

# WWA Inception – Night Of WAY TOO MANY GIMMICK MATCHES

## WWA: The Inception

Date: January 6, 2002 (Taped October 26, 2001)

Location: Sydney SuperDome, Sydney, Australia

Attendance: 8,500

Commentators: Jeremy Borash, Jerry Lawler

Now here's one you may have heard of but probably have never seen. Once WCW and ECW went out of business, there were a lot of wrestlers that didn't go to WWF. Well a lot of them got together and went on an international tour. This was before TNA so this was likely the most recognized talent pool outside of WWF. I have no idea what to expect here but it could be fun. The WWA stands for World Wrestling All-Stars in case you're curious. Let's get to it.

Jeremy Borash, one of the people behind this show, welcomes us to the first ever show and an Australian girl band sings the Australian national anthem.

A pretty standard opening video airs. Since this was taped months before it aired, we get clips of the show we're about to watch.

There are BIG sections of empty seats visible.

JB is about to introduce the first match but more pyro and music cuts him off. It's Bret Hart, the WWA Commissioner, with presumably the world title belt. Bret has never been in a ring in Australia before and he apologizes to the fans for taking so long to get here. It was about a year ago that he got released from WCW and he hasn't watched any wrestling since then.

A few weeks ago he came down here to do some promotional work. After doing a TV show, he heard about 9/11 and he couldn't get out of the country. He praises the people of Australia for making him feel welcome during that time, but now it's back to wrestling. Bret isn't going to be

a token commissioner. Whoever wins the title is going to have to work very hard. Now we get to the WWF, which Bret isn't thrilled with.

Hart talks about being world champion in the WWF and how no one in that company ever beat him. Then he was in WCW and the last thing he remembers is no one beating him for that title either. He runs down Goldberg, Rock, Austin and especially Vince because none of them ever beat him. Bret says tonight whoever wins this title is going to be get the torch handed to them. He says the WWA has integrity and it's time to let the fun begin.

JB and Jerry talk about how the title will be awarded. It's called the Seven Deadly Sins Tournament, meaning seven matches with seven different gimmicks. The title match will be in a cage.

We hear about some of the non-tournament matches which seem pretty weak. Luna Vachon vs. Gangrel in a Black Wedding match (whatever that means) and Norman Smiley vs. Crowbar in a hardcore match. Ok then. We also get the first round tournament matches, two of which are hardcore matches, one of which is a battle royal, and one of which that isn't listed.

#### International Cruiserweight Title/Seven Deadly Sins Tournament First Round: Psychosis vs. Juventud Guerrera

So not only is this for the company's Cruiserweight Title, it's also in the world title tournament and is a ladder match. Don't overbook anything there guys. Also since this isn't the first event for the company, Psychosis already won the title at a house show before this event, but the title was stripped so that the "first" champion could be crowned here. Psychosis won the first one in case you were wondering. Juvy gets on the mic before the match and does his Rock imitation which never was all that funny to me.

Something very different about this show is that the commentary comes through the PA system, meaning the fans can hear it. They head into the corner to start with Psychosis taking over. Juvy comes back with a spinwheel kick and a tornado DDT as things speed up. They head to the floor with Juvy shoving the ladder down so that the top of it slams into Psychosis' head. FREAKING OW MAN!

Back inside and Psychosis dropkicks the ladder into Juvy's face, only to get it sling shotted into his own face. Psychosis is busted open bad. Back inside and the fans aren't all that thrilled with this. Juvy hits a loud chop in the corner and the ladder is laid across the top rope. Juvy tries a sunset flip which means nothing in this so it's back to the ladder. Jerry suggests going for the belt. Gee thanks King. Juvy gets draped across the top rope and Psychosis hits a guillotine legdrop across the back of his head.

We get the first attempt at going up the ladder but Juvy hits a springboard missile dropkick to take the ladder out and send Psychosis into the top rope. Juvy gets another ladder for some reason but just like earlier, Psychosis dropkicks the ladder into Juvy to knock him down.

Back in and Juvy rams Psychosis into the ladder before climbing up and hitting some kind of a dive which doesn't really keep going once he hits Psychosis. The ladder falls down and hits the referee but he's fine because it wasn't a planned bump. They both go up the ladder with Juvy hitting a sunset bomb to kill Psychosis. He adds a 450 for good measure and climbs up to win the title.

**Rating:** C+. This was a fun spot fest and that's about all you need for it to be. I'm not a big fan of the idea of just throwing two guys out there and saying the winner of this is champion, but at least it was fun in the process. The high spots in this were pretty good too and for what it was, this was a solid opener.

Some chicks called the Starettes dance. By dance I mean pose while moving a little bit.

Nathan Jones arrives with some celebrity. Lenny and Lodi, the gay tag team, greets him but he has nothing to say.

Disco Inferno needs security.

Seven Deadly Sins Tournament First Round: Konnan vs. Jesse James

This is one of the matches listed as a hardcore match earlier but here's it's announced as a dog collar (four corners variety) match. James of

course is the Road Dogg who was released from WWF soon before this. He's billed as Road Dogg Jesse James which is kind of surprising. Oh wait make that Road Dog. Big difference there. Konnan jumps Dogg during his intro and does his own version of it while holding up the Mexican Heavyweight Title.

Konnan rips into Road Dogg for being the only member of DX to get fired which fires up Roadie, but a belt shot puts him right back down. They're attached by the chain now, but it's a long enough chain that Dogg can be choked over the top rope while Konnan is on the floor on the other side of the ring. Back in and Konnan hits the Rolling Thunder clothesline and stomps away a bit. Konnan gets three corners but Roadie hits him low with the chain.

Road Dogg gets two corners but Konnan chokes away some more. Apparently you can win by pinfall here too. Thanks for letting us know halfway through the match. Road Dogg gets put in the Tree of Woe and Konnan hits a quick dropkick for no cover. Konnan hits ten punches in the corner but Dogg hits him low to break it up.

Dogg gets two corners but just like earlier, the chain goes between the legs to break it up. After three more buckles for Dogg, Konnan rips his own collar off and pulls out a metal pole of some kind to hit Dogg in the head. He takes the collar off again and goes up with the pole, only to jump into a boot to the face. Dogg hogties him, simulates anal rape, and slaps all four corners for the win.

**Rating:** D. This was a mess for the most part with the pinfalls being an option meaning nothing at all. Both guys were all over the place and it never got going as a brutal match. Again, that's the problem with gimmick matches for the sake of having gimmick matches: there's no reason to have the gimmicks and the match doesn't have any extra heat as a result.

We see some models getting ready for a Skin to Win match. Jerry freaks of course. One of them happens to be a man. Literally. Lawler, who liked the view before the guy turned around, ERUPTS when he sees the crotch bulge.

Devon Storm vs. Norman Smiley

Storm is more famous as Crowbar. This isn't a tournament match. Norman comes out dressed like a basketball player as is his custom. A quick cross body gets two for Storm but he gets sent to the floor. We get the first garbage can but the lid gets slammed on Storm's head. The can of weapons is thrown into the ring and Storm guillotines Smiley on the rope and hits a slingshot splash for no cover.

Storm hits a moonsault onto a chair onto Norman to hurt both guys. Norman starts dancing but gets a stick to his head for his efforts. Storm's suicide dive runs into a chair and it's table time. After the Big Wiggle (arguably more simulated anal sex. There's at least male on male spanking), Norman can't suplex Storm through the table. Devon is busted but he dropkicks a trashcan into Smiley.

A slingshot plancha puts Smiley through the table but despite Storm staying on top of Norman, there's no count. Smiley comes back and whips Storm into the barricade before putting a trashcan over him. Norman pounds away with a chair before they head up the ramp. A low blow breaks up another Big Wiggle and the brawl goes to the back. Norman is put in a cart and rammed into Disco Inferno who of course overreacts.

They come back into the arena with Norman getting wheelbarrow slammed onto a piece of barricade laid on its side. Storm pulls out another table but cracks Norman in the head with a trashcan lid first. Another table is stacked on top of the first table and Norman starts screaming. Norman escapes a powrbomb and slams Storm onto a trashcan. After some dancing by Norman, he gets slammed into the can just as easily.

Storm puts him on the top table and after climbing up the set, dives through Norman and the two tables with a big splash. It's one of those spots that looks a lot better than it actually was. Norman reaches over and covers the dead Storm for the pin. After the big spot of the match, Storm doesn't even get to win? Lame.

**Rating:** D. This went on WAY too long. It's the longest match of the night so far, running about ten minutes. The problem with these matches is that once you see them beat on each other for about five minutes, the next four and a half before the big spot aren't very interesting as it's the

same stuff we've seen already. Not awful, but WAY too long and Norman getting the win is kind of stupid.

Disco runs into two fruits in the back. Literally, they're guys dressed as bananas. That's not a euphemism or anything. They're men dressed like a yellow fruit that you peel and eat that has a lot of potassium in it. Disco: "I SAID I WANTED TWO SUITS! NOT TWO FRUITS!" Comedy ladies and gentlemen!

We get some brackets but they don't make a lot of sense.

???

Road Dogg

Battle Royal

Jeff Jarrett

Front Row

Juvy won and his match is listed in the first column of the brackets, but he's not in the second round. I have no idea what Front Row is either. Ah apparently Juvy has broken ribs and can't go on so he'll be replaced instead of Dogg getting a bye. Nathan Jones is Front Row. One, what kind of a nickname is Front Row? Second, why put that instead of his name?

Stevie Ray is with Bret and I have no idea what Ray asked Bret. The battle royal is now an open invitational to anyone who works for the WWA. Stevie asks if he can get in on this and Bret says go for it.

Seven Deadly Sins Tournament First Round: Battle Royal

Buff Bagwell, Stevie Ray, Devon Storm, Norman Smiley, Disco Inferno, Jerry Lawler

That's it. Six guys is all they could find and apparently before this, there were only four. That's not much of a battle royal. Disco and Bagwell are the first two out and brawl before the match starts. Ray comes in as well, as do Smiley and Storm. Yeah I spoiled the people in it. Get over it. King throws Borash into the match as well so I guess

there are seven people in it now? Ray puts Borash out almost immediately as referees and a cameraman get in. Disco throws out Storm so Storm jumps in on commentary. Borash was eliminated somewhere in there.

Some chick in a gold dress gets in as JB gets back on commentary. Jerry slams the girl down and the girl eliminates herself. Both referees are thrown out so we're down to Bagwell, Ray, Smiley, Disco and Lawler. All four agree to jump Ray but only Disco winds up charging. They do it again and this time it's Disco and Smiley that charge him. The Fruits in Suits (they're in pajamas, so I guess they're the Bananas in Pajamas which is a kids TV show from this era) come down as well because I guess there's no time limit for getting in. Ray gets dumped and Lawler does the Big Wiggle on Smiley.

Norman hits Lawler low and tries to eliminate him but Buff puts them both out. The Fruits never got in the ring and we've got Disco vs. Buff. Buff hits a cross between a double arm DDT and a Pedigree as Disco is reeling. Disco comes back with a swinging neckbreaker before we get, I kid you not, the Village People's Elbow. Ok that was kind of funny. The Fruits get in and eliminate Disco but Buff throws them both out to go on to the semi-finals.

**Rating:** C. Yeah it was a comedy match, but it wasn't bad at being funny. When you reach the point where it's so insane that it's funny, a match like this can work. At the end of the day, the (arguably) biggest name in the match won and it didn't last long. This was fine for what it was and I can't actually complain that much about it.

Lawler goes after the Fruits to get an interview.

The girl in the gold dress is apparently an interviewer. The celebrity and Nathan Jones make sex jokes and aren't worried about Jarrett tonight.

#### Seven Deadly Sins Tournament First Round: Jeff Jarrett vs. Nathan Jones

This is another one that was listed as a hardcore match but here it's a guitar on a pole. Jarrett is in his old WCW shirt so I'd bet on a lawsuit soon. Jeff says he's the chosen one with all the stroke and that he'll win the title. Basically the same thing he said in every promo in his

last WCW run. He says he's in charge of things now instead of Bret and he calls out Jones to fight. You know, like Bret said we should do.

You might remember Jones from a cup of coffee he had in the WWE in 2003 but he never went anywhere. The guy is 7'0 tall and a ripped martial artist (who looks a lot like bald Kane actually), but he makes Khali looked like a ring general. Jones is also Australian so the place goes nuts for him. Jeff gets in some right hands but Jones big boots him down and loads up a chokeslam. Not only does he look like Kane but he wrestles like him too.

The chokeslam is broken up but a side slam puts Jeff down. I think you win by pin here. They head to the floor with Jarrett running from Jones. Back in and Jones hits a top rope clothesline to take Jeff down but as he goes for the guitar he gets hit low and crotched. Jeff gets the guitar, kills the celebrity (apparently a talk show host) with it, and hits the Stroke on Jones to advance.

**Rating:** D+. This didn't have time to go anywhere. The problem at the end of the day for Jones was that he just wasn't that good. He looked like an absolute monster but he just didn't have what it took to work in the ring. The WWE pulled him from Wrestlemania because they didn't think he could survive on a live broadcast. Think about that for a minute.

The Starettes waste more time.

Here's Lawler again to interview the Fruits. He calls them to the ring...but they can't talk. Because they're bananas you see. Now Lenny and Lodi come out (Lawler: "Now we've got four fruits in the ring." You knew someone would say it.) and gay jokes abound. Bret finally shows up and puts Lenny and Lodi in the semi-finals instead of Juvy. Oh and the bananas are out.

#### Seven Deadly Sins Tournament Semi-Finals: Lenny vs. Lodi vs. Road Dogg

Gee I wonder who is winning here. Lenny and Lodi get to do their land in homosexual position spots but they argue over who gets to cover Dogg. Since it worked so well, they do the same sequence over again. Jerry makes gay jokes as Lenny crawls onto Dogg for the cover. Lenny and Lodi

do the same thing over again as they argue over who should get the pin. Lenny misses a top rope dropkick and hits Lodi, but Lodi breaks up Dogg's shaky kneedrop. A botched double flapjack puts Dogg down and Lodi rolls up Lenny for two. Lenny's moonsault lands on top of Lodi and Dogg drops a knee to advance.

**Rating:** D-. This was stupid but you can tell Lenny and Lodi are having a lot of fun out there. Alan Funk (Kwee Wee from WCW) would replace I think Lodi in TNA and do the exact same gimmick with mixed results. Again, there was never any question who would win here but it was kind of funny I guess. Also, it was short.

Stevie puts his hat on to talk to Buff (Stevie: "I don't like looking like no fruit booty"), who cuts a very generic promo about his match with Jeff.

#### Seven Deadly Sins Tournament Semi-Finals: Jeff Jarrett vs. Buff Bagwell

This is a, and I quote, T\*\*\* Whips and Buff match, which means the Starretts as lumberjacks holding whips. Buff's graphic says Road Dogg but to be fair it's their first show. Apparently Buff got to pick the stipulations. Ok then. Basic stuff to start and Jeff has to avoid a whipping. A clothesline puts Jeff on the floor and the girls chase him around some more. Buff gets sent to the floor and the girls help him up and rub his shoulders.

Jeff gets one of the whips and beats on Buff a bit and it's off to a token reverse chinlock. Buff escapes with an electric chair and hammers away before sending Jeff to the floor for a whipping. Buff whips him a bit too and the referee says that's not allowed so the referee takes a few shots too. In the ring the Blockbuster hits but there's no referee. One of the girls counts and Buff (who wasn't looking) celebrates, allowing Jeff to hit the Stroke to advance to the finals.

**Rating:** D-. Another comedy match here and it's starting to wear thin. These matches aren't funny and at about four minutes long, they aren't coming off as important or anything like that. These are supposed to world title tournament matches but there's almost no wrestling involved at all. That gets old in a hurry.

Luna and Vampire Warrior (Gangrel) have come to Australia to renew their wedding vows but they wound up fighting and have a match tonight.

#### Luna Vachon vs. Vampire Warrior

This is a Black Wedding Match, which I think means hardcore but I have no idea for sure. Luna slaps him and Gangrel won't fight back because it's his wife. Gangrel finally kind of slams her down and we head outside. There's wedding themed stuff on the floor and Gangrel takes a cake to the face. Luna gets tongs and grabs Gangrel's balls with them. We get a pumpkin shot in and you can connect the dots on this one yourself I think. Luna throws down her wedding ring and spits at him, earning her an inverted DDT for the pin. Nothing here at all but ANOTHER comedy match.

Stevie is with the guy in women's clothing but his identity stays a secret.

#### Queen B vs. Violet vs. Sharon A. Wad vs. Adera James

I have no idea which is which. Wad is the guy. You can figure out what happens here: the man dominates the models (Queen is a Penthouse Pet) until they team up on him and hit three straight Shattered Dreams on him. It's Danny Dominion in drag apparently. Who is Danny Dominion? I have no idea, nor do I care. Dominion comes back and pounds away as this goes nowhere. Two girls lose their tops and THIS KEEPS GOING. This isn't wrestling at all and FINALLY James wins. Screw this nonsense.

We hear about some upcoming shows as the cage is lowered. Lawler and JB suck up to the crowd to fill in time.

The Starettes dance AGAIN but Disco interrupts them. He says this is about him instead of dancing girls and comes to the ring. Disco says he should be in this match and he's not because of the Fruits. They come out and beat Disco up, sending Inferno up the cage in retreat. Disco SHOVES ONE OF THEM OFF THE CAGE in a big bump. The Fruit is pretty much dead so he gets dragged off. This is your time being wasted people, not mine.

#### WWA World Title: Jeff Jarrett vs. Road Dogg

Bret comes out to do commentary and they fill even more time with long

entrances. Jeff takes Dogg down to start and pounds away in the corner. There's a cameraman in the ring which is kind of distracting. It also doesn't help that the closeups show that a lot of the shots aren't hitting. Dogg hits the shaky punches and knee drop for two. I think you can win by escape too but it's not really clear.

Dogg gets sent into the cage but he comes back and sends Jeff into it as well. This is as basic as you can get so far but it's nothing bad. Jeff gets sent into the cage again as Dogg takes over. Both guys go to the top and Jeff climbs down....but that doesn't count here, making the whole cage pretty worthless. A bell shot busts Jeff open and they head back in for a sleeper from Jarrett. There is literally blood dripping down onto the mat from Jeff's head. That's sick stuff man.

Road Dogg gets up at two arm drops and rams Jeff into the cage to escape the hold. Dogg puts on a sleeper of his own but Jeff suplexes him down for two. A forearm from Roadie takes out the referee and Jeff walks out the door to pick up his guitar. The guitar kills Dogg and Jeff puts him in the Sharpshooter but Bret won't let the bell ring. It's a cage match so why is this illegal? A second referee comes in and gets bumped and Dogg low blows Jarrett. Now Dogg puts Jeff in the Sharpshooter but Bret STILL won't ring the bell. Roadie steals the belt from Bret, misses a shot with it and takes the Stroke to give Jeff the title.

**Rating:** D+. This didn't work for me. After the night of overdone matches, they overdo it even more to end the show? Even in 2001 the Montreal stuff was old and no one was interested in it anymore. The match was getting good at the end but I don't think many people bought Dogg as a legit threat.

Post match Bret gets in the cage and Jeff backs down from him. Bret takes the legs out and puts Jeff in the Sharpshooter to end the show. Nice job of making the CHAMPION look good on the first show guys.

**Overall Rating:** D+. This is a hard one to grade. First and foremost, it's their first PPV. They had four more and a bunch of house shows to get their ideas right and hopefully ditch some of the comedy matches. The good thing here is they have a champion and it's probably their best

option. This show cost \$20 when it aired and I can't say I'd hate myself for paying that at the time, but I'd be skeptical about paying that again. If nothing else, these guys are WAY better than a lot of indy geeks you'll see, so it's not a total loss. Bigger names would come in soon enough though which would help a lot. Not great but not awful.

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# Monday Night Raw – December 28, 1998: We Close It Out With Shawn

## Monday Night Raw

Date: December 28, 1998

Location: Pepsi Arena, Albany, New York

Attendance: 11,928

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

It's the final episode of the year and it only took me two years to get through 1998. I don't remember what happens here, but my guess is that it's not as good as what happens next week. Tonight we're likely going to have more on Kane joining the Corporation and what the next move for DX is. Also there's a turn coming but I'm not sure if it happens tonight or not. Let's get to it.

We open with the Corporation saying they're taking care of Mankind tonight. They go looking for him in what looks like the boiler room and after awhile Mankind runs out and jumps one of them. You can't see anything because of the lighting but eventually the numbers get the better of him. Vince shouts that Mankind is fighting for the Hardcore Title tonight. Also Vince is going to fire Michaels when Shawn gets here. Ok then.

### Hardcore Title: Road Dogg vs. Val Venis

That's not a misprint. The winner of this faces Mankind for the title later tonight. Val does the same joke he did every December: this leg is Christmas and the other is New Year's, so come see me between the holidays. The important thing though: he got to say it, which is more than a lot of people can say today. Val jumps him to start but Roadie comes back to a big reaction. After a minute or so of not much, here's the Corporation to surround the ring. Test comes in and bulldogs Val for a DQ. In a Hardcore Title match. Love that Russo!

Val gets destroyed on the floor until DX comes out for the save. Vince comes out to the stage and says Roadie gets to defend against Mankind. As for the rest of DX, they're all going to pay. As soon as Shawn gets here, he's fired. So basically we're reiterating what was said five minutes ago.

Al Snow is still covered in blood from last week.

Kane gets a member of DX tonight.

### Al Snow vs. Edge

Edge has his more familiar music now and comes through the crowd instead of doing the circle of fire entrance. Snow goes off on Edge on the floor to start but stops to have another psychotic break. Back inside and Edge pounds away, causing Snow to shout LOOK WHAT I'VE DONE. Snow slams him down and hits a moonsault for no cover. He heads to the floor and gets a chair but Edge drives Snow chest first into the chair instead. Snow comes back with the headbutts to Edge's chest before hitting Edge with Head for the DQ. Typical Snow insanity.

The Brood and the JOB Squad get in a fight post match.

Dennis Knight (Phineas Godwin) is here for no apparent reason.

### Women's Title: Sable vs. Spider Lady

A fan comes into the ring to give Sable a yellow rose. The fan would later be named Tori and she would mean nothing until she became X-Pac's

girlfriend. Spider Lady is a reference to an incident called the Original Screwjob. Wendi Richter had been Women's Champion back in the 80s and was facing a masked woman named Spider Lady. It was actually Fabulous Moolah in a mask and Moolah shot on her and took the title, basically throwing Richter out of the company because of a real life contract issue.

Spider Lady destroys Sable before the match and there's no bell. Sable gets whipped by a belt until the Oddities make the save. Spider Lady is unmasked as Luna. No match but I guess this is what passes for a lower card swerve. If ten people in the arena got the reference, I'd be shocked. Luna says it's about her.

#### European Title: X-Pac vs. Big Boss Man

Power vs. speed here with power controlling to start via a powerbomb to counter an X-Pac rana. Off to a bearhug to the champion which is broken pretty quickly. Pac misses a charge in the corner and crotches himself on the middle rope which gets two for the challenger (Boss Man). Off to a chinlock followed by a backbreaker for no cover for Boss Man. Boss Man misses a top rope splash and Pac kicks him down a few times. The Bronco Buster hits and here comes the Corporation. Val Venis also comes out for the save and it's a DQ win for Boss Man.

**Rating:** D+. This was barely long enough to rate and that's what holds it down. Boss Man is a good size opponent for X-Pac as he's a big guy but not big enough that it's ridiculous like Big Show or Kane. Val coming in was a nice touch as he has a reason to be mad at the Corporation after what happened earlier tonight. This could have been a bit better with some more time.

We get a Vince training montage with him drinking raw eggs set to a Rocky sounding song.

#### Goldust/Steve Blackman vs. Jeff Jarrett/Owen Hart

This feud will not end. Jarrett and Goldie start things off and Jarrett gets two off a powerslam. Goldust comes back with a clothesline and loads up Shattered Dreams but Jeff escapes thanks to Owen. Jarrett goes after the arm and hits a double clothesline with Owen's help again. A LOUD

nugget chant breaks out and there's the tag to Blackman, who is immediately taken down by an enziguri and a spinning heel kick for two. There's the Sharpshooter and here comes Dan Severn in a neck brace. The distraction lets Godlust roll up Jarrett for the pin. Another nothing match in a nothing feud.

The Acolytes are kidnapping Dennis Knight and put him in the trunk of his own car before driving off in it.

#### Intercontinental Title: HHH vs. Ken Shamrock

The crowd is all over Shamrock to start. HHH hits an atomic drop and neckbreaker to send Shamrock to the outside. Cole goes into an explanation about rights of free speech and taking obscene signs away for some reason. Shamrock hits a spinning elbow to take over but HHH comes back with a gordbuster and a baseball slide to take out Test. Shamrock gets in some shots to the knee and HHH is down.

HHH comes back with a hard whip into the corner and a right hand to the back of the head. The jumping knee takes Shamrock down but it hurts HHH's knee even more. There's the facebuster but HHH has to take out Boss Man. The distraction lets Shamrock put on the ankle lock but HHH makes the rope. Shamrock won't let go and it's a DQ.

**Rating:** C+. This was REALLY hot while it lasted with the fans losing it on every move HHH hit. The ending sucks but it's almost 1999 so you can't expect a clean finish. The DX vs. Corporation feud went on for a long time until the Ministry rose up to be the real villains in the whole thing for awhile.

DX comes out for the save until Kane reluctantly clears the ring.

Shamrock and Gunn yell at each other.

Here are Henry and Brown with something to say. Henry apologizes to Chyna for what happened and says it was completely wrong. He gets down on his knees to beg her to come back but he gets PMS instead. They say they have plans for Henry but Brown says back off. Cue Chyna who gets in PMS' faces and says stay away from her man. Brown is STUNNED and Henry starts

jumping up and down. Jackie makes fun of Chyna and gets choked down for her troubles. She says she'll see Mark later and smiles a bit.

The Corporation is looking for someone.

We look at the year in review, which is pretty well done. It's a highlight package from the whole year. There's a long section on the Cell and I can't argue a bit with that. Austin vs. McMahon gets a lot of time as well.

The Corporation is destroying....the Godfather? Apparently he's facing Billy Gunn next and that's not cool.

#### Billy Gunn vs. Godfather

There's no Godfather so here's his replacement.

#### Billy Gunn vs. Kane

Kane is here against his will because he was let out of the insane asylum on the condition that he helps the Corporation. Billy goes after him but gets pounded into the corner. Billy hits the yet to be named Fameasser out of nowhere but Kane is up first. A clothesline puts Kane on the floor and here's Shamrock with some cheap shots on Billy, including the ankle lock. There's the chokeslam but Brisco says do more. There's another chokeslam but Patterson asks for another. HHH and X-Pac run in for the save and the DQ.

**Rating:** D. This was a squash with another dirty ending. That's the same kind of thing you get in almost every match and it's really tiring after awhile. I know Russo likes this kind of stuff but it's hard to sit through and it's only going to get worse next year. Billy never had a chance in this.

Rock comes out for commentary on the main event.

#### Hardcore Title: Mankind vs. Road Dogg

Shawn arrives with like fifteen minutes left in the show. The match is joined in progress after a break. Rock rips into both guys and is on fire

tonight. Roadie is in control to start but the Cactus Clothesline puts both guys on the floor. They head up the ramp with Mankind in control, hitting a suplex on the stage for no cover. Mankind pulls out a table and suplexes it onto Roadie for two.

Road Dogg takes over and they head back towards the ring. That lasts for about two seconds as Mankind drops him face first onto the apron. Mankind pulls out a toolbox but it gets knocked out of his hands. Some cookie sheet shots put Mankind down as security puts a rowdy fan down. Back inside a chair to the back puts Mankind down as does a Russian legsweep onto the chair which gets two. Mankind comes back with a pulling piledriver for two and takes over again.

Another piledriver on the chair gets another two and we head back to the floor. They head into the crowd and Mankind knocks him behind some hockey boards. A shot with a monitor misses Road Dogg and he knocks Mankind through a production assistant into some boxes. Mr. Socko comes out of nowhere and the Claw puts Roadie down as Rock leaves the announce table. Mankind drops an elbow on Roadie on the table but Rock lays out Mankind with a Rock Bottom on the concrete, allowing Road Dogg to get the pin to retain.

**Rating:** C+. This was when they were starting to get the Hardcore Title formula down and it got a lot better. Road Dogg turned out to be really good at this stuff and the matches were entertaining enough to keep the fans fired up. This was mainly to set up Rock vs. Mankind though which would be a big deal the next week.

Road Dogg is mad about winning it like that. He didn't see the Rock Bottom when he got the pin.

Here's Vince to fire Shawn to end the show. He calls out Shawn who doesn't seem angry or nervous at all. Vince talks about making Shawn Michaels and then hearing Shawn say he didn't need Vince anymore. We get a clip from March of him saying just that, talking about how Vince needs Shawn. Then last week Shawn held back the Corporation while Shane was getting beaten up. Vince says he doesn't lay down for anybody and fires Shawn as Commissioner. Shawn superkicks Vince to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This one dragged a lot because there's really only one major angle going on for the whole show. The DX vs. Corporation feud was going on strong but they had a BIG change the next week which changed everything for the company. It's also my all time favorite moment in wrestling so that makes it even better. Not a great show here but it wasn't terrible.

That's all for 1998 and somehow it took me two years to get through it. The company had spent most of 1997 growing up and they reaped the benefits of it this year. Once the spring hit, there was nothing WCW could do to hold back the eruption that the WWF was having. With DX and Austin rising up and taking the wrestling world by storm, there was no way this company wasn't going to go straight to the top. They took over and they kept the pressure on WCW for months on end. The next year would be the year when the WWF put their foot on WCW's neck and pressed hard, but we'll get to that soon enough.

I'll be starting 1999 soon and I've already done the first episode. Here's next week's show if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/04/24/monday-night-raw-january-4-1999-foley-wins/>

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**Monday Night Raw: December 21, 1998 – Swerves, A Title Change, Whipped Cream And**

# Gerbils

## Monday Night Raw

Date: December 21, 1998

Location: Spokane Arena, Spokane, Washington

Attendance: 9,487

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

We're about a month from the Rumble and there are only two shows left to go in 1998. The main story for tonight is likely going to be the debut of Test last week to end the show and what it means for the Corporation, who has all the titles of note right now. Other than that we'll likely see the return of Austin after a one week absence which is never a bad thing. Let's get to it.

Vince leaves and tells Shane he's in charge tonight. Patterson and Brisco will be held responsible in case Shane screws up.

Cole calls the show an action adventure series and 15 seconds in, Lawler says in case you just joined us, Shane is in charge tonight. To be fair, today you would be expected to have a recap fifteen seconds in.

Here's the Corporation to open things up. Shane is in charge tonight tonight because Vince is off training for the Rumble. Before Shane can get anywhere, here's DX who says Shane may have the keys to the kingdom tonight, but DX has the keys to the boiler room. Here's Mankind but before anything else can be said, Shane wants to talk about the Outlaws. Tonight it's Billy vs. Shamrock (non-title) and Road Dogg vs. Boss Man (non-title as well). Also it's Rock/Test vs. HHH/X-Pac and Shane vs. Mankind. Mankind and DX crack up. Total time to make four matches: seven and a half minutes. Takes notes modern WWE.

D'Lo tells Henry to not have sex before his match but Henry says it's cool.

## Al Snow vs. Gangrel

Snow pounds away on Gangrel and the fans want Head. A kick to Gangrel's

face puts him down and he charges into Snow's boot to put him down again. Gangrel comes back with a neckbreaker and a floatover suplex for two. Snow puts Gangrel on the top rope but gets shoved off and a cross body gets two for Gangrel. A reverse DDT by Snow is countered but he hits the Snow Plow for the pin.

**Rating:** D+. This was a strange choice for an opener. It wasn't a good match or anything and it was really basic. I'm not sure why this match was here unless there's something post match. Snow was starting to get a reaction and the fans noticed it, which is why he got pushed a lot harder in 99. See? It's not that complicated. Also take note, because it might be months before you see a 100% clean win on this show.

Post match the lights go out and Snow gets a blood bath. During the break Snow freaked out and said not again, not again. Normal night for Snow.

#### Intercontinental Title: Billy Gunn vs. Ken Shamrock

So why would Shane make this a title match? He's in complete control and the Outlaws already beat Shamrock and Boss Man at the PPV, so why risk this? Shamrock immediately takes him down by the leg but Billy kicks Ken away. It's a feeling out process to start but Billy takes him down with a drop toe hold. The crowd is HOT tonight. The champ gets put in an armbar for a bit followed by Billy stomping away in the corner.

Shamrock takes Billy's head off with a clothesline and it's off to the leg as you would expect from a submissions guy like Ken. The leg goes around the post and remember that the leg was hurt in the tag match last week. After a chair is taken away from Shamrock, he goes back to strikes of all sorts to the knee. The standing rana gets two for Shamrock and a small package gets the same for Gunn. Another cradle gets two for Billy before Shamrock goes to the knee again. Ken tries a rolling leglock or something close to it, only to have Billy fall on him and hook the legs for the pin and the title.

**Rating:** C. This wasn't bad at all here. Billy was a guy that had potential all the time but he never kept it going and people got tired of seeing the same stuff over and over again. Shamrock was great as a killing machine with a ton of submissions to use. You know the screwjob

is coming though and here it is.

Immediately after the match here's Shawn to say it wasn't a title match, which makes sense in a screw you fans way. Billy moons Shawn and gets decked by Shamrock. Billy pops up and chases them away with his leg feeling fine.

Here's Hawk with some bombs to drop apparently. Hawk admits that he has an addiction problem but now he's clean. The surprise is that Droz was his supplier and Droz was just trying to steal Hawk's job. Now that Hawk's clean, Droz isn't needed anymore. Droz comes out and jumps Hawk, who has a cast on his arm. Animal comes out for the save. This angle never clicked at all.

Henry goes into PMS' locker room as D'Lo guards the door.

#### Steve Blackman vs. Blue Blazer

Blazer comes out and Owen comes out behind him. Why is this STILL going? The Blazer jumps Blackman and hits an enziguri to take over quickly. Blackman keeps going for the mask as Owen calls conspiracy last week, saying that the tape (on a live show) was doctored. Blackman makes a comeback and Owen comes in for the DQ.

Post match Goldust comes out to break up the double team. The mask is pulled off and it's Jeff Jarrett. Ok, now no one needs to wear the mask again.

PMS (Terri and Jackie) are going to take a shower while Henry watches. Brown is getting frustrated outside.

#### Road Dogg vs. Big Boss Man

Road Dogg implies Boss Man and Test anally stimulate each other with nightsticks which makes Boss Man make this a title match by his own words.

#### Hardcore Title: Road Dogg vs. Big Boss Man

Boss Man takes over to start and whips Road Dogg into the corner and out

to the floor. He takes too much time though and Roadie gets something made of metal and cracks the champ in the head to take over. A shot with the steps hit the post instead of Road Dogg but Boss Man gets in a shot with the same piece of metal from earlier to knock Road Dogg into the crowd.

Road Dogg gets thrown into the technical area and then choked by a pole of some kind. These early hardcore matches were wild messes which is the appropriate kind of match to have actually. Back to the ring and Boss Man whips Roadie with a thick belt. Boss Man pulls out some powder and gets it knocked back into his own eyes. Road Dogg whips him with the belt and it's back into the crowd.

Boss Man finds a fan (as in one you use to cool off a room) somewhere and gets in a shot to slow Road Dogg down. Now he's got a noose and chokes out Road Dogg for two in the middle of the crowd. A low blow from Road Dogg stops Boss Man and he puts a trashcan over the champ before diving off a wall onto him. The noose is still around Roadie's neck though and he gets whipped into some walls with it. Here's Mankind from the concourse with a net to tie up Boss Man. Mankind breaks something over Boss Man's head and Road Dogg pins him for the title.

**Rating:** B-. That's likely too high but I liked this a lot for some reason. It was a huge mess and that's the idea of a hardcore match. They had to take something from the Corporation eventually just to stop the bleeding on the other side a bit. Road Dogg was very popular so giving him a title makes as much sense as anyone else. This was a fun match too.

PMS takes Henry's clothes off before putting a studded collar on him. They give Henry a massage with a bunch of oils followed by covering his stomach with whipped cream.

We go to a commercial and come back with Jeff Jarrett ranting about women that tick him off. This would be the character that finally got people to hate him.

Back to the sex scene and we have Henry being strapped down to the table he's on.

### Bob Holly/Scorpio vs. Acolytes

The Acolytes destroy both JOB Squad guys to start and it's Holly vs. Bradshaw to start. Scorpio comes in and things go badly for 2 Cold (Scorpio). Off to Farroq who helps Bradshaw with a double spinebuster but Holly distracts the Acolytes long enough for Scorpio to get up and kick Farroq down. Everything breaks down and the Acolytes beat them up so badly that the referee just calls it a DQ win for the JOB Squad.

### Shane McMahon vs. Mankind

The Stooges are here with Shane and they look scared to death because of Vince saying whatever happens to Shane is their fault. Shane pops Mankind with some lefts and rights but a single shot from Mankind puts Shane down. There's the double arm DDT but instead of covering, Mankind goes to the floor to get a chair and the mic. Shawn is holding the Corporation back on the stage. Mankind pulls the chair back but Shane falls down before Mankind can hit him. Foley hands Shane the chair and says lay him out and make Vince proud. Shane hits him with it but it has no effect. Patterson and Brisco come in and it's thrown out.

Mankind beats up the Stooges and grabs Patterson's crotch. Shane gets kneed in the face and here's Socko. The Corporation and DX come out and it's a Bronco Buster from X-Pac to Shane.

Patterson and Brisco are worried about their bonus.

Brown tries to get Henry to come out for their match but the door is locked and Henry isn't coming out.

### Mark Henry/D'Lo Brown vs. Headbangers

I wonder how many years that head swivel added to Brown's career. We cut to the back and Henry is still tied down while Jackie whips him. He's also ball gagged and there are testicle clamps involved. Professional wrestling ladies and gentlemen! It's basically a handicap match and Brown gets caught by a top rope clothesline. Brown hits a Liger Bomb out of the corner on Mosh for two. Off to Thrasher who takes the Sky High for two as Lawler is getting reports of gerbils in the back. Mosh misses a middle

rope elbow but the numbers keep the Bangers in control. A double flapjack pins D'Lo in short work.

Henry stumbles to the stage in underwear and with shackles around his wrists. Brown is MAD.

Vince gets back and goes to find Shane. It doesn't seem that Vince has been watching the show.

### X-Pac/HHH vs. Test/The Rock

Before the match Shawn throws out DX. Vince comes out and says let them stay. Ok then. Rock and X-Pac start things off and Pac hits a kick to the chest and an armdrag to take over. Off to HHH vs. Test with the bigger guy (Test) looking as awkward as ever (which is pretty awkward). Rock's distraction lets Test get in a big boot to somewhere around the face for two.

Rock comes in to beat HHH down some more and test gets two off a side slam. HHH gets in a facebuster and makes the tag so things can speed up a bit. Some kicks in the corner put Test down and there's the Bronco Buster. Test dumps Pac to the floor and things break down a bit. Pac gets crotched against the post by Rock and DX is in trouble. Back in with Rock vs. Pac and a slam sets up the Corporate Elbow for two.

HHH comes in sans tag to clothesline Rock down, only to result in X-Pac getting double teamed. Off to Test who misses a clothesline and gets his head kicked off by X-Pac. There's the hot tag to HHH who cleans house and hits a high knee to Rock and a facebuster to Test. Everything breaks down and HHH hits the Pedigree on Test but Rock makes the save. There go the lights and here comes Kane, who is suddenly not institutionalized. He chokeslams HHH and the rest of DX. Apparently Kane is the holiday bonus for the Corporation. The match is thrown out.

**Rating:** C. The match was fine and given that it's the Attitude Era, expecting a pin or submission ending in a main event is asking way too much. Test didn't look like anything more than a taller and slower Boss Man here, so adding in Kane sort of makes him look worthless. Nothing great to see here but HHH and Pac always had some chemistry together.

Kane grabs Chyna by the throat to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C-. This show started well but the ending brings it down for me. The Hardcore Title changing was finally something going bad for the Corporation but they come back with an even bigger win in the form of Kane. Now given that it's Kane his heel turn likely won't make it past the end of the year, but for now it defeats a lot of the purpose of the stuff earlier tonight. Not a bad show at all, but the ending pulls it down.

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