

Fast Lane 2015: The Best Commercial I've Ever Seen

Fast Lane 2015

Date: February 22, 2015

Location: FedEx Forum, Memphis, Tennessee

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

It's the final major show before Wrestlemania XXXI and I've yet to find someone who really wants to see this show. The big story tonight is finding out who is going to be in the main event against Brock Lesnar, as well as if Sting is going to accept HHH's likely challenge for a match at the biggest show of the year. Gee I wonder what his answer is going to be. Let's get to it.

There's no pre-show match this month but we do have MizTV with special guest Paul Heyman. Before Heyman comes out though, Miz tells Mizdow to go sit in the corner. Miz was supposed to be at the Oscars but the Academy got Dwayne Johnson to fill in for him. He explains Reigns vs. Bryan for later tonight and here's Heyman. Paul suggests that Miz is terrified of Lesnar being here because he's not a good enough actor to hide that fear.

Brock is NOT here tonight, but Miz can't get off that insult to his acting abilities. He brings up his win in the main event of Wrestlemania (he's going to catch Jericho's "I beat Rock and Austin in one night" at this pace) as a qualification for being able to ask who Lesnar wants to face this year. Miz talks up Bryan's wins last year and Heyman understands how hot Bryan is right now, but he doesn't think Brock would be worried.

Heyman gets freaked out by Mizdow sitting in the corner so Miz makes his employee face the corner. This gets Mizdow on his feet but Miz shouts him down again. Now we get back to the main event of Wrestlemania with Heyman repeating all of his lines about Reigns from the last few weeks.

The fans cut him off with a Mizdow chant so Heyman actually starts all over again. That's one way to get some heat. Heyman talks about the YES

chants at Wrestlemania that will be silenced by Brock Lesnar, and you can believe that Reigns will go down as well. Paul rolls his eyes as he leaves. This felt like total filler since there aren't enough matches to go around.

The opening video has a computerized car theme, talking about speed and velocity while focusing on the two main events.

Dolph Ziggler/Erick Rowan/Ryback vs. Seth Rollins/Kane/Big Show

This was announced on WWE.com earlier in the week. Rowan now has a big R on his coveralls. Ziggler and Rollins get things going as the fans chant for Ryback. Dolph escapes a headlock and counters a powerbomb into a sunset flip. Cole brings up Rollins bringing up the Daily Show and Jon Stewart actually responding to him. A nice dropkick staggers Rollins and it's off to Rowan to work on the arm.

That's not enough for Rowan so he hooks a pumphandle backbreaker for two. I've always liked pumphandle moves and could go for more of them. Kane comes in for the battle of boring big men and Rowan slams him down, followed by a legdrop for no cover. A nice jumping middle rope back elbow gets two on Kane but he drives Rowan into the corner for the tag to Big Show.

The villains take Rowan to the floor where he spinwheel kicks the post by mistake. Another FEED ME MORE chant starts up as Lawler makes easy bald jokes about Big Show. Back in and Kane stomps Rowan in the corner before it's off to Rollins to stomp on the leg. A Blockbuster gets two more and Big Show comes back in to keep control. He hooks the Lasso From El Paso to actually show some psychology but just lets go for some reason. Rowan counters a chokeslam and plants Show with a DDT but Rollins breaks up the tag attempt.

Erick gets up though and spinwheel kicks Seth down with the bad leg. The hot tag brings in Ryback as things speed up but Rollins avoids the Warrior splash. The Curb Stomp is countered into a powerbomb but Kane takes the Meathook. There's the low superkick for two on Ryback but another Blockbuster is countered into Shell Shock but Big Show makes the save. It's off to Ziggler for a jumping DDT on Kane for two but Rollins

interference allows Big Show to knock Ziggler cold, giving Kane the pin at 13:00.

Rating: B. The man is Mr. Money in the Bank and possibly the future of the company and he's now running interference for Big Show and Kane to get the glory as they pin one of the most popular guys in this company. This was your basic Smackdown main event, meaning it was entertaining enough and a good choice for a PPV opener. I'm totally sick of this story, but at least it's a good enough match.

The beating continues post match (picture any Smackdown.....if anyone actually watches that show) but Orton FINALLY returns and cleans house, sending Rollins running away. He goes all the way into the parking lot and presumably drives away though we don't see him get in a car.

We recap Stardust vs. Goldust, which is due to their issues as a tag team. Their father Dusty Rhodes tried to settle things on Monday but Stardust attacked his brother, setting up this match.

Dusty is in the back with Goldust and asks him not to hurt Cody too badly tonight. Goldust talks about going to the shows with Cody to watch Dusty in the ring. Tonight, he's facing Stardust though, and he has to beat him so badly that the thought of painting his face and putting on a costume will make Cody sick. He isn't leaving without Cody tonight.

Stardust vs. Goldust

Stardust is now in star tights and no shirt. Goldust shoves him out of the corner to start and neither guy seems comfortable to be out there. They trade hiptosses and Stardust hides in the corner for some polite applause. An atomic drop and right hand have Stardust in more trouble but Stardust escapes the Curtain Call. We see a nervous Dusty watching in the back. Goldust clotheslines him out to the floor before loading up Shattered Dreams, only to have Stardust bail to the apron.

Back in and Stardust finally gets some energy into the match and stomps away, taking it back to the floor. This isn't very interesting so far but it's not the worst thing I've ever seen. Back in and we hit a bodyscissors on Goldust before a rollup gets two for Stardust. A slap to

the back sets up another body vise as the fans can't decide who to cheer for. Goldust misses a springboard elbow but counters Cross Rhodes into a bad looking crucifix for two, which is called three in what looked to be a botched ending at 10:00. The referee's hand only hit the mat twice.

Rating: D. I think they were going for Goldust not wanting to do this, but it came off as much more boring and dull than anything else. At the end of the day, these sort of matches don't hold up for me with neither guy wanting to do much and clearly just being there to set up another match down the line. Nothing to see here other than a good looking change of outfit for Stardust, who wound up losing.

We see Jon Stewart of the Daily Show responding to Seth Rollins. Seth has made a big mistake by coming after the Daily Show and even J and J Security can't get him out of it. Stewart is coming for him.

Rollins says he's not hard to find and welcomes Stewart to Fast Lane or any Raw he has time to come to.

Goldust and Dusty are in the back and hope it's over but Stardust comes in and destroys his brother. He yells at Dusty that he was the black sheep of the family before nailing Goldust again.

Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. Tyson Kidd/Cesaro

The Usos are defending after Cesaro and Kidd beat them in a non-title match. Naomi and Natalya are here as seconds. Jey takes Kidd down to start and holds him for a top rope shot to the chest from Jimmy. It's off to Cesaro via a blind tag and he takes out Jimmy's knee to take over. Kidd goes after the knee and Cesaro follows suit with a one legged swing.

Back to Kidd with a slingshot legdrop for two. Notice how much they're mixing up the offense on the leg. You don't have to take turns doing the same holds over and over again. Jimmy gets over for the tag to speed things up but Cesaro grabs a quick rollup for two. The running Umaga attack gets two on Cesaro but he crotches Jimmy on the top. Cesaro lifts Jimmy off the apron for a superplex, setting up the top rope elbow from Kidd for two.

Jey escapes the Sharpshooter and throws Kidd into the air for a Samoan drop from Jimmy, only to have Cesaro drag Kidd outside. That's fine with Jimmy as he hits a huge dive. A Samoan drop drives Kidd into the barricade and all four are down outside. Back in and Jimmy's Superfly Splash hits knees and Kidd slaps on the Sharpshooter. Jey makes the save and slugs it out with Cesaro but they fall to the floor. With Jimmy still shaken up, Kidd hits a quick fisherman's neckbreaker for the pin and the titles at 9:35.

Rating: B-. Another good match here and I'm very pleased with the results. Kidd has gotten a lot better in the last few months and it's nice to see him get rewarded for all the hard work. The Usos can only do their thing for so long before they need a freshening up and this might be such a chance. Another good result after another good match.

We recap Sting interrupting HHH at Survivor Series and then again on Raw a few months later, setting up their confrontation tonight.

HHH comes out in his leather jacket and jeans for a change. He brings up the meeting with Flair on Raw and calls out Sting right now, so here's Sting in person. HHH knows why he's here and thinks Sting is backing the wrong horse. Sting may have been WCW but he went down with the ship.

It was guys like HHH that made the ship go down in the first place because his family is what keeps the WWE alive. So HHH is now taking credit for killing WCW? He wasn't even in the Winner Take All match. If Sting just walks away now, his legacy goes on. He can continue through DVDs and merchandise, and maybe even the Hall of Fame one day.

HHH takes off the jacket and says we can do it another way. He goes for a cheap shot but Sting lays him out, only to eat a microphone shot to the face. It's sledgehammer time but Sting pulls out the ball bat. HHH throws the hammer down and Sting points the bat at the Wrestlemania sign. Sting turns away but hits HHH with the bat while he's trying a cheap shot. The Death Drop leaves HHH laying. This was exactly what people expected but it worked well enough. The hammer vs. the bat was really cool to see.

We recap the pre-show edition of MizTV.

Quick recap of the Bellas embarrassing Paige.

Divas Title: Paige vs. Nikki Bella

Paige is challenging. Lillian screws up again and calls it the Women's Title. Paige quickly takes it to the mat and Nikki rolls to the floor. A chase gets us back inside but Nikki knocks her right back to the floor. Back in again and we hit the chinlock before an Alabama Slam gets two on Paige.

Nikki charges into a boot in the corner before Paige hits the three straight clotheslines. A dropkick gets two and Paige kicks her in the face for the same. The Rampaige is countered into a facebuster but Paige pops right back up. Nikki counters a superplex into a nice powerbomb for two but has to crawl to the ropes to escape the PTO. In a fast ending, Nikki sends her into the buckle and grabs the trunks for the pin to retain at 5:37.

Rating: D+. Believe it or not, this wasn't horrible, but I think most of that is due to Paige holding the thing together. The Bellas (they're the same person in my eyes anyway) know how to do some decent looking moves, but they don't know how to work a match. That's a very big difference and it shows badly when they're in there against well rounded wrestlers.

Cameron and Eva Marie are at the Oscars.

Sting vs. HHH is officially announced for Wrestlemania.

Intercontinental Title: Dean Ambrose vs. Bad News Barrett

Ambrose pinned Barrett in a non-title match (join the freaking club) and literally forced him into signing a contract for a title match. Dean goes right after him to start but gets kicked off the top rope and out to the floor. A chinlock doesn't last long and Barrett kicks him in the face again to stop Dean's comeback. Back in and Dean scores with a tornado DDT before countering Winds of Change into a small package for two.

The standing elbow drop gets two more but Dean runs into Wasteland. They're just trading signature moves right now. The Bull Hammer is countered into a rollup for two and Dean kicks him in the face for no

cover. Barrett tries to bail but gets caught by a suicide dive. Dean pulls him back from the crowd and stomps away in the corner for the DQ at 7:46.

Rating: D. This felt like a Raw match to set up a pay per view match, reenforcing my theory that this show could have been broken up into a bunch of Raws instead of being its own pay per view. Nothing to see here and it was pretty clear about halfway through that it was going to be a screwy finish.

Dean hits Dirty Deeds and leaves with the title.

The lights go out and Undertaker's druids come out with their torches. The gong strikes and two hooded men wheel out a casket. The casket opens up and it's Bray Wyatt inside. He says he will never forget the first time that he saw him. He made Bray tremble with his cold eyes but now he's just a shell of his former self. His soul is lost and it's time to go home. Bray's mission is clear because he doesn't fear him anymore. At Wrestlemania, he will claim the Undertaker's soul. Bray lays back down in the casket and the druids close it up.

The pre-show panel recap the evening so far.

We recap Cena vs. Rusev, which is based on the idea of Cena reaching the end of his career and being far weaker than he used to be. The eye injury has been forgotten in the span of a week.

US Title: Rusev vs. John Cena

Rusev is defending. They stall to start and the fans think Cena sucks. A big right hand drops Rusev so he kicks Cena in the face for two. The champ chokes him in the corner and nails a spinwheel kick for two more. A Jerry chant starts up as a fan takes pictures of Lana. Cena comes back with a dropkick for two of his own but Rusev hits a slightly worse dropkick for two more.

The fall away slam gets yet another near fall and Rusev slowly stomps away even more. Cena charges into an elbow in the corner and we hit the chinlock. A suplex puts Rusev down but the AA is countered with a DDT.

Back up and Cena fires off right hands before starting his usual sequence. Another AA is countered into the jumping superkick for two. The STF doesn't work either and Rusev hits a swinging Rock Bottom for two more.

Cena goes to the middle rope for a tornado DDT but still can't put Rusev away. They slug it out and Rusev grabs the ropes to block another AA attempt. Cena pulls him into a Crossface (called an STF by Cole) but Rusev easily powers out and hits the second Alabama (Moscow?) Slam of the night. Some elbows to the back look to set up the Accolade but Cena blocks a stomp (it could have been the shouting of RUSEV CRUSH) and slaps on the STF.

Rusev finally grabs a rope and escapes the AA again but misses the superkick. Now the AA connects for two (I'm as shocked as you are) and both guys are spent. The top rope Fameasser misses though and Rusev hooks the Accolade. Cena has his knees under him though and powers up, only to have Lana offer a distraction so Rusev can kick him low. Another superkick to the face sets up the Accolade and Cena passes out at 19:00.

Rating: B. Good freaking grief STOP USING PAY PER VIEW TO SET UP REMATCHES. They're making it as clear as they can that this show is just a big preview for Wrestlemania and they can claim "you didn't have to pay for it." Unless you're loyal to WWE of course and actually bought the Network before the free month. This took some time to get going but finally took off about halfway through. Of course it sets up Cena's big win at Wrestlemania, but this is a good win for Rusev. Granted it's on a worthless show but at least it's there.

Cena is dazed post match.

Kickoff panel recaps again.

We recap Reigns vs. Bryan, which is all about headlining Wrestlemania against Brock Lesnar. They started off respecting each other but it's evolved into a game of topping each other to play mind games.

Roman Reigns vs. Daniel Bryan

The previous match got big match intros but this didn't get anything. Good sign in the crowd: PUNCH THAT HIPPIE! Bryan keeps getting down low on the mat to avoid Roman's power in a smart move. A headlock slows Reigns down a bit but he counters into one of his own. Daniel goes for the leg and takes Reigns down into the surfboard but Reigns easily kicks him away. Roman stomps him down in the corner without showing a lot of aggression.

A nice tilt-a-whirl slam and clothesline put Bryan on the floor but he comes back with kicks to the leg to slow Reigns down again. That's fine with Roman who just blasts Bryan with a right hand to the jaw as they're getting a good story going here. Back up again and Reigns hits the jumping clothesline but misses a charge into the corner. Another clothesline turns Bryan inside out and Reigns starts rolling some pumphandle suplexes. The Superman Punch is countered with a kick to the ribs.

Some knees to the ribs have Reigns in even more trouble and the running corner dropkicks stagger him again. Bryan tries a top rope hurricanrana but gets caught in a superbomb for a close two as things are starting to get good. Reigns loads up a top rope superplex but gets crotched down, setting up a belly to back superplex to stay on the weakened midsection. The YES Lock goes on but Reigns gets the rope and bails to the floor.

Bryan hits back to back Flying Goats but tries once too often and gets belly to belly suplexed. The spear hits the steps though and Reigns barely beats the count back in. Bryan dives into something resembling the Superman Punch for two. The spear is countered into a rollup but the running knee only gets a very near fall. The YES Kicks have Reigns reeling but he blocks the big one.

Bryan slaps him in the face on one leg before pulling Reigns down into a YES Lock. Reigns turns it over and hammers away right hands to stun Bryan again. He lifts Bryan up into a powerbomb and both guys are down. Bryan's legs are over Reigns but the referee doesn't count it as a cover. Both guys sit up and Reigns hammers away with right hands so Bryan just unloads with kicks to the head to put him down again. Another running knee is countered with the spear though to send Reigns to Wrestlemania at

20:04.

Rating: A-. I actually really like that ending because storyline wise, Bryan has very little claim to a spot in the main event at Wrestlemania. This is the big win that Reigns needed to look like a star and he certainly delivered his half. They were telling a good story out there with Bryan trying to pick Reigns apart but eventually just getting run over by raw power. Excellent main event here and it did what it was supposed to do.

Bryan pokes Reigns in the chest and tells him to take out Lesnar at Wrestlemania. They shake hands and Bryan lets Reigns celebrate to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. This show was good in spite of itself because of some really solid wrestling. Unfortunately, the total lack of need to have this show really hurts it though as this simply didn't need to be a pay per view. Reigns should have eliminated Bryan last from the Rumble and the exact same things could have been accomplished on TV. The wrestling carried this, but there was no way to care about a lot of the stuff on this show. Think about it like this: other than the Tag Team Titles and the Divas, every match on here (or the post match segment) seemed to be to set up a future match. That's inexcusable for a big time show.

Results

Kane/Big Show/Seth Rollins b. Dolph Ziggler/Ryback/Erick Rowan – Kane pinned Ziggler after a KO Punch from Big Show

Goldust b. Stardust – Crucifix

Tyson Kidd/Cesaro b. Usos – Fisherman's neckbreaker to Jimmy

Nikki Bella b. Paige – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Bad News Barrett b. Dean Ambrose via DQ when Ambrose wouldn't stop stomping

Rusev b. John Cena – Accolade

Roman Reigns b. Daniel Bryan – Spear

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Fast Lane 2015 Preview

It says a lot that I had completely forgotten this show was tomorrow night. Fast Lane is a show that really doesn't need to exist and most of these matches could have easily been done as big time Raw main events over the course of a few weeks. Instead though they need a way to bulk up the Network subscriptions, and to be fair the free month for Survivor Series was an amazing success. This show really isn't doing much for me though so let's get to it.

We'll start with the match recently added: a six man tag between Kane/Big Show/Seth Rollins vs. Ryback/Dolph Ziggler/Erick Rowan. This match makes sense because the Survivor Series WILL NEVER DIE. It was also odd that you had these six guys all sitting around doing nothing so why not just get a big tag match to put them all on the show? It's definitely the most logical move they could go with and avoids repeats of singles matches we've already seen for a change.

As for the winners, of course it's the Authority, because we have to keep Big Show and Kane looking strong see. Oh and that Rollins guy gets to get a nice rub too. Rollins hasn't had much to do since the Rumble and it really goes to show you how up and down the booking is. Yeah he's beaten Ziggler a few times, but who hasn't at this point? Rowan is done to say

the least, but Ryback has been treated as a pretty big deal since he's been back. Still though, the Authority wins and they win without much trouble.

I'll take Stardust over Goldust, likely setting up a Wrestlemania rematch for Goldust's career. The guy has been around forever and would be excellent for an agent's job. Stardust needs a win to establish himself as a singles guy, which could be interesting if they let him run with it.

Usos retain the titles because Cesaro and Kidd are just there to give the smarks something to cheer for. Not that it matters anyway as the Ascension is waiting in the wings to take the belts. I wouldn't mind a more interesting story for the titles, but at least it's based on something that happened in WWE rather than the stupid reality show.

Ambrose somehow loses the title shot because Barrett has lost almost everything leading up to this match, so why not just let him keep the title? Besides, Ambrose hasn't won on pay per view since...well since the Shield was around actually. Couple that with him not winning a singles pay per view match since Night of Champions 2013 and there's no reason to think he should win tomorrow night.

Speaking of horrible stories that make my soul hurt and have no basis in logic or reasoning while involving babbling morons who are a disgrace to their far more talented NXT counterparts but fill out tight tops and shorts better and therefore are more entitled to a spot on the main roster, Nikki retains the title over Paige because TOTAL DIVAS MEANS THEY'RE SO TOTALLY CELEBRITIES and since that show is about the Bellas, they're more important than Paige. Or something.

I'll actually take Rusev to keep the title, albeit not in a straight finish. This screams Wrestlemania rematch, which isn't something I care for most of the time. They also seem to be having some issues with how this match is booked, as the eye injury has been forgotten and for some reason they're not just going with America vs. Russia, which has worked for the better part of eternity. Instead it's "Cena is suddenly old, even though no one but Vince thinks that", which is a pretty lame storyline. Anyway, Rusev retains and Cena gets his big win at Wrestlemania...in

theory. I'd love to see Rusev beat him on the big stage.

That leaves us with Bryan vs. Reigns for the Mania title shot, and I really think they're going with the triple threat. It would fit perfectly with this show meaning nothing, so why not just have them go with that and put Bryan in the title match? It makes sense (or as much sense as this story can make) and gets us where we need to go. Reigns vs. Lesnar wouldn't work on its own nearly as well, but it's clear that this Wrestlemania is going to suffer from them not knowing where they want to go, at least on paper.

Oh and HHH calls out Sting. They'll talk, they'll talk some more, they'll pretend the Invasion wasn't a thing, Sting will punch him a few times, a match will be made for Wrestlemania, it will take about three times longer than it should.

Overall, as I've mentioned more than once in the preview, this show doesn't need to exist. It's there because the Network needs something to hype up and doesn't make sense with the storylines they have. It's a weak card which will likely lead us to a weak Wrestlemania, so why would I want to see this? I'll be watching, but I think the Oscars are going to distract me from this dull show more than once.

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Smackdown – February 19, 2015: Yep, It's Still Smackdown

Smackdown

Date: February 19, 2015

Location: BB&T Center, Sunrise, Florida

Attendance: 8,000

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

It's the final show before Fast Lane and thankfully the ending to Monday's show was a bit more interesting than trying to figure out exactly when Bryan turned into a whiny loser who is using his contractual obligations to get back in the title picture instead of just winning matches like he did last year. Other than that we have Rollins vs. Ziggler again tonight because what else could they air? Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the Reigns vs. Bryan story from Monday with both of them messing with the others match and a big brawl to end the show.

Opening sequence.

Miz vs. Daniel Bryan

Before the match, we see Miz ripping on Mizdow earlier in the night, but he insists it's just trying to help Mizdow from being a loser. Mizdow of course out pops Miz, earning him a severe tongue lashing. Miz orders him to go get an Egyptian cotton towel for after his match. Apparently Bryan wants Miz to only use American goods and kicks some patriotism into his former mentor.

The running clothesline and corner dropkick set up a top rope hurricanrana but Miz bails to the floor to avoid the running knee. Back in and Miz kicks out the knee before driving knees into the hamstring. You don't try to match submissions with Bryan though and the YES Lock is good for the submission at 2:54.

Ryback vs. Kane

Ryback hammers him into the corner to start and hits a decent belly to belly. A threat of the Meat Hook sends Kane outside in the same sequence from the first match with the running knee. Back in and Kane hits a running DDT followed by a big boot to send Ryback into the corner. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Ryback fights up with a Thesz Press and the Warrior Splash. Ryback gets knocked off the top rope to the floor, which means absolutely nothing as he hits the Shell Shock immediately after getting back in for the pin at 3:51.

Rating: D. This was a ten minute power match packed into less than four minutes. Ryback and Kane could have a decent match if they were given a few more minutes but they had to fly through this instead, likely so we can see a bunch of videos from Raw. Also, Ryback can pin Kane but Reigns can only beat him by countout? These are the kind of things that just make no sense and make you wonder if anyone is actually thinking backstage.

We recap Ambrose making Barrett sign the contract on Monday.

R-Truth vs. Bad News Barrett

Non-title so just raise Truth's hand now. Ambrose is on commentary and wants to know why Truth is shouting WHOMP THERE IT IS, even though it's on his iPod. Barrett stomps away in the corner as Dean talks about the title being the backbone of the company. Truth gives Barrett a pelvic thrust, earning him a beating in the corner.

Cole asks how that contract signing can stand. Dean: "Well there's a graphic for the match on WWE.com and the internet is always true." We hit the chinlock on Truth as Barrett talks trash to Dean. Truth fights up with ease and a side kick gets two. Ambrose ignores more trash talk, even as Barrett takes Truth to the floor and beats him up right in front of Dean. Back in and Dean turns his back on Barrett, allowing Truth to grab a rollup for the pin at 3:09.

Rating: D. Egads man I was kidding about Truth winning. Remember the good old days when champions ACTUALLY WON MATCHES??? On top of that, history

shows us that Truth isn't going anywhere after this win because pinning the champion is a plot device instead of a way to elevate someone. I don't know what Barrett did to deserve this treatment, but he'd have a better future as a shark dentist than as Intercontinental Champion.

Vince is on the cover of Muscle and Fitness.

We look back at Cena and Rusev fighting on Monday. If nothing else, that segment proved that American healthcare is better than Russian, as Cena's eye went from the focal point of the match to ignored in the span of a week.

Bray Wyatt says find him before he finds you.

Sheamus return video.

New Day vs. Ascension

Kofi is the odd man out here. Viktor and Woods get things going with Xavier planting a knee into the ribs for two. Ascension drags Woods into the corner for a double teaming, featuring a lot of choking in the corner. Back to Viktor for a kick to the ribs but Woods rolls over for an ice cold tag to E. Viktor gets thrown around but gets a reprieve as Big E. wipes away the sweat. A cheap shot from Konnor allows Viktor to send Big E. into the post, setting up Fall of Man for the pin at 2:52. I'm not surprised they've already pulled the plug on New Day, even though I like at least two of the members of the team.

Luke Harper vs. Roman Reigns

My goodness Harper has cooled down since winning that Intercontinental Title. It really has become a death knell in the last few years. Reigns throws him into the corner and stomps Luke down with ease. More stomping sends Harper outside and Roman nails him with a running clothesline. If Reigns can do one thing as well as anyone, it's explode with running moves.

Back in and something like the ProtoBomb gets two but they head right back outside where Luke sends him into the steps. Back in and a slingshot hilo of all things gets two for Harper but Reigns fights out of a

headlock. A big Samoan drop sends Harper flying but he escapes another and hits a swinging Boss Man Slam for two. Reigns pops back up, no sells a superkick and spears Harper down for the pin at 4:49.

Rating: C. As much as I can't stand the no selling of hard shots to the face, this is the kind of win that makes Reigns look better. Have him get in there for a hard hitting match and then spear someone in half for the pin. It's a really basic way of getting him over and to show off his physical abilities instead of whatever the heck the story with Bryan is supposed to be. I've watched the entire thing so far and I still don't get it. What I do get however is Reigns spearing people and pinning them because it looks cool.

Recap of Flair and HHH from Raw for the response to the acceptance for the challenge to talk.

Big Show vs. Erick Rowan

I don't see this going well. Show kicks Rowan to the floor before the bell and throws him into the steps. He picks Rowan up by the beard and throws him inside where the referee is fine with opening the match despite Rowan taking a horrible beating which should be a DQ but that might make Big Show look weak and this is a Big Show tribute company after all.

Show stomps him down in the corner and plants him with a slam. More stomping sets up the chokeslam for the pin at 2:26. Why in the world did we need a Big Show squash? He beat Daniel Bryan on Raw and now he needs to win a squash? Oh wait, it's more Survivor Series fallout. Why didn't I see that coming?

Cameron vs. Paige

The Bellas are on commentary and wearing sunglasses, which actually fit them quite well. Cameron flips her hair at Paige to start and gets the revolving elbows in the corner for her efforts. Paige drives knees into the chest and does her shout on the apron to no reaction from the Bellas. Apparently Nikki is fierce. Good to know. Cameron comes back with her horrible offense and slaps Paige in the face, earning her a series of

clotheslines. A kick to the face sets up the PT0 for the submission at 2:09.

Paige shouts at the Bellas post match. They were actually far easier to sit through here as they've turned up the obnoxious levels to make it more of a character than just half doing everything and coming off like catty teenagers at summer camp. Naturally Nikki is going to retain the title Sunday though, because Paige has won every match leading up to the showdown and the Bellas are evil, meaning they have to get the upper hand.

We recap Goldust and Stardust's issues with Dusty on Monday.

Stardust knows what it's like to be considered a freak, so he embraced Goldust. They were on fire as a team and won the Tag Team Titles, but then darkness crept in. He saw it coming because it happened to him, and it took Cody away from him. Now Stardust is a cancer eating Cody alive and he wants his brother back. That means he has to face his brother and beat him at Fast Lane. Stardust appears on the screen behind him and asks to be spared from Goldust's sentiments. After Sunday, Cody won't be the only one who has ceased to exist. The universe will forget the name of Goldust.

Jimmy Uso vs. Tyson Kidd

Before the match, Kidd says his decision to team with Cesaro is the best move he's ever made. Natalya's face is rather amusing to say the least. Also of note here: Kidd is about a foot shorter than Cesaro. I've never noticed that kind of a height difference before. Kidd fires off ROH style forearm to the head to start but Jimmy comes back with right hands in the corner. Not that it matters though as Rusev comes in to beat up both guys at 0:57.

Rusev destroys everyone and rants in Russian about Cena. No Lana here.

Seth Rollins vs. Dolph Ziggler

The Stooges are barred from ringside. Feeling out process to start with both guys going for arm holds and Rollins bailing to the ropes. They hit

the mat with Ziggler caught in a headlock but he comes back with a nice dropkick. Rollins avoids a Stinger Splash though and we take a break. Back with Ziggler fighting out of a chinlock (as is almost always the case) but charging into a hot shot for two.

Big Show, Kane, Ryback and Rowan are all at ringside. After what happened earlier, why would you want Rowan out there? Isn't there an elderly music teacher somewhere that could give you a better fighting chance? Rollins yells at Ryback and Rowan, allowing Dolph to come back with a running forearm to put both guys down.

Now the Stinger Splash connects and Ziggler follows it up with a neckbreaker. Rollins tries the buckle bomb but gets countered into a sunset flip, followed by the Fameasser for two more. Dolph dropkicks him out to the floor where Seth slaps Ryback and Rowan. Back in and Ziggler has to fight off Kane, allowing Rollins to hit the buckle bomb, followed by the Curb Stomp for the pin at 10:23.

Rating: B-. Solid enough match here but it's nothing we haven't seen them do far better before. Rollins getting a big win is a good sign and I'd assume there's going to be a six man tag set up for Sunday. If nothing else it would fill out the card a bit and get us beyond six matches for the show. Oh and a big talk, because that's what I want to pay for: a preview for the next show.

The Stooges come out and it's time for the big beatdown. Given that Ziggler is done and Rowan is Rowan, it's basically Ryback getting destroyed, making a decent comeback and then getting destroyed again for the last three minutes of the show, because the Stooges were able to subdue Rowan and we're still doing the same things we did around Survivor Series time. So much for Kane and Big Show having issues I guess, unless something happens Sunday.

Overall Rating: C-. Now this felt like an alternative to Raw. Monday night tends to be about packing as much stuff as you can into a show, but at the same time it feels like they're stalling for time. This show flies by with some decent wrestling and VERY few stories. Smackdown is much more streamlined and makes it an easier show to sit through.

However, that doesn't make it an interesting show. Nothing happens on this show and it was pure false hope when it moved back to Thursdays. This is right back to the same stuff they did for years and there's no real reason to watch it. Yeah there was some mild storyline development here, but it's more like the downloadable content for a video game: it might be fun to kill some time, but if you never saw it, you wouldn't lose anything from the game itself.

Results

Daniel Bryan b. Miz – YES Lock

Ryback b. Kane – Shell Shock

R-Truth b. Bad News Barrett – Rollup

Ascension b. New Day – Fall of Man to Big E.

Roman Reigns b. Luke Harper – Spear

Big Show b. Erick Rowan – Chokeslam

Paige b. Cameron – PTO

Jimmy Uso vs. Tyson Kidd went to a no contest when Rusev interfered

Seth Rollins b. Dolph Ziggler – Curb Stomp

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Smackdown – February 5, 2015: Let It Go. Let It Go.

Smackdown

Date: February 5, 2015

Location: World Arena, Colorado Spring, Colorado

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Byron Saxton

This week's Raw changed a lot of things about the Fast Lane and potentially Wrestlemania cards. The big story was Daniel Bryan defeating Seth Rollins to earn a shot against Roman Reigns at Fast Lane with the winner facing Brock Lesnar for the World Title at Wrestlemania. This is due to the Rock interfering in the Royal Rumble when Rusev was still involved and somehow was announced without ever mentioning Rusev's name. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the "earth shaking" announcement from Raw. Rusev is still not mentioned by the Authority. That's downright impressive. Bryan pinning Rollins to earn the shot is shown as well.

Opening sequence.

It's time for MizTV with special guests Roman Reigns and Daniel Bryan. Miz has Mizdow sit at ringside to further his new role as assistant. The fans of course want Mizdow and Miz says they have him, sitting outside where he belongs. The guests come out and Reigns lays out Miz with a Superman Punch before anything can be said. Well that's one way to make fans like him. Reigns grabs the mic and says he went through 29 wrestlers to get here and he'll go through one more to go to Wrestlemania. Wouldn't it be one of them again since Bryan was in the Rumble?

Reigns is going to go to Wrestlemania by beating Bryan at Fast Lane but they should just do it right here. Bryan is game but here are Rollins and the Stooges to interrupt. Seth blames Reigns for taking his spot in the

main event of Wrestlemania but he'll get there one day on his own, even though Reigns is scared to face him one on one. As per the Authority, Bryan will be in action tonight against himself and the Stooges.

Post break Miz says he should be in the main event of Wrestlemania instead and wants to fight Roman tonight.

Goldust/Stardust vs. Ryback/Dolph Ziggler

Thankfully they come out to Ziggler's music this time. An inset interview from Ziggler and Ryback says for Goldust and Stardust, it's too bad that they're too good. Stardust jumps over Goldust to start for the team and is quickly slammed down by Ryback. Off to Ziggler who gets two off a dropkick and brings Ryback in again to hammer on Stardust even more. Ziggler drops the big elbow (after a quick strut) and Ryback follows with the splash for two. Stardust tells Goldust he has this and we take a break.

Back with Goldust choking Ryback on the ropes before it's back to Stardust for a front facelock. Ryback finally backdrops Goldust out to the floor and punches Stardust out of the air, allowing the hot tag to Ziggler. Things speed up and the running DDT gets two on Stardust. The Disaster Kick drops Ziggler and Goldust wants a tag, calling his brother Cody again. He tags in by smacking Stardust in the head, causing Cody to walk out. The solo Goldust walks into a Shell Shock for the pin at 9:14.

Rating: D+. You know, I kind of wish these teams would just split in a hurry instead of doing these weeks long drawn out buildups to the big showdown. It should be an interesting match and feud, but again I'd like to know who else they have to fill out the division, which is currently about three teams deep. Maybe it's Ryback and Ziggler, who aren't the worst combination in the world and at least they have something in common.

Ernie Ladd Black History Month video.

Curtis Axel vs. Dean Ambrose

Axel uses the "don't change the channel" line again, which is somewhere

between brilliant and depressing. He wants everyone to join the movement and of course he has a hashtag for it. Curtis tries to jump Dean to start and gets stomped down into the corner for his efforts. He spins Dean around in the corner and hammers at the back but makes the mistake of sending Dean outside. As he throws Dean back in, Ambrose comes back out with a dropkick to the face, setting up the rebound lariat. Dirty Deeds is good for the pin at 2:44 after Axel got in far more offense than I was expecting.

Barrett pops up on screen with the BNZ: Bad News Zone. The bad news this week: Ambrose is much too insane to receive a title shot.

Fandango vs. Adam Rose

The Trust Fall fails and Rose blames the Rosebuds for doing it on purpose. That earns the hot dog a right hand and kick to the knee in something I never thought I would have to type. Fandango pulls him inside and chops Rose in the corner, only to get stomped down in the corner for his efforts. A belly to back suplex onto the apron has Fandango in even more trouble. Back in and Fandango hits a spinwheel kick, yells to the crowd like a good guy would, and drops the guillotine legdrop (finally named the Last Dance) for the pin at 2:07. Fandango was wrestling entirely like a face here.

Miz vs. Roman Reigns

They're flying through these matches tonight. Miz gets in a good line before the match with "You want to headline Wrestlemania? Come face someone who actually did it." That's Miz's "I beat the Rock and Austin in the same night." He knocks Reigns off the apron during the entrances and sends Reigns into the steps. Roman says ring the bell and Miz pounds away as soon as he can. Reigns ducks his head for a backdrop and gets kicked in the face, so he opts for just running Miz over with a shoulder.

After a quick beating on the floor, Miz comes back inside with even more left hands as he's come to play. Cole says a loss here would really hurt Roman Reigns. Like the one on Monday where Big Show beat him in less than three minutes? Or is that an exception because it's Big Show who is in fact big? Miz puts on a neck crank followed by a chinlock but charges

into a big clothesline. The low DDT is countered into a bearhug and then a Samoan drop, setting up the spear to pin Miz at 5:47.

Rating: C-. This was much better than I was expecting with Miz having more fire in him than I've seen in years. It's also a good idea to have Reigns have to come from behind instead of just running people over, especially over former World Champions. Yeah Miz is on the low end of that list, but it's better than beating up jobbers or Kane all over again. Also at the end of the day, it's not Big Show, meaning it's a better match by definition.

Rusev vs. Erick Rowan

Non-title. They slug it out to start with Rowan kicking him in the face as a huge USA chant starts up. A shoulder sends Rusev outside but he scores with a spinwheel kick back inside to take over. We hit the chinlock for a bit before Rowan clubs him down and beats Rusev across the ring. A middle rope back elbow to the jaw drops Rusev again but Rowan gets kicked off the ropes. The Accolade makes Rowan tap at 3:20.

Rating: D. Standard brawl here to make Rusev look good by beating up Cena's....buddy I guess? I mean who remembers Rowan helping to steal the souls of children last summer or whatever you call it? After all, they had a 45 second chat that one time on Raw and those things bury all hatchets. This was your run of the mill Rusev match.

We look at the Bellas putting spray tanner on Paige from Monday. Somehow this is the most interesting feud in the division in months.

Paige was actually embarrassed on Monday because she isn't your standard Diva. She's also not a conformist and the Bellas will be the embarrassed ones at Fast Lane. Not a bad thirty second promo, especially given what she has to work with.

Paige vs. Alicia Fox

In case you didn't get enough of it on Raw. Paige erupts on her to start and hammers on Fox, only to walk into a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. The Bellas are watching in the back as Fox sends Paige outside. Back in and

the northern lights suplex gets two on Paige and it's time for the chinlock.

Saxton says the Bellas have been the faces of the Divas division for the better part of seven years. That would make my soul hurt if it was actually true, but I think Laycool, Mickie James, Kelly, Melina, AJ and even Paige might have a bit to say about that, especially given that before this title reign, the Bellas had combined to hold titles for about two and a half months in those seven years. Anyway, Paige fights up and hits a dropkick, setting up PT0 for the win at 2:32.

We go to the double date with Jimmy Uso/Naomi and Natalya/Kidd, but Tyson thought he'd be coming with Cesaro because they're partners. Natalya facepalms and eats at the same time while Cesaro and Kidd say FACT at the same time. Naomi yells at Natalya for being rude and letting her husband be a jerk. Jimmy doesn't like what Kidd says about Naomi and gets knocked out by Cesaro. Natalya blames Jimmy and Naomi.

Network/Fast Lane hype.

Bray Wyatt says a man is defined by his actions but he is no man. He is the reaper, so what makes you think your actions towards him mean nothing? You are blinded by your pride and the devil is knocking on your door. He just wants you to come home, so just let him in. Let him in. Let Bray in.

Daniel Bryan vs. Jamie Noble/Joey Mercury/Seth Rollins

Mercury offers a test of strength to start but gets kicked in the leg instead. Daniel rides him on the mat with ease so it's off to Noble to get abused as well. A cross armbreaker sends Noble running to the ropes and it's off to Rollins for a smattering of applause before the YOU SOLD OUT chants begin. A dropkick puts Seth down but he gets Bryan into the corner for the triple team. Back to Noble as the announcers recap Wrestlemania from last year. Rollins takes Bryan outside and sends him into the barricade as we take a break.

Back with Bryan getting German suplexed for no cover. Seth does Brock's bounce before throwing another German suplex. The Stooges take turns

stomping away with Noble throwing some shadow punches. Mercury gets two off a dropkick (people might forget how young the Stooges really are. Noble is the older of the two and is only 38. This is hardly Patterson and Brisco II) before Seth comes in for some cocky stomping.

Daniel fights up for a double cross body to put both guys down. Back up and Seth sends him into the buckle to take over again but makes the mistake of setting up the Triple Bomb out of the corner. Bryan counters into a hurricanrana and Daniel speeds things up. A top rope double dropkick puts the Stooges down and it's time for rotating YES Kicks. Bryan clotheslines Rollins to the floor and throws Noble out with him, setting up the YES Lock for the submission on Mercury at 13:58.

Rating: C. This was fine and again it helps that the Stooges are still more than capable of having a passable match. Considering they're wrestling in business casual clothing, this wasn't too bad. Bryan winning here makes sense and there's no need to have him pin Rollins again. As I said in the Wyatts' feud against Cena (before it was resolved with one of those 45 second backstage chats), a good villain needs lackeys for situations like this one.

Post match Kane comes out and beats down Bryan because THIS FEUD WILL NOT FREAKING DIE ALREADY. Bryan gets a big beating to end the show, including a chokeslam and curb stomp. There is no reason for Kane and Bryan to keep fighting, especially after last week.

Overall Rating: C. This show was rolling along to a decent rating and then they do this stupid thing again where they can't just let a feud end and move on to ANYTHING else because for some reason, writers in WWE don't get that it's ok to end a story at some point. There's no reason for this thing to keep going but they're just going to keep it going because they have no idea where else to go with Kane.

Unfortunately, this show felt like an old Friday night episode of the show with nothing really interesting and a decent match here and there. It's not bad or anything, but at least they had the two most important names featured here. At the end of the day, any show that doesn't have Cena on it all the time doesn't feel like a major show. The company

really does revolve around him and you can notice when he's gone.

Results

Dolph Ziggler/Ryback b. Goldust/Stardust – Shell Shock to Goldust

Dean Ambrose b. Curtis Axel – Dirty Deeds

Fandango b. Adam Rose – Last Dance

Roman Reigns b. Miz – Spear

Rusev b. Erick Rowan – Accolade

Paige b. Alicia Fox – PT0

Daniel Bryan b. Seth Rollins/Jamie Noble/Joey Mercury – YES Lock to Mercury

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New Column: Who Are You Again?

Looking at Reigns finding himself and playing a little game.

<http://www.wrestlingrumors.net/kbs-review/33597/>

Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2013: He Came Home

Royal Rumble 2013

Date: January 27, 2013

Location: US Airways Center, Phoenix, Arizona

Attendance: 13,00

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Jerry Lawler

This show was only a year ago and I can barely remember anything about it. Aside from the Rumble the big matches are the Rock challenging CM Punk for the WWE Title in the most obvious ending ever and Alberto Del Rio defending his newly won World Heavyweight Championship against Big Show in a last man standing match. Other than that we've only got HELL NO vs. the Rhodes Scholars to complete the card. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: US Title: The Miz vs. Antonio Cesaro

Cesaro is defending. This is just after Flair passed the Figure Four to Miz, starting the worst period of his career. Miz grabs a headlock to start and gets two off an elbow to the jaw. The headlock takes Cesaro down to the mat but he fights up and grabs one of his own. Back up and Miz tries a leapfrog but gets caught in midair with a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker for two. The champion takes over and cranks on both of Miz's arms before getting two off a Michinoku Driver.

A hard European uppercut sets up the gutwrench suplex for two and it's back to the double arm. Back up again and Miz slips out of a slam and hooks the Reality Check for two. There's the running clothesline in the corner and Miz goes up but hurts his knee on the top rope ax handle. Cesaro gets caught with his feet on the ropes, allowing Miz to get two off a rollup. Antonio misses a running knee in the corner but is still able to roll away from the Figure Four. Cesar takes him to the floor and rams Miz into the metal underneath the ring. Miz is out cold so Cesaro

Neutralizes him for the pin to retain.

Rating: D+. Miz just doesn't work in a lot of these matches and the Figure Four doesn't work in the slightest. Thankfully he wouldn't be featured very prominently for a while as there was just nothing to him for the most part. Cesaro still needs to get a push as he's more talented and marketable than half the roster but instead we get people like Miz.

The opening video is about time passing and how no one has enough. This ties into Punk's time as champion with Rock saying the reign ends tonight.

Smackdown World Title: Big Show vs. Alberto Del Rio

Last man standing match, which is a rematch with the same stipulations from when Alberto won the title a few weeks ago. Del Rio turned the announce table on top of Big Show so Big Show turned it on top of him a few weeks later. Alberto is shown in the back and he runs into Bret Hart for no apparent reason whatsoever. Bret says Alberto reminds him of a Mexican version of himself. Alberto calls Bret a Canadian Del Rio and Ricardo gushes, earning him Bret's sunglasses. What a bizarre cameo.

Some hard chops have Del Rio in early trouble and a slam gets a five count. Alberto chops away but jumps off the middle rope right into a chop to change control right back. The champion dropkicks the giant's knee out but the low superkick actually knocks Big Show up from his knees to his feet. A hurricanrana and a seated senton put Big Show down and Alberto gets a breather. It's amazing how much more interesting Del Rio is by doing this lucha stuff instead of his arm work. The arm stuff is good but this is such a nice change of pace.

Big Show blocks the armbreaker with one arm and slams Del Rio down, sending him outside. Del Rio gets back in as Big Show gets a chair but the champion dropkicks him in the ribs to knock it out of his hands. A series of chair shots (crowd: "SI! SI! SI!") has Big Show down but Alberto dives into a chokeslam for an eight count. We head outside again with Del Rio getting chopped to the floor with ease. This is a very slow paced match so far.

A pair of low blows puts Big Show down in the aisle but he's up at nine. Show hits something resembling a DDT on the floor before sending Del Rio into the set. He rips a piece of the set, resembling a light tube, and blasts Del Rio over the back. Since this is WWE there's a table readily available and Big Show takes the champion on top of the set for a chokeslam through the table. The bump looked awesome but he's again on his feet at nine.

The beating takes Del Rio back to the ring and Show loads up the WMD. Alberto sees it coming and rolls outside, only to have Big Show throw Ricardo around for fun. Big Show misses a charge through the barricade (clearly heavily padded) for five but a long series of chair shots has him down again. Del Rio crushes the arm between the steps and a chair, but Alberto follows up with a fire extinguisher blast to the face for no apparent reason. Back in and the armbreaker goes on, but Ricardo ups the ante by duct taping Big Show's legs to the ropes. The giant can't get up and Alberto retains the title.

Rating: C-. This wasn't the worst match in the world but it was very slowly paced and the ending made Del Rio look more clever than tough. It also doesn't help that the match was the same gimmick they did less than a month ago. Face Alberto was a nice guy but they cut the cord just six months after this. Not bad, but Del Rio winning the title here would have been much better.

Send Slim Jims to the military!

Ziggler isn't worried about being in the Rumble and AJ threatens Matt Striker with Big E. Langston for implying Ziggler can't win. Langston does one of the most mind blowing imitations of an annoying reporter while asking Ziggler for his thoughts on the main event. Dolph has little of note to say but no one was hearing him after Big E.'s bit anyway.

Cesaro says he'll continue the streak of non-Americans winning the Rumble.

The Prime Time Players.....WE'RE GETTING RUMBLE PROMOS!!!! Anyway they say anyone that thinks they'll eliminate either of them is getting a penalty flag.

Orton says he's perfect for the Rumble because it's every man for himself.

Cena is ready for the Rumble because it means he can be champion again.

Intercontinental Champion Wade Barrett says he'll restore credibility to the Rumble.

Sheamus says he won the Rumble last year and he'll do it again tonight.

Ryback isn't any catchphrase and he doesn't eat Fruity Pebbles, but he'll see food every 90 seconds. Feed him more.

We recap Miz vs. Cesaro on the pre-show.

Tag Titles: HELL NO vs. Rhodes Scholars

The Scholars are challenging. Cody kicks Bryan in the ribs as Cole references Queen lyrics. Bryan spins out of a wristlock and the fans chant for Cody's mustache. Cody's leapfrog is countered into a surfboard and it's off to Kane for a low dropkick and a two count. Rhodes scores with a dropkick of his own and drives Kane into the corner for the tag off to Sandow. Kane easily powers Sandow into the corner because, you know, he's Damien Sandow and it's off to Bryan for the YES Kicks.

JBL rants about Cole and Lawler hugging as Kane kicks Sandow in the face, knocking him out to the floor. The FLYING GOAT takes out the challengers but Cody low bridges Bryan to the floor to take over. Back in and a half crab has Daniel in trouble but he reverses into a small package to escape. Damien comes in again and drops an elbow for two before dropping the Wind-Up Elbow.

After some knees to the back it's Cody in again but he charges into a boot in the corner. Sandow breaks up a hot tag attempt and Cody puts Bryan in an over the shoulder backbreaker. Daniel slides down to escape and makes the tag to Kane. Sandow is tossed around like a rag doll but a Cody distraction prevents the top rope clothesline. Kane grabs both guys by the throat and Bryan tags himself in. The Scholars double suplex Kane but Bryan shoves Cody into a chokeslam and Daniel YES Locks Sandow to retain.

Rating: C. Nothing you wouldn't see on Raw around this time which means it was fine. The Scholars were a nice idea for a team but it was clear that they had no chance at this point given how low their individual stocks were. Kane and Bryan gelled perfectly well as a team and Bryan would get far bigger very soon.

Rumble By The Numbers which I've typed many times already.

HELL NO celebrates in the back when Vickie Guerrero comes up and gives them their Rumble numbers. Daniel shows Kane his but Kane won't show Bryan.

We look at the Royal Rumble Fan Fest which is another name for Axxess. This included a tournament of NXT wrestlers for a spot in the Rumble, won by Bo Dallas.

Royal Rumble

Ziggler is #1 which he picked (the other option was #2) after winning a Beat the Clock Challenge on Raw. Dolph says he'll win and doesn't care who he faces first, bringing out a returning Chris Jericho at #2. This was a complete shock and the roof is blown off the building. Also remember that Ziggler beat Jericho to send him out of the company to give us some history. The clock is at 90 seconds between entrants this year.

Jericho is quickly sent to the apron but comes back with a top rope ax handle. Now it's Dolph on the apron as the fans tell Jericho he still has it. When did Jericho ever come close to losing it? A superplex brings Ziggler back into the ring and Cody Rhodes is in at #3. Jericho hammers away on him but Ziggler gets in a cheap shot as the double teaming begins. Chris knocks Ziggler down and puts Cody in the Walls but Dolph makes the save.

Dolph catapults Jericho throat first into the bottom rope as Kofi Kingston is in at #4. Kofi immediately speeds things up and pounds away on Cody but can't hit Ziggy with Trouble in Paradise. Ziggler is thrown to the apron and all four guys try to eliminate each other at the same time in the same spot. Santino Marella is #5 and he sends all four to the apron before loading up the Cobra. Everybody is back in and even though

Santino takes Kofi down with the sock, it's Cody backdropping Marella out.

Drew McIntyre of 3MB is #6 and gets to fight Kofi as everyone else takes a breather. Back up and it's time to lay on the ropes while trying to eliminate people. Jericho is sent over the ropes but he keeps his feet off the ground and gets back in. Titus O'Neil is in at #7 to add some power, including taking Cody and Kofi down with a double clothesline. Cole finally tells us that the bark is a shout out to his fraternity from Florida. Thank you for explaining that to us after two years.

Jericho throws out McIntyre but can't do the same to Ziggler as Goldust is #8. Cody gets ready for the showdown and the fans are WAY into this. They trade the kneeling uppercuts and Goldie stomps on Cody for a bit. The fans chant for Goldust and it's David Otunga (remember him?) is in at #9. The announcers ignore the match to talk about the commentators being in the Rumble last year as people start to pair off.

Nothing much happens until Heath Slater is in at #10. That gives us Ziggler, Jericho, Rhodes, Kingston, O'Neil, Goldust, Otunga and Slater at the moment. Slater fires off right hands to Kofi as Jericho calls spots to Ziggler. Dolph gets stuck on the apron again and Sheamus is #11 to clear out some bodies. He destroys everyone with his usual stuff before sending Titus to the apron for the ten forearms. Otunga is thrown onto Titus to get rid of O'Neil before ten forearms and a Brogue Kick get rid of the lawyer. Tensai, still the Japanese lunthead, is #12.

Everybody goes after Tensai to make a big cluster in the corner. That goes nowhere at all so Brodus Clay comes in at #13. We get a Tons of Funk preview before Goldust backdrops Cody to the apron, only to get pulled to the apron as well. Cody gets back in and sends Goldust into the post for the elimination and a lot of booing. Rey Mysterio is #14 to make the crowd happy again. Ziggler and Jericho get quick 619s and the top rope splash crushes Jericho. Things slow down a bit until we reach the halfway point with Darren Young at #15.

A bunch of guys join forces to dump Brodus and Kofi puts out Tensai a few seconds later. Now we get to the part that everybody was waiting on as

Kofi is knocked off the apron, only to land on Tensai's back. He jumps onto the announcers' table as he tries to figure this out. Why he doesn't just jump two feet to get onto the steps is beyond me. Bo Dallas is #16 as this is going on. Instead of the steps, Kofi gets JBL's office chair and pogos his way back to the ring. Kingston pulls Darren out of the ring but gets caught with the Disaster Kick for the elimination before he can get back inside.

Godfather gives us the nostalgia pop at #17 and is dropkicked out by Ziggler four seconds later. He seems ok with that and leaves with his women. The whole point was the entrance anyway so I have no issue with that. Wade Barrett is in at #18 as the ring is getting too full. Everything slows down again and John Cena is #19 to clear out some tired people. Everybody gets ready for him so Cena comes a charging. John fights them all off and throws out Slater and Cody but can't dump Jericho.

Damien Sandow is #20, giving us Ziggler, Jericho, Sheamus, Mysteio, Dallas, Barrett, Cena and Sandow. Mysteio and Barrett fight to the apron and a big forearm puts Rey out. Sheamus goes right after Wade as Jericho tries to put Cena in the Walls. Daniel Bryan is #21 and fires off kicks to Sandow. Now it's Barrett getting the kicks as everyone else is down. Sheamus and Bryan try to put Jericho out but he slides back in under the ropes.

Antonio Cesaro is in at #22 and gets in a fight with Sheamus as the fans start the dueling Cena chants. Everybody is back up now and Great Khali is #23. It's chops all around until things calm a bit. Kane comes in at #24 to fire things up again (get it?) but the ring is too full. It gets even worse with Zach Ryder coming in at #25 but HELL NO dumps Khali. Bryan dumps Kane but Cesaro dumps Bryan into Kane's arms. Daniel: YES! Kane shouts no and drops Bryan for the elimination in a funny bit.

Randy Orton is #26 and it's powerslams all around. Ziggler and Dallas get a double Elevated DDT and it's an RK0 for Ryder, followed by the elimination. Jinder Mahal gets lucky #27 as Cesaro lifts Cena up, only to be eliminated himself. Ziggler gets launched to the ropes but slides back in as Miz is #28. He gets in a fight with Cesaro in the aisle and limps

into the ring to sell the ankle injury from earlier. Sheamus dumps Mahal and Sin Cara is #29.

Cara tries an enziguri on Ziggler which misses by four inches but Ziggler sells it anyway. Bo Dallas pulls Barrett out in an elimination that should have led further than it did. Miz sends Jericho to the apron as Barrett pulls Dallas out from the floor. Ryback is #30 to give us a final grouping of Ryback, Ziggler, Jericho, Sheamus, Cena, Sandow, Orton, Miz and Sin Cara. Damien is out first and Sin Cara quickly follows. Miz tries to power Ryback out and is tossed as well to get us down to six. Jericho is somehow still alive and hits a Lionsault on Cena but the springboard dropkick doesn't eliminate Sheamus.

Ziggler backdrops Jericho to the apron and superkicks him out (missed as well but he's spent at this point) but walks into an RKO. There's one for Cena as well and Sheamus gets the third. That leaves Ryback to fight Orton but the monster gets taken down with an Elevated DDT. Ryback fights off the RKO and clotheslines Randy out to get us down to four. Ziggler DDTs Cena down but a Brogue Kick puts Dolph on the floor.

It's Sheamus, Ryback and Cena with Ryback getting double suplexed down. Cena and Sheamus make things serious by LOOKING AT THE SIGN. John takes over but Ryback runs him over with a clothesline. Sheamus escapes the Shell Shock, looks at the sign, and hits White Noise on Ryback. The Brogue Kick is countered with a backdrop to eliminate Sheamus and we're down to two.

They LOOK AT THE SIGN and do their signature taunts before Ryback spinebusters Cena down. The Meathook is countered into the STF and Ryback passes out, leaving him as dead weight. Ryback fights out of the corner and Cena's head into the mat. He loads up a powerslam but Cena slips out the back and shoves Ryback out for the win and title shot at Wrestlemania.

Rating: B. It's a good but not great Rumble. That being said, there was almost no other option to win here, even though it set up the rematch that no one wanted to see. There's certainly some good stuff in it and there were no down spots, but you would expect more big moments than we

got here.

Coming Home ad for Wrestlemania. That still should have been Wrestlemania XXX.

We recap CM Punk vs. The Rock. It's a basic story: Punk has been champion for 434 days and Rock is getting a title shot because he's the Rock, which was kind of a lame reason, especially when the shot was announced six months ago. That began a countdown that made everything Punk did meaningless, because there was no way it would be anyone but Rock taking the belt from him here. Yeah Punk got in some shots on Rock before the match, but this was as much of a layup as you could get. Also if Shield or anyone interferes, Punk is stripped of the title.

Rock, after waiting for them to chant his name, says he isn't worried about Shield, even though they busted up his lung recently. He goes on a rant about how many hard things he's been through, but redeems himself a bit by talking about his mom getting cancer but beating it to be here tonight. Punk has said that the people don't count but Rock says every single one of them count to him. He reaches his hand out to everyone that believes in the Rock so he can get their power, if you smell what he's cooking.

Raw World Title: The Rock vs. CM Punk

Punk of course has Heyman with him. He charges right into the brawl and actually pounds Rock down into the corner. A quick Rock Bottom is countered but Punk is sent outside. Rock follows him outside and sends the champion into the barricade before loading up the announce table. Punk comes back with a shot to the ribs and puts the table back together in a great bit. Back in and Rock scores with more right hands to knock Punk to the floor again.

Punk is whipped into the barricade one more time but he gets a boot up to stop a charging Bull. He finishes fixing the announce table instead of following up on Rock before dropping Rock ribs first on the barricade. They head inside again for a body vice from CM followed by a knee to the ribs for two. Off to a freaky looking hold where Punk pins Rock's shoulders down but pulls back on his head to crank on the shoulders and

back.

More choking follows and a knee to the back has Rock on the apron, followed by a springboard dropkick to send him outside. Punk tries a top rope ax handle to take Rock down but injures his knee in the process. Rock scores with some kicks to the knee but the champion easily sends him out to the floor to stop the comeback. Back in and Punk misses the springboard clothesline and reinjures the knee, giving Rock his opening.

A DDT gets one on Punk but he fights out of the Rock Bottom. The GTS is countered into a Sharpshooter attempt but Punk counters into the Anaconda Vice in a nice sequence. Rock rolls over into a cradle, forcing Punk to let go of the hold. Back up and tries the Rock Bottom but Punk counters into a rollup for two, only to be countered into a low seated Sharpshooter. Punk is next to the rope so naturally he takes thirty seconds to get the break.

Rock takes him to the floor and loads up the announce table again. They fight on top but Rock counters a GTS attempt into what was supposed to be a Rock Bottom but was really more like the table collapsing with Rock's arm around Punk's chest. Rock comes up holding his knee and both guys make it back in at an eight count. Punk scores with a high kick but both guys are down.

Back up and Rock wins a slugout before scoring with the spinebuster. He loads up the People's Elbow and there go the lights. Cole can see Shield pulling Rock to the floor and powerbombing him through the table. The lights come back up and Rock is laid out as the referee has no idea what's going on. The announcers try to tell Mike Chioda what happened and Punk feigns innocence.

He throws Rock back in for the pin and celebrates but here's Vince to say Punk is stripped of the title for the interference. Rock says no and to restart the match. The bell rings again and Punk stomps away as JBL threatens to put Cole through a table for playing cheerleader. The Macho Elbow gets two but the GTS is countered into a spinebuster, setting up the People's Elbow to end Punk's reign.

Rating: B. It's another good match but it felt like they were dancing

around for twenty three minutes before we got to the obvious ending. The Shield stuff was a decent fake out but it really didn't need to be there. Rock winning was obvious though and that really put a ceiling on how high this was going to get.

Rock celebrates for about three minutes to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. Yeah it's a good show overall, but the major problem is obvious: there was no other possibly ending other than Rock vs. Cena at Wrestlemania 29 and almost everyone knew it. The show is definitely entertaining and actually really good at times, but it was so telegraphed up and down the card that it offers almost no excitement at all, even on the initial viewing. Still though, worth checking out if you have nothing else to do.

Ratings Comparison

Antonio Cesaro vs. The Miz

Original: C-

Redo: D+

Alberto Del Rio vs. Big Show

Original: B

Redo: C-

HELL NO vs. Rhodes Scholars

Original: C

Redo: C

Royal Rumble

Original: C+

Redo: B

The Rock vs. CM Punk

Original: B

Redo: B

Overall Rating

Original: A-

Redo: B

That original overall rating is too high for what I gave everything else. Also I think the original last man standing match rating is closer to the accurate one. It just didn't hold up as well on a second viewing, but it was good.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/01/27/royal-rumble-2013-by-the-book-and-still-awesome/>

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<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Smackdown – January 22, 2015:

The Goat Face Of Thursdays

Smackdown

Date: January 22, 2015

Location: Frank Erwin Center, Austin, Texas

Commentators: Byron Saxton, Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

Much like last week, this actually feels like a big show. The main event for tonight is again Bryan vs. Kane, now in a No DQ match with Bryan's Rumble spot on the line. The show had a significantly bigger audience last week compared to the normal audiences on Fridays, so maybe we're in for more big time shows. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the end of Raw with Sting helping Cena win the 3-1 handicap match to save Cena's spot in the Sunday's title match but more importantly getting Ziggler, Rowan and Ryback's jobs back.

Opening sequence.

Here's Daniel Bryan to get things going. He's excited to get on the Road to Wrestlemania and would love to talk about his No DQ match tonight and how he won't let anything stop him from winning the Royal Rumble. He could talk about how obsessed he is with getting the WWE World Heavyweight Championship back. Or he could talk about Sting's first ever appearance on Raw and how it ruined the Authority's night.

However, there's something more important than that, and it's what John Cena accomplished on Raw. There are three people with something to say about it, so here are Ryback, Rowan and Ziggler for their big returns. Well as big as they can be after just getting a few weeks off. It's really hard to care about them being fired when they're back in just a few weeks.

The fans chant FEED ME MORE at Ryback before he compares his firing to Bryan's injury. The Big Guy is back but doesn't have much more to say other than catchphrases. Rowan says being gone was sort of a blessing because he had a lot of time to sit back and think. Believe it or not, he used to be a different person. He was naive and someone's puppet, but

these last few weeks have let them (as in he and the sheep mask) know who he really is.

That leaves us with Ziggler, who of course gets the biggest reaction of the three. Ziggler set around eating stuffed crust pizza and watched the HHH and Stephanie fitness DVDs. He's joking of course and brings up all the momentum he had before getting fired (because WWE loves to build people up and then take them off TV). But the Authority tried to take it away because they're a threat. He would rather stay here and take a beating like never before than going home sitting on his couch and complaining on a podcast (it had been too long since the last Punk cheap shot).

Cue the Authority minus the actual authority with Rollins saying this is a Survivor Series reunion with a garden gnome replacing Bryan. Ziggler wants to beat Rollins up right now but Rollins has more important things to do than deal with someone who sits on a couch eating stuffed crust pizza. Oh and the fitness DVDs are AWESOME! Ziggler says Rollins must enjoy them because he's never seen anyone run away from Lesnar that fast.

Kane tells Bryan to calm down because he still has to survive tonight to get into the Rumble. Bryan responds by showing a clip of Lesnar destroying Kane and Big Show to close Raw. That's not cool with Big Show who promises to win the Rumble on Sunday because the four people in the ring are all losers. Kane promises to go to depraved levels to destroy Bryan but turns his attention to Ziggler. Since he's a new employee, Ziggler has to start back at the bottom of the ladder and work his way back to the Intercontinental Title. However, Kane is willing to give Ziggler a match against Barrett right now.

Royal Rumble Qualifying Match: Bad News Barrett vs. Dolph Ziggler

Non-title and only Ziggler can qualify with a win. Barrett easily takes him down to start but gets caught in a headlock. A nice dropkick gets two for Dolph but a headscissors is countered with a kick to the ribs. They head outside where Barrett sends him into the apron before cranking on the arm back inside. This is the kind of stuff I'd like to see more of: someone grabbing a body part and cranking on it for the middle part of

the match.

A top wristlock has Zigler in trouble but he avoids a charge in the corner. The running DDT gets two for Dolph and we take a break. Back with Barrett going back to the arm but Zigler rolls through to send Barrett shoulder first into the post. Dolph nails a big superkick for two more and both guys are down. Back up and the champ kicks him in the ribs but the Bull Hammer is blocked, setting up the Zig Zag for the pin at 10:54.

Rating: D+. Barrett losing all the time is officially a running joke. I mean, it has to be. There's no way they can think this is the logical way to book anything. The match was actually pretty dull with neither guy going out of the ordinary. I'm not sure what the solution is for Barrett, but this stuff is turning him into more and more of a waste every week.

We recap Ascension getting beaten down by the legends on Raw.

Reigns looks at the footage of Big Show going after the legends from Raw and knocking out Flair until Reigns made the save. Roman doesn't know if Renee Young has heard, but Big Show is a giant. If you haven't heard, just listen because it's all he ever talks about. Andre never had to do that because his actions did the talking.

Show also always talks about Reigns wanting his spot, but Reigns wants his own spot. In the Rumble, everyone is all over the place and his fist is cocked, locked and ready to rock. He's the one vs. all and he's the one standing at the end. Believe that. This was FAR better than his usual stuff and felt much more natural.

Fandango draws his Rumble number and seems very pleased. As he dances with Rosa, Ambrose sneaks in and steals his number. The referee monitoring the drawing has no issue with this.

Ryback vs. Rusev

Non-title again and only Ryback can qualify. Ryback hits a hard shoulder but Rusev frantically rolls outside before the cover. Back in and Ryback hits a nice suplex, sending Rusev's legs into the ropes in the process. The champ bails to the floor again but is able to dropkick a charging

Ryback to take over. We take a break and come back with Rusev getting two off a DDT.

Rusev wraps the leg around the post, hoping Ryback actually sells it unlike he did in the Big Show match a few weeks back. Ryback takes advantage of Rusev's trash talking and hits a slingshot belly to back suplex and a powerslam for two. A Backpack Stunner gets two more and Ryback stops to hold his knee (to be fair Rusev didn't do much to the knee so it's not as annoying this time).

Ryback's powerbomb is countered into an Alabama Slam (Siberia Slam?) for two but he just runs Rusev over. For some reason Ryback goes up top, only to be quickly crotched down for two. Rusev tells himself to crush but Ryback fights out of the Accolade and loads up the Meathook, sending Rusev running again. Ryback follows and hammers away before beating the count at 13:47.

Rating: C+. Who would have thought these two would be better than Zigler and Barrett? There was even a bit of a story told with Rusev running a lot in the beginning and then losing when he tried it once too often. Ryback can do a decent power match and Rusev is finding ways to keep the unpinned streak alive without looking stupid. I'll call this a pleasant surprise.

Rusev goes after him again but gets dispatched one more time.

Brie Bella vs. Naomi

Paige and Natalya are on commentary. Thankfully the BRIE MODE is gone. The Bellas mock Natalya for loving cats and call Paige a vampire. Paige corrects them by saying she's a glampire and a black heart. Naomi kicks at Brie's leg as Paige and Natalya debate if they're friends or not. Paige calls Tyson Kidd an idiot as Naomi gets her throat snapped across the top rope for two. Brie misses her running knee but hits a jawbreaker on the knee, setting up the Bella Buster for the pin at 2:20. So much for Naomi meaning anything.

Luke Harper says you can send anyone into the Royal Rumble, but don't send in anyone you want back. Rowan better not blink or the monsters will

get him. Are you scared yet?

Goldust and Stardust draw their numbers and hiss at each other.

Erick Rowan vs. Luke Harper

Only Rowan can qualify. They slug it out to start and Rowan runs him over with a shoulder for an early two. Harper busts out a freaking hurricanrana to counter a powerbomb. This guy is not normal. Rowan just throws him into the corner and gets two more off a spin kick. Luke bites the fingers to block I think a full nelson but this time Rowan's powerbomb connects for two. Erick misses a top rope splash though and a superkick and discus lariat gives Harper the pin at 3:20.

Rating: C. The more I see Harper the more I wonder why he isn't being pushed to the moon and back. On the other hand, the more I see Rowan, the more I wonder why they even bothered pushing him in the first place. He's fine in the ring and I like his potential, but he's just a big jobber at this point and it seems like that's all he was ever meant to be.

Kane borrows the Stooges for his match with Bryan.

Rumble by the numbers video.

Miz is annoyed at Mizdow for imitating X-Pac without his permission. Mizdow says the fans liked it but Miz says no one cheers for him because they're all cheering for Miz. Miz also rejects the pumpkin latte for having the wrong amount of foam. He leaves and the Usos come up and tell Mizdow that he can get his hands on Miz in the Rumble. The idea intrigues Mizdow but he still looks conflicted.

Kane vs. Daniel Bryan

No DQ with Bryan's Rumble spot on the line and the Stooges in Kane's corner. A cross body gets one on Kane but Bryan has to go after the Stooges, allowing Kane to kick him down to the floor. He stays on the neck with a neckbreaker on the floor before dropping him onto the barricade. It's kendo stick time with Bryan getting cracked over the back a few times before they head back inside.

Daniel gets the cane to cane Kane before alternating between kicks and cane shots to the back. A big kick to the head is only good for two and Kane knocks him out of the air as we go to a break. Back with Kane holding a chinlock (what else would he be doing?) and cracking Bryan in the back with a chair for two. The chair gets wedged into the corner but Kane low bridges him to the floor. The Flying Goat is countered with an uppercut and Kane takes over on the floor. Bryan gets whipped into the steps and the Stooges load up the announcers' table. They're already more useful than Patterson and Brisco.

The torestone and chokeslam are both countered and Kane gets sent into the post to give Daniel a breather. Back in and a bad looking YES Lock has Kane in trouble but the Stooges come in to break it up. Lawler and Cole are incensed but Saxton correctly point out that they're not breaking any rules. Bryan fights them off but eats a chokeslam for two. Kane is livid and gets another chair, only to be sent into the one he wedged in the corner, setting up the running knee to send Bryan to the Rumble at 12:18.

Rating: B-. This was as good as you can expect from Bryan vs. Kane, but the feud needs to end here. Kane as the monster hunting Bryan is only going to get you so far and we passed that point back in April. Having Bryan overcome a small set of odds is the right way to use him and getting the big win off his finisher is the right way to go. I can more than live with Kane in roles like this, with him getting pinned by a bigger star who slays a monster. Why can't we get there with Big Show?

Speaking of Big Show, he drags Bryan back to the ring but Ziggler, Rowan and Ryback come in for the save. The big Rumble brawl is on until Ambrose and Reigns come out to make it serious. Roman cleans house, even though most of the guys were already gone by the time he got in. It gets down to all of the big heroes in the ring (minus Rowan. They're not even hiding it now) and Kane and Big Show on the apron to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. It's still not a great show, but the important part of this show is stuff happened. Instead of spending a big segment on Raw bringing back the three fired guys, it was saved for here and we even saw two of them qualify for the Rumble. It's not exactly Lesnar and Rollins

having a showdown, but I'll take this over the weekly big tag match every day. If WWE can build up momentum for Smackdown, it might get even bigger in the future. Good show this week that felt important.

Results

Dolph Ziggler b. Bad News Barrett – Zig Zag

Ryback b. Rusev via countout

Brie Bella b. Naomi – Bella Buster

Luke Harper b. Erick Rowan – Discus lariat

Daniel Bryan b. Kane – Running knee

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Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: January 5, 2015

Well the Authority is back and I'm not sure what else you're expecting the show to focus on this week. The previous week Cena agreed to bring them back for the sake of protecting his BEST FRIEND EVER Edge, and of course the Authority just happened to be there that night. This is likely to set up Wrestlemania and the return of Sting, which should be awesome

when it finally happens. Let's get to it.

The roster was in the ring for the Authority's big return. As in their return from last week when they really came back because of course they were in the back. Screw suspension of disbelief and all that nonsense. They actually kept this one short as the Authority's only announcements were Rollins being added to the title match at the Rumble, John Cena Appreciation Night later, and Dolph Ziggler defending the Intercontinental Title against Bad News Barrett right now.

First up we'll look at the PPV title match. I REALLY like Rollins being added to make it a triple threat, as we've seen Cena vs. Lesnar far too often now. At the end of the day, why am I supposed to care about seeing the same guys fight each other with Cena getting closer and closer every time? This also opens a door to avoid Lesnar vs. Reigns for the title at Wrestlemania. There are multiple ways out now, and that's the best news we could have had in a long time.

Bad News Barrett took the Intercontinental Title back from Dolph Ziggler in classic Russo booking. Ziggler pinned him in less than three minutes but Kane came out to say it's 2/3 falls, with Barrett winning the next two. This is the start of the night's big idea and it really should have been more obvious after you know where it's going. I'm not wild on another title change, especially after Barrett looked like a face last week. Then again, you can't expect something like week to week continuity around here. It's not like this is NXT or something.

All night had some great John Cena moments, most of which are the same ones you always see for something like this. I really would like to see them bust out some fresh ones every now and then.

Roman Reigns still can't talk. I'm interested in where this is going though, because on Smackdown he cut a really goofy promo but then said of course it was hard to say and winked at the camera, acknowledging that it's a badly scripted promo. I doubt that goes anywhere, but it's an interesting possibility.

Bray Wyatt is still creepy.

The Ascension came out for the promo and reaction from the announcers that I've already written far too much about.

Roman Reigns beat Big Show via DQ in the feud that will not die. They're still dragging this thing out and I'm scared that they won't blow it off until Fast Lane. Does anyone even remember why they're fighting? Was there ever a reason in the first place? It's a boring feud and for some reason it just keeps going. It didn't help that Show basically squashed him and then lost via DQ.

Nikki Bella beat Natalya for the second time in two weeks. I'm still just waiting for Naomi to take the title and end this ridiculous Bella domination. Or we could just cancel Total Divas already and stop these stupid stories.

Dean Ambrose is violent.

Erick Rowan lost to Luke Harper via a fast count from the Stooges. More angle advancement and thankfully we haven't had the big showdown between these two. Then again, it's not like WWE knows how to build a match other than to have them fight each other a bunch, nor do they seem to have any sort of a plan for or interest in Rowan.

Alicia Fox beat up Naomi in the back because Total Divas thinks it's interesting.

Bray Wyatt beat Dean Ambrose again in an ambulance match to end their feud. As usual, WWE doesn't know how to pace a feud. We started with a TLC match then had a bunch of street fights and they end it with an ambulance match. Why an ambulance you ask? No clue, as there's no connection to an ambulance in their feud. They wound up feuding just because they were feuding before and that almost never makes for a good story.

On top of that, the match was nothing interesting. It's the problem with having a feud based on violent matches: eventually you get numb to what they're doing. Ambrose has dropped how many elbows through tables now? I don't know why I'm supposed to care now because the table has a red cross painted on.

Miz/Damien Mizdow/Alicia Fox beat the Usos/Naomi in a six person tag. This feud has run out of steam, meaning we're likely getting it for another six weeks. The match was nothing special and it didn't help that it came on a long, draining show.

Ryback's punishment is a handicap match against Rollins and Kane but his big moment is he wasn't knocked out by the first Curb Stomp. He was however knocked out by the second Curb Stomp to give the villains the win.

Big E. beat Adam Rose via DQ when two masked men, played by Cesaro and Tyson Kidd, interfered. They just HAD to put this in? The show felt like it had been going on for a year at this point and I really could have used a breather. Air a video package or something but stop cramming everything in every chance they have. It's ok to let the show breathe for a minute, but WWE insists on jamming in every story and angle they can. It makes the show very tiring and I don't want to see any more at this point.

The big ending segment was the Authority praising Cena and then bringing out the other members of Team Cena from Survivor Series (the show that will not die). The Authority fired Ziggler, Ryback and Rowan for a big dramatic moment. Things picked up though as confetti and balloons fell and music played to celebrate John Cena to end the show. I'll give them that one as the look on Cena's face as the Authority smiled was perfect.

This show was LONG. That's my big complaint here in case you missed it the first dozen or so times. It felt like they were cramming in every single idea they had and it makes for a very tiring show. The big angle isn't going to mean anything long term because I'd be stunned if those three weren't back for the Rumble. The ending scene was about breaking Cena's spirit....which is a really questionable idea. Why you ask?

Has Cena even mentioned Lesnar at the Rumble? We haven't gotten one promo about the match, one reason to think that Cena is focused, or one thing that really makes me want to see him fight Lesnar again. Sure he'll mention Brock once in awhile, but it's always broken up by something from the Authority or Rollins. The title match is a complete afterthought at

this point and that's not what we should be having going into the Road to Wrestlemania. I can't wait for Lesnar to lose the title so we can get back to something resembling normal around here.

Other than Cena and the Authority, this show just didn't do anything for me. We've seen the same feuds and stories for so long now that it's almost impossible to care about them again. I know we keep saying the Road to Wrestlemania will re-energize things, but nothing ever seems to change. Maybe it's coming soon, but the Rumble needs to be a home run at this point.

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Monday Night Raw – January 5, 2015: This Show Sucked And I Hated It

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 5, 2015

Location: American Bank Center, Corpus Christi, Texas

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield, Booker T.

It took awhile to get here but we're finally into Royal Rumble season. The big story from last week (biggest out of many that is) was the return of the Authority, after a grand absence of about a month. Now that

they're back they can oppose Daniel Bryan as he tries to make it to Wrestlemania to take the World Title off the corporate backed champion. Well it worked the first time so why not now? Let's get to it.

We open with a recap from the end of last week with Rollins setting the stage for the Authority's return by threatening to cripple Edge. I still have issues with a simple "I respect you" making up for all of Cena and Edge's issues.

Opening sequence. We haven't had one of those in forever.

The roster is in the ring and around ringside to open the show. Cena would like to apologize for what's coming, because he had to go back on his word and bring the Authority back last week. He thought he could slide in at the last second like Superman and save Edge but he just wasn't sure. Now the Authority is back, but 2015 is going to be....cut off by the Authority's music. Cole: "Stephanie McMahon on the left, HHH on the right." In case you thought HHH had become a woman you see.

Stephanie hopes we all had a great new year and HHH knows we were all begging for them to come back. He mocks the guest GM's and praises Seth Rollins for ensuring their return. Rollins tells Cena Happy New Year but HHH has a surprise for him: he's officially added to the WWE World Title match at the Royal Rumble, making it a triple threat with Lesnar defending against Rollins and Cena.

That brings us back to Cena, because last week he showed that he knows what's best for business. Stephanie declares tonight John Cena Appreciation Night and Cena's attendance is mandatory. As for everyone else, this is a new year, meaning they'll all get what they deserve. That means Ziggler is up first and will be defending the Intercontinental Title against Bad News Barrett. I see no reason why the entire roster had to be out there, but they're out of the opening segment at just 8:14.

Intercontinental Title: Dolph Ziggler vs. Bad News Barrett

Barrett is challenging due to Barrett having to vacate the title due to an injury. The champ nails a dropkick to start but tries to get too high in the corner and takes a kick to the ribs. We're in a chinlock less than

two minute in, meaning I don't see this lasting long. Ziggler pops up and grabs a crucifix of all things to retain the title at 2:38.

Barrett destroys Ziggler post match and sends him into the and steps over and over. Cue Corporate Kane to say the Authority forgot to mention that this match is 2/3 falls. Ziggler is barely able to get up and Wasteland ties us up about thirty seconds in. The referee calls the trainers in before the third fall and we take a break. Back with Ziggler insisting he can continue but taking a boot to the face. Wasteland plants him again for two and Barrett puts him in the ropes for another boot.

Barrett cranks on the arms as Cole gets something as simple as Barrett's hometown wrong (Prescott instead of Preston). We hit the chinlock on the champ but he fights out with a Stunner, followed by a swinging neckbreaker. The Fameasser doesn't work but the Winds of Change gets two. I still really like that move. Barrett's Bull Hammer misses and Dolph scores with a superkick for another near fall. Kane gets up on the apron and eats a superkick, only to have the Bull Hammer knock Ziggler cold to give Barrett the title back at 16:39 total, counting the breaks between the falls.

Rating: C. The match was good but it was almost all angle. Barrett getting the title back is fine and it makes him a five time champion, but I wouldn't get my hopes up given his past experiences as champion. I'm curious to see where Ziggler goes from here, but again they protected him with the big beatdown leading to his loss. He's looking like a bigger star now and stacking the deck against him is going to make that work as much as anything else.

We get our first John Cena great moment, starting on Smackdown, July 27, 2002 when he answered Kurt Angle's open challenge and took him to the limit. The Undertaker endorsed him post match to really make it mean something.

Clip from last week of Big Show interfering to break up Rollins vs. Reigns. Show buried Reigns under the announcers' table, only to have Reigns do the same to him on Smackdown. Reigns vs. Show again tonight.

Reigns doesn't know what to expect tonight but he knows Big Show can

expect a man faster than a speeding bullet, able to leap tall building in a single bound, and more powerful than a locomotive. Believe that.

Bray Wyatt asks Dean Ambrose about his new year's resolution. Is it to become a better father or to get to know his imprisoned father? Well tonight he'll get the chance, because tonight he's going to be locked in an ambulance. Ambrose's lunatic fringe will be forever locked inside his own nightmare. The devil is suffering and pain and tonight he walks beside Wyatt.

Here's the Ascension for a chat. There have been a lot of dominant teams over the years, but they'll demolish Demolition and throw the Road Warriors off the road. Oh what a rush? Oh what a JOKE. Welcome to the wasteland. JBL of course buries them by saying they couldn't carry the Road Warriors' bags and Booker calls them stupid.

Ascension vs. ???/???

Fall of Man in 41 seconds.

Lana and Rusev tell America to stay out of Russia's business. How dare America disrupt Russia's tradition and heritage? Only Vladimir Putin can bring this world to peace, and only Rusev is undefeated.

John Cena beat JBL to win his first World Title at Wrestlemania XXI.

Roman Reigns vs. Big Show

Show spears him down to start and steps over Reigns' ribs. Some kicks have the ribs in even more trouble as the announcers do their job by reminding us that Reigns' had surgery on his abdomen to put him out of action late last year. A hard knee to the face gets to more and Big Show gets back to stepping on the stomach. We hit the bearhug before Reigns fights back, only to have the Superman Punch blocked. They head to the floor and Show hits him with the steps for the DQ at 4:19.

Rating: F. Failure, for the simple reason that this feud MUST CONTINUE! WHY IS IT CONTINUING??? How can WWE sit there and validate keeping Reigns locked up with Big Show for months on end and think that it's going to get him over? Just look at this match too: Big Show dominates, swats away

Reigns' big move, and then loses because he beats him up too badly. This was a Big Show squash until the ending, making this match an even bigger waste of time than it looked like on paper. They're going out of their way to annoy fans at this point.

We recap the opening segment.

Natalya vs. Nikki Bella

Rematch from last week when Natalya lost in a minute. Tyson Kidd isn't out here after possibly costing Natalya the match last week. Cue Paige, who started a feud with Natalya last night on Total Divas. Natalya shoves Nikki down to start but can't grab the Sharpshooter. Instead Nikki blasts her in the face as Paige and Brie are about to get into it on the floor. Paige easily destroys Brie but the distraction lets Natalya roll up Nikki for the pin in 1:23.

Paige saves Natalya from a post match beatdown.

Ambrose doesn't have any new year's resolution other than beating Wyatt up and throwing him into an ambulance. This match is going to be brutal and end their feud once and for all. That's the way Dean lives his life and it's the way he's ending Bray's.

The commentators offer their condolences to the family of ESPN anchor Stuart Scott as he passed away yesterday.

Luke Harper vs. Erick Rowan

Noble and Mercury are guest referees. Rowan sends him into the corner to start but the referees get in his way. He nails Harper with a spinwheel kick but the referees argue over who will do the count. Rowan yells at them and eats the discus lariat for a fast count pin at 1:00.

The Stooges beat up Rowan post match, allowing Harper to hit another discus lariat.

We see Cena's first night as an official member of the Raw roster. That's the night he was officially anointed as the top star of the company.

The WWE Network is coming to the UK on January 19. Allegedly.

Alicia Fox comes up to Naomi in the back and says they'll be friends after they're on different sides in the mixed tag. Fox brags about being part of the Total Divas cast and talks down to Naomi for being off the show. She beats Naomi up and screams a lot until more of the cast comes up to stop her.

We recap Ambrose vs. Wyatt, which has been a series of hardcore brawls since Wyatt cost him the Cell match against Rollins.

Bray Wyatt vs. Dean Ambrose

Ambulance match where you have to throw your opponent in the ambulance to win. This is billed as the end of the story, which I don't buy for some reason. They quickly fight to the floor with Wyatt being sent over the announcers' table and thrown into the crowd. They're quickly up by the ambulance and Dean has a red cross table. Well of course he does. Bray comes back with a stretcher to the knees and they fight back down to ringside with Wyatt sending him knee first into the post.

Back from a break with Bray splashing Dean in the corner and tossing his hair around. I guess he's a Kevin Nash fan. Sister Abigail is broken up and the Rebound Clothesline puts both guys down. Bray comes right back with a shot to the bad knee (because he's smart like that) and they head to the floor again. Up to the ambulance and Dean is able to clothesline him off the stage for a nice spot. Bray sends him into the ambulance...where there's a chair waiting. Dean pelts it at Wyatt's head but of course the fans only want tables. I'm so sick of hearing that chant every single week.

Another clothesline drops Bray but the knee is too banged up for Dean to give it the full effect. Ambrose nails him with the back board from a stretcher before loading up the red cross table. He lays Bray on it...and looks at the ambulance. With the limp slowing him down, Dean gets on top of the ambulance and drops the elbow to drive Wyatt through the wood, with the table breaking so clean that it ruins almost the entire visual. Not that it matters as Bray hits Sister Abigail into ambulance door. Dean is still able to fight out though, only to take a slow motion Sister

Abigail on the concrete to give Wyatt the win at 19:40.

Rating: B-. The violence was fun but this felt like it went on forever. I'm not really sure why an ambulance match is supposed to be the be all and end all of this feud. It wasn't anything we haven't seen them do a bunch of times, but at least Wyatt definitively wins the feud and can now move on to something else. Good brawl, but I'd have liked them to go on and do something new instead of the same old stuff in a different setting.

Time to insult the fans who still pay for regular pay per view.

Remember that opening segment? Well here it is again.

Usos/Naomi vs. Alicia Fox/Miz/Damien Mizdow

Another Total Divas match. The girls get things going with Naomi throwing Alicia around with ease before it's off to Miz for a neckbreaker and chinlock on Jimmy. Mizdow gets the tag and is back out three seconds later before any contact. Does any of this sound familiar to anyone else? Miz ax handles Jimmy from the apron to the floor and it's back to the chinlock. Jimmy finally escapes and makes the hot tag as everything breaks down. In the melee, Jimmy has to stop himself from running into Naomi, allowing Miz to roll Jimmy up with a handful of the tights for the pin at 4:12.

Rating: D. This show is dying before our eyes. The story is starting to drag as there's really no reason for these people to be fighting anymore, other than the required crutch of a rematch that they just have to have. If they wanted to make things interesting they would have Fox get the new projects that were promised to Naomi to show her that Miz was lying to wrap things up, but something tells me the Naomi part is just going to be dropped.

WWE Network song.

Ryback vs. Seth Rollins

Wait a second as Kane comes out to make it a handicap match.

Kane/Seth Rollins vs. Ryback

Ryback runs into Kane's uppercut to start but comes back with the Thesz Press and Warrior splash for one. Off to Rollins who bails in the face of a monster like a villain should. We get a Flair slam from the top and Kane is sent outside as well as we take a break. Back with Ryback fighting out of a chinlock but eating a dropkick from Rollins. Rollins chokes a bit and Kane puts on one of the worst chinlocks I can ever remember seeing. It's like when you're a kid and you do wrestling moves to your friends but you don't know what you're doing and it looks horrible, but this is a former World Champion doing it instead.

Ryback suplexes Kane down for a breather and nails Rollins with a nice spinebuster. The Stooges offer a distraction but Rollins takes the Meat Hook anyway. Kane breaks up Shell Shock but takes it himself, only to have Seth nail the Curb Stomp. He does it again for no particular reason and gets the pin at 11:54.

Rating: D-. END THIS ALREADY! This show has been dragging on and on for the last two hours and I have no idea who thinks this is a good idea. Rollins getting the pin makes sense but if all the fans pass out due to boredom, no one is going to care. Also, well done on giving Ryback the big promo last week and then jobbing him here. You could have at least made this Rollins and Rusev to help build the match, but instead let's just get Kane out there.

Big E. vs. Adam Rose

Rose actually takes over to start and throws Big E. into the corner before slapping on a chinlock. Big E. makes his comeback but we've got masked men for the DQ at 1:50.

Big E. takes a powerbomb/Blockbuster combo and the masked men are Cesaro and Tyson Kidd.

Preview of tonight's new episode of Countdown.

Here's the Authority to introduce Cena for John Cena Appreciation Night at 10:58. We see the ending of last week's show again and Stephanie calls

Cena her hero. HHH says he thought Cena was horrible when he debuted and then he had to sit through all those years of hustle, loyalty and respect. Last week though, Cena changed his mind when Cena brought back the Authority. This ring is all that matters to HHH and before the night is over, a lot of people are going to appreciate John Cena (it didn't make sense when he said it either).

HHH brings out Ryback, Rowan and Ziggler, none of whom have had a good night. He recaps how everyone joined Team Cena and now it's time for the punishments: Rowan is suspended for thirty days, Ryback is suspended for sixty days, and Ziggler...has to wait while the Authority walks up the aisle in a conference about what to do. Their decision: they're all fired. HHH: "LET'S HEAR IT FOR JOHN CENA!" Music plays, confetti and balloons fall, and Stephanie does a little dance to end the show.

Overall Rating: F+. The plus is only due to some good action when they could get away from the stories. This show was downright infuriating as they basically forgot everything interesting and entertaining from last week and took us back to the stupid Survivor Series fallout, which has now gone on longer than the build and pay per view itself. They were packing every single thing they could into this show and making sure that the fans had as little fun as possible.

Above all else though, this show lost me with how the announcers talked about Ascension. I know the team isn't for everyone, but this company's philosophy seems to be "let's put every possible thing against the new guys and see how hard they're willing to get it over." Then when it fails, oh well it wasn't the company's fault for whatever reason. The announcers referred to the new team as stupid and basically called them worthless. I'm so glad they got a year as NXT Tag Team Champions only to be shot down like this a week after they debut.

That's just part of the downside to this show. It just went on and on and kept feeling like they were trying to get on the fans' nerves. And for what? To set up some big moment where the Authority is defeated? Again? As in after they were defeated at Wrestlemania and then again at Survivor Series? I'm supposed to care that they lose again, only to come back a few months later like nothing ever happened? This show drove me crazy and

I gave up on it about an hour in. If this is the start of the Road to Wrestlemania, we're in for a long, long ride.

Results

Bad News Barrett b. Dolph Ziggler – Bull Hammer

Ascension b. ???/??? – Fall of Man to #1

Roman Reigns b. Big Show via DQ when Big Show used the stairs

Natalya b. Nikki Bella – Rollup

Luke Harper b. Erick Rowan – Discus lariat

Bray Wyatt b. Dean Ambrose – Wyatt threw Ambrose in the ambulance

Alicia Fox/Miz/Damien Mizdow b. Naomi/Usos – Rollup with a handful of tights

Big E. b. Adam Rose via DQ when Cesaro and Tyson Kidd interfered

Seth Rollins/Kane b. Ryback – Curb Stomp

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Reviewing the Review – Monday Night Raw: December 29, 2014

I needed some time to think about this one...and for the New Year but the former sounds better. This show ended the year and for once felt like something that was a much bigger deal than the last several weeks of shows. There's a simple yet overarching theme for this show which has one major outlier, but that's not necessarily a bad thing. Let's get to it.

Guest GM's Edge (wearing a Sami Zayn shirt, despite rumors that Zayn won't be on the main roster until 2016) and Christian opened things up and instantly showed more energy than most of the roster combined. There's a chemistry between them that few tag teams have ever had before. They made lame matches but Lesnar and Heyman came out to threaten the retired Canadians. Yes Christian, the guy that hasn't been able to go six months without being injured and barely ever wrestles anymore is retired. Why did this surprise anyone?

Cena came out and tried an AA on Lesnar but Brock bailed. This was a bit shorter than most opening segments but felt rather pointless. Stuff like spending two or three minutes setting up the Cutting Edge Peep Show for later really could have been cut out and just announced later on. It feels like they're just taking extra time because they can, and that makes for a very dull show. Also Lesnar really didn't need to be here for this segment as he came out, looked menacing and then ran when Cena tried the AA. How many thousands did he make for that?

Ziggler beat Rusev in a non-title champion vs. champion match that had the same problem as so many matches recently: the ending was obvious from the second the match was announced. This makes for some very dull moments, as instead of getting into a match and wondering about the drama, you're sitting there waiting for one of the guys to get counted out or disqualified. The match was good enough while it lasted, but I never got into any of the near falls.

Ryback made the save after the match and stayed in the ring after the

match. He gave a long speech about the story of his career, focusing on his leg injury that kept him out for over a year and how he has his dream job now, but wants to make Rusev his next meal. In about five minutes, Ryback has established a better connection with the fans that Roman Reigns has established in all the months he's been pushed.

He told us something about him that we may not have known and it's given us a reason to care about him. Even if it's something this simple, just talking to the fans for a minute instead of reading off some prepared statement that may or may not fit your character is going to do wonders for a lot of the guys. This wasn't anything profound, but it did more for Ryback than anything else he's done since he debuted. I'd really like to see more of this kind of thing from a lot of the wrestlers, especially if it means sacrificing some stupid comedy match or backstage segment that doesn't advance anything.

Nikki beat Natalya in just over a minute, making her entire run of fighting the Bellas a huge waste of time.

The Usos took the Tag Team Titles back from Miz/Mizdow in a surprising ending. My guess is this sets up Mizdow's face turn, but I really don't know how far he's going to go after that. It's the difference between something someone is doing getting over and that someone getting over. Sandow is getting reactions right now for imitating Miz, but what happens when he can't do that anymore?

Cesaro cut a Ravenesque promo talking about how the company says he doesn't connect with the fans. He doesn't care about connecting because all that matters is what he does inside this ring. That's an important line because he actually said these four ropes, so Cole spent the entire match burying him for the slip up. Stuff like that is what drives me crazy about WWE anymore. It's basically a bad comedy hour to get the announcers' characters over and if they have to bury the talent and ignore the promos and matches in the process, that's just fine.

Bad News Barrett returned to beat Cesaro, making the entire promo pointless anyway. If you didn't know it was a waste already, just listen to Cole rip on Cesaro for a simple slip of the tongue. I'd LOVE to ask

Vince why he's ok with that kind of commentary.

Luke Harper cut another great promo in the shadows, calling himself a nightmare come to life. These things are like 15 seconds long each and are absolutely chilling. He then beat Jack Swagger in a match that was much better than I was expecting. It still wasn't very good but it did its job very well.

Cena and Edge buried the hatchet to officially end their feud. Did anyone think it was still going? Apparently the writers did because this becomes something resembling a plot point later.

The long match of the night saw Roman Reigns beat Seth Rollins via DQ when Big Show interfered. I know a lot of people (myself included) haven't been thrilled with Reigns as he's scheduled to go to the top of the company, but no one can make a long feud with Big Show seem interesting. But again, he's a guy in his 40s who has been around forever and that makes him exactly the same as Shawn, Undertaker or HHH right?

Bray Wyatt said his usual stuff about the ambulance match with Ambrose next week. This is being billed as the end of their feud.

Daniel Bryan came out, teased the audience for a bit, and announced that he was going to continue his career and enter the 2015 Royal Rumble. This is GREAT news and not just from a wrestling perspective. The guy has worked so hard over the years and finally saw it pay off, only to almost have it all take away. He deserves this chance and I hope he's around for years to come. I smiled a lot when he said he's coming back and I'm sure a lot of other people did too.

Ascension debuted and squashed Miz/Mizdow. This was called a waste of time by some fans, but what else would you like them to do here?

The big ending to the show was the Cutting Edge Peep Show with guest Seth Rollins. Seth also brought out the Big Show before nailing Christian and putting Edge's head on the briefcase. He threatened to break Edge's neck unless Cena brought back the Authority, and that's where we need to stop for a little chat.

There are two ways of looking at this and thankful one is a bigger deal than the other. First of all, Seth Rollins looks like the epitome of EVIL here as he's threatening to cripple a husband and father for the sake of bringing back the Authority. This is how a heel is supposed to do things. Not with lawyers or winning because of a distraction, but by threatening to do horrible things to someone who can't defend himself. I loved that part and it made Rollins feel like a top heel.

The downside is he's basically doing all this so his big buddies can come back because he can't handle life without them around. Rollins goes from pure evil to a lapdog for the Authority because WE MUST PRAISE THE AUTHORITY EVERY CHANCE WE GET OR THEY MIGHT BE SAD AND DESTROY THE UNIVERSE! It gets very tiresome hearing Rollins, who has had the best 2014 of anyone, whine because the Authority is gone. It's ok to have someone get over without them, but WWE doesn't seem to see things that way.

Anyway, Cena allowed the Authority to come back but Rollins tried to cripple Edge anyway. That's more of that "pure evil" thing I was talking about. I even said to myself that if he's a real villain, he'll hurt Edge anyway, and that's exactly what he tried to do. The numbers beat Cena down though and Lesnar and Heyman came out to celebrate...and so did the Authority. Well of course they're here, just in case Rollins had some master plan to bring them back and Cena just happened to make up with Edge and wanted to save him.

So yeah the Authority is back, four weeks after we last saw them. I knew they were coming back at some point, but I really don't see the need for it to be this soon. Couldn't they have done this after the Rumble, giving them two months to prepare for Wrestlemania? Having them be in the back ruined whatever suspension of disbelief I can have in wrestling and it really got on my nerves. They're back though, and I'm sure dozens of people somewhere are thrilled by it.

Overall, I actually liked this show quite a bit for one simple reason: stuff actually happened. Instead of just rehashing the same Survivor Series matches over and over, we actually got some fresh stories and promo time from the wrestlers to let them build up their characters. The

ending was annoying but at least it's going to get us onto the Road to Wrestlemania. Give us more of the talking and character development and less of the repeats and we'll be in a much better place. Well that and cut out the extra hour but that goes without saying.

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