

Monday Night Raw – February 24, 2003 (2017 Redo): You Can Still Smell the Greatness

Monday Night Raw

Date: February 24, 2003

Location: Air Canada Centre, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Attendance: 10,000

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the night after No Way Out and that means it's time to start things shifting towards Wrestlemania. HHH defeated Scott Steiner last night to end their feud (thank goodness) and now he needs a new challenge for the titles. Other than that we have Steve Austin back tonight and it should be interesting to see how he holds up as a full time guy instead of someone just back for a stand alone appearance. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Here's a very banged up Eric Bischoff to say he's still standing even after Austin beat him up last night. As for tonight though, Austin is banned from the building, meaning he'll miss tonight's 20 man battle royal to crown a new #1 contender. Austin will be dealt with next week though when Bischoff has a special welcoming committee waiting on him. Even though Austin isn't here tonight, Bischoff has a special surprise: THE ROCK! It must be Wrestlemania season if they're ignoring the exclusive roster statuses like that.

Rock isn't pleased with the mixed reaction and says that he's FINALLY come back "Toron....Toron....to run his mouth all over" these people. Rock advises us to not boo until you hear what he has to say. Last night he did Vince a favor by taking care of Hogan, in return for being able to go wherever he wanted. Rock wanted to go to Raw in Toronto, Canada. The fans cheer of course so Rock rips them apart for cheering over something so stupid. Rock: "YAY! HE SAID TORONTO! THAT'S WHERE WE LIVE! SHUT UP!"

He wanted to come to Toronto because it's where the people turned on the People's Champion. Last year at Wrestlemania, 68,000 of you mother Canuckers booed the Rock out of the building. That strikes up a Hogan chant so Rock has to slowly explain that this isn't Smackdown. Rock wasn't about to forget last year, if that's what these people think. Then again, it doesn't matter what they think.

Then at the Raw Tenth Anniversary, they gave the Superstar of the Decade Award to Steve Austin. There's only one Superstar of the Decade and he's "stronger than a bear, faster than a buck, the biggest thing to hit Canada cause the MAPLE LEAFS SUCK!" The fans get in whatever insults they can and Rock is just basking in the hatred.

He's even going to enter the battle royal tonight and go on to Wrestlemania. Rock loads up IF YA SMELL but cuts them off in a rather deep voice. Rock: "YOU CAN'T SING ALONG WITH THE ROCK! NO! NO! NO MORE!" The Rock and the Rock alone gets to say IS COOKIN to wrap up one of the most amazing heel performances you'll ever see.

This was nothing short of outstanding with Rock completely destroying the entire arena in the span of ten minutes. He took some of the simplest ideas that makes a face promo work and turned them around on the fans with the MAPLE LEAFS SUCK clearly cutting them deeply. Rock came into this with complete confidence and sold every word of it to the point where he was suddenly the biggest heel in years. Watch this if you haven't seen it and take notes.

Jazz vs. Jacqueline

Victoria and Steven Richards are on commentary. They slug it out to start and head outside with Jackie taking over as Lawler is confused by Jackie's chest tattoo. Back in and Jazz gets two off some clotheslines and loads up a powerbomb. I'm not completely sure what happens next though as I think Jazz tried to drop her backwards and face first onto the mat but Jackie might have tried to reverse into a sunset flip, leaving her to just drop off to the side in what looked like a botch. Jazz takes her down by the leg and puts on the half crab into the STF for the tap.

Post match the lights go out and Trish makes her return to beat Jazz up. She was gone in the first place? Victoria tries to interfere and gets kicked in the face.

We see Test arriving at a Girls Gone Wild shoot. For some reason JR didn't know what GGW was despite the Girls Gone Wild boss showing up on Smackdown. Test goes to a club to pick the finalists for Miss Girls Gone Wild and shows off that awesome charisma (or he might just be really drunk).

Test and Maven are watching the clip with Test saying it makes up for all the stupid stuff Stacy has done. Apparently she didn't know what GGW was and isn't happy about it. Cue Stacy to accuse him of doing a few things he shouldn't have been doing. Chief Morely comes in and makes Test/Stacy vs. Chris Jericho/Christian.

We recap Goldust being electrocuted.

JR sits down with Goldust for his first comments. Goldust talks about Booker T. having his back....while randomly shouting and making noise because he now has Tourette's Syndrome. I'm assuming someone finds this funny and I'm not sure I want to see anything else they perceive as humor.

Kane vs. Lance Storm

Storm jumps on Kane's back for a choke and is quickly clotheslined out to the floor. Back in and a big boot sets up an elbow drop for no cover as this is one sided for Kane so far. Kane charges into a boot in the corner and eats a middle rope missile dropkick for two. Back to back chokeslams end Storm in a hurry.

Randy Orton's shoulder is healthy (99% at least) and he's back in the ring tonight.

Randy Orton/Batista vs. Booker T./Scott Steiner

Booker chops at Orton and forearms him down, only to have Flair trip Booker up to take over. Steiner chases Flair away but Batista comes in to work over Booker. Flair holds Booker in the corner so Orton can hammer

away, only to have Booker fire off the kicks to get a breather. A Flair distraction lets some double teaming bring Booker back into the corner though and we hit the bearhug.

Orton grabs a chinlock, only to have Booker fight up and hit the ax kick (Not the Spinarooni JR. That's bad even for him.). More double teaming keeps Booker in trouble so Steiner finally comes in without a tag and cleans house. Flair gets caught in the Recliner but Batista makes the save and spears Booker down. Orton adds the high crossbody but Booker rolls through for the pin.

Rating: D. Not a very good match but the really telling part here is the fact that Steiner never actually tagged in. The night before he was wrestling on pay per view for a World Title and he couldn't even get into a tag match here. You can tell they've completely pulled the plug on him and I'm actually surprised they even let him stand on the apron instead of swapping in ANYONE else, or just making this a singles match.

We recap Rock entering the battle royal. As in we show a fifteen second clip of it.

Chris Jericho/Christian vs. Stacy Keibler/Test

Stacy is in a cutoff Maple Leafs jersey and little white shorts so the sympathy is really turned up. Test leaves her on the ramp (Why not leave her in a hotel somewhere?) and charges in but Stacy gets on the apron anyway. Jericho pulls her down to send her face first into the apron and the double teaming begins. Chris grabs a chair and blasts Test for the DQ in less than 80 seconds.

With Test down, Jericho handcuffs him to the ropes and puts Stacy in the Walls. Jeff Hardy tries to make a save but gets beaten down, leaving Shawn Michaels to make the real save. Christian really didn't need to be there at all, save for making the odds a bit stronger. The silence for most of the beatdown segment was rather telling to put it mildly.

Post break Jeff is still in the ring when Christopher Nowinski comes out to call him a failure. Those are wrestling words.

Jeff Hardy vs. Christopher Nowinski

Jeff hits him and drops the Swanton for the pin at 13 seconds. Actually hang on as Jeff beats on Nowinski post match, drawing a reversal of decision.

Van Dam and Kane are ready for the battle royal but don't agree on who should win after they get rid of Rock.

Speaking of Rock, he's in a somewhat cramped dressing room and tells someone on the phone that Austin can come see him next week. Rock gets off the phone and grabs his guitar but cue Hurricane of all people. Hurricane chastises him for ripping on the people and wants to know whatsupwithdat. Rock wants to know who he is but realizes that it's the Hamburgler.

He's not impressed though because any superhero could beat Hurricane, even Aquaman. Rock: "Yeah the dude that talks to the fish." Hurricane knows he could beat the Scorpion King though. Rock: "OH NO YOU...!" Hurricane asks if Rock can fly and promises to make him fly over the top rope tonight. He leaves but Rock insists that losing to Brendan Fraser was just a special effect. Good stuff here as Rock clearly has no issue working with people way beneath him, which so many people can't say.

Jerry Lawler vs. Chief Morely

No DQ so just get the interference ready now. Morely hammers away to start as JR points out how much experience Lawler has. Lawler gets in a clothesline and knocks Morely outside as the YOU SCREWED BRET chants start up. Back in and Morely grabs a spinebuster to set up the Money Shot for no cover. Instead he goes for a chair but Hebner kicks it out of the ring for no apparent reason. Cue the Dudleys for a 3D and Lawler drops the middle rope fist for the pin.

Rating: D-. This is the second match of the night that made it to five minutes and they certainly didn't make use of the time. I have no idea what the point is in having the announcers fighting Bischoff's lackey but it's getting really annoying in a hurry. Lawler can work a brawl just fine but couldn't this be used for ANYONE else who could use a rub?

Lawler is a legend and won't be wrestling full time so who does this really help?

Evolution is ready for the battle royal and Orton wants Booker T.

Battle Royal

Chris Jericho, Al Snow, Booker T., Batista, Christian, Jamal, Rosey, Jeff Hardy, Kane, Lance Storm, Maven, Randy Orton, Rob Van Dam Rodney Mack, Scott Steiner, Steven Richards, Test, Hurricane, Tommy Dreamer, The Rock

Winner gets HHH at Wrestlemania. Jericho and Christian bail to the floor as Test gets in. A bunch of people go after Rock to star, leaving Jericho to dump Test. Geez bad night for him. Test goes back in and Jericho eliminates himself to run into the crowd. Van Dam kicks Jamal out and Rock gets rid of Dreamer and Maven.

Richards is out next as the crowd is rather silent. Again. Evolution gets rid of Van Dam, followed by Snow and Mack being eliminated. Hurricane slugs away at Rock but gets kicked low for his efforts. That's enough to get rid of Hurricane but Booker throws Rock through the ropes to the floor. They brawl on the outside (neither are eliminated) until Rock goes up and joins commentary.

Rock talks about JR's barbecue sauce as a production guy pokes his head out from underneath the stage in a funny visual. Orton backdrops Hardy out but Steiner gets rid of Randy. Batista gets rid of Steiner and Booker gets rid of Batista, leaving us with Booker, Christian, Kane, Rosey, Rock and Storm. Rosey and Storm of all people team up to beat on Kane as Rock mocks JR's hat.

Kane gets rid of Rosey and shrugs off some of Storm's horrible right hands. They're bad enough that Kane throws him out and Booker takes a chokeslam. Now Rock heads back to the ring and gets rid of Kane and Christian. Booker chops away but gets caught in a DDT. Rock loads him up but Booker reverses and throws Rock out for the completely clean win and the title shot.

Rating: D. Just a bad battle royal here though the ending was a good

call. Booker is the kind of guy who could get a major rub out of a win here and an even bigger one out of the Wrestlemania match. Eliminating Rock like he did was a perfect way to wrap things up as well, making this a good ending to a bad match.

Overall Rating: D. Let me make this clear to start: everything good about this show has to do with the Rock and everything bad has to do with almost everyone else. Rock is the ONLY good thing going on here and the lack of Austin was really bad. HHH wasn't there either but at least he was beaten up last night (kind of) to explain the absence.

The problem here was so much of the show being built around bad matches that didn't have any time to go anywhere. How much can you do when four matches aren't even three minutes long? You can tell they're getting ready for the Wrestlemania season and that means some improvements but sweet goodness there's some horrible stuff that they need to drop for the sake of stuff that could actually benefit from the extra attention.

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No Way Out 2003 (2017 Redo): Half and Lower Half

No Way Out 2003

Date: February 23, 2003

Location: Bell Centre, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Attendance: 15,100

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Tazz

It's time for another pay per view that is little more than a glorified pit stop before the real pay per view. At least this time around there are some major matches though, including Scott Steiner vs. HHH II and Rock vs. Hulk Hogan II, the latter of which is a little more interesting as Rock is a full on heel. Let's get to it.

There's no regular opening video this time as it's just the logo flying through what looks like a standard dungeon in a 90s PC game.

Jeff Hardy vs. Chris Jericho

This was originally going to be Test vs. Jericho but he missed a show earlier in the week and Jeff got the spot instead (thank goodness). Jericho armbars him to start but gets sent hard into the ropes for some right hands. A belly to back suplex cuts him off though and the fans are behind their Canadian hero. Jericho is quickly sent outside though and it's a springboard Whisper in the Wind to drop him again.

The apron run clothesline misses though and Jeff gets sent into the steps to slow things down. We hit the chinlock for a bit until Jeff fights up and sidesteps a charge to send Jericho into the post. A Codebreaker and DDT give Jeff two each but he misses an enziguri and it's off to the Walls. That goes nowhere so Jeff reverses another attempt into a small package for two.

A reverse Twist of Fate looks to set up the Swanton but Jericho rolls away, setting up the Lionsault for another near fall. Chris gets two off a sleeper drop with his feet on the ropes and heads up top. Jeff crotches

him down but the hurricanrana is countered into a superbomb, followed by the Walls to make Hardy tap.

Rating: B. Solid opener here with Jeff more than holding his own but not being ready to beat someone like Jericho on his own yet. The ending looked good too with Jeff finally giving up, especially after a huge move like the superbomb. Jeff would have his day, though the abandoned heel turn has left a few questions that aren't likely to be answered.

Jericho won't let go so Shawn Michaels runs in (to a chorus of boos) for the save. Christian comes in as well but it's a superkick for both Canadians. The fans like Shawn again.

Kurt Angle gives Team Angle a pep talk because this country has no Canadian heroes. They're not teaming up for the first time and losing to a walking gorilla and two Canucks. Kurt has an idea for an early advantage.

Evolution arrives and pass Austin's truck.

Raw Tag Team Titles: William Regal/Lance Storm vs. Kane/Rob Van Dam

Kane and Van Dam are challenging. For your stupid statement of the night (so far), Coach says Van Dam made his debut a year ago at No Way Out 2002. He was already a three time Hardcore Champion by that point. Van Dam grabs a headlock on Storm to start and kicks him down into the champs' corner.

Regal comes in and takes a spinning kick to the shoulder, followed by the split legged moonsault for two. Kane is so unscared of the champs that he takes Regal into Storm's corner to keep beating on him. Van Dam can't launch Rolling Thunder so he dives onto the champs instead. Back in and Rob gets shoved off the top and into the barricade, followed by Regal dropping him on his head with a half nelson suplex.

Storm grabs a DDT and a chinlock as the fans want Regal. A kick to the face allows the hot tag to Kane, who comes in with all of his usual. The chokeslam is loaded up but Storm twists Kane's mask around, which is completely irreversible for some reason. The blind Kane chokeslams Van

Dam to give Regal the pin.

Rating: D+. Basically a Raw match, which is the problem with so much of the tag division these days: these teams are thrown together and don't have a ton of chemistry together in the first place so they're not likely to have a very good match. This match wasn't terrible but Regal and Storm aren't thrilling in the first place and the ending was pretty stupid.

Van Dam isn't pleased.

Matt Hardy is being interviewed when Jeff stumbles by. Matt insults him and the Imag-I-Nation for losing all the time. Jeff slaps him in the face but Shannon Moore holds Matt back.

Cruiserweight Title: Matt Hardy vs. Billy Kidman

Matt, who is annoyed by snow and ice and takes hot tea with milk and sweetener, is challenging. Kidman gets armdragged down to start and we hit the jumping jacks. A hiptoss to the apron and a whip into the post put Kidman on the floor. Back in and a neckbreaker gets two and we hit a chinlock.

It's off to a front facelock as this is entirely one sided in the first five minutes. Tazz talks about banana juice which is likely a joke that I won't find funny. Kidman fights up but gets caught in the Ricochet for two. An enziguri gives Kidman a breather though in his first significant offense.

The BK Bomb gets two but Matt is right back with a clothesline and the middle rope legdrop. The Twist of Fate is countered into a rollup but a Shannon distraction sets up the Side Effect for two. Kidman comes right back with a Bodog but Shannon breaks up the shooting star. The distraction lets Matt grab a super Twist of Fate for the pin and the title.

Rating: C. Matt winning is completely the right call here as Kidman was another name on a long list of boring champions (partially because WWE won't do anything with the title). At least Matt has a ton of charisma and vignettes of him trying to keep the weight off could be entertaining

stuff.

Edge is out cold in the back with Benoit and Lesnar checking on him. In other words he needs neck surgery and would be out for over a year.

We recap Undertaker vs. Big Show. Undertaker was laid out back in the fall but returned at the Royal Rumble, wanting some revenge. This led to a series of segments where Show sent presents to Undertaker to fill in time before beating him down on Smackdown earlier this week. In other words, GET ON WITH IT ALREADY BECAUSE WE'VE SEEN THIS MATCH A TON OF TIMES AND IT DOESN'T NEED TO HAPPEN AGAIN!

Undertaker vs. Big Show

Show has Paul Heyman with him. Undertaker circles the bike around the ring and they start slugging it out until Show easily posts him to take over. They head inside with Undertaker kicking him in the head (more of a dropkick than anything else) and the apron legdrop makes it even better. The referee gets shoved down so Show punches a chair into Undertaker's head. As usual, this isn't a DQ because these are big hosses and you don't disqualify them.

A slam doesn't work as Show falls back onto him for two. Cole's analysis: it's tough to slam a 500lb man. Some slow elbows have Undertaker in trouble as we hear about Edge being taken to a hospital. With Heyman shouting that Show has him, Undertaker charges straight into a bearhug to stay on the bad back. A side slam gives Show two as Cole things Undertaker is trying to get Big Show to punch himself out.

Some headbutts bust Undertaker open with Cole pointing out how quiet the crowd is. That's not something you want to point out but at least a Taker chant brings them back a bit. Undertaker fights back with right hands and the running clotheslines in the corner, followed by a REALLY BIG CLOTHESLINE for two. Old School sets up the battle of the attempted chokeslams and it's a standoff. A low blow sets up a running DDT to drop Show for two.

Back up and Undertaker walks into a spinebuster to slow things down even more. A dragon sleeper has Show in trouble but of course Heyman offers a

distraction. Cue A-Train for a distraction but it's the Taker Dive to put both Heyman and A-Train down. Back in and a chokeslam gives Show...nothing as Undertaker pulls him into a triangle choke (not a great one either) to knock Show out for the win.

Rating: D. The match wasn't terrible but it went WAY longer than it needed to. This went on over fourteen minutes and would wind up being the longest match of the night. Undertaker vs. Big Show isn't the most interesting match in the world and after three to four months of build, I really need more than a slow power brawl that we've seen them have so many times.

Undertaker goes to grab a chair but walks into the Trainwreck (which Tazz calls the Derailer) to leave him laying.

Quick look at Edge being taken away.

Eric Bischoff and Chief Morely talk potential stipulations for Bischoff vs. Austin but Vince comes in and says it's one on one with anyone interfering being fired.

Kurt Angle/Team Angle vs. Brock Lesnar/Chris Benoit

How awesome did Angle look in the track suit with the hood up and the title on? Or just the track suits in general? Cole thinks Angle and company had SOMETHING to do with Edge being taken out. Benoit has on the Toothless Aggression shirt which was always good for a chuckle. Benjamin and Benoit start things off and hit the mat for a bit until Benoit whips him hard into the corner.

Haas comes in and gets to be stomped in the corner by Brock Lesnar. That's what you get for joining the team chum. Lesnar cleans house and stares Angle down, sending Kurt out to the floor. Team Angle's interference earns them another beating as Tazz tries to figure out what a Canuck is. Angle sneaks in for a choke on Brock and Shelton adds a superkick to take over.

Like any good heel, Angle comes in and stomps away before grabbing a chinlock with a grapevine. This goes on for a good while as the match

isn't exactly as energetic as you would expect from a match of this magnitude. Brock finally drives Angle into the corner for the break, which according to the Kurt Angle 24 special on the WWE Network, broke his neck AGAIN. You can see that he's very shaken up as he crawls over for the tag off to Benjamin, who gets elbowed in the face by the legal Benoit.

Everything breaks down and Benoit starts firing off German suplexes, including a now very scary one to Angle. Kurt is fine enough to run the corner for a belly to belly superplex on Benoit as we hit the second heat segment. It's off to Charlie for some stomping and a release belly to belly. Angle comes back in to start in on the arm and shoulder, followed by a front facelock.

Kurt looks fine for the most part here though it could just be adrenaline carrying him. Benoit's comeback is cut off by another German suplex and it's off to Shelton again. They're doing a very solid job of cutting the ring off here but I could go for a bit better choices of offense than stomping and the occasional suplex.

Benoit dropkicks Shelton down and the hot tag brings in Lesnar. Everything breaks down and Benoit reverses the ankle lock into a Crossface which is reversed into an ankle lock which is reversed into a Crossface until Haas makes the save. That's countered into another Crossface for the tap as Lesnar F5's Angle.

Rating: B-. This felt like it was waiting to get into the next gear and they never even attempted to get there. Maybe the lack of Edge really messed things up here but I'm glad they didn't go with Lesnar pinning Angle in the most likely finish. Having Benoit make Haas tap doesn't hurt anything and Lesnar beat Angle up at the same time so they helped most that forward a bit as well. This would fine for a big Smackdown main event but it doesn't do much on pay per view.

We recap HHH vs. Scott Steiner. They had one of the worst big matches of all time at the Royal Rumble and now we're having a rematch in a vain attempt to validate Steiner's main event push. HHH now has the full Evolution behind him so Steiner is fighting an even more uphill battle.

This gets the music video treatment, which is often the case with HHH matches. Eh I like Bring Me To Life so it's fine.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Scott Steiner

Steiner is challenging and HHH only has Flair in his corner. The champ also had a thigh injury coming in and his leg is heavily taped up. They go nose to nose to start and you can see the fans going off while Steiner shouts SHUT UP at no one in particular. Steiner sends him into the corner and the fans boo him out of the building.

The clothesline (with HHH falling before contact) sets up the Push-Up Elbow and the fans are just not having it from Steiner. He goes after the bandage (which Lawler thinks is illegal) before going with a leglock. The fans go into a STEINER SUCKS chant, which Coach thinks will mess with HHH. Steiner grabs a Figure Four but Flair offers a distraction and gets chased around a bit. HHH sends him into the steps to take over and the fans start the YOU SCREWED BRET chant at Earl Hebner.

Now it's the BORING chant, even though it's not that bad. HHH's neckbreaker gets two but he walks into the first belly to belly suplex, drawing the loudest booing of the match. HHH stops a charge with a boot but Hebner won't count with the feet on the ropes. Hebner won't disqualify him either so we get the traditional argument with the referee. Another belly to belly puts Steiner in control again and he hammers the champ's head.

The third belly to belly has me scared and a super Angle Slam gets two with Flair pulling Scott off the cover. The Steiner Recliner goes on and here's Orton for the distraction. Batista gets whipped into the steps and Steiner throws Orton on top of him before the rest of Evolution is FINALLY ejected. HHH gets in a belt shot for two, followed by the Pedigree to retain.

Rating: D-. Well it's still horrible, but this is Austin vs. Rock II by comparison to what they did back in January. This match is a mess in its own right but Steiner only threw a handful of suplexes and the match was a manageable thirteen minutes instead of pushing twenty like the original. The fans were ready this time too and it made the match a lot

more odd than bad. It's certainly bad of course but it's nothing as bad as what we saw at the Rumble.

Various wrestlers laugh at Bischoff.

We recap the kind of confusing Eric Bischoff vs. Steve Austin massacre. Vince gave Bischoff thirty days (which turned into less than four weeks) to turn Raw around or be fired. This turned into an obsession with bringing Austin back, which became the only possible way to turn Raw around. Bischoff then went on a wild goose chase to find Austin until Jim Ross got Austin to agree to show up. Apparently Vince agreed that signing Austin back to Raw would save Bischoff's job but Eric had to fight him first. That's how we got here, despite it not being close to thirty days.

Jim Ross comes out for commentary.

Eric Bischoff vs. Steve Austin

Bischoff, in his karate gear, begs for mercy and offers to help Austin make a fortune. That goes as well as you would expect as Austin, in jean shorts, takes him down and stomps away to quite the reaction. Austin takes off Bischoff's gloves, allowing Eric to rake the eyes. A kick to the chest has no effect, because former professional martial artists are worthless once they become authority figures. Austin takes him to the floor for another beating and hits three Stunners for the pin. JR, of course, loses it.

Rating: D-. There's your Raw main event people and it was about what had to be expected. Austin looked good in a short burst like this but he wasn't very interesting when he left in the first place and that's not a good sign going forward. Austin vs. just about anyone on Raw at the moment doesn't sound too appealing (Austin vs. HHH would be their best option and that sounds rather boring) but maybe he's the shot in the arm that Raw needs, at least in the short term.

Austin hits another Stunner for good measure.

We recap Rock vs. Hulk Hogan. After a look at last year's Wrestlemania dream match, we shift to the real story of Vince vs. Hogan. They've been

arguing over who created Hulkamania so Vince brought Hollywood Rock in to deal with Hogan, setting up the rematch. Oh and Hulk called Rock a Rock-A-Jabroni.

The Rock vs. Hulk Hogan

Rock debuts his long form Hollywood entrance, complete with a helicopter flying over the city until we hear Rock starting with the catchphrases. Hogan's entrance seems to take Rock aback so he jumps Hogan to start, only to get knocked outside. We're already in the stall until Hogan goes outside to throw some right hands. Back in and Rock can't send him into the buckle as Cole points out that the referee, Sylvan Grenier, is from Montreal. That can't end well.

More right hands send Rock outside but he snaps Hogan's throat across the top. A quick Rock Bottom gets two and the stunned Rock puts on Hogan's bandanna. Rock grabs the weightlifting belt and administers a whipping, only to stop to grab some water. The hydration break allows Hogan to get in a few whips of his own. That goes badly for Hogan as he gets caught in a DDT to set up the Sharpshooter.

Hogan gets the rope but gets pulled back to the middle, with Grenier not bothering to break the hold. Egads it's going to be a screwy referee in Montreal isn't it? Two arm drops set up a wagging finger though and Hogan kicks Rock out to the floor to escape. They head outside for more brawling with neither guy being able to hit a chair shot. Grenier takes it away from Hogan, allowing Rock to hit a low blow. The announcers are going out of their way to talk about the referee here.

A spinebuster sets up the People's Elbow, including Rock throwing in a Hogan pose before dropping the elbow. That means Hulk Up time with the big boot and legdrop getting...nothing as the lights go out. They come back on to reveal...Grenier out cold next to a chair. Cole: "How did that chair get into the ring?" Hogan brought it in five minutes ago you dingbat.

Here's Vince of course and we hit the YOU SCREWED BRET chants. Grenier slips Rock the chair to knock Hogan silly and the Rock Bottom gives Rock the pin. Cole calls it a screwjob because Montreal is a thing that happened and we'll make sure you never forget it and then mock you for

being wrestling fans who remember things.

Rating: D. Rock was doing everything he could here but there's only so much you can do to get around Hogan being so far over the hill that he's at the bottom of a lake, plus a stupid story. The fact that this is about to set up Hogan vs. McMahon tells you everything you need to know: Rock comes back as one of the best heels in years but he's a lackey for Vince vs. Hogan. Of course he is.

Post match Rock leaves so Vince can get in his big joke: a Hogan shirt with NOTHING written underneath "Whatcha Gonna Do?". A bloody Hogan stares Vince down to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. There's some good stuff in there to help balance out the bad but the second half of this show is one horrible match after another. The better matches weren't exactly pay per view quality, at least partially due to the amount of time they had. As mentioned the longest match was just over fourteen minutes, which likely has something to do with the shot barely breaking two and a half hours. The short length helps when the big matches were so bad but I don't get why some of the good stuff couldn't have been a bit longer.

Other than that though, it's the same problem that so many B show have, especially the ones right before a major pay per view: it feels like nothing more than a pit stop before we get to the really important show. That was the case here, with the handicap match and the main event just feeling like a way to get to the Wrestlemania match. If this show doesn't feel important, why am I supposed to care? Bad show here, but it's only because of a specific half of the show.

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Monday Night Raw – February 17, 2003 (2017 Redo): No Way In Either

Monday Night Raw

Date: February 17, 2003

Location: Nationwide Arena, Columbus, Ohio

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the go home Raw for No Way Out and thankfully Scott Steiner vs. HHH II doesn't feel like it's anywhere near the biggest thing on the show anymore. Unfortunately what is the biggest story on this show is the chance that Steve Austin will be here on Sunday, which leaves a bunch of talking and nothing to see building up to the show. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

Lance Storm vs. Rob Van Dam

Warmup for Sunday's Tag Team Title match. Storm cartwheels out of a monkey flip but gets kicked in the face for his efforts. A middle rope crossbody gives Rob two so Storm sends him into the corner for some right hands. After telling the referee that he has until five, Storm gets caught with a spinwheel kick for two more as the crowd is rather silent for this. You don't often get that with a Van Dam match.

Storm is right back with a chinlock but Rob comes back with even more

kicks for another near fall. The Maple Leaf doesn't last long as Rob gets to the ropes and comes back (again) with kicks and Rolling Thunder. Regal tries to break up the Five Star but has to deal with Kane. The distraction lets Storm get up and try a superplex, only to be shoved down so the Five Star can finish him off.

Rating: C-. Rob didn't seem interested in trying here as it was almost all kicks plus Rolling Thunder and the Five Star. Normally he'll add in a little more than that for the sake of some flavor but this was pretty dull stuff. At least the right team won before we get to the title match on Sunday.

Shawn Michaels and Jeff Hardy are in the back with Shawn complaining about the airline losing his bag. Eric Bischoff comes up so they wish him luck against Austin on Sunday. That's not cool with Eric for some reason and he threatens the two of them, saying they'll need luck later.

Here's Bischoff to say there's someone here in Columbus who needs to be addressed. It's Chief Morely, who is reinstated as Bischoff's Chief of Staff. Bischoff doesn't want to hear about the fans, nor does he want smiles from Shawn and Hardy. Actually, let's just have Shawn and Jeff team up to face Chris Jericho and Christian in a No DQ match.

As for the Dudleyz, they've been suspended and thrown out of the building. We see a clip of them being thrown out so Bischoff makes Spike vs. 3 Minute Warning and Rico. Finally, Bischoff brags about his martial arts skills and wants to showcase them a bit. Therefore, tonight it's Bischoff vs. STONE COLD STEVE AUSTIN.....'s best friend Jim Ross! You can hear the crowd die as soon as he said best friend and with good reason.

This is more of the same story we've been seeing: Bischoff and Morely being all evil and messing with the same people while Austin will certainly be here one day. Last week Vince did various things to Bischoff and now we're right back where we were Vince showed up last week. Why would I want to keep watching if they keep bringing us back to this same point over and over again?

Steven Richards tries to get Victoria to talk to Jazz before their tag match. They finally do talk, but Jazz just threatens to take the title.

Jazz/Victoria vs. Molly Holly/Jacqueline

Jazz drops Molly in a hurry so it's off to Victoria, who gets small packaged for two. Victoria starts choking as Lawler mocks Molly's attire (it's not the best, basically pants and a regular top). The slingshot legdrop is loaded up but Jazz tags herself in before Victoria can use it, much to the champ's chagrin. A splash misses though and it's off to Jackie to clean house. Jazz sends her into Victoria though and finishes with a DDT.

Rating: D. Just like earlier, the crowd completely died for this one as Jazz and Jackie may be tough but she's not interesting. Molly is talented but doesn't have charisma, leaving Victoria who is crazy and gets your attention but is a heel, leaving no one for the fans to care about in the whole thing.

Jazz beats on Molly as well and has the staredown with Victoria to a grand non-reaction.

We look back at Goldust being electrocuted.

Booker T. says Goldust will be back in a few weeks but he's having neurological issues and isn't right. As for tonight though, Booker is ready to fight Batista and Randy Orton for making fun of Goldust's condition.

Evolution makes fun of Goldust and preps for the tag match tonight.

JR and King mention the passing of Mr. Perfect and we get the video tribute. Thankfully they include Perfect doing all the sports, which he really could do....if the camera wasn't on. Apparently he would mess up while the cameras were on so the director kept having to lie about them being off so he could do them right.

Here's Teddy Long with the debuting Rodney Mack, who used to be known as Red Dawg on Smackdown. It seems that Long has gotten rid of D'Lo Brown for not being able to handle the man. Tonight it's Mack vs. Al Snow. Teddy: "Did I say Snow? It don't get no whiter than that!" See, Snow has the same chance tonight as a black man ever has of being President.

Rodney Mack vs. Al Snow

Snow charges in and gets stomped down as Teddy preaches the virtues of backing the Mack. The Snow Plow connects but Al goes up for a moonsault for no apparent reason, only to hit knees. A double underhook driver/powerbomb (imagine a double arm DDT but Mack pushed him forward a bit and let him go so the back of Snow's head crashed to the mat) gives Mack the pin.

Jericho and Christian have a discussion about screaming girls and sexy beasts. A surprise is promised for Shawn. Jericho swats his gum away ala Mr. Perfect because Jericho is cool like that.

Shawn Michaels/Jeff Hardy vs. Chris Jericho/Christian

No DQ and Lillian sounds like she's in a tunnel for the entrances. Shawn is in street clothes due to the airline losing his bag but he's able to crotch Christian against the post to start. The announcers try to figure out Jeff's heel turn, even though it doesn't seem to actually exist anymore.

Jeff gets dropped in the ring though, leaving Shawn to take a double teaming on the floor. That's not all though as Shawn gets handcuffed to the bottom rope rung, making this a handicap match, complete with tags because agents don't understand No DQ matches. Christian chokes away with the boot and cuts off Hardy's comeback with the reverse DDT.

Jericho decides to taunt Shawn with the key before ripping Shawn's shirt off and whipping his chest with a belt. A quick Whisper in the Wind drops Christian though and Jeff gives Shawn the key. Jericho eats a superkick and Christian gets slammed off the top, followed by a good looking dive. Now Jericho comes back in with a chair, only to have it superkicked into his face. The Swanton finishes Jericho.

Rating: C. We're building to Shawn vs. Jericho so Chris gets pinned in this match when Christian is RIGHT THERE? And for what? The sake of pushing Hardy, who doesn't even have a pay per view match at the moment? Then again Jericho is facing Test of all people at No Way Out so I have no idea what they're thinking at this point.

Jericho flips out in the back and wants Hardy, who hasn't won a match in four months. Two actually but I think the point stands.

Hurricane vs. Christopher Nowinski

During Hurricane's entrance, we see Bischoff's announcement about facing JR. Did they really have to get that in again? The fans think Harvard suck but barely react when Hurricane catches him with a clothesline. Hurricane sends him to the floor for a slingshot hurricanrana as Lawler tries to explain that Nowinski was so popular at Harvard that no one liked him. Back in and they trade rollups until Hurricane misses the Blockbuster. A modified spinebuster gives Nowinski two but the Eye of the Hurricane puts him away.

Rating: D. These are the kind of guys who could benefit from having the Intercontinental Title around. Not that they would be champion or even serious contenders for it, but you could buy them as trying to get into the title hunt. No one is going to buy them as World Title contenders though, making this nothing more than filler otherwise. A midcard title is a conceivable goal for someone like Hurricane but without it, he's just kind of there for random matches like this one.

Morely makes fun of JR (how original) while Bischoff warms up. They're ready to see Spike Dudley get beaten up.

Spike Dudley vs. Rico/3 Minute Warning

There's nothing to say here: Spike gets beaten up for three and a half minutes with every single move you would expect from these three. A splash from Jamal lets Rico get the pin (while grabbing tights). This is a thing that happened and we're moving on.

No Way Out rundown.

Scott Steiner gives a shockingly normal interview about Sunday. HHH says he's the best but he couldn't beat Steiner so Steiner must be the best. He'll prove it on Sunday when he wins the title. Booker comes up to exchange catchphrases.

Scott Steiner/Booker T. vs. HHH/Batista

Booker throws HHH (with his taped thigh) around to start and gets two off a backdrop. The jumping knee drops Booker though and it's off to Batista for some clubbing forearms. Steiner comes in and glares at HHH but stops to go after Flair, allowing HHH to jump him from behind.

Orton gets in a few cheap shots on the floor, sending JR into a funny rant about how long Orton has been on the shelf with a shoulder injury. Back in and Steiner has to fight out of the sleeper for the hot tag to Booker so house can be cleaned. Everything breaks down and Steiner beats up Evolution, leaving Booker to ax kick HHH for the surprise pin.

Rating: D. Nothing to see here but it's nice that they're not even trying to hide the fact that Steiner is DONE in the main event and Sunday is just a formality. Booker seems to be the next challenger for the title, which would have been better a few months ago but at least it seems to be happening.

Bischoff comes out for the match with JR but first he has to beat up some boards and watermelons.

Eric Bischoff vs. Jim Ross

Coach is on commentary. Eric makes it no holds barred and does the Karate Kid pose so JR hits him in the face, drawing in Morely for the beatdown. Morely puts a cinder block next to JR's head for the big kick and JR is out. Cue Lawler for the save attempt but Morely beats him down, leaving Bischoff to pin the bloody JR with a kick.

Rating: F. This wasn't a match and that's about what was expected. I know Bischoff is all cocky because he has Val Venis in his corner and knows karate but this is reaching a pretty low point in stupid evil boss history. At least Vince would hire a big name or some monster to fight for him. Morely isn't enough and it's not exactly a secret.

Bischoff drinks beer in Austin fashion to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. Raw is in big trouble at the moment and I'm not sure if Austin is the solution. To be fair though, a lot of the problem is talking about Austin all the time despite him never showing up on TV.

This show was a lot of filler and a lot of Bischoff and that really doesn't make for a good two hours. Another lame show this week but now it's just directionless and boring instead of horrible and I guess that's a step up (I think?).

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

Monday Night Raw – February 10, 2003 (2017 Redo): The Business Meeting Show

Monday Night Raw

Date: February 10, 2003

Location: Staples Center, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're officially in the Evolution Era and less than two weeks away from No Way Out, meaning Scott Steiner vs. HHH II. Why we're doing that is anyone's guess but I would assume a lot of liquor was involved. There

isn't much else set on the Raw side but we'll likely remedy that tonight. Let's get to it.

In Memory of Curt Hennig. That's an especially sad one.

We get a long recap of the Bischoff Needs to Fix Raw angle, which seems to be culminating tonight because WWE can't count to thirty.

Here's a nervous looking Bischoff to open things up. Eric hasn't heard from Steve Austin about No Way Out and that means he might be in trouble. Vince McMahon is on his way here tonight and there's a good chance that he's going to get fired. Eric starts sucking up to the fans and then demands their support. The old villains never learn.

Until Vince gets here, Eric is going to do whatever he wants to do and he's going to start with the commentary team. Jim Ross seems to have almost guaranteed that Austin will be back but now it's not happening. Eric thinks JR could do more and blames him for Austin not signing. JR suggests that Austin just hates Eric for firing him from WCW (there's a reference that not many people will get) so Eric fires him.

During the break, a limo arrived with Eric waiting outside, only to find Evolution instead of Vince.

Since Lawler is on his own, he plugs his book in something that fits Lawler so perfectly.

Christian vs. Test

Test takes him down and rams his head into the mat a few times as Lawler tries to figure out how to do JR's job. Christian snaps Test's neck across the ropes as Jonathan Coachman comes out to join commentary. The pumphandle slam is countered into a reverse DDT for two on Test as Lawler is instantly better with someone to talk to. Test misses the big boot but hits the full nelson slam for the pin.

Rating: D. The story is helping Test a bit but that doesn't make his matches any better. At least it's not the same unfunny Testicles jokes over and over again, which were much more stupid than anything else. I can't imagine they'll put Test over Jericho in the eventual blowoff match

but at least he's getting a win here.

Christian takes Test out post match but Jeff Hardy of all people comes in to save Stacy.

JR tries to get in touch with Austin.

We recap Booker T. and Goldust splitting last week in a rushed yet emotional moment. Then Evolution electrocuted Goldust later in the night because reasons. On a well run show, this would lead to Booker/Goldust vs. Evolution but they don't seem smart enough to pull that off at the moment.

Booker T. vs. D'Lo Brown

Yeah they're not that smart. Booker dedicates this to Goldust but Brown and Teddy Long cut him off. Teddy says Goldust is another white man holding the man down and suggests a team with D'Lo. Booker opts to chop and punch away in the corner instead until Brown leg lariats him down. The side kick (clearly not making contact) sets up the ax kick to give Booker the easy win.

Jericho asks for a match with Jeff Hardy.

Jazz vs. Molly Holly

Molly goes right after her and has as much luck as you would expect with Jazz easily taking her down into a cross between the Muta Lock and Cattle Mutilation. Rolling butterfly suplexes get two on Molly as Lawler tries to figure out JR's job status. A half crab cuts off Molly's comeback and the STF puts her away without too much effort.

Rating: C. I'm not a big Jazz fan but she beat the heck out of Molly here and made it look awesome. Sometimes you need someone tough and awesome who can beat the heck out of various opponents. The problem is the division isn't exactly deep right now and Jazz is probably already the #1 contender after winning one match. Not that she's not undeserving of it but I could go with dedicating more time to set things up.

Jazz gives her the double chickenwing faceplant and the STF.

Steve calls JR. Fink comes up and asks what's going on but that was Steve from Oklahoma, not Austin.

Kane/Rob Van Dam vs. 3 Minute Warning

Van Dam starts with Jamal and is quickly shoved off the top and onto the barricade in a big crash. Rosey gets in some clubbing forearms but heel miscommunication allows the hot tag to Kane. House is quickly cleaned and Rolling Thunder gets two on Rosey. A chokeslam into the Five Star puts Jamal away.

Rating: D. Just a step above a squash here as 3 Minute Warning somehow gets even less interesting and valuable every single week. I really don't know why they're even still on Raw other than filling in time. Kane and Van Dam are working as the oddball team and it gives them something to do, which in a way is a lot more important than having good matches.

Vince arrives and wants to know why JR is in the parking lot.

Here's Vince in the ring for the big speech of the week. He wastes no time in calling down Bischoff and Chief Morely. Coach: "It's been a long thirty days." Actually it's been a short 21 days. Starting with Morely, he hasn't met any of the goals that Vince has set for him. He's not getting fired immediately though, because he has a chance to keep his job. All he has to do is win a match against all three Dudley Boyz.

Morely goes to get ready so Vince asks if Bischoff has signed Austin, which apparently became the saving grace move off camera. Vince says Eric would have saved his job if he had signed Austin but Bischoff pleads his case. By that he means bringing out lesbians for HLA. But wait, because these aren't just regular lesbians but rather bisexual lesbians. Since that's one heck of an oxymoron, Vince fires him anyway. Vince even leads the Goodbye Song on the way out and throws in the maniacal strut.

William Regal and Lance Storm suck up to Vince after a break and he announces a new GM being hired tonight.

Chief Morely vs. Dudley Boyz

The trio wastes no time in starting the beating with a double flapjack

and overhand chops in the corner. There's a Samoan drop before the trio just stomps him down in the middle. A whip sends Morely into the steps and they bounce off his head for good measure. The Dudley Dog and 3D finally end the massacre.

Rating: D. It's pretty unfair to rate this but obviously this was more about the angle than the "match". This is all it needed to be though as the Dudleyz have been screwed over by Morely and Bischoff for weeks now and it's time for them to get something back. They kept it quick though and this accomplished its goal. Morely deserves some credit here too as he sold everything really well.

Morely goes through a table for good measure.

Bischoff offers JR a handshake but he tells Eric to go clean out his desk.

Batista vs. Tommy Dreamer

Batista Bomb and we're done in 22 seconds.

Booker T. comes in for the post match save but Scott Steiner makes the real save.

Jeff Hardy nods at Shawn Michaels but says nothing.

Stacy has a new idea for Test: some personal appearances with GGW. Yes, that would be Girls Gone Wild.

Bischoff is packing up his office (as he does every week) but the Dudleyz come in to sing the Goodbye Song again.

Chris Jericho vs. Jeff Hardy

Jeff's headlock doesn't get him anywhere so Jericho forearm him in the face to take over. Hardy gets tossed over the top but Jericho misses a dive for a crash on the floor. Jeff sends him into the steps but gets crotched on the way back inside. A backbreaker keeps Jeff in trouble and Jericho bends the back over his knee to make things even worse.

Jeff's comeback is cut off by a clothesline and we hit the chinlock with

a knee in the back as the crowd is really not interested so far. Back up and Jericho goes shoulder first into the post, though his leg is fine enough for an enziguri to take over again. The Walls go on but are quickly broken with Jeff taking him down in a hurry. The Swanton gets two with Jericho getting his foot on the ropes. Jericho has had enough now and grabs the Walls for the tap, which Jeff has to do three different times before the referee stops the match.

Rating: C. Jeff is on another planet at this point and it's becoming clear that he's not getting much better anytime soon. I have no idea what happened with the heel turn from last week but he's about as much of a face as you can be this time around. Jericho was doing what he could here but that was only going to get him so far.

Evolution is on the way to the strip to celebrate but Vince cuts them off, saying the new GM is about to be announced. Next week, it's going to HHH/Batista vs. Booker T./Scott Steiner.

Here's Vince to announce the new GM. Jim Ross comes out but Vince says it's not him. Bischoff comes out behind JR, who says Austin WILL BE at No Way Out. That means JR is reinstated....and so is Bischoff, assuming he's will to join Vince's signature Club (complete with Vince making it do tricks). Eric says no way so Vince puts him in a match with Austin at No Way Out to end the show. Somehow everything from the announcement of the club to the end of the show took nearly eight minutes.

Overall Rating: D. The wrestling wasn't all that great but even worse than that is the whole Bischoff junk. Ignoring the fact that they apparently can't count to thirty, there's the fact that this story has been little more than "Sorry fans, but your rattlesnake is on another show." Raw has become a mess as of late, though at least this week didn't focus on Steiner, who has been shifted to more of a glorified afterthought role. That's better for everyone, though it still doesn't make for a good show.

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Monday Night Raw – February 3, 2003 (2017 Redo): I Waited Thirteen Years For This?

Monday Night Raw

Date: February 3, 2003

Location: MCI Center, Washington D.C.

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's always cool to have a show from my birthday. We're coming up on No Way Out and that means HHH needs a challenger for the World Title. That will be set up tonight as Scott Steiner faces Chris Jericho in a #1 contenders match. Given that Steiner won at the Royal Rumble and JR immediately talked about there being NO WAY OUT, this shouldn't be too complicated. Let's get to it.

Eric Bischoff is in his limo in San Antonio to sign Steve Austin. Chief Morley is in charge tonight but they can't hear each other. I have no idea if this was supposed to be funny but egads we're in trouble if that's what passes for comedy. This was aired properly on the Network version but the Spanish audio bled over and drowned Bischoff out in the

original broadcast.

Opening sequence.

Here are Stacy Keibler and Test, the former of whom is back from nearly being hit in the head by a chair. She says being hit was just an accident but she needs to be more careful. An apology from Chris Jericho would have made things better but Test wants Jericho out here right now.

This brings out Jericho to say he has more important things to worry about tonight. Test, showing the best acting skills of his career, says Jericho has five seconds to apologize or he's coming up the ramp. The time passes but Christian comes in from behind to shove Test into Stacy. Test gets back up and beats the heck out of Christian before tending to Stacy.

Rob Van Dam and Kane nearly get into an argument over Kane leaving Van Dam last week. Kane goes into a rant about how Van Dam doesn't know what it's like to be him. Van Dam: "So all your power is in your mask?" Morley comes in and makes a match between the two of them for later.

Test and Stacy leave.

Dudley Boyz vs. 3 Minute Warning

Hang on as Morley makes Rico guest referee. The Samoan Bucks hit double superkicks to start but Rosey misses a split legged moonsault. The Doomsday Device drops Jamal for the slow two so they loads up 3D on Rosey. Not that it matters as Jamal grabs a rollup for the fastest count in recorded history and the pin.

With Spike's help, Rico gets put through a table.

Bischoff is trying to find Austin but doesn't have his address. He does however have a dumb limo driver who says he'll get Bischoff to Austin's house if he has the right address.

Back from a break with a countdown clock to Bischoff getting fired as they've entirely given up on the 30 days thing. They would have known that 30 days were up on a Wednesday so why not just say four weeks? Is a

calendar too complicated of an idea?

Tommy Dreamer comes out for a match but HHH and company come out to destroy him instead. HHH says everything evolves and calls this group the greatest example of evolution in wrestling history. He brags about how awesome the whole team is and declares himself the one true diamond in the business. After introducing Batista, he describes Orton as the diamond. He really can't go three minutes without using the same terms to describe someone? They hammer in the evolution name again and wrap things up. Evolution is a good enough name and "Evolution has just passed you by" was a pretty solid catchphrase.

Steiner is ready to deal with Evolution the only way he knows how. Riddling them with math problems?

Evolution is in a private box.

Bischoff goes to a house and finds...someone named Buford, who tells him that Austin is at a bar in nearby Bandera. Somehow this takes three minutes.

Victoria vs. Molly Holly

Non-title. Victoria goes for a full nelson to start but gets shouldered down without too much effort. The spinning side slam gives Victoria two but Molly slips out of the Widow's Peak. Molly can't hit the handspring elbow so the second attempt at the Widow's Peak puts her away in a hurry. Not bad while it lasted actually.

Post match Jazz comes in to take Molly out. Victoria gets in Jazz's face and Richards is shoved away but nothing happens.

Goldust tells Booker that if they don't win the Tag Team Titles back tonight, Booker needs to go his own way because the team is holding them back. Booker is all fired up to win the titles.

Tag Team Titles: Booker T./Goldust vs. William Regal/Lance Storm

Regal and Storm are defending. Goldust and Storm get things going and the drop down into the right hand puts Lance down. Booker comes in to stay on

the arm as the announcers talk about the bar Bischoff is heading for. It's off to Regal who eats a forearm and kick to the face for two, followed by Goldust armdragging Storm down again.

Regal forearms Goldust in the back though and the evil champions take over. We hit the cravate to slow down an already slow match but Goldust fights up and cleans house on his own. The powerslam gets two as everything breaks down. Storm shoves Goldust into Booker though and a leg lariat gives Storm the clean pin to retain.

Rating: D. Goldust and Booker might be an entertaining team but they've gone ice cold in recent weeks. It doesn't help when Goldust is losing in less than six minutes to a standard leg lariat. It's clear that the team is done at this point, save for a long form story to build them back up. The match wasn't very good but at least Booker doesn't lose any face at the end of the match.

Booker tells Goldust he has nothing to feel sorry about and agrees to go their separate ways. They hug and raise hands, despite the team really not needing to split up so soon.

Bischoff goes into the bar and gets laughed out of the room for ordering a martini. Naturally Austin has come and gone already, heading for another bar down the street. Given that, as of 2010, Bandera had a population of 827, I can't imagine that's a very long street so this shouldn't take the 15-20 minutes that it's likely going to take. I also can't imagine why a place with a smaller population than my neighborhood needs at least two bars.

Rob Van Dam vs. Kane

Kane clotheslines him during the finger poke for two and it's an early standoff. A spinning kick drops Kane but it's way too early for Rolling Thunder. Instead it's a no hands dive over the top to put them both down on the floor. Back in and Kane grabs a side slam for two but the chokeslam is broken up by a kick to the head. Now is the right time for Rolling Thunder with Kane sitting up and kicking Rob in the face. The top rope clothesline knocks Van Dam silly but it's just goldbricking so he can fire off more kicks. Not that they matter as here's Jeff Hardy to go

after Rob for the DQ.

Rating: D+. They didn't have time to go anywhere (a common theme tonight) and the ending was awful. Kane vs. Van Dam could be a good match/feud if they're given more than four minutes and something more of a story. They seemed to have some chemistry out there for a little while but Jeff coming in was a really lame idea.

Jeff gets demolished with the usual.

Booker can't find Goldust. Did Booker stop off for a taco and fish plate when they both left the arena earlier?

Post break, Jeff is still out in the ring when Shawn Michaels joins him. Since Chris Jericho already has something going on, Shawn is going to give Jeff some free advice. Jeff is frustrated and angry at the world. Shawn has been there before, like fifteen years ago (it was just over eleven) when he put Marty Jannetty through the barbershop window. Hardy is at the point where he needs to make a decision.

Shawn wants to know who Jeff Hardy is. Jeff needs to find out in a hurry, which doesn't seem to please him. Hardy promises to start taking people out, starting with Shawn. One Sweet Chin Music later and Jeff is out again. I have no idea how this is supposed to help Jeff and I don't think WWE does either.

Sean O'Haire doesn't think you should pay taxes.

Maven vs. D'Lo Brown

Feeling out process to start with Brown getting headlocked to the mat. Brown fights up for a bit but gets sent hard into the corner, allowing Maven to come back with the kind of offense you would expect from someone of his ability level. When your high spots are a dropkick and a backslide, you might not be ready for Raw. D'Lo avoids a missile dropkick and finishes with the Sky High.

Rating: D-. If they think this is the way to elevate Brown, they're better off with having Jeff Hardy take three finishers over two segments. The match was exactly what you would have expected here and that's not a

good sign, especially with how boring a lot of this show has been so far.

Long tries to get a DOWN WITH THE BROWN chant going and gets....nothing, with JR pointing that out for us.

HHH sends Orton and Batista to deal with Steiner.

Bischoff goes into another bar, doesn't find Austin, gets insulted by a redneck and hits said redneck with a beer glass. Eric gives up trying to find Austin, making this whole thing completely pointless.

Orton and Batista find Goldust (Why couldn't Booker find him earlier?) and after making fun of him, beat him into the arena and toss him into electrical equipment. Goldust is electrocuted and we get the serious voices as he does a stretcher job.

Scott Steiner vs. Chris Jericho

Winner gets HHH at No Way Out. Jericho hides to start (probably his best idea) and gets one off an early rollup. They take turns hammering away in the corner with Steiner firing off the chops. A clothesline into the push-up elbow gets two but Chris grabs the referee to block an early belly to belly. They head outside with Steiner going into the steps (Steiner: "OW!") and Jericho cranks on both arms back inside.

Something like a powerslam drops Jericho though and there's the first belly to belly. A powerbomb gets two (with Steiner nearly dropping him) and Jericho rolls him up with his feet on the ropes for the same. The Walls don't last long (well duh) so Jericho snaps him throat first across the top. Steiner catches him on the top though and a super Samoan drop sends Steiner to the pay per view.

Rating: D. The match could have been much worse had Steiner been on offense any more than he was. This was as much of Jericho doing his thing and trying to hold things together as he could and that was their best option. They were also smart to keep this especially short as Steiner has proven to be untrustworthy in longer matches as of late. That being said, WHY IN THE WORLD ARE WE SEEING HHH VS. STEINER AGAIN????? How could anyone watch that mess and then expect it to be anything good the second

time around? I know I say this company makes no sense but egads this is a really bad idea.

Vince comes in to see Morely and says if he's not impressed next week, Bischoff and Morely are fired.

Overall Rating: F. Between the horrible matches, the completely unnecessary splitting up of Goldust and Booker T., the wasting of any good feeling from the split for the sake of electrocuting Goldust and Hardy looking like a goof, I have no idea what positives happened on this show. The midcard is a disaster and we're looking at more HHH vs. Steiner, leaving me with one heck of a headache as we officially move into the Evolution era.

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Slammiversary 2017: The Good

Old Days

Slammiversary 2017

Date: July 2, 2017

Location: Impact Zone, Orlando, Florida

Commentators: Robert Flores, Don West

It's both a milestone and a farewell as Impact Wrestling is all set to be renamed Global Force Wrestling. While it's not clear what all that means, tonight is also the anniversary show with a few title unification matches between Impact Wrestling and GFW. Possibly the biggest match on the card though is a battle between announcers. Let's get to it.

The opening video is about what you would expect: history is awesome and tonight is a big night.

An owl flies into the arena to land on a Slammiversary logo. Sweet chicken wings with a sauce that's sweet but not too spicy, NO ONE CARES ABOUT THE STUPID OWL!

The bosses of Crash, Noah, AAA and Impact are here for the opener.

Impact Wrestling Tag Team Titles/GFW Tag Team Titles: Laredo Kid/Garza Jr. vs. Drago/El Hijo de Fantasma vs. Naomichi Marufuji/Taiji Ishimori vs. LAX

LAX is defending under lucha rules (going to the floor means the same as a tag) and this is one fall to a finish. Santana and Marufuji start things off with Marufuji flipping out of a wristlock but getting kicked in the face. They flip into a standoff and trade chops until Santana charges into a good looking dropkick.

It's off to Ishimori and Laredo with Taiji bouncing off the ropes over and over for kicks to the head. Laredo hits the floor so Ortiz comes in for a kick of his own as the fans chant for LAX. Ortiz gets two off a Death Valley Driver and everything breaks down. Garza takes off his pants (as is his custom), allowing Drago to springboard in with a dropkick. Drago and Fantasma take over on Santana and then Ishimori but LAX's

manager Diamante gets in a kick of her own so the champs can take over.

A tandem powerbomb gets two on Ishimori and the Street Sweeper is good for two on Drago. Laredo comes off the top with a clothesline to Ortiz while Garza hits a World's Strongest Slam on Santana for a sweet looking spot. Things settle down with Ortiz heading up top, shoving Laredo and Garza away, and moonsaulting down onto Drago for two with Marufuji making the save.

Diamante tries to interfere again and gets powerbombed onto LAX. Fantasma hits a modified Tombstone for two with Marufuji making a save. Ishimori eats a suicide dive and Homicide adds (and nearly botches) a Gringo Killer on the apron. Drago sends Ishimori to the floor with a tornado DDT and something like a C4 2000 gets two on Santana. Ortiz is back in with a belly to belly superplex and the Street Sweeper retains the titles at 15:22.

Rating: B. That's a heck of an opener and they were moving WAY too fast to keep track of everything going on out there. This was a great choice to start the show as they just flew all over the place and didn't bother with stuff like tagging, which they shouldn't have in something like this match. You book a match like this for the sake of chaos and entertainment, which is what we got.

Joseph Park has good news for Jeremy Borash: tonight's tag match is No DQ. JB: "WHAT??? YOU'RE GOING TO GET ME KILLED!" Park says don't worry.

We recap Moose/DeAngelo Williams vs. Chris Adonis/Eli Drake. Basically Moose has been dealing with a two on one deficit and needed some help so he brought in an NFL buddy. Moose also has NFL player Gary Barnidge and NASCAR driver Austin Dillon with him.

Moose/DeAngelo Williams vs. Eli Drake/Chris Adonis

Moose throws Adonis around to start and hits his always good looking dropkick. It's off to Williams to roll Drake up and grab an armdrag before handing it back to Moose. That's probably all he should be doing and there's nothing wrong with that. Moose's running dropkick in the corner gets two but Adonis gets in a shot from the apron to take over.

That doesn't last long as Moose fist pumps himself up and brings Williams back in for a one knee Codebreaker and a near fall of his own. Everything breaks down and Moose hits his bicycle kick to set up back to back sentons. Williams is left alone in the ring to kick both villains through the ropes, followed by Moose moonsaulting out to the floor. It's table time but Adonis and Drake take Moose down and put him on it instead. Drake poses a bit too long though and gets shoved down. Moose tells DeAngelo to do it and a frog splash (!!!) hits Adonis (doesn't break the table but the splash looked good) for the pin at 10:50.

Rating: B-. That's on a bit of a sliding scale as Williams is literally brand new at this but DANG. I was legitimately impressed by what he did out there as I was expecting Dennis Rodman's stuff from WCW (he does like two basic moves and the announcers act like he's the best thing ever) but he looked like he was an indy level talent at worst. That might be the best celebrity/athlete performance I've ever seen and was a very, very pleasant surprise.

Post match Moose powerbombs Drake through the table to make sure everything is covered.

Ethan Carter III is ready to beat up James Storm because he's the real man Impact needs.

We recap Carter vs. Storm. Carter lost a #1 contenders match earlier this year and blamed Storm, who he whipped 31 times with a strap. Now it's a strap match with Carter thinking he belongs here because of his name and Storm out for revenge and blood.

James Storm vs. Ethan Carter III

They're strapped together and you win by pinfall or submission (thank goodness). Storm unloads with right hands to start and there's the first strap shot. Carter gets dropped hard onto the apron (which is the hardest part of the ring you know) and sent into the barricade but a strap shot takes over again.

Back in and we hit the choke with the strap but Storm isn't going to take any more. The comeback is on in a hurry but Carter sends him into the

corner for a breather. It's handcuff time with Storm in trouble, only to pull the old switch and get Carter cuffed instead. Storm gets in thirty two lashes (one more than he gave Storm) and NOW the referee unlocks the cuffs. I'm sure Carter is thrilled with the timing.

A 1%er gives Storm two but Carter sends him into the post for a breather. Carter hits the 1%er as well for the same result and that's not cool. There's the Last Call but Storm collapses. Carter gives him a lifting sitout Pedigree (Christopher Daniels' Angel's Wings) for the pin at 10:45.

Rating: C. I wasn't feeling this one as much as the strap shots weren't the biggest focus, save for that one time in the corner. Storm collapsing is an interesting angle but I'm worried about where it might be going. Carter winning is the right call as there's a good chance he's going to be challenging El Patron soon.

Karen Jarrett and Dutch Mantell can't find Bruce Prichard.

We recap Josh Matthews/Scott Steiner vs. Joseph Park/Jeremy Borash. Matthews is a loudmouthed announcer who brags about his former career. Borash stood up to him and a tag match was set up. This feud has been going on for about three months now and I absolutely cannot stand the thing. It's basically been the top story for months now and since the commentators are on the show all the time, it's talked about throughout the shows.

Jeremy Borash/Joseph Park vs. Josh Matthews/Scott Steiner

No DQ and D'Angelo Dinero joins commentary. Josh starts with Park and flips around a bit, followed by a kick to the head. A crossbody doesn't work so it's off to Steiner, who looks to be about 50lbs (of muscle) lighter than he was in his regular career. He's also wearing a shirt, which he would never do given that his character was built around a great physique. Again, there was NO ONE ELSE on the active roster that could play this role?

Borash hands it right back to Park...and they run to the back for a pre-taped segment. Park and Borash grab a fire extinguisher while Steiner and

Matthews are in a golf cart. A car with a random fan (I think he was in one of the Final Deletion segments) shows up so Matthews and Steiner steal that to give chase, but they can't catch an announcer and an out of shape lawyer on foot.

They finally get out of the car (which had cameras inside) and chase after them with Matthews being backdropped into a pool while Steiner throws Park through a wall. With a camera under the water, the Jaws theme starts playing and Shark Boy shows up to bite Matthews. Steiner leaves Park and here's Father James Mitchell (Abyss' old manager) to say happy anniversary.

Back inside (and after an unnecessary cameo from celebrity chef Robert Irvine) and Matthews misses a Swanton. Josh spears him down but here's Steiner for the save. Matthews grabs a hug which is called a Steiner Recliner, only to have Shark Boy come in for the failed save attempt. Now Steiner puts on the Recliner and we've got Abyss to get rid of Scott without much effort. The Black Hole Slam onto the tacks crushes Josh and Borash adds a top rope splash to give Abyss the pin at 10:50.

Rating: C. That was as good as it was going to be and the Shark Boy thing made me chuckle a bit. You knew Abyss was going to be in there at some point and there's nothing wrong with that as it was the only way they could really go. Steiner could have been any heel here though and that's not a good thing. Again, it looks like the company has no faith in its roster, which is a very bad sign. The wrestling wasn't the point here of course, but I'm more worried about it continuing until we have a singles match at Bound For Glory. Just let it be over as I don't think anyone really cared much for this in the first place. Please let it end.

We recap the Eddie Edwards/Alisha Edwards vs. Davey Richards/Angelina Love. The Wolves broke up and Eddie blamed Angelina, but Davey said she just told him to follow his heart. Tonight it's Full Metal Mayhem (TLC with pins) in what is likely the final fight.

Davey Richards/Angelina Love vs. Eddie Edwards/Alisha Edwards

Full Metal Mayhem with the heels taking over via some early cheap shots. They waste no time in bringing in the weapons with Alisha trash canning

Love down. Back in and the good guys take over with Richards and Love having a trash can being put on top of their heads for a double kendo stick shot.

Eddie powerbombs Alisha onto Davey (Flores: That's in the wedding vows right?) but Love finds a cup of tacks. The tacks are poured into Eddie's mouth for a kick to the head (straight out of PWG) but Alisha powerbombs Love through a table. Eddie is right there after here and it's a powerbomb to put Davey through another table for the pin at 8:53.

Rating: C. And this is why you don't book back to back hardcore matches. We literally saw tacks used less than twenty minutes ago and while the spot here was more intense, it's still thumb tacks again. The right team won but my goodness I hope that ends the feud. There's not much left for Richards and Edwards to do but Bound For Glory is always a possibility. Also what was with the REALLY short run time?

We recap Low Ki vs. Sonjay Dutt. Sonjay finally won the X-Division Title in his native India and Low Ki wants a rematch, which will be 2/3 falls.

X-Division Title: Sonjay Dutt vs. Low Ki

Low Ki is challenging in a two out of three falls match. Feeling out process to start as they fight over a wristlock. They grab a test of strength with Dutt being taken to the mat but bridging up. A knee to the ribs actually breaks the bridge and we hit a standoff. Dutt takes him down in a waistlock, followed by a tornado DDT.

A moonsault misses and Low Ki dropkicks him into the corner for two. Dutt tries a springboard hurricanrana but Low Ki rolls through for a standing Warrior's Way and the first fall at 7:26. After a brief break they head outside with Dutt being sent into the barricade. A kick to the knee takes Dutt down on the apron but another Warrior's Way only hurts Low Ki's ankle.

The ankle slows things down but OF COURSE he's playing possum and throws the referee into Dutt. A big springboard kick to the head gives Low Ki two. He tries a top rope Warrior's Way but only hits the steps, followed by Dutt sending him hard into the barricade. Back in and Low Ki hits a

quick Warrior's Way, only to try a choke instead, allowing Dutt to roll him up for the second fall at 13:26.

Dutt gets kicked down again but Low Ki seems to have hurt his hand. It's fine enough for the Ki Crusher and two. Dutt goes up but gets dropped face first onto the buckle. Low Ki takes too much time going up though and a backdrop sets up the moonsault double stomp (still a scary looking finisher) to retain Dutt's title at 18:40.

Rating: B. The ending surprised me but it's nice to have Dutt get a big win like this to make his reign seem less like a fluke. That and Low Ki losing is always a good thing in my eyes as I've never cared for the guy. The moonsault double stomp is still insanely cool looking though and it was a great way to wrap the match up, especially after all the times Low Ki was using the Warrior's Way.

We recap the Women's Title match, which is Sienna being polished vs. Rosemary being crazy.

Impact Wrestling Knockouts Title/Global Force Wrestling Women's Title: Rosemary vs. Sienna

Unification match and Gail Kim is at ringside. Rosemary has an army of freaks with her. Rosemary goes right after her and here are Laurel Van Ness and KM for the nearly immediate distraction. Sienna gets thrown out onto them and orders them to the back, leaving us one on one again.

Back in and Sienna hammers away before grabbing a chinlock. Rosemary gets sent hard into the barricade, only to fight out of a Tree of Woe for a German superplex. That doesn't do much actually as the Red Wedding is broken up and Sienna gets two off the Silencer. The second Red Wedding attempt connects but here's Van Ness to pull out the ref. Allie comes in for the save but the distraction lets Sienna get in a belt shot for two. The mist is blocked and Sienna rubs it in Rosemary's eyes, setting up a guillotine to make Rosemary tap at 10:03.

Rating: C-. I'm still not sure why these two are fighting or why I should care about the GFW Women's Title but that's the case for the entire "promotion" pretty much since its inception. The match was a good brawl

but the overbooking really dragged things down. This story has been going on for months now and it doesn't seem anywhere close to being finished, even though there's not much left for them to fight over.

Here's Jeff Jarrett for a chat. He thanks the fans for helping the Jarrett Family over the years. For fifteen years, the fans have supported this company and he wants to say thank you. He's ready for the main event and says they've got a lot to follow. This was short and classy, which is always nice.

We recap the main event with Lashley's Impact Wrestling World Title vs. Alberto El Patron's GFW World Title. Alberto beat Lashley earlier in the year but the level of shenanigans caused the match to be overturned. They've built this up very well and the videos have helped a lot.

Impact Wrestling World Title/Global Force Wrestling World Title: Bobby Lashley vs. Alberto El Patron

Unification match. Lashley has a bunch of MMA fighters with him while Alberto has his father and brother with him. The fighters, save for King Mo, and Alberto's brother all leave so it's just Mo and Dos Caras Sr. They hit the mat to start with Alberto kicking at the legs to set up a standoff.

Lashley looks serious and they head outside with Lashley sending Alberto head first into the table five times in a row. Back in and Lashley charges into some raised boots but grabs a neckbreaker. Alberto is back up with a superplex for no cover and they slug it out from their knees. Some right hands in the corner are countered with a powerbomb to give Lashley two.

Lashley is starting to get cocky as he hammers away in the corner but the armbreaker has him in quick trouble. We get the big power up spot with Lashley powerbombing him down for two more. A middle rope Death Valley Driver of all things gives Lashley another near fall and King Mo grabs a chair.

Lashley is content with slapping Alberto in the face, earning himself a kick to the head for two. Dos Caras stares Mo down, leaving Lashley to

grab a cross armbreaker. That goes nowhere so a spear gets two, only to have the second spear eat a dropkick. Alberto sends him into the corner and hits the top rope double stomp for the pin and both titles at 19:29.

Rating: B. That's about what I expected: good, back and forth match with hard hitting action and little to no emotion to the whole thing. I'm assuming their World Title matches are this way by design but it's never been my favorite style. The World Title matches often feel like they're contractually obligated instead of personal, which is certainly an option but I could go for more hated/personal issues in the build. Still though, solid match with the right ending.

Alberto celebrates with the roster to end the show. Of note: the logo says GFW Impact Wrestling.

Overall Rating: B. This was actually a heck of a show, which tends to be the case when the company cuts out all the nonsense (and the horrible commentary, which was a MAJOR upgrade tonight) and stupid stuff that they do so often. If nothing else, the matches here were long enough with the wrestlers working hard throughout. I had a good time with the show and while there are definitely issues that need to be fixed, they had a good night tonight to end/begin an old/new era. Call this a very, very pleasant surprise but nothing you need to get used to, given this company's track record.

Results

LAX b. Naomichi Marufuji/Taiji Ishmori, Drago/El Hijo de Fantasma and Laredo Kid/Garza Jr. – Street Sweeper to Drago

Moose/DeAngelo Williams b. Chris Adonis/Eli Drake – Frog splash to Adonis

Ethan Carter III b. James Storm – Lifting sitout Pedigree

Joseph Park/Jeremy Borash b. Josh Matthews/Scott Steiner – Top rope splash to Matthews

Eddie Edwards/Alisha Edwards b. Davey Richards/Angelina Love – Powerbomb through a table to Richards

Sonjay Dutt b. Low Ki – Moonsault double stomp

Sienna b. Rosemary – Guillotine

Alberto El Patron b. Lashley – Top rope double stomp

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Slammiversary 2017 Preview

While mainly being a celebration of the company's history, this is also the end of an era (or error depending on your take). Following "Slammiversary 2017", the promotion will officially become Global Force Wrestling, bringing an end to the Impact Wrestling era. I'm not sure how much of a difference that's going to make but before we get to that discussion, we still have a pay per view to cover so let's get to it.

[Josh Matthews/Scott Steiner vs. Jeremy Borash/Joseph Park](#)

I'm putting this first so we can get it out of the way. Despite it being a match about battling announcers, there's a real argument to be made about this being the main event of the show. At the very worst, it's the

second biggest match on the card and that's really pitiful. Why in the world I'm supposed to be interested in announcers fighting over...whatever it is they're fighting over in a match where Park is the most active competitor isn't clear but the company certainly seems to think it's important.

I'll take Steiner and Matthews to win here as I actually think they're going to extend the feud all the way through "Bound For Glory 2017". The story should have ended a few months ago so it wouldn't surprise me to see it keep going even longer. The wrestling is going to be bad at best as Steiner hasn't been an active competitor in years, Park is a comedy character and the other two are announcers. This is the second (at worst) biggest match on the card and one of the biggest matches of the year people. Let that sink in for a minute.

Moose/DeAngelo Williams vs. Chris Adonis/Eli Drake

This is your celebrity match of the show but at least there's a story built in. Moose has been having issues with Adonis and Drake for weeks now and needed some help dealing with them. Williams is an NFL free agent so he has an athletic background, though there's a good chance that's not going to translate into wrestling success.

That being said, it would take WCW levels of stupidity to bring in a celebrity athlete and have them lose. I'm not sure why we're not having Moose defending the Global Title here as it would make more sense but at least they have something different by having Williams in the match. I'd assume this keeps going as well but Williams is likely just going to be a one off, meaning him losing would make next to no sense.

X-Division Title: Sonjay Dutt(c) vs. Low Ki

Dutt won the title in the highlight of the Indian tapings and now it's time for Low Ki's rematch. I'm not a big Low Ki fan whatsoever but Dutt has enough charisma and skill to get by. This is also 2/3 falls, meaning there's a good chance it's going to be a long match with both guys winning at least a fall.

I'll go with Dutt retaining the title as Low Ki never felt like a long

term champion. He has way too long of a history of leaving promotions to keep a title on him long term. Dutt might not stick around long either, but putting the title on him in India and then taking it right back in his first defense wouldn't be the brightest idea in the world. I don't think he'll do anything more than set the stage for a top heel to take the title away from him and there's nothing wrong with that.

Tag Team Titles: LAX(c) vs. Drago/Hijo de Fantasma, Naomichi Marufuji/Taiji Ishimori vs. Laredo Kid/Garza Jr.

We continue the trend of each match having a theme with the international match. In this case we have two teams from Mexico, one team that represents the Latino nation and a Japanese contingent. Of the challengers, only Laredo Kid and Garza Jr. have appeared regularly for on "Impact Wrestling" TV so this might not be the most easy to follow match in the world.

LAX should retain here as they're getting somewhere with the act. Laredo Kid/Garza Jr. are a good high flying team but nothing we haven't seen done better before. The other two teams are likely just one or two shot deals and that wouldn't mean putting titles on them. Let LAX get a big win under their belts so they can build up to something more in the future, perhaps for the Veterans of War to dethrone them later.

Impact Wrestling Knockouts/Global Force Wrestling Women's Title: Rosemary (c) vs. Sienna (c)

This is one of two unification matches because this company actually thinks the GFW Titles matter in the slightest. Having this as title for title adds nothing to the match as Sienna could have easily been built up as a regular challenger to Rosemary with the GFW Title really adding nothing whatsoever. It's a gimmick though and unfortunately that's often more important than making the most sense.

Due to the merger though, I'll go with Sienna winning, even though Rosemary has been built up far better. Neither is the most thrilling option in the world but at least you have the possibility of building Allie up to face Sienna for the title at "Bound For Glory 2017". You could do the same with Allie vs. Rosemary but that wouldn't pack quite

the same punch as Allie challenging Sienna.

Eddie Edwards/Alisha Edwards vs. Davey Richards/Angelina Love

Full Metal Mayhem, which is Impact Wrestling's version of Tables, Ladders and Chairs. The guys have been feuding for a good while now and the women have added some nice flavor to the story. Alisha isn't the most experienced but there's a lot of potential for drama with the husbands protecting their wives from extreme violence.

This show needs a face to win a big match so I'll go with Eddie and Alisha. Richards and Love have dominated the feud so far and it would make sense to have them lose in the end to even things out a bit. I can always go for some good violence in a match and the Wolves have the ability to beat the heck out of each other like few others can. This should be a lot of fun and that's something this show needs.

James Storm vs. Ethan Carter III

Strap match. This has been a solid upper midcard feud, though I'm not sure what they were going for with the E Singh III deal in India. As is almost always the case, this one seems to depend on what happens in the main event as you could easily see the winner getting a shot at the World Title in the near future.

Therefore, I'll take Carter, probably through some major shenanigans. That's the beauty of a strap match: Storm can get in some solid revenge on Carter but still lose via some sort of cheating in the end. These two should beat the heck out of each other and that's certainly a good thing, especially given how this feud has gone so far.

Impact Wrestling World Title/Global Force Wrestling World Title: Lashley vs. Alberto El Patron

Another title for title match and I'm not sure if I'm interested in this one or not. Neither of them has what I'd call an interesting character or personality, meaning they need to blow it out of the water with the actual wrestling. The good thing is they're both more than capable of doing that, but it doesn't matter if they have too much other stuff

weighing them down.

I'll take El Patron to win and unify the titles as this show is going to need a big moment to end on. El Patron as champion isn't the best idea in the world but we've covered Lashley as the unstoppable (save for those times where he lost the title) champion for far too long now and it's time to move on to something fresh. The promotion needs something new on top and while El Patron isn't that guy, he can hold the title until they find that guy.

Overall Thoughts

I'm not the most excited for this show (if that wasn't clear) and it's mainly because there's no single match that really has my interest. There's going to be good stuff throughout the card and some of the stories should wrap up, but that doesn't mean the show is going to hold a lot of interest for a good chunk of the audience.

It also doesn't help that we're coming up on yet another new era for the company, which seems to be the case far too often anymore. We have roughly three and a half months until "Bound For Glory 2017" and I hope most of these stories wrap up so we can spend that time building to something new instead of spending half of it on fallout. Therefore, a lot of these matches need to wrap up stories instead of extending them, which has been a problem for this company for a long time now. Hopefully the show is a surprise but I'm not getting my hopes up.

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Monday Night Raw – January 27, 2003 (2017 Redo): The Steiner Shadow

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 27, 2003

Location: Allstate Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

Eric Bischoff's time to fix Raw continues to count down but he has a secret weapon: magazine interviews! Yeah that was his big announcement last week: Steve Austin can tell his side of the story in Raw Magazine. I'm going to assume that it leads to an on-screen return but at least it gives us something to talk about other than HHH vs. Scott Steiner, which is still going for some reason as well. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of the end of last week's show with Scott Steiner getting the first group beatdown at the hands of HHH, Ric Flair, Randy Orton and Batista. I'm sure a name will be coming soon.

Opening sequence.

Booker T. vs. Jeff Hardy

Jeff has been, shall we say, more aggressive and angry lately but he hasn't pulled the trigger just yet. Feeling out process to start with Booker missing the side kick but scoring with some big chops. Jeff knees him down though and grabs a chinlock as the announcers talk about

Bischoff's potential firing.

I've been watching some old 80s stuff lately and this makes me miss the old commentary so much more. Back then the announcers would talk about the match going on like it was the only thing that mattered at the moment while here, it could be anything else other than the match going on in front of them. Booker gets back up and avoids the Whisper in the Wind. The ax kick misses and Jeff drops the legs between Booker's legs. Now the Whisper connects but Booker grabs the spinning sunset flip out of the corner for the quick pin.

Rating: C-. Not a bad little match here as Booker/Goldust doesn't seem to be getting the most focus at this point. As much as I wanted to see them get a better push with the Tag Team Titles, HHH is desperately in need of a challenger who can have a competent match and Booker would fill that role very well. It's also nice to open the show with a match instead of some segment, which isn't the best way to get a show going on a good note.

Jeff attacks Booker but gets beaten down. That's quite the heel turn.

Nathan Jones video.

Here's Steiner for a chat. He thinks HHH orchestrated that whole thing last week so get out here right now. This brings out the champ, with the long blond hair, sunglasses and suit for a look that says "I don't know how to be Ric Flair". HHH brags about how awesome he is and agrees to come to the ring...but here are the reinforcements. The team comes after him but Steiner pulls out a pipe and chases them off. Simple idea, but I'm not sure you want to have your new heel stable being chased off in their second appearance together.

Terri interviews D'Lo Brown before his match with Hurricane. Terri: "Now you've never been in the ring with a superhero before have you?" Teddy Long goes on a rant about the lack of black superheroes. The only one he knows of is Black Lightning, suggesting that Long doesn't know much about superheroes.

Hurricane vs. D'Lo Brown

Going back to the complaints about commentary, the announcers talk about black superheroes, which turns into a discussion about Shaft. Brown starts fast with the leg lariat (Is that a super power?) and follows with an abdominal stretch (I'm assuming rest holds are like his yellow sun?). Hurricane grabs a hurricanrana and something like an Edge-o-Matic for two before sending Brown outside. A flip dive seems to hurt Hurricane's back though and he can't get a suplex back inside. The Sky High is enough to put Hurricane away.

Rating: D+. The ending with the bad back was a nice touch but the commentary hurt things a lot. Brown and Hurricane are fine enough for a low level heel act but I don't know how far they're going to go with the thing. You can also add Hurricane to the list of people who were given titles last year and seemingly gained nothing as a result.

Chief Morely is watching a tape of the end of last week's Smackdown where Hulk Hogan returned and punched Vince out. Morely thinks that's going to get Bischoff an extension on the thirty days, which Bischoff calls stupid, as he should be doing. Eric has an idea.

Chris Jericho, who will be facing Steiner next week in a #1 contenders match, is disturbed by hurting that ring post in front of Stacy Keibler last week. Somehow Stacy has a grade 2 concussion and Jericho needs to go address the situation.

Here's Jericho, in black and white checker pants, to address said situation after a break. He's concerned about what's going to happen: he has to face Scott Steiner! While that's a big deal, he does apologize to Stacy, only to be cut off by Christian. He doesn't think much of what happened to Stacy because this is a wrestling ring and it was all her fault. JR is at his most offended here as Jericho says the blame should be on Test. If Test was a real man, he would have taken the shot himself. JR: "WHAT???"

Test deserved it after throwing Jericho out of the Royal Rumble but here's Shawn Michaels to disagree. After making fun of Jericho's pants, he says a real man would come down and fight Jericho face to face, which is exactly what he's going to do. Christian helps with the beatdown but

Shawn cleans house without too much effort.

Victoria beats on a trashcan with Trish Stratus' picture on it to get ready for the street fight.

Women's Title: Victoria vs. Trish Stratus

Victoria (looking especially good here in pink) is defending in a street fight and jumps Trish from behind with a pool cue. Trish is sent into the steps and Victoria stops to pose in the ring. A Chick Kick drops the champ and a clothesline gets two on the floor (street fights and hardcore matches aren't the same thing but you can't expect WWE to keep up with something like rules).

Back in and Victoria misses a charge into the post and gets two trashcan lids cracked around her head. Victoria is right back with a catapult into a trashcan in the corner but a Stratusphere gives Trish two. Steven Richards tries a fire extinguisher but hits Victoria by mistake. Richards comes in for the save so Trish kendo sticks him away. Stratusfaction is broken up and Trish is sent into the barricade...for the pin? What a lame ending.

Rating: C+. That ending really hurt things here as they were beating the heck out of each other and looking more polished as almost any hardcore match you would see from this company. It felt like they were actually trying to hurt each other, which is far more than you can say about these matches most of the time. Just find a new challenger though as the feud is really starting to look stale.

Victoria and Richards beat on Trish some more until Jazz returns to get in her own shots. A DDT and STF have Trish screaming and I'm sure we'll be having a match at No Way Out as a result.

Tag Team Titles: Dudley Boyz vs. William Regal/Lance Storm

Regal and Storm are defending in a tables match (ladder match according to JR). Bubba and D-Von jump the champs to start and get in some shots with flag poles. Storm gets speared down and sent outside in a heap as JR lists off the Dudleys' record in table matches with the titles on the

line since 2000. Well how can you argue with general statistics like that?

The reverse 3D drops Regal and the regular version does the same to Storm but, instead of going for a table, here's a What's Up to Regal. It's table time...but there are no tables present. You can find a small hardware store under there most of the time but we can't find a single table? Also, ANNNOUNCER'S TABLE anyone?. Morely comes out with a table and says he's not that stupid. The Dudleys go after him and here are Rico and 3 Minute Warning to lay them out. The beatdown is on and even Spike Dudley's interference can't stop D-Von from being powerbombed through the table to retain the titles.

Rating: D. This was a squash until the second half was all about the interference. The problem with the whole evil regime thing is you basically have Val Venis, two Samoans, the most boring Tag Team Champions ever and Rico vs. the Dudleys. Why in the world is that supposed to be interesting? I say supposed to because it certainly isn't, but WWE is likely going to keep it out there as long as they can.

Video on the recent tour of Asia.

HHH and company come in to see Bischoff about the #1 contenders match but then changes his mind because he's not worried.

Matt Cappotelli and John Hennigan (looking WEIRD with much shorter hair) are ready for an exhibition. Al Snow comes up to give them a pep talk but EVIL Christopher Nowinski is behind them with an evil smile.

Rob Van Dam is cool with Kane throwing him out of the Rumble. They're ready to fight HHH and Batista tonight. Rob thinks the chokeslam is cool and then lists off all of his own moves. Kane does Rob's thumb pose while calling himself the Big Red Machine. These two are a good choice for an upper midcard team, which tends to be the case with Kane more often than not. Not the worst role in the world to have actually.

We recap the Tough Enough 3 finale.

Matt Cappotelli vs. John Hennigan

They both look nervous, not to mention small. Matt headlocks him to the mat to start as Snow watches from ringside. John flips out of a hiptoss and hits a dropkick with a backflip for two. Cue Nowinski to post Snow and stop the match for a speech instead.

Nowinski rants about not winning Tough Enough but here's Dreamer to chase him off, only to cane the rookies down for not earning the right to be here. I always liked Matt more than John and given that this is being written the day he announced that his brain cancer had returned, this was very bittersweet.

Sean O'Haire tells us not to worry about having a drink or a smoke.

Here's Eric Bischoff to talk about Austin. We see a clip from Confidential back in June with everyone burying Austin for walking out on the company. There are two sides to every story though and Austin will be telling his side in Raw Magazine. This will include talking about JR, Debra (recently divorced) and a host of various wrestlers, entirely uncensored. For now though, here's the Austin Desire video.

Rob Van Dam/Kane vs. HHH/Batista

Kane and Batista start things off with JR already talking about the Austin article. Batista stops a charge with an elbow but eats a jumping clothesline. It's off to Van Dam for the shoulders in the corner but the backflip lets Batista run him over. HHH comes in and gets kicked in the face as JR and King talk about horses in Oklahoma.

Batista takes Van Dam's head off with a hard clothesline but Van Dam kicks HHH in the face (again), allowing the hot tag off to Kane. Side slams abound and the top rope clothesline drops Batista. The Five Star doesn't quite work though, leaving Orton to post Kane. Batista rips the mask off (giving us a pretty clear shot of most of his face), sending Kane up the ramp in shame. The spinebuster and Batista Bomb end Van Dam.

Rating: D. Boring for the most part here with the mask stuff being the only thing of much note. Van Dam and Kane are good options for the jobbers here, though at the end of the day they need to build up SOMEONE other than Steiner for the future. I know Kane and Van Dam aren't the

most interesting people but having them lose in seven minutes isn't the best way to give us people to fight against the heel faction.

Post match Van Dam gets beaten down until Steiner comes in. That earns him a beatdown from an invading Jericho and then the whole group, with Scott getting some color. HHH and company leave so Jericho slaps on the Walls to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. They kept this show moving for the most part but the shadow of HHH vs. Steiner and Austin returning for Bischoff's sake isn't the best stuff to put on top of the card. Couple that with stuff like D'Lo Brown: Black Superhero and the never ending Tough Enough nonsense and it can make for a tedious show. They managed to make the best of some bad situations though and the show was as watchable as it's going to get around this time.

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Monday Night Raw – January 20, 2003 (2017 Redo): THAT MAN HAD A DOCTOR'S NOTE!!!

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 20, 2003

Location: Dunkin' Donuts Center, Providence, Rhode Island

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're past the Royal Rumble and, somehow, the big story still seems to be HHH vs. Scott Steiner for reasons of general torture. After Steiner showed why he shouldn't be allowed to wrestle a watermelon farmer in front of a pair of chickens named Dolores and Walter, it's pretty clear that he's getting a rematch next month at No Way Out. Let's get to it.

We open with the Martin Luther King Jr. Day video. Vince always gets this one in and maybe we can have a D'Lo Brown match to celebrate.

The opening recap looks at Vince McMahon telling Eric Bischoff that he has thirty days to turn the show around or he'll be replaced by Shane McMahon.

Opening sequence.

Here are HHH and Ric Flair to open things up. The announcers immediately start talking about how awesome last night's match was, likely with Vince screaming in their ears the whole time. JR even mentions the most terrifying word in the world: REMATCH. I mean, I thought/hoped I was imagining it when he said HHH had "no way out" last night but I probably need to see my therapist more. Granted when the match put me in therapy in the first place (Which CAN NOT be blamed on Steiner of course. That would just be lunacy.), it kind of defeats the purpose.

HHH talks about how physical the match was last night but at the end, Steiner had to use a sledgehammer to save himself. As they say in the movies, "there ain't gonna be no rematch." Apollo didn't say "there" you

nitwit. Get your Rocky quotes straight. Cue Steiner to say he wants his rematch tonight, despite taped ribs. Are those from carrying HHH last night? I mean, that WHOLE THING was HHH's fault and nothing can be blamed on anyone else so we'll go with that theory.

HHH has a note from his doctor (An apology for the match perhaps?) and can't wrestle tonight so Flair says Batista can do it instead. As I desperately scramble to find that therapist's number, Batista comes out for a distraction so HHH can jump Steiner to little avail. Scott cleans house, despite a minor misstep where they looked to be on the wrong page (HHH'S FAULT!!! HHH'S FAULT!!!).

Rob Van Dam vs. Jeff Hardy

Imagine the pre-match prep talk. I feel string would be discussed in thorough detail. Jeff starts with a jawbreaker and a running dropkick puts Rob on the floor. The barricade run doesn't work as Rob kicks the leg out, followed by more kicks back inside. The announcers start talking about Chris Jericho in the Rumble for no apparent reason as Jeff gets two off the Whisper in the Wind. Van Dam grabs a Regal Roll and hits a middle rope moonsault, only to miss the Five Star. A Codebreaker of all things sets up the Swanton for two, followed by Rob grabbing a backslide for the pin.

Rating: C. The match had the noticeable slips that you would expect from these two but it worked well enough with Jeff not being able to win even with his best move. If nothing else it was cool to see what would become a famous move later on used as something basic here. It's not like Jericho invented it but it's still weird to see so long ago.

Post match Jeff snaps and grabs a chair but throws it down before the swing.

Christian and Christopher Nowinski offer Bischoff good luck with his remaining twenty one days to turn Raw around. I know WWE doesn't think much of its fans, but I think they know that thirty minus seven isn't twenty one. This always made me shake my head back in the day and I still don't get it now. If they just had to set it up to end on Raw, just set it up as four weeks from tonight instead of thirty days, which made the

whole thing confusing. Anyway, there's going to be a bombshell announcement later tonight.

Steiner runs into Randy Orton, who talks about Steiner wanting to be World Champion. Steiner, ever the crazy man, attacks Orton, which threatens his 95% healed shoulder. Dude DON'T MESS WITH HIS MATH SKILLS! Some threats leave Orton shaken.

Chief Morely has Nick Patrick watch the ending to the Tag Team Title match. Patrick admits his mistake but Morely wants a public apology. As opposed to one on national television.

Here are Morely and Patrick for said apology. Patrick gladly does so, but Morely wants the decision reversed. In one of the most laugh inducing lines ever in WWE, Patrick says it's company policy that all referee decisions are final. That's bad even by WWE standards. Morely calls out the Dudley Boyz, who point out that Morely brought the knuckles into the ring in the first place. Morely demands the titles be handed over but Bubba won't give them to a washed up ex-adult star. It's almost table time but William Regal and Lance Storm run in for the save. Bubba gets flapjacked through the table and Morely says let's have a title defense.

Tag Team Titles: Dudley Boyz vs. Lance Storm/William Regal

Storm and Regal are challenging and win the titles in less than fifteen seconds.

To clarify, Booker T. and Goldust can't keep the titles for a month but we can do two title changes in twenty four hours. There's no real reason to have Booker and Goldust lose the belts in the first place when you could have had them defend against Storm and Regal at the Rumble and then do this same angle tonight. Why do that though when you can get two more reigns out of it though, thereby making the titles seem even weaker than they already are?

Trish Stratus/Hurricane vs. Steven Richards/Victoria

The genders have to match. Hurricane armdrags Richards down to start but Victoria tags herself in and slaps Hurricane in the mask. The threat of a

chokeslam brings Richards back in as the rules are thrown out less than a minute and a half in. Trish comes in and they botch what I think was going to be an electric chair but turned into Trish sitting on the back of Victoria's head. Victoria misses the slingshot legdrop and it's off to Hurricane but the referee didn't see the tag. Trish almost takes the StevieDT but Hurricane makes a save. Stratusfaction ends Victoria, likely setting up another title match. This was a mess.

Bischoff talks to Vince's secretary and again promises a big surprise so Vince should turn the show on. WWE just admitted that the boss, the owner of the company, and the most important man in the wrestling world ISN'T WATCHING HIS FLAGSHIP SHOW. That sums up so many problems in one line. Bischoff throws a dart at a picture of Shane McMahon on a dartboard to really emphasize the idea.

Same Sean O'Haire video from last night.

Here's Bischoff for his big announcement. We see a clip of Steve Austin being named Raw Superstar of the Decade but not being invited to the ceremony. Bischoff says Austin wasn't there because he walked out on Vince McMahon. We've heard Vince and JR's sides of the story so maybe we should hear from Austin. Eric is going to give him the chance to tell his side....IN RAW MAGAZINE!

That's not the big announcement though (thank goodness). Instead, Bischoff is inviting Austin to return at No Way Out. How does that change Raw though? As in Bischoff's whole assignment. Eh I'm sure it makes sense in WWE's mind, which is all that matters. It's not like the fans can make sense of all these brilliant ideas (Want to know what happened? GO BUY THE MAGAZINE!) so take what you can get. Oh and the pay per view is further than 21 days away. In theory he could be safe if he signs Austin back before then, but just say "you have until No Way Out" and this isn't an issue.

3 Minute Warning vs. Goldust/Booker T.

JR calls them 3 Count and, while discussing Test vs. Chris Jericho (which is being treated as a major match for some reason), says Jericho eliminated Shawn Michers last night. Goldust and Jamal get things going

but it's off to Booker before anything goes anywhere. A very hard clothesline turns Booker inside out and all hope is lost.

Back up and Booker superkicks his way back into hope as the match is being ignored for the sake of talking about Austin (fair enough at this point and it's not like Booker and Goldust seem to be going anywhere anytime soon). Jamal breaks up Shattered Dreams and runs Goldust over to hit the neck crank.

Back up and Jamal misses a charge into the corner so Booker can come in to clean house. A double DDT drops the Samoans and it's time for the Spinarooni (With a crowd reaction shot. As in one. On the whole show. Not seventeen per match.) but Jamal superkicks Booker down. Jamal misses a top rope splash (his toes might have grazed Booker if he had "connected") and the ax kick puts him away.

Rating: D+. This could have been a lot worse but they're not even trying to hide the fact that Booker T. and Goldust are done with the title picture. I have no idea why the company felt the need to immediately move to the Dudleys, who have done this time after time before. It's not like the upcoming HHH vs. Booker feud needed to be started this early so why not get a little more mileage out of the team?

Video on Chris Jericho's Royal Rumble performance until Shawn Michaels ran back in, allowing Test to eliminate him.

Chris Jericho vs. Test

Jericho, with a heck of a knot on his head from a Tommy Dreamer cane shot, complains about having his dream stolen. Test sends him over the top for some cat skinning, only to follow up with a gorilla press drop. Jericho grabs a belly to back suplex and we hit the chinlock. Stacy plays cheerleader (playing to her natural skills) and gets Test to his feet for a side slam. The big boot misses so Test backdrops him to the floor. Test gets posted and Jericho grabs a chair, which he uses to hit the post, which Stacy was standing behind. Naturally this is equal to shooting Stacy dead and the match is thrown out.

Rating: D. Most of that is due to the horrible ending, which we'll get to

in a minute. The rest of the match was Test doing his really standard power offense and still having no reason to care about him because his big thing is a great looking manager who does lame jokes. This really isn't interesting and that's not the biggest surprise in the world.

Stacy gets taken out on a stretcher while Test shows off his acting skills. She didn't get hit in the head and Jericho didn't hit her. Unfortunately this is going to lead to the Owen Hart voices because this story needs to be all serious instead of something rather bad looking. I get what they're going for, but it's kind of hard to get interested in a story where someone hit a post and damaged the woman who does the Testicles jokes.

Al Snow plugs the Tough Enough finale.

Stacy is still being taken out. They show the worst replay imaginable, which shows the chair hitting the post, which Stacy's HANDS are touching with her head at least six inches away.

Flair gives Batista a pep talk.

Tommy Dreamer vs. D'Lo Brown

Singapore Cane match. Before the match, Brown brings out Teddy Long to say that D'Lo isn't going to be one of Dr. King's followers because a lack of aggression never got him anywhere. Last night, Brown was held out of the Royal Rumble and tonight THE MAN has him in this violent match. Starting tonight, the WWE has to be down with the Brown. D'Lo: "Free at last, free at last, free to cane a white boy's a**!"

Dreamer immediately starts caning away but hits the post by mistake. Brown was a few feet away but there's no stretcher brought out. I smell racism. D'Lo canes him a few times, then Dreamer canes him a few times. Tommy hits D'Lo's head shaking legdrop and a DDT, only to dive into a cane to the ribs. The Sky High (the Low Down according to the way off JR) gives D'Lo the pin.

Rating: F. This was as good as a suddenly racist D'Lo Brown and Tommy Dreamer caning each other for three and a half minutes was going to be.

Long is a big improvement for the angle but there's only so much he can do with something this stupid. There was no reason for this to be a cane match but at least Brown won.

Batista vs. Scott Steiner

It's a power match to start (I'm as shocked as you are) with Steiner winning a battle of shoulders. Scott hammers away in the corner and actually uses a belly to belly. I'd have bet on that one being banned. It's so offensive that Randy Orton runs in for the DQ.

Steiner beats up Flair but Batista breaks up the Recliner. HHH comes in as well and beats Scott down (JR: "WHAT ABOUT THE NOTE FROM THE DOCTOR???") with the help of his new buddies. Steiner is busted open and Pedigreed, drawing a face pop. The new team (no name yet) poses to end the show.

Overall Rating: F+. This was horrible and it's getting clearer and clearer every single week that something really needs to change around here. Above all else, bring back the Intercontinental Title. These matches are just coming and going because there's nothing for most of them to fight over. They're just filling in time with nothing feuds and stories (D'Lo Brown, Test, Hurricane vs. Richards, Booker T./Goldust and so on) because HHH can only fight one guy at a time.

Other than that though, you barely have any good wrestling and now we're setting up for No Way Out which will feature a rematch of one of the worst matches ever and Steve Austin, who was a shell of himself eight or so months ago and could be even worse now. On top of that, you know it's a bad time when your top face can't be trusted to go two minutes in the main event of Raw. This show is in a massive need of a shot of blood or anything for that matter, but I don't see it happening anytime soon.

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Monday Night Raw – January 13, 2003 (2017 Redo): This Was So Bad I Can't Be Sarcastic About It

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 13, 2003

Location: Mohegan Sun Arena, Uncasville, Connecticut

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the go home Raw before Sunday's Royal Rumble and hopefully we actually hear a few more names for the Rumble itself. However, we're lucky enough to get more of HHH vs. Scott Steiner without having them actually doing anything physical. Throw in more of Bischoff as McMahon and the show could manage to set new standards for horrible. Above all else though, Vince McMahon is here tonight and that makes for some drama. Let's get to it.

Eric Bischoff and Chief Morely are in the back waiting for Vince. Earl Hebner comes up to complain about referee treatment and says the word strike has been mentioned. The Chief goes off to deal with that when Steiner comes up behind Bischoff. Scott wants to fight HHH tonight but

Bischoff sets up a bench press contest instead. You can imagine how Steiner reacts.

Opening sequence.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Victoria vs. Jacqueline

Victoria is defending and this is a hardcore match. You know, that thing that they banned from Raw last year until they forgot about it a week later. There are trashcans full of weapons at the corners, including a cardboard cutout of Trish. Victoria spends too much time ripping the thing up so Jackie beats on her, only to botch a headscissors. Instead of flipping over, Victoria fell backwards, making it look closer to a spinning crossbody rather than a headscissors. Much like last week, this isn't thrilling me with confidence for 2003.

Steven Richards low bridges Jackie to the floor, accidentally allowing Trish to fire off some kendo stick shots. A few swings of a trashcan lid put Trish down but she avoids a moonsault. Jackie gets some ice cold near falls but gets pulled to the floor and send into the barricade. Victoria sends Trish face first into the ropes where Richards....grazes her shoulder with the lid to give Victoria the pin. This was down there with the Jackie Gayda vs. Trish portions of that mixed tag as they managed to blow almost every big spot of a match that didn't even last two and a half minutes.

Trish and Jackie beat up the villains for a bit until Steven takes them both out. The Hurricane of all people makes the save.

The Dudleys yell at Bischoff and beat up Morely. Eric fires them so Bubba threatens to go to Smackdown. Hang on a sec then as Bischoff rescinds the firing and suspends them instead.

Maven/Test vs. Christopher Nowinski/D'Lo Brown

Thankfully Brown is back to his normal look. Let that sink in for a second: the Testicles joke can survive for months but that stupid gimmick didn't even make it three weeks. Test gets clotheslined down to start and we're in an early double teaming. The comeback takes even less time and

Maven comes in for a double elbow to Nowinski's jaw. Brown gets in a Stunner over the top rope and Nowinski adds a sloppy spinebuster.

The bad guys take turns beating on Maven with Nowinski showing off that Tough Enough style offense. Brown hits a hard clothesline as this is still going for no apparent reason. We hit an armbar for a bit until Maven gets over to Test for the house cleaning. The Test Drive drops Nowinski but Test's big boot (Test: "BOOT!") misses. Brown hits the Sky High on Maven but that's not the legal man so there's no count. A Stacy distraction lets Test get in the big boot for the pin.

Rating: D-. It's not that the match was bad but sweet pickles on popsicle sticks it was dull. Maven and Nowinski are glorified jobbers and because of some reality show, we're stuck watching them almost every week. Nowinski is further along with the Harvard stuff but that's not exactly saying much.

Bischoff goes up to a limousine but finds Gene Okerlund, who is in town for Raw X. Insults are exchanged and Gene says if Bischoff was smarter, we'd be having a Nitro reunion. I believe he's going for "Nitro would still be around" but who am I to doubt Mean Gene? The limo takes Gene away and Chris Jericho comes in, begging to be #1 in the Royal Rumble. Eric says go win the over the top rope challenge and they'll talk.

F-View (That's still a thing?) shows William Regal insulting Lawler's book before their match tonight. Regal tells Lance Storm that he has the brass knuckles ready. Did this really need to be on a hidden camera?

Jerry Lawler vs. William Regal

Storm comes out with Regal and Lawler isn't happy. Before get get going, Regal reads a section of his book about Lawler's sex life. Three referees come out to check Regal and find his knuckles. Storm gets checked as well, despite not being in the match. Storm has knuckles as well (brass ones, not the ones on his hand) and gets ejected. During the melee, Lawler pulls out a chain to knock Regal cold, only to get caught and disqualified. Keep in mind that Regal and Storm won the Tag Team Titles last week because they NEEDED the belts for this bit you see. I have no idea why but they certainly needed them.

Lawler says he's still the king.

Raven vs. Jeff Hardy

The winner gets to be the final Raw Royal Rumble entrant. Who are the other fourteen? Well that's not important at the moment. What is important is Raven having a huge haircut and trunks instead of his usual gear. Jeff grabs some early rollups for two each before they both fall out to the floor.

Raven wraps the knee around the post though and Jeff is in fast trouble. That lasts all of ten seconds before Jeff sends him into the corner, only to miss a moonsault. We hit a spinning toehold for a bit before Jeff goes with the usual for the comeback. The Raven Effect is broken up and a Swanton to the thighs is enough to give Jeff the pin.

Rating: C-. They were working harder than you would expect out there but the idea of Hardy vs. Raven for a spot in the Rumble isn't exactly the highest level of drama. I don't remember the last time Raven had a match on Raw while Jeff at least still has some star power, which always helps.

Vince arrives, doesn't say much to Bischoff, and slaps Orton's 94% shoulder. He slaps the shoulder though and Orton cringes in a good bit.

Sean O'Haire vignette, talking about how you should have an affair.

Here's Vince for his big announcement but cue the Dudleys before he can say anything. They get straight to the point and ask for the suspension to be overturned and Vince says okey dokey. Oh and they can have a title shot on Sunday. Again: Booker T. and Goldust continue to look like nothing despite being one of the most popular teams in recent memory.

Bubba and D-Von leave but here's Jericho to interrupt. Chris sucks up a bit before asking if he can be #1 in the Rumble. Vince tells him to shut up and says the winner of tonight's over the top rope challenge gets to pick any number in the Rumble, save for #1 which Shawn Michaels has already taken. As usual, WWE seems to think that #1 is better than #2 for reasons likely used to praise Shawn's 1995 performance even more. With Jericho gone, Vince gets cut off AGAIN, this time by Bischoff.

Vince almost immediately tells him to shut up because he's here to make an announcement for the anniversary special. However, it's time for a public job evaluation. While the people don't think Bischoff is doing well, Vince thinks Eric is doing quite well. After praising him, Vince goes into a long explanation for how Eric hasn't done anything he was hired for. Therefore, Eric has thirty days to turn Raw around or he's fired. In other words, Raw sucks and needs to change but it might be another month.

Post break Vince is leaving with Eric groveling. Vince already has a replacement in mind though and here's Shane to stare Bischoff down.

Booker T. vs. Lance Storm

Booker headlocks him to start and hits a hard clothesline, followed by a knee drop for two. The spinning sunset flip out of the corner is broken up but Storm can't get in the Sharpshooter. They trade a few shots until Storm grabs a backbreaker and slaps on a chinlock. Booker fights up and hits a few chops before the referee gets bumped. Regal and Goldust get in a fight on the floor as the Dudleys run in for the DQ.

Rating: D+. This was a perfectly acceptable match until that ridiculous finish. There was no mention of Booker and Goldust getting their rematch and it really does seem that their time as contenders to the titles is over. The Dudleys were shoved into this spot for no apparent reason, especially when Goldust and Booker have issues with Bischoff dating back to their feud with 3 Minute Warning.

A bunch of big Smackdown names (Edge, Lesnar, Angle) are at The World.

Hurricane vs. Steven Richards

Trish is with Hurricane. Richards goes right for him to start but the StevieDT is countered with a suplex. The women get in a fight and the Eye of the Hurricane ends Richards at less than ninety seconds.

Trish and Hurricane clean house after the match.

Nathan Jones video.

Pay per view rundown, which does include fifteen Raw names. Now other than Shawn Michaels, the biggest name is Chris Jericho and it falls off a cliff from there, but there are fifteen.

It's time for the bench press challenge with Steiner coming out first. He's tired of these games because he's beaten HHH at every challenge so far. Scott wants 585lbs to start and after a break but before the first lift, here's HHH in a suit. Instead of stopping at the bench press, HHH goes to the ring to talk about how he's the best wrestler in the world and none of this other stuff matters. Again, STOP TELLING US THAT WE'VE BEEN WASTING OUR TIME WATCHING YOUR SHOW!

HHH lists off all the names he's destroyed and promises to make an example of Steiner, just like he has with everyone else. Steiner comes to the ring and the fight is on with Scott getting the better of it and ripping HHH's suit off. This leaves HHH in...eh about the same look he regularly wrestles in. I'm assuming this is a takeoff of the Ricky Steamboat vs. Ric Flair angle, which of course lead to a masterpiece. Something (common sense perhaps) tells me that won't be the case here.

Rob Van Dam vs. Kane vs. Batista vs. Chris Jericho

Over the top rope challenge (four man battle royal) and the winner can pick any number, save for #1, in the Rumble. JR gets his history wrong by saying Shawn won the Royal Rumble in 1995 and went on to win the main event of Wrestlemania that year. It's a brawl to start (as it should be) with Jericho saving Batista for no apparent reason.

Van Dam goes shoulder first into the post as the power guys brawl on the other side. There's not much going on here as they're barely trying for eliminations and are just beating each other up. Jericho dives at Kane, who can't catch him, but does pick him up a few seconds later.

Rob is finally sent to the apron, only to come back in with a top rope boot to the face. Rolling Thunder connects on Jericho and Batista shoulders Kane down. Jericho saves Batista from a chokeslam and Kane is clotheslined to the floor. The Batista Bomb plants Jericho but Rob kicks Batista out. Ever the brilliant one, Rob goes up but Batista crotches him, allowing Jericho to get the win.

Rating: F. So we had botches in a bad match that had no heat. This is what they decided to use to close the show and somehow that's the better way to wrap it up instead of the HHH vs. Steiner nonsense. The match was little more than a long segment as the wrestlers weren't even trying for eliminations most of the time. Terrible match.

Jericho picks the #2 spot so here's Shawn to throw him over the top to end the show.

Overall Rating: D-. That's one of the worst go home shows I've seen them put together in a very long time. There wasn't a good match, the angles that they're advancing had almost nothing to do with the Royal Rumble (the Women's Title isn't on the line, Hurricane isn't even in the Rumble and Lawler is Lawler) and the big story is about two guys not wrestling, mainly out of fear for how bad it could be. This is really their big way to start not only the year but build to the Royal Rumble? It's going to be a very long 2003.

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