

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XL Night Two (2025 Edition): Happy Ending

Wrestlemania XL Night Two

Date: April 7, 2024

Location: Lincoln Financial Field, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 60,203

Commentators: Michael Cole, Pat McAfee, Corey Graves

God Bless American: The War And Treaty

And now, the night after. This is the second half of the event, which features Cody Rhodes challenging Roman Reigns for the WWE Title despite his back being firmly against the wall. Other than that, a banged up Seth Rollins is defending the World Heavyweight Title against Drew McIntyre, plus a not that hot midcard. Let's get to it.

I was in the stadium for this show, sitting in the upper deck with the entrance on my right.

The opening video looks at Night One before shifting to Meek Mill talking about how if you don't finish your story, someone else will finish it for you. The rest of the card gets a bit of a look of its own.

The War And Treaty sing God Bless America.

Here is Stephanie McMahon to get things going. She's glad it's a bit warmer today (preach it) and calls this the first show of the Paul Levesque Era. With that out of the way, let's get things going.

Raw World Title: Drew McIntyre vs. Seth Rollins

Rollins, banged up after last night, is defending and CM Punk is on commentary. McIntyre is played to the ring by a pipe and

drums band while Rollins is led out by a group of Mummers (People in very insane costumes, playing instruments. I wasn't familiar with them but a guy next to me said it was about as Philadelphia of an entrance as you could get.). McIntyre hits a Claymore at the bell for a near fall five seconds in as we're starting fast.

Rollins immediately rolls outside as he's in trouble early. A belly to belly drops Rollins and McIntyre grabs someone's phone for a quick picture. McIntyre stops to yell at Punk though and gets Pedigreed on the floor, with Rollins coming up holding his knee (banged up last night). Back in and a Stomp gets two on McIntyre and they both pull themselves up, exhausted by their three and a half minutes of action thus far.

They slug it out with McIntyre getting the better of things and nipping up. The Claymore is countered into a powerbomb though and the Pedigree connects again. A top rope stomp misses but so does the Claymore. Rollins misses the regular Stomp and gets Future Shocked for two. McIntyre mocks the GTS pose to annoy Punk but the GTS is countered into a small package for two.

Another Claymore hits Rollins for two and McIntyre is stunned. They go outside where Rollins slips out of a powerbomb attempt and hits a basement superkick. Rollins hits a Stomp on the table and they head back inside, where McIntyre hits another Claymore for another two. Punk wants to see another GTS but it's another Claymore to give McIntyre the pin and the title at 10:34.

Rating: B-. This was more out of the old Lesnar style and that works a lot better when you haven't see it over and over again. McIntyre getting more and more frustrated before finally getting the pin was a great story as he had been going nuts for so long that he had to win something. This worked well and it was a big opener, even if some of the near falls

were a bit nuts at times.

Post match an emotional Rollins leaves and gets something of a look of respect from McIntyre. He kisses his wife and then goes back to Punk, mocking him as you might expect. As you also might expect, Punk trips McIntyre down and hits with the arm brace...and it's Money In The Bank time.

Raw World Title: Damian Priest vs. Drew McIntyre

Priest is challenging and wins the title with South Of Heaven at 9 seconds, sending McIntyre further into insanity and furthering the feud of the year with CM Punk.

Judgment Day comes out for the big celebration in a nice moment. Punk mockingly applauds McIntyre to make it even better.

Street Profits/Bobby Lashley vs. Final Testament

Street fight, Bubba Ray Dudley is guest referee and Snoop Dogg is on commentary. B-Fab is here with the good guys while Paul Ellering and Scarlett are here with the Testament. Graves says that this is Ellering's first appearance at Wrestlemania. I guess he's forgotten Wrestlemania VIII as well. Lashley and the Profits waste no time in knocking them outside and it's already time for a table, which Dogg seems to like.

The AOP come back and take out the Profits before being on Lashley with kendo sticks. Kross gives Lashley a neckbreaker onto an open chair for two, with Dawkins making the save. Ford goes up but gets knocked out of the air and it's the Super Collider to the Profits. B-Fab tries to make the save but gets taken out by Scarlett, with the two of them crashing through a table. Lashley fights up and starts the comeback, with Dawkins hitting a big tackle on the floor to drop the AOP.

Some chair shots to Kross set up Lashley's spinebuster onto the chair but the AOP is back in. The Doomsday Saito suplex

drops Lashley and a DDT through a chair gets two. Kross yells at Bubba, who puts the glasses on, leaving Lashley to hit a spear. Bubba orders a What's Up on Kross and it's table time, but the table breaks in advance. Another table is brought in as Kross is beaten with a kendo stick (Dogg: "WHOOO HIM! WHOOO HIM!"). A frog splash through the table finishes Kross at 8:32.

Rating: C. Yeah this was fine, but it was nothing you wouldn't see on Smackdown. The AOP felt like monsters but it didn't exactly take much to knock them out. At the same time, Kross is supposed to be the big bad and Lashley beat him up without much trouble. This felt like a way to have a street fight with tables in Philadelphia and that doesn't get you very far. As usual, Snoop Dogg felt like he was having the time of his life on commentary and clearly loves wrestling.

We look at last night's main event, with Cody Rhodes getting pinned to make tonight's main event Bloodline Rules.

Paul Heyman is asked what Bloodline Rules mean. He cites the WWE rule book before saying it's whatever Roman Reigns wants them to be.

LA Knight arrived in a fast Slim Jim car.

We recap LA Knight vs. AJ Styles. Knight is the crowd favorite and seems to be on his way to stardom but Styles doesn't like him, to the point of costing him the Elimination Chamber. Styles said he wanted to humble Knight, who said they should fight at Wrestlemania. Game on, with Styles attacking Knight with a chair. Knight showed up at Styles' house and got arrested to make it more personal.

AJ Styles vs. LA Knight

During his entrance, Knight gives the keys to his Slim Jim car to a sweepstakes winner, who seems to be...not overly excited. Styles charges to the ring and gets punched in the face to

start fast. They go to the floor where Styles is rammed into the announcers' table but he starts in on the leg.

A DDT on the leg keeps Knight down but he fights up with a Russian legsweep. Knight hits a tornado DDT and tries a superplex, only to get reversed into the belly to back faceplant. Styles goes up so Knight jumps the corner and hits a release German superplex. The Calf Crusher goes back to Knight's bad leg and Knight goes straight over to the ropes.

The leg is wrapped around the post so Knight pulls him face first into said post. It's time to peel back the mats but Styles knocks him onto the concrete. Back in and the springboard 450 hits Styles' raised knees but the BFT is countered into a failed Styles Clash attempt. Another springboard is broken up and Knight hits the BFT for the win at 12:24.

Rating: B-. This wasn't a great match or really anything close, but it did what it needed to do: give Knight a clean win on a big stage. Knight is the definition of someone who needs to win something to validate his popularity and while this wasn't quite that win, it was the biggest victory of his career. As usual, Styles can work well with anyone and he made Knight look like a star here.

We get the Hall Of Fame video package from Friday.

The Hall Of Fame class is presented:

US Express (in Bray Wyatt shirts, after a Wyatt tribute at the ceremony)

Bull Nakano

Thunderbolt Patterson

Lia Maivia

Muhammad Ali

Paul Heyman (to the ECW theme and carrying the WWE Title, receiving by far the biggest reaction)

We recap Logan Paul defending the US Title against Randy Orton and Kevin Owens. Paul is a huge star and the other two are sick of him. Orton wants to give him an RKO and Owens was sick of hearing about Paul being a star, including after losing to him at the Royal Rumble.

US Title: Logan Paul vs. Randy Orton vs. Kevin Owens

Paul, defending, comes to the ring in a Prime truck and he has a guy in a Prime bottle costume, which cannot end well. Owens comes to the ring and runs into Sami Zayn in a reversal from their meeting last night. Paul bails to the floor to start and tells the other two to start, which doesn't happen as they would rather go after Paul. The challengers take turns sending Paul into various things, with Owens getting to drop him onto the announcers' table in something of a tribute to Orton.

That's not good enough though as Orton shows him how to do it a bit better before they get back inside. Paul sends Owens into Orton to try to start some strife, only for the two of them to beat him up again. They even get in some stereo stomps before Owens hits a backsplash. The two of them both cover Paul though and now it's clear that things aren't going to work. Owens blocks an RKO attempt and they know where this is going to go. The brawl is on but Paul knocks both of them down to take over.

Paul even mocks Orton's pose to be a real villain before sending Owens into the buckle a few times. That's broken up though as Owen superkicks Paul into the corner but the Swanton hits raised knees. Paul Swantons Owens and rolls into a regular splash for two on Orton in a rather athletic display. Orton actually loses a slugout with Paul but he rakes the eyes and sends Paul outside. Back up and Owens gets clotheslined into a powerslam, allowing Orton to pop his chest a bit (the fans approve).

Paul comes back in and gets powerslammed as well and there's a

double hanging DDT to put Owens and Paul down. Owens snaps off some superkicks though and a Codebreaker to Orton/Backstabber to Paul gets two. They all go to the corner and Paul makes the mistake of trying a superplex on Owens, who reverses into something like a super Jackhammer. A moonsault gives Owens two but Orton is back in with an RKO for the same (that's not something you see kicked out of very often).

Back in and Paul knocks Orton silly with the brass knuckles for two and the kickout leaves Paul stunned. Owens tries to come in and gets knuckled as well. Paul yells at Orton and gets an RKO for his efforts but Orton is too banged up to cover. Now Orton gets the brass knuckles but hands them to the referee, only for the guy in the Prime bottle to pull Paul outside. It's....IShowSpeed, one of Paul's cronies/a popular streamer, who shoves Orton in a really bad idea.

The suit is pulled off and an RKO onto the announcers' table leaves Speed out cold. Paul uses the breather to miss a frog splash and gets caught with a pop up powerbomb. Owens Stunners Orton for two so he tries another pop up powerbomb, which is countered into an RKO in a sweet reversal. Paul sends Orton outside though and hits a frog splash to pin Owens and retain at 17:39.

Rating: B. This was better than I remember it as they had a good story of the wrestlers fighting each other and treating Paul like an afterthought but Paul got smart and stole the win in the end. Paul continues to come off like a star and someone who keeps surprising people, which is what he did here. It was a good match for everyone and Paul gets a win on the big stage, which will only help him.

We recap Bayley challenging Iyo Sky for the Smackdown Women's Title. Bayley had started Damage CTRL and the team had success but then they started to move past her. Eventually Iyo Sky won the title and Bayley won the Royal Rumble. One day the Japanese members mocked her in Japanese, but Bayley revealed

she knew what they were saying and the match was on. Sky promised to show that she was the real star of the team while Bayley wasn't sure if they were ever friends in the first place.

Smackdown Women's Title: Iyo Sky vs. Bayley

Bayley is challenging and is carried to the ring as part of her weird pyramid theme. They start fast with Bayley knocking her outside and shrugging off a shot to the face. A suicide dive hits Sky on the floor, with Bayley coming up favoring her leg a bit. The leg is fine enough to hit a baseball slide to drop Sky again but the dropkick under the ropes misses. Instead Sky wraps the leg around the post and cranks on said leg as we have a target.

Back in and a dragon screw legwhip takes Bayley down again so the fans start singing about Bayley. The power is enough to make her send Sky into the timekeeper's area, only for her to dive out and right into a Bayley To Belly on the floor. Back in and a spinning side slam (kind of like Victoria) gives Bayley two and she goes up. Sky catches her up top, with Bayley's leg getting tied in the ropes, followed by a crash to the floor.

A great moonsault hits Bayley on the outside but she's able to hit a sunset bomb into the corner back inside. Some German suplexes give Sky two each but Over The Moonsault hits a raised knee (as in the already injured one). Bayley, with one good leg, manages to get up top and tries the elbow, only to get pulled into the crossface. That's broken up in a hurry but Bayley's basement clothesline is countered into another crossface.

With that not working, Sky switches into a more logical STF, which is broken up as well. Another Bayley To Belly gets two but Bayley spends too much time yelling and gets hit in the face. A backbreaker sets up Over The Moonsault for a near

fall, followed by some more moonsaults. The big one misses but Bayley can't hit the Roseplant. Instead Bayley hits a heck of a clothesline and a suplex sets up the top rope elbow. The Roseplant gives Bayley the pin and the title at 14:22.

Rating: B+. This turned into a heck of a match with Bayley working hard to overcome the injury and show that she was able to beat the star in Sky. That's the kind of match you do not often see and it worked well here, with Bayley showing that she still has it. As usual, Sky is as smooth as it gets in the ring and looked awesome, but this needed to be Bayley's win and that's exactly what she got.

Here is Snoop Dogg, with the Philadelphia Eagles cheerleaders and mascot, to announce the attendance of 72,755. The two night attendance is 145,298, with Snoop saying 145,420 for the joke which is mostly ignored.

We recap Cody Rhodes vs. Roman Reigns for the WWE Title. Reigns beat Rhodes last year in a huge upset, sending Rhodes on a path to get back to the title match and Finish The Story. Now though, the Rock is back and Rhodes is up against the entire Bloodline, meaning, as Cole put it last night, "Cody Is Screwed".

Reigns isn't giving it up without a fight though, as he has been champion for three and a half years. This gets the big music video treatment as we look at Rhodes fighting to get to the top after all of this adversity in his quest to finish the story. Of note, the theme here is Rhodes is back after a long hiatus, including photos of him with the Young Bucks, Chris Jericho and Kenny Omega.

Smackdown World Title: Cody Rhodes vs. Roman Reigns

Reigns, with Paul Heyman, is defending under Bloodline Rules, meaning anything goes. The entrances are of course epic, with Rhodes coming out with his wife Brandi amid a ton of pyro and rising through the stage. Not to be outdone, Reigns has a full

orchestra playing him to the ring, which is treatment worthy of a champion. We get the Big Match Intros and Samantha Irvin manages to make this feel all the more incredible.

They stare each other down to start and Rhodes goes for the leg but lets it go for another standoff. We get some more circling as they clearly have a lot of time here. Rhodes hits a right hand and knocks Reigns to the floor as things pick up fast. It's already time for a table but Reigns cuts him off and puts it back. Rhodes sends him into the steps but Reigns is back up with a kendo stick to start the beating.

That's taken away though and Rhodes comes back with a quick bulldog. Rhodes gets smart by grabbing a Figure Four, which is quickly broken up with a rake to the eyes. They go outside again and, after a trip through the Prime station, it's time to fight into the crowd. Reigns takes him onto a platform and tells people to move so he can throw him. That takes too long as well and Rhodes reverses it into a suplex of his own.

Back in and Reigns hits a heck of a powerbomb to drop Rhodes again and we get a double breather. Reigns is back up with a suplex and starts getting cocky, setting up a cravate. A PerfectPlex gives Reigns two but Rhodes is back up with some kicks to the face. They clothesline each other down as we're nearly fifteen minutes in without things getting too crazy. They slug it out and the Disaster Kick gives Rhodes two (and Heyman a big scared reaction).

Back up and Reigns hits his own Cross Rhodes for two, resulting in Reigns looking like he says something in the vein of "I knew that wouldn't work". Rhodes fights up and fires off the jabs but they go outside, where Reigns sends him through the announcers' table. Back in and a Superman Punch connects for two as the fans are getting a lot more into this stuff. Rhodes pops up with a Cody Cutter for two and a spear gets the same to even the stolen finishers score.

Cross Rhodes connects and the fans get up...as Jimmy Uso runs in (they made it over 20 minutes before getting there) for a superkick. The Superman Punch connects but here is Jey Uso to even the score. The Usos brawl on the ramp and Jey spears Jimmy off of said ramp through some tables. Rhodes grabs a rollup for two but gets speared down for the save. The fans are surprisingly way more into this than I would have expected as you have to know the Rock is on the way.

They go outside again and this time Rhodes spears him through the barricade for the big crash. Back in and two Cross Rhodes connect but here is Solo Sikoa with the Samoan Spike to cut Rhodes off for two. A spear/Samoan Spike combination only gets two and heeeeeere's John Cena to a ROAR. Cena clears Sikoa out but here is the Rock to go after him (Cena's look of "oh here we go" is good). A Rock Bottom takes Cena out in a hurry but the Shield music starts up.

Cue Seth Rollins in Shield gear but Reigns cuts him off with a Superman Punch. Rock yells at Mama Rhodes and loads up the weight belt....and a gong strikes. The lights go out and the Undertaker is here to chokeslam Rock. As great as that was, my goodness what I would have given for the glass to shatter at Wrestlemania one more time.

Reigns gets back up and grabs a chair, but hits Rollins instead. The broken concentration lets Rhodes hit three Cross Rhodes for the pin (with Cole saying FINISH THE STORY in time with the count) and the title at 33:25. Samantha Irvin clearly fighting back tears as she announces the win makes it that much better.

Rating: B. This is a hard one to grade as the entire point of this was to crown Rhodes as the new champion and they got that covered. Given the build, there wasn't much of anything else that could have been done without killing Rhodes off as a top guy. They had a big match feel and it felt like Rhodes assembled the Avengers to take out the unstoppable force. The

build throughout worked too, as Rhodes couldn't pin him with the single or the double Cross Rhodes but finally did it with the triple.

It did exactly what it needed to do and was a good enough match on the way there. Much like Daniel Bryan winning the title ten years earlier, the ending was the only thing that mattered and everything else was pretty much gravy. Good main event here though, and it did the big goal of ending Reigns' all time title reign.

One other thing: I watched this show next to a family, including someone who got to come to the show as his high school graduation present. He talked about how this was so much better than anything he could have imagined and the only thing that he didn't get to see was the Undertaker, his all time favorite wrestler. The gong went off and he started crying over how happy he was at the whole thing. That's the kind of special reaction you do not get in many things and I love it when you get to see wrestling make it happen.

A bunch of wrestlers come out to celebrate with Rhodes as we get the big crowning of Rhodes as champion. Rhodes even hands the title to his mom as his family gets in the ring. Rhodes gets the mic and asks for Bruce Prichard and HHH to come out here, because it wouldn't be happening without them. Both come out and HHH holds up Rhodes arm as it's time to lift Rhodes up on Sami Zayn and Randy Orton's shoulders. Rhodes goes out and hugs Michael Cole before shaking Rollins' hand in a nice moment. The ring clears out and Rhodes gets to pose a lot before leaving to end the show.

We get the long highlight package to really wrap us up.

Overall Rating: B+. I liked this one better than Night One overall, with only the six man street fight feeling a bit beneath the standard. The show was built entirely around the main event and that worked well, with Bayley vs. Sky and the

US Title match being nice moments. We also had the big title changes to start the show and it made for a good event. As usual though, the whole thing is about a feel good moment and that's all it needed to be. WWE knows how to do these big milestone Wrestlemanias and they did it again here, as the new era feels like it is officially under way.

Ratings Comparison

Seth Rollins vs. Drew McIntyre

Original: B-

Redo: B-

Drew McIntyre vs. Damian Priest

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Final Testament vs. Bobby Lashley/Street Profits

Original: C

Redo: C

AJ Styles vs. LA Knight

Original: B-

Redo: B-

Randy Orton vs. Kevin Owens vs. Logan Paul

Original: C+

Redo: B

Bayley vs. Iyo Sky

Original: B

Redo: B+

Cody Rhodes vs. Roman Reigns

Original: B+

Redo: B

Overall Rating

Original: B+

Redo: B+

Yeah I underrated that triple threat match as it was a lot more fun than that. Still though, pretty solid show all around.

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

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XXXIX Night Two (2024 Edition): Story Time

Wrestlemania XXXIX Night Two

Date: April 2, 2023

Location: SoFi Stadium, Inglewood, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

Attendance: 67,553

America The Beautiful: Jimmie Allen

After a rather long intermission, we're ready to wrap up the show and this night has a lot to live up to. The first night

was outstanding and now we have the real main event, as Roman Reigns defends the WWE Universal Title against Cody Rhodes. In addition, Gunther defends the Intercontinental Title against Sheamus and Drew McIntyre and we have a Cell match as a bonus. Let's get to it.

Jimmie Allen sings America The Beautiful.

Kevin Hart gives us the cold open again, this time talking about how the sequel has to be bigger and better. Points for not just redoing the same video from the night before and keeping up with the theme.

Miz and Snoop Dogg welcome us to the show with a quick recap and preview. Snoop is ready to get us going.

Brock Lesnar vs. Omos

The story here is that Lesnar can't overpower Omos (with MVP). Seriously that's about it. Lesnar can't double leg him to start and gets tossed around. Running shoulders don't do much for Lesnar so Omos hits a headbutt and grabs a slam. Omos throws him around again and hits some forearms to the back. We hit the bearhug, followed by another slam, and another bearhug to keep Lesnar in trouble. Lesnar fights out and is quickly chokeslammed for a near fall. Back up and Lesnar rolls some German suplexes but his back gives out on the F5 attempt. Then Lesnar hits the F5 for the pin at 4:56.

Rating: C-. Well they definitely did the right thing in keeping this short, as the whole thing was about Lesnar doing his power moves but not doing them all that well because Omos is that big. It's a very basic story and while Omos got in some impressive stuff, it felt more like a way to get Lesnar on the show more than anything else (which granted that's more or less what it was). Not a great match but the fans liked the big throws so points for that.

Liv Morgan/Raquel Rodriguez vs. Natalya/Shotzi vs. Chelsea

Green/Sonya Deville vs. Ronda Rousey/Shayna Baszler

It's the women's match of the showcase tag match from last night. Baszler and Rousey (the bullies) didn't have to qualify here and were just thrown into the match. Morgan Backstabbers Sonya to start and a one kneed Codebreaker makes it even worse. Natalya comes in for the sling shot belly to back drop. The basement dropkick puts Morgan down again but she hurricanranas her way to freedom.

Rodriguez comes in and gets to throw Natalya around, leaving Natalya to hand it off to Green. A missile dropkick has no effect so Sonya comes back in, allowing Green to grab some hair. Shotzi comes in so Baszler throws her outside, where Rousey is waiting on her. That leaves Baszler to get caught in a triplebomb, meaning Rousey has to get on the apron...but the three on one is broken up by Green and Sonya.

Shotzi dives onto people in the ring and on the floor, but Green stops to tell us to get our cameras ready. Rather than face Rodriguez, Green dives onto a bunch of people at ringside. With no one else left inside, Rodriguez powerbombs Morgan onto the pile for the big crash. Back in and Rodriguez fall away slams Shotzi, setting up the corkscrew Vader Bomb. Sonya comes in for the save though and some double teaming puts Rodriguez on the floor.

Green and Sonya celebrate until Natalya and Shotzi are back in for an assisted double Sliced Bread. A Hart Attack gets two on Sonya with Green making the save. There's the double Sharpshooter to Sonya and Green until Morgan dives off the top for the save. Morgan takes Shotzi down but Rousey and Baszler (now with one boot and limping) come back in to break it up. Rousey armbars Shotzi for the win at 8:22.

Rating: C+. I don't know if Baszler's injury put she and Rousey on the floor for so long but they were almost not around whatsoever for a good chunk of the match. The match was

pretty similar to its male counterpart but two of these teams felt thrown together and it hurt a lot. Rousey and Baszler winning should set them up as the monsters of the division and they would win the Tag Team Titles in about a month and a half...after Rodriguez and Morgan won them first. As usual, those things are a mess.

We look at Bobby Lashley winning the Andre The Giant Memorial Battle Royal on Smackdown.

Lashley comes out and shows off the trophy.

Xavier Woods and UpUpDownDown preview the Intercontinental Title match.

We recap Sheamus vs. Drew McIntyre vs. Gunther for the latter's Intercontinental Title. Gunther is a monster champion and his fellow Europeans want to hit him really hard and win the title. Sheamus and McIntyre are friends but both want the title, meaning they're willing to fight each other. This falls into the "do we need to draw you a picture here" category. It also falls into the "we saw this video (or something really similar to it) last night" category.

Intercontinental Title: Sheamus vs. Drew McIntyre vs. Gunther

Gunther is defending and Titus O'Neil is on commentary. Sheamus and McIntyre waste no time in knocking the champ to the floor before starting to lay into each other. Sheamus hits a clothesline and takes McIntyre into the corner for some uppercuts. McIntyre is sent to the apron for the forearms but Gunther is back up with chops for both of them. Gunther sends McIntyre into the post for a crash out to the floor, followed by a big boot to Sheamus' face.

The Boston crab has Sheamus in more trouble until McIntyre comes in to break it up. McIntyre and Gunther chop it out (and they're loud chops too) but Sheamus is back in with the uppercuts all around. With Gunther getting back up, Sheamus

ties him in the ropes for the forearms to the chest, mixed in with chops from McIntyre. That leaves Gunther down so Sheamus ties McIntyre up in the ropes for almost thirty forearms to the chest.

Gunther is back in to break up the Celtic Cross though and a German suplex drops Sheamus again. The big clothesline gives Gunther two but McIntyre is back up to suplex Sheamus into Sheamus in the corner. There's a Futureshock to Gunther but the Claymore misses. Gunther powerbombs McIntyre down and goes up but Sheamus is right there with a super White Noise. The Celtic Cross sets up the Cloverleaf so Gunther makes the rope, which means nothing because it's No DQ.

Sheamus lets go and puts the hold back on anyway, only to have McIntyre come in for the break. That doesn't go well either as Sheamus knees both of them down but McIntyre cuts off the Brogue Kick. McIntyre headbutts him out to the floor and busts out the big flip dive, leaving everyone down on the floor. Cole to O'Neil: "You never did that!" O'Neil: "AND I NEVER WILL!"

Back in and Sheamus Brogue Kicks McIntyre for two, followed by the Claymore to give McIntyre two of his own. Sheamus drops McIntyre again and covers but Gunther dives in with a top rope splash. Gunther's powerbomb to Sheamus onto McIntyre leaves them both down, followed by another powerbomb to pin McIntyre and retain at 16:35.

Rating: A. It's rare that I'll watch a match back on its own but I've seen this one more than a few times now as it's that kind of brutal. These guys beat the fire out of each other and that is exactly how it was advertised. They didn't stop and for once it felt like three people having a match. There were stretches where it was two in and one out, but it was a brutal and hard hitting enough match to make up for it. Excellent stuff here, as you probably should have expected.

WWE did charity work this week.

We recap Asuka vs. Bianca Belair for the latter's Raw Women's Title. Belair won the title last year at Wrestlemania and has become a huge star during her reign. Then Asuka showed up as an evil clown and Belair is all scared, at least somewhat due to Asuka spraying her with the mist over and over. It's a simple story but it didn't exactly work and this never felt like a big feud.

Raw Women's Title: Bianca Belair vs. Asuka

Asuka is challenging and comes out with a team of masked Asukas, while Belair counters with an all girl kids dance troupe. Eh point to the champ. Belair kicks her down at the bell and hits a dropkick into the corner, setting up the right hands. That's broken up and Asuka kicks her down, setting up the big missed kick to the head. Asuka puts her on top but Belair flips over her and hits a spinebuster for a fast two.

Something close to a triangle choke has Belair in trouble before Asuka switches to the Asuka Lock. It's not on quite full though and Belair rolls outside, where she PLANTS Asuka with a sitout powerbomb. Back in and Belair misses a charge into the post, allowing Asuka to pull her into a heel hook. Belair powers out but Asuka grabs an ankle lock, which is rolled away for the break. Asuka is right back up with a missile dropkick for two and things slow down a bit.

They go to the apron where Asuka hits a hard dropkick into the post. Belair sends her into the post to even things up a bit, setting up a deadlift superplex to bring them back inside. Asuka's kick to the face gets two but a Codebreaker is blocked. A running Blockbuster into a handspring moonsault gives Belair two and frustration is setting in. They go to the corner with Asuka slipping out of a fireman's carry and hitting a Codebreaker for two of her own. Back up and the mist misses but Asuka slips out of the KOD. The cross armbreaker

doesn't quite work for Asuka though and Belair powers up for the

Rating: B-. This was good but it never hit that next level, save for maybe the final sequence. The story just wasn't that compelling coming in and it didn't really feel like a major showdown. Belair retaining the title over a top level challenge is good though as beating Asuka is still an impressive feat.

We look at Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens beating the Usos for the Tag Team Titles in Night One's main event.

Here are Miz and Snoop Dogg to announce tonight's attendance of 81,395, giving us a two day total of 161,892. That's great, but Miz isn't happy with Snoop for putting him into an impromptu match last night. Dogg: "So you want to do it again?" Of course not, because Miz doesn't like being humiliated in his town. Snoop says this is the people's city and introduces...Shane McMahon, because SHANE MUST BE A THING. Shane thanks the fans and sounds like he can barely breathe after his entrance. Time for a match

Shane McMahon vs. Miz

Shane punches him in the corner and yeah they're as bad as before. Then he drops down, leapfrogs over Miz and...tears his quad on the landing less than thirty seconds in. That brings Snoop in to hit Miz in the face and apparently we have a replacement. Snoop knocks him down again and drops a People's Elbow for the pin at 2:11. This seems to have been completely impromptu with either the referee telling Snoop to get in there or Snoop coming up with the idea on his own. Either way, major points to Snoop who had no idea what he was doing and gave the fans a very fun moment out of nowhere.

We recap Edge vs. the Demon Finn Balor inside the Cell. Balor threw Edge out of the Judgment Day the night he joined, setting off a feud between the two of them. This led to

Judgment Day attacking both Edge and his wife Beth Phoenix, meaning it's time for the big, violent fight.

The Cell is lowered and we get a voiceover (from Russell Crowe of all people, as part of a movie tie-in) talking about how evil it is as well.

Edge vs. Finn Balor

Inside the Cell and this is Brood Edge (and yes, his Titantron literally says BROOD EDGE), who comes out of the Brood ring of fire with a shiny mask that makes him look like the Terminator while wearing wings, against the Demon. They waste no time in getting the weapons, with Edge grabbing a red chair and Balor grabbing a purple kendo stick (because not only do you need weapons in the Cell, but you need COLOR COORDINATED weapons).

Balor gets the better of things and knocks him to the floor, only to get hammered back inside. Edge knocks him off the apron and grabs a bunch of kendo sticks (two purple, one red), some of which he uses to pin Balor into the corner of the Cell. A dropkick off the apron hits Balor to make it worse, meaning it's time to set up the table. Balor uses the delay to get out and sends Edge hard into the steps. They get back inside where Edge hits a quick Impaler but the spear is countered with a Sling Blade.

They go outside with Balor being dropkicked through a table, only to come back in with an Unprettier. The Edge-0-Matic gets two more and it's time to grab a ladder. Edge throws said ladder at Balor's face and Balor is busted open BAD, meaning we pause for the medic to come inside to check on him (this led to a hilarious reaction from Mick Foley, because apparently YOU CAN PAUSE A CELL MATCH DUE TO AN INJURY).

Edge uses the delay to get a bunch of weapons ready but Balor is back up with 1916. The spear only hits ladder and Balor hits another Slind Blade. Coup de Grace connects for two and Balor climbs the ladder, only to get countered into a super

Edgecution for a slightly delayed two.

That takes too long again and Balor is back up with his own weapons shots, including a bunch of chair shots to Edge. Balor climbs up but instead climbs the cage and gets onto the camera platform. This adds a full nine inches above the top rope but the Coup De Grace only hits table. Edge's spear gets two so he unloads with chair shots to the back. The Conchairto finishes Balor at 18:10.

Rating: B-. This was the modern Cell match and that is not a good thing for the most part. The bell rang and they went straight for the weapons, which didn't exactly make the Cell itself feel important. It was a violent and hard hitting match but other than one or two spots, I'm not sure how much the Cell was needed. Either use the Cell or don't, because this was a street fight with the cage blocking the camera view.

We look at the Wrestlemania trailers.

Backlash is coming to Puerto Rico. You should too!

We look at the Hall Of Fame induction ceremony.

Here is the class in the stadium:

Stacy Keibler (who has not aged a day)

Andy Kaufman (represented by his family)

Great Muta (that's a nice addition)

Tim White (Warrior Award, and his brother looks identical to him)

Rey Mysterio (that's about as perfect of a choice for an active headliner as you could pick)

Mysterio shakes the other inductees' hands (bowing to Muta).

We look at Set Rollins' entrance from last night. Feel free to get on with the show at any time.

We recap Roman Reigns defending the WWE Universal Title

against Cody Rhodes. The big idea here is Rhodes wants to finish his story, meaning winning the title in his dad's honor while also completing his long rise to the top of WWE. Reigns has been champion for two and a half years and isn't going away that fast, so it's time for the big showdown. It feels like a main event and Cody is almost the last man standing to fight Reigns.

Smackdown World Title: Cody Rhodes vs. Roman Reigns

Reigns is defending and has Paul Heyman/Solo Sikoa with him. Rhodes gets his big entrance and goes over to say hi to his family, including giving his weightlifting belt to an unmasked Negative One (the son of the late Brody Lee, who makes occasional AEW appearances). Reigns gets a special entrance of his own, with a team of pianists playing the start of his entrance live. We get an ACKNOWLEDGE ME from Reigns before the bell finally rings.

Rhodes hammerlocks him over to the ropes to start and Reigns isn't impressed. A headlock takeover and a right hand has Reigns a bit more annoyed so he bails out to the floor. Heyman's advice is that Reigns isn't here for Rhodes because Rhodes is here for him. Heyman: "NOW SMASH HIM!" Back in and Reigns elbows him in the face, meaning it's time to raise up a finger. Rhodes manages a dropkick (Reigns is stunned again) for two, with commentary saying that cover wasn't about getting a pin but rather sending a message to Reigns. What that message is isn't clear but I'd guess "Eat At Joe's".

The Disaster Kick is pulled out of the air though and Reigns hits a powerbomb for two. Some suplexes have Rhodes in more trouble but he's back up to send Reigns out to the floor. That goes badly for him as well as Reigns drops him face first onto the apron. A hard slam puts Rhodes down onto the ramp but Rhodes gets in one of his own. Rhodes sends him back inside but Sikoa gets in a chair shot to the ribs, allowing Reigns to come back with the apron boot.

The cravate slows Rhodes down back inside until he fights up, only to have Sikoa interfere again. This time it lets Reigns hit a hard clothesline before whipping Rhodes into the corner to stay on his bad ribs. They go back outside with Reigns loading up the announcers' table but getting backdropped through the other one for the big hope spot. Back in and Rhodes hits the drop down uppercut into the snap powerslam.

There's the Cody Cutter for a big near fall so Reigns rolls outside, meaning it's a suicide dive to hit him again. They try to get back in but Sikoa gets in a weightlifting belt shot...which the referee hears for an ejection. The distraction lets Rhodes hit Cross Rhodes for two (with Heyman looking on in fear for a nice visual). Reigns is back with some shots to the head and a release Rock Bottom gets two.

The Superman Punch is countered into a Pedigree (Heyman even reaches through the ropes this time) for two and it's time to start the comeback. Said comeback is cut off with a Superman Punch to knock Rhodes out of the air for two more. The spear is countered into a sunset flip for two and Rhodes whips out a Figure Four for a change of pace. Reigns turns it over (while slapping the mat on the way there), with Rhodes getting over to the ropes for the break.

A big spear connects for two and now Reigns is stunned for a change. With nothing else working, Reigns hits him in the face over and over before grabbing the guillotine choke. Rhodes can't spinebuster his way to freedom but he can slip his head out and hammer away at Reigns for a change. The referee gets bumped though and a double knockdown gives us quite the breather. Cody is back up for the Cross Rhodes but the Usos run in to break it up. The 1D drops Rhodes but here are Kevin Owens and Sami Zayn to take out the Usos.

A Stunner into the Helluva Kick leave Reigns down and the other four brawl out into the crowd. Rhodes gets the big dramatic near fall (and thank goodness that wasn't the pin as

Rhodes winning thanks to Owens and Zayn wouldn't have worked) and they're both down again. Back up and the slug it out with both of them being staggered off the shots. The Superman Punch is countered with the Flip Flop And Fly into the Bionic Elbow. Rhodes hits back to back Cross Rhodes...but Sikoa comes in with the Samoan Spike. The spear retains the title at 34:36.

Rating: B+. A year removed from this and my goodness I'm still amazed at the guts it took to not pull the trigger here. This was Cody's chance to win the whole thing and they kept it on Reigns, which is quite the way to go. They beat the fire out of each other and it had the big match feel, but not pulling the trigger here still feels way off. Heck of a main event, but man they had the fans ready for the moment and just didn't do it.

Replays and a highlight package wrap us up.

Overall Rating: B. There were some weak parts here and there but the good stuff is more than enough to carry this. Much like Night One, you can't fault the atmosphere and the look/feel of the show, which made for a heck of a showcase for everyone involved. The main event was very good (ending aside perhaps) and the Intercontinental Title match was great, mixed in with some other strong stuff along the way. I liked this one a lot and the slightly shorter running time helped, but it's just a few ticks below Night One's instant classic status.

Overall Overall Rating: A-. Wrestlemania has a complicated history but this was going along with the big, epic show feel and it worked to near perfection. It's one of the best Wrestlemanias ever and what matters is the show feeling as big as possible. Granted it helped that there was some great action, though that ending is one of those things that is going to stick in a lot of fans' memories for a very long time. I loved the show overall, and my goodness WWE knows how to make these things work so well.

Ratings Comparison

Brock Lesnar vs. Omos

Original: C+

Redo: C-

Women's Tag Team Showcase

Original: C

Redo: C+

Drew McIntyre vs. Sheamus vs. Gunther

Original: A-

Redo: A

Asuka vs. Bianca Belair

Original: B

Redo: B-

Shane McMahon vs. Miz

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Edge vs. Finn Balor

Original: B

Redo: B-

Roman Reigns vs. Cody Rhodes

Original: B+

Redo: B+

Overall Rating

Original: B+

Redo: B

Overall Overall Rating:

Original: A

Redo: A-

At least most of them are in in the ballpark. Either way, excellent show.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and head over to my Amazon author page with 30 different cheap wrestling books at:

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AND

[Remember to check out Wrestlingrumors.net](http://wrestlingrumors.net) for all of your [wrestling headline needs](http://wrestlingrumors.net).

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XXXIX Night One (2024 Edition): The Biggest Tag Match Ever (At The Time)

Wrestlemania XXXIX Night One

Date: April 1, 2023

Location: SoFi Stadium, Inglewood, California

Attendance: 67,303

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

America The Beautiful: Becky G

I've been curious to get back to this show as it was rather well received last year, leading me to wonder just how well it holds up. The main event of the first night is the Usos defending the Tag Team Titles against Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens, which is still hard to believe in multiple ways. Other than that, we have Rhea Ripley challenging Charlotte for the Smackdown Women's Title. Let's get to it.

The set is a classic one, looking like the stage at the Academy Awards.

Becky G sings America The Beautiful.

The opening video features Kevin Hart, who threatens the voiceover guy with a big boot and legdrop. Hart is here to tell us a story about something that happened once upon a time in Hollywood. This sends us to a Wrestlemania greatest hits package before we look at the Wrestlemania trailers, which really weren't close to the level of the originals in 2005. Hart asks the pyro budget to wrap it up.

Here are the hosts (in the ring rather than doing a full entrance in a smart time saver), the Miz and Snoop Dogg, to get things going. Miz talks about how they have a lot in common: they're both musicians (Miz was in *Wrestlemania: The Musical*) and they're both in a bunch of movies, plus Snoop is a WWE Golden Champ. Snoop: "So we're the same?" Snoop says it's more about the champions in the audience tonight, sending Miz into a preview of the card. We're ready to fire it up so let's get going.

US Title: Austin Theory vs. John Cena

Theory, defending, has one of my favorite entrance styles as the camera is shooting from the entrance, allowing you to look at the sea of humanity in front of him. It's been awesome for years and it still is here. Cena on the other hand gets a

video of his Make-A-Wish work (which is as cool as it gets) and has a bunch of Make-A-Wish kids with him for the big feel good moment. The entrance is rather strong, though maybe not as strong as that bald spot Cena is sporting.

Feeling out process to start with Theory grabbing a headlock and getting powered off without much effort. Cena goes after the arm and takes Theory down with a headlock takeover as the fans aren't sure about this one. Back up and Cena powers him into the corner so Theory gets creative with a bite of the ear of all things. As I try to figure out if Theory was alive for Tyson vs. Holyfield II, Theory jumps Cena from behind and hits a suplex for two.

Theory takes a bit too long to follow up though and Cena snaps off a suplex of his own. The rolling Blockbuster cuts Cena right back down for two and we hit the posing for a bit. Theory's rolling dropkick gets the same as the fans aren't quite into these covers yet. More posing sets up Theory knocking him down again but a big stomp is blocked. The AA is countered into a DDT to give Theory two more and the frustration is on again.

Theory misses a charge into the corner and they slug it out until Theory grabs a sleeper. That's broken up with a ram into the buckle and Cena initiates the finishing sequence. The AA is blocked again with a grab of the ropes and the referee gets bumped. Cena grabs the STF for the tap, which the referee doesn't see. Theory gets in a low blow and A Town Down retains the title at 11:21.

Rating: C. It takes some guts to have Cena come out with the Make-A-Wish kids and then have him lose. As for the rest of the match, it was rather basic and felt like Cena was just playing the greatest hits. I get that Cena wasn't able to be his old self, but it was getting close to "shell of his former self" territory. It was an attempt to give Theory a rub, but that didn't quite click here as it felt like Theory was

beating someone out there for one more match rather than a returning star.

Street Profits vs. Ricochet/Braun Strowman vs. Alpha Academy vs. Viking Raiders

This is dubbed a Showcase Match, which is pretty much flat out saying "they're here to be on the card". I kind of like the honesty there. Titus O'Neil is on commentary for no adequately explored reason. The Raiders have Valhalla (or Sarah Logan according to Titus) in their corner. Ricochet and Gable start things off and thank goodness they aren't having four in the ring at once.

Ricochet's hurricanrana attempt is countered into a quickly broken ankle lock so Ricochet sweeps the legs, only to get pulled into a backslide for one. Gable gets sent into the corner for the tag from Otis, who runs Ricochet over without much effort (Titus: "Big sweaty Otis!"). It's right back to Gable, who mocks Strowman, allowing Ricochet to jump over Gable and make the tag.

All eight get in (you knew it was coming) and the big brawl is on. The Vikings clear the ring and the springboard clothesline/German suplex combination drops Ricochet. Ragnarok hits Ford but let's stop to pose instead of covering. Strowman is back up to run both of them over, only to have Gable come back in for the rolling Chaos Theory. Gable goes up for a Swan Dive but Dawkins tags himself in, only to miss a dive. Ivar comes in and misses the moonsault as Dawkins moves (not that it would have connected anyway).

That leaves Strowman to hit a top rope splash for two on Strowman, with almost everyone else making the save. Otis World's Strongest Slams Strowman but Ford is back in to clean some house. A bunch of people go to the corner and that is indeed a Tower Of Doom, with Ricochet diving onto them for the real crash. Strowman is up for the Strowman Express until

Dawkins BLASTS HIM with a shoulder to pop the heck out of Titus. Ricochet is up with a springboard shooting star onto Dawkins but the shooting star press inside hits raised knees. Ford's frog splash to Ricochet's back (onto Dawkins' knees) is enough for the pin at 8:29.

Rating: B. The term showcase makes sense here as that is what it felt like we saw. This was eight people getting the chance to have fun and it felt like something you would have seen on an independent show. That block on Strowman and Ricochet's shooting star were both great, though the Profits were the most established team coming into this and giving them the win makes sense. I'm not usually wild on the people being stacked onto the card, but I'll take it over a battle royal.

Video on Brock Lesnar vs. Omos, which takes place tomorrow.

We recap Seth Rollins vs. Logan Paul. Rollins is a star and Paul eliminated him from the Royal Rumble. To make it worse, Paul has knocked cost Rollins the US Title and knocked him out with his loaded right hand, leaving Rollins a little worried.

The UpUpDownDown crew simulates Rollins vs. Paul in WWE2K23, with Rollins having a 58% chance to win.

Seth Rollins vs. Logan Paul

Paul ziplines in, which is cool enough, but it doesn't have much in the way of lasting power. Rollins has quite the entrance, as a conductor leads the crowd to sing his song. There is also a walking bottle of Prime, which can't end well. Rollins grabs a headlock to start and talks to Paul a bit before being shoved away. They pick the pace up a bit with Rollins hitting a running shoulder but it's way too early for the Stomp.

Back up and Paul throws him over the top (just like he did at the Royal Rumble, hence Paul saying "that's twice"). Rollins isn't happy with that and comes back in to hammer away until

Paul snaps his throat across the top. Back in and Paul starts slugging away before avoiding a charge in the corner. A springboard crossbody into a standing moonsault gives Paul two and we hit something like a seated octopus. They strike it out while laying on the mat until Paul busts out a nice gutwrench suplex.

Commentary isn't sure if they should be shocked that Paul is this good as he jumps from the mat to the top for a moonsault (geez) which only hits mat. The fans greatly approve of something (seemingly in the crowd) as Rollins makes the comeback and sends him over the top to even the score a bit. Three straight suicide dives connect for Rollins so Paul crawls away, only for Rollins to Stomp his hand on the steps.

Back in and the Pedigree is countered into an exchange of rollups for two each. Paul pops up and hits the big right hand but the pain means it's a VERY delayed near fall. Rollins is back up with a sitout powerbomb for two and the Stomp is loaded up...but the bottle of Prime makes the save. It's KSI (Paul's business partner), whose distraction lets Paul post Rollins for the big knockdown. The announcers' table is cleared off but KSI spends too much time filming, allowing Rollins to pull him in the way of Paul's splash off the post through the table.

Back in and the Pedigree gets two in a heck of a kickout, leaving them both down. The frustrated Rollins hits an elbow to the back of the head but the Stomp is pulled out of the air. Paul busts out a GTS of all things before dropping a nice frog splash for two. With Rollins down in the corner, Paul goes up and tries a Coast To Coast, only to dive into a superkick. The Stomp finishes for Rollins at 16:14.

Rating: B+. These guys tore the house down with some awesome stuff as Paul continues to be an absolute freak of nature out there. He absolutely should not be this good with so little experience but here he is, having a heck of a match with a top

WWE star on the biggest stage of them all. I had a great time watching this and you could feel the energy going up over and over throughout. Great match.

We recap Damage CTRL vs. Becky Lynch/Trish Stratus/Lita. Damage CTRL took out Lynch so she brought in Lita of all people to team with her and take the Women's Tag Team Titles. Lita and Lynch, with an assist from Stratus, actually won the titles so now it's time for a big grudge match.

Damage CTRL vs. Lita/Trish Stratus/Becky Lynch

Damage CTRL gets a normal entrance while the other three get a movie trailer/comic book style entrance, which is indeed rather cool and fitting for the show. For some reason they come into the stadium in black and white and...well it's cool but I'm not sure I get the theme here. We get the big staredown to start and the fight is on before the bell. Damage CTRL is cleared out to the floor so Lynch baseball slides into Kai.

Back in and we officially start with Lynch's early Manhandle Slam attempt being broken up. Sky offers a distraction so Kai can kick Lynch in the head, meaning the villains can take over in the corner. Some knees in the corner give Sky two, followed by a heck of a springboard missile dropkick for the same. A double wheelbarrow suplex/neckbreaker combination gives Bayley two, followed by Kai's kick to the face for two more.

Lynch manages to send Bayley outside and drop Kai but Bayley pulls Stratus down to break up the tag attempt. Kai is finally knocked down though and the tag brings in Lita for a kind of awkward looking headscissors. Another headscissors sends Sky face first into the corner, setting up a faceplant for two. Lita goes up but Kai offers a cheap shot to put her down as the villains take over again.

Triple kicks drop Lita again before Sky bends the neck around the rope and screams menacingly. Lita manages to DDT her way

out of trouble and brings Trish back in to chop away at Kai in the corner. A neckbreaker gives Stratus two but the Stratusphere is broken up. Everything breaks down and an assisted Stratusphere sends Kai off the top and down onto Sky/Bayley.

Back in and we get a rather awful looking Poetry In Motion to Kai, setting up the Disarm-Her from Lynch. Bayley breaks that up and takes Stratus down before pulling Kai over to the right corner in a move heels should use more often. The Rose Plant and Manhandle Slam are broken up but Bayley's second Rose Plant connects with Lita having to make the save. Stratus comes back in and everything breaks down with everyone but Sky crashing out to the floor.

Sky moonsaults onto the pile and everyone is down at once. All six of them get back in and we have the three on three slugout, much to the fans' delight. Lita hits Sky with a Twist of Fate and the Chick Kick drops Kai. The Litasault connects on Kai and Sky, leaving Lynch to hit a super Manhandle Slam for the pin at 14:38.

Rating: C-. This wasn't very good as it felt long and then went another five minutes. Lita can't really move all that well anymore (a lot of that will have to do with her neck problems) and it was getting tough to watch her out there. Everything else was ok at best and this really needed to be about five or more minutes shorter. Not an awful match, but slow and fairly dull to watch at times.

Video on Bianca Belair vs. Asuka for the former's Raw Women's Title on Night Two.

We recap Dominik Mysterio vs. Rey Mysterio. Dominik has been corrupted by Rhea Ripley and the Judgment Day and has gone full evil. This saw him torment his dad for months before finally getting Rey's attention by going after his own mother. Now Rey is ready to teach his son, who was arrested for

invading Rey's house and now brags about his time (all of a few hours) in jail, a lesson.

Bad Bunny is on Spanish commentary.

Rey Mysterio vs. Dominik Mysterio

Following a long video showing him being transported from prison (including a shot of Auschwitz (as in the German concentration camp, which WWE had to apologize for using), Dominik is out first and comes to the ring in the back of a police van, where he has to be unshackled (with a lucha mask, which has Michael Cole WAY too incensed). Yeah that's not going to be topped. Rey is driven to the ring in a low rider (with Eddie Guerrero music) by Snoop Dogg and yeah Dominik wasn't topped.

Dominik, in gear close to Rey's Halloween Havoc 1997 attire, locks up to start and gets absolutely nowhere with it. They go to the mat with Dominik taking him down, only to be sent out to the floor. Back in and Rey snaps off a running hurricanrana, meaning Dominik needs a breather. That's fine with Rey, who headscissors him into the corner, where a whipping ensues. Dominik bails to the floor again, where he grabs a drink from his sister and throws it into her face.

Rey goes over to cut said sister off, allowing Dominik to catapult him into the post. That's too far even for Graves, who can't bring himself to defend Dominik on this one. The abdominal stretch goes on back inside before Dominik drops him down, meaning more trash talk can ensue. He yells at his mother enough that she slaps him in the face, allowing Rey to start the comeback.

Back in and Rey starts the comeback, including the springboard spinning crossbody. The Eddie Dance looks to set up Three Amigos but here is Judgment Day as Dominik drives him into the corner. Rey gets a running start but gets flipped over Dominik, sending him face first into the bottom turnbuckle for

a VERY hard crash. After the referee makes sure Rey's face isn't broken, Dominik tries Three Amigos but Rey slips out of the third.

The 619 connects, only to have the Judgment Day offer a distraction so Dominik can take Rey down again. Rey is sent outside so Judgment Day surrounds him, only for the LWO to come in for the save. Back in and Dominik's 619 sets up a frog splash for two, meaning frustration is setting in. Dominik unhooks the turnbuckle pad but the referee sees him, allowing Dominik to grab a chain instead. Bad Bunny breaks that up though and it's a 619 into the frog splash to give Rey the pin at 14:31.

Rating: B. This is a weird one as I remembered absolutely loving it the first time but instead this was just good. The spanking in the corner spot was great and it was by far the biggest match Dominik has had. The big thing here was the Mysterio Family overcome Judgment Day and the evils of Dominik, which is about as feel good of a feeling as you can have.

It told a story and the action was good, making it feel very Wrestlemania worthy. Having the LWO there to cut off Judgment Day and Bad Bunny there to even things out again were nice additions as well. Good stuff overall, though maybe not the classic I remember it being originally.

You should visit Puerto Rico. The Puerto Rico tourism bureau really recommends it.

We recap Rhea Ripley challenging Charlotte for the Smackdown Women's Title. Ripley is the new monster of the division but Charlotte beat her before. This is a very different Ripley though and she wants the title, but also to avenge her loss to Charlotte at Wrestlemania XXXVI.

Smackdown Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Rhea Ripley

Ripley is challenging. They take their time to start before Ripley runs her over. Back up and Charlotte knocks her out to the floor for a change, with Ripley looking a bit scared. She gets back inside where Charlotte is sent to the apron, only to come back with a big boot. A high crossbody gives Charlotte two but Ripley drops her face first onto the top turnbuckle. Ripley's bodyscissors slows things down a bit, followed by the chops to keep Charlotte in trouble.

Charlotte is back up with some chops up against the ropes but Ripley snaps off a German suplex for two. Another comeback lets Charlotte drop her on the turnbuckle and hit some clotheslines, followed by the big chops to really stagger Ripley. Back up and Ripley rolls through a high crossbody and tries Riptide, only to get countered into a heck of a DDT for a near fall. Stereo big boots leave them both down for a minute before it's time to slug it out. Ripley sends her into the knee but Charlotte snaps off a t-bone suplex.

Charlotte takes too long going up though and it's a release German superplex for two, leaving Ripley shaken up. The breather lets Charlotte go after the knee and Natural Selection gets two. They go outside, where Charlotte misses a charge into the steps, allowing Ripley to grab a belly to back faceplant for two. Riptide is countered into a German suplex to put Ripley down but she's back up with a German suplex to put Charlotte down on her face (that was almost really bad as Charlotte barely rotated enough).

Charlotte is fine enough to hit a heck of a big boot for tow more but the Figure Four is blocked again. A staggered Ripley rolls to the apron, where Charlotte hits another big boot. The moonsault to the floor actually connects but Ripley blocks the Figure Four again. The spear misses and a quick Riptide gets two, leaving Ripley absolutely stunned (you don't see that every day). With the covers not working, Ripley grabs the Prism Trap, which looks even more impressive with someone as tall as Charlotte.

The rope is reached and Ripley almost runs into the referee, allowing Charlotte to come back with a spear for two of her own. Another big boot (Charlotte likes those) drops Ripley and the Figure Four finally goes on but the rope is grabbed in about half a second. They go up top, where Ripley drops her face first onto the post. That sets up a super Riptide to knock Charlotte good and silly for the pin and the title at 23:34.

Rating: A. I gave this a B+ last year and I completely shortchanged the whole thing. These two beat the living daylights out of each other and it felt like an absolute war with Ripley being crowned as the new queen. This is the match that Ripley needed to win and WWE got it absolutely right with the victory coming in a war. It was time for something new in the division and that was Ripley, who had to beat Charlotte to get there after what happened three years ago. Outstanding match here and an instant classic.

Video on Gunther defending the Intercontinental Title against Drew McIntyre and Sheamus on Night Two.

Austin Theory says he showed John Cena. Do you believe in him now?

Miz and Snoop Dogg announce tonight's attendance: 80,497. Snoop says the only thing that would be better than that would be if Miz had a match tonight and Miz agrees. He put out an open challenge, but no one responded. Everyone knows that he is the toughest man here and we hit the catchphrase...which is cut off by Pat McAfee.

Cole stands up and Graves looks crushed all over again. McAfee says high to the beautiful people and greets Snoop before saying no one heard about this open challenge. He's wearing his Wrestlemania tank top and the challenge is on. Miz would love to do it but he's just the host of Wrestlemania so he can't make the match. McAfee mocks Miz's testicular fortitude

so Snoop decides he can make the match. Miz tells Snoop to do this instead. Snoop: "I don't do this. I rap." And the bell rings.

Pat McAfee vs. Miz

McAfee slugs away to start and catches a charging Miz with a spinebuster. Miz goes up top but McAfee goes up with him and then backflips away. A superkick (and a nice one) knocks a diving Miz out of the air so Miz is ready to walk. For reasons of celebrity involvement, Miz shoves NFL tight end George Kittle, who jumps the barricade (security around here is awful) and clotheslines Miz. That lets McAfee go up onto the post and flip dive down onto Miz for the big crash. Back in and McAfee hits the Punt for the pin at 3:25.

Rating: C. This was the goofy fun that they knew it would be as Miz continues to be the perfect choice for the goof who can be beaten down and come back again later no matter what. McAfee is a nice celebrity guest star as he can more than handle himself in a short match and the fans seemed to like him. Good, easy fun here.

Wrestlemania XL is in Philadelphia.

Night Two rundown.

We recap the Usos defending the Tag Team Titles against Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens. Zayn had been part of the Bloodline but they eventually turned on him, leaving Zayn to turn to his long time, on again/off again partner Owens, who did not trust Zayn. There was one too many beatdowns though, and Owens finally reformed the team with Zayn to set up the title match, as they have to bring the Bloodline down one way or another. The other aspect of this is Jey Uso, who seemed to trust Zayn before getting stabbed in the back as well. Zayn still seems to believe in Jey, which adds a bit of a twist to the whole thing.

Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens

The Usos are defending and are played to the ring by Lil Uzi Vert. Owens and Zayn are so fired up and you can feel every bit of it. After the Big Match Intros, Zayn seems ready to start with Jimmy but Jey comes in instead. Jey shoulders Zayn down but he comes back with right hands for a change. Jimmy low bridges Zayn to the floor though as the villains start taking over.

A suplex to the floor and a boot to the face keep Zayn in trouble, with Jey adding a Stinger Splash for two. Zayn finally manages to send the champs outside though and it's Owens coming in to clean house. A big flip dive to the floor drops the Usos and a frog splash from the apron/top rope each gets two on Jimmy. Back in and Jey hits a pop up neckbreaker to cut Owens off though and we slow back down.

Owens fights back and tries a Swanton, only to hit raised knees. Jimmy adds a quick Superfly Splash for two and the near fall has Jimmy confused. Some superkicks put Jimmy into the corner though and it's a Cannonball to Jimmy, with Zayn brainbusting Jey on the apron. The Swanton gives Owens two and Zayn adds his own Superfly Splash for two more. Cole references El Generico for the OLE chants but Jey cuts things off with a superkick.

A high quantity of superkicks get two on Zayn, with Owens having to make a save. Another superkick gets two but this time Zayn kicks out himself. Owens tries to come in sans tag but gets spinebusted through the announcers' table for his efforts. Back in and the 1D gets two on Zayn, with Cole (and the fans) LOSING IT over the kickout. The livid Jey shouts at Zayn in the corner, slapping away while saying they were brothers.

Jey hits a Helluva Kick but Zayn grabs an exploder suplex into the corner. The tag brings in Owens for powerbombs a plenty,

setting up a Helluva Kick from Zayn to Jimmy. The Stunner gets two on Jey and everyone is down. They all pull themselves up and the fight is on again, meaning more and more superkicks.

The Usos' superkicks are supererer though and Owens is down while Zayn is knocked to the floor. The double Superfly Splashes get two and the Usos are stunned. Zayn breaks up the super 1D though and Owens superplexes Jimmy, allowing the tag to Zayn for the Helluva Kick to Jey. Another Helluva Kick to Jey, a Stunner to Jimmy and a third Helluva Kick to Jey FINALLY give us new champions at 24:07.

Rating: B+. This was all about the emotion, as Owens and Zayn had such a long story to not only win the titles, but they headlined Wrestlemania (two in a row for Owens) to do so. That is one of those "who would have believed it" stories and my goodness the payoff was worth the wait. If nothing else, the fact that neither of them had won a Tag Team Title in WWE until now is almost hard to fathom. The match itself was rather good too and they nailed the finish as it had to be Zayn pinning Jey, but even the Young Bucks would tell them to tone down the superkicks here. Heck of a main event though.

A big celebration and the highlight package take us out for the night.

Overall Rating: A-. There were eight matches on here (one of which was the impromptu celebrity match) and five of them were very good to excellent. That is getting into all time territory and if the other two matches (Cena/Theory and the six woman tag) could have held up even a bit more, it's one of the best shows ever. For now, I'll more than go with what they gave us, including an excellent Ripley vs. Charlotte match.

The biggest thing here though was how grand everything felt. From the stadium to the set to the crowd to the action, it felt like the biggest show in the world and that is what sets Wrestlemania apart. There is nothing like it in wrestling and

this one blew a bunch of its predecessors out of the water. I liked it a lot on the first viewing and the repeat might have been even better. Definitely worth a look if you haven't seen it before or even since the original airing.

Ratings Comparison

John Cena vs. Austin Theory

Original: C

Redo: C

Street Profits vs. Alpha Academy vs. Ricochet/Braun Strowman vs. Viking Raiders

Original: B

Redo: B

Logan Paul vs. Seth Rollins

Original: B+

Redo: B+

Damage CTRL vs. Becky Lynch/Trish Stratus/Lita

Original: C-

Redo: C-

Rey Mysterio vs. Dominik Mysterio

Original: A-

Redo: B

Rhea Ripley vs. Charlotte

Original: B+

Redo: A

Pat McAfee vs. Miz

Original: C

Redo: C

Usos vs. Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn

Original: A-

Redo: B+

Overall Rating

Original: B+

Redo: A-

Pretty close all around but it's better than a B+ overall.

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Wrestlemania XXIV (2023 Edition): That Felt Like Wrestlemania

Wrestlemania XXIV

Date: March 30, 2008

Location: Citrus Bowl, Orlando, Florida

Attendance: 74,365

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Jonathan Coachman, Joey Styles, Tazz

This show has had a pretty strong build as the card has been all but set for a few weeks now. The bigger matches include Big Show vs. Floyd Mayweather Jr. and Edge defending the Smackdown World Title against the Undertaker, plus the Raw World Title triple threat match as Randy Orton defends against John Cena and HHH. Throw in Shawn Michaels trying to end Ric Flair's career and that's a heck of a card. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Battle Royal

Elijah Burke, The Miz, Chuck Palumbo, Snitsky, Deuce, Tommy Dreamer, Shannon Moore, Jamie Noble, Kofi Kingston, Festus, Cody Rhodes, Lance Cade, Hardcore Holly, Jesse, Stevie Richards, Trevor Murdoch, The Brian Kendrick, The Great Khali, Jimmy Wang Yang, Domino, Mark Henry, Val Venis, Kane, Jim Duggan

The winner gets an ECW Title match later in the show. The bell rings so Festus snaps, allowing him to toss out Deuce and Domino rather quickly. Khali tosses Duggan and Burke gets rid of Richards, only to get eliminated by Kane. Miz, Yang, Moore and Jesse go out in a hurry, with Venis going out somewhere in there.

Murdoch, Festus, Kendrick and Cage go as well as the ring clears out VERY fast. Henry throws Kingston on top of the pile, followed by Noble (who tries to walk on the eliminated bodies but gets knocked down), Rhodes and Palumbo. A bunch of people get rid of Khali, Dreamer and Holly, leaving us with Henry, Kane and Snitsky. Kane gets rid of Snitsky, slips away from Henry and kicks him out for the win/title shot.

Rating: D. This is one of those "let's get everyone on the DVD" matches and they didn't bother wasting time with anything else. Kane winning is a fine way to go as he is pretty easily

the biggest name in the match. There is almost no reason to not put the title on him later in the night and at least they didn't waste time announcing the title match in advance, as Chavo Guerrero vs. Kane is hardly some huge showdown.

John Legend sings the America the Beautiful.

The opening video talks about how important it is to be here, as well how much has changed in a year. It's not do much a sequel to last year, as much as it is the grand culmination of a rather eventful year. Cool video, as WWE nails these most of the time.

John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Finlay

Belfast Brawl (street fight) and kind of a weird choice for an opener. JBL gets the limo entrance and we look at a quick recap of JBL attacking Hornswoggle (Finlay's son) as Vince McMahon's mercenary. As you might expect, Hornswoggle is back as well. They start the fight on the floor with JBL getting the better of things before the bell. Finlay reverses a whip into the steps and they're back inside for the bell.

That means it's time to go outside for some weapons, with JBL grabbing a trashcan for a heck of a shot to Finlay's head. The steps are brought in but JBL gets backdropped off of them for a crash. JBL hammers him back down and grabs the shillelagh but Hornswoggle gets in a kendo stick shot for the save. Finlay shillelaghs JBL down and the fans are rather pleased, with Finlay pulling out a table to make them even happier.

With the table up in the corner, a heck of a clothesline drops JBL again but he goes outside and slaps Hornswoggle. Finlay goes nuts and unloads on JBL, who manages to grab a trashcan lid. The suicide dive (oh dear) is lidded out of the air and JBL even kicks Hornswoggle down. Back in and a trashcan shot to the head puts JBL down for a change, setting up the spear through the table. Finlay grabs the steps but JBL knocks out his knee, sending Finlay face first into them. The Clothesline

From JBL finishes Finlay off.

Rating: B-. It wasn't a classic but they beat each other up rather well and started the show off pretty well. It's a bit weird to see JBL win as the villain comes out on top, but at the same time he's a much bigger star than Finlay. Even from fighting underneath, Finlay beating JBL would have been a big upset. It might have been the better result though, but at least it was a solid opener.

Kim Kardashian is the guest host and talks about the Money In The Bank ladder match. Mr. Kennedy interrupts to say he'll win again this year to become the first ever back to back winner. Kardashian laughs at him repeating his name.

John Morrison vs. Carlito vs. Shelton Benjamin vs. CM Punk vs. Mr. Kennedy vs. Chris Jericho vs. MVP

Money In The Bank. Everyone but MVP bails to the floor to go for a ladder to start, leaving MVP to steal one of the ladder that slides in. Some shots to the face put various other people down but here is Jericho with the big ladder. That means a ladder off (?) with MVP being knocked outside, leaving Morrison to pick up a ladder and moonsault down with it onto the pile (there's a highlight reel moment).

Back in and Jericho cuts off Kennedy's climb but catapults him into the ladder in a bit of a mistake. Kennedy can't get the briefcase so Morrison jumps onto the ladder for the slugout. Benjamin sets up his own ladder and joins the two of them, setting up a sunset bomb into a Tower Of Doom (geez) off the ladders. Carlito breaks up Benjamin's climb and hits him with the GTS. MVP comes in to knock some people down but misses a running boot in the corner.

It's Carlito getting pulled down this time so Benjamin Dragon Whips him down. Benjamin goes up until Carlito and Kennedy shove his ladder over...sending him through a bridged ladder at ringside. Kennedy, Carlito and Jericho go up but MVP shoves

the ladder over, only to be taken out by Morrison as the carnage continues. Jericho gets the Walls on Morrison on top of the ladder (geez that looks painful/scary) until he has to stop Kennedy.

Hold on though as Carlito and Punk springboard onto the ladders, setting up the big crashes, including Carlito's super Backstabber to Jericho. That leaves MVP all alone so he goes up but Matt Hardy (in gear) runs in to make the save and reignite their feud. A super Twist of Fate brings MVP off the ladder and Matt runs off through the crowd, leaving Jericho to wedge two ladders together, making kind of a big V (Daddy not included).

Morrison goes up and gets knocked down just as fast, including a crotching on top. Jericho's climb is cut off by an apple to the face but Kennedy shoves Carlito into a ladder in the corner. Punk makes the save but gets Codebreakered into a ladder to leave everyone down. That lets Jericho go up until Punk starts the slugout. Punk gets smart by tying Jericho's leg in the ladder and gets the briefcase for the win.

Rating: B. Yeah these matches can be interchangeable but dang they are a lot of fun. This was another spotfest and Punk winning the briefcase is about as big of an endorsement as he could have gotten here. I'd still like to see one or two fewer people in there but Benjamin getting taken out softened things a bit. Heck of a fun match and that's all it needed to be.

We see the video from last night's Hall Of Fame induction ceremony.

Here is the Class Of 2008 (dang that music is still great):

Brisco Brothers (how Jack wasn't in already is beyond me)

Gordon Solie (you can't forget that voice)

Rocky Johnson (complete with a shuffle)

Peter Maivia (I hear he's a family man)

Eddie Graham (had to be inducted in Florida)

Mae Young (again, how was she not in before)

Ric Flair (who thankfully isn't here to tell us about how great he is)

Snoop Dogg is having a great time here so far and he has found someone he sees eye to eye with, from movies to food to cars to everything. That would be Festus but Santino Marella comes in to threaten Snoop...who whips out a bell to send Festus after Santino. Todd Grisham asks where the bell came from so here is Mick Foley, complete with Mr...would it be Snoopo?

Batista vs. Umaga

Smackdown vs. Raw so Theodore Long and William Regal are here. Batista powers him into the corner to start and a shoulder sends Umaga outside for a breather. Back in and a spinwheel kick drops Batista for a change, followed by a splash to the back for two. The nerve hold goes on, which seems a bit early for this one. With that broken up, a powerslam from Umaga sets up...another nerve hold. The Samoan drop gives Umaga two but the Samoan Spike is blocked. Umaga misses a charge into the post, gets spinebusted, and the Batista Bomb (with Batista falling backwards) finishes him off.

Rating: D. Oh this was bad, as it was Batista laying around a lot and then doing his two big finishers. They had built this up as a big match and Batista barely did anything for most of the match. While Umaga had fallen a long way, he was able to do more than this. Normally I would complain about their lack of time, but I don't want to imagine how much worse this would have been if it had gone longer. Pretty awful match.

We look at the tale of the tape for Big Show vs. Floyd Mayweather Jr.

We look at Kane becoming the new #1 contender to the ECW World Title on the pre-show.

ECW World Title: Chavo Guerrero vs. Kane

Chavo is defending and loses the title to a chokeslam in a record eleven seconds. That's how it should have gone as there was no reason to believe Chavo would be a threat to Kane.

Here's the Carlito/Maria ad for the show you're already watching. Weird.

Raven Symmone is very loud and introduces a bunch of Make-A-Wish kids. That's always cool. The kids, not Symmone.

We recap Ric Flair vs. Shawn Michaels. Flair is still on his winning streak, as he has to retire whenever he loses his next match, so now he wants to face one of the best ever in Shawn, or he doesn't want to be here anymore. Shawn thinks he has to put Flair down, but Flair isn't about to go down without a fight. This include an AMAZING tribute video to Flair, set to Leave The Memories Alone. I'm not a Flair fan but dang this worked well.

Flair says his game plan is to be the man. WOO!

Ric Flair vs. Shawn Michaels

Flair retires if he loses. Shawn takes him down to start and teases a strut but Flair is back up with a hammerlock. That's reversed into one from Shawn and they get up for a standoff, complete with WOO. Flair takes him into the corner and brings up the Old Yeller line, earning a shot to the face from Shawn (busting a lip in the process).

A quick slugout goes to Shawn so he goes up top, only to get slammed off. Flair goes up and hits the high crossbody for two in a Starrcade 83 callback. Back up and Shawn sends him outside again, only to have an Asai moonsault hit the edge of the announcers' table (as in not Flair) to do some serious damage to his ribs. The count is beaten so Flair goes right after the ribs, including a suplex for two.

Shawn knocks him outside again though and hits the moonsault

off the top for another knockdown. Back in and they chop it out again until Michaels hits the flying forearm into the nipup. The top rope elbow hits Flair but Shawn can't bring himself to fire the superkick. You don't do that to Flair, who grabs the Figure Four, which is turned over without much trouble. Shawn sunset flips him for two more but Flair is right back to the leg, as is his bread and butter.

There's the Figure Four again and this time it stays on a lot longer. The rope is grabbed to get Shawn out of trouble and he nails Sweet Chin Music out of nowhere. A very delayed cover gets two so Shawn loads it up again, only to have Flair fall down. Shawn's attempt at picking him up earns himself the required low blow for two but Flair can't follow up either.

Instead, Shawn pulls him into that inverted Figure Four of his, sending Flair to the rope for a change. They chop it out from their knees until Shawn hits another Sweet Chin Music. Shawn won't cover so he goes to the corner, with Flair getting back up. Flair says bring it, so Shawn says "I'm Sorry, I Love You" and superkicks him for the pin.

Rating: B. This is a weird one to rate as it is a farewell for Flair, but not exactly a classic. At the end of the day, Flair has been able to wrestle a completely acceptable match for a long time now but there is a big gap between that and hanging in there on this level. It didn't exactly feel like a classic and the drama was limited, but what we got was certainly good. The problem is that when you think of Flair vs. Michaels on the stage of Wrestlemania, you expect a bit more than "good". That being said, Flair gets to out with a solid match on the grand stage against a legend. What more could you reasonably ask for?

Shawn immediately leaves so Flair can have the big moment. Flair kisses and hugs his family and makes the long walk up the aisle before blowing one last kiss to the crowd. Yeah it's an emotional moment, as like him or not, Flair is still a

legend and one of the last links to the glory days of the 70s/80s.

Edge talks about being at Wrestlemania VI and seeing Hulk Hogan lose in the main event. It was ok though, because it has come full circle and now he is here again. See, everyone can count on the Undertaker at Wrestlemania but tonight, he takes everything away from them, just like Hogan losing took it away from him. That makes sense.

Fireworks go off.

Maria/Ashley vs. Beth Phoenix/Melina

This is the Playboy Bunnymania match, meaning a lumberjill match with Snoop Dogg as the Master of Ceremonies. Naturally Snoop comes to the ring in what looks like a Mercedes golf cart, with most of the women following him. Santino Marella is here with the villains. Ashley drives Beth into the corner to start so Maria can come in. Melina gets sent to the floor for a quick beating from the lumberjills, setting up Maria's Bronco Buster back inside.

Ashley comes back in and gets caught in the wrong corner. A trip to the floor goes badly for Ashley as well and Beth grabs the bearhug. With that broken up, Beth electric chairs Melina into a moonsault onto Ashley (not bad) for a near fall...and the lights go out. As in an actual lights issue, not an Undertaker cameo.

We get a spotlight as Maria (now legal) hits a crossbody for two on Beth. The Glam Slam is countered into a bulldog for two and Beth's spear hits Melina by mistake. Ashley dives off the apron onto a bunch of lumberjills, leaving Maria to hit a top rope bulldog for two on Beth, with Santino making the save. Jerry Lawler gets up and decks Santino but Beth hits the fisherman's buster to pin Maria.

Rating: D. Well ok then. This is one of those matches that was

never going to be very good in the first place, but then it got a bit more time than I was expecting (even at five minutes) and the villains win. The match was supposed to be little more than goofy fun and you can't have Maria get in a rollup for the pin? Just a rather weird choice and I'm not sure why they went this way.

Post match Snoop Dogg drops Santino and kisses Maria.

We recap the Raw World Title match, with Randy Orton defending against John Cena and HHH. Cena and HHH are both coming back from major injuries, with Orton having risen to the top during their absences. Now both of them are back to win the title at Wrestlemania, but Orton doesn't quite see it that way.

Raw World Title: Randy Orton vs. John Cena vs. HHH

Orton is defending and Cena's big entrance this year is a marching band playing him to the ring (that's rather cool). The bell rings and Orton hits HHH with the bell before brawling with Cena. HHH gets back up and takes Orton outside to beat him over the announcers' table, followed by the sleeper back inside. Cena picks both of them up but HHH slips out and kicks him low. Orton is back up as well and knocks HHH down to stomp away at both of them.

Cena catches Orton up top but a HHH distraction lets Orton reverse into a sunset flip for two. Another hard shot puts HHH down and Orton hits a double hanging DDT. The RKO to Cena is countered with a shove, leaving Orton to land on HHH. The Throwback hits Orton and the top rope Fameasser takes him down again. Back up and HHH goes after Orton's knee and slowly stomps away. Cena's distraction lets the RKO drop HHH but Cena pulls Orton into the STFU.

Orton is about to tap so HHH grabs his hand and pulls it to the rope in a smart move. A whip into the steps takes Cena down and HHH grabs the Indian Deathlock on Orton, because of course he has to do that. Cena sends HHH over the ropes and

grabs the STFU on Orton again, only to have HHH make another save. HHH grabs a crossface on Cena but gets broken up, meaning it's time for the slugout. The FU and Pedigree are both broken up so HHH hits a face/spinebuster. Another shot to the knee takes Orton down and there's the Pedigree to Cena...but Orton Punts HHH and pins Cena to retain the title.

Rating: B-. It's an interesting way to go to have Orton retain, but if you want him to have him feel like a bigger main event, giving him the win at Wrestlemania makes as much sense as anything else. Orton can drop the title to one of them alter if he has to but for now, he gets the win that he needs. The match wasn't exactly great though and felt like almost any other big time triple threat, with one person being out for most of it so the others could fight. Then Orton stole the pin, which is far too common of a finishing sequence in something like this. Not awful, but I'd call it pretty disappointing.

We recap Big Show vs. Floyd Mayweather Jr., in a package that is cut from Peacock, likely for music. Mayweather broke Show's jaw with a punch at No Way Out so Show is trying to take him out. This is billed as the Best Fighter In The World vs. the Largest Athlete In The World and is as McMahon Freak Show style as you can get.

Big Show vs. Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Pinfall, submission or knockout only. Mayweather comes out with his entourage and makes money rain from the sky for a festive entrance. The bell rings and Mayweather, in boxing gloves runs away to start before hitting a few shots to the ribs. Hold on though as Mayweather needs water (from a chalice, because of course) so Show beats up part of the entourage.

Back in and Mayweather goes for the right hand to the face but Show pulls it out of the air. The big stomp on the hand misses

so Show grabs him by the throat on the corner. A few right hands don't do much to Show so Mayweather grabs the required sleeper. That's broken up so Show goes after the hand again and stands on Mayweather, which has the entourage shouting that how THAT IS AGAINST THE RULES!

The big chop in the corner drops Mayweather again and there's a side slam to crush him. Show gets creative by dropping a leg on the arm and that's enough for the entourage to pull Mayweather out. That goes as well as you might expect and they go back to the ring, with Mayweather being mostly done.

The entourage tries to come in and gets dropped, with a chair shot having no effect on Show. Mayweather gets the chair and drops Show (after a guy twice his size couldn't even stagger him), setting up a low blow. Some chair shots to the head stagger Show again so Mayweather grabs brass knuckles from the entourage to knock Show silly for the knockout win.

Rating: C+. This was a total mess and incredibly entertaining throughout. There is something fun about seeing Mayweather get beaten up, even if he won in the end. It made sense to not bother trying to do anything else here than having a goofy match and that is what they pulled off. Good enough stuff here, even if it was mainly Show doing slow motion stuff and Mayweather's entourage getting beaten up. Still though, they knew what they had here and it worked.

The attendance, as announced by Kim Kardashian: 74,635.

We recap Edge vs. Undertaker for Edge's Smackdown World Title. The focus is on both of them being undefeated at Wrestlemania, with Edge seemingly being more obsessed with giving Undertaker his first loss rather than retaining the title. Undertaker just wants to hurt Edge, as tends to be the case to anyone who has hurt him before. Like Edge, who cost him the World Title and then stole it for himself.

Smackdown World Title: Edge vs. Undertaker

Edge is defending and gets his neck snapped across the top rope to start. Undertaker hammers away back inside and starts cranking on the arm, as is his custom. Old School is broken up and Edge sends him to the apron for a shoulder into the barricade. A running neckbreaker snaps Undertaker's neck across the top to even things up a bit, meaning Edge gets in some Wrestlemania worthy posing.

Undertaker finally gets back in, where he is caught with a missile dropkick. Edge takes too long to go up again and gets shoved to the floor, setting up the required Taker Dive. Back in and Undertaker's banged up back means the Last Ride doesn't work so Edge takes him back outside. There's a drop onto the barricade, followed by the half crab to keep Undertaker in trouble back inside.

Make that a double leg crank until Undertaker kicks him away for a needed breather. Undertaker wins the slugout and Snake Eyes connects, only to have Edge hit a dropkick to block the big boot (that's smart). The chokeslam is countered into the Edgecution for two and frustration is setting in. Back up and the chokeslam gives Undertaker two but Old School is countered again (as the theme of Edge knowing everything that is coming continues).

A superplex brings Undertaker back down but for some reason, Edge decides to punch away in the corner. The pose lets Undertaker try the Last Ride, which is countered into a neckbreaker to give Edge two. Another Last Ride attempt connects for two but the Tombstone is countered into the Edge-O-Matic. Undertaker is up again and Old School connects, only to have a big boot hit the referee (you knew that was coming).

Edge goes low and grabs a camera, which knocks Undertaker silly for...well nothing actually as the referee falls to the floor. For reasons of delusions of grandeur, Edge tries his own Tombstone, which is reversed into the real thing, with another referee running down to count the near fall. Cue the

Edgeheads to get beaten up, allowing Edge to hit a spear for two. Another spear is pulled into Undertaker's choke and Edge has to tap away the title.

Rating: A-. That felt like a Wrestlemania main event as you had Edge countering every single time but ultimately not being good enough to beat Undertaker, even with the interference. Edge had his game plan but got a bit too cocky a few times, allowing Undertaker to catch up fast. Undertaker getting his title back and vanquishing Edge in the process is a great way to close the show, and the fact that it came in an excellent match makes it even better.

Undertaker celebrates and pyro rains.

The big highlight video wraps us up.

Overall Rating: B-. This was a show where there is a lot of good stuff but the bad drags it down, with only the main event really standing out as great. Other than that you have Money In The Bank doing its usual stuff, Flair's farewell as a special moment, a freak show match with Show vs. Mayweather and a just pretty good Raw World Title match. That really isn't enough to carry a nearly four hour Wrestlemania, leaving it as a good enough show, but far from a classic or all time show.

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Wrestlemania XXXIX Night Two: Feelings.....Whoa, Feelings

Wrestlemania XXXIX Night Two

Date: April 2, 2023

Location: SoFi Stadium, Inglewood, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

America The Beautiful: Jimmie Allen

It's time to finish the story with the second half of Wrestlemania. That should mean a lot of good things but egads they have a lot to live up to after last night's great show. The card is stacked again but the big deal is going to be the main event, with Roman Reigns defending the World Title against Cody Rhodes. When a match inside the Cell feels secondary, it's quite the lineup. Let's get to it.

[Here is Night One if you need a recap.](#)

Jimmie Allen sings America the Beautiful.

Kevin Hart handles the intro again, talking about how in Hollywood, if the first one is a success, a bigger sequel is following. That's what we're getting tonight, and the card is stacked.

Miz and Snoop Dogg are in the ring to welcome us to the show, with Miz recapping Night One and giving us a nondescript preview of tonight.

Omos vs. Brock Lesnar

Omos throws him around to start and then does it again for a bonus. A bearhug goes on and Lesnar isn't sure what to do here. Lesnar fights out and tries to get something going but gets bearhugged again. A chokeslam gives Omos two but he misses a charge in the corner. Lesnar manages the first German suplex (the crowd approves) and the second one looks better. The F5 is loaded up but Brock's back gives out. The chokebomb is blocked as well though and the F5 finishes Omos at 4:51.

Rating: C+. They kept this short and that is what they should have done. Omos is not going to be able to be out there very long before things get bad so get your stuff in, pop the crowd, head out. That's all it needed to be and they made it work here, with a match that might not have been good, but it was fun, which is the best they could hope to do.

Raquel Rodriguez/Liv Morgan vs. Natalya/Shotzi vs. Chelsea Green/Sonya Deville vs. Ronda Rousey/Shayna Baszler

Morgan gets knocked around to start and Natalya adds a basement dropkick. A running hurricanrana gets Morgan out of trouble and it's Rodriguez coming in for a splash in the corner. Green comes in with a missile dropkick but Shotzi comes in for a hip attack. Baszler breaks up the cover and throws her outside to Rousey but a triple powerbomb plants Baszler inside.

Everything breaks down and Green is left to pose...until Rodriguez is waiting on her. Instead of fighting, Green would rather dive onto the pile, followed by Rodriguez powerbombing Morgan onto everyone. Back in and Green and Deville take Rodriguez down but Natalya helps Shotzi with a double standing Sliced Bread. The Hart Attack hits Deville for two with Green making the save. Natalya's double Sharpshooter is broken up and Liv hits Shotzi with the Oblivion but Baszler (who has taken a boot off and seems to be limping) breaks it up. Rousey

gets the armbar to finish Shotzi at 8:18.

Rating: C. This was a thing that happened and there isn't much else to say about it. Rousey and Baszler were barely factors (likely due to injuries), leaving the other six to run through their stuff. As usual, the teams have no history together so you more or less just have random things going on until the finish. It was energetic, but this didn't look like a good idea when it was announced and it didn't get much better.

Bobby Lashley, with the Andre the Giant battle royal trophy, is here.

UpUpDownDown previews the Intercontinental Title match.

We recap the Intercontinental Title match. Gunther is the unstoppable champion while Sheamus and McIntyre want to fight each other and to be the champion. Big fight is on.

Intercontinental Title: Sheamus vs. Drew McIntyre vs. Gunther

Gunther is defending and Titus O'Neil is on commentary. Gunther tells the other two to fight before they all start hitting each other rather hard. McIntyre is knocked to the floor and Gunther gets to chop Sheamus hard against the ropes. The Boston crab goes on Sheamus but McIntyre comes in for the chop off. McIntyre actually knocks Gunther into the corner but Sheamus is back up to fight both of them.

With nothing else working, Gunther gets tied in the ropes for the forearms from McIntyre and the chops from Sheamus until they fall to the floor. Back in and Sheamus hits 29 forearms to McIntyre's chest (McIntyre fell down on #30) as the fans are VERY pleased here. Gunther blasts Sheamus with a clothesline for two but McIntyre hits a top rope shot to Gunther's head. Sheamus gets knocked to the floor and Gunther's powerbomb gets two on McIntyre.

Gunther goes up but Sheamus catches him with the super White

Noise and the Celtic Cross gets two. McIntyre is back in to break up the Texas Cloverleaf so Sheamus knees both of them down. The Brogue Kick hits Gunther for two with McIntyre breaking up the pin. McIntyre isn't done and hits the big flip dive to drop Sheamus (Cole: "Titus, I guarantee you have never done that!" Titus: "AND I NEVER WILL!").

Back in and the Claymore is countered with the Brogue Kick for two (as the fans keep losing their minds on everything). The second Claymore drops Sheamus for two more and everyone is down. With Gunther on the floor, Sheamus and McIntyre slug it out until Sheamus hits another Brogue but Gunther comes off the top with a splash to break it up. Gunther powerbombs Sheamus onto McIntyre and then powerbombs McIntyre to retain at 16:36.

Rating: A-. I love a match where they don't even pretend it is going to be anything but what it is. This was advertised as three big, strong men beating the fire out of each other until one of them couldn't get up anymore. That's exactly what we got here and it was some awesome violence as Gunther racks up another huge title defense. Great stuff here and the next match is in trouble.

We recap Bianca Belair vs. Asuka for the Raw Women's Title. Belair has held the title for a year and become a big star but now Asuka is a lot scarier and wants the title back.

Raw Women's Title: Asuka vs. Bianca Belair

Belair is defending. Asuka comes to the ring with a bunch of women in masks while Belair has a bunch of children from a charity who dance on stage before she comes out (cool). Belair strikes away to start and takes her into the corner, where Asuka shoves her away without much trouble. Some spinning strikes have Belair in trouble but she can get away before the Asuka Lock can go on.

They go out to the floor where Belair manages a sitout

powerbomb (yeowch) but misses a charge into the post back inside. The ankle lock keeps Belair in trouble and a middle rope dropkick gives Asuka two. Belair gets in a shot on the apron and manages an apron superplex for two more. They trade rollups for two each until Asuka's Codebreaker is blocked.

Belair hits a running Blockbuster into a handspring moonsault for two. Asuka knees her in the face but Belair is back with a running shoulder for another double knockdown. They go into the corner and a Codebreaker gives Asuka two. Belair manages a kind of Glam Slam onto the turnbuckle for two and ducks the mist. The KOD is countered into a cross armbreaker but Belair muscles her up into the KOD to retain at 15:55.

Rating: B. This was another good one, which is all the more impressive after such a lame buildup. The match itself being a success wasn't really in question as they are too talented to have a bad one, but it went a bit better than I was expecting. Belair is running out of challengers though and outside of Charlotte, they're going to have to try someone new sooner than later.

Miz and Snoop Dogg announce tonight's attendance: 81,395 and a two night total of 161,892. With that out of the way, Miz is mad at Snoop Dogg for screwing up last night and getting him into a match. Snoop isn't having this and brings out someone else. Cue SHANE MCMAHON (he looks blown up from the ramp) and let's do this.

Shane McMahon vs. Miz

Shane punches away...and then gets hurt on a leapfrog. The referee checks on him and says this is a no go, so Snoop decks Miz and hits a People's Elbow for the win at 2:12. If that was a work, it's one of the funniest things I've seen in years. If that was real, (minus Shane's injury), it's one of the funniest things I've seen in years.

We recap Edge vs. Finn Balor inside the Cell. They've been

feuding for months since Balor kicked Edge out of Judgment Day, so now it's time for the final showdown. We get all of the evil/demonic stuff for the build and the Demon is all but guaranteed.

We get a quick trailer for the Devil's Exorcist movie.

Russell Crowe, the star of said movie, talks about how demons can cause problems.

Edge vs. Finn Balor

In the Cell (No longer red!) and Edge comes out to the Brood entrance (featuring a Slayer song instead of the Brood theme) with a Titantron that says BROOD EDGE (that's up there with "the JBL persona has never entered the Royal Rumble"). Balor is indeed the Demon again and the entrance loses a bit without the darkness everywhere. Edge punches him in the face to start for no effect so it's time for the weapons to come in.

We get some colored chairs and kendo sticks, with the latter going over Balor's back. Balor is tied up in the Cell with the sticks as Edge grabs a table. That takes too long as Balor gets out and sends him into the steps. Back in and Edge hits a quick Impaler but Balor takes him back outside. The beating stays on, including a shotgun dropkick to send Edge through the table against the Cell wall.

With nothing else working, Edge manages a Killswitch and then throws a ladder into Balor's face. We now pause for the trainers to come in and check on a cut (with the camera staying away from Balor). Edge uses the time to grab all of the weapons he can find until Balor is ready to go again. Balor sends him into the ladder and hits a quick Coup de Grace for two so they climb a ladder in the corner.

A super Impaler brings Edge back down so let's grab another table. Balor knocks him onto it though and unloads with the chair, only to climb the Cell onto a well placed platform. The

Coup de Grace only hits table so Edge hits a spear for two. With that not working, Edge unloads with chair shots and hits the Conchairto for the pin at 18:08.

Rating: B. This was a weird one, with the match just kind of ending rather than building up to something. It felt like they were trying to have Edge be pushed so far and reach a level that Balor can't touch but it just felt like the match stopped out of nowhere. It's also weird to see Edge win if he's probably leaving again, but that might mean giving Balor a big win and that doesn't happen anymore. The match was violent (because it was a TLC match inside the Cell, as tends to be the case far too often anymore) but it hit a wall and didn't get any further.

We recap the Hall of Fame ceremony.

The Hall of Fame Class is presented:

Stacy Keibler (yeah sure)

Andy Kaufman (about as perfect of a celebrity as you can get)

Great Muta (absolutely)

Tim White (great choice for the Warrior Award)

Rey Mysterio (perfect choice for a headliner and well deserved)

We recap Cody Rhodes vs. Roman Reigns. Roman has been World Champion for over two and a half years and seems unstoppable. Rhodes is here to win the title for his father Dusty and complete his story. This is the most serious threat Reigns has faced in a long, long time and he could be in trouble.

Undisputed WWE Universal Title: Cody Rhodes vs. Roman Reigns

Rhodes is challenging and hugs his family before handing his weightlifting belt to...AEW's Negative One (unmasked) in the front row. Paul Heyman and Solo Sikoa are here with Reigns and we're ready to go after some rather long entrances (including Reigns demanding acknowledgment). They fight over a lockup to

start with Cody getting a headlock (so Heyman can roll his eyes at the CODY chants). A right hand sends Reigns outside for some advice from Heyman ("You're the relevant one. Now SMASH HIM!").

Back in and Reigns hits some corner clotheslines but walks into a dropkick so Cody can start working on the arm. The Disaster Kick is countered into the powerbomb for two and Reigns snaps off some suplexes. They head outside and Reigns knocks him up the ramp so the fight can keep going. Cody gets the better of things as they fight back to ringside but Sikoa gets in a chair to the ribs. The referee didn't see it so Reigns hits the apron dropkick to take over again.

Cody fights up again but Sikoa grabs a boot, allowing Reigns to nail a clothesline. They go to the floor again and it's time to load up the announcers' table. Reigns' powerbomb is countered into a backdrop and Reigns is in trouble again. Back in and Cody hammers away with the Cody Cutter getting two. Reigns heads outside again and there's the suicide dive. On the way back in, Sikoa gets in a belt shot to the back, which the referee hears for an ejection.

Reigns grabs the belt but gets superkicked into Cross Rhodes for a close two. Back up and Reigns catches Cody from behind, setting up a release Rock Bottom for two more. The Superman Punch is countered into the Pedigree for two more and Cody is looking stunned. Reigns' spear is countered into a sunset flip for two and the Figure Four goes on (complete with WOO).

Reigns makes the ropes so Cody goes to the apron (Cody: "Fight Cody.") and they slug it out. Cody misses something off the top and gets speared down for two. Reigns is so frustrated that he unloads with forearms and grabs the guillotine. The arm comes up so Reigns grabs the bodyscissors to really cinch it in. Cody manages to slip his head out and hammers away but the referee gets bumped. Reigns hits a Superman Punch and Cody hits a clothesline to put them both down.

It's Cody up first and the Cross Rhodes is loaded up but cue the Usos for the double superkick. The 1D drops Cody again but here are Kevin Owens and Sami Zayn (through the crowd for some reason) for the save. The Stunner into the Helluva Kick drops Reigns and the teams fight off, leaving Cody to get a very delayed two. They slug it out until Reigns misses the Superman Punch and Cody hits the Flip Flop and Fly into the Bionic Elbow. Cross Rhodes and Cross Rhodes connect but Heyman offers a distraction so Sikoa can come back in with the Samoan Spike. Reigns hits the spear to retain at 34:37.

Rating: B+. It felt like a major showdown here and the reactions from the crowd were great. The back and forth action was outstanding and I wasn't sure how it was going until the ending. At the same time though...wow that is a heck of a way to go, as Reigns doesn't really have anyone left to face. It felt like a Wrestlemania main event and a huge fight, but egads that is a bold choice for the future. Cody was protected, but it's going to take some time to come back from this kind of a loss.

A lot of posing and pyro but no Dusty Finish wraps us up.

The highlight package takes us out.

Overall Rating: B+. It's another great show and I think I liked the action a bit more overall here as even the weakest match on the show was completely fine. The ending was the big surprise and I have no idea where they go from here. There was a lot of fun to be found here and the Intercontinental Title match was great, followed by some other very good stuff. What matters is that it felt like a Wrestlemania and that is one of the hardest things to pull off in all of wrestling. Heck of a show again and absolutely worth seeing.

Overall Overall Rating: A. It's an all timer over two nights and what makes it even more impressive is that they made the already huge card actually work. That extra pressure makes it

even harder but they did it here, with some of the best stuff WWE has done in years. The worst thing over two nights is a watchable six woman tag and the best stuff is some all time quality.

The bigger thing here is the emotion though, as it felt like the biggest show they have presented in years. This show was built up for a long time and then they made the whole thing work. I was invested in so much of this and it gave off the feelings that you're supposed to get with something this big. Check out all of this, as both nights flew by in a great way.

Results

Brock Lesnar b. Omos – F5

Ronda Rousey/Shayna Baszler b. Chelsea Green/Sonya Deville, Liv Morgan/Raquel Rodriguez and Natalya/Shotzi – Armbar to Shotzi

Gunther b. Drew McIntyre and Sheamus – Powerbomb to McIntyre

Bianca Belair b. Asuka – KOD

Snoop Dogg b. Miz – People's Elbow

Edge b. Finn Balor – Conchairto

Roman Reigns b. Cody Rhodes – Spear

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Wrestlemania XXXIX Night One: They're Telling Stories

Wrestlemania XXXIX Night One

Date: April 1, 2023

Location: SoFi Stadium, Inglewood, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves

America The Beautiful: Becky G

Dang it feels good to get to write that again. It's the first night of the show and the card is pretty stacked. This time around, we have the Usos defending the Tag Team Titles against Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens, John Cena challenging Austin Theory for the US Title and Charlotte defending the Smackdown Women's Title against Rhea Ripley. Let's get to it.

Becky G. sings America The Beautiful.

The opening video features a voiceover talking about how only one man could host this cold open and that is....Kevin Hart! He talks about how this is the greatest show in the world and it is taking over Tinseltown. Everyone is going Hollywood tonight, which sends us to some of the Wrestlemania trailers.

The set is designed like the Academy Awards stage and looks GREAT. WWE knows their production stuff and they're showing it again here.

Here is Wrestlemania Host the Miz with...Snoop Dogg. Miz compares their resumes and says they're the same person. He declares them both to be champions, with Snoop saying the real champions are the ones in the audience. Miz runs down the card and says it's time to go, so let's do that.

US Title: Austin Theory vs. John Cena

Cena is challenging but first we look at Cena's record setting Make-A-Wish numbers. There are a bunch of Make-A-Wish kids on stage as Cena makes his entrance (with a new GI Joe themed shirt). Cena runs him over with the shoulder to start and powers Theory into the corner without much trouble. Back up and Theory seems to bite Cena's ear, allowing him to take Cena down for a change.

Cena gets in a few right hands but Theory is back with a rolling Blockbuster for two. A quick STF is broken for Cena and Theory stomps him down as the cockiness continues. Theory slips out of the AA and knocks him into the corner again but Cena comes out swinging. The sleeper cuts him off but Cena powers out and initiates the finishing sequence. The referee gets bumped so there is no one to see Theory tapping out to the STF. A low blow sets up A Town Down to retain the title at 11:18.

Rating: C. This was in the very basic mode but what matters is Theory pinned him in the middle of the ring. That is the only way this should have ended and the cheating doesn't matter. Cena can lose every match he's in for the rest of time and still be an all time legend, so the loss means nothing. You can tell Cena has lost a few steps, but he was perfectly fine out there all things considered. It should be a big one for Theory though and that's what matters.

Braun Strowman/Ricochet vs. Street Profits vs. Viking Raiders vs. Alpha Academy

Titus O'Neil is on commentary and Valhalla is here with the Raiders. Gable ankle locks Ricochet rather quickly to start before Otis comes in to run Ricochet over. Everything breaks down though (Titus approves) and the Vikings clear the ring. Ragnarok plants Ford but the Raiders stop to pose, allowing Strowman to run them both over.

Gable is back in and...somehow he manages rolling Chaos Theory to Strowman. The fans REALLY like that one but Dawkins breaks that up. Ivar drops Dawkins and goes up, only to miss a moonsault. Strowman comes off the top with a splash of his own to Ivar (dang) but a bunch of people make a save.

We get a Tower Of Doom, but this time it's Otis and Ivar holding up Dawkins and Gable with Ford above THEM, allowing Ricochet to hit a high crossbody to break it up. Now the Strowman Express gets going until Dawkins shoulders him down for a big surprise. Ricochet springboard shooting stars down onto Erik and Dawkins but the shooting star inside hits knees. Ford adds the frog splash to pin Ricochet at 8:23.

Rating: B. This feels like eight people were told to go out there and have fun with one big spot after another. You got to see the talented stars showing off (almost showcasing themselves) and it worked well. There were no stakes and it doesn't mean anything for now, but this was a lot of fun.

The UpUpDownDown team previews Seth Rollins vs. Logan Paul via video games.

We recap Paul vs. Rollins. Basically Rollins isn't happy that Paul is getting this much attention without actually being a wrestler. Paul eliminating him from the Royal Rumble and costing him the Elimination Chamber didn't help either. Since then, Paul has knocked Rollins out a few times (the steel plate in the hand helps), setting up the match.

Logan Paul vs. Seth Rollins

Paul comes down on a zipline (and yes he'd mic'd up) and is accompanied by a dancing bottle of his Prime energy drink. On the other hand, Rollins has a conductor from the Los Angeles Symphony (or something close to it) conducting the crowd as they sing his entrance song. Eh point to Rollins. They circle each other a bit to start with Rollins taking him down without much effort. The Stomp misses but Paul pops back up and sends

him outside.

Back in and Rollins sends him into the corner, where Paul snaps Rollins' throat across the top. The Maverick (Buckshot) Lariat connects and Paul stomps away at the ribs. A standing moonsault gives Paul two and it's off to an Octopus hold on the mat. With that broken up, Paul jumps from the mat to the top but misses the moonsault, allowing Rollins to throw him over the top.

Three straight suicide dives connect for Rollins and he stomps Paul's hand on the steps. Back in and they trade rollups for two each before Paul hits the loaded right hand...but he can't cover because of the stomp. The very delayed cover gets two so Rollins loads up another stomp, only to have the Prime mascot pull Rollins out of the way. It's....KSI, Paul's business partner (and a YouTuber/boxer), which allows Paul to knock him onto the announcers' table.

The big splash is loaded up but Paul hits KSI as Rollins pulls him in the way. Back in and the Pedigree gets two but the stomp is countered into a fireman's carry gutbuster (or GTS according to commentary). A frog splash gives Paul two so he tries to go Coast To Coast, only to get superkicked out of the air. The Stomp gives Rollins the pin at 16:11.

Rating: B+. As has been the case, Paul continues to be scary good at this stuff. There were some great near falls in there and Rollins was the right choice to help walk Paul through the match on such a huge stage. Sometimes it's ok to just let the guys go out there and hit one high spot after another, though they even had the hand injury and Rollins going for the Stomp over and over to tie it together. Paul as a special attraction still works well and it will be great to have him around for the future if he wants to.

We recap Trish Stratus/Lita/Becky Lynch vs. Damage Ctrl. Becky needed some help with the numbers game so Lita showed up for

the save. Then they won the titles and Trish Stratus showed up to help as well. Now it's a six woman tag, with Trish slightly miffed at the suggestion that she is Becky's backup.

Trish Stratus/Lita/Becky Lynch vs. Damage Ctrl

Trish and company get a comic book themed video and come to the ring in black and white with CGI rain. Well that's different. The brawl is on before the bell and Becky can't get the Manhandle Slam. An assisted double neckbreaker drops Becky and Sky hits a running boot in the corner. Becky kicks her way out of trouble but Kai breaks up the tag attempt. The second attempt works though and it's Lita coming back in to clean house (while looking rather slow and hesitant at times).

A cheap shot puts Damage Ctrl back in, uh, control and the beating is on. Lita suplexes her way out of trouble though and it's Trish coming in to fire off on Kai in the corner. A neckbreaker gets two on Kai but the Stratusphere is broken up. Instead, Trish sends Kai down onto the other two in a big crash. Back in and Becky's top rope legdrop sets up the legdrop but the Disarm-Her is broken up.

The Manhandle Slam is broken up and Sky gets in a cheap shot, allowing Bayley to hit the Rose Plant for two, with Lita making the save. Everything breaks down and Stratus hits Kai with Stratusfaction. Becky rolls Bayley up for two and everyone but Sky falls to the floor. Sky moonsaults onto the pile and everyone heads back inside for a slugout. Lita hits the Twist of Fate and Trish hits the Chick Kick, setting up the Litasault. Becky adds a super Manhandle Slam to finish Bayley at 14:37.

Rating: C-. This could have been a lot worse. It wasn't exactly great but this was more about having Trish and Lita on the big stage again. They are still legends and of course they're nowhere near what they once were. Neither of them has wrestled a regular schedule and they're shells of their former

selves. The big thing though is they're still some of the biggest names ever in women's wrestling and wrestling legends period. Becky got the pin so it isn't like one of the legends beat a modern star. It wasn't very good, but it was also far from some disaster.

We recap Rey Mysterio vs. Dominik Mysterio. Rey has tried to be the best father he can to Dominik but wasn't always there because of wrestling. Eventually Dominik got sick of living in his shadow and joined Judgment Day, who he says is his real family. Then Dominik got arrested for invading Rey's house on Christmas Eve, earning him a jail sentence of...a few hours. Then earlier this month, Dominik insulted his mom and that was enough to get Rey to FINALLY agree to fight him.

We see Dominik being taken from his cell and being put in the back of a police van...which is then backed into the arena. Dominik, still cuffed and in a lucha mask (looks like Rey's from Halloween Havoc 1997), is taken to the ring by armed guards. Because of course he does.

Rey Mysterio vs. Dominik Mysterio

Rey on the other hand comes to the ring in a low rider, as driven by Snoop Dogg, complete with the VIVA LA RAZA start to Eddie Guerrero's theme. After Rey greets Bad Bunny (on Spanish commentary), we're ready to go. Dominik shoves him around a bit and poses but Rey sends him outside to even things up a bit. Back in and Rey snaps off a running hurricanrana before sending him into the corner for a spanking with a belt.

Dominik rolls outside to throw a drink at his sister Aliyah, drawing her over the barricade. Rey isn't having that and helps get her back over, allowing Dominik to get in a cheap shot. A Falcon Arrow drops Rey again and Dominik goes outside to yell at his mom. She slaps the heck out of him (oh yeah there's a reaction) and Rey makes the save, while throwing in a kiss. Dominik gets in a cheap shot back inside as the rest

of Judgment Day is here.

Dominik loads up a powerbomb and sends Rey backwards, face first into the buckle (that looked NASTY). Three Amigos are broken up and Rey fights back up but the Judgment Day distraction lets Dominik get in a cheap shot. Cue the LWO (took them long enough) to go after Judgment Day but the distraction lets Dominik hit a 619 into the frog splash for two. With nothing else working, Dominik whips out a chain but Bad Bunny takes it away. The 619 and a frog splash connect to finish Dominik at 14:28.

Rating: A-. This was GREAT and I had a blast with the whole thing. The main thing here is the fans were into it the whole way and carried it so much further. The key to the whole story is that it is something you can relate to. How many parents have had a kid who thought way too much of themselves and ran their mouth to the point where you wanted to (emphasis on those words) smack them? The action was awesome and I wasn't sure who was winning until the ending, so well done all around. Quite likely Rey's best Wrestlemania match ever too.

Backlash ad.

We recap Charlotte vs. Rhea Ripley. They have met before at Wrestlemania and Charlotte beat her, which has Charlotte believing that she can do it again. This is a different Ripley though and she is ready to prove that she is the best.

Smackdown Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Rhea Ripley

Ripley is challenging. They hit shoulders to start with Charlotte going down, allowing Rhea to tell her to suck it. Back in and they slug it out, with Ripley knocking her into the corner. Ripley bodyscissors her, followed by a German suplex to cut off the comeback. Charlotte gets in a shot and goes after the knee, as is her custom, but Ripley isn't having that. Riptide is blocked and they trade big boots to leave them both down.

They slug it out until Charlotte snaps off a fall away slam and goes up top. That takes too long though and Ripley catches her with a release German superplex for two, leaving Ripley stunned. Charlotte goes to the knee again and Natural Selection gets two. They go outside with Charlotte missing a charge into the steps, allowing Ripley to hit a belly to back faceplant for two.

Charlotte rolls some German suplexes but Ripley gets one of her own (with Charlotte almost landing on her head). Charlotte is fine enough to hit a big boot and Ripley is sent outside, where the moonsault connects. The Figure Four is blocked and Charlotte almost runs into the referee, leaving Ripley to hit Riptide for...two (yeah you knew Charlotte would get to kick out of that at least once).

The stunned Ripley gets small packaged for two and the Prism Trap goes on instead. Charlotte makes the ropes and the referee is almost bumped, meaning a spear can give Charlotte two. They slug it out until Charlotte hits another big boot into the Figure Four but Ripley is right next to the ropes. Ripley goes to the apron and they both go up, with Charlotte being dropped face first onto the post. Charlotte is out and the super Riptide gives Ripley the pin and the title at 23:32.

Rating: B+. This started slowly but once they got into the big falls they had me wondering where it was going. While it would have been hard to imagine Ripley losing, there is always that chance with Charlotte in there. What matters is Ripley gets the win that matters and becomes the new star. Charlotte needs to go away from Ripley for a bit (it feels like she hasn't been on Raw in a long time) and let her be the big deal. For now they, I'll take Ripley getting the title that she has earned and getting it by pinning Charlotte at Wrestlemania.

Austin Theory brags about his win and asks if you believe in Theory now.

Miz and Snoop Dogg announce the attendance: 80,497. Dogg says the only thing better than those numbers would be if Miz had a match. As it turns out, Miz has put out an open challenge for a Wrestlemania match (even on MySpace) and no one answered. Cue Pat McAfee to say he didn't see an open challenge but he's in his Wrestlemania tank top.

Miz says he would love to but just because he is the Wrestlemania host doesn't mean he can make matches. That's good for a TINY BALLS chant and McAfee asks who can make a match. Snoop decides he can and the match is on. Miz yells at him but Snoop says "I don't do this. I rap." And we're off.

Miz vs. Pat McAfee

Miz is in street clothes and walks into a spinebuster. McAfee puts him on top and backflips off, allowing Miz to dive into a superkick to send him outside. Miz yells at San Francisco 49 (and wrestling fanatic) George Kittle, who jumps the barricade and clotheslines him, allowing McAfee to flip dive off the pose to take Miz out. Back in and the punt finishes Miz at 3:31.

Rating: C. It was quick, it was funny, they had the celebrity stuff includes and Miz losing is hardly anything new. This was a nice way to give the fans something easy between the Women's Title match and the main event. Throw in Graves losing his mind over all things McAfee and this was a quick side trip that didn't hurt anything.

Wrestlemania XL is in Philadelphia.

We recap Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn vs. the Usos. Zayn was at his lowest point just after Wrestlemania last year and needed help. He tried to join the Bloodline and finally got them to say yes, though Jey Uso didn't trust him. During his attempts to get the team to trust him, Zayn attacked on/off again friend Kevin Owens. Then Roman Reigns changed his mind on Zayn, who turned on Reigns to leave the Bloodline. Jey, who

had finally embraced him, walked away as Zayn tried to get Owens on his side. Zayn finally begged enough and got Owens to join him again to fight the Bloodline, including the title match here.

Lil Uzi Vert (a rapper from Philadelphia) performs before the Usos' entrance and then poses with them.

Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn

Owens and Zayn are challenging and it's pretty amazing that they have made it here. Zayn starts with Jimmy but let's make it Jey instead. Jey takes over and sends Zayn outside for a clothesline and posting. Back in and the champs start taking turns on Zayn, who gets to stagger around like he's barely hanging in there as he does so well. Zayn finally gets away though and hands it off to Owens who comes in and goes nuts.

A Swanton off the top to the floor takes out both Usos and a bullfrog splash gets two back inside. The Swanton only hits Jimmy's knees though and Jey adds the Superfly Splash for two. Owens pops back up though and kicks Jimmy into the corner for the Cannonball. Zayn brainbusters Jey into the apron and the Swanton gives Owens two on Jimmy in a near fall. Zayn's Superfly Splash gets two on Jimmy and there's the Blue Thunder Bomb but Jey comes in off a blue tag.

A jumping superkick hits Zayn for two and even more superkicks get two more, with Owens making the save. Double basement superkicks get two more on Zayn, who won't give up. Owens breaks up the 1D though and sends Jimmy into the announcers' table over and over. Jey makes the save though and it's a double chokeslam to send Owens through the table. Now the 1D connects on Zayn for two and Jey is livid.

Jey unloads on Zayn in the corner and Zayn of course looks like he's dead on his feet (or incredibly drunk), with a Helluva Kick from Jey making it worse. The trash talk is on but Zayn hits an exploder into the corner. Owens is back up

for the tag and it's a Helluva Kick to Jimmy and a Stunner to Jey...for two in a heck of a false finish (they got me there). They both stand up (Owens: "LET'S END IT"!) and it's time for the barrage of superkicks.

Owens gets dropped and Zayn is kicked on the floor, setting up the double Superfly Splash for the very near fall. More superkicks drop Owens but he reverses a superplex into the swinging superplex, allowing the big tag to Zayn. The Helluva Kick in the corner hits Jey and, after Zayn whispers something to him, another Helluva Kick knocks him silly. Owens Stuns Jimmy and the third Helluva Kick finishes Jey and ends the title reign at 24:07.

Rating: A-. This was all about the moment and it was a smash hit. They had set this story up months ago and now they got the chance to pay the whole thing off. The last few minutes were the kind of situation where you could feel the big moment coming but they made you wait for it anyway. It was a heck of a match (cut out the superkick spamming and it's even better) and the best way to close out a pretty awesome night.

Owens and Zayn celebrate in an emotional moment.

The big highlight package wraps us up.

Overall Rating: B+. This was a heck of a show with only a little bit that wasn't very good or better. Wrestling aside though, this was built around one important thing: stories that had been set up months in advance and are being paid off. Theory vs. Cena, Rey vs. Dominik, Ripley vs. Charlotte and the main event were all set up a good while ago and we got to see how it went to get us to the payoffs. That made them all the sweeter and it was a much more emotional moment as a result.

As for the show itself, you had a series of strong matches, with Rey vs. Dominik, the Women's Title and the main event all being awesome, plus a very good showcase match. The six woman tag wasn't very good and the opener was just ok, but the rest

of the show worked well. I had a blast with this show and it felt special, which is the point of Wrestlemania. Nicely done and Night Two has its work cut out.

Results

Austin Theory b. John Cena – A Town Down

Street Profits b. Braun Strowman/Ricochet, Alpha Academy and Viking Raiders – Frog splash to Ricochet

Seth Rollins b. Logan Paul – Stomp

Trish Stratus/Lita/Becky Lynch b. Damage Ctrl – Super Manhandle Slam to Bayley

Rey Mysterio b. Dominik Mysterio – Frog splash

Rhea Ripley b. Charlotte – Super Riptide

Pat McAfee b. Miz – Punt

Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens b. Usos – Helluva Kick to Jey

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Monday Night Raw – March 17,

2008: All Of Them

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 17, 2008

Location: Cajundome, Lafayette, Louisiana

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're still under special guest control as HHH is running things this week. This time around, that means John Cena and Randy Orton are going to be facing the entire roster, which probably isn't going to go as described. At least it sounds different though and I'll take that over more of the same. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

We open with Chris Jericho's Highlight Reel, with special guest...the Intercontinental Title! Last week he won the title for the record setting eighth time, breaking the record of seven, which he held too of course. As for a human guest, here is Big Show, who also set a record for most times seeing a clip of someone punching him in the face. We look at Show tossing Floyd Mayweather Jr. over the top and onto his entourage last week, which Show calls a real highlight.

Show talks about how everyone knows Jericho is better in the ring than Mayweather and outweighs him by 50lbs, but Jericho couldn't last two minutes with Show either. Jericho doesn't think much of that but Show calls him WWE's version of Mayweather: small, loud and in over his head. The challenge is thrown out for a title match tonight and, after an insult to his singing, Jericho is in. They kept this quick and that's a good thing for a simple announcement.

Earlier today, Vince McMahon listed off a bunch of his accomplishments, but thinks ending Ric Flair's career tonight

would be even better. That's why tonight, it's Vince vs. Flair.

CM Punk vs. Carlito

Carlito starts fast and sends him outside before hitting a basement dropkick in the corner. A kick to the head gives Carlito two and we hit the double arm crank. Punk fights up and tries the springboard clothesline, which is dropkicked out of the air instead. The GTS attempt is countered as well and Carlito gets two off a neckbreaker. Back up and Punk manages a kick to the face before catching a springboarding Carlito in the GTS for the pin.

Rating: C. This was, again, short and to the point, with Carlito taking over to start so Punk could make the comeback and win. That's all you need to do at times as they gave the fans a popular star getting a victory. Perfectly watchable match that got two of the Money In The Bank stars in the ring before Wrestlemania.

Snoop Dogg is ready for Bunnymania and can't bring himself to follow Santino Marella's cue cards about how Maria shouldn't have posed for Playboy.

Paul London and Brian Kendrick are in the ring when William Regal introduces their opponent, who will represent Raw at Wrestlemania.

Umaga vs. Brian Kendrick/Paul London

Umaga doesn't waste time to start and hits a double Samoan drop. London gets hit with the running hip attack in the corner but Kendrick rolls away before another can hit. The Samoan Spike finishes London fast as Kendrick seemed to walk off. I'd like to believe London and Kendrick have more, but they've been treated as nothing for months now.

William Regal and HHH are in the back, with HHH saying Randy

Orton and John Cena can't walk out on each other tonight. If Cena walks out, he's out of the Wrestlemania match and if Orton walks out, he's stripped of the title and Cena and HHH can fight over it instead. Regal asks why HHH doesn't just make himself champion, but HHH say she wants to earn it.

We look at HHH getting hurt last year and missing Wrestlemania as a result. Now he's back and wants the title again.

We look at Vince McMahon receiving a star on the Hollywood Walk Of Fame. And yes, he thanked himself.

Shawn Michaels is in the back and Ric Flair wants to know why he's here. Flair thinks Shawn is here because he doesn't want Vince McMahon to end Flair's career tonight. He doesn't want Shawn getting involved tonight because Vince has NO CHANCE of winning.

We see Finlay's promo from Smackdown, where he says there are no words for what he is going to do to JBL at Wrestlemania.

Here is JBL for a match, but first he says that Finlay isn't here due to Hornswoggle dealing with complications. Since it's St. Patrick's Day, he is going to do something for the Irish (who made him rich) so he has found the second toughest Irishman in WWE: Colin Delaney!

John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Colin Delaney

Some clotheslines from JBL set up the Clothesline From JBL for the fast pin.

Post match JBL says at Wrestlemania, Irish need not apply.

We recap Vince McMahon ordering that Ric Flair has to retire the next time he loses a match.

Ric Flair vs. Vince McMahon

Street fight so they go straight to the floor with Flair

hammering away. They take it into the crowd but Vince manages to get it back to ringside for a posting. There's a monitor to Flair's head and yes, he is bleeding believe it or not. Vince hammers away and takes him back inside for two as JR is getting more than a bit over the top.

A trashcan, kendo stick and chair shot get two each, with Shawn Michaels coming in to pull the referee out at two. Shawn is immediately ejected (Why?) so Vince grabs a table. That takes too long though and Flair gets in some low blows. Vince is put on the table instead and a top rope splash through it gives Flair the win to stay alive.

Rating: C-. This felt like the same kind of street fight you usually see in WWE and of course Flair wasn't going to lose less than two weeks away from Wrestlemania. A lot of this whole story has been about Flair getting to do something one more time and that includes beating up Vince. The match wasn't any good, but Vince getting beaten up is always worth a glance.

Video on John Cena returning from injury early for the chance to go to Wrestlemania.

Jared from Subway is here and he gives Jerry Lawler a sandwich and drink.

Maria/Candice Michelle vs. Jillian Hall/Victoria

Before the match, Maria's Playboy cover is unveiled over the Titantron. Cue Santino Marella to join commentary as Jillian jumps Maria to start. An enziguri gets Maria out of trouble and Candice comes in to kick Victoria down for two. Jillian makes a save but misses a 450, allowing Candice to hit an Unprettier for the fast pin.

Post match Santino goes on a rant, throws the drink in Lawler's face and steals the sandwich. Ok then.

Floyd Mayweather Jr. is ready for Wrestlemania.

Intercontinental Title: Chris Jericho vs. Big Show

Jericho is defending and gets kicked in the face to start. Jericho manages a few shots of his own and knocks Show over the top, only to get swung into the barricade. Back in and Show misses a Vader Bomb, allowing Jericho to dropkick him down. The Lionsault gets two so Jericho uses the belt for the fast DQ.

Rating: D+. What was that? They barely did anything before the lame ending, which was about the only way they had out of something like this. That being said, was there no one else they could put out there against Show besides the new Intercontinental Champion? That's kind of an out there way of thinking and I really don't get why Jericho was necessary here.

Post match Big Show knocks Jericho silly with one right hand. Ah, that's what that was.

Kim Kardashian reads a script about Wrestlemania and ignores Big Dick Johnson.

Video on Randy Orton.

John Cena comes in to see Randy Orton, with the latter saying they should take a dive against the roster. Cena says no chance so Orton tries threatening him. That just makes Cena bring up their history and we get the big RAH RAH speech. HHH pops in to say it's elimination rules, but he's pulling for them.

John Cena/Randy Orton vs. Raw Roster

This is billed as 17-2, though outside of Umaga and JBL, it's a bunch of lower level guys. Cena hammers on Snitsky to start but gets clotheslined down as the Roster takes up two full sides of the apron. Santino Marella comes in and misses a

headbutt, allowing Cena to roll him up for a quick elimination. Trevor Murdoch is in next for a neckbreaker but Cena grabs a very fast STFU for the tap.

Cena brings Orton in for the RKO to get rid of Lance Cade even faster but Umaga runs both of them over as we take a break. Back with JBL taking Orton down for two as Super Crazy was eliminated at some point during the commercial. Cody Rhodes comes in to stomp away and it's off to Paul Burchill for more of the same. The Roster takes turns beating on Orton, with one coming in for a few stomps and then leaving.

Orton grabs the backbreaker on Robbie McCallister, allowing Cena to come in with the top rope Fameasser for the pin. The FU to DH Smith and the RKO to Burchill and Val Venis get rid of three in a row, followed by Cena tossing Rhodes into another RKO for another elimination. That's enough for the rest of the Roster to come in and jump Cena and Orton for the DQ.

Rating: C. This wasn't so much a match as much as it was an extended segment, with Cena and Orton either getting stomped or hitting a finisher. Other than Umaga and JBL, the Roster was comprised of a bunch of jobbers and Cena/Orton mowed down a good chunk of them without much trouble. It's really nice to see something different than the same stuff we always see around and this was certainly unique compared to the usual stuff we see.

Post match Orton gets beaten down until Cena makes the save with a chair. Umaga takes Cena down but JBL grabs his own chair and hits Umaga by mistake, meaning the chase is on. With everyone else gone, HHH comes out to Pedigree both of them and hold up the title to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. Much like Smackdown, Raw has reached the point where Wrestlemania is set and there isn't much left to do before we get there. That makes for some rather different

shows, including this one, which didn't add much to the card other than firming up what is already there. Wrestlemania is looking good though and we should be in for a pretty solid show if they deliver on what has been set up.

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