

Monday Night Raw – February 7, 2005 – Raw In Japan, Now With More Features And Confusing Animation!

Monday Night Raw

Date: February 7, 2005

Location: Super Arena, Saitama, Japan

Attendance: 16,657

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Yes, we're actually in Japan for this. I was going to do Great American Bash 2000 but that turns out to be kind of hard to find so while I'm downloading it you get this requested show. I barely remember 2005 WWE to be honest but we're approaching Mania 21 which wasn't too bad. Cena and Batista would be on the rise at this point so there's Big Dave to look forward to. Let's get to it.

Union Underground brings us into this. I love that song.

Obviously this isn't live but it was taped on Friday before the show.

This is listed from Tokyo so I'll assume it's a suburb or something.

Here's Bischoff who is GM at the moment. He has a translator and the fans aren't thrilled with him in the slightest. The translation is booed far louder than the English. Yes, the English that they didn't understand at all is booed out of the building. HBK vs. Flair tonight so that'll be good. Also Edge vs. HHH for the world title. But for an opener, here's Jericho vs. Benoit in a submission match.

Chris Jericho vs. Chris Benoit

Yeah this works. No idea if there's a story here but does it really matter? Apparently they had a tag title shot last week but lost and argued post match. They lock up and go to the floor with it as this is very intense right off the bat. They keep ramming heads together for a hard staredown and lock up again. Benoit works on the arm but Jericho grabs a Walls attempt which fails. Sharpshooter attempt has the same result and it's a standoff.

Springboard dropkick by Jericho isn't launched and they fight on the bottom rope but both crash to the floor as we take a break. Back with Benoit running over Jericho and adding a snap suplex. Jericho is bleeding from below the eye. Rolling Germans by the Canadian in Japan to the American (Jericho was born in New York remember) but Jericho busts out the Octopus of all things.

More Rolling Germans are countered into a half crab as Benoit is in trouble. Benoit gets the rope and tries the suplexes again but Jericho fights him off. Benoit is like oh son you done made me mad and BLASTS him in the back a few times and hits the Germans to set up the swan dive to the back. He dives in for a Crossface but Jericho escapes and takes him down with a clothesline. Lionsault misses but Jericho intentionally misses and grabs the Walls.

Benoit gets a shot in to block that but it's a slingshot into the corner. Benoit fights out of that and there's the Crossface but it's more of a chinlock than the regular grip. Still not enough to end it though as the other Chris manages to get to the rope so we're not done yet. Walls don't work because of the arm and Benoit kicking him in the face and there's the Crossface again, still with the chinlock but a lot more torque, this time enough for the tap.

Rating: B. Oh come on it's Benoit vs. Jericho on a stage where

they intentionally want to look awesome. What were you expecting them to do? Sleepwalk through it? Naturally very good match between these two as they wrestled each other so much that they could have a great match in their sleep, which always makes their great ones more impressive. Great opener to keep the crowd how.

The Divas are having a fashion show later.

Clips of the plane ride which must have taken forever.

Flair and HHH are getting ready and Flair says he's awesome. Batista gets...Maven later. Oh joy. The first Raw from this year I've watched in a long time and I get Big Dave vs. Maven. HHH is worried about what Batista is going to do as far as Mania goes. Flair talks some sense into him as HHH is going to talk him into going to Smackdown so Evolution will have both titles.

Christian is giving an interview as to how he got the name Captain Charisma when they run into Stacy. The interviewer wants to talk to Orton and Christian isn't that happy with it. Christian makes fun of him which is amusing since they're feuding now. Christian is rather amusing here. He challenges Orton for later and Tomko is skeptical. Tomko shouldn't worry though because the match is with Tomko, not Christian.

Ad for Wrestlemania, in this case HHH as Braveheart. I loved this campaign. Flair WOOing at a donkey is funny.

Maven vs. Batista

Maven is a cocky heel at this point and doesn't get an entrance. What do you think is going to happen here? He's mad he wasn't in the Rumble and calls conspiracy. Cue Big Dave and this is exactly what you would expect. The run time is 32 seconds if you're curious. These fans are losing their minds over a total squash. He really needs I Walk Alone which he would get soon after winning the title.

Big Show pops up on the screen and says he's not worried about facing Batista at Mania. No real point to this as apparently it's a running theme.

Batista yells at Bischoff in the back about it. He's getting tired of Smackdown talking about him so Bischoff gives him a sales pitch about staying on Raw. The fans pop at the mention of Batista vs. HHH.

Raw Tag Titles: William Regal/Tajiri vs. La Resistance

Gee I wonder what's going to happen here. Conway and Grenier here. The place ERUPTS for Tajiri who is all fired up here. Regal and Eugene were champions but Eugene is injured so Regal picked Tajiri as his new partner. Massive Tajiri chant starts up so Regal starts off with Conway. Regal Stretch goes on but it's off to Tajiri who adds the low dropkick as the offense is on.

Regal plays Ricky Morton for a bit here despite getting some shots in to try to break the momentum. The fans chant something but it's in Japanese. Grenier punches Tajiri so when Regal takes him down there's no one to tag. STF is broken up quickly and there's the hot tag to Tajiri who cleans house. Let the kicks begin! Enziguri hits Grenier for two as everything breaks down. Double handspring elbow takes out the French dudes and it's Tarantula time. Regal takes Conway down and there's the Green Mist and a Buzzsaw kick gives us new champions.

Rating: C+. The match totally doesn't matter and is rated too high, but this is about giving the fans something to erupt for and that's exactly what they did here. Tajiri and Regal would hold the belts about three months so this wasn't just a fluke title reign. No problem at all with this and while it's not great or anything, it was perfectly done as it made Tajiri look like a star.

Regal and Tajiri go into the crowd to celebrate.

We go over the HOF class for 2005 which was the second year that this was revived. Going in this year are Orndorff, Iron Sheik, Nikolai Volkoff, Bob Orton Jr. and Jimmy Hart. They say others will be named, which would include Piper and Hogan.

Ric Flair vs. Shawn Michaels

Can't say they're not giving them a big card tonight. Pretty much just a showcase match. Shawn's pop is bigger. Flair elbows Shawn on a break in the corner to take over. They hit the floor and Shawn chops away. Backdrop has Flair moaning in agony. Back in and Flair begs off which gets a big reaction for some reason. They slug it out some more and it's Flair Flop time. Shawn actually gets two off that and it's time to work on the knee. Basic leg work follows and Flair loads up the Figure Four.

Shawn fights it for a bit and then reverses as this is about as basic of a match between these two as you could ask for. It's fine and all but they're going through the motions here. Rollup gets two for Shawn and the knee gives out again. Small package gets two as does a backslide. There's an enziguri by Shawn and you know what's next. Nip up but Flair tries to go up. Even the Japanese fans know that joke. Backdrop sets up the elbow which sets up Sweet Chin Music (with questionable selling by Shawn) for the clean pin. You can tell they weren't going with much if it's a clean pin like that.

Rating: C. It's Flair vs. Michaels so it's going to be solid at least. Very weak match from these two but the point was to allow the fans to see a pair of legends go out there and do their thing for an historic match. That's what they did here and there's really no reason to complain about it. Not exactly Mania 24, but still fine for what it was.

Time for an All-American Diva Fashion Show. Lawler of course hosts and I'm a bit surprised by this getting a big pop. Up first is Maria who is dressed as a western chick apparently.

Victoria is a biker, meaning more or less a bikini and a leather jacket. Christy represents the beaches and is just in a bikini. Not complaining but is there a point to this?

Ah here it is as Simon Dean comes out to protest. He wants to use the time to pitch his Simon System of products to an international audience. An American sumo wrestler protests the jokes and then sits down. Simon says the girls are all fat and I think we can see where this is going rather quickly. Jerry defends the Divas and Simon busts out the Burger King line. The girls beat him up anyway and Lawler gets a group hug.

Evolution has a meeting where HHH tries to convince Dave to go to Smackdown. Dave says he'll think about it and Flair/HHH aren't thrilled with that idea but go along with it anyway. They have to focus Edge tonight though so they go to get ready for it.

Edge says he's ready but is tired of being overlooked because of Evolution all the time. He's a heel here but not a very good one yet.

Another video about the fans loving WWE. I'll give them this: Japanese fans are passionate about their wrestling at a level American fans have never hoped of approaching.

Randy Orton vs. Tyson Tomko

Orton is still a face at this point but his heel turn to fight Undertake at Mania was coming incredibly soon. Orton doesn't look like he had ringside seats to a nuclear explosion here and you can actually see his arms. Basic stuff to start until Christian drags Stacy, Orton's current kind-of-girlfriend, down the aisle. Orton is also suffering from a concussion from the Rumble which was 8 days ago.

The distraction from Stacy being dragged out there allows Tomko to start hammering away. He pounds on Orton's head as they're playing up the head injury here. It's not a bad one

where he's going insane or anything, but if it did that would explain a lot about his character from a few years ago. Orton fights back with the backbreaker but he's stumbling a bit. He wants the RKO but gets dizzy when trying it. He settles for a rollup instead, which is a good ending since he got his concussion trying the RKO on HHH.

Rating: C-. Just a quick match here and there's nothing wrong with that. They had to protect Orton's head for the storyline so the ending was a good way of going about doing that. This was really just to advance Christian vs. Orton and again that's just fine. Not a bad match or anything but pretty unremarkable.

Christian gives Orton the Unprettier (Killswitch) post match.

Orton was taken out during the break.

We recap the rest of the show so far, namely the title change.

Raw World Title: Edge vs. HHH

Edge tried to spear Shawn last week but speared the Game instead so there's actually a point to this. They trade some technical stuff to start and it's a standoff. We actually get a pinfall reversal sequence into a backslide which gets a LOUD gasp. HHH is showing off athleticism here which is rather shocking but if he can do it rock on dude. Edge's shoulder goes into the post and then does it again.

Make it three times as who says HHH isn't repetitive? We take a break and come back with Edge hitting a backbreaker for two. During the break HHH got sent up and over the corner and hurt his back so Edge hit a suplex on top of that. Facebuster stops Edge's mini-comeback for two. Edge manages to get a missile dropkick for two. He gets a bit going but walks into a spinebuster.

Pedigree doesn't work as the fans are definitely staying with

this. Edge sets for the spear but remember he has a bad shoulder. Not that it matters as HHH gets a knee in for a close two also. Edgecator (kneeling Sharpshooter) goes on and HHH is in trouble. Rather back and forth match here. There's a rope though as Flair plays cheerleader. Edge tries the hold again but HHH kicks him off.

Out of nowhere Edge misses the spear, taking out the referee. Neckbreaker puts HHH down but there's no referee. Cue Flair with a chair but he gets speared also. Edge misses a chair shot to HHH and a suplex takes both guys down. They both crawl for the chair but Batista comes down and pulls it out of the ring, which HHH isn't pleased with. HHH knocks Edge into Batista with unclear motives and a Pedigree is countered into the Edgecution. Edge wants the spear again but Batista kills him with a spinebuster. Pedigree finally ends this.

Rating: B-. This was pretty good actually as they had time and it advanced the story with Batista and HHH. I don't think anyone thought the title was changing but at times having a guy like Edge go out there and have a long title match with the champion is a good thing. It spawned a PPV series called In Your House so it's not that much of a stretch. Pretty good main event.

Batista and HHH celebrate but Batista looks at the title and HHH sees him so a staredown ends the show.

Overall Rating: B+. This was a very good show overall with a white hot crowd all night. Very interesting that for their own product they're silent most of the time yet here they were barely quiet all night. Anyway this was an awesome show as they had a spectacle in Flair vs. Shawn, a good main event and a title change, plus Benoit vs. Jericho. I had a good time with this show and it goes to show you what they can do when they let good wrestlers have time. Shame that didn't happen often in 2005.

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Johnny Ace Not Fired

According to WWE.com. I'm fine with this because Ace is a good heel boss, but it kind of makes the last two shows pointless in regards to this storyline. Didn't the Board tell HHH that he had the right to fire Ace and become the boss again at any given moment? Why now does HHH's firing not stand? Why am I looking for continuity in WWE?

Thoughts on this?

Monday Night Raw – February 6, 2012 – Truth Go Boom

Monday Night Raw

Date: February 6, 2012

Location: Chesapeake Energy Arena, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

We're on the second of the three Raws between the Rumble and the Chamber. Last week's show was pretty awesome with the return of Undertaker to apparently challenge HHH. Also it appears that HHH is back in charge instead of Johnny Ace which should at least be interesting. We should get some more matches for the PPV tonight too. Let's get to it.

We open with a gong. Oh wait it's just a recap from last week with Taker returning and seeming challenging HHH.

6 Pack Challenge tonight with the winner entering the Chamber last. Also Show vs. Bryan.

Here's HHH to open things up. He says he was here last week to fire Johnny Ace. He wasn't here to wish him well, but rather well in all of his future endeavors. However he never got that far. Ace being called a man is an exaggeration as he's more of a weasel. Apparently Ace flew to Stamford to plead for another chance and HHH has to wait on the proposal. The decision should be in by tomorrow morning.

However he's not here for that, but rather to talk about the return of the Undertaker. He talks about hearing the gong go off and it still gives him chills. Taker is the only person that humbles HHH when they're in the ring together. Last week though, HHH didn't feel humble or anything like that. He felt sorry for the Undertaker. He knows what he did to Undertaker last year and he chooses to remember the Undertaker in a certain way.

HHH plays a highlight reel of Taker's career and I think this is all from Wrestlemania. That's how HHH wants to remember him, not like this, which brings up a video of Taker not being able to stand after last year's match. Due to that, the challenge for Wrestlemania is declined. If they have to do it again, HHH will have to finish it. He respects Taker too much and this is over.

HHH goes to leave and his music cuts off. There go the lights

and a video from the match last year plays. Taker is somewhere and says it's not over. The victory last year means nothing and he wants what belongs to him. So it's Shawn's storyline from two years ago with Taker in Shawn's place?

Daniel Bryan vs. Big Show

AJ comes out with Bryan in a neckbrace. Show takes him straight to the corner and the power begins. He throws Bryan around a lot until Bryan gets in a kick to the knee and we take a break. Back with Bryan's half crab being broken as Big Show powers him around. Spear gets two. Show loads up the chokeslam but Bryan counters into a guillotine choke. Bryan gets in a shot to the leg and goes up but Show kicks him to the floor. Now Bryan is holding his knee but he was goldbricking. Show charges at Bryan but almost crushes AJ again. Bryan takes AJ to the back and loses by countout at 7:32.

Rating: D+. These two just do not work well against each other at all. Show is good against someone like Henry. The problem is that Bryan is not Henry and can't have a ton of convincing offense against the Big Show. That makes the matches quite boring so what's the point of watching them fight, especially when Bryan loses almost every time?

Bryan says Show tried to run her over on purpose and she's more important than the title. On Sunday (the PPV is in two weeks), he'll still be Bryan, a vegan and the champion.

Carl Edwards, a NASCAR driver drove his car into the arena last week and met with Cena. Cena will be the official starter for the Daytona 500.

Video on the Elimination Chamber.

Here's Otunga in the ring and he has something to say. He praises Ace and wants the Board of Directors to keep Ace on the job. Otunga asks for us to join him in prayer and he

Tebows. We get an announcement from HHH that right now, Otunga has a match.

Sheamus vs. David Otunga

Otunga is in his suit, sweater and bowtie. Sheamus immediately loads up the Celtic Cross but Otunga escapes, losing the sweater in the process. A double ax takes him down and there are the ten forearms. The shirt is torn now as well. Otunga holds onto the top rope and grabs a DDT to take over. He stomps away and chokes a little bit but Sheamus is all ticked off. Brogue Kick ends this in 2:04.

Here's Jericho who says the end of the world is here. He's here to end the lying, the plagiarism and all that jazz. Everyone who is in this ring is a Chris Jericho wannabe. The fans are all wannabes too. He got all of the fans to believe whatever he wanted. Jericho admits he trolled all of them. Miz scowling in a suit is a Jericho thing. Kofi flying around is a Jericho thing. Dolph walking to the ring with Vickie is a Jericho thing because he walked to the ring with Stephanie. O.....k?

Then we have CM Punk. Punk says he's the best in the world but in reality he's a Chris Jericho wannabe and he knows deep down inside that Jericho is the best in the world. He doesn't have to write it on the back of a t-shirt but he knows it. Jericho is back to claim what is his and that means the end of the world of CM Punk. Here's Punk who comes in with a mic and drops it. Instead he holds up the title then turns his back on Jericho. Jericho looks like he's pulling his arm back to hit Punk but doesn't and the champ leaves. Jericho yells about wanting Punk to say something but Punk keeps walking.

Randy Orton/Great Khali vs. Wade Barrett/Cody Rhodes

Orton and Barrett start but it's quickly off to Khali with the chops. He chops Orton HARD for the tag back in. Off to Rhodes and we're in an 80s style kick and punch match. Orton hits the

elevated DDT and Khali tags himself back in. They get in an argument but Khali chops Rhodes out of the air during a Beautiful Disaster attempt for the pin at 3:45.

Rating: D-. This match happened. That's about all I've got for it. I get that it's supposed to push the idea of distension and everything but that doesn't mean that it's a good match. Khali was supposed to be dominant and while it kind of worked, the execution of it came off as horrible.

Khali tries to chop Orton post match but takes the RKO instead.

Now we hear about a Twitter argument between Rock and Cena. Now we see the Cena video AGAIN.

Tamina/Alicia Fox/Kelly Kelly/Eve Torres vs. Beth Phoenix/Natalya/Bella Twins

We get an inset promo from Beth who talks about how she's unbeatable. She starts with Eve and the beating begins. Off to a Bella who is chopped in the chest to bring her in. She walks into a Samoan Drop from Tamina and the Superfly Splash ends this in 1:33.

HHH is in the back when Ace comes up. Ace is all smiley and says he's still the interim GM. He met with the Board earlier today and they're very nice people. He'll accept whatever decision they make. Shawn is going to be here next week. Also it's officially Cena vs. Kane in an ambulance match. Speaking of ambulances, HHH says Ace's career is on a flatline. If Ace doesn't leave right now, he'll be flatlined.

The decision on Ace will be announced tomorrow morning at 10AM.

We get the same video from earlier with Taker's voiceover.

Ace says he thinks the Board is looking for someone honest rather than someone who is a brute.

CM Punk vs. Dolph Ziggler vs. R-Truth vs. The Miz vs. Chris Jericho vs. Kofi Kingston

This is one fall to a finish and the winner gets to be #6 in the Chamber. Roberts fumbles over the rules before the match starts. Everyone is in the ring at once so I'm not going to try to keep up with what's going on. Jericho heads to the floor which is a smart move. Other than him, everyone but Ziggler and Kofi go to the floor. Truth TOTALLY misses a dive and crashes to the floor on his back.

Ziggler teases a dive but stops to strut. Punk clotheslines him down for two as we take a break. Back and Truth is carried out. Jericho and Kofi are on the floor and Kofi is down. Punk hits a combination neckbreaker/DDT on both heels but it only gets two on Miz. The Vice goes on both guys but Kofi makes the save. It's down to Punk vs. Jericho but Miz and Dolph come back in.

Jericho and Miz clothesline each other down as this match is going VERY slowly. Punk goes up for a superplex on Dolph but it winds up being a Tower of Doom. Miz covers Punk as Jericho covers Dolph so the referee counts both, getting two both times. Miz tries for the Finale on Jericho but Kofi comes in with Trouble in Paradise to Miz, sending him to the floor. Middle rope missile dropkick takes Kofi down and it's off to a chinlock.

Jericho misses the Lionsault and blocks Trouble in Paradise. There are the Walls for Kofi but Punk comes back in with a knee to the back of Jericho's head. Chris is sent to the floor and Ziggler tries a rollup, getting two. GTS takes Ziggler down but Jericho breaks it up, sending Punk onto the table. Jericho slides in and steals the pin on Ziggler at 12:25.

Rating: C+. The problem with this show is based in this match. The problem is that with so many people being in this match, there's nothing else to get us through the rest of the show.

This was decent but once Truth was gone, the crowd was basically dead for the rest of the time. It's not bad but it's nothing great.

Jericho sits like Punk in the ring.

We hear screaming and Eve is being yelled at by Kane. He says he has to do something because of the hate. Cena is starting to embrace the hate and when he finally does it fully, he'll be in a better place. Until then though, Kane is afraid for Eve and Cena. More than that though, he's afraid of himself. Ok then.

Overall Rating: C+. This was much more about storytelling and moving things forward towards the Chamber and then on to Mania. It wasn't as good as last week's, but we got a lot done tonight which needed to happen. There's plenty of time before Mania, so it was good to get some of this out of the way. The problem with the main event as I said though is that it gives us nothing but Smackdown matches before then, which is ok but it still gets a little boring. Good show but not great.

Results

Big Show b. Daniel Bryan via countout

Sheamus b. David Otunga – Brogue Kick

Great Khali/Randy Orton b. Cody Rhodes/Wade Barrett – Chop to Rhodes

Kelly Kelly/Eve Torres/Tamina/Alicia Fox b. Beth Phoenix/Natalya/Bella Twins – Superfly Splash to Brie Bella

Chris Jericho b. CM Punk, Dolph Ziggler, Kofi Kingston, The Miz and R-Truth – Jericho pinned Ziggler after a GTS from Punk

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Monday Night Raw – March 3, 1997 – Perhaps The Best TV Match Ever

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 3, 1997

Location: Deutschlandhalle, Berlin, Germany

Attendance: 6,373

Commentators: Vince McMahon, Honky Tonk Man, Jim Ross

This is a very nice surprise. I had planned to do this because it was the 200th episode (again that's an approximation because a simple thing like counting is a hard task for a company like the WWF) but in reality it has what is considered one of the best matches in the history of Raw and possibly in the history of wrestling on free TV. We're setting up for Wrestlemania 13 which is in about three weeks I think. Let's get to it.

The opening video is about the Berlin Wall being torn down and how tonight it's the tournament final.

Honky Tonk Man comes out for commentary.

There are three title matches tonight. This card is STACKED. See how this grabs you for an opener.

Hunter Hearst Helmsley vs. Bret Hart

For those of you that can't do the math, that would be HHH. He's just a midcard guy here though. Bret says he can stay focused because he has to. The fans throw in a Bret Hart bear so HHH punts it out. HHH is nowhere near what he would become

so this would be like Orton vs. Mahal. Bret takes over with a headlock and they go to the mat. Honky says Bret plays it up like he's quick but he's really cheating.

HHH gets in a kick which might have been low as we take a break. Back with the future Game still in control and working on the arm. The jumping knee to the face takes Bret down as we talk about the submission match. HHH goes up but Bret crotches him and a superplex gets two. The Russian legsweep and middle rope elbow gets the same. Pedigree is countered but a rake to the eyes breaks up the Sharpshooter. Bret puts HHH in the Tree of Woe and goes after him but shoves the referee in the process for the DQ.

Rating: B-. Not as good as you would expect but like I said, HHH wasn't anywhere near what he'd become. This wasn't a terrible match and HHH certainly didn't look bad here at all. It's not a classic, but it's nice to see something like this where a veteran puts over a young guy by going toe to toe with him for twenty minutes. Good stuff.

Chyna gets in Bret's face but she's escorted out.

There's no Austin for an interview.

Intercontinental Title: Vader vs. Rocky Maivia

Again we have someone in the form of Rocky that isn't anywhere near what he'd become yet. He's the Intercontinental Champion though so he's had a good start to his career I'd say. Vader beat Rocky in the first round of the European Title tournament so the title is in jeopardy here. All Vader to start who takes Rocky's head off with a clothesline. Rocky hooks a rollup for two and is crushed by a splash in the corner.

Rock tries a sunset flip but Vader sits on him for two. He speeds things up and hammers away on Vader. Taking the fight to Vader always seems to be the best course of action actually and Rocky even manages a belly to back for two as we take a

break. Back with Vader getting two off a splash. Paul Bearer is at ringside with Vader. A middle rope splash (not the Vader Bomb) gets two.

Vader really changes gears now by throwing on a leg lock. That's not something you see him do that often and it goes against his style pretty hard. Vader goes up again but Rock powerslams him down for two. A pretty sweet belly to belly gets two. Spinning DDT gets two and Rocky is all fired up. Vader has lost his mask. Rocky hits his top rope cross body finisher but Vader gets out before the count starts. A dropkick puts Vader on the floor but Mankind runs in and clocks Rocky with the Urn for the DQ.

Rating: B. Pretty solid power vs. speed match here and I really wanted to see the ending here. Vader was still valuable at this point as he hadn't been made into a jobber to the stars yet. Rocky of course was on the rise but he didn't have much to go on yet. That's what veterans past their primes like Vader are good for too. This was very fun and I was having a great time with it.

Vader beats Rock up post match.

We get a clip from last week where Lawler issued an open challenge to ECW and they ran in. I've reviewed that show already and it was pretty dull if I remember. Dreamer beat up D-Von and there were a lot of weapons involved. Seeing stuff like weapons being blurred out is weird. Sandman drinking a beer is censored. That's so bizarre to see on Raw. The ECW guys had to stop a fight between Lawler and Heyman.

Sultan vs. Flash Funk

Sultan is Rikishi. Jim Ross has joined us on commentary. Lawler calls in and yells at Vince for having ECW guys on Raw. Didn't Jerry invite him? If the ECW guys show up next week, Lawler will finish the fight. After a break the match is joined in progress with Sultan running him over. Flash does

his usual flying around the ring to get in some offense but Sultan hooks him in a sleeper. Heyman calls in to say Lawler is over the line. The challenge is accepted but it might not be next week. Standing rana sets up a top rope moonsault for two by Funk. Sultan counters a headscissors and the camel clutch ends this quick.

Rating: C-. This match was fine but it's by far and away the weakest of the matches as far as star power goes. Good match here as Funk is always someone I love watching. Sultan was a dead end gimmick and more or less stopped meaning anything after Mania when Rocky beat him in the IC Title match.

We get a clip from October with Austin breaking a lot of stuff in the back. He yelled at a security guard and got thrown out by cops. We're looking for him tonight.

Sid says he's ready for Mankind.

We get a clip from Final Four where Bulldog and Owen had some issues.

Here's Ahmed to answer the challenge from Farroq for a street fight at Mania. The announcer speaks in German and then shifts to very accented English. Ahmed accepts and I have no idea what else he's saying.

Video on the LOD who are still awesome at this point. On Shotgun Saturday Night (I really need to do more of that show) they said they'd be in Chicago for Wrestlemania.

WWF Title: Mankind vs. Sycho Sid

This should be...interesting. Mankind gives a quick prematch promo mostly in German. Sid pounds away on him while the music is still playing. Out to the floor and Mankind gets in a few shots before hitting the post by mistake. Back inside Sid hooks a chinlock and we hear that next week, Raw is War. That would be the official new name of the show. Sid grabs a

Fujiwara Armbar of all things.

Austin pops up on the split screen and rants about how he's the #1 talent in wrestling today but he was sitting next to the bathroom on the plane and had a stale sandwich in a brown paper bag. That's not what made him sick though: it was Bret whining all over the place. More from him later. Mankind hooks onto Sid with what looks like a face grab or something. An elbow on the apron gets two.

Mankind pounds away while Sid is on the apron on the outside. Sid comes back and pounds away. Why this guy is world champion is beyond me but he would lose it soon. He and Taker will be teaming up next week says Vince. A running boot in the corner misses for Sid and we take a break. Back with Sid pounding on him and Mankind is knocked to the floor. They slug it out on the outside with Sid grabbing him by the throat and throwing him into the post.

A belly to back on the floor takes Mankind down again but he gets a Stunner on the top rope to break up the momentum. Back inside and a top rope legdrop gets two on Sid Mankind takes over again via a chinlock and there's the Claw. It only gets two and Sid stands up which breaks away the leverage. Double Arm DDT gets two. Off to a sleeper for awhile until Sid rams Mankind into the buckle to escape. Bearer tries to interfere but it results in Mankind taking the chokeslam for two. The powerbomb keeps the title on Sid.

Rating: C-. Sid was just awful at this point and Mankind just wasn't good enough to get something good out of him. He tried as hard as he could but the clashes of styles and the sheer force of suck from Sid really brought this down. When your offense consists of punch, kick, forearm, chokeslam and powerbomb, there isn't much that can be done.

Austin is back for the more of his interview and we get a clip where Austin tried to keep Bret from winning the title at

Final Four. Bret won the title but Sid won it the next night thanks to a chair shot from Austin. Austin goes on a rant about how Shawn was sick and had a knee injury and got a video about them.

Austin was sick and had a bad knee and went 25 minutes but that's never talked about. He should be champion and knows enough to beat Bret into submission. Austin isn't worried about Shamrock because no one can make him quit. He says Vince treats him like a dog so why shouldn't he be bitter? AWESOME promo with Austin being full of fire in his eyes.

European Title: Owen Hart vs. British Bulldog

They're tag champions but have been having a lot of problems lately. This is the finals of a tournament with the first title going to the winner. They go to the corner to start with no one having an advantage. They exchange wristlock counters and it's Davey with some very early control. He counters a monkey flip with a cartwheel and both guys nip up to a standoff.

They shake hands and things reset. Owen grabs the wrist and climbs the ropes but gets caught in a powerbomb. Davey catapults him to the floor and invites him back in. Rollup gets two for Owen but an armdrag puts him on the mat where Davey takes over with a headlock again. Owen tries the same wristlock counter as before but Davey drops him right on his back and arm to counter.

We take a break and come back with Davey working on the arm some more. Davey's old crucifix gets two. Delayed vertical is countered into an enziguri attempt which Davey ducks. There's a surfboard but Owen grabs the referee to escape. Bulldog speeds things up but Owen avoids him to toss him out to the floor. Davey is holding his knee but gets back in pretty easily.

Back in Owen tries a leapfrog but injures his own knee. He's

channeling his inner Bret though and is goldbricking so he can get the advantage. Now they're ticked off and the Sharpshooter is broken up. Things speed up and Owen kicks his head off for no cover. Owen drops a leg for two and hooks a chinlock as they get a breath. Davey is knocked to the floor and a sunset flip back in gets two.

We take a second break and come back with Davey ramming elbows into Owen's ribs but a belly to belly suplex stops him cold. Off to a camel clutch but Davey stands up and hits an electric chair to break the hold. Owen tries a Flair cover with his feet on the ropes for two. Middle rope elbow gets the same. This is already very good and is getting great. Up to the corner and Davey falls onto him to counter a superplex for two.

Davey comes back with clotheslines and the fans are getting into it. Suplex puts Owen down for two. Smith gorilla presses him but crotches him on the top. The Canadian grabs a German on the Englishman for two. Davey loads up the powerslam but Owen grabs the ropes to escape. There's the enziguri and Davey is down. He hooks the Sharpshooter but Bulldog makes the rope. Owen loads up a tombstone but Davey reverses into the Powerslam for two. The victory roll that Owen beat Bret with at Mania X is countered into a rollup of Davey's own for the pin.

Rating: A+. Just a total classic here as they countered each other perfectly the entire time and we got a great false finish with Owen kicking out of the powerslam. Do you ever remember that happening? This is easily one of the best matches you'll ever see, especially on free TV. Great stuff and probably their second best matches ever each.

They shake hands post match.

Overall Rating: A. The WWF was FEELING IT at this point but they were in so deep against WCW and the NWO that no one

really noticed it until the end of the year. You had guys like Austin that were hungry for anything they could get and Bret being all ticked off. The main event would set up a rematch in a few weeks which Bret would interrupt to start the Hart Foundation, leading to the vastly underrated Border War of 1997. Excellent show and well worth checking out.

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Monday Night Raw – January 30, 2012 – They’ve Turned It On

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 30, 2012

Location: Sprint Center, Kansas City, Missouri

Commentary: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole

We’re past the Rumble now and Raw still has the same champion. The main thing going on tonight is that HHH is going to be evaluating Ace’s job performance. Last night, Ace pretty much was perfect other than a few small errors, which makes me think something is up. Punk vs. Ziggler was a highlight of the show and I’d like to see more of it. Also the Chamber members have been announced already: Kofi, Miz, Truth, Punk, Ziggler and Jericho. Let’s get to it.

After a quick Rumble video and the theme song, we’re ready to go.

Ace comes out and shakes hands with fans and the announcers to keep sucking up. He talks about how it's ok to make mistakes as long as you don't make the same ones. Ace is looking forward to the evaluation. He talks about his performance last night and moves onto the "Elimination PPV." We hear the aforementioned Chamber participants. Also it's Beth vs. Eve, Kofi vs. Miz and Ziggler vs. Orton. Finally, Punk vs. Bryan.

Cue Punk who leads us in the goodbye song. Ace wants an apology for not screwing Punk and being a man of his word. Punk talks about how bad of a job Ace has done and can't wait until HHH gets here and throws him out. We also get the Bart Simpson (I think) suck and blow at the same time line. Ace says he won't take it personal because the Board doesn't. He does offer a clean slate via a handshake but Punk says if you do that to the best wrestler in the world, it means you want to go to sleep.

That brings out Bryan for the big celebration as usual. After last night, Punk isn't much of a challenge. Punk again says he's the best in the world so Bryan says he's a role model as a vegan. He doesn't even eat meat. Punk wants to know what exactly Bryan eats then. Bryan threatens to shove the Pipe Bomb somewhere it shouldn't be. Punk says let's give the people a show and the best match in the world.

That brings out Sheamus to remind us that he won the Rumble last night. His words, not mine. He also reminds the champs they defend at the Chamber PPV and that Ace could be fired. Sheamus doesn't pick yet and gives Ace a little Irish proverb. Punk and Bryan shake hands.

Barrett is in a sky box to watch Orton's match.

Randy Orton vs. Dolph Ziggler

During Orton's entrance, Barrett says he'll finish the job on Friday. Barrett is doing commentary from his box in a way. Ziggler starts off fast and avoids a right hand. Randy takes

it to the mat for a second with a headlock. Barrett reiterates that he'll take Orton out on Friday. Zigger hits a dropkick to the back and we take a break. Back with Ziggler holding a chinlock.

Orton gets up and avoids a corner splash but another dropkick takes him down for two. A neckbreaker sets up the sit-ups. Dolph goes up but gets crotched and a superplex gets two for Randy. Orton powerslams him down but the elevated DDT is countered and Dolph hooks the sleeper. They go to the corner again and Orton gets a slick rolling cradle for two. Fameasser gets the same for Dolph. Zig Zag is countered and we go to the floor. Orton throws him into the barricade and comes back in with the elevated DDT. RKO ends this totally clean at about 11:00.

Rating: B-. Is Ziggler capable of having a bad match anymore? He and Orton do nothing but put on solid matches anymore and this was no exception. Good stuff here and the dominant victory is fine for Orton. I don't think it hurts Ziggler really as he's a lower level star than Orton so it's not exactly an upset.

New Hall of Fame inductee tonight.

We get a still package on the Kane/Ryder/Cena stuff from last night.

Ace is still talking to people in the back and asks Regal how his son is. Regal has daughters apparently, who are conjoined and locked in the attic. Somehow that's hilarious.

Brodus Clay vs. Tyler Reks

There's a disco ball in Brodus' entrance now. Reks actually gets in some offense, even getting Brodus down to one knee. Not that it matters though as Brodus comes back and What The Funk ends this in 1:04.

Punk is lacing up his boots when Bryan comes in. Punk asks about the whole vegan thing and Bryan explains about how it's about screaming animals and not putting poison in your bodies. Bryan asks about straightedge which Punk explains and says he doesn't claim to be a role model. He's just the best wrestler in the world.

CM Punk vs. Daniel Bryan

Bryan quickly takes over with a dropkick and double leg stomp out of the surfboard position. The announcers explain the Chamber as Bryan continues to control. He misses a high kick and Punk backdrops him to the floor. Punk drops an axehandle on him and they trade European uppercuts on the floor. Bryan throws him over into the timekeeper's area but Punk beats the count back in at 9.

Punk hits a belly to back suplex to set up the springboard clothesline which gets two. Bryan does his moonsault out of the corner and tries a cross body at the same time Punk does. They collide and as they're both down we take a break. Back with Bryan working on the arm which he kicked during the break. Bryan goes up but Punk crotches him and hits a rana after shouting BEST IN THE WORLD.

The running knee hits in the corner and Punk shifts to the good arm for the bulldog. I love subtle little things like that, even though Cole and Lawler pointed it out. GTS is attempted but Bryan heads to the floor. Baseball slide is attempted but Punk's suicide dive is countered by a forearm. Missile dropkick gets two for Daniel. Bryan fires off the kicks but Punk gets a sunset flip for two. BIG kick to the head of Punk gets the same.

They go to the corner again with Bryan trying a superplex. A headbutt puts him down and there's the Savage Elbow. Well not quite as he only points with one arm. GTS is countered into a crucifix but Bryan can't get the LeBell Lock. Slingshot puts

Bryan into the corner and a high kick puts him down. And here's Jericho to interfere for the DQ at 15:04.

Rating: B. It was good while it lasted and I guess this sets up Jericho vs. Punk. It was very good back and forth stuff, but it does kind of say a lot when Punk vs. Bryan and champion vs. champion is only the first hour main event. Still though, pretty entertaining match which had no chance at a clean ending.

Jericho hits Punk with a Codebreaker and leaves him laying. He hit Bryan first though so Bryan wins.

Mike Tyson is going to the WWE Hall of Fame. This was on ESPN.com earlier today.

Truth comes out for commentary for the next match.

Kofi Kingston vs. The Miz

Miz talks about the handstand last night and how he'll be going to the main event of Wrestlemania no matter what. Miz controls to start with his usual basic stuff. Kofi avoids a charge and speeds things up a bit, but Miz takes him down with a double axe from the top. Off to a cravate and into the short DDT for two. Cole keeps asking about Little Jimmy and Truth gets annoyed. Kofi is in tights with question marks on them. Top rope cross body hits Miz for two. He tries the SOS but Miz escapes. Jumping forearm is almost countered into the Finale but Kofi shakes him off. Trouble in Paradise hits out of nowhere for the pin at 4:15.

Rating: C. It's nice to see Kofi get a win which gives him some momentum. He hasn't really done anything as a singles guy in awhile so this is something he needs going into the Chamber. Not a great match but at least it accomplished something and was 100% clean. Kofi has as much chance as I do in the Chamber but that's ok as he'll hit some huge spots for the fun aspect of the match.

Otunga comes in to talk to Ace and wishes him luck.

Same Rock video from last night airs. You know, for the wrestling fans that don't know who The Rock is.

Divas Title: Eve Torres vs. Beth Phoenix

Eve jumps her to start but the Glam Slam ends this in 30 seconds. Yep, this was pointless.

Kane pops up on the screen and says this could have been avoided if Cena embraced the hate. Cena keeps looking by Kane to Rock, and until Cena embraces the hate, there's no way Cena can beat Rock. Kane is going to continue punishing Ryder until the hate is embraced. Tonight, Kane is going to use Eve as a way to push that idea along. The fire goes off and Kane isn't at the entrance. Instead he's on the apron behind her. She screams and Cena comes out for the save.

The fight is on quickly and they go into the aisle. Cena fires back at Kane and rams him into the steps. He picks up the steps and takes Kane down with them, drawing a smile on John's face. There's another shot and Kane is in trouble. Cena loads up the announce table and sets for the AA as he laughs. Kane elbows his way out of it and runs through the crowd. Good segment as Cena has some fire to him (no pun intended) and you buy that he can beat Kane now, which is the idea heading into the Chamber so he can reach his destiny at Wrestlemania.

Time for Ace's evaluation. Ace says he's not nervous because he knows what he's done on Raw and that the fans have appreciated it. He's had to go through a self evaluation and has given himself a lot of 5's (the highest score possible). Ace goes on with this for a bit before HHH's entrance cuts him off. HHH says forget everything about the assessment and all that stuff because it's all about how Ace has grabbed the power and tried to make himself a star.

Ace tries to explain it and HHH says don't lie and make it

worse. HHH talks about how this is a personal agenda to make Ace a star. That HAS to be a rib. HHH talks about people letting personal decisions cloud their judgment and having to be replaced. Ace says he'll do anything to save his job. HHH makes sure the word anything was in there. When Ace says that's right, HHH says apologize to the WWE Universe.

Ace apologizes to everyone and you can feel the corporate stooge in him coming out perfectly because he snaps this off like he's ordering dinner. HHH says the fans aren't going with it so how about Ace runs a gauntlet match against everyone in the locker room that wants a shot at him. That probably isn't fair though so how about Ace joins Vince's exclusive club. Ace is really shaken about it but puts on chapstick and gets on his knees.

His eyes are closed and he's puckered up. HHH laughs and says "You're really going to do it aren't you you freak?" Instead, Ace is fired and HHH is running Raw again. HHH sets to wish his well in his future endeavors...and a gong sounds. The lights go out, fire comes up, and the Undertaker is back. I don't know if Ace is officially gone or not but HHH said the Board said HHH could run Raw again anytime he wanted.

Taker stares down HHH and slowly walks to the ring. Well there's Wrestlemania and the shot at 20-0. Taker circles HHH and they stare each other down. This is a LONG overrun as it's 11:15. He looks up at the Wrestlemania sign and then at HHH then hits the throat slit. A very long staredown and more looking at the sign follows and then HHH pats him on the shoulder to a lot of booing. HHH leaves and Taker looks at the sign again. His music plays us out.

Overall Rating: B. I really liked tonight's show, but MAN does it take a hit between Miz vs. Kofi and the Cena/Kane fight. That Rock video is way too long and it stops things cold. I really don't get the point of it either. Who doesn't know who the Rock is? Even non-wrestling fans know he used to be a

wrestler and wrestling fans worship him. Why do we need a 5 minute video on him? Either way, the rest of the show was solid as they've turned it on as they always do this time of year.

Results

Randy Orton b. Dolph Ziggler – RK0

Brodus Clay b. Tyler Reks – What The Funk

Daniel Bryan b. CM Punk via DQ when Chris Jericho interfered

Kofi Kingston b. The Miz – Trouble in Paradise

Beth Phoenix b. Eve Torres – Glam Slam

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Ace Appears To Be Fired, HHH Appears To Be Back In Charge, And Undertaker Is Back

Quite the closing segment no? My take: I was starting to like Ace but his time has kind of come and gone. I wonder if the whole personal issues thing is going to keep HHH from running Raw and if they'll just keep Ace on. Should be interesting and I think we all knew HHH vs. Taker III was coming. That should be good and hopefully it's career vs. career.

Your thoughts?

Raw Elimination Chamber Participants Announced

Jericho, Kofi, Miz, Truth, Ziggler and Punk.

No Cena and/or Kane makes this interesting. It must mean a rematch which makes sense because Cena is busy at Mania so there's no point in going for the title for the most part.

Monday Night Raw – July 9, 2001 – The Alliance Is Formed/My Favorite Raw Ever

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 9, 2001

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Commentators: Jim Ross, Paul Heyman

We're in WCW territory tonight and this is one of my all time favorite Raws, if not my favorite ever period. We'll get to why later, but I remember watching this and absolutely losing it, which doesn't happen often. Anyway, this absolutely has to be better than last week's show. Also tonight, we get our first taste of an official WCW vs. WWF match. Let's get to it.

We open with a rematch from Smackdown where they actually did ANOTHER WCW Title match with Booker facing Page. Angle came in again but Booker escaped the Angle Slam and beat Angle down.

Taker and Page fought to the back and about 6 guys beat Taker down. Shane called them off, so Page beat up Shane and Booker.

Tonight it's Taker vs. Storm/Awesome. That would be changed.

Shane McMahon vs. Diamond Dallas Page

This is a street fight. And never mind because Undertaker comes out instead of Page. Taker says tonight Page is his. Shane is ok with this so here's Page.

Undertaker vs. Diamond Dallas Page

Page starts fast and pounds Taker in the corner but Taker counters that easily and beats on Page. Here come the chokeslam but Shane turns on Taker (was he with him in the first place?) and saves DDP. This was like a minute long.

Taker fights on the kendo stick shots and fires away on Shane in the corner. Page saves Shane with a chair and Taker is double teamed. Sara comes in with a kendo stick and gets in some shots on Shane but walks into a Diamond Cutter to kill her dead. She gets taken out on a stretcher. What does it say when Sara is better at taking a Diamond Cutter than Kane does?

DDP steals Taker's motorcycle and Shane gives him the night off.

Taker promises Sara he'll get Page.

Tag Titles: APA vs. Dudley Boys

Apparently Spike is going to be out for awhile with a broken leg. The APA clears the ring to start and we get down to Bubba vs. Farrooq. Off to Bradshaw as the Dudleys take over. The reverse 3D gets two. D-Von pounds on him and it's off to Bubba. He goes to the corner for the ten punches but gets powerbombed out and both guys are down. Off to Farrooq and D-Von with Simmons getting a spinebuster for two. 3D doesn't work but What's Up does to Farrooq. Bubba goes for a table but

Spike comes out, hits Bubba with the crutch and throws him in where Bradshaw's Clothesline gives the APA their third tag title.

Rating: D+. Pretty boring match but I guess the idea here is that if the APA is leading the WWF's army so give them something to make them seem important. That's not a terrible idea actually and it's better than another boring Hardys vs. Dudleys feud for the 7000th time. Not a terrible match and it did its job I guess.

Off to Austin and Vince with Austin repeating everything Vince says. Even the audience is laughing now which is a good thing. Angle comes in wearing a cowboy hat that Austin gave him on Thursday. Angle has presets for everyone except Debra of course. They're big boxes but they have small sheriff badges in them. Angle's is a lot bigger and golden to match his medal. Austin goes on a huge rant, quoting The Treasure of Sierra Madre to a nice pop. He calls Kurt a jackass and says that the hat was a joke. Austin tells Kurt to go beat up Booker T for the WCW Title.

Kane is just getting here.

Intercontinental Title: Rhyno vs. Albert

Slugout to start (I'm as shocked as you are) with Rhyno stomping the champ down into the corner. Pac runs in while Albert has the referee and superkicks Rhyno for two. Rhyno manages to get in a shot to buy himself some time and they slug it out for a bit. Belly to back suplex and a top rope splash combine for two. The Gore misses though and the Baldo Bomb is countered. Pac comes in and gets Gored. The distraction lets a bicycle kick keep the title on Albert.

Rating: D+. Back to back power matches probably isn't a good idea but it wasn't all that bad. Albert is a guy that was on the roll of his life at this point but soon enough he'd be just another guy in the Alliance war. Not much to see here but

they were at least trying to make a new star with him as he beat up various power guys.

Angle goes to talk to Booker. He yells at Book and Mr. T. doesn't seem that interested or upset by it. Angle challenges him and Booker agrees. Kurt says yippee kay yay Mother Hubbard. Good stuff and I had to listen twice.

Kane goes into Regal's office so Tajiri hides behind the suit of armor. Regal says that Sara is ok but is being held for observations. Kane says he'll take Taker's place in the handicap match against Awesome and Storm.

Jeff Hardy vs. Big Show

Boy this would be a different match today. Show runs him over and we go outside. Here comes Trish and Show accidentally runs into the post. Jeff runs the rail to get in a shot and a missile dropkick puts Show down. Trish is cheering for Jeff. Jeff goes up again but jumps into a powerbomb position. Instead Show drops him back so he lands face first on the mat which is good for the pin. This was nothing again.

Trish kisses Jeff post match.

Kurt is getting ready for Booker and is bent over in front of Austin's face which is kind of funny. Austin volunteers to be the leader of Team WWF at Invasion. Angle says if he wins the WCW Title, he should be leader. This turns into a discussion of Gilligan's Island and who gets to be Skipper. Austin goes Bugs Bunny on him to get Angle to say that he (Angle) is Gilligan and Austin is Skipper.

Vince finally asks the question we're all thinking: what does this have to do with the WCW Title or the Inaugural Brawl??? Speaking of which, Austin and Angle are both in it and Undertaker probably will be also. Jericho comes in to a big pop and says he's WWF for live. He wants to be on Team WWF. Vince seems intrigued but Austin laughs him off.

Some Atlanta Falcons are here.

At Invasion, it's Trish/Lita vs. Stacy/Torrie in a tag team bra and panties match.

Matt and Lita are at WWF New York. They don't know if they can trust Trish but this is for the WWF and she can follow the Lita. Oh geez. They kiss to end this.

Shane fires Booker up.

Vince and Austin fire Kurt up. Austin repeats everything Vince says again. Angle says this is Atlanta and he won with no one in his corner in 1996 so he'll go alone tonight.

WCW World Title: Booker T vs. Kurt Angle

Booker hammers him into the corner to start and hits a side kick. Kurt knocks him to the floor with a clothesline and Booker goes into the table. Booker sends him into the post and a missile dropkick gets two back in the ring. Back to the floor and Booker keeps control. Angle reverses an Irish whip back inside and a belly to back suplex slows Booker down but he comes back with a spinning kick for two.

Angle starts snapping off suplexes and a belly to belly looks to set up the Slam. Booker rolls out though and hits the scissors kick. The fans are against Booker now which is a good thing. Kurt charges and they ram heads. Booker gets the advantage and hits a spinebuster for two. Kurt grabs the ankle and there's the ankle lock. Shane gets the referee so Booker's tap doesn't mean anything. Now the Slam hits and Earl Hebner runs in to count two. Now the referees fight and the distraction lets Booker get a belt shot. A seconds WCW referee runs in and Booker retains.

Rating: B-. This is the best match on Raw in weeks and it's only just above average. Booker and Angle could do some good stuff together with some more time. Amazing what happens when

you give two talented guys time and a face and heel combination to work with isn't it? Good stuff and the referee fight was kind of funny.

Angle rants to Austin and Vince which makes Austin say he's the leader at Invasion.

Torrie and Stacy say they'll win at the PPV. Torrie bashes Vince and calls him a dirty old man.

The APA says they don't want the titles like that and tell the Dudleys they can have another shot as soon as Smackdown. Right now though, cold beers on the APA. The Dudleys say not right now but ask them at the end of the night.

Kane vs. Lance Storm/Mike Awesome

I thought this match was earlier in the show. I guess not as we're into the second hour. Before we get started though, here's Jericho. He doesn't say anything but comes in and we have a tag match.

Kane/Chris Jericho vs. Lance Storm/Mike Awesome

The 24/7 Rule has been waived until after Invasion. Why? Kane vs. Awesome starts us off with the bigger man taking over. Jericho comes in and chops away but gets caught by the power of Awesome (how was that never a t-shirt?). Off to Storm and the Thrillseekers get a nice reunion. Awesome hits a knee to the back and Storm clotheslines Jericho down to take over.

Storm comes in and misses a dropkick but he gets the knees up for the Lionsault. Awesome comes in and hooks a chinlock. Jericho fights back but jumps into a belly to belly for two. Back to Storm who stomps away. Was there a reason for him to stomp like that? He always had that little hop to it. Jericho gets an enziguri which is good for the hot tag.

Everything breaks down and Storm is sent to the floor. A powerslam puts Awesome down and there's the top rope

clothesline for two. A missile dropkick takes Storm down but Chris can't get the Walls on Awesome. He does get them on Storm though, and I'm going to stop the match review there. Storm didn't tap and the match is still going on, but the next part needs its own attention.

Rating: C+. This was a pretty decent formula tag match between Team Canada and Team Name That Has To Do With Kane And Jericho. Jericho and Storm always have great chemistry together and this was a fine example of it. Also, how in the world did both companies manage to screw up Mike Awesome? Let him be a mulletted killing machine. Why is that so hard?

Kane sets to chokeslam Awesome but Tommy Dreamer and Rob Van Dam jump the railing and it's a 4-2 beatdown. Here come the Dudleys, Taz, Raven, Justin Credible and Rhyno. It's a showdown but the six WWF guys that ran in all turn around and destroy Jericho and Kane. Jericho takes a Death Valley Driver and Kane gets a Van Daminator. The fans are loving this. JR asks Heyman what's going on so Heyman says listen up.

Heyman gets into the ring with the Dudleys holding the ropes open for him. All of the guys celebrate and Heyman says here's the truth. He's been sitting there like a sellout for months and talking about WWF vs. WCW. It seems to him like these men were too extreme for WWF vs. WCW so it seems like Storm and Awesome have left WCW. The other six have left WWF and they all have joined ECW. Heyman says either Vince or Shane can come get some at any time. This Invasion has been taken to the EXTREME. When I saw this, my jaw dropped.

After a break, JR turns into Eric Bischoff and wonders how long he's had this planned.

Shane and Vince bump into each other and Shane is kind of panicking, saying that their guys should team up for tonight only to crush ECW before it spreads. A twenty man tag is set for later.

Light Heavyweight Title: Scotty 2 Hotty vs. X-Pac

This is what we call a filler. Pac is defending and they speed things up to start. Scotty dances around a lot and works on the arm. They go to the floor and Scotty misses a dive. Pac stays on offense for about twenty seconds and Scotty comes back and hits a superkick for two. X-Factor is countered but Pac avoids the Worm. Scotty tries a sunset flip but Pac grabs the rope for the pin.

Rating: D+. Scotty was actually pretty entertaining around this time when he dropped the whole dancing and Cool aspect of his personality. X-Pac on the other hand was just kind of there and doing his own thing which no one really wanted to see. Nothing to see here and all they were doing was filling time.

Vince and Shane try to fire up their boys but can't get along. Shane is officially put in charge and the agreement is that once ECW is gone, all bets are off. WCW leaves and Vince says ignore Shane and just do it.

Team WWF/WCW vs. Team ECW

It's the 10 ECW guys listed earlier for their side. WWF is Big Show/Billy Gunn/Hardcore Holly/APA and WCW is Jindrak/Stasiak/O'Haire/Palumbo/Kanyon. WWF and WCW get in a fight before the ECW guys even get here. WCW is sent to the floor and here comes ECW. The ECW guys fight the WWF team and WCW stays on the floor. ECW clears the ring and calls out the WCW guys. And they all hug, officially forming the Alliance. No match obviously.

Vince comes out and wants to know what's going on. Shane says watch the WWF guys get destroyed. Each one is thrown in and takes various finishing moves (including an F5 to Bradshaw from O'Haire). Shane says he can't outspend Vince but he can outsmart him. Vince told Shane he was personally responsible for what happens out here and that's true.

He's responsible for ECW being here tonight and for the merger of WCW and ECW. Vince's jaw is further into the Earth's crust with every word. At Invasion, it's the two companies against WWF. Oh, and here's the new owner of ECW: Daddy's Little Girl, Stephanie McMahon. The place ERUPTS at that. Vince's eyes roll back in his head and here's Stephanie, looking drop dead gorgeous in a pink dress. I think that's why I loved this show when I was 13. Shane and Stephanie pose to end the show. Now THAT is how you end a TV show.

Overall Rating: B. This show depends on what you're looking for. If it's wrestling, you'll probably be a bit disappointed. If you're in it for drama and something that makes you want to watch next week, this is the show for you! When I was a kid this was an awesome moment and I loved it, but unfortunately it didn't quite live up to the hype. Still though, I was glued to the screen on Thursday and Monday for awhile, which is the idea. Good stuff here.

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Monday Night Raw – July 2, 2001 – Why The Invasion Died

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 2, 2001

Location: Tacoma Dome, Tacoma, Washington

Commentators: Jim Ross, Paul Heyman

Back to 2001 and we're on the road to Fully Loaded, but that

name isn't going to stick. This show is famous for one reason: it's the show where there's a WCW segment, in that Booker T defends the WCW Championship against Buff Bagwell. It's also known as the segment that basically killed the original Invasion plans. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the Invasion. On Smackdown, the whole Fully Loaded PPV has been changed to Invasion and will be WCW vs. WWF. This is set to Rey Mysterio's WCW music.

Theme song.

Vince talks about how everything here is leading up to July 22. WCW is going to die at the Invasion. How can you compare the two companies? It's like comparing Washington state to Washington DC. The nation's decisions are made in DC and here, all you have are apples. But if you insist, let's compare Booker T to Austin. Booker is a sneak, Austin is a man among men.

Cue...Angle? Kurt says he had to come out here because Vince's words inspired him. Not only does Booker lack integrity, he also lacks intelligence and intensity. Kurt shows clips of Booker outsmarting Austin and beating him up. Booker did it on Smackdown also, which Kurt says made Austin look like a jackass. Here's Austin with a rebuttal. Angle promises that he'll protect Austin from Booker. Austin says that'll be hard with Austin's boot in him.

Austin thinks the problem is Kurt Angle. He and Vince don't need him and Angle is getting in between their partnership. Austin calls Angle a jackass. "No I'm a hero!" "Jackass." "Hero!" This goes on for a few moments until Vince tells them to just fight. Angle is ready to go and then Austin hugs Vince. Austin and Angle shove each other and here's Shane. "So let me get this straight. We have the WWF Champion and an Olympic gold medalist competing for hugs?"

Shane says tonight it's about the Invasion and about Invasion,

how about an Inaugural Brawl, as in a massive tag match. Shane somehow has the power to make the main event on the show tonight, so he makes Booker vs. Buff.

The APA are watching a clip of Shane running away last week. They want to know who let them in and who Shane was talking to on the phone. They think there's a mole in the yard.

Intercontinental Title: Albert vs. Undertaker

Uh...sure. I mean the match makes sense, but Undertaker challenging for the IC Title? Page cost Kane the title on Smackdown with the worst Diamond Cutter I can ever remember. I watched the clip and though it was Austin stunning him. They slug it out to start (shocking) but a charging Taker is caught in the corner for a bearhug. A bicycle kick puts Taker down but he comes back with the clothesline and chokeslam but Page runs in with a chair shot to draw the DQ.

Rating: D. This was nothing and very boring while it lasted. Page running in might as well have been on a big sign because it was very clear that was the ending after they showed the clip from Smackdown. Taker was really getting bad at this point and would get even worse for the next year or so.

Page Diamond Cuts him post match and leaves, but Sara goes after him. Kane sneaks up on DDP and the beating begins. He throws Page in to Taker but Albert saves. Page runs and Kane knocks Albert to the floor.

Torrie Wilson debuts on Raw. She was on Smackdown so this isn't her full on debut. She's looking for Vince, which probably explains why she debuted in a bra.

Crash vs. Molly Holly

Jackie is with crash to annoy me. Molly starts with ranas and a victory roll for two. Jackie tries her up because she has to annoy people every now and then. Crash suplexes Molly when

Spike gets up for a distraction. Jackie puts Molly on the top but Molly hits a quick Molly Go Round for the pin. Too short to rate but all things considered it wasn't bad.

Jackie beats up Crash for no apparent reason.

Vince, Austin, Angle and Debra are in the back. Angle and Austin almost get into it again when Torrie comes in. Kurt tries to hit on her but Vince is like down boy. She wants to talk to Vince in private. Austin needs a hug before Vince leaves. This is hilarious. Austin and Angle get in an argument over why Vince left. They determine it was Debra's fault and Austin agrees.

We get a video from Smackdown where O'Haire and Palumbo interfered and were destroyed as a punishment.

Christian is looking at the KOTR trophy and talks about how he could have won if the brackets had switched. Edge is still uncomfortable but Christian has a Light Heavyweight Title match so he has to go get ready.

Regal advises Tajiri on how to watch out for the Worm, complete with a brief demonstration. The Dudleys come in and want to know why they're facing Jericho. This somehow goes into a big rant about Winston Churchill. When the Dudleys have no idea what he's going on about, he says just put Jericho through a table. They leave and Tajiri is still trying to get the Worm down. The wrestling and stories may have been hit or miss, but the comedy at this time was great.

Hardcore Holly says he isn't the mole. Holly suggests to figure out who wasn't there when they beat up Palumbo and O'Haire.

Vince and Torrie are in the shower (clothed) and are having a business meeting. She offers to do anything to get to the top of the WWF. Sex is implied. Austin comes in and demands an explanation for why they're in the shower. "Uh....sometimes

there's no other place to do business besides the shower." Austin is totally cool with this and wants to talk about Invasion, but he'll go get coffee first. This is comedy that I can't do justice.

Tajiri vs. Scotty 2 Hotty

Scotty takes him down almost immediately and they go to the apron where Tajiri kicks him upside the head. There's the Tarantula and the fans are way into this. A rana is countered into a sitout powerbomb by Scotty. Here comes the Worm, but Tajiri mists him and the Buzzsaw Kick ends it. Tajiri was awesome but he needed his music to really hit his stride.

Vince and Torrie go to a mop closet. HE'S A MULTIMILLIONAIRE!!! GET A FREAKING HOTEL ROOM!!! Angle comes in and points out that they're in a mop closet. Vince looks like he wants to kill him. "Hey Torrie, have you seen my gold medals?"

Booker T and Test meet and Booker asks if Test might join WCW. Test implies he could and might take the title. It's about the money though.

Dudley Boys vs. Chris Jericho

The Dudleys pound him down in the corner so Jericho has to use speed to have a chance. They finally get down to one Dudley in the ring at a time. D-Von starts us off but Bubba comes in quickly. There's a double flapjack to take Jericho down and set for a double superbomb off the middle rope but Jericho escapes and slams Bubba off the top. The Dudleys get back up and Bubba is knocked to the floor via the springboard dropkick. D-Von gets caught in the Walls but Bubba pulls the referee out. Bubba loads up a table but Spike runs in and Dudley Dogs him to give Jericho the opening for a Lionsault for the pin.

Rating: C-. Not bad here but did we really need Spike? Well to

be fair they needed to make sure that the champions keep their credibility, but Spike still felt like overkill. It's not a bad match and is a nice breath of air from the Vince is a horny old man thing going on tonight, but it just kind of came and went.

Torrie and Vince are in the bathroom now. Hey Vince: YOUR COMPANY IS BEING INVADED BY YOUR GREATEST RIVAL! Torrie doesn't like Vince's cologne and a flush is heard. It's Saturn. This is so stupid.

Benoit had neck surgery last week so here's a video about it. He'll be out about a year.

Light Heavyweight Title: Christian vs. X-Pac

Christian works on the arm and powerslams Pac down. Pac jumps back up and pounds him down. Off to a quick chinlock followed by a spinwheel kick for two. Bronco Buster is broken up by a spinwheel kick by Christian. Pac misses a kick as well and Christian hits a gutbuster. Edge and Justin both get up on the apron and after Edge knocks him down, he tries to throw in the title. Edge intercepts it and knocks Justin down but Pac gets it and a shot with it ends Christian.

Rating: D+. Nothing to see here at all. The Light Heavyweight Title never really did anything for me and that's mainly because there wasn't much to it. It was more about matches between guys that were light heavyweights instead of a match like you would see in WCW. That's kind of a problem but smaller guys don't draw right?

The APA think it was Test. They ask a referee where he is and are told he was last seen talking to Booker T.

Taz is at WWF New York and doesn't want to talk. We get a clip from Thursday where Tazz demanded an apology from Austin about Austin beating up Austin so Austin was mauled.

Rhyno vs. Test

Gee, I wonder what's going to happen here. Rhyno pounds Test into the corner very quickly because he's mad about the Hardcore Title being lost. The APA brings out the group that beat up O'Haire and Palumbo on Thursday. A big boot gets two for Test. Pumphandle slam is countered and another big boot breaks up a Gore attempt. The guys on the floor distract the referee so Bradshaw clotheslines Test and the Gore gets the pin. This was nothing.

Test gets a big beatdown post match. Bradshaw kills him with a powerbomb.

Big Show/Trish Stratus vs. Lita/Matt Hardy

The guys start and Show shoves him into the corner. Trish comes in to try to pick the bones but Matt is like blonde woman please and brings in Lita. Trish is really bad at this point so Lita runs her over. Lita goes up but Show pushes him out of the way. The rana attempt doesn't go that well so Matt tries to make a save. Show clotheslines Matt outside and Jeff's barricade run totally fails. Trish gets caught in the Tree of Woe so Lita and Matt hit a double DDT on Show. Twist and Litasault beat Trish.

Rating: D-. With girls like Trish and Lita out there you can't call it a failure but was there ANY point to this? Again, THE COMPANY IS BEING INVADED BY THE GUYS THAT ALMOST PUT THEM OUT OF BUSINESS. Why in the world are guys like Matt and Jeff not calling out any two WCW guys while Big Show is leveling a small city?

Show yells at Trish so Jeff hits a missile dropkick to save him.

Vince and Torrie are in the hall and Vince FINALLY comes up with the idea of DOING IT LATER TONIGHT. Torrie suggests a location she thinks will work so let's go there now.

Shane runs into Buff, who says he relies on skill rather than luck.

The APA celebrates getting rid of Test when Sgt. Slaughter comes in and says he's here to help find the mole. He was with Test watching old tapes of the Alley Fight back in 81. Watch that match. Seriously, stop reading this and go watch that match. It's way more entertaining.

We officially turn things over to WCW, as in their graphics, their ring skirts, their announcers (Arn Anderson and Scott Hudson) and their ring announcer named Stacy Keibler. Here's Shane before the match to introduce everyone I just said. You can literally see the fans walking out. This is where everything began falling apart. Regal comes out as this is already being booed out of the building. He and Tajiri are getting rid of Shane and he's ok with that.

Hudson says Buff is challenging for the WWF Title after the break. I think you can see where this is going to go from here.

WCW World Title: Booker T vs. Buff Bagwell

Hudson screws up AGAIN, saying Booker is the current TV Champion rather than the US Champion along with world champion. You can actually see the people walking out. The fans IMMEDIATELY start changing BS and the upper level is blacked out so we can't see them leaving. Buff takes over and does his strut as EVEN MORE people leave.

Buff hooks a chinlock and the remaining people boo. Now they chant THIS MATCH SUCKS. Buff starts glaring at the crowd, basically turning heel mid match. Booker comes back with a side kick and forearm that misses but gets two anyway. Axe kick, Spinarooni, Austin and Angle FINALLY come in for the DQ.

Rating: F. I'm going to go into a much longer explanation of why this was an abomination later, but for now we'll go with

this: if the company has to black out the upper deck because your match made that many fans leave, your match is a failure. Again, we'll get back to this later.

Bagwell, Austin and Angle beat down Booker. They knock him up the aisle, but enough of this FIRST TIME EVER stuff for world titles and invasions. TO THE LAUNDRY ROOM!

Torrie and Vince are flirting and Vince takes his clothes off. Vince makes VERY disturbing noises and Torrie takes his pants off. He has his eyes closed and turns around, presumably sans clothes, and it's Linda waiting on him. CUE SITCOM MUSIC!!!

Oh and the WWF and WCW Champions are still brawling. Good thing we had enough time to get back to this. Austin and Angle throw him out the door and then throw Bagwell out also. Buff never had another match and I'll explain why now.

Overall Rating: F-. This was one of the biggest disasters I've seen in a very long time. First and foremost as I've said, THE WCW IS INVADING. WHY ARE WE WASTING TIME WITH ALL THESE POINTLESS MATCHES??? I'll give you an answer to that right now: why should the WWF care? See, there's this misconception out there that thinks that the Invasion was about WCW vs. WWF in a battle for the ages for all supremacy. There's one major problem with that: we've had that battle.

Think about it. WCW has already lost. They're out of business. WCW got so horrible for the last few years that no one paying attention or with a brain would suggest that WCW was any real threat to the WWF. On top of that, this is the best WCW has got? They have their champion Booker T and then.....who? The tag champions were destroyed so it's not them. Mike Awesome I guess? As in That 70s Guy? WWF has Angle and Austin and Jericho and Undertaker and Kane and we're worried about That 70s Guy? Oh and DDP, the guy that Taker destroys whenever they're in the ring together. Yeah how about that guy.

WCW has been made to look awful and we're what, a month into

this? Also, who in the world am I supposed to cheer for? I don't think even they know. Third, this show wasn't about the Invasion. It was about Vince trying to get laid and not having the common sense to GO SOMEWHERE ELSE. Why in the world would I want to watch this? Where's Flair or Goldberg or Sting or Steiner or ANYBODY OTHER THAN THESE CLOWNS?

On top of all that, think about the fans leaving tonight. Can you blame them? They didn't buy a ticket to see Buff Bagwell (who was fired for how bad his match was) vs. Booker T. They bought a ticket to see Monday Night Raw, the flagship show of the biggest wrestling company in the world. How would you feel if you were at Raw and the main event was for the OVW Title? In essence that's what this was: a match for a title that means absolutely nothing in the WWE.

Finally, the McMahons. The Invasion was about Vince vs. Shane (and Stephanie who we'll get to next week). It was never about WWF vs. WCW. It was about Vince McMahon and the battles he had with his children and nothing else. Why would you want to see that for 5 months? In short, no one did because they wanted to see the big names of WCW against the big names of the WWF (which could have gone on for YEARS and drawn millions and millions and MILLIONS of dollars).

Instead, we would wind up with one or two big name WCW guys and the rest was about Vince, Shane and WWF guys. This isn't an invasion. This is the other company saying LOOK WHAT WE DID to try to get attention. There's one problem with that: there is no other company. There's WWF and the WCW is out of business. Why should I buy them as a threat when they spent the last three years getting killed? No one did and the Invasion failed. It would get a charge up next week, but this version of it has completely failed.

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Monday Night Raw – July 6, 1998 – DX Parodies The Nation

Monday Night Raw

Date: July 6, 1998

Location: Bryce Jordan Center, State College, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Another day another Raw. With three weeks to go before Fully Loaded we have more conspiracy stuff to get to. Austin won the title back last week so there's also likely to be fallout from that. Also we'll of course have more DX vs. the Nation stuff as that feud is going to take awhile to get through. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap video of last week's events.

Here's Undertaker to open the show. He says he wants a title shot and he wants it right now. We cut to the back where Cole is looking for Austin. JR says Austin is here somewhere. There he is and he doesn't want to talk. Here's Austin who gets in the ring. Taker gets ready but Vince cuts them off. He says that he picks the opponents and times when Austin defends the title. However since they both want it, he'll make it happen, but at Fully Loaded. It won't be a one on one match though. It'll be them teaming up against Kane/Mankind. The #1 contender will be named tonight as well. Vince flips Austin off.

Brawl For All First Round: Brakkus vs. Savio Vega

Brakkus is a big German muscle man. Savio gets in some good shots in the first round but it's tied up because of a takedown. Brakkus is totally gassed after round two. Savio wins via points or decision or however you win these things. Brakkus has a broken nose.

Jeff Jarrett vs. Ken Shamrock

Shamrock easily sends him to the floor to start. Jarrett comes back in with a top rope cross body but Shamrock rolls through it for two. Edge is in the crowd. Out to the floor and Jarrett throws him into the steps. Jeff takes over and hooks a sleeper. Belly to back breaks whatever momentum Shamrock was getting going. Shamrock starts his comeback and hits a powerslam. A belly to back suplex gets two when King Mabel of all people runs in and splashes Shamrock.

Rating: D. Boring match but it was only here for the ending. Mabel would be here for one night only and would face Shamrock later in the night, which is why things were so short. I don't think anyone wanted to see Mabel and I don't think most people remembered him, but either way it's just one night and the King of the Ring angle was something for Shamrock to do for awhile.

Vader vs. Bradshaw

Outlaws vs. Kane/Mankind for the titles next week. What exactly are you expecting here? They're big, they're strong, they hit each other a lot. Vader fires off headbutts in the corner and goes up but jumps into a powerslam. And here are Kane and Mankind to beat them both up for the double DQ. The big guys leave the lesser big guys laying.

Disciples of Apocalypse vs. Headbangers

Please be a squash. The Headbangers pour hot candle wax on themselves on the way to the ring. Ellering is with the DOA here and sends them right after the Headbangers. Mosh vs.

let's say 8-Ball to start. Ellering says the wind was blowing towards the DOA so he went with them. The LOD took their talent and became prisoners of their own memories. Thrasher gets two on a cross body. Off to Skull and Mosh and the Headbangers do their...whatever that is that they do. Stage Dive is broken up and the DOA hits something like a spike belly to back suplex to pin Thrasher.

Rating: D. This was basically a squash but at least it wasn't against the LOD. Those matches were simply awful so of course they would go on for months. Not much here and the Headbangers weren't going to be anything pretty much ever again. Not horrible, but there's only so much this could be.

D-Lo Brown vs. Terry Funk

Brown has the chest protector. Terry takes him to the mat easily but D-Lo gets him into the corner and splashes him with the chest protector. Terry tries to chop him but can't due to the protector. Instead he punches Brown in the face and piledrives him. A Downward Spiral takes Brown down and they go to the floor. Terry tries an Asai Moonsault but partially hits the railing. Back in and Terry thinks enough to put Brown on his stomach for the moonsault so that it hurts. Brown goes to the apron and Godfather hits Funk with some jewelery. The Low Down ends it.

Rating: D+. I love Terry Funk more and more every time I see him. He does crazy stuff but he has some of the most entertaining matches on Raw every week. Good stuff here and the beginning of one of Brown's long running gimmicks. That nagging injury angle could work today if someone would think to use it.

Undertaker comes out and chokeslams everyone, including Terry, basically becoming a tweener.

Here's Vince to announce the #1 contender. We'll get to the announcement in a bit but first let's bring some people out.

First up, Mankind. Now Kane. Finally it's Undertaker. Vince talks about everyone and why they could be #1 contender. Mankind took a horrible beating at King of the Ring, Kane was a great champion but was also a very stupid person, and Taker Vince isn't sure on.

Is it because he's done evil things to the other candidates? Is it because he thinks he's as good as Austin? Or is it something else? Either way, we'll find out who the #1 contender is tonight in a triple threat match.

Brawl For All First Round: Hawk vs. Darren Drozdov

Hawk looks very stupid in wrestling gear and boxing gloves. They lumber around for the first round and this needs to end already. I mean the whole competition mind you. Hawk gets knocked backwards in the second. Nothing happens in the third round and it's a draw. Droz would advance because Hawk was hurt.

Here are Mero and Jackie. The fans chant for Sable and Jackie says she's here to talk. She blames herself for Mero losing the fight because she wore him out. Apparently Sable couldn't satisfy him. Here's Sable who says Marc couldn't do anything. Sable implies Jackie is a rather loose woman, so Jackie wants a bikini contest. Ok then.

Val Venis vs. Dustin Runnels

Val's pre match thing is about Joe Paterno. Dustin prays a bit. Val takes over quickly and hits a running knee in the corner. He goes up for punches but gyrates in Dustin's face, resulting in an atomic drop. Val takes over again and hooks a full nelson with his legs on Dustin. Dustin comes back with a Russian legsweep but here's Kai En Tai for the DQ.

Yamaguchi gets on the mike and threatens Val. His wife can't stop looking at Venis.

And now for the famous part of the show: the DX parody of the Nation. We have HHH as the Crock, Road Dogg as B-Lo, X-Pac as Mizark, Billy as Godfather and a guy named Jason Sensation as Owen. Billy says random things and hands the mic to HHH. He has an eyebrow painted on his forehead and talks about what he was cooking in the bathroom. Roadie repeats everything and then shakes his head. Crock sets for a People's Elbow on B-Lo but stops mid-leg turn to talk about how when he hits Rock Bottom with the ladies, he has to lay the Smackdown on himself.

B-Lo of course runs to the corner and shakes his head after repeating everything Crock said. Jason Sensation (in a PERFECT Owen voice) says that he looks like a road sign. He wanted to be tough, but he couldn't grow his beard in. He's a black Hart, a winner and a soul survivor WOO! And if anyone smells what the Rock is cooking, it's him. Look how big his nose is. What is he, an aardvark. WOO!

Mizark wants to know what Rock is cooking, because hey hey hey, it smells like crap. B-Lo is finally told to shut up. Now shut your mouths and know your roles, because Nation, we got two words for you: WATCH THIS. This is still absolutely hilarious and had me cracking up. It's on a WWE DVD somewhere I'm sure.

Mabel vs. Ken Shamrock

Mabel goes after the ribs and hits a backbreaker. Shamrock hammers on him but a corner splash misses. A middle rope elbow can't drop the monster and neither can a leg lariat. World's Strongest Slam puts Ken down but a middle rope clothesline misses and the ankle lock ends this quick. Not long enough to rate but this was no surprise at all.

Shamrock won't let go of the hold and snaps again.

Here are Vince and Bearer to watch the triple threat. Austin joins them. It's Austin and Vince on commentary.

Undertaker vs. Mankind vs. Kane

Winner is #1 contender. And there's no Undertaker. The arena has Kane's red lights in it. Vince gets off commentary and says it's now one on one and no holds barred. We'll throw in falls count anywhere in the building too. Mankind sits on the floor in front of the steps. He says he's given enough and he's not giving for Vince anymore. Mankind isn't going to fight his friend Kane. Vince says ring the bell and we have like 2 minutes left. Kane stands in the ring as Vince yells to get going. Kane goes to the floor, cracks Mankind in the head with the chair and becomes #1 contender.

Kane rips off the mask to reveal the Undertaker, who is now #1 contender, end of show. This was done perfectly. Kane had been wearing the two sleeved outfit for a few weeks so it wasn't out of the ordinary to see him in that. The red light keeps you from being able to see details of Taker, and therefore it probably fooled a lot of people. Very well done and I was shocked when I was ten.

Overall Rating: C. This show is very indicative of what the Attitude Era's problem is: it doesn't age well at all. The problem is that when you have a show that is totally built around drama and who knows what and who is really with who, it's very entertaining to watch week to week. Watching it later, you realize that it's not the best TV. The difference between this and Nitro is on Nitro, there was a ton of drama, but it resulted in stuff in the ring week to week. Now Raw did that too, but it resulted in great stuff in the ring on the PPVs, which means the TV can be kind of boring to sit through.

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