

Smackdown – March 22, 2013: Thank Goodness I Didn't Go To This Show

Smackdown

Date: March 22, 2013

Location: U.S. Bank Arena, Cincinnati, Ohio

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Josh Matthews

With Wrestlemania coming up very soon we've got almost everything set, meaning that the next few weeks will be spent building up everything else that we've already established. The main event tonight is Swagger vs. Jericho in a rematch from last week where Swagger beat Jericho through the help of some shenanigans. Let's get to it.

The opening recap is from Raw with Swagger breaking Ricardo's ankle as well as Big Show joining Orton and Sheamus to face the Shield.

We open with MizTV with guests Sheamus and Randy Orton. Orton wants Big Show to replace Ryback in the six man tag at Wrestlemania but Sheamus isn't sure. Neither guy trusts him, but sometimes you have to do something you aren't sure of in order to survive. At Wrestlemania, Orton wants a ticked off giant on their side. Here's Big Show to give us his take on this.

Miz talks about being Show's partner back in the day and Big Show ending the team by knocking him out. Big Show: "I've dated women bigger than you so shut your lip." Show talks about knocking out a member of the Shield and how they can work together to stop the Shield once and for all. Sheamus talks about his past with Big Show and a showdown is teased but Orton plays peacemaker. Miz: "REALLY? Randy Orton is the voice of reason of this group???" Before Show and Sheamus start arguing even more, here's Booker T to interrupt. Tonight the three of them will be in a six man tag

against opponents to be named.

Mark Henry vs. Zack Ryder

Ryder is shoved in the corner but comes back with a few right hands. Like an idiot though he tries a cross body and gets caught in the World's Strongest Slam for the pin at 52 seconds.

Ryder gets two more slams as Henry shouts at him about how many can he take. Ryback finally comes out for the big staredown as Ryder is carried out like a pancake. Henry charges but is taken down by the Meat Hook to send Henry into a state of confusion on the floor.

Teddy looks for Booker's approval for teaming up with Vickie to make Henry vs. Ryback. Booker isn't pleased because Teddy should have consulted with his boss, as in Booker. Teddy doesn't like the idea that he works for Booker, because he works with him.

We get the Booker Hall of Fame video.

Dolph Ziggler vs. Kofi Kingston

Well to be fair it's been four whole days since we saw this match. AJ sits in on commentary. A quick neckbreaker puts Kofi down as JBL hits on AJ. Kofi comes back with his jumping clotheslines and the Boom Drop for no cover. Langston distracts Kingston from trying Trouble in Paradise though, allowing Dolph to hit a dropkick as we take a break.

Back with Kofi sliding through the ropes and kicking Dolph in the face. As Kingston goes up though, Ziggler crotches him down as AJ complains about being in a match with Dolph and her two exes. Kofi comes back with some right hands but another dropkick gets two. Ziggler hooks a chinlock for a bit but Kofi fights up and sends him shoulder first into the post. The middle rope cross body gets two for Kofi but a springboard splash

hits knees, giving Ziggler a two count.

Trouble in Paradise misses and there's the sleeper to Kingston. Kofi escapes again and gets two off the SOS as AJ sings Dolph's praises. Dolph falls to the floor but Langston guards him from a suicide dive. Kofi dives on Big E. instead but the distraction lets Ziggler hit the Fameasser on the floor. AJ: "I'm going to have that man's babies. And they're going to have great hair and the abs of a Greek god." Back inside the Zig Zag finishes Kofi at 6:31 shown of 10:01.

Rating: C. Not their best match here but it's nice to see Ziggler get back on top even a little bit. Kofi will bounce back from this as he's always lost a lot over his career. It's rumored that he might be turning heel, which could be interesting given how serious he's been in the past. The match here wasn't great but these two are incapable of having an actual bad match against each other.

Langston hits the Big Ending on Kofi post match.

We recap Fandango and Jericho's interaction from Raw.

We get the CM Punk promo about Undertaker from Raw.

Orton again has to tell Sheamus and Big Show to stop fighting.

We look at Ricardo having his ankle broken again.

Jack Swagger vs. Chris Jericho

After a break, Colter talks about Ricardo's injury from Raw and how that should be a warning to anyone who disagrees with what they say. This would include Jericho who interrupts Swagger as he repeats his catchphrase. Feeling out process to start with Jericho knocking Swagger out to the floor. Colter calms down an angry Swagger but Jericho comes to

the floor and rams Jack's back into the barricade. Back in and Swagger takes out Chris' leg to take over for the first time.

Jericho comes back with a kick to the chest for two but the Codebreaker is countered as Jericho is rammed into the corner. Swagger loads up a superplex, only to be shoved off the top and hit with a cross body for two. With Jack rolling to the floor, Jericho hits a sweet plancha to take Swagger out as we take a break.

Back with Swagger hitting a clothesline for two and pounding on the back for good measure. Jericho is sent shoulder first into the buckle but Swagger misses a charge, allowing Jericho to speed it up a little. A top rope fist to Swaggers face puts him down and Jericho pounds away in the corner as the fans chant his name. Jericho's hurricanrana is countered into the Patriot Lock but Jericho sends Swagger out to the floor.

There's the springboard dropkick to send Jack to the floor...and here's Fandango with his full entrance. The distraction allows Swagger to hit a powerslam for two. A side roll gets the same for Jericho but when he can't hook the Walls he instead catapults Swagger into the ropes. Jericho loads up the Lionsault but Fandango trips him up, allowing Swagger to hit the Vader Bomb for the pin at 9:04 shown of 12:34.

Rating: C. This wasn't as good as last week's and again I don't like the idea of a guy who might be world champion in three weeks needing Fandango's help to beat someone. This sets up Jericho vs. Fandango at Wrestlemania for reasons that I don't comprehend. That's quite a way to push someone new though.

Post match Fandango beats up Jericho and shouts WHAT IS MY NAME. A guillotine legdrop leaves Jericho laying so Fandango pronounces his name again for good measure.

Big Show says his partners can trust him. Trust him, that's true.

We get the Rock vs. Cena video from Raw.

Here are the Rhodes Scholars along with the Bellas. The guys say the girls are beautiful and that's about it.

Rhodes Scholars vs. Brodus Clay/Tensai

Tensai is in a coonskin cap for no apparent reason. Rhodes and Tensai start things off before it's quickly off to Brodus who runs over every Scholar in sight. The girls get in a fight on the floor and the match is thrown out at 1:10.

Sheamus says Big Show can trust himself and Orton.

The Miz vs. Antonio Cesaro

Barrett is on commentary and this is non-title. A quick rollup gets two for Miz but he charges into a knee to the face. Cesaro kicks him in the back and face for two each. The gutwrench suplex gets another near fall and it's off to the cravate. Miz fires back with a knee lift and a big boot, followed by the running corner clothesline and the top rope ax handle.

The Figure Four is countered once but after a chop block Miz takes out the knee and gets the submission in 2:13. Yes, the United States Champion just tapped out 100% clean in less than two and a half minutes in a match to set up an Intercontinental match. Let that sink in for a minute.

Post match Miz calls out Barrett and says he's only champion for now.

We recap the contract signing and announcement of the stipulations for Lesnar vs. HHH from Raw.

Randy Orton/Sheamus/Big Show vs. 3MB

Yes, all night long the super team has been worried about not being able to work together against 3MB, the team that I believe at least two of them have individually beaten before. Orton and Mahal get things going with Randy pounding away in the corner. Off to Sheamus as apparently Big Show isn't official yet. Mahal gets in some right hands but Sheamus easily pounds him down and hits the Regal Roll.

Off to Big Show vs. McIntyre with Show hitting ten chops on the ropes ala Sheamus' forearms. Back to Mahal and then Slater with both guys being tossed into the ring. With Slater laid out on the mat it's back to Orton for the powerslam but Slater breaks up the Elevated DDT. Slater gets in a cheap shot and stomps away before it's off to McIntyre for a neckbreaker. Back to Heath who goes up, only to jump into a dropkick by Randy. The tag brings in Show who cleans house and knocks out McIntyre, only to have Sheamus tag himself in and Brogue Kick Mahal for the pin at 5:53.

Rating: D. Again, we've seen at least Sheamus beat all three of these guys on his own, so what exactly was this supposed to prove? It's like saying you need to be able to work together to crush a group of ants. I get the idea of working together but they didn't even need to. Did we really need to sit through two hours to get to this?

Sheamus and Big Show are about to fight again but here's Shield. Before they get here though Sheamus and Big Show get in a fight and shove Orton away. Actually never mind as they stop fighting once Shield is at ringside. Scratch that again as Shield is already bailing without ever getting in the ring to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. What in the world did I just wasted two hours on? The world champion isn't here and we're 16 days until Wrestlemania? Alberto is so angry about what happened on Monday that he let Swagger get by for free here. We can't even get an interview from him? Seriously? On top of that we have the United States Champion playing a role that Heath Slater

could have played just as well. This show was a waste of time and thank goodness I didn't waste my time to go and see it. Terrible show.

Results

Mark Henry b. Zack Ryder – World's Strongest Slam

Dolph Ziggler b. Kofi Kingston – Zig Zag

Jack Swagger b. Chris Jericho – Vader Bomb

Brodus Clay/Tensai vs. Rhodes Scholars went to a no contest

The Miz b. Antonio Cesaro – Figure Four Leg Lock

Big Show/Randy Orton/Sheamus b. 3MB – Brogue Kick to Mahal

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On This Day: March 16, 2012 – Smackdown: Back When AJ Was Interesting

Smackdown

Date: March 16, 2012

Location: Nationwide Arena, Columbus, Ohio

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T, Josh Matthews

It's that time of the week again. It's time for absolutely nothing being done about Bryan vs. Sheamus because that match means nothing in the grand scheme of Wrestlemania. Odds are we'll hear more about the battling GM's and that's about it. I haven't heard anything announced for tonight yet so it'll be a

surprise to me as well. Let's get to it.

Do You Know Your Enemy? Mine at the moment is Iowa St. They need to be defeated Saturday.

Here's Christian to open the show with the Peep Show. He looks healthy now at least. Christian gets a nice reaction but Booker informs us that Christian is looking down at all of us. He talks about the 12 man tag match at Mania and says that it'll change a lot in WWE. Christian brings out Ace and Otunga as well as Teddy who comes out with Aksana. R-Truth is officially part of Team Long.

Christian says let the bidding begin on his services and Teddy gets to go first. Teddy looks at him so Christian goes on a small rant and says make it worth his while. He says to give Christian what he deserves: one more match. Teddy tells Christian he's awesome but won't beg him to be part of the team. Once Teddy takes over both shows, you have to earn title shots and they won't get one if they get on his nerves. So in other words, earn it, but make sure you suck up at the same time?

Ace says that Christian should be on his team and guarantees Christian a title match if Team Ace wins. Christian says he won't fail, unlike Teddy. He officially joins Team Ace. Christian's music plays but Teddy says hang on a minute. He says Christian will be in action tonight but Ace says no because he isn't medically cleared tonight. Instead, Otunga gets to face the newest member of Team Teddy.

David Otunga vs. Kofi Kingston

This is joined in progress as we come back from a break. Ace is on commentary and Christian and Santino are at ringside. Teddy is on commentary too. Kofi kicks away to start but Otunga avoids him to take over. Cole and Teddy argue as Otunga pounds away. Christian can't compete because of an ingrown toenail. Powerslam gets two for David. Teddy and Ace argue

about ingrown toenails as Otunga poses.

Off to a chinlock as Cole talks about baseball. Thankfully Josh actually talks about the match even a little bit to get us back to some sanity. Otunga hits a clothesline in the corner and then a second one. Booker says Otunga would have been better off in the WBF. That's allowed to be mentioned? Kofi comes back with a cross body for two and a dropkick to put David down. He loads up the Boom Drop but Christian trips Kofi. Teddy points it out so Christian is ejected. The GM's argue and Cole says something about the IC Title. Otunta tries to hit Kofi with his belt but Santino stops him. Trouble in Paradise ends this at 5:40.

Rating: C-. In a roughly five and a half minute match, we had attempted weapon use, two interferences, a fight between the GM's, and a WBF reference. Who in the world thought this match needed that much to it? The match was just ok and it's good to see Otunga getting some time to be on offense.

Bryan is outside the Divas locker room and AJ comes out in a little black dress. AJ says this dress Bryan bought her doesn't seem to fit. Bryan: "It looked much better on the mannequin." Bryan talks about how they need to be the new power couple so he's gotten her a match tonight where a win could get her a Divas title match.

AJ vs. Nikki Bella

Bryan comes out to be in AJ's corner. Nikki gets on her knees because AJ is short so AJ dropkicks her in the face. Bryan is coaching AJ from the floor. Nikki stands on AJ's hair and pulls her up. Booker thinks AJ doesn't want to be in the ring. Off to a chinlock as Booker goes on a long and stupid rant about how AJ shouldn't be in there and doesn't want this. Josh and Cole agree that it's stupid because she's a wrestler and that's her job. AJ comes back with a cross body and Twin Magic fails. AJ grabs a rollup for the pin at 2:27.

Bryan celebrates post match. Booker says Bryan is ruining AJ's career and that wasn't a win. WHAT IS HE TALKING ABOUT???

Sheamus vs. Jericho later.

Raw ReBound shortens the Rap vs. Rock deal to about three minutes.

Cody talks about how dominant Big Show is 364 days out of the year, but at Wrestlemania he's a choke artist. This match also has more story than Sheamus vs. Bryan.

Great Khali vs. Cody Rhodes

Khali easily overpowers him to start and chops Rhodes a lot. Cody grabs a single arm DDT which Khali can't sell right so Cody works over the arm. Booker says go for the legs, even though Cody has Khali down already. Now it's to the knees for a bit but Cody goes up and jumps into a chop. Khali loads up a chop but Cody heads to the apron and hits an enziguri. A dropkick to the knee sets up the Beautiful Disaster for the pin at 3:13.

Rating: C-. Cody beating a giant is a good idea heading into Wrestlemania. It worked for Luger when he was getting ready to face Giant back in 1996. It might work a little better if there was more than one face giant to face before Big Show but you get the idea. Cole called this a huge upset for no apparent reason.

Video on the Central American tour.

Here's Orton with something to say. He says he usually doesn't come out here to talk when he has a problem with someone but instead he hunts them down. However he feels like he's being hunted by Kane. Orton wants to know why Kane has chosen him. Kane wants people to embrace hate and Orton is embracing it as well. He calls out Kane for an explanation. Well forced exposition is better than no exposition I guess. Orton wants

to know why he's putting Kane down when it eventually happens.

Here's the Big Fried Freak who talks about how Orton doesn't like being in the unknown. Usually he'd like to see Orton all unsure but since Orton asked, Kane will tell him. At least he's polite. We get a clip from last year where Orton beat Kane in a street fight and post match Kane offered a handshake which Orton accepted. I don't remember that but maybe it was a post show thing.

Kane says he watches that footage every day because it reminds him of what he had become: something with humanity. Kane says he's a monster again but he needs closure, which he'll get by destroying Orton. Orton says come get me but Kane says we'll do it at Wrestlemania. That gets us to eight matches which is acceptable.

Go to the David Otunga law offices!

Here's Drew for a match. Teddy pops up on screen and says Drew has a one year contract that can't be broken. Here's Drew's first opponent.

Drew McIntyre vs. Big Show

Show powers him around to start with pure power. McIntyre comes back with some kicks but Futureshock is broken up and Show spears him down. Show chokeslams him but decides to punch him instead of covering him. Show goes over to him and the referee stops it at 1:52. That's an odd ending.

Mark Henry vs. Yoshi Tatsu

Yoshi immediately dropkicks him but Henry glares at him. Henry takes over with power and powerslams Yoshi into dust. World's Strongest Slam ends this in about 2:00.

Here's Jericho to talk a bit before the main event. He talks about how he's been requested to apologize for what he said on Monday about Punk's family. There's no need to apologize for

the truth. Punk has all the signs of an alcoholic such as the tattoos and trying to hide. Jericho talks about how the Pipe Bombs are things Punk wants to say to his parents. He's the best in the world and he's going to prove it by winning the world title at Mania. Afterwards, he's going to make a stiff cocktail and toast Punk and Punk's father. He starts a CM Drunk chant and says Pipe Bomb.

Sheamus vs. Chris Jericho

Sheamus knocks him into the corner to start and Jericho bails to the floor. That goes nowhere as Sheamus takes him back inside and gets two. Jericho gets sent over the corner and out to the floor in a crash. There are the ten forearms to the chest which Booker calls musical chairs. A delayed vertical suplex gets two for Sheamus. This has been one sided thus far.

Just as I say that, Jericho low bridges him to send Sheamus to the floor. A baseball slide sends Sheamus into the barricade. Bryan and AJ (now in matching colors) come out to watch as we take a break. Back with Jericho still in control. The big red welt on Sheamus' back is still there after crashing into the table on Monday. Jericho hits a belly to back suplex as we hear about Jericho's Vengeance 2001 accomplishments.

Jericho loads up the running bulldog but Sheamus sends him into the corner to counter. Sheamus comes back with his double ax handles and the Irish Curse for two. The rolling fireman's carry slam looks to set up White Noise but Jericho counters into a Codebreaker attempt. Sheamus puts him on the top rope but the Brogue Kick misses. Jericho hits the bulldog and Lionsault for two. Sheamus pulls himself to the top but gets crotched. Jericho gets knocked to the mat and Sheamus hits the top rope shoulder for two.

Celtic Cross is loaded up but Jericho rolls down the back and counters into the Walls. Since Sheamus is a top face though he manages to get the ropes to break it up. Another Celtic Cross

is loaded up but Jericho escapes again. They go to the floor and Sheamus throws Jericho over towards Bryan and AJ but they move. Sheamus stares at Bryan but Jericho rams him into the table. Bryan kicks Sheamus in the head as Jericho is getting back in and Chris wins by countout at 10:52 shown of 14:22.

Rating: B. I was digging this one and I can live with the ending because it serves a better purpose. It was obvious neither guy was going to go over clean here which is ok, but they still need to give us something else to care about with Sheamus vs. Bryan. The AJ stuff is kind of there on the side and I don't know if they're going to be able to have it mean anything for the PPV.

Sheamus kicks Jericho's head off to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. I like this one more than I've liked most of their shows lately. This did a good job of pushing a lot of the matches for Mania which is really all you can do with two weeks left. Orton vs. Kane has a story (not a great one but a story nonetheless) now and we FINALLY get a little friction between Bryan vs. Sheamus. It doesn't mean anything but it's better than leaving them apart. Good show here though and a good Mania build show.

Results

Kofi Kingston b. David Otunga – Trouble in Paradise

AJ b. Nikki Bella – Rollup

Cody Rhodes b. Great Khali – Beautiful Disaster

Big Show b. Drew McIntyre by referee stoppage

Mark Henry b. Yoshi Tatsu – World's Strongest Slam

Chris Jericho b. Sheamus via countout

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Smackdown – March 15, 2013: Why Bother Calling It A World Title?

Smackdown

Date: March 15, 2013

Location: Allen County War Memorial Coliseum, Fort Wayne, Indiana

Commentators: Michael Cole, Josh Matthews, Brad Maddox

Back to Smackdown as we continue getting ready for Wrestlemania. Counting this episode we have four episodes to go before the big show and a lot of the card is already set. The main thing we still need to do is officially announce the likely six man tag between Shield and Orton/Sheamus/Big Show. We have a main event tonight of Ryback vs. Mark Henry, which I have a feeling won't happen. Let's get to it.

Sheamus/Randy Orton vs. Rhodes Scholars

Before the match we get a clip of Shield attacking Orton and Sheamus on Sunday. We also hear from Sandow who complains about how bad things went on Monday, but tonight the Scholars are going to ruin Orton and Sheamus' night. Rhodes and Sheamus start things off and after Cody can't get anything going he makes the tag off to Sandow. Damien stomps Sheamus down in the corner but Sheamus comes back with the knee lift and some running forearms.

Sheamus hits the ten forearms to the chest of Sandow before they head to the floor, allowing Rhodes to hit the Disaster Kick off the apron to take Sheamus out. After a break we come back with Cody dropkicking Sheamus down for two. Back to Sandow who pounds away on the pale one, only to have Sheamus headbutt him from the mat to escape. A front facelock keeps Sheamus in control but he punches his way out.

Sheamus is sent into the corner but the referee stops Sandow for a lecture. Damien charges into an elbow in the corner followed by the top rope shoulder from Sheamus to put both guys down. The hot tag brings in Orton to powerslam Rhodes. A t-bone suplex puts Cody down again as does the Elevated DDT. It's a Brogue Kick for Sandow and the RKO to Cody for the pin at 5:57 shown of 9:27. Cole: "HASHTAG CELTIC VIPERS!" It's time to push Twitter again apparently.

Rating: C. Basic tag match here to establish the super team as a threat. Granted I'm not sure how much of a threat you can prove yourselves to be when you beat a team that loses every time they team up. Again, what was the point in splitting them up if you're just going to put them back together to job them out all the time?

Post match here's the Shield...on the screen. They say Sheamus and Orton should be afraid, but not tonight. Ambrose lists off all the people they've taken apart and left laying in the ring like roadkill. Rollins wants to know why Shield doesn't have a match at Wrestlemania because that's the biggest injustice of all. Ambrose tells Sheamus and Orton to find a partner for a six man tag. Orton and Sheamus say they're in.

Fandango debuts tonight. Again.

We recap Lesnar's beatdown of the Outlaws from Raw as well as Heyman accepting Lesnar's challenge for Wrestlemania.

Sheamus and Orton talk about making the right choice when Big Show comes up. He offers his services even though he doesn't trust either guy. Instead though, Sheamus and Orton have apparently picked Ryback.

Kaitlyn/Layla vs. Tamina Snuka/Aksana

Tamina shoves Layla down to start but Layla comes back with some kicks. Tamina slams Layla as he blocks a kick before bringing in Aksana. The

crowd is dead for this. The Funkadactyls are watching in the back. Aksana puts on a lame bow and arrow hold before it's back to Tamina for another suplex. Layla whips Tamina into the corner, allowing for a hot tag to Kaitlyn. She fires off kicks and right hands to Aksana and spears her down, but Layla tags herself in and hits Lots of Layla (that bouncing cross body out of the corner of hers) for the pin at 3:52.

Rating: D. This was a rather boring match with things continuing to lead up towards Layla vs. Kaitlyn, but again there's no reason to care about these girls. Tamina and Aksana are very boring as villains to be beaten up and Layla does nothing of note either as a challenger. The match was boring on top of having a played out premise to it.

The Bellas come in to see the Funkadactyls and the dancers say the Bellas were big influences on them. The Bellas call the Funkadactyls hoochie mamas who dance for a dinosaur and a man who thinks he's Japanese. A brawl erupts and the Bellas leave the Funkadactyls laying.

We go back to Raw to recap the events with Punk, Kane, Undertaker and the urn during the tribute to Paul Bearer.

Kane vs. Dolph Ziggler

Kane takes him into the corner to start and fires off some knee lifts before punching away in another corner. An uppercut puts Ziggler down on the floor for a bit but he fires off some right hands back inside to get himself a breather. A big boot puts Ziggler down again though as does a slam. Dolph fires off more right hands but gets backdropped out to the apron. He comes back in with a missile dropkick for two before kicking Kane in the face.

A front facelock by Ziggler is easily thrown off by Kane but Ziggler counters with the jumping DDT for two. Kane comes right back with a delayed vertical suplex for two. A powerslam attempt is countered into the sleeper by Ziggler but Kane flips him down onto his back for two.

Kane's top rope clothesline puts Dolph down but an AJ distraction breaks up the chokeslam. Langston throws Bryan into the timekeeper's area so Kane kick Big E. down. Back inside Ziggler hits a Fameasser and the Zig Zag for the pin at 7:17.

Rating: C. Not bad here but the distractions got to be a bit much. It was nice to see Ziggler getting a win here and it appears we'll be getting Ziggler and Langston vs. HELL NO at Mania for the tag titles. The formula worked for Shawn and Diesel twenty years ago so why not do it again here?

Post match Langston lays out Kane.

We get another parody video from Del Rio and Ricardo, this one about evil Canadian immigrants. Apparently they're crossing the border and bringing in maple syrup. Is this supposed to be amusing?

Jericho and R-Truth are laughing at the video in the back when Jack Swagger and Zeb Colter come in. Swagger talks about putting the weight of the country on his back and fighting for America's soul. They accuse Jericho of sneaking across the border and stealing American jobs, but Jericho points out that he was born in New York. Jericho tells Swagger to focus on his match with Del Rio at Wrestlemania but not until after their match tonight.

Fandango still debuts tonight. Allegedly.

Great Khali vs. Fandango

I'm sure you know the drill by now. Khali can't pronounce Fandango's name so no match. The idea is starting to get old in a hurry. We waste another five minutes on this.

We get the Rock vs. Cena video from Raw.

Sheamus and Orton talk about being excited for the six man when Shield jumps them. Ryback comes up but Booker tells him to go fight Mark Henry instead of worrying about Shield.

Mark Henry vs. Ryback

They lock up and fight into the corner but here's Shield about thirty five seconds in. No match for all intents and purposes.

Henry bails and Ryback clears out Shield. Henry gets back in but Shield comes back in to beat Ryback down. The TripleBomb lays Ryback out and the Shield leaves, allowing Henry to hit a pair World's Strongest Slams for good measure.

Jack Swagger vs. Chris Jericho

Feeling out process to start as they fight for control via a hammerlock. Swagger takes over with a big right hand in the corner but Jericho clotheslines him to get a breather. The springboard dropkick sends Swagger to the floor and we take a break. Back with Swagger hitting a running knee in the corner before hooking a double chickenwing. Jericho finally rolls his way out of it but gets kicked right back down for two.

Off to a front facelock by Jack but Jericho rolls over into a near fall. Jack takes out the knee with a chop block to set up the Patriot Lock. Chris kicks off and gets two more off a small package, only to be suplexed down for two for Swagger. We take another break and come back with Swagger hitting a running splash in the corner but Jericho comes back with a DDT for two. Chris fires off some kicks but Swagger grabs the gutwrench, only to have the powerbomb countered into the Walls of Jericho.

Swagger blocks those though and puts on the Patriot Lock but Jericho rolls through THAT and puts on the Walls. They're not on tight though and

Swagger makes a rope. Out to the floor we go with Jericho sending Jack into the steps. Back in and a top rope cross body gets two for the Canadian but Jack blocks the Codebreaker. The gutwrench powerbomb is enough to end Jericho at 10:03 shown of 16:33.

Rating: C+. This started slow but the stuff after the second break was much better. This is where Jericho is so valuable: he could (and often does) lose like 80% of his matches but he's such an established star that it doesn't hurt him at all. The win doesn't do much good for Swagger but it's better than losing I guess.

Overall Rating: C-. The show was ok but there was nothing on here that got me excited for the most part. It was mainly Wrestlemania build but the focus was on everything but the Smackdown world title match. Del Rio wasn't even on the show and the only mention of the match was the unfunny Canadians video. Then again, it's not like this match means anything so it doesn't make much of a difference.

Results

Sheamus/Randy Orton b. Rhodes Scholars – RKO to Rhodes

Kaitlyn/Layla b. Tamina Snuka/Aksana – LOL to Aksana

Dolph Ziggler b. Kane – Zig Zag

Ryback vs. Mark Henry went to a no contest when Shield interfered

Jack Swagger b. Chris Jericho – Gutwrench Powerbomb

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Monday Night Raw – March 11, 2013: This Show Is Uncle Paul Approved

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 11, 2013

Location: Bankers Fieldhouse Arena, Indianapolis, Indiana

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

We're four weeks out from Wrestlemania and the top of the card is set. The major news coming out of last week is that CM Punk gets the chance to stop Undertaker's Streak this year after winning a fatal fourway to end last week's episode. Other than that we're likely to hear more about Rock vs. Cena II tonight which should be fun after last week's solid promos. Let's get to it.

We open with a tribute video to Paul Bearer. This is the same one that aired on WWE's Youtube channel last week.

Appropriately enough, here's Undertaker to open the show. He kneels down in the middle of the ring in front of an urn and looks up at the In Memory graphic but is interrupted by CM Punk. Punk talks about wanting to extend his heartfelt condolences for Undertaker's loss. That would be Undertaker's loss at Wrestlemania of course. The silver lining for Undertaker is that Paul Bearer won't be alive to see Undertaker go 20-1. Punk says that in four weeks, we'll get a tribute video to Undertaker's streak.

During the break Kane came out and tried to chokeslam Punk off the stage but he escaped. Kane went looking through the back for Punk but couldn't find him. Instead he threw someone I couldn't make out across the locker room. It might have been Alex Riley.

Big Show vs. Seth Rollins

This is a result of Shield beating up Big Show after Raw went off the air last week. Rollins runs at Big Show to start but is easily shoved away. Rollins is sent to the floor with Big Show in pursuit. The other members of the Shield jump him for the DQ at 41 seconds.

Show tries to fight them off but the spear takes him down. There's the TripleBomb to leave Show laying.

Punk yells at Vickie Guerrero and Brad Maddox about what happened with Kane, so Vickie makes it Kane vs. Punk in a No DQ match.

We get a classic Bearer moment with him making his debut on the Brother Love Show.

Daniel Bryan vs. Dolph Ziggler

This is a result of Bryan making fun of AJ after she had water thrown on her last week. Bryan starts fast with a surfboard submission, only to have Ziggler escape and dropkick him down for two. Bryan comes back with an elbow in the corner and a stomp to the arm before backdropping Ziggler out to the floor. Bryan loads up the suicide dive but Langston gets on his apron to stop him in his tracks as we take a break.

Back with Ziggler holding Bryan in a chinlock but Bryan catapults him into the corner to escape. A running knee to Ziggler's chest puts him down but Bryan runs into a boot in the corner. An O'Connor Roll gets two for Bryan but Ziggler pops out at the last second. Bryan fires off the hard kicks to the chest and a big one to the head gets two. Ziggler goes up top but gets crotched down hard. Bryan loads up a belly to back superplex but Ziggler turns over in mid air, turning it into a cross body for a VERY close two.

Bryan tries a standing huricanrana but gets dropped onto the top rope. The Fameasser gets two for Dolph and he pounds away on the chest. AJ gets on the apron to distract the referee as Bryan hooks the No Lock, only to have Langston pull him to the ropes. Another attempt at the No Lock is countered and Zigler hits the Zig Zag for the pin at 11:30.

Rating: B. Good back and forth match here but it still doesn't help Zigler's major problems right now, mainly being the lack of a match at Wrestlemania. Maybe he and Langston will go after the tag titles or something, but right now there's nothing for him to do, which says a lot after how big a deal he was a few months ago.

Post match Langston hits the Big Ending (falling slam) on Bryan at AJ's request.

We recap HHH's challenge to Lesnar from last week.

Tensai vs. Fandango

Tensai tells him to get out here, but Fandango doesn't like how they say his name. He wants Naomi to say his name because she's the only one with any skill. Fandango says she's better than this but Tensai cuts her off, meaning no match.

Trailer for G.I. Joe 2.

Another Paul Bearer moment is him returning with Undertaker at Wrestlemania 20.

Rhodes Scholars vs. New Age Outlaws

Before the match, Sandow and Rhodes do the intelligent version of the Outlaws' entrance which is very amusing. Apparently they've reunited for good now, which makes me wonder why they split in the first place. Road

Dogg: "Lord have mercy, this one is for you Percy (Bearer's real first name). Roadie and Cody start things off and there are the shaky jabs to put Cody down. Before this goes anywhere though, here's Brock Lesnar, sending fear running through Cody. Lesnar attacks Gunn for the DQ at 1:25.

Both Outlaws get F5's and are laid in front of Lesnar. Heyman is here with Lesnar and talks about how Lesnar isn't here to play games. He talks about Lesnar hurting both Shawn Michaels and Vince McMahon. Heyman says the last traces of DX were just destroyed right in front of you and that Lesnar will indeed fight HHH at Wrestlemania. However, there's a but to that yes. Lesnar wants to name the stipulations before he'll agree, but HHH has to sign the contract before he knows the rules. Heyman eggs HHH on by listing off people that HHH will disappoint by saying no. Heyman's two words for us: BROCK LESNAR.

Kofi Kingston vs. Mark Henry

Kofi tries to fire off some kicks to start but is easily knocked out to the floor with a single kick from Henry. Out on the floor and Henry misses a charge into the steps, allowing Kofi to dive off the steps and stagger Henry. Back inside Kofi tries his top rope cross body, only to be caught in the World's Strongest Slam for the pin at 2:26.

In the back, Cody makes mustache jokes to Kaitlyn when Sandow shows up. He says he has a surprise for Cody and here are the returning Bella Twins. Kaitlyn walks off in disgust. Vickie comes up and gives the Scholars a match with Randy Orton and Sheamus.

Ryback vs. Heath Slater

Mark Henry comes out to watch and there isn't much else to say. Slater tries to jump him but gets pounded down, allowing for the Meat Hook and the Shell Shock to end this at 1:05.

Post match McIntyre gets Shell Shocked and here's Henry to the ring. McIntyre gets a World's Strongest Slam and a second Shell Shock. Now he gets another World's Strongest Slam as the monsters stare at each other.

Trailer for The Call.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Antonio Cesaro

Non-title here as usual. Before the match Del Rio says he was born in Mexico but made in America. Alberto hits a quick cross body for two but Cesaro comes back with a forearm to the head. He pounds down Del Rio before hooking a fast chinlock. The world champion comes back with some clotheslines and a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. The low superkick and Backstabber get two each and Del Rio goes up top. He jumps into the European uppercut for two though and follows it up with an attempted German suplex. Del Rio easily counters into the cross armbreaker for the submission at 4:40.

Rating: C. This was fine, and although I could go without the US Champion tapping out in five minutes, at least it was to Alberto who is on a roll at this point. Del Rio is on a higher level than Cesaro so a loss by Antonio isn't the worst thing in the world. Cesaro got in one good move the entire match though and that's not a good omen for him.

Kane is holding the urn and has nothing to say.

We get a video recapping Cena vs. Rock over the last two years.

Rhodes Scholars vs. Randy Orton/Sheamus

Damien and Randy start things off with Orton in full control. It's off to Sheamus to face Cody and the Scholars manage to send Sheamus to the floor to take over. Back do Damien for some knee drops for two as Sheamus is in trouble. He fights up with relative ease though once Cody comes back in.

The not hot tag brings in Orton for an attempt at the Elevated DDT but Damien makes the save.

Orton is sent into the post and we head back inside so Sandow can hit the Wind-Up Elbow for two. Back to Rhodes who goes up top, only to get crotched and superplexed down. There's the tag to Sheamus who cleans house, including hitting Sandow with the ten forearms on the apron. White Noise takes down Sandow again and it's the Brogue Kick for the pin at 8:03.

Rating: D+. That's probably really harsh but this show is hitting the exact same problem that every single episode does: it's feeling long. We've done so much tonight and now the show is reaching levels of burnout. This is the same problem the show always reaches because three hours a week is just too much.

During the break, Shield attacked Orton and Sheamus.

We get some Touts from fans about Paul Bearer.

Here's Jericho for the Highlight Reel with guests the Miz and Wade Barrett, both of whom have movies out at the moment. Miz is out first and talks about the success of his movie but here's Barrett to talk about how great Dead Man Down is. Barrett talks about turning down a lot of movie roles because he's busy being IC Champion. Jericho gets in his face and says he's been Intercontinental Champion nine times and if Barrett keeps up, he might make it ten. Cue Brad Maddox who stumbles through the worst promo in the history of ever while announcing Jericho vs. Miz with the winner getting a title shot at Wade next week.

Chris Jericho vs. The Miz

This is joined in progress and the winner gets a title match at Barrett next week. Barrett is on commentary for the match. Jericho has Miz in a

chinlock with an armtrap but Miz fights out with some left hands. Jericho bulldogs him down very quickly but the Lionsault hits knees. The Walls of Jericho can't go on either so Miz takes out the knee. He can't hook the Figure Four so Jericho fights for the Walls again. This time he manages to hook them but Miz crawls over to the ropes before falling to the floor. Jericho sends Miz flying into Barrett so the champion jumps Jericho for the DQ at 4:09.

Rating: D+. This didn't have the time to get anywhere and the ending was pretty clear for most of the match. The triple threat next week probably won't be anything interesting but if it sets up an IC Title match for Wrestlemania I can't say I'm complaining. It's not like Barrett ever defends the thing.

Post match Barrett takes both finishers.

We get Ricardo and Alberto's parody of Colter and Swagger's videos.

We get a video from a Wrestlemania XI vignette which parodies NYPD Blue and has Bearer in drag, saying he has nothing to do with Yokozuna disappearing. A gong sounds, the lights go out, the lights come back on, Bearer is in a male suit. 1995 was weird.

Jack Swagger vs. Sin Cara

Before the match, Colter talks about how the fans are programmed to cheer for Sin Cara because of his entrance and the jumps he performs. Colter says Sin Cara is nothing but a sign of things that need to change. As the match starts we're told that it's a triple threat for the Intercontinental Title next week with Miz and Jericho challenging Barrett. Cara sends him to the floor to start and hits a big dive but might have hurt his shoulder. Apparently it wasn't that bad as he charges back into the ring and fires off some kicks to Swagger, only to springboard into a kick to the ribs. The Patriot Lock ends this at 1:52.

Now we get an interview with Halle Berry about The Call. During the interview David Otunga calls her and tells her he may have given her phone number to someone who threatened him with violence. She hangs up and Kane calls her, asking why she doesn't return his fan mail. Apparently Kane sent her a picture but she wasn't impressed. She raises up her arms and makes fire come out of the ring posts behind Kane.

Ryback vs. Mark Henry on Smackdown.

CM Punk vs. Kane

No DQ here. Punk dives through the ropes to attack Kane to start but Kane comes back with an uppercut. He drops Punk throat first onto the barricade and loads up the announce table, only to have Punk hit Kane in the ribs with the ring bell. Back inside Punk shoves Kane off the top and hits the Macho Elbow for two before nailing the knee in the corner. Kane throws him over the top and we take a break at 11:05pm.

Back with Kane charging into a boot in the corner followed by Punk hitting a middle rope clothesline for two. Punk wedges a chair into the corner but Kane reverses a whip to send Punk into said chair. Kane goes to the floor and throws about four chairs into the ring before turning his attention back to Punk who is cowering in the corner. Back inside and Punk counters a chokeslam into a DDT onto a chair for two. The high kick blocks a chair shot but the Undertaker's gong goes off, allowing Kane to chokeslam Punk for the pin at 12:00.

Rating: C. Not bad here but at the end of the day this match was WAY too late in the show to hold up. The ending was the right idea with Undertaker costing Punk a match to set up the Wrestlemania match a little bit more. That's good, basic storytelling and the match is going to be awesome.

Undertaker and Kane do their kneeling salute to Bearer, but Punk hits Kane in the back with the urn over and over before leaving with it.

Overall Rating: B. This show did a lot for Wrestlemania, but at the same time the problem was how packed it was. There was no room to breathe on this show and it felt really long at about the two hour mark. I did like the stories being told and all the angle advancement we got, plus the Bearer stuff was very nice. Good but LONG show tonight.

Results

Big Show b. Seth Rollins via DQ when Shield interfered

Dolph Ziggler b. Daniel Bryan – Zig Zag

New Age Outlaws b. Rhodes Scholars via DQ when Brock Lesnar interfered

Mark Henry b. Kofi Kingston – World's Strongest Slam

Ryback b. Heath Slater – Shell Shock

Alberto Del Rio b. Antonio Cesaro – Cross Armbreaker

Sheamus/Randy Orton b. Rhodes Scholars – Brogue Kick to Sandow

The Miz vs. Chris Jericho went to a no contest when Wade Barrett interfered

Jack Swagger b. Sin Cara – Patriot Lock

Kane b. CM Punk – Chokeslam

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Smackdown – March 8, 2013: I

Believe In The Shield

Smackdown

Date: March 8, 2013

Location: Times Union Center, Albany, New York

Commentators: Michael Cole, Josh Matthews

We continue to move closer to Wrestlemania with this stop in Albany. The main event tonight is the match that the fans picked last week with Alberto Del Rio facing Dolph Ziggler although not for the title. Other than that we're likely to see some more development in Sheamus/Orton/Big Show vs. Shield in a story that started last week. Also I'm sure Swagger and Colter will be here. Let's get to it.

We open with an In Memory graphic to Paul Bearer. Very nice.

The opening video shows the end of last week's show with Orton and Sheamus being ready to fight Shield before Big Show gave them a surprise hand. Tonight it's Sheamus vs. Big Show.

Here are Swagger and Colter to start things off. Swagger introduces Colter, who wants the crowd to admit that they all think like him. Everyone should be able to see what's wrong with America, but everyone else is too afraid to do something about it. Colter asks how many people know someone who has lost a job to someone who has snuck across the border and will work for a lower wage. He talks about writing a new bill of rights for the citizens because they've had enough of this and if you don't like it that's too bad.

This brings out Alberto and Ricardo with the champion saying that he's got proof of what Colter and Swagger really think America is about. We get a video of Ricardo dressed as Colter and Alberto portraying Swagger. Ricardolter says the real threat to America is Mexican food, because real American bellies can't take those kinds of beans and spices. Real Americans love pizza and French fries you see. Swaggerto wants to go get a pizza but he isn't allowed to because he has to say his catchphrase first. Not bad.

3MB vs. HELL NO

Before the match we see 3MB getting beaten up by Tensai/Brodus Clay/Honky Tonk Man. This is non-title and it's Slater and McIntyre for 3MB. Kane and McIntyre start things off with both guys getting in a shot to the face before it's off to Slater. Kane elbows him down and Bryan gets a tag in. Bryan sends Heath to the floor with a hurricanrana but misses the knee off the apron. McIntyre gets in a shot to the head of Bryan and the band takes over.

Drew pounds away in the corner as 3MB makes some quick tags in and out. McIntyre stays in for a bit and is caught in a belly to back suplex from Daniel, allowing for the hot tag to Kane. Slater comes in as well and is immediately run over by the monster. A low dropkick keeps Slater down as does an uppercut which gets two. There's the side slam for good measure but a Jinder Mahal distraction lets Slater stay out of the chokeslam. Bryan tags himself in and counters a rollup attempt into the NO Lock on Slater for the submission at 3:52.

Rating: D+. This was a glorified squash as HELL NO continues to roll along while having no challengers in sight. There's no one for them to fight at the moment and they aren't having as many problems as they had before, so what is there to be interested about with them right now? They aren't really even funny together anymore.

We hear about Natalya and Alicia Fox going to Rwanda on a charity trip for malaria relief.

Ziggler talks about how the fans voted him in to face Del Rio because they want to see the most show stealing match in Smackdown history. It's also about the MITB case because history will be made tonight.

Ryback is on the way to the ring for a match when he sees Mark Henry. They stare each other down again but nothing happens.

Brad Maddox has joined the commentary booth.

We see HHH's challenge to Brock Lesnar from Raw.

Damien Sandow is in the ring saying that tonight he's facing the brute

that Darwin's theory of evolution forgot. If he's hungry, he should feed himself with the arts.

Ryback vs. Damien Sandow

Ryback takes him into the corner to start before throwing Sandow across the ring. Sandow rolls to the floor for only a few seconds before Ryback throws him back in. Damien gets in one shot but sees Ryback glaring at him, sending him running away. Back in again and Sandow gets in a few shots to the back to take over.

Some knees to the ribs slow Ryback down as Maddox thinks Cole is his employee. Off to a chinlock by Damien but Ryback quickly breaks free and elbows him down. A backdrop puts Damien down again as Maddox thinks Ryback is cheating somehow. The Meat Hook sets up the Shell Shock for the pin on Sandow at 3:23.

Rating: D+. Another squash here as Sandow's offense seemed to annoy Ryback more than hurt him. That's a good sign though as Ryback is starting to string together some victories after the disastrous winter that he just got done with. The fans still seem to like him though and that's a good sign for the monster.

We get a clip from after Raw went off the air where the Shield attacked Big Show and actually managed to hit him with the TripleBomb.

Big Show says he'll fight anyone that gets in his way and knock them out.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Dolph Ziggler

Non-title here again. Brad applauds himself for signing off on this match despite having nothing to do with it. If he wasn't so worthless I might say I like him a bit. Ziggler shoves him into the corner to start and hits a Stinger Splash before choking away a bit. Langston adds in a shot of his own so Ricardo hits him with a towel. Langston goes after Rodriguez so Ricardo picks up the bucket and throws some water, which hits AJ by mistake. AJ chases Ricardo around but gets caught by Big E., earning the two of them an ejection. The match has basically stopped during this whole scene.

We take a break and come back with Dolph getting two off an elbow drop. Off to a chinlock by Ziggler for a bit but Del Rio comes back with a sunset flip for two. Swagger and Colter are watching in the back. Off to another chinlock with a body scissors by Ziggler which doesn't last long again. Del Rio launches Dolph into the air before putting him on the top rope for a reverse superplex. It stuns both guys though so they stand up for a slugout.

Alberto takes over again with some clotheslines and a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker followed by the low superkick for two. Ziggler is sent into the corner but he fights out of the Backstabber, only to be caught in the second attempt, getting two for Del Rio. Josh brings up a good point on commentary: where is Booker? He's barely been around in the last few weeks.

Alberto goes up but jumps into a dropkick which only gets two for Dolph. A German suplex gets a near fall on Ziggler but he comes back with a tornado DDT for the same. The cross armbreaker is countered into a rollup but the second attempt gets the submission from Dolph at 10:02 shown of 13:32.

Rating: B-. This started off stupid with all of the comedy antics but it picked up by the end. The problem here though is the usual: Ziggler loses yet again, despite probably cashing in soon. I know I've been saying that for awhile now but he has until July, which is a lot closer than it sounds. I hope he loses at this point though, because it would make the title look weak otherwise.

In the back, Bryan makes fun of AJ for being soaked and looking like a Shetland pony. She doesn't care because soon enough she'll be with the World Heavyweight Champion. Bryan reminds her that when they were together, he was world champion. AJ says he lost it in 18 seconds, but Bryan says with Ziggler, AJ should be used to stuff lasting 18 seconds.

Mark Henry vs. Yoshi Tatsu

This is exactly what you would expect with Henry winning in 39 seconds via the World's Strongest Slam.

We get Donald Trump's Hall of Fame video.

Sheamus says Big Show shouldn't blame him for what Shield did to him on Raw. It doesn't surprise him though because nothing Big Show does is his fault. It's not his fault that his gear smells because he never washes it or that people think he's Shrek when he goes to Universal Studios. It won't be his fault either when Sheamus kicks his head off later tonight.

We go back to Raw to see Rock and Cena's confrontation.

Kaitlyn vs. Tamina Snuka

Layla is at ringside. Non-title again here and Kaitlyn starts fast with a backdrop. Cole gets sent face first into the ropes which sends her out to the floor. Layla gets knocked down on the floor so she tries to get in, allowing Tamina to hit a Samoan Drop on Kaitlyn for the pin at 1:24.

Sandow and Rhodes are watching in the back. Damien wants to talk strategy for their match on Monday but Rhodes wants to talk about Kaitlyn. Sandow thinks she's a good wrestler but Rhodes means as a woman. Damien thinks she's a success given how bad her genetic makeup is. These two still have decent chemistry together.

Fandango debuts tonight...allegedly.

Justin Gabriel vs. Fandango

No match again as Fandango doesn't like how Lillian pronounces his name. Fandango calls her Jillian.

Booker and Teddy are in the back and don't know what to think of what they just saw. Booker sends Teddy to tell Fandango that he has to perform the next time he's told to.

We get a video from Raw, summarizing that Undertaker faces Punk at Wrestlemania.

Colter and Swagger video on speaking English.

Sheamus vs. Big Show

Show tries his chop in the corner but Sheamus avoids it and pounds away at the giant. A headbutt puts Sheamus down though and Show pounds away in the corner. Show spears him down to the floor where Sheamus is chopped in the chest. As they come back in, Sheamus gets in some shots to the chest, only to be launched into the timekeeper's area as we take a break.

Back with Big Show holding a nerve hold followed by a side slam for two. Big Show goes up for his Vader Bomb but Sheamus pulls him down. Show escapes again and hits the falling backwards powerbomb for two. We head to the corner for a long series of chops by Big Show before he grabs Sheamus by the beard. Sheamus fights back with shoulders blocks in the middle of the ring as well as in the corner before clotheslining Big Show down.

Sheamus goes up, only to jump into a chokeslam. He counters with a DDT for two though and both guys are down. Big Show blocks White Noise but can't block it twice in a row, allowing Sheamus to plant him with it. Sheamus loads up the Brogue Kick but Big Show rolls to the floor. The Irishman hits a clothesline off the apron to put Show down again and we head back inside. As Show is on the apron though it's a Brogue Kick to put him down again. Here's Shield though and we'll say the match is thrown out at 7:00 shown of 10:30.

Rating: C. This was their usual hard hitting brawl but the match wasn't flowing as well as it usually does. It was more like a collection of moves instead a well built match like they had at Hell in a Cell or one of their later fights. To be fair though this is just a Smackdown match with a run-in finish so it's not like they needed to make it as good as they had before.

With Sheamus surrounded, here's Orton to even the odds a little bit. The numbers catch up with them though until Big Show gets up and cleans house almost on his own. The Shield runs away and Big Show knocks out Sheamus, only to walk into an RKO to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. This wasn't a great episode. They're definitely in build mode for Wrestlemania, but there are still some holes with no matches. It's clear that Ryback is fighting Henry and the six man is

going to happen as well as the world title, but stuff like Ziggler and the tag champions aren't clear yet. With nothing coming up for them yet, it's kind of dull watching them have the same seemingly meaningless matches that we've watched them have for months.

Results

HELL NO b. 3MB – NO Lock to Slater

Ryback b. Damien Sandow – Shell Shock

Alberto Del Rio b. Dolph Ziggler – Cross Armbreaker

Mark Henry b. Yoshi Tatsu – World's Strongest Slam

Tamina Snuka b. Kaitlyn – Samoan Drop

Big Show vs. Sheamus went to a no contest when Shield interfered

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Undertaker Returns On Raw

He didn't actually do anything, but there's a fatal fourway tonight to determine his opponent. It'll either be Sheamus, Big Show, Orton or Punk (read as: Punk).

On This Day: March 2, 2012 –

Smackdown : Doing What Smackdown Is Made For

Smackdown

Date: March 2, 2012

Location: Key Arena, Seattle, Washington

Commentators: Michael Cole, Josh Matthews, Booker T

Orton is back tonight and he's facing Daniel Bryan after Bryan gave him the concussion that put him out. I don't remember if I ever heard how legit that injury was. Anyway, that's the main event and it should be good, but I'd be shocked if we got a clean finish to it. Expect more of the Bryan vs. Sheamus build as well as some more Ace vs. Long stuff. Let's get to it.

We open with what looks more like a commercial for the show than an opening video. It's about the main event.

Do You Know Your Enemy? Mine is bronchitis.

Here's Sheamus to open the show. He says he's thinking about Wrestlemania and being in front of over 80,000 members of the WWE Universe. FANS. THEY'RE CALLED FANS. When did that become a dirty word? I know "Members of the WWE Universe" has been their term for it for years now, but why is fans such a bad thing to say? Anyway he can't wait to face Bryan. Bryan has become a changed man since he won the title, just like Sheamus did two years ago.

When Sheamus won his first world title, he became wrapped up in his own ego. However, he was lucky. He should have known that the WWE Title was the greatest trophy he could have earned. He became a bully instead though. You mean like he was before he won the title? What Sheamus needed was for someone to knock his block off. Bryan needs the same thing.

This brings out Vickie and Dolph for some reason. She liked his story but her favorite part was when Sheamus stopped talking. Ziggler says the people deserve to see him in the main event, not Sheamus. He says Sheamus' hair is on fire. Sheamus says that joke is as old as Dolph's grandmother Vickie. For some reason this leads to Vickie talking about Ace/Teddy and saying she's the only non-McMahon to be GM of both shows. Teddy comes out and makes Dolph vs. Sheamus right now. I liked Sheamus' promo here. He's not the best talker in the world so keeping it simple is something that works well for him.

Sheamus vs. Dolph Ziggler

The match is joined in progress after a break but it doesn't look like we've missed much. There was an ad talking about how Ace will run Smackdown next week so the announcers talk about that for awhile. Ziggler hits a dropkick but Sheamus keeps smiling. Sheamus comes back with forearms to the back and the ten in the ropes. The fans clearly really like Sheamus but they've given him no character development at all. It's a lost art in WWE anymore.

Ziggler goes to the floor. Booker says stay on your bicycle Dolph. There's an image for you, complete with Benny Hill music. Ziggler grabs a neckbreaker coming back in to take over. Another neckbreaker gets two so Dolph drops some elbows for the same result. Sheamus fights out of a chinlock and hits his power shots to come back. Powerslam gets two. Ziggler locks on a sleeper but Sheamus powers out of it by ramming Ziggler into the corner and out to the floor.

Dolph comes off the top but jumps into the Irish Curse. It gets two as Vickie puts the foot on the ropes. Sheamus loads up the Celtic Cross (Sheamus', not Finlay's). Irish Curse The Sequel gets two. Sheamus pounds his chest and shouts Brogue so Vickie calls out Swagger. The Kick takes him down but Ziggler hits a Fameasser. That only gets two so he tries the Zig Zag.

Sheamus holds the ropes and catches Ziggler in the new finisher which is now called the White Noise.

Rating: B-. Pretty good match here with Sheamus continuing to roll over the upper midcard. Since they're not going to give him and Bryan a concrete story, this works as well as anything else. Also it makes Sheamus look a lot stronger going into the PPV. At the end of the day though, he needs to pin Orton clean to really make himself look like the top challenger on Smackdown and I'm not sure I can see that. The other problem is that Bryan needs to be made to look strong also and I don't think that's going to happen.

We recap the Bryan vs. Punk stuff from Raw with the Battling Bosses.

Ace and Otunga are in Teddy's office when Teddy comes in. Ace wants an apology for the attack by Teddy on Raw. Apparently Ace has a bad back now and its because of Teddy. Otunga is considering a civil suit against Teddy. Ace says an apology will do instead. Teddy says no because it made Ace look like "a cow on ice crossed with Sesame Street Big Bird." Otunga vs. Khali on Monday. Ace suggests Teddy try yoga.

Heath Slater vs. Santino Marella

Santino attacks to start but the headbutt lands on knees. The announcers talk about Ace and Teddy. Cole: "See how tough he is?" Booker: "He used to have a skateboard. That's how tough he is." Anyway, Slater hits a Harlem Side Kick for two. He goes up but gets crotched and the Cobra ends it at 1:53.

Video on HHH vs. Undertaker, the same from Raw. The match simply isn't as good as they're trying to make it out to be. It's very good. It's a great match. It's not this masterpiece that they're pushing it as.

Natalya yells at Eve about Zach. Eve goes off on her about it and guess what Natalya winds up doing. You either want the

Divas to be serious or you don't. Pick one.

Natalya vs. Eve Torres

Natalya controls with a headlock and Booker has a thing for Eve. Now Booker diagnoses Natalya's stomach issues. Eve slaps her so Natalya takes her down and pounds on her. Eve reverses a rollup into one of her own for the pin at 1:32.

Here's Cody who has held the title for a very long time. If my math is right, if he holds the title until April 10, he'll have held it for the longest reign since Rock's in 97/98. Cody talks about Big Show's Wrestlemania losses and shows some stills from the Akebono and Mayweather matches. Cody says Show should be thanking him for keeping Show out of Wrestlemania because Show would just floundered again. He's got another Wrestlemania clip but Show cuts him off.

Cody runs into the crowd as soon as Show gets to the ring. Show says hang on a second. He wanted to watch the new clip with Cody like friends. Since Cody won't come back though, Show better go get Cody. Cue Teddy who says hang on a minute. This isn't Pamplona, Spain and Show can't be running into the crowd like a bull. Show vs. Cody for the title is announced for Wrestlemania. That's the second time the IC Title will be on the line at Mania since 2002.

Big Show vs. Mark Henry

Show takes him down to start but Henry fights back and clotheslines Show to the floor. The fans chant Sexual Chocolate as Show is sent into the timekeeper's area. He gets back to the apron at 8 but Henry rams him into the exposed buckle as we take a break. Back with Henry pounding him down and Cody on commentary. Back to the floor and Henry rams Show's back into the post.

With Show still against the post, Mark throws the steps at him. Since that would result in probable death, Show moves.

Henry knocks him down again and hits a Vader Bomb for two. Show hits a superkick and a "spear" (it was a shoulder block) to take Henry down. Show sets for the chokeslam but gets caught in the Slam for two. So long Henry, hope you enjoyed your time in the main event. Henry charges into the corner but walks into the WMD for the pin at 5:22 shown of 8:52.

Rating: C-. It's such a shame to see someone like Henry who has raised his game so much over the last six months and shocked the world by becoming a legit world champion to be sent down to this because of the way the WWE main event pushes work. Instead of going and feuding with a midcard face, they need to have him against other top good guys and losing, making his whole summer of dominance seem like it was nothing at all. Such is life in the WWE anymore.

Teddy tells Drew if he loses he's fired. Again.

Orton says he's back to normal, which means angry and wanting revenge. Bryan decided to pay the price and tonight Orton is going to collect.

Drew McIntyre vs. Justin Gabriel

Drew starts by blocking a kick and getting a clothesline for two. Another spin kick misses and Drew hits a big boot for two. Into the corner but Drew's tilt-a-whirl slam is countered into a DDT. Gabriel goes up and hits the 450 for the pin at 1:44. Justin hit two moves the whole match.

Teddy pops up on screen and fires Drew. At least until next week when Ace rehires him because he sees a lot of potential in him or something. They mentioned that Ace discovered Drew and brought him to WWE in the first place during the match.

We get ALL of Rock and Cena from Monday. The version I watch is divided into 6 fifteen minute parts. I literally skipped all of part 5 because of this. There was NOTHING in there they could clip?

Daniel Bryan says he hasn't changed since he won the title. He's still the same down to Earth person who was born and raised in Aberdeen, Washington. However he moved to Vegas as soon as possible. He calls himself a role model and talks about how he beat Giant and Henry in a cage and five others in the Elimination Chamber.

Daniel Bryan vs. Randy Orton

The fans are split on Bryan. Orton sends him to the floor quickly and throws Bryan into things. He sends Bryan into the steps and kicks Bryan's head into them. Back in Orton loads up a superplex but Bryan shoves him off and takes over. Knee to the head gets two as we take a break. Back with Bryan working over the arm and shoulder. Booker says that he'll never call Bryan D-Bry again. Bryan stays on the shoulder but Orton hits a dropkick to get some separation.

Booker runs down AJ now, calling Bryan her meal ticket. Is AJ really a heel, or does she just associate with one? I'm not exactly sure. The dropkick gets two. Bryan kicks him in the shoulder so Orton throws him into the Elevated DDT. RKO is countered twice and Bryan heads to the floor. Orton follows him and loads up the Elevated DDT on the floor...but here's Kane. Didn't see that one coming. The bell rings, presumably for a countout since Kane hasn't touched anyone, at 6:30 shown of 10:00.

Rating: C. Well we knew it wasn't going to be a clean finish. I'd assume this is going to set up Kane vs. Orton at Wrestlemania. That's a feud I've always wanted to see as I'm a fan of both guys. It's as good as anything else they're going to get and it gives them both something to do. The match was just ok though as they didn't have the time to get anything good going.

Orton goes straight at Kane for no apparent reason. Kane might have been coming to ask Booker if he wanted to buy some Girl

Scout cookies. They go into the ring but Kane is clotheslined to the floor. He pulls Orton out and they brawl on the floor for a bit. Back inside and Orton's shoulder goes into the post. A chokeslam puts Randy down and Kane wants a mic. He says welcome back Randy and that's it.

Ace says it's Kane vs. Aksana next week.

Overall Rating: B. I liked this show a lot. This is more the Smackdown style: steady as it goes and set up matches for the PPV. Here we set up the IC Title match, Kane vs. Orton and they furthered the Smackdown world title match. With four weeks to go until the PPV, that's a pretty solid show as far as building to the PPV. I could have done without 1/6 of the show being about Cena vs. Rock though. They could have cut that down to about five minutes and it would have been fine. Better show than most recent ones here though.

Results

Sheamus b. Dolph Ziggler – White Noise

Santino Marella b. Heath Slater – Cobra

Eve Torres b. Natalya – Rollup

Justin Gabriel b. Drew McIntyre – 450 Splash

Daniel Bryan vs. Randy Orton went to a double countout

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**Smackdown – March 1, 2013:
Tweet This: Social Media Is**

Stupid

Smackdown

Date: March 1, 2013

Location: Chesapeake Energy Arena, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Josh Matthews, Michael Cole

This is another special edition of the show called Social Media Smackdown. In other words, the show is heavily themed around things like Twitter, Tout and whatever else is popular in that area of technology. I'm not entirely sure how we're supposed to hear live from fans during a taped show, but I'm sure WWE has some "clever" idea in mind to solve this dilemma. Let's get to it.

The opening video talks about Orton and Sheamus attacking the Shield on Monday in a surprise attack.

Alberto Del Rio vs. Damien Sandow

Non-title. On the way to the ring, Sandow complains about the poor sentence structure that the champion and Ricardo both use. He also doesn't like the spit bucket that Ricardo carries for some reason. Sandow is only accomplished by his good looks and jealous gazes of the unwashed masses. Alberto makes fun of Damien's breath and we're ready to go. They fight over a lockup to start until Sandow gets a quick shoulder to knock Del Rio down.

The champion comes back with one of his own and Damien heads to the apron. Back in and Sandow hooks a headlock before stomping away in the corner. We get some tweets on the bottom of the screen to meet the social media requirement of the match. Some of the commentary is indeed new though as we hear Cole talk about some news stories from Friday.

Alberto comes back with a slam and a middle rope moonsault for two.

Sandow hooks a chinlock to no avail as Del Rio comes back with la majistral (rolling cradle) for two. Damien is right back with a clothesline for a near fall of his own though as the fast pace continues. Sandow jumps into a kick to the ribs and gets backdropped out to the apron. An enziguri puts him on the floor and we take a break.

Back with Damien slamming Del Rio down and dropping the Wind-Up Elbow for two. Sandow drops some knees into the champion's ribs and hooks a chinlock with his knee in the back. Del Rio fights up and hooks a German suplex to escape, putting both guys down. Back up and they slug it out until the Del Rio comes back with some clotheslines and a backbreaker. A low superkick gets two on Sandow as Swagger and Colter are watching in the back.

The cross armbreaker is countered into an Edge-0-Matic (reverse X-Factor) for two. Del Rio sends Sandow into the ropes and spins him around, allowing for some forearms to the back and a Backstabber for another near fall. Alberto loads up something in the corner but charges into a boot, followed by a running flip neckbreaker for two more for Sandow. He loads Del Rio into the Terminus but Alberto counters into the cross armbreaker for the submission at 9:42 shown of 13:12.

Rating: B. This was much better than I was expecting with both guys moving very quickly. The idea here was great with both guys getting to show off and look good in a match where they both benefit. Del Rio gets a win over someone who isn't bad and Sandow gets to look good against the world champion. Above all else though: this is a fresh match. We haven't seen these two fight, or at least not in awhile.

We get some clips from the masterpiece of Cena vs. Punk on Raw.

HELL NO is in the back and they talk about facing the Prime Time Players again tonight but with the handicaps from Raw reversed: tonight Kane is blindfolded and Bryan has an arm behind his back. Kane says fine but Bryan yells because Kane doesn't know what it's like to be blinded in a

match. Kane is happy because he doesn't have to look at Bryan's ugly goat face during the match. Bryan says no a lot.

US Title: Antonio Cesaro vs. The Miz

This is 2/3 falls and Miz is challenging. No jacket of flag for Cesaro this time. Miz grabs a fast rollup for two but Cesaro takes him to the mat with ease. He puts a headlock on Miz before running him over with a shoulder for two. Miz hits a back elbow of his own for one and kicks Cesaro in the face for two more. The champion heads to the floor for a breather but back inside Miz goes after the knee. Antonio heads to the floor again, only to get caught by a sunset flip back inside.

A knee to the ribs puts Miz down for two and it's off to a chinlock. Miz fights up and hits a clothesline, only to charge into a kind of torture rack slam for two. Cool looking move by Cesaro there. A rollup gets two for Miz but Cesaro Neutralizes him for the first fall at 4:02. We take a break and come back with the score tied up. Apparently Miz won a fall with the Figure Four during a break. I don't think I've ever seen that before. Miz charges into the gutwrench suplex for two and it's back to the chinlock.

The challenger fights up and stars raining down left hands on Cesaro but the champion calls Miz a stupid American, earning himself a slap. The Reality Check (backbreaker into a neckbreaker) is countered and Cesaro throws Miz into the air for the European Uppercut for a very close two. Cesaro taunts Miz, only to have the weak knee taken out for two.

They slug it out from their knees with Miz taking over and pounding away on Cesaro in the corner. The running clothesline in the corner sets up the top rope double ax handle for no cover. Back to the knee and there's the Figure Four but Antonio makes the rope. Miz tries the hold again but Cesaro kicks him off. A rollup out of the corner gets two for Miz but Cesaro reverses into one of his own, pulling the trunks for the pin at 10:04 shown of 13:34.

Rating: C+. Another decent match getting some length here and both guys got to look pretty good. It was annoying having the second fall on the WWE App but I guess we need to make sure we get it if we want to see the full match. Also they just didn't have time for the wrestling stuff tonight because we need to TOUT STUFF later on in the show or something. Decent match here and hopefully this ends this feud, although odds are it won't given the finish.

Orton and Sheamus are in the back and Sheamus wants Randy to worry about the Shield. Orton says he has to worry about Big Show tonight so Sheamus offers to watch his back. Randy actually takes him up on the offer.

Video on Fandango who debuts tonight.

Here's good old JR to interview Jack Swagger and Zeb Colter. JR talks about how he recruited Swagger to wrestle when he was playing football at the University of Oklahoma. Swagger insults the Sooners and Colter says they gave JR this interview because he's a real American. We get a clip from September when Swagger walked out on Raw. Colter answers for him, saying that he taught Swagger the truth about what happens in America everyday.

JR doesn't understand so Colter talks about how WWE is a microcosm of what America is like. Colter thinks it's interesting that Swagger could go on a losing streak and leave at the same time someone like Alberto Del Rio comes in and takes what should belong to Jack. Colter goes into his usual schtick about illegal immigrants taking jobs from Americans. Remarkably in one of the most conservative states in the country, no one seems to disagree. Colter says that Del Rio doesn't share the same values that he and Swagger do, so Del Rio needs to leave the country. Zeb compares Del Rio to rotten fruit that should be trashed.

Colter talks about Swagger winning the title at Wrestlemania but JR suggests that Colter is brainwashing Swagger. Apparently whatever talking Swagger and JR had done in the past means nothing anymore and JR needs to

be quiet before something bad happens to him. Swagger gets in JR's face and shoves him into the corner while calling JR a sympathizer. This brings out Del Rio who stands between JR and Swagger before saying that Swagger and Colter are the problems before saying he's the solution. That's a very good line and it ends the segment.

Your choices to face Del Rio next week are Ziggler, Barrett and Cesaro. The winner will be announced later tonight.

HELL NO vs. Prime Time Players

Non-title, Kane is blindfolded and Bryan has an arm tied behind his back. After a break, Kane puts a hood on over his mask but it has a goat face on it. Funny stuff. Bryan has Kane start with Young so Darren has some fun. He tries to trip Kane up in a school boy but the masked man catches on. Darren: "IT DIDN'T WORK TITUS!" Kane catches up to Darren and slams him down before Bryan tags himself in. After some kicks to the chest, a one arm crucifix gets two on Young. It's off to Titus and we take a break.

Back with Daniel escaping from Titus and bringing in Kane. The fans help Kane find Titus in the corner and there's a hip toss by Kane, but he can't find Titus again. Young comes in off a tag and walks into a chokeslam but Young rolls away from the cover. Bryan tags himself in but Kane grabs the referee by the throat. Bryan tries to call him off so Kane grabs Bryan with the other hand. Kane eventually feels the beard and lets Bryan go, but the distraction lets Titus roll Daniel up for the pin at 3:55 shown of 7:25.

Rating: D. I have no idea what the point of this was. Is it that Bryan and Kane fight a lot? That's fine I guess, but they did this same idea on Raw on Monday. It certainly wasn't to push the Players as the division has already died off again. It wasn't for comedy because other than the goat face hood, nothing on here was funny.

Post match Kane sees the goat face on the hood and is ticked off. Of all the costumes he's worn over the years, that's the one that offends him? Bryan wants a hug but Kane puts the hood on him and smacks Bryan in the face.

Big Show says he'll chokeslam Orton tonight.

Here's Chris Jericho live via Skype where it's the afternoon. He's on tour with Fozzie and bands like Metallica and Anthrax and plugs the replay of Robot Combat League after Smackdown. That's that apparently.

We meet Fandango in the back where he rubs his chest and criticizes Striker for his pronunciation of the name. We get some lessons in how to say Fandango before Striker asks him about his fighting style. Fandango says that he's accomplished everything in the ballroom so now it's time to take his rhythm and grace to the ring. Striker says Fandango's debut is up next against what sounds like Zack Ryder, but Fandango says the debut isn't happening until Striker gets his name right before walking off. Oh dear indeed.

We recap Lesnar returning to attack Vince and HHH returning to fight off Lesnar, busting him open in the process.

Del Rio faces Ziggler next week with over 50% of the vote.

Big Show vs. Randy Orton

During Orton's entrance we get a clip from Raw of Orton and Sheamus distracting the Shield, allowing Orton to hit an RKO on Rollins. Orton avoids the chop in the corner to start and pounds away on the giant. Show knocks him back down and fires off a headbutt to stagger Orton. The big man takes over and things slow down as he pounds away at Orton's midsection. Show crushes him in the corner but gets dropkicked out to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Big Show slamming elbows into Orton's shoulder to keep him in trouble. Show hooks a short arm scissors but Randy fights up with some right hands. That gets him nowhere though as Big Show takes him right back down with the Final Cut for two. Show goes to the middle rope but his elbow from there hits the mat, allowing Orton to keep living.

Orton pounds away at the head and counters the chokeslam into a DDT for two. They head to the floor where Orton sends Big Show head first into the post to slow him down even more. Back in and Orton kicks Big Show in the jaw, allowing him to hit the Elevated DDT. Before he can follow up though, here comes the Shield. Big Show is still down so Orton is caught 3-1. Here's Sheamus before Shield can get in the ring and it's 3-2. The fans chant FEED ME MORE as the match is thrown out I'm guessing. For the time, we'll say it was 7:00 shown of about 10:30.

Rating: C-. The match was pretty slow paced but it was just there for the post match stuff. There's nothing wrong with that at all and it allowed for Big Show to prove he hasn't fallen far off the radar after losing the title. The Shield stuff is the important stuff though so let's get to that already.

Orton and Sheamus get caught in the numbers game but Big Show gets back up and knocks Reigns out cold. Rollins and Ambrose don't know what to think so they run away. This didn't come off as a turn for Big Show but rather him fighting someone he perceived as an imminent threat. Big Show knocks Orton out with a punch so Sheamus Brogue Kicks him down.

Overall Rating: C+. The first 45 minute or so were really solid but then things started to taper off in a hurry. The social media stuff wound up meaning nothing although the version I watched which aired before it aired in America had slightly different commentary and didn't include the JBL or Jericho interviews, the Call trailer or the Del Rio poll stuff. Still though, the social media stuff meant nothing at all for the most part. The show tonight was ok though and it looks like it set up a six man tag for Wrestlemania.

Results

Alberto Del Rio b. Damien Sandow – Cross armbreaker

Antonio Cesaro b. The Miz – Rollup with a handful of trunks

Prime Time Players b. HELL NO – Rollup to Bryan

Randy Orton vs. Big Show went to a no contest when Shield interfered

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On This Day: February 27, 2010 – Elimination Chamber 2010: Shawn vs. Undertaker Is Set

Elimination Chamber 2010

Date: February 21, 2010

Location: Scottrade Center, St. Louis, Missouri

Attendance: 17,628

Commentators: Michael Cole, Matt Striker, Jerry Lawler

Well it's the day after the show and thanks to me being an idiot my regular laptop is in the shop so this is my second try at this. The card looks pretty weak on paper as there are only four announced matches, including one that no one wants to see. However with two chambers it's hard to assume this is going to be bad, although I've seen others that were far better looking that sucked so we'll find out. Let's get to it.

The opening video is of course all about the Chamber which is

rather annoying but that's how things go. Why is it annoying? Because it's exactly what you would expect it to be, which says to me that it's boring as all goodness. WOW that's a lot of pyro. And the Chamber is lowered for this.

Raw World Title: Sheamus vs. Ted DiBiase vs. HHH vs. John Cena vs. Kofi Kingston vs. Randy Orton

Cena gets a VERY mixed reaction but I think it's leaning towards more cheers than boos which is a good sign I guess. I'm digging those white ropes. DiBiase gets an ok at best reaction. I do like them giving the young guys a chance if nothing else. They get main event experience even if there's no chance any of them win it. Ok Striker needs to drop the metaphors already.

Orton gets a POP. Just turn him already Vince. He needs it. HHH gets a pop but nothing compared to Orton or even Cena for that matter. No one has ever won more than one Chamber match. Except HHH. He's won four. Nothing wrong with that is there? Apparently Sheamus has to get all the eliminations. Kofi and he will be starting us out. Kofi looking over his shoulder just in case is rather amusing. Kofi is rocking red tonight which is working for him.

Can someone get Armstrong a weight in his arm? EPIC RKO chant. They touch on the Orton/Kingston feud. Sweet goodness that was awesome. This three man commentary team is working really well for me. The clock runs down and it's HHH. There's not a ton to talk about at this point as everything here means very little. Sheamus needs a name for his Razor's Edge as Cole just calls it that finishing maneuver.

That high knee always works for some reason. They clarify that you have to get the pin in the ring. Good to know as that's always a question I think about in these matches. Kofi sits on the outside here and lets them fight which is very smart. Scratch that as he hits a cross body on Sheamus.

Kofi hits a sweet Boom Drop over the top rope onto HHH. That looked great. Clock starts up again and it's Orton to a nice pop. He's beating the heck out of everyone. This guy is dying to be a face already Vince. Can you not see that? He's beating the tar out of Sheamus and HHH which is awesome. SHUT UP STRIKER. It's not a metal thing with fangs. It's a cage blast it.

The fans want blood. Kofi takes everyone out with a huge dive. He's getting a lot of big spots in this. He goes for another but Orton catches him with a dropkick. Nice indeed. Everyone goes for their finisher and no one gets it. Orton's head slams into the post. That looked SICK. In at 5 is DiBiase.

I love that falling punch. Orton and DiBiase team up and beat down just about everyone. They shove Kofi's head through the Chamber wall and DiBiase puts a Boston Crab on him. Orton gives HHH the elevated DDT onto the cage. That would hurt indeed. He and DiBiase wait on Cena outside his pod so of course he plows through them. He cleans house and hits an FU over the top rope on DiBiase.

DiBiase is in the STF and his leg isn't supposed to bend like that! Rhodes is here with a pipe. DiBiase hits Orton with it as he's in the FU and then takes Cena down with it. Ted pins Orton so we're at five. Kofi puts him out with Trouble in Paradise and Sheamus hits his two move combination to take Kofi out so it's Sheamus, HHH and Cena left. The pale one takes over and for NO apparent reason, HHH saves Cena.

And of course HHH gets to pin Sheamus first. So at the moment is the title vacant or is Sheamus technically champion as the match he's defending in isn't over yet? I'm not sure. A few seconds later Cena gets the STF and HHH taps. I've read some posts saying HHH might not have been tapping. What show were you watching? Yeah he was tapping.

Rating: B+. Solid stuff here. It's missing that little

something extra to make it a classic but this is certainly more than good stuff. The timing here was solid as we had enough to keep it from being too short but not enough to get boring. Half an hour is just about perfect I think. Also there was the fact that all of the guys in here were given a chance to showcase themselves, especially Kofi. He stole the show out there and it worked very well. Very good stuff here.

Cena is celebrating and Vince's music hits. Yep, there's another match and it's with Batista. Not going to bother with giving it a formal introduction. It's 30 seconds long and Batista hits the spear and Batista Bomb for the title. This is what people complain about when they say the amount of title reigns mean nothing anymore. The angle is awesome though.

Mania video.

We recap the Bret/Vince feud. Good video but it has zero to do with what's going on at the moment.

Intercontinental Title: Drew McIntyre vs. Kane

Never seen Drew's intro before. That was indeed as sweet as it's made out to be. Can we give Kane something though? The guy has jobbed more than anyone in history and what does he have to show for it? Very little that I can see. He deserves to have something at some point. I love that uppercut that Kane uses. It's just sweet.

His in ring stuff is very good overall. We get a great stat: 20% of IC Champions go on to be world champions. That's something most people wouldn't pick up on. And yes I'm a Kane mark so get over it. I didn't realize Drew was that big. And let's talk about the Raw world title again. Drew goes for the knee. And then the arm. Make that the ribs. PICK SOMETHING BLAST IT. Ok it's the arm. Better than nothing I guess.

Both guys hit big boots which there's just something cool about. I mean how awesome is it to just kick someone in the

face? Kane hits the clothesline from the top and shakes his arm to sell the injury even more. The chokeslam is countered and it's still Kane in control. The ramp seems exceedingly short for some reason.

And after Kane dominates 80% of the match a thumb to the eye and the double arm DDT ends it. Never been a fan of that, at least not a setup like a thumb to the eye. I like Drew's look with the belt if nothing else.

Rating: B-. Not bad but nothing that jumps off the page here. The ending was just bad to me. Kane DOMINATED for about 80% of the match and a thumb to the eye is enough to stop him dead? That doesn't do it for me. Even a knee or something small like that would have made it a lot better. Still though, the purpose here was to give Drew more credibility and that was certainly accomplished so big points for that.

We get the EPIC, yes EPIC I say, reveal of Gail being able to speak French and knows Maryse has been insulting her. Gail CANNOT ACT. I said in the LD that this is getting to Stephanie levels. Oh and the Smackdown Divas aren't sexy apparently.

Raw Women's Title: Gail Kim vs. Maryse

So this is the final of the tournament that has gone on forever to replace Melina who is injured now. No one cares about this anyway. And Vickie has something to say. Apparently the Smackdown Divas don't like being left off the show so we're getting a tag match with Raw vs. Smackdown. For the love of cheese and crackers, no one cares. Whatever. Oh and Striker has something close to a racist joke as he says once you watch a Gail Kim match you want to see another 20 minutes later.

GailKim/Maryse vs. Michelle McCool/Layla

Oy seriously? For the life of me I do not get this. Maryse would beat Gail clean the next night anyway, so what the heck is the point to this? I just do not get it. To be fair I don't

care enough to figure it out anyway so there we go. Yep the Smackdown girls are way hotter. Gail and Layla start us off and it's not very good at all. Basically Maryse refuses to tag in and it's a handicap match. Yep she won't tag and Michelle kicks the tar out of Gail and the Styles Clash ends it. Maryse beats her up afterwards.

Rating: N/A. I have no idea what the point of this was unless they're setting up to unify the titles at Mania or something like that. This was a waste of time and the only perk were the looks of Michelle and Layla.

Ad for NXT.

Miz talks about Daniel Bryan and makes fun of St. Louis. MVP interrupts him and of course he's got another title shot tonight.

Regal comes out to talk about his rookie for NXT. Edge interrupts Regal's standard great heel promo to talk about how he's going to make his pick tomorrow on Raw. It's Jericho in case you didn't know by now. Regal gets speared for no reason at all.

Another ad for Mania. I really hate the theme song they're playing the entire time.

US Title: Miz vs. MVP

I love Miz's theme music I think. Both guys have their fat tag partners with them. He really does look awesome with all that gold. And the Kool Aid Man is still fat. Naturally the talking is mostly about Daniel Brian and NXT. Why in the world should I care about MVP? I have zero idea what the appeal of him is. Oh and apparently he's a power guy now? We get Tiger Woods jokes. Oh dear. They try to compare the last few years in their two careers.

Both have come miles. Yes but Miz has gone forward and MVP has

gone backwards. This has been fairly entertaining. It's nothing epic but it's certainly doing ok. I just can't stand MVP at all anymore so that has something to do with it. Show's shouting is funny to me. I hate that Ballin Elbow. It's just stupid on so many levels. On the floor Henry goes after Show and hits the railing which more or less explodes. Miz is busted open a bit and Show punches MVP to let Miz retain.

Rating: C+. Not bad at all here. It was a great way to get some time on the card filled in which this show needed badly. Also, Miz gets another win to further establish him as a big deal. This is a win he should have gotten and he did. That's all you can ask of him. Decent little match here indeed.

We recap the Raw Elimination Chamber. REALLY? We need to recap a moment that happened an hour and a half ago? On a PPV? Is this for people that bought the show halfway through or were late getting home? Seriously, who is this for? They show the whole Batista thing. Seriously, is this for people that are stuck with their fathers at a car dealership because their fathers are pathetic liars that just HAD to buy a new truck on the night their son was paying for their first PPV? It could happen.

Smackdown World Title: Rey Mysterio vs. Undertaker vs. CM Punk vs. John Morrison vs. R-Truth vs. Chris Jericho

Rey is out first and thankfully he's only been world champion once. Morrison is out second and gets a solid pop. Remember he has a bad ankle allegedly. Jericho gets a solid pop of his own. Taker is fourth and this is the interesting thing. In case you didn't hear, he was set on fire by the pyro.

Let's see if I can see it unlike anyone else watching the show. Ok the fire is going on and he's not there yet. Ok there he is and everything seems ok. The flames keep going up but you can't see where they are in relation to him. Everything seems fine at the moment though.

RIGHT THERE! The flames go up in the middle of everything where he would have been standing so I'd bet that's where it happened. It's right as Chimmel is saying his name. Oh yeah when they go down he's nearly running out of there. Oh man he is TICKED.

There's a moment where the camera locks on Rey which is when I'm guessing Taker has water poured on him. Now let's think about this for a minute. Taker, other than running to the ring, which is fairly understandable I'd say, completely stayed in character there.

Think about that: he was just involved in what could have been a life threatening situation or if nothing else something that could have caused severe injury to him. He stayed in character. You can complain about him all you want, but that my friends is discipline. I don't think the announcers have a clue what was going on but they play it up as the Chamber changing him. Punk cuts a promo on his way to the ring which of course is epic.

Seriously, this gimmick could carry him for ten years easily. Truth cuts him off. As I've said before, wrestlers that get the crowd involved or play to them are ALWAYS going to be bigger deals. Think about this match for example: Truth, Jericho, Rey and Punk got the biggest reactions. Taker here is an exception but look at Morrison. He doesn't play to the crowd much and he got a far weaker reaction.

Truth talks to the fans, Rey does the mask thing, Jericho and Punk's promos are insulting to the crowd. They get bigger reactions and they're the four here with world titles. Morrison doesn't have one yet does he? And the length of time in the company argument doesn't hold up as Morrison has been in WWE longer or as long as Punk.

Morrison and Punk start us off. Apparently Serena is Punk's concubine. Ok then. Truth is dominating here. They're using

the Chamber really well here. That's a big thing that puts this WAY ahead of its I guess you would say counterpart, Hell in a Cell. They messed that show up so badly I can't comprehend it.

After a missed elbow, GTS puts Truth out. And now we wait for the rest of the clock and Punk gets to talk even more. That's a great mini gimmick. He mentions making Taker tap. Love that. It's Rey in next so we're getting what's likely a Mania preview here. They fight outside on the cage area with Rey getting slammed into the cage. Cool spot.

Rey is getting destroyed with a capital destr here. Punk tries a GTS from the top rope and Cole makes me laugh. Striker: you can tear a tendon up there. Cole: how about falling on your head? And Rey gets the rana and a splash from the top for the pin to get us down to four. Ok then.

Next in is Jericho to a nice reaction. He hits this 619 but Jericho gets outside to avoid the really weak pin off a really bad move. Rey hits the Spiderman spot which is always cool. These two can't have a bad match I don't think. Rey hooks a form of a dragon sleeper and the IWC rejoices. Solid stuff here.

Rey is in the Walls as the clock ticks down and it's Morrison. For ZERO apparent reason, he goes for Jericho who lets go of the hold. Yep that makes no sense at all. In a cool spot Morrison goes up top and Rey shoves him into the pod. That would hurt like the Dickens. Morrison hits the standing shooting star on Rey. Solid stuff but they're just milling around waiting on Taker to come in here. Jericho hits a SWEET backbreaker on Rey to stop the 619 for no apparent reason.

Morrison gets that springboard spinkick that I freaking love. Rey is the only one with something close to control here. And Starship Pain puts Mysterio out to get us down to three. Morrison is getting to showcase himself here which is a big

deal. Jericho gets the Walls on John and there's the clock. And he hits Jericho which makes NO SENSE but whatever. Taker is getting NO reaction here.

The two living guys go after Taker which makes sense. Apparently half of Taker's offense is his defense. What grade did you teach Striker? Jericho does something great as he hides in a pod. That's very smart. Shame they're clear so he's easy to see.

With Jericho down Taker goes after Morrison who hits the kick again to put him down. Starship Pain is blocked and there goes Morrison's chances. Jericho is hiding again which is brilliant. In a great looking visual, Morrison is hanging onto the cage while Jericho and Taker fight underneath him.

Taker is SLAMMED into the pod which would hurt like being crushed by 837lbs of macaroni. Taker getting a chant now. Morrison gets chokeslammed onto the cage and he's gone. How have Jericho and Taker never had a long feud? There go the straps. Jericho is in control here but both guys are banged up. Taker goes for the chokeslam with FREAKY looking eyes.

After a bunch of counters, Jericho gets the Walls. Cole points out that he's in the middle of the ring, even though in a bit he points out that ropes mean nothing in this match. Make up your freaking mind Cole. Jericho hits the Codebreaker which Taker jumps in to, making it look all the better. Last Ride hits and Taker kind of throws him with it. That looked great. We get the Tombstone sign and there's Shawn. You know the rest.

Rating: A-. I loved this but I would have liked seeing Jericho get the clean pin and for the first two guys getting more time. Either way they pushed a lot of Mania here which is the best thing they could do. The wrestling here was great and they had Morrison do what he had to do out there. This was great stuff though and it worked very well. Great match.

Overall Rating: A-. Sweet show, period. This was great all around with good action, bloodshed, Mania being set up and some shockers. Excellent show and while there are parts that are annoying, there's nothing here that's that terrible. Great show, well worth checking out.

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Monday Night Raw – February 25, 2013: Perhaps The Best TV Match I Have Ever Seen

Monday Night Raw

Date: February 25, 2013

Location: American Airlines Center, Dallas, Texas

Commentators: Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole

Tonight is a big show as we have two major matches: Punk vs. Cena for Cena's title shot and Vince having a fight with Paul Heyman. Other than that, Undertaker returned at a house show on Saturday and there's a chance that he could be back tonight. There's also the possibility of Lesnar being in the house, but most importantly of all: WE GET TO MAKE FUN OF GLENN BECK! Odds are we get a midget sighting. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Brock attacking Vince a few weeks back as well as the scene from last week with Cena challenging Punk.

Here's Vince on crutches to open the show. He says we need something big on Raw every week until Wrestlemania so why not start with a fight. Vince should be able to do this one one leg or no legs, so let's bring out the Ultimate Fighter, Paul Heyman. Cue Heyman himself in what I guess you

would call fighting clothes. He's in workout pants and what looks to be a workout sweatshirt.

Heyman insults the Dallas Cowboys before talking about how he's seen Vince take on every promoter as well as the US Government. He offers Vince a chance to make an executive decision, but as he's talking Paul spears down Vince and takes out the knee. A crutch shot to the leg keeps Vince down but Vince blocks the other crutch shot. He hits Heyman in the back with it but here's Lesnar.

Heyman has rolled to the floor so it's just Brock and Vince alone in the ring. Lesnar stares Vince down and is ready to go but Vince wisely begs off. Cue HHH as Vince bails to the floor. He's got the leather jacket and the water bottle so you can tell this is serious. The fight is on immediately and HHH sends Lesnar into the post, apparently busting him open. Another post shot has Lesnar reeling and a clothesline puts Brock into the timekeeper's area.

HHH goes to get a crutch but it allows Brock to fight back. Lesnar hits an AA (not an F5 but an AA) to put HHH onto the announce table. We head back inside with Brock bringing in a chair, only to walk into a spinebuster. A big chair shot to Brock's back sends him to the floor and there's a BIG blood stain on the mat. HHH stands tall.

Ryback vs. Dolph Ziggler

No intro for Mr. MITB. Ryback easily picks Ziggler up and throws him around to start but walks into a dropkick for one. Ziggler tries to keep things moving fast but he charges into a powerslam to put him right back down. A few chops in the corner stagger Ziggler as the fans chant Goldberg. Ryback hits a modified Oklahoma Stampede (powerslam out of the corner) to send Ziggler to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Ziggler caught in a long delayed vertical suplex. We see about twenty seconds of it so who knows how long it actually was. Dolph rolls to the floor so Ryback goes to retrieve him, only to have Langston take Ryback's head off with a clothesline. Back in and Ryback shoves Ziggler away, only to get caught in a running DDT for two.

The Fameasser misses so there's a sleeper on Ryback instead. Ryback counters with a kind of Stunner and starts throwing Ziggler around like he isn't even there. AJ gets on the apron but Langston's interference doesn't work. Ryback hits a kind of spinebuster to Ziggler and Dolph is Shell Shocked for the pin at 11:08.

Rating: C+. It's nice to see Ryback get a big win again and who better to get one on than the reigning king of the jobbers of WWE? Langston vs. Ryback is likely going to be talked about now, despite the fact that they don't need to fight just because they're similar. Anyway, decent match here and good to see Ryback get a win for a change.

Trailer for The Call, starring Halle Berry and with David Otunga.

Here's CM Punk with something to say. He says that tonight is a night of history and a night that people are going to tell their grandchildren about. It's the end as well as the beginning but tonight isn't about Wrestlemania or the people. It isn't even about the WWE Championship. It's not about the future and what is more important than the Rock: it's about PUNK. Punk goes into a big rant about how he important he is before finally saying that in this world, he is god.

The latest inductee into the WWE Hall of Fame: Donald Trump. Given how much he's done with Wrestlemania over the years, this shouldn't be a big surprise.

Great Khali vs. Mark Henry

Khali chops him into the corner to start and Henry rolls to the floor. Back inside and Henry easily hits the World's Strongest Slam for the pin at 1:24. This was nothing.

We get a look at Marine 3 starring the Miz.

Fandango debuts Friday on Smackdown.

Here's Miz for MizTV with guests Alberto Del Rio, Jack Swagger and Zeb Colter. After a break, Miz wants to talk to Jack and Zeb to start things off. Zeb says he's here to talk to Gleen Beck but since he chickened out, he'll take Del Rio instead. Colter talks about the problem in America:

eleven million undocumented workers who are all calling for amnesty instead of being deported. Those eleven million illegals (his word) are making it harder for Americans by taking things that belong to honest Americans. Alberto cuts Colter off but Miz says let the champion talk.

Miz asks Del Rio how hard it is to become a citizen in Mexico. Colter says it takes ten years to become a citizen in Mexico because of all the corruption. Also foreigners can't own property in Mexico. Colter wants to know what's wrong with Mexicans in that regard. Zeb says this isn't personal, but rather it's about what Del Rio represents to his people. Colter wants there to only be one Alberto Del Rio success story because he doesn't want more criminals in his country.

Del Rio goes on a rant about how America belongs to everyone and how America is built on immigrants. He talks about the American Dream of working hard to make everything possible. Del Rio calls himself living proof of that and says Swagger and Colter are hiding behind the Constitution like bullies. Swagger says WE THE PEOPLE will see Del Rio at Wrestlemania.

During the commercial, Colter yelled at Miz for conducting a biased interview, allowing Swagger to run Miz over with a clothesline.

Antonio Cesaro vs. Randy Orton

Orton hits a quick elbow to start followed by a t-bone suplex of all things for two. Cesaro comes back with the gutwrench suplex for two of his own and we hit the chinlock. Orton easily fights out of it and hits the powerslam to load up the Elevated DDT. Cesaro will have none of that though and snaps Randy's neck across the top rope. The backbreaker puts Cesaro into the corner though, only for him to get a boot up. Cesaro goes to the middle rope and dives into the RK0 for the surprise pin at 3:02.

Rating: C-. The ending was good but did we really need to see the US Champion lose in three minutes completely clean? That's the second straight loss in a row on Raw for Cesaro which makes me think he'll be champion for a long time to come. Nothing to see here and I have no idea what either guy will be doing at Mania.

HELL NO argues over which of them could beat the Prime Time Players on their own. Vickie and Maddox come up to annoy the champions. Due to what Kane and Bryan argued over earlier, the match against the Players will have Kane with one arm tied behind his back and Bryan blindfolded.

We get a trailer for Wrestlemania 21 (you read that right) with JBL and Cena imitating the climax of A Few Good Men.

Next up: Sheamus' Oscar snubs?

Here's Sheamus in a suit to talk about the Oscars last night. He watched the Oscars last night and he has a bone to pick with the Academy: they ignored Wade Barrett. This leads us to the trailer for Dead Man Down which has nothing from Barrett in it. Sheamus shows us another clip with Barrett in the background but not saying a word. "Tom Hanks wishes he could have done Forrest Gump that good!"

This brings out Barrett with a rebuttal. Wade talks about how the Irish love green and that's apparent right now given how jealous Sheamus clearly is right now. Tomorrow night Barrett is going to be walking a red carpet while Sheamus returns his suit. Sheamus says make sure the camera get your good side but with a nose like that, the good side doesn't exist. They nearly brawl but Barrett bails so he can look good at his premiere tomorrow.

Cody Rhodes vs. R-Truth

Damien Sandow is on commentary. Truth speeds things up to start and Damien calls the hip thrusting disgusting. Cody kicks Truth's leg in the corner and hits a release front suplex to take over. The announcers talk about bromances which apparently appears in the dictionary. Cody hooks a full nelson on the mat but Truth fights up. Cody sends him into the rope but gets caught in a bad looking Little Jimmy for the pin at 2:24.

Post match Sandow runs in and is quickly dispatched.

We get a Zeb Colter/Jack Swagger video about Americans losing their jobs to illegal immigrants. They promise to correct the wrongs in this country.

HELL NO vs. Prime Time Players

Bryan is blindfolded and Kane has an arm tied behind his back. Bryan and Titus start but Daniel grabs the referee for the NO Lock by mistake. The Players mess with Bryan with the whistles and Titus hits a clothesline to the back of the head to take over. Off to Young who sends Bryan to the floor where Kane tries to help him. Bryan hits Kane by mistake before heading back in. Young misses a charge into the post and Kane tags himself in. After beating up Young for a bit, a one armed chokeslam is enough to pin Darren at 3:30.

Rating: D+. This was your standard comedy match that was missing the comedy. I'm not sure what this was supposed to accomplish other than making the Players look even more worthless than they already do. Bryan and Kane still fight but they still win matches so who knows where it's going. Other than Shield, is there anyone around that could beat them anyway?

We recap the opening fight with HHH vs. Lesnar.

Here's the Shield with something to say. Ambrose talks about how they're what's best for WWE right now and any three man team they send out will be dispatched just like the others. Reigns says believe in the Shield or be turned into dust. Rollins talks about the three wins they've had over super team after super team. He asks if there's anyone else to fight them and here's Sheamus. He says come up here and fight him but as Ambrose and Reigns go after him, Orton sneaks in with an RKO to take out Rollins. I saw those two team up against Shield at a house show a few weeks ago so they've been practicing.

Jack Swagger vs. The Miz

This was set up by Swagger's sneak attack earlier. Miz knocks him to the floor to start but Swagger rams him into the apron to take over. Back in and a shot to the back staggers Miz as the fans chant for the non-super patriot. Miz kicks away at Jack's knee but gets clotheslined right back down. A suplex floors Miz again and there's the Vader Bomb for two. Off to a quick armbars on Miz but he comes back with a neckbreaker to get himself a breather.

Swagger suplexes him back down for two but charges into a boot. Miz hits the running clothesline in the corner followed by the top rope ax handle for two. A sunset flip gets two more for Miz but Swagger breaks up a DDT. He shoves Miz into the ropes where Miz's ankle is tied up, giving Swagger the opening he needs. A chop block takes Miz down and the Patriot Lock ends this at 7:13.

Rating: C. Swagger isn't terrible but he's still too similar to what he was just a year or so ago. Either way, the match here was basic but ok. I'm guessing there isn't going to be any public embarrassment for Swagger after the incident last week, but maybe they're going to punish him behind the scenes. Match was just ok.

After Lawler and Cole plug Sonic for a bit, we look at a video from the end of last week with the debut of the new title and Punk attacking Cena.

We get a Tout from HHH about Lesnar and we see the opening brawl again.

Here are some Touts from fans about what we saw earlier. Nothing of note here.

Cena talks about how important this match against Punk is. He talks about how tonight it's about to going to Wrestlemania and he requested this match to prove that he's back. If you still believe in him, you'll believe that everyone else's time is up and our time is now.

We get a clip of Robot Combat League hosted by Chris Jericho.

We get a clip of Undertaker returning at a show in Waco this past weekend.

John Cena vs. CM Punk

The winner gets the shot at Rock at Wrestlemania. They have a ton of time left too. After some big match intros we're ready to go. The fans are of course split on Cena as we get some chain wrestling to start. Punk gets in the ropes to break up a headlock before putting on one of his own. A hip toss puts Punk on the floor and we take a break. Back with Punk getting backdropped but popping back up with a clothesline to take control again. A neckbreaker gets two on cena and it's off to a neck

vice.

Cena powers out of it and slams Punk to the mat before hooking a front facelock to slow things down. Off to a headlock instead but Punk shoves him off and hits a leg lariat for two. Off to a CM chinlock now but Cena fights back up. He hits a shoulder block but Punk ducks an attempt at a second. The suicide dive takes out Cena on the floor and we take another break.

Back with Cena escaping an abdominal stretch and hitting the shoulders again. There's the ProtoBomb but Punk counters into the Anaconda Vice. Cena rolls over into a cover for two but Punk hits a swinging neckbreaker for two more. Sweet sequence there. Cena picks the leg for the STF but Punk makes the rope.

The springboard clothesline gets two more on Cena but Punk loads up a second, only for Cena to step to the side and hook the STF. Punk slips out and puts the Vice on again but Cena counters into a Crossface (called the STF by that lunkhead Cole). Punk rolls backwards into a small package for two and both guys are down again. They slug it out and Cena is getting madder on each punch he throws.

Punk kicks him in the ribs but the high kick misses. There's the ProtoBomb but Punk kicks him in the head to escape the Shuffle. The GTS is countered into a sunset flip attempt but Punk sits on Cena for two. The bulldog by Punk is countered and there's the Shuffle. AA is countered as is the GTS but Cena hits a Batista Bomb for two. The place is losing their minds on these kickouts. John goes up top but Punk gets up before Cena can try anything.

Cena blocks whatever Punk is trying and knocks him down, setting up the top rope Fameasser for two. Cena can barely follow up though and the high kick puts in the corner. Punk hits a WICKED running knee in the corner but Cena IMMEDIATELY hits the AA for two. Punk rolls to the floor and Cena has no idea what else he can do here. Cena goes out after him but gets sent HARD into the post. He isn't moving an inch at nine but is somehow in by ten.

Back in and the GTS gets two and now Punk is ticked off. Another GTS is

countered into an STF attempt and even with Punk trying to fight off the hold, Cena locks it in. Punk raises his hand to tap but SOMEHOW gets to the ropes. He kicks Cena in the knee and busts out a piledriver for a VERY close two and we get multiple frustrated covers. Punk goes up top and the Macho Elbow misses, allowing Cena to hit a FREAKING HURRICANRANA and the AA for the pin at 26:32.

Rating: A+. WOW. This doesn't happen often but I was sitting there watching this match with my jaw hanging open. Those near falls were as good as I have seen this side of Austin vs. Rock at Wrestlemania and I had no idea what they were going to do until the ending. This was a PPV main event for free on Raw and was one of the best TV matches I have ever seen. Absolutely amazing and to people who say "well it wasn't THAT good", you're wrong. Period.

Cena poses to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. I usually write these ratings before the main event but I had to redo it because of that match. That raised this from a B- to what it is here. That's happened maybe once in all the years I've been doing this. The main event really is that good and you need to find a copy of it as soon as you can.

As for the rest of the show, it wasn't a masterpiece but the most important thing here is that we can see the Wrestlemania card taking shape. We have our title matches and tonight it looks like some stuff was set up, but Shield vs. Orton/Sheamus doesn't make sense as it looked like they were setting up Sheamus vs. Barrett. Either is a good option but the tag match probably fits better. Either way, the energy tonight was a good sign and I'm fired up for the Old School show next week. Oh and did I mention a GREAT main event? Very good but not great stuff here.

Results

Ryback b. Dolph Ziggler – Shell Shock

Mark Henry b. Great Khali – World's Strongest Slam

Randy Orton b. Antonio Cesaro – RKO

R-Truth b. Cody Rhodes – Little Jimmy

HELL NO b. Prime Time Players – Chokeslam to Young

John Cena b. CM Punk – Attitude Adjustment

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