

CWA Championship Wrestling – January 15, 1983: Andy Kaufman's Shadow Over Memphis

CWA Championship Wrestling

Date: January 15, 1983

Location: WMC-TV Studios, Memphis, Tennessee

Commentators: Lance Russell, Dave Brown

This is the last episode in this series of CWA shows as I'm sure people are getting tired of this old Memphis stuff. At the end of the day, this is before the idea of supershow as we know them, so it's hard to have anything to build to other than house shows. Lawler has lost the world title back to Bockwinkel in a rematch which may or may not be mentioned tonight. Let's get to it.

Shepherders vs. Ken Raper/Ira Reese

Reese is back for more punishment this week I guess. Reese starts with Luke and the afroed Reese is in trouble quickly. Off to Boyd who snap mares Reese down a few times to keep him in trouble. Back to Luke who holds Reese for some more punishment from Boyd. This is total dominance so far. Reese finally reverses an Irish whip and tags Raper but Luke beats him down almost immediately. The move we would call the Battering Ram puts Raper down for no cover but the double knee drop ends the massacre with Williams getting the pin.

Rating: D. This was barely long enough to rate. Apparently the Shepherders are tag champions even though you never see them holding belts and this was only called a non-title match at the very end. They were being kept strong here which is the right kind of idea. Russell teases a match with the Fabs soon which would be good.

Speaking of the Fabs, here's what might be the same video on them from last week.

House show ad, including a mention of SEVEN title matches on the card. These "titles" would never be seen before or mentioned again after these special shows. Jimmy Hart runs his mouth about Koko Ware who has left the First Family. There's \$5000 involved in a tag match at the upcoming show.

Here's the First Family (with Koko, as we experience the wonders of house show ads being taped in advance and a big production miscue) with the new Mid-America Champion in the form of Bobby Eaton. Hart (the manager of the team) praises Sabu (not that Sabu) for winning his match and says the only cloud over the Family is Sweet Brown Sugar not beating Terry Taylor. Sugar blames Eaton and a brawl is teased. Hart slaps Sugar and we have a face turn. Sugar leaves and we're told we'll see how Hart cost Lawler the world title.

We get a clip from the world title rematch starting with Bockwinkel and Lawler both down. A man in a mask who is allegedly Jimmy Hart distracted the referee when Bockwinkel was covered, causing Lawler to go after him. Lawler got rolled up and a handful of tights gave Bockwinkel the title back. Post match the mask is pulled off and it's....ANDY KAUFMAN. Back in the arena Hart brags about getting Kaufman back to Memphis to get revenge.

We get ANOTHER clip, this time of Hart and Kaufman, bragging about getting the belt off Lawler. Kaufman offers \$5000 to anyone that can put Lawler in the hospital. That would be the five grand mentioned in the house show ad earlier. That's quite the long segment for 1983 as this ran almost ten minutes in total, not counting the house show ad which could be considered another part of it.

Terry Taylor/Bill Dundee vs. Sweet Brown Sugar/Bobby Eaton

Dundee and Sugar get us going with Dundee hitting a quick hiptoss for

one. Taylor comes in and the good guys mess with the referee a bit so they can cheat. That's a nice touch. Eaton vs. Taylor now as I'm assuming this is 2/3 falls as well. Eaton gets confused again and punched in the face by Taylor. There are some shenanigans going on here from Dundee and Taylor and I kind of like them.

Back to Dundee who dropkicks Eaton into the corner for two. Sugar comes in for a monkey flip and backdrop for one. Taylor comes back in with a sunset flip for two on Sugar which is broken up by Eaton. Bobby comes in and takes over before tagging right back out to Sugar. You know, because he's done SO well in this match so far. Eaton comes back in almost immediately so a disaster can't happen. A big powerslam puts Taylor down but the delayed cover only gets two.

A knee drop keeps Taylor down and it's back to Sugar. Sugar's chinlock doesn't last long and Jimmy wants to fight someone. That goes nowhere and Sugar goes up, but his missile dropkick misses Taylor and takes out Eaton, allowing Taylor to get a quick pin to give his team the first fall. Apparently this was just a one fall match. Ok then.

Rating: C+. This was one of the better matches I've seen since I've been watching this era in Memphis. The only issue is that we knew the split was coming before the match due to the production gaffe from earlier. Sugar would turn soon after this and I'm sure this is the final straw for Jimmy. The match was good and fast paced though and we had an actual story to it. Good stuff.

Eaton and Hart almost get in a fight with Sugar post match. Jimmy goes on a rant and says Sugar has one minute to get out here and apologize or he's out of the Family. Post break Hart wants Sugar to come out here and shine his shoes. Sugar doesn't come out so Hart storms off.

Sabu vs. Jerry Lawler

Boy that would mean a much different match today. Before the match Lawler

says he's sick of Hart and all of his cronies and all their bounties and challenges and all that stuff. If Hart wants to, bring all his boys out here right now and let's do it. Hart and Sabu come out and it's on fast. Lawler throws Sabu into the ring and the beating begins. They head to the floor and Lawler destroys him with a chair. I don't think this was anything resembling a match. Actually the referee is letting it keep going. Eaton runs in and gets a right hand from Jerry.

Lawler beats the tar out of Eaton too before heading back in to beat on Sabu some more. Back to Eaton as Jerry has to keep going between the two of them. He doesn't seem to have many friends here does he? Sabu finally gets in a shot on Lawler with his collar and the beating is on. Some people finally come in to help but get beaten down as well.

Eddie Marlin finally comes out to get the First Family off Jerry. Sabu shoves Marlin and THE PROMOTER PUNCHES HIM BACK! This would be a big deal here as Marlin rarely got involved at all. The Family beats him down and Brown Sugar finally comes in and cements his face turn by beating up the Family. Lawler gets back up and the ring is cleared. Sugar says he isn't shining anyone's shoes and he's out of the Family.

Bobby Fulton/King Cobra vs. Jesse Barr/Adrian Street

This is what they call an expiration of time match, which is basically an iron man match with the time limit of however much time they can give it. Remember all those matches I call 2/3 falls? Forget that because this is what they mean. This is the first time they've bothered to explain the rules so it's a bit confusing. Street and Fulton get us going and Street prances a bit. That gets followed up by jumping on Fulton and kissing him. It was a different time you see.

Street takes him to the mat and works over the leg in a bridging leg lock. Off to Barr who hooks a bearhug, meaning Fulton has gotten hugs and kisses in this match. A headknocker gets Fulton out of it and he pounds on Barr's head a bit. Off to Cobra who speeds things up a bit before

bringing Fulton back in. I guess Cobra got tired after being in there a full fifteen seconds. Cornette trips Fulton and Barr drops a knee for the pin.

After some house show ads featuring Lawler and Sugar saying they're coming for what's left of the First Family, we're told there's no time for a second fall so the Cornette Dynasty wins.

Rating: C-. Not much here but the time limit thing gets a little annoying after awhile. I get why they do it because they're saying you don't know how much wrestling you'll get so you better stay tuned, but it's still hard to get used to. Either way, this was decent with Cornette screwing over a future Fantastic feeling just right.

The announcers recap the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This was good like last week's show but in a different way. This time we set up/continued a big angle as Lawler was feuding with Hart and his boys. That feud went on for a LONG time. Also notice how they keep Kaufman's shadow over Memphis with the bounty being offered without having to have him there. The production gaffe hurt things here as it spoiled the second half of the show, but it was still entertaining which is a good sign.

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CWA Championship Wrestling –

January 8, 1983: Lawler Makes This Show Much Better

CWA Championship Wrestling

Date: January 8, 1983

Location: WMC-TV Studios, Memphis, Tennessee

Commentators: Lance Russell, Dave Brown

Back to Memphis for another week of a not very interesting show. Hopefully this week is better as in theory Jerry Lawler will be back. He's coming up on a rematch with Bockwinkel where I'm sure there won't be any shenanigans afoot. I have up through the middle of February with this show so it should be interesting to see where they go. Let's get to it.

Shepherders vs. Ira Reese/Bobby Fulton

Fulton would become one of the Fantastics, my favorite NWA team from the 80s. This is Luke and Jonathan Boyd instead of Butch. Boyd pounds Fulton into the corner to start and it's quickly off to Luke. It's odd to see them in red. Fulton tries to speed things up but he gets double teamed almost immediately. A knee drop gets two for Luke and it's back to Boyd. Fulto hits a shoulder and finally makes the tag to Reese. The Herders run him over too and it's time for Reese to suffer some too. Williams knees him in the back and they double team choke Reese a bit. A double knee drop gets the pin on Reese.

Rating: D. This was a long squash and not a very entertaining one. It's amazing to see how different the Shepherders were as compared to the Bushwackers as these guys were brutal and violent. When these guys (and by that I mean the Butch version) had good opponents, they could have some great bloody wars.

Video on the Fabulous Ones who were flamboyant but very popular. They

were good too.

Video on the Lawler vs. Bockwinkel title match with Jerry finally getting the belt. There are clips of other matches they had in here too.

Jerry Lawler vs. The Invader

Lawler throws him around a few times and then takes out the leg for a basic hold on it. Lawler counters a headlock into a knee crusher and it's clear he doesn't really have to try here. Invader fires off some right hands in the corner but Lawler easily slugs him down and the middle rope punch gets the pin.

Rating: D. Nothing to see here but Lawler was fun back in his day. I know all most people remember to day are his weak jokes, but Lawler knew how to work a crowd like few others could. I could guarantee that if you put him in a feud today when he's in his early 60s, you could have him be a heel or a face and he would have the crowd eating out of the palm of his hand in about a week. It's an art form and Lawler is a master of it.

Lawler, who still doesn't have the belt with him as it was held up, looks at a clip from the title changing match. The referee was bumped and Bockwinkel's feet were in the ropes during the pin but the referee didn't see it. At least there's a legit issue with the title change. Bockwinkel goes on a rant about how he didn't lose and promises that this won't stand. After a break, Lawler doesn't respond to what we just saw. Ok then.

Apocalypse vs. Bill Dundee

Dundee immediately knocks Apocalypse to the floor for a consultation with the still young looking Jim Cornette. Back in and Apocalypse takes him down and splashes Dundee for two. After some more power stuff, Apocalypse goes up and hits a middle rope headbutt to a standing Dundee for two.

Dundee comes out of the corner with a cross body which draws in Cornette and his boys for the DQ.

The Cornette Dynasty destroys Dundeed post match. Jacques Rougeau and Terry Taylor finally make the save.

Video on Terry Taylor. This goes on for like three minutes.

Bobby Eaton/Sweet Brown Sugar vs. Jacques Rougeau/Terry Taylor

Rougeau is the Mid-America Champion and Taylor is the Southern Champion. Sugar is more famous as Koko B. Ware. Taylor and Eaton get going to start and things speed up, which you know is going to be at least moderately awesome. Off to Sugar who is immediately taken over in a headlock by Taylor. Rougeau comes in and things slow down a bit. We get a test of strength resulting in Rougeau monkey flipping Sugar down.

Back to Eaton who is taken down by another headlock as things slow down even more. Eaton has black hair here which is an odd look on him. The heels finally wake up and cheat to take over on Jacques. Taylor gets a quick hot tag and cleans house, only to get poked in the eye and taken down. Sugar works on his back and then the arm as the fans are WILD about Taylor. Back to Eaton with a knee drop for no cover.

Sugar comes in again and I think this is 2/3 falls. They're really bad about letting us know these things in advance. I get that it's a common thing of the era, but if you're someone like me who doesn't get to see this regularly, a little notification would help. Taylor finally gets away from Eaton and it's off to Rougeau for a quick middle rope dropkick on sugar, good for the first fall.

We start fall #2 with Sugar taking over on Rougeau. Back to Eaton as Jacques is in trouble early on. After some quick offense from Eaton, Sugar comes back in for a fast chinlock. Rougeau misses a cross body out

of the corner as Eaton ducks and gets two off of it. Jacques finally makes a comeback but doesn't tag for some reason. Eaton trips him up coming off the top, allowing Sugar to drop an elbow on him for two.

Rating: C. There's no time for a third fall so this is going to end in another draw. This wasn't bad and it was fast paced enough, but I'm not a big fan of Koko and I'm certainly no fan of Taylor. Still though, this was certainly interesting enough to keep my attention for the last fifteen minutes of the show. Not great but not bad so we'll go right in the middle.

Overall Rating: C+. I liked this show better than last week and a lot of that was due to the main event and Lawler. Last week's main event was a big mess but this one, while not the best in the world, was much more coherent and easier to follow. At the end of the day though, the important thing here though is Lawler. He's made to be the biggest thing on the show and when you don't see him there, it makes the show seem less important. He made it that much better.

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