

Wrestler of the Day – February 21: Carlito

We'll switch from Canada to Puerto Rico today with Carlito.

Carlito is of course the son of legendary Puerto Rican wrestler Carlos Colon and got his start in his dad's promotion, the World Wrestling Council. To be clear, I don't know a ton about Puerto Rican wrestling so I'll keep it simpler with them. From what I can tell, one of Carlito's (Carly Colon in the WWC) biggest rivals is Ray Gonzales, so here's their first meeting from January 6, 2000.

Carly Colon vs. Ray Gonzalez

Carlito has almost no hair here and is in a white undershirt and black pants. It's actually a FAR better look than he had in the WWE. Gonzalez shoves him down to start and slams him for good measure as we're still in first gear. Carlito comes back with a hiptoss and slam of his own, sending Ray out to the floor. A backdrop puts Gonzalez down and the stalling continues. Since when is Puerto Rico in south Memphis? Carlito hammers away in the corner before jumping over Gonzalez and trying what looked to be a Stunner, sending Ray running to the floor.

The fans are firmly behind Carlito here and he takes Gonzalez down with a headlock. Gonzalez fights up and is sent outside as the very slow pace continues. I think we take a break and come back with Carlito getting two off a rollup. Carlito hammers away in the corner and goes for the legs but Gonzales rolls outside AGAIN. Back in and Carlito counters a backbreaker attempt with a headscissors but Gonzalez slams him down to take over.

Ray pounds away at Carlito's head but Carlito comes back with left hands of his own. A nice TKO puts Carlito down again but Gonzalez puts on a

chinlock instead of covering. This goes on for a LONG while as the announcers freak out about something. Back up and Carlito gets a delayed sunset flip for two but Ray takes his head off with a clothesline and it's back to the chinlock. Gonzalez elbows him down and goes up but Carlito slams him down with ease.

A rollup gets two for Carlito as things speed WAY up. Ray loads up a foreign object but Carlito kicks it away and avoids a charge. The referee goes down as Carlito puts on a figure four, drawing in a second referee. Ray makes the ropes and kicks Carlito low before going outside to get a shovel. Carlito throws powder in his face though and blasts Gonzalez in the face with the shovel for the pin. A bunch of fans swarm Carlito after the match to celebrate.

Rating: C-. I have a feeling there's a big story here that I didn't get at all. I liked Carlito here as his look was FAR easier to take seriously, but at the same time it was clear he didn't know how to get through a long match. Gonzalez would get the Universal Title a few days after this and drop it to Carlito before the end of the month. Not bad but the story would help a lot.

Carlito stuck around for a few more years before heading to OVW in 2003. After about a year there, he debuted on Smackdown on October 7, 2004. He would actually get a US Title match that night after talking his way onto champion John Cena's bad side.

US Title: John Cena vs. Carlito Caribbean Cool

They would shorten the name later. Carlito bails to the floor from a ticked off Cena and we're off fast. A clothesline puts the challenger down on the floor and Cena blasts him in the face with an inflatable hand. Back in and Cena takes him up for a suplex and does squats while holding Carlito in the air. A big backdrop takes Carlito down again and a legdrop gets two. There's a side slam to send Carlito outside and John whips him into the steps for good measure.

Back in and Cena gets low bridged to the floor and Carlito rams him into the announce table. Carlito rakes the eyes and loads up a piledriver, only to be catapulted into the crowd. We take a break and come back with Cena ramming Carlito into the buckle but missing a middle rope cross body. A suplex gets two on the champion and a slingshot elbow drop gets the same.

We hit the chinlock on John but he fights back with a backdrop. Cena makes his comeback and gets two off the Shuffle but Carlito counters the AA. He bails to the floor and brings in the title belt but it's only a distraction. The referee takes it away so Carlito gets Cena's chain and knocks him out cold for the pin and the title.

Rating: C-. That's quite the debut but it doesn't make him look like anything impressive. I remember watching this live and not getting the appeal of Carlito at all. He looked different but he didn't do anything to impress me at all. This feud never worked for me either and I'm afraid that's mainly on Carlito.

Carlito would hold the title for a few months before dropping it to a ticked off Cena in about 30 seconds. He would then pick up a bodyguard in Matt Morgan and face Big Show at Judgment Day 2005.

Big Show vs. Carlito

After a quick Carlito promo running down Minnesota we're ready to go. Carlito runs a lot until Show finally gets his hands on him. Show chops away as Cole says that's like hitting yourself in the chest with a frying pan. One, why would you know what that feels like? Two, why would you hit yourself with a frying pan? Three, wouldn't it be like someone hitting you with a frying pan? Four, why am I paying attention to Michael Cole?

Anyway, Show dominates because Carlito has nothing to fight him with. Morgan interferes and gets in some offense on the floor but Show kicks out of the covers from Carlito with ease.

Cole says Show's head is like a typewriter. How in the world does his head remind you of a typewriter? Show keeps hammering away but accidentally elbows the referee. Low blow puts Show down and Morgan pops in for a big boot and an F5 (bad execution, awesome setup) for Carlito to get the pin.

Rating: D. This probably should have been on Smackdown to set up Morgan vs. Show which is a more interesting match. No one was really interested in Show vs. Carlito as Carlito had no real threat to Show at all as you saw here. Pretty boring match but Morgan looked very impressive.

Soon after this Carlito would be sent to Raw and receive an Intercontinental Title shot in his first match on Mondays, facing Shelton Benjamin on June 20, 2005.

Intercontinental Title: Shelton Benjamin vs. Carlito

Carlito hammers away to start but runs to the floor when Shelton looks up at him. Shelton tries a dive over the ropes but doesn't get a running start and hooks his toe on the ropes, leaving him short of Carlito and crashing down onto the floor. That wasn't on Carlito as he was in place but Shelton didn't get far enough. We take a break and come back with Carlito getting two off some kicks to the back.

Shelton fights out of a front facelock and a double clothesline puts both guys down. Benjamin goes up top for a top rope clothesline and a two count. He looks very shaky out there after crashing on the floor. A northern lights suplex gets two for the champion but he walks into a DDT for two. Shelton comes out of the corner with a sunset flip for two and a Samoan drop for the same off a very sloppy looking cover. Even JR points out how bad it looked. Carlito grabs a rollup out of nowhere for the pin with a grab of the ropes.

Rating: D+. The match was pretty bad but a lot of that was due to the

botch and subsequent injuries. Shelton just did not look right at all after that and it was really messing things up out there. Carlito was getting more into a groove at this point but it still didn't work all that well.

That win means Carlito won titles in his debut matches as a member of the Raw and Smackdown rosters. After losing the title he would eventually hook up with the newcomer Chris Masters, eventually receiving a Tag Team Title shot at Wrestlemania 22.

Raw Tag Titles: Carlito/Chris Masters vs. Big Show/Kane

The monsters are defending here. Kane and Masters start stuff out and the 6'5 Masters looks tiny by comparison. Show headbutts him from the apron before coming in legally for some chops. A poke to Big Show's eye slows him down and here's Carlito who is immediately chopped down. Masters is slammed down as well with Show throwing Carlito over the top and out onto Chris.

Kane goes up top and dives onto both guys as the challengers are in trouble. Somewhere in between there the turnbuckle pad has been removed and Show misses a charge, going head first into said buckle. It doesn't seem to have much effect though as Show suplexes both guys down with ease. Off to Kane as everything breaks down. Kane pounds away on Carlito in the corner and hits the side slam for no cover.

The top rope clothesline misses Masters though and there's the Masterlock to Kane. Show breaks it up seconds later but there's the Backstabber to Kane. The chokeslam is broken up by Masters and Show is sent to the floor. Kane's double chokeslam attempt is broken up but after causing some heel miscommunication, a solo version to Carlito retains the titles.

Rating: C. Not bad here but this is one of the matches that probably could have been cut for the sake of trimming the show a bit. The match was a squash and not a very interesting one either. That's the problem

with a pair of giants like Big Show and Kane: there's no one that can stop them and the resulting matches are dull at times. Not bad but it felt like a Raw match.

Carlito would turn face over the summer by hooking up with Trish Stratus. Evil Randy Orton would go after Trish, setting up a quick feud with a match at Unforgiven 2006.

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 RKO 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. RKO 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 RKO 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.

Carlito wouldn't do much at all for the next year though he would get back into the title scene at Summerslam 2007 in a triple threat match for the Intercontinental Title with champion Umaga and Mr. Kennedy.

Intercontinental Title: Mr. Kennedy vs. Carlito vs. Umaga

No real story here other than Umaga is defending and these two are at the Intercontinental level. Kennedy tries to negotiate and gets punched in the face by Umaga. Carlito loads up the apple but gets punched as well, giving the champion complete control so far. The challengers fall out to the floor and finally start going after Umaga at the same time, though it has the same result. Carlito gets in a cheap shot from behind to send Umaga to the floor and Kennedy rams the champion into the steps.

Back in and Carlito gets two off a rollup but gets caught using the ropes. Everyone in this is either a heel or close enough to call them one. Carlito hits a springboard back elbow to the jaw for two on Kennedy but gets caught in a Stroke for no cover. Instead Kennedy goes after Umaga but gets pulled to the floor instead of getting in a cheap shot. Umaga hits a middle rope headbutt on Carlito but Kennedy saves Carlito from a charging Samoan.

Carlito knocks Kennedy to the floor and gets two on the champion before asking for an alliance with Kennedy. The champion won't be double suplexed but easily hits one on the other guys. Umaga is back up first to clean house and a spinning Rock Bottom gets two on Kennedy. A superkick puts Carlito in the corner and a running hip attack crushes him again. Kennedy sends Umaga to the floor and hits a rolling senton on Carlito, only to have Umaga come back in with the Samoan Spike on Kennedy for the pin.

Rating: D+. The match wasn't bad but this could have been on any given episode of Raw. Umaga was fine for a monster and would soon be slain by Jeff Hardy. Kennedy was supposed to be in a huge story coming up but a Wellness violation derailed those plans. As for Carlito....there's just nothing interesting to say about him. He exists and that's about it.

It would be another year before Carlito would do anything else of note when he hooked up with his cousin Primo. The two received a Smackdown Tag

Title shot on September 26, 2008.

Smackdown Tag Titles: Primo/Epico vs. Edgeheads

That would be Zack Ryder/Curt Hawkins defending the titles. Hawkins and Primo get things going with Primo grabbing a quick flying headscissors for two. Off to Carlito for a slam before he drops Primo on top of Hawkins for two. Ryder offers a distraction and Hawkins sends Carlito shoulder first into the post.

Off to Zack who works on the injured arm with a hammerlock before it's back to Hawkins for some kicks to the back. Armbars a go-go continue as Carlito keeps trying to get over for a tag. We take a quick break and come back with Primo coming in and cleaning house as everything breaks down. Carlito gets a quick tag and a Backstabber to Ryder is enough for the pin and the titles.

Rating: D+. This wasn't much to see either as they didn't have time to go anywhere and the arm work was completely forgotten after the break. Hawkins and Ryder weren't much of a tag team and the division was pretty clearly not going to last much longer. Thankfully that would change soon.

The two Tag Titles would be unified at Wrestlemania 25 with the Colons winning the belts. Here's a title defense in a triple threat from The Bash.

Unified Tag Titles: Edge/Chris Jericho vs. Colons vs. Legacy

The original two teams won't let Jericho and Edge in to start which is a nice bit of thinking. Carlito and Ted start and Carlito does a gorgeous moonsault off the top. The team that speaks Spanish has the belts here. They're trying to keep Edge and Jericho out of the ring, I'm assuming betting they'll win if they get in, which is kind of odd for faces to be all scared like that. I think the fans are chanting for Christian

of all people.

This is similar to the Horsemen/Dungeon of Doom match from Bash at the Beach 96 where Benoit and Anderson knew the Giant would destroy them if he came in so they wouldn't let him in. It made sense and this does as well. Primo gets a nice rollup on Rhodes for two. It's so strange hearing Orton talked about as being so hated a mere year ago and 9 months before he was the hottest thing in the world. Cody hooks an inverted Gory Special that looks awesome.

The fans love Edge here which is rather odd indeed. Jericho takes Primo out with a Codebreaker and we have Edge vs. fired guy. Carlito misses it though and Rhodes gets a backstabber. A spear gives the Canadians the belts after being in the match all of 20 seconds combined. As I type that, Lawler says it. At least I wasn't imagining it.

Rating: B. While the wrestling wasn't anything spectacular, the thought process here was perfect. They planned this one out very well and it made perfect sense which is a great thing in my eyes. They knew they couldn't stop Edge or Jericho so they kept them out as long as they could. That's smart booking and it worked just fine.

Carlito would be gone by early 2011 and it was back to Puerto Rico. We'll wrap this up with a match against Savio Vega at Summer Madness 2013.

Carlito vs. Savio Vega

Again I'm not sure what's going on here but I think it's some kind of a power struggle. Vega jumps him to start and the brawl starts on the floor. Carlito gets choked up against the steps and they head inside for the first time. Carlito avoids a charge into the post and DEAR GOODNESS SOMEONE KILL THE FAN WITH THE HORN!!! Vega comes back in but gets stomped down as Carlito walks around a lot.

Back up and Vega scores with some right hands, only to get dropped by a big one from Carlito. Vega still has his vest on and we're nearly seven minutes into this. Carlito slowly sends him into the corner before scoring with a suplex. Vega tries to get up but gets pummeled with punches and slaps. That guy is still honking his horn. Is that a thing in Puerto Rico or something? Savio misses a splash in the corner and Carlito stands around even more. You could cut out ten minutes of standing there and the match would have the same amount of action.

An elbow to the jaw puts Savio down again for a very delayed two count and we hit the chinlock. Back up and Carlito charges into a boot to the jaw followed by some right hands. Carlito tries a springboard but lands on his feet and gets kicked in the jaw as Savio mistimed the landing. Vega misses a spinwheel kick but kicks out at two as both guys are spent.

Carlito heads outside and pulls out a chair, only to have the referee try to take it away. Savio scores with a nice superkick for two and picks up the chair, only to get into a pulling match with the referee (who seems to be a special guest). Savio lets go and Carlito gets blasted in the head but kicks out at two. A superkick by Carlito gets two for him as well so he loads up the apple. Savio ducks and fires off green mist which misses as well, but Vega grabs a rollup for the fast pin.

Rating: C+. I liked this far better than the Gonzalez match as they were telling a story in the ring rather than something you needed a backstory to understand. Vega seemed to be the face here and made the classic comeback before countering Carlito spit for spit and winning with a rollup. Nice touch.

Overall...I just don't get Carlito. I didn't care for him when he was in WWE and I haven't cared for anything else he's done before or since. The hair was a big problem for him as he looks more like Sideshow Bob than a tough guy and the purple trunks made it even worse. Give him the skills he had with the look he was using back in 2000 and he's WAY easier to buy. Not my favorite guy to put it mildly.

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