

Rumor: Roman Reigns Named as Customer of Steroid Distributor

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/rumor-roman-reigns-involved-steroid-distribution-ring-miami/>

It's way, WAY too early to know if this is going anywhere, but if it's true I'd be stunned if he gets the title in New Orleans. With the TV deal coming up, I don't think WWE would want to pull the trigger on something like this.

That of course brings up the major problem: what if they postpone THIS TIME FOR SURE until XXXV and make us waste another year on this nonsense? I don't think I can take that again.

Monday Night Raw – January 15, 2018: Smart Booking and Delicious Looking Chocolate Cake

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 15, 2018

Location: AT&T Center, San Antonio, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

It's the go home show for the Raw 25th Anniversary Show which is the go home show for the Royal Rumble. That makes tonight almost the go home show for the pay per view, as next week's show is going to have a completely different vibe. Tonight we have Asuka vs. Nia Jax so let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Brock Lesnar fighting Braun Strowman last week until Strowman pulled a huge piece of the set down onto Lesnar and Kane. That's quite the visual, but both Brock and Kane being conscious after a commercial hurt things a lot.

Here's Strowman to get things going. He has a short story for us but it has a happy ending. Before he can get to his story though, Kurt Angle, flanked by security, cuts him off. Angle lists off all the obvious problems with what Braun did but Strowman says it could have been worse. Kurt gets in the always dumb sounding "unsafe worried environment" line with Strowman saying he did his job.

Strowman is ready to do whatever he wants and if that means ripping the walls off of Suplex City, so be it. Angle says Strowman is lucky Kane and Lesnar can still compete at the Rumble. As for Strowman though, he's out of the match because HE'S FIRED. I'm not even going to bother getting all annoyed here because there's no way they'll do Kane vs. Lesnar as a one on one. Hardcore Holly was a more interesting (and believable) challenger back in 2004.

In the back, Braun leaves while threatening security.

Raw moment: Hugh Jackman is guest host.

Post break, a security guard orders Strowman to leave and the destruction is on. Braun promises to do even more.

The Bar vs. Titus Worldwide

Rematch from last week where Titus scored a fluke pin. Dana Brooke is in a very different top this week to prevent another instance of last

week's, uh, incident. Cesaro powers Crews into the corner to start but it's quickly off to Titus for an exchange of chops in the corner. Cesaro uppercuts Crews down though and Sheamus adds a top rope clothesline as we take a break.

Back with Sheamus getting two off a middle rope ax handle and grabbing a chinlock on Crews. Apollo fights up and brings in Titus for the forearms to the chest and an impressive toss to Cesaro. Everything breaks down and Crews moonsaults to the floor just like last week but Cesaro is ready for him this time. An uppercut to Titus knocks him into a rollup for two, only to have the Neutralizer broken up. Apollo's high crossbody and standing moonsault get two each but Sheamus picks him up for White Noise. Cue Jason Jordan for a distraction though, allowing Crews to roll Sheamus up for the pin at 10:48.

Rating: C-. Now that's the right call, even if the ending didn't need Jordan out there. I was nearly convinced that they would go with the 50/50 booking here but instead, they gave Titus Worldwide another win to make them even the slightest level players in the division. Now, even if they lose for weeks to come, there's a more believable chance they could win and that's what matters most. Good idea here, even in a not great match.

Seth Rollins comes out to ask Jordan what he's doing.

Strowman kicks in the door to Angle's office and breaks a lot of stuff.

Post break, Strowman wrecks catering and chokeslams Curt Hawkins through a table. He does however take a piece of chocolate cake from a nearly catatonic worker. I can appreciate a man with a taste for some cake and Strowman as the unstoppable monster is fun.

Tony Nese vs. Cedric Alexander

Before the match, Enzo Amore says he's like Frankenstein and Cedric is like Dracula because he sucks. Goldust is in Cedric's corner and says Cedric is a box office smash. After the title match at the Rumble, the one word to describe Cedric will be champion. Cedric says that between Amore's face and his ankle, the only word to describe him is sawft. We're

joined in progress after a break, but not before seeing Strowman shoving a dumpster through the back.

That's one thing that drives me crazy about WWE. Strowman is supposed to be destroying everything on a rampage, but he does it right after we get back from a commercial and before we get to this match. Go split screen to show him doing this at the same time or something, but find a way to make it feel more spontaneous.

Anyway, to the match. Cedric catches him with an ankle scissors but Nese knees him in the ribs as Booker talks about how Angle shouldn't have fired Strowman live in the ring. We hit the neck crank on Cedric with Enzo talking so much trash that Goldust goes after him, even mocking the dance. Cedric fights up and hits the springboard clothesline for two, only to get slowed down by a headlock. Back up and Cedric elbow shim in the face, followed by the Lumbar Check (with a great sell job from Tony) for the pin at 5:52.

Rating: D+. Who in the world decided to put these two out there to die like this? The longer we wait on Cedric to get his big title shot, the less interesting he becomes. He's beaten up all these same cruiserweights over and over and there's no point in watching him do anything other than win the title. It wouldn't surprise me to see WWE not even do that though, which would be one of the dumbest things they could do. Just find some more interesting villains for him to vanquish or give him the title already because this was a waste of time.

Angle is thinking about calling in a SWAT team but is told Strowman is heading towards the production trucks.

Post break Strowman goes into the truck and shoves a bunch of papers around before leaving without causing too much damage. The whole thing starts shaking though as Strowman has unhooked the semi from the truck and is trying to turn it over. Angle comes up to say he's called the cops. His phone rings as Strowman leaves, only to come back and flip the truck over with the camera going spastic with cuts to hide how fake it looked, making it look worse in the process.

Strowman heads into the arena and goes after commentary, picking Cole up

by one hand and carrying him over the stage. Angle and security shows up with Kurt saying he's called the cops off. Stephanie has rehired Strowman and he's back in the title match (because of course Stephanie can solve any problem in ten seconds while it's caused Angle problems for an hour) if he lets Cole go. Braun does let him go, with a flying toss off the stage and onto the security guards. The Stephanie thing made me roll my eyes but Cole being picked up by the belt and carried away like a child was funny stuff.

Tom Phillips replaces Cole on commentary.

Nia Jax vs. Asuka

Asuka gets tossed around to start but comes right back with a Black Widow (ala AJ Lee) into something like an abdominal stretch. Nia calmly shoves Asuka's leg off though and catches her with a backbreaker. A triangle choke cuts Nia off again until she lifts Asuka up for a powerbomb into the corner as we take a break. Back with Asuka fighting out of a bearhug and avoiding a sitdown splash. Asuka's running kick to the chest drops Jax but she's right back up with a hard powerbomb. Asuka grabs a kneebar to send Nia bailing to the ropes and they head outside. Asuka avoids a charge and sends Nia into the steps, only to have Nia get her knee caught between the ring and the steps. Nia beats the count back in but the referee stops it due to the knee injury at 10:45.

Rating: C. I've seen clowns who slip on banana peels less frequently than Nia Jax. It's like she loses every match she has this way and that's getting old. The match was a shortened version of what we've seen from these two every single time now with Asuka hanging in there and finding a way to survive. This was fine, but Nia needs to win something like NOW, as she still doesn't have a big win.

Alexa Bliss comes out to check on Nia.

Jason Jordan comes in to see Angle, who is still upset over Braun. Jordan has been watching his dad's back all night and wouldn't have let Strowman do anything. He thanks Angle for the opportunities again but thinks Seth needs a warmup for next week. Say against Finn Balor tonight, which Angle makes for later.

The announcers talk about Martin Luther King Day.

Video on Martin Luther King.

Bliss blames herself for Nia's injury when Enzo comes in to check on Nia as well. Nia tells Bliss that Enzo has this so Alexa leaves while not looking happy.

Revival vs. ???/???

Yes it's an old school squash against nameless jobbers. Dawson suplexes jobber #1 and gives hi a hard clothesline for good measure. Dash comes in with a jumping knee to the face before sending it off to jobber #2. In a cool spot, Revival loads up #2 for something like a Snapshot (elevated DDT) but Dash flips him up like a backdrop, only to have Dawson send him forward in a gordbuster. The Shatter Machine ends #1 at 1:39. There's something so great about jobbers not even having names because they're not important enough.

Post match Revival brags about their tag team skills because too many people are worried about Instagram likes or video games. As for next week, Revival isn't thrilled with meeting any of the veterans at Raw 25 because there's nothing old school about beer bashes and crotch chops. They're professional wrestlers instead of sports entertainers so WWE doesn't want them to succeed. Next week at Raw 25, the superstars from around the world are coming to their universe and the Revival is setting the tone for the next 25 years. Good promo here but as always: FOLLOW UP ON IT.

Here's Elias for a new song. He's looking forward to the Royal Rumble but wants to eliminate Cena, along with 29 others. So he's going to pull a Mil Mascaras and eliminate himself? Elias insults the San Antonio Spurs and introduces Miz and the Miztourage for a chat before their match.

Miz talks about the fans cheering him last week because they recognize greatness. The fans knew something was missing from Raw and it wasn't Cena or Lesnar but rather Miz. Last week Miz and the Miztourage beat up Roman Reigns and it felt awesome. That spark is why he and Maryse are getting their own series on USA and next week he's getting the

Intercontinental Title back. It's going to feel awesome. Maybe it's just because he hasn't been around lately but Miz has felt like a bigger deal in the last two weeks.

Roman Reigns vs. Miztourage

Non-title. Miz offers an early distraction to no avail as Reigns punches both lackeys down. Axel's cheap shot allows the Miztourage to send Reigns into the steps and the beating is on. We hit the chinlock for a good while until Axel has to save his partner from a suplex. Instead Dallas gets two off a DDT, followed by some double teaming to keep Reigns slowed down.

Reigns fights up and hits a Samoan drop, followed by knocking Dallas off the apron. We get the always stupid spot of someone accidentally DDTing his partner with Axel getting spiked. The Superman Punch drops both guys and Miz's distraction fails, allowing Reigns to spear Axel for the pin at 8:16.

Rating: D-. This was reaching new levels of boring as it really didn't need to be even half this long. Reigns isn't threatened by these two and there was little reason to have him be in this kind of trouble. Throw in Reigns being down after five minutes of offense from Axel and Dallas and this was a combination of really boring and unbelievable, in the completely wrong way.

Sasha Banks vs. Sonya Deville

The rest of Absolution, Bayley and Mickie James are at ringside. As we get started, Paige is officially ruled out of the Royal Rumble. Nothing is mentioned beyond that though. A very early Bank Statement attempt send Deville bailing to the ropes but Mandy offers a distraction so Sonya can get in a few shots.

We hit a chinlock with a body vice as Booker compares Sonya to Ken Shamrock in a rare name drop. Banks fights up and goes to the middle rope, only to dive into a kick to the chest for the completely clean pin at 2:26. That's exactly the way this needed to go. Oh and welcome to the doghouse Sasha. Bayley can keep you company (for whatever reason).

Some wrestlers were at the National Civil Rights Museum last week.

Rollins tells Jordan to calm down and stop trying to be his spokesperson. This story hasn't been bad but my levels of not caring whenever either of them show up is growing in a hurry.

Matt Hardy vs. Heath Slater

Joined in progress with Matt hitting a splash to Slater's back and hammering away. Matt sends him into the ropes and laughs a lot so Slater heads outside for a meeting with Rhyno. Back in and Matt bites the hand before launching Slater into the corner. Matt thinks Slater must be deleted so it's the ten rams into the buckle and a Twist of Fate for the pin at 3:37.

Rating: D+. Matt is changing his style up enough and that's the best thing that could happen for him. He wasn't really getting far with the nostalgia run so let's see what he can do with this character. Unfortunately I'm not sure what exactly he can do with it but maybe he'll surprise me like he did in TNA.

Goldberg is official for the Hall of Fame so it's time for a long video package.

We look back at Strowman's path of destruction earlier tonight.

Royal Rumble rundown.

Finn Balor vs. Seth Rollins

Jordan, Gallows and Anderson are at ringside. Balor armbars him to start but gets armdragged away, followed by a kick to the back. Seth gets sent outside though and a kick to the chest puts him down as we take a break. Back (after a Raw moment of the 1-2-3 Kid pinning Razor Ramon in a huge upset) with Rollins hitting the Blockbuster but hurting his knee. It's fine enough to try the suicide dive though and Balor is down again.

They get back inside with Rolling hitting a forearm to the back but having Balor slip out of the Falcon Arrow. The Sling Blade takes Rollins down, only to have Seth come back with his own. Balor gets in another

Sling Blade but charges into a superkick for two. I really wouldn't emphasize how they both use the same move like that but have it their way. The Wind-Up knee is countered with a forearm so Rollins enziguris him down. Seth has to roll through the Phoenix splash and gets caught with the shotgun dropkick in the corner.

The Coup de Grace is broken up with the superplex into the Falcon Arrow for two more and both guys are down. Seth's frog splash hits the knees though and Balor rolls him up for...two apparently but here's the Bar to interrupt. The brawl is on at ringside with Anderson and Gallows fighting the Bar until Balor hits a flip dive to take all four out. Another kick to the head sets up the Coup de Grace but Rollins rolls away. Cesaro's distraction allows Jordan to trip Balor and Rollins hits the curb stomp (WHERE IN THE WORLD HAS THAT BEEN???) for the pin at 15:18.

Rating: C+. Seth's eternally present knee selling issues aside, this was the kind of main event match that always works. They were pushing the idea of the messed up fall quite a bit here and that leads me to think we're heading for a rematch. I'm really not sure about the idea of Balor losing so soon after his renewed push but that's WWE for you.

Balor is rather shaken up and the camera stays on him for a long time to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This show started off great with Strowman running wild but they made sure to cut that off after an hour because it was getting too interesting. It felt like an hour of one show and two hours of the regular show, which kind of feels like a warmup for next week's show. This show had some good booking choices (Deville winning, Revival getting a squash win, Titus Worldwide winning again etc) but the wrestling wasn't exactly thrilling. That being said, the next two weeks are all that matters so we'll see what they really have to offer then.

Results

Titus Worldwide b. The Bar – Rollup to Sheamus

Cedric Alexander b. Tony Nese – Lumbar Check

Asuka b. Nia Jax via referee stoppage

Revival b. ???/??? – Shatter Machine

Roman Reigns b. Miztourage – Spear to Axel

Sonya Deville b. Sasha Banks – Kick to the chest

Matt Hardy b. Heath Slater – Twist of Fate

Seth Rollins b. Finn Balor – Blackout

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Main Event – January 11, 2018: Yeah I Knew That

Main Event

Date: January 11, 2018

Location: FedEx Forum, Memphis, Tennessee

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Vic Joseph

What does it say that we're less than a week removed from the most recent

episodes of Monday Night Raw and Smackdown Live and I can barely remember what happened? We're building towards two of the biggest shows of the year and I'm drawing blanks on what went down. That's not a great sign for either show and hopefully it's not one for this show too. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Dana Brooke vs. Alicia Fox

Now Brooke beat Mickie James last week, which more or less guarantees that she loses here, just for the sake of the dumbest result possible. They take turns slamming each other down by the hair before Brooke grabs a waistlock. Back up and Fox tries a flying shoulder but bounces off of Brooke, who of course hits the pose.

Brooke tries a charge of her own but gets kicked out to the floor so Fox can take over. We hit the chinlock for a few seconds before the bridging northern lights gives Fox two. Dana clotheslines her a few times and tries the handspring elbow, only to flip into two raised boots. The ax kick gives Fox the pin at 5:45.

Rating: D. Yeah I knew that. Somehow, I just knew that was going to be the case. Brooke really isn't that great in the ring but I still like her for some reason that I just can't quite place. If she could reach a level of plain competence, she could be a nice little midcard fixture. Fox is the same person she's been for years, which is to say acceptable and not much more.

From Raw for the first time.

Here are Paul Heyman and Brock Lesnar to talk about old school. The thing is, this is a progressive industry where you need fresh ways to present the ideas to the audience and the general public. They've gotten away from the old school way of promoting a Universal Title match (oh come on), which was all about finding a challenger who could possibly pin or tap out a champion.

Now the Universal Title is marketed as how could Brock survive this time.

Even Lesnar thinks it sucks. At the Rumble, it's Brock vs. monster #1 and monster #2 but the only cliffhanger is who Lesnar will pin. Heyman knows no one can beat this man and that's all that matters. Lesnar goes up the ramp but here's Kane for the fight.

They fight into the back where Braun Strowman shows up and runs them both over. Brock is thrown into a wall where a big case falls on him. Strowman throws another case onto Kane (that is some scary power) before pulling out...a grappling hook? He attaches it to a big old piece of the set and pulls it down onto both guys for a huge crash, sending Heyman and everyone else behind him into fits of screams. That was quite the set piece and my goodness it should have killed them both. Worry not though, as I'm sure Lesnar will be just fine to lose to Reigns in New Orleans.

I know that's harped on but it's the problem with the entire Universal Title picture. Why should I even possibly buy that Strowman, who Lesnar has already beaten, or Kane (because HA) is going to take the title at the Rumble? Even if they do, there's no way they're defending it at Wrestlemania because that's Reigns' spot and everyone knows it. I know it sounds lame but that's what goes through my head every time I see anything related to the title.

Post break, Brock was taken out on a stretcher while Kane was allowed to walk away on his own. Well limp away but you get the idea. Lesnar didn't want to go to the hospital but went anyway.

Recap of Daniel Bryan and Shane McMahon's recent issues on Smackdown.

From Smackdown.

AJ Styles/Shinsuke Nakamura/Randy Orton vs. Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn

The threat of an RKO sends Owens bailing to the floor before coming back in for some right hands. It's off to Sami vs. Nakamura as the announcers talk about the Freebird Rule for the potential of co-WWE Champions. A kick to the face sends Sami outside and an attempt at the Styles Clash sends the villains walking up the ramp.

Cue Shane, because we haven't seen him enough tonight. The match is

restarted (it never stopped) with no countouts. Back from a break with AJ fighting Owens off and hitting the fireman's carry backbreaker. The hot tag brings in Orton for the snap powerslam on Zayn, followed by the hanging DDT. Orton loads up the RKO but Owens chairs him in the ribs for the DQ at...oh of course Shane comes out to say restart it with No DQ.

AJ knocks Owens up the ramp and into the back with a chair, leaving Sami trapped. The chase is on but Sami can't quite make it over the barricade. Orton loads up the steps and then drops Sami back first onto the announcers' table. Kinshasa drops Zayn and the RKO is good for the pin at 14:54.

Rating: D+. What do you want me to say here? The good guys had a big advantage and used that advantage to win, including a pair of restarts in the process. This was everything you would have guessed the match would be and really didn't deviate from that premise. There's not much these guys can do when EVERYTHING in this story has been about Shane vs. Bryan, which at the moment can't be an actual match. I'm still begging for the big swerve where it's Shane as the heel, but that's getting more and more unlikely with each passing week for reasons I don't want to understand.

Ariya Daivari/Drew Gulak vs. Mustafa Ali/Akira Tozawa

Gulak and Tozawa start things off with Drew demanding no chanting. Instead Tozawa kicks him down for the jumping backplash and it's off to the arm. Daivari makes a blind tag though and jumps Tozawa from behind as we take a break. Back with Daivari's frog splash getting two on Ali. Everything breaks down in short order (without a hot tag either), allowing Tozawa to hit his suicide dive on Daivari. The 054 ends Gulak at 8:22.

Rating: C. I'm running out of ways to say "they did the same thing they always do" in these cruiserweight matches but that's the case here again. This was every bit out of the old 205 Live playbook with a completely standard tag match (not a bad thing) and nothing we haven't seen time after time. It could have been worse, which often times is the best thing that can be said about a match.

Quick look at the US Title tournament.

Royal Rumble rundown.

We see a little bit of Miz's return on Raw.

From Raw to close things up.

Balor Club vs. Roman Reigns/Seth Rollins/Jason Jordan

Balor and Rollins start things off with Balor scoring off an early double stomp. It's off to Anderson in a hurry but Reigns tags himself in so house can be cleaned in a hurry, including a double shoulder to Balor. Back from a break with Reigns working over Balor until a Sling Blade cuts him off. Gallows and Anderson take over in the corner with Luke grabbing a chinlock. Anderson drops a knee and puts on a chinlock of his own.

Back up and Reigns gets in a clothesline to drop Anderson but Gallows won't give up the hot tag. The third chinlock goes on but Reigns no sells a big boot and scores with a Superman Punch. The hot tag brings in Rollins for the Blockbuster, followed by a Sling Blade on Anderson. Gallows breaks up the Wind-Up knee and Anderson's spinebuster gets two.

Rollins makes the tag to Reigns but Jordan distracts the referee by mistake so Rollins stays legal. A Magic Killer plants Rollins so Reigns goes outside to fight two on one. Jordan tries to help Rollins up, allowing Balor to hit the shotgun dropkick. The Coup de Grace gives Balor the pin at 15:28.

Rating: C-. The chinlockery hurt this a lot but I'm not sure anyone was expecting this to be any more than another wedge between Jordan and company, which is all it needed to be. That team isn't going to hold together that much longer and it makes sense to have them split up just in time for the Rumble.

Post match Miz and the Miztourage come in to attack Rollins, Jordan and Reigns. Roman takes a Skull Crushing Finale and the TripleBomb to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. Yeah there's a reason I didn't remember anything from this week. This was a run of the mill show and the highlights really didn't offer anything of note. That's part of the problem with the build

to the Rumble: once everything is set, there's really not much to do other than sit around and wait on the show. Raw 25 will help that a lot, but it's not like there's anything overly interesting on this week's shows.

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Monday Night Raw – January 8, 2018: THEY'RE NOT EVEN PAYING ATTENTION!

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 8, 2018

Location: FedEx Forum, Memphis, Tennessee

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

The big story this week is the return of the Miz, but at the same time we need to have someone to challenge Roman Reigns for the Intercontinental Title now that Samoa Joe has been vanquished. I think you might be getting where I'm hinting: Finn Balor with the Club challenges Reigns for the title. I've heard of less interesting ideas. Let's get to it.

The opening recap looks back at Reigns defeating Samoa Joe last week. I'm still not sure if that's the right call.

Opening sequence.

Here's Reigns for the opening chat. Reigns is surprised that Joe came in so unprepared last week because Roman was fighting for his brother Dean Ambrose. If you mess with one member of the Shield, you mess with all of them. Cue Jason Jordan of all people to say that he feels like something special. After ignoring the YOU BOTH SUCK chants, Jordan implies that he's part of the Shield now and even does the fist.

This brings out Seth Rollins to say Jordan's timing is horrible. It's made clear that he's not part of the Shield but Jordan says they can fight anyone. Jordan thinks they're pretty good despite not being the Shield, but Reigns and Rollins aren't convinced. Neither are Finn Balor and the Club, who interrupt next. They talk about their history together, which started way before Jordan even knew who his daddy was.

Then they came here and did their own thing, all with success. The thing is, they all knew they would come together to take over. They get in the ring with Balor saying this is the year of Balor Club. Jordan laughs them off and says he'd rather be in the Champions' Club. Gallows calls him a NERD so Jordan goes after him, only to quickly be calmed down. Kurt Angle comes out to make the six man main event. Jordan as the misfit works very well here, but I'm not sure where it goes. Balor vs. Reigns could be some good stuff too, especially if it makes me look smart.

Little Mix is doing the Royal Rumble theme song. That would be an all girl band that my fifteen year old cousin loves. Are they that out of band ideas?

Bayley/Sasha Banks vs. Mandy Rose/Sonya Deville

Mickie James, now official for the Rumble, and Paige are at ringside. Bayley and Mandy get things going with Mandy pulling her down by the hair. Back up and Bayley shoves her out to the floor as the announcers talk about the Rumble (fair enough in this case). We take a break and come back with Sasha hitting the running double knees for two on Mandy.

Sonya offers a distraction though and a good looking jumping knee drops Banks. A comeback is cut off by some hard, rapid right hands to the ribs in one of the first instances of Sonya looking like an MMA fighter for a change. A double clothesline gives Sasha a breather but Mandy breaks up another hot tag attempt. Everything breaks down and the Bank Statement makes Mandy tap at 10:57.

Rating: C-. Pretty standard women's match here and that's all it needed to be. They're keeping Paige looking strong, which is the most important thing they can do at the moment. Mandy and Sonya are just going to be cannon fodder in the Rumble anyway so having Bayley and Sasha get a win over them helps people who need the help and doesn't harm people who wouldn't be hurt anyway.

We look back at the ending of last week's show with Brock Lesnar and Kane brawling.

We look at Cedric Alexander and Goldust teaming up last week.

Goldust is dressed like Mickey from Rocky and gives Cedric one of Mickey's speeches. Cedric says he has it because he's fired up enough to win the title tonight. Goldust says the one thing standing in Cedric's way is Cedric himself. The voice makes Goldust cough before he says tonight is all about Cedric.

Earlier today, Goldust was doing a time lapse video of putting on his makeup when he found out that Alicia Fox will be his partner for the Mixed Match Challenge.

Matt Hardy vs. Curt Hawkins

Before the match, Matt officially enters the Rumble. Matt has his full on Broken entrance, complete with a theme song talking about being Broken. Hawkins tries an armbar but Matt bites his way to freedom. A snap German suplex into the corner has Hawkins in trouble and a missed middle rope crossbody makes things even worse for him. The Side Effect into the Twist of Fate is enough to end Hawkins at 1:55. Matt looked different enough to make the character feel different, which is a good sign for his future.

Post match Bray Wyatt appears behind Matt and a laugh off ensues. Nothing physical goes down.

Here's Elias with something to sing. The fans boo his guitar playing but Elias says it was good. He's got a song about Memphis and Elvis but the fans don't seem too thrilled with him. Elias: "What's wrong with Elvis???". He doesn't care about Elvis though because there's a star on the way who is taking over the entertainment biz. Elias: "Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome the Miz." Nice rhyme there.

The Miz, with the Miztourage, is back and ready to brag about his recent accomplishment. The fans welcome him back (along with his much taller hair) but Miz wants to thank the Miztourage for holding things up while he was gone. Dallas says Miz makes every day Mizmas and Dallas thinks having him back feels like winning the Mizzies every single day. Bo even has a present for Miz: a framed photo of Miz himself. Dallas: "It's going to be hard to get to sleep without that tonight." Miz: "...what?"

Axel has his own present: the suit jacket that he's wearing! Dallas offers his watch and Axel tries his shoes but Miz tells them both to sit down. Miz brags about his 2017 and promises to make it even bigger this year. We see a clip of Shield TripleBombing Miz through a table to put him on the shelf two months ago, which of course requires revenge.

Miz says the champion makes the title and daddy is home. In 2018, he's celebrating the birth of his daughter and become the greatest Intercontinental Champion of all time. He's back for the title and you can believe that. This was the most serious Miz has been on the main roster in a long time and it feels like he's been elevated a bit, which is long overdue.

Balor Club tries to talk strategy for tonight but Anderson and Gallows would rather make Japan references. They agree to make 2018 the year of Balor Club.

Cruiserweight Title: Enzo Amore vs. Cedric Alexander

Enzo is defending. Before the match, Enzo talks about missing last week's show but being taken care of by Nia Jax. Last week he was in the hospital

and watched the show, which included the Zo Train facing Cedric and Goldust. Then Enzo got it: they were teaming so Cedric can get close to gold, because he's not winning the title.

Cedric drops him with a single right hand, followed by a kick to the head to really drop Enzo. We see Nia Jax watching in the back as Enzo is pulled away from the ropes to keep Enzo in trouble. Enzo knocks him off the top in a heap though and Cedric is holding his back as we take a break.

Back with Enzo grabbing a chinlock but getting dropkicked out of the air for his efforts. Cedric fights back with some clotheslines followed by the Neuralizer. Another kick sets up a big flip dive but Enzo comes up screaming about his ankle. He's busted open too as the trainer comes over to check on him but that's a countout at 8:50.

Rating: D+. He better have a broken ankle at this point as it would get the title off of him. It's good to have the title match over and Cedric is likely to get a rematch, but they desperately need something fresh in this division. There's only so much you can do with waiting on another title match for so long but at the same time you can't have Enzo actually wrestle that often because there's nothing he can do in the ring.

Post break Enzo is in the trainer's room when Nia comes to check on him.

Angle is on the phone with some legendary female wrestler about a spot in the Rumble but has to go when the Bar comes in. They want their rematch for the titles and aren't happy with the six man tag main event. Sheamus claims favoritism but Angle makes the title match at the Rumble. That's cool with them and Angle gives them a match against some surprise competition tonight. The two of them leave and Miz comes in to brag about his upcoming reality series along with Maryse. Miz wants his rematch for the Intercontinental Title at the 25th anniversary of Raw. Angle thinks it's a good idea and the match is set.

Earlier today, Miz found out that Asuka will be his partner for the Mixed Match Challenge.

Alexa Bliss comes in to see Asuka and threatens her with Nia Jax. It's as

short as it sounds.

The Bar vs. Titus Worldwide

Sheamus knocks Titus around to start before it's off to Crews for a dropkick on Cesaro. The standing moonsault gets two but Apollo is sent outside, seeming to bang up his knee in the process. Back in and Sheamus grabs a wristlock as Dana Brooke plays cheerleader. Crews gets over for the tag and the beatdown continues as everything breaks down. Apollo dodges a Brogue Kick by moonsaulting onto Cesaro, allowing Titus to roll Sheamus up for the pin at 5:30.

Rating: D. Uh, sure? I'm glad to see Crews getting a win for once but this feels like a way to have Sheamus and Cesaro come back and crush them in a rematch as we get closer to the Rumble. The match was nothing to see as it was all about the surprise, which certainly worked, though I'm not exactly ready to put Titus Worldwide in the title hunt.

Here are Paul Heyman and Brock Lesnar to talk about old school. The thing is, this is a progressive industry where you need fresh ways to present the ideas to the audience and the general public. They've gotten away from the old school way of promoting a Universal Title match (oh come on), which was all about finding a challenger who could possibly pin or tap out a champion.

Now the Universal Title is marketed as how could Brock survive this time. Even Lesnar thinks it sucks. At the Rumble, it's Brock vs. monster #1 and monster #2 but the only cliffhanger is who Lesnar will pin. Heyman knows no one can beat this man and that's all that matters. Lesnar goes up the ramp but here's Kane for the fight.

They fight into the back where Braun Strowman shows up and runs them both over. Brock is thrown into a wall where a big case falls on him. Strowman throws another case onto Kane (that is some scary power) before pulling out...a grappling hook? He attaches it to a big old piece of the set and pulls it down onto both guys for a huge crash, sending Heyman and everyone else behind him into fits of screams. That was quite the set piece and my goodness it should have killed them both. Worry not though, as I'm sure Lesnar will be just fine to lose to Reigns in New Orleans.

I know that's harped on but it's the problem with the entire Universal Title picture. Why should I even possibly buy that Strowman, who Lesnar has already beaten, or Kane (because HA) is going to take the title at the Rumble? Even if they do, there's no way they're defending it at Wrestlemania because that's Reigns' spot and everyone knows it. I know it sounds lame but that's what goes through my head every time I see anything related to the title.

Post break, Brock was taken out on a stretcher while Kane was allowed to walk away on his own. Well limp away but you get the idea. Lesnar didn't want to go to the hospital but went anyway.

Samoa Joe vs. Rhyno

Joe starts fast with an enziguri in the corner and a headbutt cuts off Rhyno's comeback. More right hands give Rhyno a breather until an STO cuts him off. A running big boot into the backsplash gives Joe two, followed by the Koquina Clutch to make Rhyno tap at 2:44. Short and to the point with Joe looking dominant, as he should.

Post match Joe says he's taken years off of Reigns' career and the cracks are starting to show. When everything comes crashing down, he'll be there to pick up the pieces. As for now though, he's entering the Royal Rumble. Joe is ready for everyone, including John Cena, which is a name that he'll never forget.

Alexa sucks up to Nia again, this time saying that Enzo might be holding her back. Nia says Enzo motivates her to be a champion so she's entering the Royal Rumble. She's Alexa's favorite to win but thinks Nia should take Asuka out first. Nia doesn't buy it but Alexa stays on the "Asuka is talking about you" train. Nia: "CAN IT BLISS!"

Alexa whispers something that Asuka said in Nia's ear and Nia can't believe Asuka said that...because Asuka doesn't speak English and Bliss doesn't speak Japanese. If you ignore the times that Asuka has spoken English, there's nothing wrong with this segment. Like, EARLIER TONIGHT WHEN SHE TALKED TO MIZ ABOUT THE MIXED MATCH CHALLENGE FOR EXAMPLE!!!

Announced for the 25th anniversary show: Steve Austin! Ric Flair! The

Undertaker! Shawn Michaels! THE BELLA TWINS!

Asuka comes out for a match but Nia shows up and lays her out.

Royal Rumble card rundown.

Asuka vs. Nia is set for next week.

Balor Club vs. Roman Reigns/Seth Rollins/Jason Jordan

Balor and Rollins start things off with Balor scoring off an early double stomp. It's off to Anderson in a hurry but Reigns tags himself in so house can be cleaned in a hurry, including a double shoulder to Balor. Back from a break with Reigns working over Balor until a Sling Blade cuts him off. Gallows and Anderson take over in the corner with Luke grabbing a chinlock. Anderson drops a knee and puts on a chinlock of his own.

Back up and Reigns gets in a clothesline to drop Anderson but Gallows won't give up the hot tag. The third chinlock goes on but Reigns no sells a big boot and scores with a Superman Punch. The hot tag brings in Rollins for the Blockbuster, followed by a Sling Blade on Anderson. Gallows breaks up the Wind-Up knee and Anderson's spinebuster gets two.

Rollins makes the tag to Reigns but Jordan distracts the referee by mistake so Rollins stays legal. A Magic Killer plants Rollins so Reigns goes outside to fight two on one. Jordan tries to help Rollins up, allowing Balor to hit the shotgun dropkick. The Coup de Grace gives Balor the pin at 15:28.

Rating: C-. The chinlockery hurt this a lot but I'm not sure anyone was expecting this to be any more than another wedge between Jordan and company, which is all it needed to be. That team isn't going to hold together that much longer and it makes sense to have them split up just in time for the Rumble.

Post match Miz and the Miztourage come in to attack Rollins, Jordan and Reigns. Roman takes a Skull Crushing Finale and the TripleBomb to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. This was a storytelling show and, aside from the part

where they couldn't remember the clip they aired earlier in the night where Asuka spoke English, they accomplished that goal. They're getting stuff set up for both the big anniversary show (which could be a blast) and the Rumble (which should be a blast). The wrestling tonight wasn't the point but that's often the case around this time of year. Not a great show but one that did its job, which is often more important.

Results

Bayley/Sasha Banks b. Mandy Rose/Sonya Deville – Bank Statement to Rose

Matt Hardy b. Curt Hawkins – Twist of Fate

Cedric Alexander b. Enzo Amore via countout

Titus Worldwide b. The Bar – Rollup to Sheamus

Samoa Joe b. Rhyno – Koquina Clutch

Balor Club b. Roman Reigns/Jason Jordan/Seth Rollins – Coup de Grace to Rollins

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Monday Night Raw – January 1, 2018: Should Raw Acquaintance Be Forgot, Remember Brock Lesnar

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 1, 2018

Location: American Airlines Arena, Miami, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

It's a new year (yes it is) and that probably doesn't mean much. We'll be getting ready for the Royal Rumble in less than a month and tonight that includes an appearance by Brock Lesnar. Other than that we have Roman Reigns defending the Intercontinental Title against Samoa Joe and Cedric Alexander challenging Enzo Amore for the Cruiserweight Title. Let's get to it.

Alexa Bliss goes to see Kurt Angle in the back because she's not happy with having to face Asuka tonight. Angle basically says get over it.

Here's Angle for a chat. Angle talks about how great 2017 was and promises 2018 will be even better. In a few weeks we'll be having the 25th Anniversary of Raw and then the Royal Rumble. John Cena entered the men's Royal Rumble earlier today and that brings us to the women's Royal Rumble. The same rules will apply for the men: thirty entrants with the winner getting a title shot at Wrestlemania.

Cue the Bar to complain about Angle giving Jason Jordan and Seth Rollins a title shot last week and then celebrating with the new champions after the show. They won't stand for this favoritism. The Bar wants their rematch tonight but Angle says it's when he chooses. Cue Jordan to say he and Seth earned the titles last week but Cesaro isn't convinced. Angle makes a match for right now but here's Rollins to interrupt as well. Rollins thinks Jordan is going a bit too fast but Seth will be in his

corner....to watch Jason lose.

I know this was supposed to be Rollins and Ambrose again but Rollins and Jordan aren't working so far. They're a very forced together team and Rollins acting like Jordan has no idea how to be a tag wrestler is quite the stretch. Jordan going full heel would help, but it seems that they've shifted gears into him just proving himself as a talent, which he doesn't need to do.

Jason Jordan vs. Cesaro

Joined in progress with Cesaro in control and grabbing a chinlock. Back up and Cesaro's dive is pulled out of the air, allowing Jordan to drive him into the corner over and over. Sheamus offers a distraction though and Cesaro takes the knee out. Cesaro cranks on the knee in a variety of ways before Jordan manages to send him outside. That just earns him another shot to the knee, followed by a knee crusher onto the apron.

We take a break and come back with Cesaro baseball sliding Jordan out to the floor again. Cesaro grabs a half crab (that's a back hold but whatever) but Jordan fights up and grabs some suplexes. Both guys are down again and Sheamus knocks Jordan into a rollup, followed by another half crab. Seth goes after Sheamus though, allowing Jordan to grab the wheelbarrow neckbreaker for the pin at 15:13.

Rating: C. A lot of that made my head hurt as Jordan's leg was worked over for the majority of the match, including two holds (again, didn't work on the leg but they were trying) but then he's throwing suplexes and the wheelbarrow neckbreaker. What's the point in doing something like that if Jordan just does his stuff anyway? It's a common problem and again, it seems that they're postponing the heel turn for the moment, which isn't good for anyone.

Roman Reigns promises to stay in the rules tonight because if he gets disqualified he loses the title. If that had actually lead to a title change via DQ more than maybe twice ever, that declaration might actually mean something.

Sasha Banks says she'll win the Royal Rumble.

Bray Wyatt vs. Apollo Crews

Bray takes him into the corner without much effort but has to punch his way out of a headlock. An enziguri into a slingshot hilo doesn't do Crews much good as Bray runs him over with a headbutt to the chest. Crews kicks him down again but gets crotched on top. Bray glares down at Dana Brooke and we take a break.

Back with Bray holding a chinlock until Crews fights up for a running kick to the face. Crews looks for the Toss Powerbomb but gets his head taken off with a hard clothesline. Dana gets on the apron and gets scared off onto Titus, allowing Crews to hit the jumping enziguri. The Toss Powerbomb is easily reversed into Sister Abigail though and Crews is done at 10:23.

Rating: D+. What the heck was that? Like seriously, what was that? Crews is someone who should be losing in about two minutes, not stretching it through a commercial. This is a good example of why Bray is in the place he's in: despite being presented as a monster, he doesn't wrestle like a monster. Instead he comes off like someone who is dealt with by speaking to him with a firm voice. I like Crews a lot but he should have been flattened here.

Post match Matt Hardy pops up on screen to say he's all around Bray and intends to delete him. The screen turns into hundreds of small screens featuring Matt's face and Bray looks disturbed. I would be too if it took me that long to beat Apollo Crews.

Nia Jax is trying to leave because Enzo Amore is in the hospital with the flu. Alexa cuts her off and says she needs her at ringside. Bliss says it's Enzo or her and Nia leaves. Sweet goodness you mean Enzo is STILL going to be champion next week? Well of course, because there's no way they'll put the title match on 205 Live.

Ad for the Mixed Match Challenge, which I believe is the first time it's been mentioned on the main show. That being said, HAHHAHAHA if they actually think people are staying until 11:30 for the end of 205 Live after that show is over.

Alexa Bliss vs. Asuka

Non-title. This was set up last week when Asuka kicked Bliss in the head. An early spinning backfist misses so Asuka goes with a front facelock instead. Bliss has to bail from a kneebar but the hip attack puts her on the floor. Back in and Bliss gets kicked down as this is one sided so far. Bliss bails to the floor again and we take a break.

Back with Bliss holding Asuka in a bodyscissors, only to be reversed into an ankle lock. Bliss makes a rope and kicks her in the ribs again, followed by some forearms to the back. A backbreaker lets Bliss hammer away with right hands and it's back to the bodyscissors. That's switched into a guillotine choke before Bliss stomps away in the corner.

A running slap just ticks Asuka off though (Well what were you expecting?) and it's some dropkicks to put Bliss in trouble again. There's a running hip attack and a hard knee to the face but Bliss comes out of the corner with a sunset flip. Asuka counters that into a cradle for two, followed by the cross armbreaker to make Bliss tap at 14:35.

Rating: B. Bliss hung in there but this wasn't exactly a shocking result. Asuka is going to win the title one day and they're going to treat it as a big moment. Normally this would set up a title match at the Rumble but we can't do that when Asuka is already in the Rumble itself. There are some options here and that's what you want going into a major match like that.

We look back at Roman Reigns attacking Samoa Joe last week and causing a DQ in their title match.

Joe is ready for Reigns because he's already broken up the Shield. It's because of Joe that Dean Ambrose is a stay at home husband living off his wife's (who happens to be doing this interview) paycheck. Renee's face off that line was great and as usual, Joe comes off as the most serious person not named Brock Lesnar in this company.

Bayley enters the Rumble.

Braun Strowman vs. Rhyno

The announcer introduces Slater as the opponent. Well they do both have meaty thighs. Strowman drops him with an early shoulder and goes outside to grab a mic. Braun tells Strowman to either stay on the floor and be quiet or take a beating. Slater comes in and the double teaming actually works for a good five seconds. The running powerslam ends Rhyno at 2:31.

Post match, multiple powerslams ensue. Yeah he's great. Now have him be the odd man out when Lesnar pins Kane so we can move on.

Rollins comes up to Reigns in the back and Roman says he's keeping his cool. Jordan comes in and says they'll take the Bar out tonight. Jordan: "Believe that." Seth and Roman share a funny look. Ok point for a good scene.

Strowman runs into Kane, who just wants to talk about Lesnar. Kane says they're the alpha monsters and since NO ONE HAS EVER TALKED LIKE THIS IN THE HISTORY OF EVER, Kane wants to team up, Strowman says no. Can no one in this company speak like a human?

Finn Balor comes in to Angle's office and enters the Royal Rumble. Angle is pleased but wants to know who Balor has for partners tonight in a six man tag. Cue Anderson and Gallows with Balor asking who else it would be.

Intercontinental Title: Samoa Joe vs. Roman Reigns

Reigns is defending and loses the title if he's disqualified. Joe pops him with the right hands to start but Reigns comes back with some forearms to the back. The referee breaks up some shots to the face in the corner because the rules say he needs to be all serious here when no referee would ever do something like this otherwise. A suplex puts Reigns on the floor and we take a break.

Back with Joe running him over with an elbow for two. Reigns grabs a suplex though, only to miss a charge and go shoulder first into the post. Joe works on the arm but Roman is back up with a clothesline. That just earns him a charge to take him down again as the pace stays slow (in a good way). A hard whip sends Reigns into the corner and Joe takes him down to the mat to crank on the arm some more.

Reigns fights up again and hits a running clothesline, followed by the standing clotheslines in the corner. The running apron dropkick gives Reigns two but hang on a second as the referee has to warn for a DQ. Joe sends him outside though and there's the suicide elbow for a double knockdown.

They're both back in at nine and we take a second break. Back again with Reigns getting headbutted down but yelling at Joe to hit him harder. Reigns gets two off a Samoan drop and Joe bails to the floor. Roman dives into a shot to the chest and gets sent into the steps but thankfully Joe rolls back inside to break the count. A whip into the steps is reversed but of course that's not enough for the DQ.

Joe gets in a shot to the face, only to eat a Superman punch off the steps. Back in and another Superman punch gets two with the kickout stunning Reigns. The spear is blocked and Joe sends Reigns into the referee, who of course is talked out of the DQ. Another Superman punch is countered into the spinning Rock Bottom for two more and now Joe is yelling at the referee. The Clutch goes on but Reigns spins out of it and hits the spear to retain at 24:53.

Rating: B+. The DQ stuff was kind of annoying but they were beating the heck out of each other for a LONG time here and it made for a good match. I mean, you knew the most likely ending was spear into Reigns winning but at least Joe got in a very solid match before losing via clean pin. It's going to be almost all Reigns until we get to the Superdome because THIS TIME FOR SURE but that's how WWE works anymore.

Paul Heyman comes in to see Angle and basically says Lesnar is awesome. Thanks for coming in for that one Paulie.

Absolution is entering the Rumble. These entrances aren't exactly surprising when there are all of twenty or so women on the main roster.

Drew Gulak and Ariya Daivari are in the ring with Drew reading Enzo's promo off a letter Enzo wrote for them. Enzo isn't defending the title tonight due to the flu and would love to face Cedric, who interrupts in short order. The villains are willing to have a tag match but Cedric doesn't have a partner. Cue Goldust of all people to ask if Cedric wants

to be friends. Goldust: "Cedric, want to be friends?". See that's what he said.

Drew Gulak/Ariya Daivari vs. Cedric Alexander/Goldust

Daivari takes Cedric down into a chinlock to start but gets elbowed in the face for his efforts. That's enough for a pretty early double tag to Goldust and Gulak as the pace quickens. They botch Goldust's running bulldog (Gulak seemed to trip and Goldust made a quick save by punching him in the head so it was nothing too bad) but the second attempt works just fine. Goldust actually goes up top and hits a pretty good looking twisting crossbody. Cedric's springboard double clothesline takes both guys down and it's the Lumbar Check to end Gulak at 3:26.

Rating: D. It says a lot when my reaction is "uh.....ok?" to a match being made. Was everyone else on vacation or something? I'm really not thrilled with Enzo holding the title EVEN LONGER and really hope they don't stretch this out to the Rumble because there's just nothing for the two of them to talk about any longer. Goldust can still go though and I hope he makes it to 2020 so he can wrestle in five decades.

Finn Balor/Anderson and Gallows vs. Elias/Miztourage

Before the match, Elias has the Miztourage come out of the shadows with a cowbell (Bo) and some bells (Axel). Miz is back next week so they dedicate a little Auld Lang Syne to his honor. This goes as well as you would expect and even Elias cuts them off. Joined in progress after a break with Axel getting two on Balor before it's off to Elias for some boots in the corner. Balor gets over to the corner for a hot tag to Gallows though and house is cleaned in the form of some kicks to the head. A splash crushes Dallas and the Magic Killer into the Coup de Grace puts him away at 3:24.

Rating: D. Just a squash here but I'm thinking the Miztourage should just stick with Elias. They have some chemistry there and it's not like it matters who their boss is. Miz doesn't really need lackeys (though they don't hurt him) and it would give Elias a nice little rub, which he could use with his current status.

Video on Miz's return next week.

Here are Brock Lesnar and Paul Heyman to close things out. Paul thinks the company's New Year's Resolution is to stack the deck against Lesnar by throwing multiple challengers at the same time. It used to be challenger and now it's CHALLENGERS because there's no other way to stop Brock. That makes things more complicated because Brock can lose the title without getting pinned, which is the only way it could happen.

Heyman mocks the announcers talking about the odds but says Brock is always 100%. If it's one on one, no one is beating Brock. You could even throw all thirty Royal Rumble entrants against him and it would be the same slaughter. They go to leave but here's Kane (with Brock pausing due to a delay in Kane's music hitting) to chokeslam Brock but Lesnar sits up like Undertaker. A Cactus Clothesline puts them on the floor but some of the locker room comes out for the break up. No Braun as Brock poses to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. The Intercontinental Title match is more than enough to carry the show but the rest felt like it was being extended to fill in time. Unless Enzo was getting something like twenty minutes (I'd be STUNNED), then it felt like they were trying to punt because of the college football but didn't know how to do it. The show was more good than bad as the focus is firmly on the Rumble and that's good for everyone. Now build up some potential winners for both matches and we should be fine.

Results

Jason Jordan b. Cesaro – Wheelbarrow neckbreaker

Bray Wyatt b. Apollo Crews – Sister Abigail

Asuka b. Alexa Bliss – Cross armbreaker

Braun Strowman b. Rhyno – Running powerslam

Roman Reigns b. Samoa Joe – Spear

Cedric Alexander/Goldust b. Drew Gulak/Ariya Daivari – Lumbar Check to

Gulak

Finn Balor/Anderson and Gallows b. Elias/Miztourage – Coup de Grace to Dallas

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Main Event – December 14, 2017: This Is How You Remind Me

Main Event

Date: December 14, 2017

Location: Quicken Loans Arena, Cleveland, Ohio

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Nigel McGuinness

It's the go home show for Clash of Champions 2017 and for once that might mean something around here. The recent change towards having Smackdown clips as well as Raw stuff is a nice idea and that's a very cool thing for the time being. Maybe we can even build towards the pay per view a bit. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Curt Hawkins vs. Rhino

Feeling out process to start until Rhino scores with some chops and an elbow. Hawkins is right back with a clothesline for two but stops to pose. Nigel isn't pleased with Hawkins' offensive choices and we hit the chinlock. Rhino fights up without much effort and runs Hawkins over again. The spinebuster is good for the pin on Hawkins at 5:04.

Rating: D. I'm not even sure what to say about these matches anymore, though to be fair I'm not sure there's supposed to be much to say about them in the first place. Hawkins losing is a guarantee but you can pretty much write out every Rhino match for the rest of his career. It's not a horrible match or anything but it's the same thing we've seen so many times now.

From Raw.

Intercontinental Title: Roman Reigns vs. Cesaro

Reigns is defending and starts fast with uppercuts and clotheslines. They fight to the floor and we take an early break. Back with Cesaro cranking on the arm after swinging it into the barricade for a sick thud during the commercial. Reigns fights out with a backslide for two, followed by a rollup. That's reversed into a Fujiwara armbar and then a regular armbar. Reigns fights up again and hits the apron kick to the face for two, only to get pulled into a Crossface.

Reigns reverses into a Samoan drop for two, only to be sent HARD into the post. It doesn't seem to matter that much though as Reigns scores with a Superman punch off the apron. The arm won't let him follow up properly though, allowing Cesaro to grab another Crossface. The Swing is reversed into a sitout powerbomb for two more but Reigns can't follow up. Cesaro slugs away in the corner but the Neutralizer is countered with a backdrop, followed by the spear to retain the title at 16:53.

Rating: B+. It's a long match but it actually needed a little more time. I would have liked a lot more of Reigns fighting back and something

better than “spear, ow my arm, pin”. Cesaro working on the arm for that long looked like it was going somewhere but then they just went to the finish. That being said, they beat the heck out of each other for a long time and it was a heck of a match. Just have a better finish and it’s a classic.

From Raw again.

Video on Strowman vs. Kane.

Kane vs. Braun Strowman

The winner gets Lesnar at the Rumble. Strowman wastes no time by splashing Kane in the corner, followed by a running dropkick for one. Kane avoids a charge though and a chokeslam gets two. Another chokeslam gets the same before Strowman chokeslams Kane for good measure. They fight into the crowd and Strowman spears Kane through the barricade for a double countout at 4:31.

Rating: C-. It was fun while it lasted in a Brock Lesnar vs. Goldberg at Wrestlemania kind of way but that’s about all it had. I don’t think anyone expected Kane to win here and Strowman not winning is likely a good idea, especially if it would have meant losing to Lesnar again at the Rumble. I really hope Lesnar does defend at the pay per view (assuming he’s not injured or something) but this doesn’t give me a lot of hope.

The fight continues post match with both guys picking up steps. Said steps are rammed together with Strowman getting the better of it but he can’t crush Kane’s throat again. Kane chairs Strowman in the knee and then the back, finally taking the monster down. Kane sets up a table but a double clothesline gives us a double situp. Strowman muscles him up for the powerslam through the table to end the show.

Video on the Riott Squad wrecking the Smackdown women’s division.

Pay per view rundown.

Brian Kendrick/Jack Gallagher vs. Gran Metalik/Akira Tozawa

Gallagher and Tozawa get things going with Jack doing his headstand in the corner and jumping over a charging Tozawa. It's quickly off to Metalik vs. Kendrick with the masked man speeding things up, including a rope walk middle rope dropkick. Kendrick hits a super atomic drop of all things and we take a break. Back with the Metalik Driver getting two with Kendrick grabbing a Captain's Hook for the save. Everything breaks down and Metalik drops a rope walk elbow for the pin on Kendrick at 7:10. Not enough shown to rate but it was energetic while it lasted.

From Smackdown.

Here's Styles to open things up. He won the title a little over a month ago and wants to be a fighting champion. This Sunday he defends against Mahal and lists off what Mahal will do to get the title back, including bringing in Great Khali. Cue the Singh Brothers, who say they're not introducing Mahal tonight. We look back at Mahal attacking the two of them two weeks ago so AJ wants to hug it out. AJ: "Come hug it out with Uncle Al!"

The Brothers get in the ring and say they want to be in Mahal's corner on Sunday. One of them rants about how horrible Mahal is ("He thinks we're twins!") while the other tries to calm him down. AJ doesn't buy it and shows a still of the Brothers being in Mahal's corner this weekend in India. They swear they're done with Mahal, who comes out looking rather angry. AJ of course doesn't buy any of this (thank goodness) and lays the Brothers out.

And we'll wrap it up with more Smackdown.

Shinsuke Nakamura vs. Kevin Owens

Bryan is on commentary to continue a trend tonight. Owens grabs a headlock for a bit before getting kicked in the chest for his efforts. A knee to the ribs cuts Nakamura down though and a backsplash gets two. We hit the chinlock as Bryan talks about how Shane's stipulations aren't exactly fair. Nakamura fights up but can't hit the knee in the corner. Instead he gets sent hard into the barricade as we take a break.

Back with Owens stomping away until Nakamura gets in a running kick to

the face. Some YES Kicks have Owens in more trouble and there's Good Vibrations for a bonus. The running knee in the corner gets two but Owens breaks up a superplex. His Swanton hits knees but Owens blocks the reverse exploder. The referee gets bumped and Bryan takes over instead. Nakamura's spinning kick to the head gets a delayed two as Orton and Zayn get in a fight. The distraction lets Owens hit a Pop Up Powerbomb for the pin at 14:29.

Rating: C+. Good match, but the sledgehammer of plot didn't help things. This was supposed to be the smoking gun that proves Bryan is going to be biased on Sunday but it feels a bit forced. Granted some of that might have been Byron Saxton hammering home the same idea over and over again, which makes anything sound annoying. I would say I look forward to this story ending on Sunday but I'd be surprised if it's done by Wrestlemania at this point.

Kevin and Sami say no one is taking their careers away because they'll win at the Clash.

Overall Rating: D+. All this show did was reinforce how boring WWE TV has been as of late. On top of that it also shows how unnecessary Clash of Champions is, but never let that get in the way of putting a pay per view on for the sake of putting a pay per view on. This didn't do anything to change those issues and that's becoming a problem. Hopefully it gets better after next week but I wouldn't bet on it.

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New Column: Who Ya Got?

46 days is the right amount of time to start making Royal Rumble picks right?

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review-ya-got/>

Main Event – December 7, 2017: I Don't Believe They'll Be Fine

Main Event

Date: December 7, 2017

Location: Valley View Casino, San Diego, California

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Vic Joseph

I'm hoping this idea of doing both Raw and Smackdown highlights continues as it's a lot better than just having the Raw stuff. Smackdown might not be the most thrilling show in the world but it certainly deserves some attention of its own. It's certainly better than most of the original content we get around here so let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Akira Tozawa vs. Brian Kendrick

They trade hammerlocks to start with Kendrick slapping the mat by mistake. Back up with Tozawa flipping out of a belly to back suplex and chopping away. Kendrick pulls him throat first into the middle rope to

take over and it's off to a chinlock. Tozawa elbows his way out of what looks like a slam and a suicide dive gets two. A quick Captain's Hook is broken up without too much effort so Kendrick knees him in the chest for two. Tozawa kicks him in the head though and the top rope backplash is good for the pin at 6:33.

Rating: C. For a match without much time and with both guys having to rush, they got in a fair amount of stuff. It was nice to see Tozawa get a win, even if it's on a show like this which isn't going to get him anywhere. Kendrick will be fine and his feud with Kalisto will do him a lot of good, especially depending on who Kalisto brings in to help him.

From Raw.

Here's Kurt Angle to get things going. He's ready to announce that Roman Reigns will be defending the Intercontinental Title against....someone but Jason Jordan comes out to interrupt. He wants Reigns, despite his bad knee. Jordan lists off the people he's been in the ring with, bad knee or no bad knee. This brings out Reigns to say he wants Joe. Jordan still wants the shot so Reigns tells him to step up and take it. Now it's Joe coming out to say Reigns knows he can't beat him. Jordan actually suplexes Reigns so Roman says it's on right now.

Intercontinental Title: Roman Reigns vs. Jason Jordan

Reigns is defending and knocks Jordan outside to start. Back in and Jordan's right hands don't have much effect and Reigns clotheslines him outside again. Jordan fights out of a chinlock and drives Reigns into the corner four times in a row. The running shoulder doesn't work but Reigns is sent shoulder first into the post.

Back from a break with Jordan working on the arm and Samoa Joe watching from the stage. Reigns fights up and hits the corner clotheslines, only to walk into a dropkick for a near fall. They head outside again with Jordan driving him into the steps a few times. That's only good for two more though and we take a second break.

Back again with Reigns putting the bad knee in a half crab. Jordan reverses into a small package but gets his head taken off by the Superman

Punch. Some rolling belly to belly suplexes (with the bad knee raised in the air) give Jordan two more but it's the spear to retain the title at 20:34.

Rating: B-. Jordan is a rather interesting case as he's death on the microphone but can put on an entertaining match. Reigns is in a similar place but his talking has gotten far better over time. Jordan might be able to get somewhere in due time but this character really, really isn't working. At least the match was good though.

Video on Absolution.

From Raw again.

Paige vs. Sasha Banks

Alexa Bliss is on commentary again and Banks has Bayley and Mickie with her. Sasha wastes no time in throwing Paige down and hammering away both on the mat and in the corner. Paige kicks her down and stomps away as well before hitting the chinlock. Some shouting sets up a front facelock as things stay slow.

Sasha fights up with a high crossbody for two before grabbing a cross arm choke. Paige makes the ropes so Sasha just hammers away to keep her in trouble. The Bank Statement is broken up and they fall out to the floor as we take a break. Back with Paige grabbing her front facelock as Bliss calls Cole rude for bringing up her leaving last week.

Banks fights up with a clothesline and some dropkicks, only to miss the running knees in the corner. Paige heads up top and catches Banks with a sunset bomb. The Rampaige is countered into the Bank Statement but Paige gets her foot under the rope. The other four get in a brawl on the floor though, allowing the Rampaige to put Banks away at 16:06.

Rating: B. Another good match here and the best thing is that Paige looked like she hadn't lost a step. This was her first match in a year and she was every bit as good as she used to be. Paige can be a very valuable asset to the division and if she can bring the other two up with her, then it's all the better.

Post match Absolution takes out the other two, including Rose gordbusting Banks onto DeVille's knee.

And now to Smackdown.

Randy Orton vs. Sami Zayn

Before the match, Bryan and security is ready to cuff Owens. Kevin says no, but Bryan threatens him with suspension. Orton wastes no time in taking Sami outside and dropping him back first onto the barricade. Sami starts running and hides next to Owens in a smart move. That's fine with Orton, who grabs Sami and bounces him off the announcers' table.

Owens offers a distraction though and Sami gets in a hard shot to take over for the first time. Some trash talk from Owens takes us to a break. Back with Sami stomping away and saying he's not afraid of the Viper. Sami snaps his throat across the bottom rope and pulls out some bolt cutters (which they just had laying around underneath the ring). Orton breaks it up before the chain can be cut but Sami posts him instead.

Back in and Sami gets crotched, setting up a top rope superplex to put both guys down. Owens grabs the cutters and gets free, only to be taken down by an Orton clothesline. The RKO is loaded up but Owens offers a distraction so Sami can get two. The RKO doesn't work but the Helluva Kick misses as well, allowing Orton to grab a rollup for the pin at 11:44.

Rating: C+. So to clarify: Orton can beat the two of them clean on his own so now we should totally be interested in watching him and a partner face off with Sami and Owens on pay per view. The idea should be that Orton can't handle these two because they keep cheating and using their numbers advantage but instead we get Orton pinning Sami when Owens interferes. Where's the logic in that?

Post match the beatdown is on until Shinsuke Nakamura makes the save. The heroes shake hands and we seem to have a partnership. Owens takes and RKO and Zayn gets a Kinshasa.

Heath Slater/Rhyno vs. Luke Gallows/Karl Anderson

Slater shoulders Anderson down to start and it's quickly off to Rhyno. This one doesn't go as well until Rhyno shoulders his way to freedom. House is cleaned and we take a break. Back with a double hot tag bringing in Slater and Anderson as things speed up. Rhyno is sent into the barricade, leaving Slater to take the Magic Killer for the pin at 6:25. Not enough to rate due to the commercial but it was fun while it lasted.

Video on AJ Styles vs. Jinder Mahal.

From Raw.

Tag Team Titles: Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose vs. The Bar

The Bar is defending. Ambrose armdrags Cesaro down to start but it's off to Sheamus to take over. A double kick to the ribs has Dean in trouble and we hit the choking on the ropes. That doesn't last long though as Dean leapfrogs over Sheamus and makes the hot tag off to Rollins. The Sling Blade give Seth two but Sheamus posts him as we take a break.

Back with Seth not being able to get away as the champs clothesline him down. The ten forearms to the chest rock Seth again and a top rope clothesline gets two. Ambrose gets knocked off the apron, leaving Sheamus to drop Rollins onto an uppercut for another near fall. It's off to an armbar for a bit until a superkick gets Rollins out of trouble.

The hot tag brings in Ambrose and house is cleaned in a hurry. His suicide dive is cut off by an uppercut though and Cesaro adds the high crossbody. Everything breaks down and Sheamus' cheap shot gives Cesaro two on Dean. A powerbomb is broken up and Seth superplexes Sheamus into a Falcon Arrow for a very near fall.

The Neutralizer is broken up and the Wind-Up Knee gives Seth two with Sheamus making a save. The referee is shoved though and the Bar retains the titles via DQ at 17:11. Actually hang on as Angle comes out and says restart the match with No DQ. The double dives takes the Bar out and a frog splash to Cesaro gets two. Cue Samoa Joe to lay the Shield out though, drawing out Reigns to chase him off. The distraction lets Sheamus Brogue Kick Ambrose to retain at 20:03.

Rating: B. Another solid match here and I can actually go with the screwy ending as you can pencil in either a six man tag or a pair of title matches as a result. These teams have some great chemistry together and while this one wasn't up to the other matches' standards, it was still a lot of fun.

Overall Rating: C+. If you like wrestling, this is one of the best episode of Main Event you've ever seen (assuming you don't mind it being clipped half to death). That being said, what we got was entertaining stuff with a nice recap of all the good things that WWE did earlier this week. If they can follow up on them, they'll be fine. In other words, I don't bet on them being fine.

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Main Event – November 30, 2017: The New Normal

Main Event

Date: November 30, 2017

Location: Thompson-Boling Arena, Knoxville, Tennessee

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Nigel McGuinness

Things have been changing around here lately with both Raw and Smackdown clips airing instead of just the ones from the red show that had been the case for so long. We're also back to a normal week in WWE after the huge Survivor Series weekend last time around. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Apollo Crews vs. Curt Hawkins

Crews shoves him down a few times to start and grabs a headlock takeover for good measure. A slingshot hilo gets two but Hawkins sends him throat first into the ropes. We hit the reverse chinlock with a knee in the back until Hawkins heads outside to yell at Titus O'Neil. Hawkins gets two off a top rope elbow, only to get caught with an enziguri. The Toss Powerbomb gives Apollo the pin at 5:15.

Rating: D. I'm not sure how many times you can watch this match and still get anything out of it. We get the idea already but that's not going to stop WWE from running the thing over and over again around here. Now that being said, it's just Hawkins so does it really matter that much? I can't imagine there was that much thought put into the thing, which should be the case.

From Raw.

Here's Reigns to open things up. Last week was a big week for him as he and the Shield beat up New Day. Then he had an opportunity and we see a clip of him winning the Intercontinental Title. After the show was over, Shield came back out and put Miz through a table. This is his yard and this is the title so if you want it, come get it. Cue the Miztourage to say they know someone who wants the title. This brings out Elias of all people to say he wants the title. Reigns thinks it sounds like Elias wants to walk with the big dog, but after tonight he might have a neck brace like Curtis Axel.

And from later in the night.

Intercontinental Title: Roman Reigns vs. Elias

Elias is challenging. They trade shoulders to start with Elias getting the better of it and slapping on a reverse chinlock. Elias gets two off a clothesline and we hit a regular chinlock. Back up and the Miztourage offers a distraction so Elias can get in a hard knee for a near fall.

We come back from a break with Elias getting kicked in the face, only to have Reigns stop and take out the Miztourage instead of following up. The distraction lets Elias take Reigns down and drop a top rope elbow for a rather near fall. A sitout powerbomb gets the same but Reigns is right back with a Superman Punch for two of his own. Back up and the spear retains the title at 14:48.

Rating: B-. While the ending wasn't exactly in doubt here, it was still a good, hard hitting match. They're certainly protecting Elias at the moment and I'm not sure what to make of that. It would be nice if they had him actually win something but with the Intercontinental Title now basically the show's World Title, he's kind of stuck. But at least it was a good match.

Post match Samoa Joe sneaks in and chokes Reigns out. No Rollins for the save either, mainly because this was a Reigns singles match and not a Shield match. That determines who comes out for a save you see.

And again from Raw.

Paige/Mandy Rose/Sonya DeVile vs. Bayley/Sasha Banks/Mickie James

Alexa Bliss is on commentary.....and there's no Mickie or Bayley. Paige and company come out and laugh off the idea of Sasha having no partners. We cut to the back where Mickie is holding her shin and Bayley is holding her neck. Paige laughs this off and says she's tired of hearing about her interfering last week. Last year, she was THE woman in WWE and helped erase the word Diva from WWE (we could have a tournament for everyone who takes credit for anything like this).

Now she and her friends, named Absolution (sounds like a bad perfume) are here to take things back. Rose and DeVille talk about how everyone has tried to be the next big thing but they remember how Paige started all of this. Paige offers Sasha a spot on the team but she forearmms Paige off

the apron. The beatdown is on in a hurry with everyone hitting a finisher. No match of course.

Now from the Smackdown counterparts.

Charlotte/Natalya/Naomi vs. Riott Squad

Yes Riott and no I don't know why. During Charlotte's entrance we see clips from Starrcade, WHICH SHOULD HAVE BEEN FREAKING BROADCAST ON THE NETWORK! Logan takes Natalya into the corner to start and scores with a clothesline. It's off to Charlotte but that's enough for Natalya, who walks out on the match less than a minute in. Back from a break with Charlotte fighting off the trio but getting caught by the numbers game on the floor. Morgan gets two off a floatover suplex and it's off to Ruby for a chinlock. That leaves the other two Squad members to take Naomi down on the floor.

They send her hard into the steps and then bridge them over the barricade, catapulting Naomi face first into the steel. The best the referee can do is glare at them, making me wonder HOW IN THE WORLD THIS ISN'T A DQ. Seriously do they need to break out a pair of nunchuks and beat the stuffing out of Naomi before the match is called off? So it's now three on one with Charlotte actually managing to fight them off for a bit. A spear hits Morgan in those impressive abs but Logan hits a knee from the apron, setting up the Riot Kick to the face for the pin at 9:12.

Rating: D+. The beatdown was impressive enough though none of them seemed capable of hanging with Charlotte or Naomi on their own. That already puts them a few steps back of Absolution (I can feel my brain melting as I write these names over and over) but at least they're looking a bit more polished than people like Mandy Rose. Not a great match or anything but the divide and conquer strategy worked just fine.

Kalisto/Gran Metalik vs. Brian Kendrick/Jack Gallagher

Metalik headlocks Kendrick to start but gets kicked in the face for his efforts. Kalisto comes in and cranks on the arm so it's off to Gallagher. A whip sends Metalik outside in a heap and we take a break. Back with Metalik breaking away for the hot tag as everything breaks down. The

Salida Del Sol is broken up but Metalik tags himself in and kicks Gallagher in the head. The rope walk elbow is enough to end Jack at 3:34.

Rating: D+. There's not much to say about these things, though I still like Metalik more often than not. They have entertaining matches, even if it's a match you can write out before it even starts. It's also the standard Main Event idea: Gallagher and Kendrick would win this 9/10 times on 205 Live but they're dead in the water on this show. Again it's predictable but not the worst thing in the world.

Back to Smackdown.

Singh Brothers vs. AJ Styles

Before the match, Jinder Mahal attacks AJ, sending him ribs first into the post. After a break (and Mahal doing his standard promo), the match is on with AJ getting double teamed. The Brothers get in some shoulders to the ribs in the corner but AJ kicks them away without much effort. AJ knocks the two off them off the top, kicks Mahal in the face, and blocks a super hurricanrana attempt. He's not done yet though as it's a SUPER STYLES CLASH with one Singh landing on the other for the easy pin at 3:56.

Rating: D. This wasn't much to see but it was exactly what it needed to be, especially with an awesome ending like that. Really, what else was AJ supposed to do against a couple of goons like this? Styles vs. Mahal isn't an interesting story but at least Mahal has goons to send out there instead of having us watch the same match over and over.

Post match Mahal lays out the Singh's, including a TERRIBLE looking Khallas to the second one. The guy's head and back never came close to the mat as he basically bounced off his elbow (it looked even worse in slow motion). As I've said many times: Mahal just isn't very good and that finisher makes things even worse.

And then to Raw to wrap things up.

Jason Jordan vs. Kane

Before the match, Jordan talks about how he's an athlete and knew his

knee was banged up last week. Kane actually gets powered into the corner a few times to start but the suplex is broken up. A hard toss sends Jordan outside where he comes up holding the knee again. That's enough for a countout at 1:42.

Post match Kane stays on the knee until Finn Balor comes out for the save. They stare each other down and we take a break.

Finn Balor vs. Kane

Kane wastes no time in whipping Balor into the corner and we're into an early chinlock. Balor dropkicks him outside and hits a dive as the announcers talk about what a big deal a win over Kane would be. Kane hits him in the ribs with a chair for the DQ at 2:44.

Kane beats on him with the chair and wraps it around Balor's throat until Braun Strowman comes out for the save. A chair to the back has no effect on Strowman and the beatdown is on. Strowman destroys him with the steps and a chair, including a powerslam onto the steps. Kane gets his throat crushed on the chair and staggers into the crowd (probably looking for registered voters) to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. All this show did was make you remember how hit and miss some of these shows can be. Raw and Smackdown weren't exactly great this week and cutting them down to the clipped versions of the matches and ignoring some of the better stuff (Rollins vs. Cesaro from Raw for instance) isn't the best idea. I do like them adding in more stories though as it makes the show feel more like a full on recap than anything else, which is a good idea. It really might be better to cut out one of the original matches though, just so the recaps don't feel as crammed together.

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Main Event – November 24, 2017: A Thankful Change

Main Event

Date: November 23, 2017

Location: Toyota Center, Houston, Texas

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Nigel McGuinness

Now aren't you all thankful for this? We're still in Houston because that's where we have to be for every show for the better part of a week. This was a bit delayed due to the holidays and I was really missing it. Where else am I going to get Curt Hawkins losing another match and a cruiserweight match? Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Brian Kendrick vs. Gran Metalik

Kendrick grabs a headlock to start but gets taken outside with a springboard armdrag. Of course that means a suicide dive, followed by a springboard splash for two. Another dive misses though and Kendrick sends him ribs first into the apron to take over. We hit the chinlock for a few seconds before Metalik rolls him up for two more. A rope walk elbow drop gets the same and the Captain's Hook is reversed into the Metalik Driver for the pin at 5:42.

Rating: C-. Completely paint by numbers cruiserweight match here, meaning it wasn't all that bad. That being said, I do get a chuckle out of the

almost certainty that the faces will always win these matches. Kendrick is miles ahead of Metalik most of the time but you put him on Main Event and he loses clean. It's kind of amazing really.

Stills of Sunday's main event.

From Raw.

Here's a happy, dancing Stephanie to open things up. Graves: "At least she's humble too." She recaps the siege and says Kurt Angle's job as GM is secure. With that, she brings out the man who lead the team to their win last night: HHH! Before HHH can say anything though, here's a livid Kurt Angle to interrupt. He's not talking as the General Manager but the man who can beat HHH up. Stephanie gets all serious and reminds HHH that he's talking to the COO.

The staredown continues and here's Jason Jordan to interrupt as well. Booker: "Oh come on." Jordan gets in HHH's face but Angle holds him back. Jason wants to face HHH tonight but Stephanie warns Jordan that he'd get killed in a match like this. Stephanie: "HHH isn't afraid of anyone in that locker room." This of course brings out Braun Strowman to get right in HHH's face as well. HHH stares him down but backs off and leaves. Stephanie makes Jordan vs. Strowman for later. She didn't cut Braun's balls off here and at least they kept this relatively short, even if Stephanie didn't need to be out there.

From later in the show.

Jason Jordan vs. Braun Strowman

Jordan tries to go with the wrestling stuff to start but gets caught without too much effort. He manages to lift Strowman off his feet but Strowman takes him down and tosses him outside. Jordan's knee is banged up again...and here's Kane to go after Strowman for the DQ at 1:44.

Kane destroys him with a chair and crushed Strowman's throat with it. Strowman can't breathe but walks off under his own power.

From Raw again.

Alicia Fox vs. Bayley vs. Sasha Banks vs. Mickie James

One fall to a finish and the winner gets a title shot at some point. Joined in progress with Fox running Bayley over but getting caught in the Bank Statement. Bayley makes the save...and PAIGE IS BACK. She says she's not here to interrupt (Then what was she doing???) but she's not alone. Cue Sonya DeVille and Mandy Rose from NXT to interrupt and jump Bayley, drawing the no contest at around six minutes. There was barely two minutes of action though so no rating, but this was a heck of a debut and a MUCH needed face lift for the division.

The villains clean house with ease as Fox bails.

Post break Paige introduces us to her new friends. Alexa Bliss comes up, says a nervous hello, and gets destroyed.

And from Smackdown.

Naomi is getting her makeup done when NXT's Ruby Riot comes up. She's with Liv Morgan and Sarah Logan, all of whom beat the heck out of Naomi. Becky Lynch comes in for the save and gets beaten down as well.

From later on Smackdown.

Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Natalya

Charlotte is defending after having won last week. Natalya jumps at her to start but gets elbowed in the jaw. That earns her a face first toss into the middle buckle and we take a break. Back with Natalya getting two off a Batista Bomb and grabbing the Sharpshooter. Charlotte makes the rope for the break but Natalya is right back on her with right hands. A whip into the corner lets Charlotte try the moonsault, only to land on the knees. The spear connects but here are Logan, Riot and Morgan to jump Natalya for the DQ at 6:43.

Rating: C+. They were rolling until the interference here with Natalya showing more fire than she has in a long time. Charlotte looked like she was in a fight and that's not something you see from her too often. I can go for the trio interfering, though I would have liked to see Charlotte get the win first.

Charlotte gets beaten down as well as the trio poses.

Apollo Crews vs. Curt Hawkins

Hawkins bails to the ropes to start, only to come back in and eat a dropkick. Another dropkick actually sends Crews outside and it's off to a chinlock back inside. Even Nigel is saying that's not going to be enough to make this work. Instead Hawkins stomps away in the corner, followed by a Downward Spiral for two. Not that it matters as the enziguri and a Toss Powerbomb extend Hawkins' losing streak at 3:45.

Rating: D. This is one of those standard things you just know you're getting on this show, which really isn't the most thrilling thing in the world. I'm not sure if they're going anywhere with Hawkins' losing streak but it wouldn't surprise me to see him win a big match at some point on a complete fluke. I mean, it wouldn't do anyone any good but why let that stop you?

From Smackdown again.

Here's Styles for a chat, but first we see a post-match video from Paul Heyman, saying Styles is the best in-ring performer he's ever seen. AJ wishes he could celebrate with all the fans but it didn't go as well as he thought it would. He'd love to face Lesnar again though because in the sequel, Rocky wins.

That brings him to Jinder Mahal, who says he's taking the title back tonight. AJ takes off the jacket and the belt, saying come get it. Mahal pops up on screen to say it's his time instead of AJ's. If Mahal had faces Brock, he would be hailed as the Beastmaster. AJ says bring it on because Mahal should be well rested after not doing anything on Sunday. Mahal will take his rematch at Clash of Champions. Cue the Singh Brothers from behind to jump AJ, who cleans house without any trouble.

And from Raw one more time.

Intercontinental Title: Roman Reigns vs. The Miz

Miz is defending and seems willing to take an early countout. That's not cool with Reigns, who chases him to the floor and hits an uppercut to the

jaw. A Batista Bomb gets two on the champ and we take an early break. Back with Reigns hitting his running clothesline, followed by a big boot to the jaw. Miz is smart enough to bail again and catches Reigns diving off the steps.

A DDT on the floor is nearly good enough for a countout but Reigns dives back in. We hit the chinlock for a good while until Miz hits a corner dropkick. Another is countered with a big boot, only to have Miz knock him down a few more times. It's off to the YES Kicks until Reigns fights up without much effort. The Superman Punch is countered into the Skull Crushing Finale but Reigns slips out.

Miz sweeps the leg for two though and Reigns is favoring his knee. The Superman Punch knocks Miz out of the air for a VERY close two though as the fans are impressed with the kickout. The spear is loaded up but cue the Bar for a distraction, allowing the Skull Crushing Finale to connect...for two. Ambrose and Rollins run out to even things up, allowing Reigns to hit a spear for the pin and the title at 16:26.

Rating: B-. They were doing some good stuff out there and I like Reigns winning the title. Earlier on I mentioned people like Balor and Joe having nothing to do because they were bigger than the Intercontinental Title. They're not bigger than Reigns though and that gives them a bigger target to go after. Good move here, even if it's two to three years after Reigns should have won the thing in the first place.

Overall Rating: C-. Well that was certainly a packed show. I can go for this idea of putting both Raw and Smackdown clips into the same hour as it's not like there's a Raw monopoly on clips. There's important stuff happening on Smackdown and there's no reason to leave them out on a nothing recap show. I like this as the new direction and while the show wasn't thrilling, it makes more sense now.

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