on a stretcher, as is Vince, which gets cheers. I'll give them this: that's how you END a feud.

**Rating:** C+. It was entertaining, but this just didn't feel like it belonged in a Cell. If there hadn't been so many people it would have fit in a regular cage better. This wasn't bad, but it just doesn't measure up to everything else. The comedy thing hurts the whole pain part a lot. This was a good match, but after the attempted murder, cheering them is kind of hard. It's ok but it doesn't work if that makes sense.

The post match stuff takes like five minutes.

Mania is in Detroit.

We get a package on Trish, as her retirement match is next. It's her hometown, so what do you really think is going to happen? If nothing else the highlight reel of her hotness is nice. The story is that Trish wasn't going to announce the retirement but Lita told WWE.com so that Trish couldn't have her moment, which is different if nothing else.

### Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Lita

If she's going to go, this is how you do it: in your hometown against your rival for the title. Both of their theme songs freaking rock. Lita is announced from Atlanta which sounds weird. LOUD Thank You Trish chant before the music even hits. She gets the loudest pop for a Diva ever, period. This really is a cool moment and her stumbling up the steps is awesome too.

Lita gets booed out of the building and I had to grab my headphones to get the loudness out of my ears when Trish went on offense. Thesz Press off the apron to Lita and I can't get over how hot this crowd is for this. I know it's a big deal but DANG they're loud for it. They changed the mat during the video package so that the blood is gone, which is nice since the stains on the mat get annoying later on.

Lita's looks never worked that well with bangs. In a cool spot, Lita blocks the headscissors out of the corner and Trish winds up sitting on Lita's lap in the corner as they punch each other. Never seen that before. They fight even more on the top and Trish goes to the mat. Moonsault misses and the Stratusfaction is missed too. A fan at ringside actually asks Trish to marry him as she's down. Well he's certainly trying.

Trish is in trouble as they actually tease her losing here. That's rather amusing. JR mentions she'll be in the Hall of



Fame, which better be true. If she's not they might as well close off any other Divas. They slug it out which is something these two can actually make believable, which isn't often said of the ladies. BIG old kick to the head of Lita gets two.

Sweet move by Trish as Stratusfaction is reversed but Trish twists PERFECTLY in midair into a sunset flip. The sunset flip part isn't great but the twist was nice. It gets two, but Trish gets the FREAKING SHARPSHOOTER and the crowd absolutely loses it. Lita almost gets the rope but Trish drags her back to the middle for the tap and the title.

**Rating:** A. This wasn't for the match, although it was good. This was about a last moment, and I'd love to hear a way to go out that is better than this. In her hometown, using the most famous move in the history of the country, she beat her archrival and broke the record for most Women's Championship ever. That is what you call epic. Good match too, but that's expected from these two. Crowd was awesome too.

Everyone gives Trish an ovation, including Lillian, Jim and Jerry. Lita would retire in like 3 months, killing the division once and for all.

There's a season premiere of Smackdown. I think that was the Friday debut.

Orton is in the back and gets a mixed reaction, even though he's a heel here. He says no one cares about her retirement unless you're Canadian. Orton REALLY can't talk yet here and it shows badly. He has Carlito next. Odd interview and not in a good way.

### Randy Orton vs. Carlito

I still like Burn in My Light better than Voices. This is more or less the apex of Carlito's WWE push. Standard stuff to start which is fine. Randy takes over and we get an RK0 chant. I love Canadian crowds. So much for that Randy takes over

aspect as Carlito hits some nice springboard splashes. Both guys have nice dropkicks also. Orton's mouth is busted, which today would bring a match to a screeching halt.

It's chinlock time, which was more prevalent back in the day if you can believe that. Carlito hits a Downward Spiral which is a required move in this company I think. RK0 is countered into the Backcracker and is told they have two minutes left. To end it, Carlito does a double springboard into a spinning clothesline. It doesn't hit though as Orton pulls him into the RK0 in a SWEET counter. Awesome ending to a bad match.

**Rating:** D+. This was rather boring. It's nothing great at all as the whole thing was about the ending. Carlito was a rather odd worker as he had such a different style but it just never clicked for more than like one match in a row. This was rather short and didn't really ever get off the ground, but after the long celebration with Trish they're likely short on time.

We recap Edge vs. Cena, which is happening because Cena wants the title. The idea is if Cena loses here to Edge in Edge's hometown then he goes to Smackdown for three years. There's also a new belt here as Edge threw the spinner belt in the water. He has a new spinner with an R on it. This gets the music video treatment. Oh and Cena's dad got beaten up by Edge.

Raw World Title: Edge vs. John Cena

Oh and it's TLC. Let the Vince hardon begin. No coat for Edge here which is weird. BIG pop for Edge. I really want to see him as a face again. It might have helped to have him be a face for more than like two months or give him more than just shouting SPEAR over and over again. They start booing before Cena's music even hits. Nuclear heat on Cena.

I love having the ladder and chair set up on the tables around the ring. That's always a perk for some reason. Cena just being a two time champion is great. You can barely understand

Lillian over the top for Edge. Ross makes a good point and asks what Buddy Rogers would think of a TLC match. I'd counter with what would he think of the belt that spins with a big R on it.

LOUD booing for a simple headlock. This crowd is awesome. Impaler hits but since it's not 2000 anymore that move is just average. I've never gotten that: how can a move like that just lose its power? Cena goes into some chairs and Edge is loudly cheered. You'll get used to that tonight. Ladder time as Edge is mostly dominant. I'm getting tired of me saying things and then them changing immediately. A hip toss puts Edge onto a ladder and the American takes over.

It has always confused me a bit how people always talk about experience in these kinds of matches. How much experience do you need to climb a ladder? Sunset powerbomb through the table is kind of botched as the table isn't there so they hit mat instead of table. A powerslam does it instead. These matches are hard to review as you kind of always wind up just listing off spots and it gets rather repetitive.

Edge runs up the ladder and hits a dive over the top to take out Cena which looked awesome. One man Conchairto is avoided by Cena, resulting in the cheering from fans over the lack of massive head trauma. STFU with Edge inside a ladder, which actually would hurt which is nicer than the figure four around the leg which wouldn't really add a lot of pain I don't think.

Cena hits an FU on the ladder. As in the ladder was across his shoulder and landed on Edge who was on the mat. Edge takes over again and sets Cena on a table then sets up another table on top of that. Nothing happens with it though, so I'd bet on that being the big finish. The BIG ladder is brought out and Edge is down, so Cena has to inch up the ladder.

SPEAR to take Cena off the ladder. It's not quite the one to Hardy but it's not bad at all. They fight over big spots near

the ladder and Edge hits the floor. Cena almost gets the belt but Lita makes the save and Cena takes a big old fall to the floor and through a table. Lita messes up though and causes Edge to go flying through a table as well. FU to Lita and it's time for Miley Cyrus' big song from last year.

The double stack table is set up again but for no apparent reason at all as Edge is down on the floor and Cena is capable of climbing. Both guys on are the ladder and in a fairly famous visual now, Edge takes the FU off the ladder through two tables. Cena grabs the belt, which he would hold for the next full year plus.

**Rating:** B. I thought a higher grade at first but this feels more right. It's definitely a good match and worthy of being a PPV main event, but it just feels kind of anti-climactic. Cena defies the odds again and wins the title? It's not bad or anything but it just lacks that spark I guess you would say. Very intense match though with some very nice big bumps. This is worth checking out.

**Overall Rating:** B. It's definitely a good show and the two huge matches are definitely a good way to sell the show. This has some issues with it but for the most part it's good. Trish's moment is probably the highlight of the show actually but the whole comedy spot in the Cell match just stopped that one dead. It's worth seeing and is definitely entertaining but not a classic or anything. I'd consider this a good popcorn show if that makes sense.

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