

Smackdown – July 31, 2003: Brock Done Screwed Up

Smackdown

Date: July 31, 2003

Location: World Arena, Colorado Springs, Colorado

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

We're past the very good Vengeance and that means it's time to gear up for Summerslam. The big story is Kurt Angle regaining the Smackdown World Title when he pinned Brock Lesnar. Other than that we have the continuing saga of the McMahons, which hopefully is kept on a leash again this week. We need to get ready for Summerslam though so let's get to it.

We open with a stills package of Sunday's main event.

Opening sequence.

We look at Eddie Guerrero splitting with Tajiri, who gets a US Title shot tonight.

Here's Angle to open things up. After taking in some cheers, Angle talks about what it means to become WWE Champion for the fourth time. But really, was there any doubt? Kurt: "I'm Kurt freaking Angle! What did you expect???" This title means more to him than any other because of the injury but here he is! Tonight is a dream come true but here's Brock Lesnar with something to say.

Brock admits that Angle beat him but brings up Lesnar being there with him throughout his entire rehab. That's why Brock is out here to challenge Angle face to face and man to man for his one on one title rematch. Angle says there's a lot to consider and a lot of people deserve a shot. Angle: "So Brock, I just don't think that ok you're on.". Well that was an abrupt shift.

This brings out Vince McMahon though and he has some bad news for Brock. Earlier today, Angle came to his office and begged him not to give Lesnar a rematch. Vince likes that line of thinking so Lesnar

gets no shot. If Brock wants it, he can earn it down the line but tonight, Lesnar and Angle are facing a team of Vince's choosing. Somehow, this took fifteen minutes.

Summerslam ad featuring Brock Lesnar F5ing a shark. That always gives me a chuckle.

Shelton Benjamin vs. Rey Mysterio

Non-title again because Rey never defends the stupid thing. Rey takes him down to start without much trouble but an early 619 attempt doesn't work. Shelton sends Rey shoulder first into the post (underneath the bottom rope for a change) and Charlie Haas gets in a few shots to the bad arm. A shoulder breaker and a regular slam get two before it's off to a hammerlock.

Rey sends him shoulder first into the post as well though and things are a bit more even. Shelton's pop up...something is countered into a seated senton for a sweet reversal but Shelton takes him down by the arm again. Benjamin grabs a rather unique looking hold as it's kind of like a crossface chickenwing but with his legs instead of his arm to wrap up Rey's arm. Kidman and Haas get in a fight on the floor as the 619 connects. The West Coast Pop is broken up but Rey settles for a victory roll and the pin.

Rating: C+. Like this wasn't going to be good. I could go for Rey actually defending the Cruiserweight Title but if we keep getting solid outings like this, I can live with it a little bit more. Benjamin wrestling on the mat with more holds and submissions is a good idea for him, as long as he keeps up the athletic stuff as well.

We look back at Jamie Noble defeating Billy Gunn on Sunday, earning him a night with Torrie Wilson.

Jamie is at the hotel, in a cowboy hat and white boxers, getting everything ready. Torrie shows up (my goodness she spends a lot of time winding up in hotel rooms) so Jamie opens the briefcase of toys. This includes leopard print handcuffs, a paddle, something to tickle with, and a Lone Ranger mask. Torrie runs to the bathroom

before she's sick. I guess she's a Zorro fan.

Chris Benoit vs. Rhyno

Hang on a second though as Rhyno pops up on screen to say he's tired of being treated like a joke. He has a warm up match for Benoit and this man knows something about jokes.

Chris Benoit vs. Doink the Clown

It's Nick (Eugene) Dinsmore, who was basically a Benoit clone in OVW, down to using German suplexes and a Crossface for his finishers. Benoit gets tired of waiting on Doink to pull out the rubber chicken and runs him over. A hard clothesline (Benoit: "RHYNO!!!") takes Doink's head off (but the wig stays on) and a top rope belly to back superplex knocks Doink silly. The Swan Dive into the Crossface is good for the Benoit win.

Benoit takes his time letting go of the hold. Post match Benoit says he's ready for Rhyno, who says Benoit doesn't get what he wants.

Jamie is laying on the bed (with leopard print sheets of course) when Torrie comes out, still in her street clothes (I'm not sure what street someone would be on dressed like that). Nidia comes to the door though and says she's here to win Noble back with some, ahem, female prowess. She drops her fur coat to reveal some lingerie and dives on Jamie as Torrie can't help but watch.

Brock asks Angle if he talked to Vince earlier. As I try to figure out why Brock waited the better part of an hour to ask this, Angle says he did talk to Vince and says Vince should keep the major risk in mind. The rematch is still on but Angle has an idea for how Lesnar can get his rematch. It doesn't make much more sense when Angle says it either.

US Title: Eddie Guerrero vs. Tajiri

Eddie is defending and there's almost no way to hide the fact that he's the most popular act on the show. The hydraulics in the car don't work though...because Tajiri was hiding in the trunk and mists Eddie in the aisle. The brawl is on in a hurry but the trainer comes out to check on Eddie's eyes, drawing an EDDIE chant. Eddie: "I

CAN'T SEE!!!” Trainer, holding up three fingers: “How many fingers am I holding up?” Eddie, to the referee: “WILL YOU TELL HIM I CAN'T SEE THE THREE FINGERS HE'S HOLDING UP???” . That's enough for the referee, who says Eddie either wrestles or loses the title.

We're joined in progress after a break with Tajiri kicking away and kicking Eddie into the Tree of Woe. More kicks stagger Eddie until he pulls Tajiri face first into the buckle. Eddie gets into a rhythm and sends Tajiri outside for some shots to the back while trying not to make the fans cheer him even more. The slingshot hilo gives Eddie two and we're off to a chinlock.

Eddie takes too much time going up and gets kicked in the leg, setting up a heck of a top rope superplex. Tajiri is so banged up that Eddie is on his feet first, only to get monkey flipped out to the floor. A hard whip sends Eddie into the steps and Tajiri kicks him in the head for painful measure. Back in and Tajiri scores with the handspring elbow, followed by a tornado DDT for a very delayed two.

We hit the Three Amigos but Tajiri slips out of the third and grabs the Tarantula. With the hold broken, Eddie grabs the referee so he can kick Tajiri low. The referee yells a lot and accidentally gets misted for his efforts. A belt shot to the head drops Tajiri and Eddie pours water in the referee's eyes. The frog splash retains Eddie's title.

Rating: B. You kind of knew these two were going to have a good match with each other and I'm glad to see Tajiri getting some exposure like this. The ending might have been a bit messier than it needed to be but it's a very entertaining way to give Eddie his first title defense. I'm hoping Tajiri gets to do something else because he's had a very successful summer.

We get a Confidential video on Zach Gowen. He loved wrestling, then he got cancer and lost his leg, then he kept fighting, then he got into wrestling anyway. It's an amazing story but I think we've gotten the idea by now. This eats up over five minutes.

Zach Gowen vs. Shannon Moore

I do miss Out Of My Way as Gowen's theme song. Moore has Matt, whose favorite season is summer and who is twice the wrestler Zach Gowen is, in his corner. Shannon takes him down and hops around on one foot, earning himself a dropkick to the floor. Back in and Gowen's tornado DDT is countered into a suplex into the corner for a big crash. Matt offers a trip to cut off a comeback but Gowen hits a leg lariat anyway. A moonsault press gives Gowen two and he dropkicks Matt down, only to get rolled up for the pin.

Rating: C. Gowen is better than you would guess and could be more than just a novelty performer but he's only going to get so far with having one thing to talk about all the time. The match wasn't bad either but I'm not sure how many people Gowen can realistically fight as he's very small, ignoring the leg point. Enjoy it while it lasts though.

John Cena vs. Orlando Jordan

Before the match, Cena challenges Undertaker to a rematch next week and suggests various sexual contact between Undertaker and Jordan. Orlando punches him before the bell and gets dropped ribs first over the top. Some shots to the ribs slow Cena down but he grabs the ropes to avoid being rolled up. Cena shrugs off some right hands and hits the FU for the easy pin.

A rather disheveled but still clothed Torrie seems to have been drinking all night. Jamie and Nidia come out of the shower and are willing to allow Torrie to join them. Torrie downs another glass of champagne but there's a knock at the door. It's a rather angry Billy Gunn, who hugs Torrie...as the other two are at it again.

Brock comes in to see Vince and says he can beat the boss to earn a rematch with Angle. Vince will take the rematch under consideration but the match is on. Brock leaves and Vince makes a phone call.

Back at the hotel...all four of them are in bed together. That would be the third woman Torrie has had at least some form of a relationship with in less than a year.

Here's Sable to brag about winning and call Stephanie a pussycat.

She's the dominant female and we see a clip of Sunday's match, which Sable won thanks to A-Train. Sable: "Thanks Vince." She introduces Vince's team for tonight and we're ready to go.

A-Train/Big Show vs. Brock Lesnar/Kurt Angle

Brock doesn't have any wrist tape and it's a weird look for him. A-Train shoves Angle down to start as the SHAVE YOUR BACK chants start up. A shoulder runs Angle over but he misses a charge in the corner and gets his ankle locked. Lesnar comes in for a double shoulder, followed by more shoulders to A-Train in the corner. A-Train charges into a powerslam (he needs to stop the charging) and it's back to Angle, who gets caught in a backbreaker.

Show finally does something by decking Angle from the apron, allowing A-Train to get in a bicycle kick. Now it's Show coming in and running Angle over before chopping him hard in the corner. Angle's right hands have little effect as Show cuts him off with a side slam. A Warrior Splash gives A-Train two but Angle catches him with a suplex, allowing the hot tag to Brock. Some rapid fire belly to belly suplexes cut A-Train off and there's the F5 to Show. Angle tags himself in though and steals the pin like a jerk.

Rating: D. Just a main event tag match with little drama here as it might as well have been the Mega Powers vs. the Twin Towers. We've seen Angle and Lesnar beat these two in every possible combination so far so I'm not sure how much doubt there was on something like this. At least the ending helped advance things a bit.

Brock gives Angle an F5 and here's Vince to say the match next week will be in a cage. Oh and Angle can be guest referee. Brock's "I done screwed up" look ends the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This was a bit up and down as the US Title stuff was rather solid and the Mystério vs. Benjamin match was entertaining. However, you then have the main event (which was more uneventful than bad), the hotel stuff (which did feature Torrie in some rather fetching attire) and the WAY too long Gowen section. The lack of Vince vs. Stephanie drama helped so much though and it was much more of a good show with some weak spots.

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Smackdown – July 3, 2003: Why Is This A Theme?

Smackdown

Date: July 3, 2003

Location: Blue Cross Arena, Rochester, New York

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

Believe it or not, tonight is going to be focused on Stephanie McMahon, who is still trying to save Zach Gowen from her dad or whatever it is this time. Therefore, tonight it's Gowen/Stephanie against Big Show for Gowen's contract because that's what this show is looking for. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of Vince vs. Gowen, including Vince trying to make Gowen join his club last week. Last week's six man main event is included, which set up tonight's handicap match.

Vince, in a creepy closeup, says he's ready to close the fate of Mr. America. After that, he'll see Stephanie and Gowen crushed in the first ever true handicap match.

Cruiserweight Title: Rey Mysterio vs. Nunzio

Nunzio is challenging and Billy Kidman is in the crowd again. I know facing Undertaker is supposed to be a rub but is getting squashed by him for weeks really worth a title shot? The other Italians are sent to the back to start. Are you sure that getting rid of those two bumbling nitwits doesn't make this harder for Rey? The champ spins out of a wristlock to start and sends Nunzio outside for a big flip dive.

Back in and Nunzio dropkicks him out of the air for two, setting up a double arm crank. A chinlock keeps Rey in trouble until a headscissors gives him a breather. The springboard seated senton gets two and a hurricanrana takes both of them out to the floor in a crash. Cue the Italians to take Mysterio out but Nunzio can only get two. The APA comes out to dispatch Stamboli and Palumbo, leaving Rey to hit the 619 and Drop the Dime to retain.

Rating: C+. They were starting to roll here until the interference, but at least Rey still won clean. I'm still trying to figure out what the point is in having the FBI around and getting this kind of a push, though at least they're not winning anything. Mysterio needs a good challenger and it seems that they're already preparing for that issue. Good little match here.

Kidman comes in and congratulates Mysterio.

Brock Lesnar and Kurt Angle (with milk) are sitting in catering and get in a friendly argument over who a woman meant when she said "hi champ". Angle says he'll get the title back at Vengeance so Brock tells him to drink his milk. Kurt flirts with the woman until Brock slaps him on the back, causing him to spit milk on her. Comedy ensues.

Basham Brothers vs. Rhyno/Chris Benoit

Before the match, Shaniqua gives the Brothers a quick whipping with the riding crop. It's a brawl to start with the Bashams actually taking over early on. Danny hammers on Rhyno and scores with an enziguri. Some hard crossface shots set up a cravate but it's

already time for heel miscommunication. The hot tag brings Benoit in but Danny breaks up the rolling German suplexes. The release version works a bit better though, setting up the Swan Dive for a delayed two. It's a Gore to Doug and the Crossface makes Danny tap.

Rating: D+. So the tag division is just a step above dead in the water with two teams, let's have a potentially good team job most of the time while making them look stupid with the whole spanking things. Shaniqua doesn't need to be there but she was on Tough Enough so they have to get something out of her right? Also didn't Benoit and Rhyno break up twice already?

Shaniqua looks at Benoit post match. Run away Chris.

Vince is in his office and using pencils to play his desk like a drum. That's one of the oddest visuals I've seen in a long time. Stephanie comes in and says she's a woman and shouldn't be put into this situation. Vince says spare the rod and spoil the child, but Stephanie says she's not a child in a voice that makes her sound about three years old. He doesn't care and she cowers away. How long is this stupid story going to go on?

Post break Sable annoys Stephanie and says she'll take care of things if Stephanie is put on the shelf.

Jamie Noble and Nidia, fresh off getting \$827 thousand, have a limo, sunglasses and a fur coat. Noble tips the driver and then takes the money back.

Undertaker critiques Orlando Jordan's boxing and explains paying dues. Jordan needs to challenge people like John Cena if he wants to earn respect. Cena comes up to ask where Undertaker has been since he gave Cena respect last year. He calls himself a veteran now and tells Undertaker to stay out of his business. You can guess Undertaker's reaction.

US Title Tournament First Round: Billy Gunn vs. John Cena

Side note: we're about forty five minutes into this show. So far we've had a recap of Vince lowering his pants last week, Shaniqua spanking the Bashams, Jamie spanking Nidia when she got the coat out

of the limo and you know Gunn's theme song. Why is that their best available theme? Cena makes gay jokes and demands respect. Gunn gives chase to start and stomps away in the corner as Cole tries to make us care about Billy again. Cena bails to the floor as the fans are cheering him for one of the first times ever.

A whip into the post has Billy in trouble and it's time for the chinlock. Cena kicks him down for two as Cole tries to connect this US Title's lineage to the one from the mid 1970s. I know that's the case but it's also quite the stretch. Billy finally escapes with a powerslam but walks into the Throwback (named for the first time here). That's only good for two so it's time to grab the chain. Cue Undertaker on the motorcycle for a distraction though, allowing Billy to get a small package for the pin.

Rating: D. Undertaker vs. Cena should be entertaining but this Gunn stuff is getting more and more annoying every single week. He's the same guy with the same song that hasn't worked in a very long time but now we're supposed to buy him as a serious act. Oh and that Torrie has a thing for him. It does show you what being tall can get for you in a career.

Lesnar and Angle continue to act like frat boys and decide to have a pushup contest. Brock does 301 first (with a commercial in between) as I'm more curious about who can be seen just off camera watching this whole thing. With Lesnar finished, Angle declares him the winner and walks off. Eh funny ending, but who looks at Lesnar and Angle and thinks they need to do a buddy comedy?

Tag Team Titles: Shelton Benjamin/Charlie Haas vs. Eddie Guerrero/Tajiri

Eddie and Tajiri are defending. Tajiri headlocks Haas down to start before switching over to a hammerlock. Eddie takes over on Benjamin's arm as they're certainly moving to start. An armdrag/headscissors combination takes both challengers down and the Eddie chants begin. As they should to be fair. Haas gets in a backbreaker for a breather as Tazz keeps ripping on Cole for calling this fun.

Eddie suplexes his way to freedom in short order and it's back to Tajiri for the rapid fire kicks. A hurricanrana is broken up so Haas muscles Tajiri up, allowing Shelton to springboard in for a clothesline/powerbomb combination. Sweet move there but it's only good for two more.

Back from a break with Tajiri caught in an abdominal stretch with the challengers doing the switch when the referee wasn't looking. The referee ACTUALLY NOTICES and brings Benjamin back in...to take Tajiri down again. Well that felt like a waste of a spot. Haas hammers away on Tajiri, followed by Shelton jumping over Charlie onto Tajiri's back. Tajiri slips out of what looked to be a powerbomb and kicks Shelton in the back of the head (loud one too).

That's enough for the hot tag to Eddie and the rolling suplexes have Haas in trouble. The frog splash is broken up but Tajiri takes Shelton down with the handspring elbow. Eddie gets sent outside so Tajiri starts in with more kicks, followed by the Tarantula to Haas. Shelton avoids a frog splash though and Tajiri gets kicked off the apron, onto the hood of the low rider. Back in and the atomic drop with a superkick to Eddie's chest gives Charlie the pin and the titles.

Rating: B. These four have some solid chemistry together and it's nice to see Charlie and Shelton get the belts back. They were a really strong team when they got the belts and while the feud with Eddie and Chavo/Tajiri did them a lot of good, they probably should have held the belts throughout. Eddie didn't seem happy with Tajiri for being knocked onto the car and there's a good chance they're going to have an issue because of it.

Gowen is stretching in the back when Big Show comes in to step on the leg. Tonight, he's going after Gowen's legs. It didn't work for the Executioner at Wrestlemania I and I doubt it works for Big Show tonight.

Back from a break with Tajiri still on the hood and Eddie looking dejected. Eddie goes over to check on him...but he really just wants to check on the car.

Video on Mr. America. Stephanie saying she signed him sight unseen triggers my memories of how ridiculous so much of this story was and it's even worse when I realize that Vince vs. Stephanie is continuing.

Eddie is STILL looking at the car and Tajiri is still down behind him. It's finally too much for Eddie and he snaps, sending Tajiri into the hood (which won't help the paint) and then dropping him through the windshield for a great looking crash.

Orlando Jordan vs. A-Train

Jordan's dropkick has no effect and A-Train launches him into the corner for a beating. A splash to the back has Jordan in even more trouble and it's off to the reverse full nelson (kind of like a Gory Special but pulling on the arms instead of the face). An enziguiri knocks A-Train into the corner but the Derailer gets two. Jordan's high crossbody only hits mat and the Train Wreck gives A-Train the pin.

Rating: D. I know what they're going for with Jordan but there's only so much you can get out of someone so average. History hasn't exactly been kind to Jordan but then you watch a match like this and you understand why. There's nothing special about him, be it his look, his work or his personality. Just having him out there as a guy in trunks isn't going to do him any good and kicking out of the Derailer isn't enough to change that.

Show tries to intimidate Stephanie and even twirls her hair around. There are, ahem, other ways he'd like to hurt her. Show walks away and runs into Vince and Sable, the former of whom has an announcement regarding Mr. America.

Wrestlemania Recall: Jake Roberts vs. Honky Tonk Man from Wrestlemania III. Was Alice Cooper being around that big of a deal? The post match stuff with Alice throwing the snake onto Jimmy Hart was good but it's not that good.

Here are Vince and Sable for the announcement. Vince recaps the Mr. America story and knows that it was Hulk Hogan under the mask. If

Vince could prove that, Hogan was gone for good. That brings us to last week's Smackdown where Vince thought something might be up.

Vince told the cameramen to keep recording, which captured Mr. America lifting his mask to reveal Hogan and telling everyone to keep it quiet. Therefore, Hogan is FIRED (he had quit earlier in the week due to creative differences, which likely means he wanted the title and wasn't getting it) and gone for good. Or at least the better part of two years. It's kind of a lame ending but at least they wrapped it up with a storyline explanation.

As for tonight, Zach Gowen is in a handicap match against Big Show. That's not good enough though, because it's going to be no holds barred. As a bonus for Big Show, he's being added to the Smackdown World Title match at Vengeance to make it a triple threat. I'm so thrilled by all of this.

Stephanie McMahon/Zach Gowen vs. Big Show

Anything goes. Why do I have a feeling this was due to Stephanie thinking she needed to show off how good shape she was in? Gowen's early offense has as much effect as you would expect and Show shoves him outside. Stephanie jumps on Show's back and let's hear that screeching! Show flips her down and grabs Gowen's (detached) prosthetic leg. A dropkick doesn't hurt Show, who catches a diving Gowen and throws him back inside.

Stephanie gets thrown inside as well but for some reason Vince won't let Show chokeslam her. Gowen comes in for the save and takes the chokeslam instead. Stephanie gets in her big moment with the slap to Vince but Angle comes out to save her from another chokeslam. A Vince chair shot breaks up the ankle lock so here's Lesnar for a save of his own. The Angle Slam and an F5 set up Gowen's moonsault for the pin and the contract.

Rating: D-. Lesnar's F5 looked good and that's about it for this one. The match was a glorified segment of course and while it advances the story, that doesn't make it any more interesting. This Stephanie standing up to her father and using Gowen to fight the battle for him isn't good and other than the McMahons, I'm not sure

who thinks it's the best way to go. Throwing Big Show into the World Title match takes away a lot of the interest I had in seeing Lesnar vs. Angle II, but it's time for Big Show's annual push, whether we like it or not.

Overall Rating: D. There were good parts to this show but the big story is so dull and lifeless that it's dragging things down. The story is far from the worst thing they've ever done (it's not even the worst thing Stephanie has done this year) but it's a bunch of people I don't care about doing a bunch of stuff that has been done in a better version before. Gowen is a case where once you see his stuff once, the interest goes away in a hurry. Now he's involved in the top story on the show, which is likely going to go on for months because that's how the McMahons work.

There's still good stuff on the show though, such as Cena vs. Undertaker (which has potential), Eddie's heel turn after a really good match, the former Team Angle back on top of the division and Rey as Cruiserweight Champion. As usual though, the problem comes down to the McMahons dominating the show with their stupid issues and Stephanie's bad acting. Just don't let her talk or interact with Vince and this show gets a lot better in a hurry.

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Smackdown – October 10, 2002: Stop Trying to Be Raw

Smackdown

Date: October 10, 2002

Location: America West Arena, Phoenix, Arizona

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

We're ten days away from No Mercy and the big question is Undertaker's hand, which was broken last week. That's not good when he's heading into the Cell with Brock Lesnar. The other major story is the Tag Team Title tournament, which is almost destined to offer a string of great matches. Let's get to it.

We open with one of those stuttering recaps with Stephanie McMahon narrating because we watch these shows to hear from her. Anyway we recap Undertaker vs. Lesnar with the OFFICIALLY broken hand (you want to make sure it's the official one or you won't be able to get a warranty) and an announcement of the Cell match.

Undertaker is in the parking lot.

Here's Matt Hardy with something to say. After the WE WANT JEFF chants die down, Matt brags about beating Undertaker for the second time last week. Matt talks about how last week was a defining moment in Mattitude and we see a clip of last week's pin. Of course we see Undertaker coming to the ring and the beating is on in a hurry. A few headbutts and cast shots open Matt up but he gets in a low blow. That's fine with Undertaker who casts Matt in the head and then casts a chair into Matt's head. Undertaker punches the post and Matt FINALLY escapes. This went on far longer than it should have but you have to fill time somehow.

Rikishi vs. Eddie Guerrero

Fallout from last week where Eddie make Mark Henry tap in a tag match. Rikishi doesn't waste time and grabs a bearhug but Eddie crawls over into a sunset flip. That goes nowhere so Eddie hits a dropkick, allowing Chavo to get in some choking from the floor. The cheating earns Uncle Eddie a spinebuster but he goes after the knee and scores with the slingshot hilo for no cover.

The frog splash misses though and Rikishi loads up the Stinkface,

meaning Chavo has to make another save. That means Rikishi superkicks him into the corner as well and Stinkfaces them both. You would think that the combined forces could have allowed them to escape but alas not so much. The referee, who somehow hasn't called for a DQ, has to deal with Eddie throwing Chavo a chair. It is but a ruse though as Eddie uses another chair on Rikishi's leg, setting up the El Paso Lasso for the tap.

Rating: C-. I could go for watching the Guerreros do their cheating every day. They have so much chemistry together and really do feel like they could beat anyone with these shenanigans. It helps that Eddie is doing some of the best work of his career right now and looking more and more awesome every single week. Rikishi was just fine here too as the one that gets to stand still while Eddie does his thing.

Torrie Wilson can't believe Dawn Marie has challenged her to a lingerie contest. I can't quite hear what she says next because the pop is far too strong. Torrie's father shows up and she tries to hide her lingerie choices before getting him away.

Stephanie wants the tag division to be legitimate so she lectures Chris Benoit and Kurt Angle. Wouldn't it make more sense to bring in regular teams to make the belts a bit more legit? I mean, I'm no one to question Stephanie but reforming the Dudleyz or something like that would have made more sense. Or not letting THE TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS JUMP TO RAW IN THE FIRST PLACE. Angle mocks Benoit's missing tooth and they get in an argument over who leaves first.

Rey Mysterio is ready for his tournament match with Edge tonight when Nidia comes in for a Spanish argument. Rey seems to insult her so Nidia storms off to yell at Jamie Noble. Jamie says don't treat him like that because he has a tournament match of his own tonight. Coffee is tossed away and security breaks it up.

The Guerreros are fired up over their win when Benoit comes out of Stephanie's office (Does that mean he won or lost the competition with Angle?) and looks rather serious. Eddie: "Did you just get in trouble with the principal man?" Benoit doesn't want to be suspended for a year but Chavo chimes in with a rumor that Angle is taking a year off to train for the Olympics. Chris is suspicious when Angle comes out. His greetings to Eddie and Chavo respectively: "What up home slice?" and "Word up my Chicano friend." The Guerreros leave

and Angle things they were talking about him. Violence is threatened and Benoit smirks.

Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: Billy Kidman/John Cena vs. Kurt Angle/Chris Benoit

The winners get the Guerreros next week. Kidman hurricanranas Benoit down to start and it's off to Cena (in purple and orange, Phoenix Suns colors) for a hiptoss on Angle. That's not cool with Kurt so he snaps off a belly to belly to send Kidman flying out to the floor. Benoit and Angle get annoyed at each other again (of course) so Chris rolls some German suplexes on Kidman.

We hit a kneeling half crab with Benoit cranking on it as only he can. Kidman does the tag that the referee doesn't see spot so Angle can throw him down again. Angle is finally sent into the post and Benoit takes an enziguri, allowing the real hot tag off to Cena. Everything breaks down in a hurry and Benoit's powerbomb is countered into an X-Factor to give Kidman a near fall. Angle is back in for an Angle Slam though but Cena saves the ankle lock. He can't save the Crossface though and Kidman taps.

Rating: C. This got better at the end but was there any real question about who was going to win here? They kind of screwed themselves over with the "one year suspension" thing because no one is going to buy that happening. Angle and Benoit trying to one up each other is very entertaining though and that makes for some fun matches.

Brock Lesnar and Paul Heyman arrive with a good looking woman. They want to have the path to the ring cleared because they have an announcement.

And now for the highlight of the show: a Desire video all about Matt Hardy with Matt narrating. I know he gets a lot of flack for all these reinventions but when they hit, they hit huge.

We recap the Undertaker vs. Matt brawl.

Here are Lesnar, Heyman and that woman for what I really hope isn't the announcement I think it's going to be. Heyman talks about Undertaker being in the back talking about the Cell, which Lesnar isn't qualified to talk about. However, Tracy is qualified to talk about what kind of a man Undertaker is. This brings out a ticked off Undertaker so Heyman and Lesnar bail. Tracy stays though and calls

him Mark because it's serious you see.

They've been sleeping together for three months and she just found out he's married. The big SARA tattoo on his throat wasn't a hint that there was a woman in his life? She didn't care that he was famous and promised to never take the relationship permanent. The fans chant some VERY unkind things about Tracy until Undertaker denies it. Tracy slaps him in the face and storms off.

Post break, Heyman and Lesnar are leaving when Stephanie pops up to put Lesnar in the tournament with Tajiri. It's important to have the best teams, which is why the Dudley Boyz are still separated right? Heyman protests so Stephanie guarantees him that Undertaker is banned from ringside. If he interferes, he's out of the title match.

Billy Gunn vs. Reverend D-Von

The Gunn is back and so is the generic rock music. D-Von, with Ron Simmons in his corner, hammers away to start but gets clotheslined for two. That's enough for D-Von to take a breather on the floor and Simmons gets in a cheap shot to take over. Back in and we hit the chinlock as the announcers ignore the match to talk about anything else. Can you blame them in this case? A powerslam gets two but Billy grabs the One and Only for no cover. Simmons breaks up the Fameasser so Chuck superkicks him, allowing the Fameasser to connect for the pin a few seconds later.

Rating: D. Boring match here but that's all you can expect here. I'm sure there's a good reason to have D-Von lose before he and Simmons have their semifinal match next week. At least Bubba is still getting to team with Spike over on Raw and fill in a spot in a one off gimmick match. That's also all we'll see of Gunn until June of next year as he wrecked his shoulder a few days later at a house show.

Undertaker can't get a word in with Sara and she hangs up on him. This is exactly what I want to see to build up the most violent match in the company.

Chavo is holding his head and screaming for Benoit. Chris comes up and Chavo says Angle jumped Eddie. Benoit goes off to find them and Chavo shoves him into a closet where violence can be heard. A smiling Eddie comes out holding a dented chair and saying Angle did it.

Torrie is ready for her lingerie contest and asks her dad to not watch (well duh). Dawn Marie comes up and gives Al a preview of her outfit, which he seems to approve of.

Lingerie contest, Torrie wins, Cole thinks this is WAY more impressive than it really is, Torrie won't shake hands after winning.

Post break Al is waiting outside the women's locker room when Dawn comes up to give him the Divas Undressed magazine with her hotel room key marking her pages.

Heyman is telling Brock what to watch for in the tag match when Lesnar asks for his phone. Brock calls Sara and asks if she's ok before smiling and hanging up. Heyman looks somewhere between mortified and inspired.

We hear Tracy's bad acting skills again.

Tag Team Title Tournament First Round: Brock Lesnar/Tajiri vs. Rey Mysterio/Edge

The winners get D-Von and Simmons next week for reasons that make my head hurt. Edge and Lesnar start with the champ shoving him down with ease. The Canadian pops back up and gets in a takedown before mocking Lesnar's pose. That just ticks Lesnar off and I don't see this ending well. If nothing else, Brock being on the floor gives Cole a chance to praise Stephanie's business sense.

Back in and the beating begins but Mysterio tags himself in and springboards into a crossbody on Lesnar. That gives us the staredown with Brock hitting something like a powerslam for two. Tajiri tags himself in for the first kick before grabbing a chinlock. That's followed by the more successful Tarantula but Rey escapes and grabs a hurricanrana.

The hot tag brings in Edge and Lesnar has no issues watching his partner get beaten up. Edge makes the mistake of knocking Brock off the apron and here comes the champ. Brock actually gets dropped by a flying forearm and Tajiri kicks Lesnar by mistake. A double dropkick puts Lesnar on the floor and the 619 into the spear sends Edge and Rey on.

Rating: D+. This was exactly what you would expect from these four in this situation. I could certainly go for Tajiri vs. Rey and Edge vs. Lesnar doesn't sound too bad either. I'm not sure I get the

logic of giving the face team such an easy path to the finals but the tournament needs to be the best or something.

Lesnar cleans house until Undertaker makes the save to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. There's good stuff sprinkled through this show but it's not enough to overcome the stupid Tracy story, the pretty lame tournament stuff and Billy Gunn vs. D-Von. Smackdown works because it has a bunch of action instead of the weak drama and bad storylines. Give us any two combinations of the really talented guys for twelve minutes or so and everything will be fine.

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205 Live – January 3, 2017: A Bad Gut Feeling

205 Live

Date: January 3, 2017

Location: Jacksonville Veterans Memorial Auditorium, Jacksonville, Florida

Commentators: Mauro Ranallo, Corey Graves, Austin Aries

I'm starting to get attached to this show and a lot of that is due to Neville. This heel character has been outstanding so far and it's easily the best thing he's done so far in WWE. It needs to lead to a

Cruiserweight Title win over Rich Swann at the Rumble but I have a feeling they'll keep it on Rich for the sake of....I'm not sure really. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of Neville vs. Swann last week with the champ losing a non-title match.

Opening sequence.

Swann is injured so tonight it's TJ Perkins filling in against Neville.

Tajiri vs. Sean Maluta

Tajiri still looks so strange without the goatee. Maluta grabs a headlock to start and hits a good looking headbutt. For some reason Maluta charges into the corner, earning himself a Tarantula. Some VERY hard kicks to the head drop Maluta and the handspring elbow puts him down again. The Buzzsaw kick ends Maluta at 2:52. This was basically saying "Hey, remember Tajiri? Here he is again."

Post match here's Brian Kendrick to welcome Tajiri back. He's so glad to see someone who takes this serious and thinks they can take this show over. They shake hands but Tajiri mists him. Aries: "That's not kale juice!"

Neville is tired of how he's been treated and all the discrimination against him over his accent and looks.

Video on Tony Nese.

Jack Gallagher vs. Tony Nese

Before the match we get a recap of last week's Gentleman's Duel and all its glory. Nese has Gulak in his corner. Gallagher spins out of a wristlock and bounces out of a headscissors. We get the headstand in the corner with Jack jumping out because he's that awesome. Not that it matters though as Ariya Daivari comes in for the DQ at 2:25. Daivari destroys Gallagher post match.

Cedric Alexander wants Alicia Fox to be a little more careful. Kissing ensues.

Mustafa Ali vs. Noam Dar

Ali grabs a hammerlock to start and follows with a good looking spinwheel kick to the jaw to send Dar outside. As they come back in, Dar scores with a dropkick to the side of the head. It's time to

start in on the arm as the fans are way quieter than they probably should be for a cruiserweight match. We hit an armbar with a knee on Ali's face until he grabs a tornado DDT to put both guys down. A neckbreaker keeps Dar in trouble until Ali flips right into a Fujiwara armbar. That's reversed into a crucifix, followed by a kick to the face and that sweet inverted 450 for the pin on Dar at 6:20.

Rating: C+. This was a snappy little match and that's the kind of thing this show needs. Well, aside from a better timeslot and more personalities but you get the idea. Making Ali a face is an interesting idea and I'm glad they're doing it instead of just going with the simple idea. Not a bad match here and it worked fine.

Dar says he wants Fox because she's always welcome in his corner.

Video on Akira Tozawa.

Neville vs. TJ Perkins

Neville now has the angry, slower music. Before the match, TJ says he's going to deal with this bully with a punch to the face. Perkins won't shake hands either and it seems to work fine here as a headscissors puts Neville down. A Rey Mysterio wheelbarrow bulldog and another headscissors sends a frustrated Neville to the floor.

Back in and Neville goes with the classic KICK HIM IN THE HEAD style, including a missile dropkick for two. That means a chinlock and for once it's fine to go to a replay here. The middle rope Phoenix splash misses though and TJ can speed things up to take over for the first time in a good while. A corkscrew plancha and a high crossbody give TJ two. The super hurricanrana gets the same as the fans are starting to get into this. Perkins kicks him down again but gets crotched on the top. One heck of a superplex puts TJ away at 11:34.

Rating: B-. I love Neville's psychology here as it doesn't make sense to have him do all the flips that are going to pop the crowd. A superplex isn't a huge move but it looks good enough to feel devastating. I'm still digging the heck out of the character and this was the kind of victory that Neville needs: beating the top names and being just a few steps ahead of them no matter what.

Overall Rating: C+. I'm liking this show quite a bit more lately now that they've actually figured out a formula instead of just going all over the place with whatever they feel like doing at the moment.

This was a good way to help build Neville into the monster heel who should take the title soon enough, though again I think it's going to be Swann retaining on gut instinct alone.

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NXT – December 28, 2016: A First For NXT

NXT

Date: December 28, 2016

Location: Edion Arena, Osaka, Japan

Commentators: Corey Graves, Tom Phillips

It's a special week in NXT as we're closing out the year with a house show taped over in Japan earlier this month. The main event is Shinsuke Nakamura challenging Samoa Joe for the title in a match we saw a few weeks back. This is also a two hour show, meaning the matches won't have to be as clipped. Let's get to it.

We open with a quick video on Samoa Joe vs. Shinsuke Nakamura.

Opening sequence.

Oney Lorcan vs. Andrade Cien Almas

Almas wears a mask during his entrance and has no interest in a pre-

match handshake. We hear about Almas defeating Nakamura for the IWGP Intercontinental Title a few years back which is almost unthinkable given their statuses in NXT. Almas' headlock doesn't go anywhere so he does the lay on the ropes spot before getting caught in a Lorcan headlock. We talk about the crowd being more silent than usual as Almas takes him down into a chinlock.

Back up and Lorcan hits a running corner clothesline before popping in a few shots to the face. Something like a standing backflip into a reverse DDT (I believe Tetsuya Naito uses the same) gets two on Lorcan but he comes right back with an inverted exploder. Almas sends him into the corner again with the running double knees getting two despite a foot on the ropes. The hammerlock DDT is broken up and Lorcan takes him to the top for a German superplex (with Almas flipping over in the air) and the pin at 10:06.

Rating: C. It's a decent match of two lower level guys hitting each other a lot but that's not the most interesting thing in the world. Above that though, this is making me wonder why this is a full two hour show. I really didn't need to see this match getting ten minutes though there are worse ways to spend a Wednesday night.

Aliyah/Liv Morgan vs. Peyton Royce/Billie Kay

Billie gives Liv a quick fireman's carry to start as Corey goes into his usual anti-New Jersey rant. Morgan grabs a sunset flip and rolls Kay around the ring for a few two counts but both of them seem a bit dizzy. Aliyah comes in and gets caught in the wrong corner for some very long legged choking.

The Australians work on Aliyah's back and keep pulling her away from the hot tag. We hit the chinlock for a bit as the beating continues. Liv gets knocked off the apron, which Graves refers to as an insurance policy. Aliyah finally flips out of a double suplex and brings Morgan back in to clean house with a bulldog. An STO gets two on Billie but a blind tag allows Peyton to send Liv face first into Billie's knee for the pin at 8:29.

Rating: D+. This was far less interesting than it should have been and a lot of that was due to the length. It felt like they were

stretching the match out to fill in time, which isn't what you want to do on a show that already feels longer than it should be. I can appreciate the idea of trying to build up Kay and Royce as the top heels in the division but I'm having a really hard time buying either of them as a threat to Asuka.

Tag Team Titles: DIY vs. Akira Tozawa/Tajiri

DIY is defending and this time we get the handshake. Gargano and Tozawa start things off and this time the fans are a bit more into it. The fans seem split as both guys miss big kicks and bring in their respective partners. Tajiri sprays some mist as Graves questions his fandom with DIY in the ring.

The feeling out process continues with the mist having fallen on Tajiri's back. Ciampa wins a battle of the shoulder blocks but a headlock into a headscissor sequence takes us back to a stalemate. They're almost completely even in the first five minutes. Ciampa starts in on Tozawa's arm but gets taken down for some Tajiri kicks to put the champions in trouble for the first time.

Back from a break with Ciampa telling Tozawa to kick him harder. They take turns sticking their chests out for chops until Tozawa hits him behind the ear to take over. A gutbuster puts Ciampa down but he breaks up a tag to Tajiri as the formula changes a bit. Tozawa kicks him before bringing Tajiri back in for the REAL kicks to the chest. Everything breaks down and Tozawa hits some suicide dives to put the champs in trouble. It doesn't last long though as Gargano hits the spear through the ropes for a close two.

The Tarantula sets up a missed Buzzsaw Kick before it's back to Tozawa for a forearm slugout. Ciampa comes back in for the rolling German suplexes, only to get caught in a snap German suplex from Tozawa. That's enough for Ciampa who kicks the heck out of Tozawa and hits Project Ciampa for two with Tajiri breaking it up. A blind tag brings Gargano back in for the running knee/superkick combination for the pin on Tozawa at 21:04.

Rating: B. Now that's a bit more like it. They went a bit long but this was FAR better than anything else on the show so far. Tozawa is

really impressive and Tajiri still has it despite being in his mid-40s. I liked this a lot more than I was expecting to as DIY can do no wrong at the moment. I'm not sure that's going to extend to the Authors of Pain though and that scares me.

DIY bows to the challengers post match.

Women's Title: Nia Jax vs. Asuka

Asuka is defending and we're in her hometown. Jax shrugs off the strikes to start and headbutts the champ into the corner. That earns her an Octopus Hold followed by a guillotine with the announcers bringing up Jax's issues with that hold. Asuka gets thrown into the corner and we take an early break.

Back with Jax tossing Asuka around even more with a release slam getting two. A sidewalk slam gets the same and another comeback is cut off in a hurry, quieting the crowd all over again. Nia drops her with a clothesline as the announcers talk about how bringing the NXT Women's Title to Raw would be a huge deal for Jax's career.

As odd as it sounds, they're absolutely right as the title is probably more valuable than the Smackdown Women's Title and just a few steps behind the Raw counterpart. Some kicks set up a kneebar on Nia but she stands up for the easy break. A hip attack knocks Nia off the apron but Asuka is easily thrown into the apron to put her in trouble again.

The big leg sends Asuka outside again and the announcers aren't sure if Nia is familiar enough with the rules. I get what they're going for but she knows that you have to get a pin in the ring. She's not Kamala guys. Back in and Asuka unloads on her with the strike, followed by a cross armbreaker. Asuka jumps on Nia's back for a sleeper but gets countered into a hard powerbomb for two. Back up and Asuka actually gets her up for a German suplex, followed by one heck of a kick to the jaw to retain the title at 18:52.

Rating: B-. This was a cross between Nia vs. Asuka I and either Nia vs. Bayley match, which means it's pretty entertaining stuff. The idea of Asuka having to be pushed to the limit was a good story

though at some point Nia needs to find something other than being too confident and getting beaten as a result.

We're in Melbourne next week and hopefully it's not another two hour show.

NXT Title: Samoa Joe vs. Shinsuke Nakamura

Nakamura is challenging. They trade some kicks to the legs to start and Nakamura does his arm waving bit to mess with Joe's head. That's enough for Joe to take a breather on the floor and we take a break. Back with Joe taking it outside and chopping Nakamura to his knees. The corner enziguri drops Nakamura again and it's time to go after the knees. A spinwheel kick to the leg sets up a leglock and Nakamura is in trouble.

Joe grabs a kneebar for a bit until Nakamura makes the ropes, setting up a big kick to the champ's head. The running knee to the ribs in the corner gets two, followed by Joe's big boot getting the same. We take another break and come back with Joe holding the STF, which is transitioned into the Crossface. Nakamura finally gets to the ropes but can't hook a cross armbreaker. He can however get a triangle choke, sending Joe's legs into the rope for a break of his own.

It's too early for Kinshasa though as Joe powerslams him out of the air for two. Joe can't hook the Muscle Buster so he switches to the Koquina Clutch, only to settle for a hard German suplex instead. An enziguri sends Nakamura outside but he gets out of the Rock Bottom onto the steps that put him out of action for so long earlier this year. The running knee to the back of the neck drops Joe but he's too big for Nakamura to hold up in a fireman's carry. That's fine with Nakamura as he hits the middle rope knee, followed by Kinshasa for the pin and the title at 26:28.

Rating: B+. This was a lot better than the version shown before, which only gave us 10:45 of the match. Nakamura fighting back to win in his home country was the right way to end the show and it felt like a big deal on a big stage. Joe should be ready to head up to the main roster as there's nothing left for him to do in NXT.

A lot of posing ends the show.

Overall Rating: B-. The problem here is the length. This easily could have been trimmed down by half an hour or so (edit some of the matches or just cut off the first two) and it would have been much better as a result. It really felt unnecessary to last this long and not much was gained as a result. I'm not going to think of this show again and that's not something I like thinking on a long NXT show. Totally watchable show but trim it down to make it that much better.

Results

Oney Lorcan b. Andrade Cien Almas – German superplex

Billie Kay/Peyton Royce b. Liv Morgan/Aliyah – Bulldog onto Kay's knee

DIY b. Akira Tozawa/Tajiri – Running knee/superkick combination

Asuka b. Nia Jax – Kick to the head

Shinsuke Nakamura b. Samoa Joe – Kinshasa

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Smackdown – July 11, 2002:

Right Down the Middle

Smackdown

Date: July 11, 2002

Location: Boardwalk Hall, Atlantic City, New Jersey

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

It's the week after a big show and the top story is the return of the Rock. It's not clear what he's going to be doing here but odds are it's something rather simple that is going to be considered amazing because it's the Rock. If nothing else he needs to start the build towards Vengeance when he challenges for the World Title. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's World Title match which ended in a draw.

Opening sequence.

John Cena is in the main event tag. That's a big, big step forward in a hurry.

Tag Team Titles: Edge/Hulk Hogan vs. Billy and Chuck

Billy and Chuck are challenging. Edge spinwheel kicks Chuck in the face to start but Billy snaps off a tilt-a-whirl slam to take over. As the beating ensues, it's hard to ignore Hogan playing cheerleader. That's one thing I always love about Hogan in tag matches: he almost never stops moving on the apron. It might be slapping the turnbuckle or pacing back and forth but he's rarely just standing there watching. There's a lot that can be done from that spot and it's something not enough people do.

The double and triple teaming has Edge in trouble before we hit the chinlock to slow things down even more. Billy walks into the half nelson faceplant and it's off to Hogan for the usual. The big boot hits Chuck's chest/shoulder area and the one to Billy is even less accurate. Rico offers a distraction so the Fameasser can get two on Hulk. Another big boot sets up the legdrop to retain.

Rating: D+. The important thing here: the match ran 6:16 and Hogan

was in the ring for about a fourth of that. Hogan wrestling less than two minutes a match but getting to do all of his signature stuff is the best thing he can do right now. Good enough match and it ends the threat of Billy and Chuck getting another shot.

Cena comes up to Undertaker (his partner tonight) to thank him for the chance tonight. Undertaker doesn't seem to care because he's worried about the Rock.

Torrie Wilson was doing a beach photo shoot earlier today when Molly Holly interrupted. She thinks wrestling is what matters and offers Torrie a title shot tonight. Torrie: "Ok, I'll do it."

The agents try to get Undertaker out of the parking lot but he'll have none of that. A limo arrives but it's Chris Jericho/Kurt Angle, Undertaker and Cena's opponents tonight. Insults are exchanged and a brawl breaks out. Vince comes in for the save and some yelling.

Post break, Undertaker wants to know where Cena was. Cena says Undertaker threw him out but Undertaker yells about Cena not having his back. Undertaker thinks Cena won't last long if he doesn't get it together. So I guess he got it together.

Women's Title: Torrie Wilson vs. Molly Holly

Holly is defending. Torrie gets in a slap and that's about it for her early offense. Molly chokes on the ropes for a bit until Torrie catapults her into the corner. Some right hands in the corner have little effect as Torrie gets powerbombed out of the corner, setting up a leglock for a pin (kind of odd) to retain Molly's title.

Rock is here.

Mark Henry/Randy Orton vs. Reverend D-Von/Batista

D-Von cheap shots Orton to start and the early beating sends Randy outside. That means it's time for Batista to show off the power for a bit. Orton avoids a knee drop though and Henry comes in to clean house with his own power. Everything breaks down and Henry clotheslines both of them down at the same time, only to have Batista hit a Regal Roll of all things. The spinebuster ends Henry in a hurry.

Rating: D. Nothing to see here, including Orton who disappeared halfway through the match. They need to go somewhere with this idea before Orton loses what little steam he has. At least Batista and D-Von are getting somewhere with this though and that's a big accomplishment in WWE at this point.

Hogan and Edge are going gambling. Rock comes in and Hogan takes credit for the Wrestlemania match. Rock: "You been forgetting to take your vitamins lately?" He'll even join them at the casino after some business is taken care of. Rock mocks Hogan a bit behind his back and Edge says Mr. Nanny smoked the Scorpion King. Edge and Rock is an odd visual as their generations mostly never crossed.

Here's Rock in the arena for the first time in a long time. Before he can get to the point though, he brings in rapper Busta Rhymes to plug an album and movie. This goes nowhere so they sing Under the Boardwalk and of course all of this is edited off the Network. After the singing ends, Rock calls out Undertaker but gets Angle instead.

Kurt thinks he's the one Rock needs to be worried about because he can make Rock tap just like he did to Hogan. Oh and if Puff Daddy wants a shot, Kurt can make him tap too. Kurt: "I speak that jive!" After taking a bit to figure it out, Rock starts making Dr. Evil jokes. Apparently Angle isn't a Mike Myers fan (smart man) and wants Rock next week. Rock agrees and puts Angle in the ankle lock until Undertaker comes out to clean house. This was a bit long but Rock vs. Angle should be great.

We recap the Un-Americans interrupting America the Beautiful last week.

Test vs. Rikishi

Rikishi sends him into the steps before the match as his way of standing up for America. The bell rings and Test turns him inside out with the clothesline. For some reason Storm has to hit a superkick, setting up a nearly botched pumphandle slam for two. Rikishi loads up the Banzai Drop for two but it's too early for a Stinkface. Not that it matters as the Samoan drop ends Test in a hurry. Short match but they did a lot here, including having part of

the new heel stable lose despite interference.

Post match the trio goes after Rikishi until Edge and Hogan make the save.

Stacy and Vince are about to remove clothing when Jericho comes in to ask nothing in particular. Vince asks that he give up his match against Edge so we can have a Tag Team Title match at the pay per view. Jericho is offered a reward to be named later.

Jamie Noble, Nidia and Tajiri are rather disgusting at a restaurant. Noble talks about how he's never had anything but the title means he's not poor anymore. That's not something I'm naturally going to boo.

We look at the NWO's actions on Raw. Nash will be out for a long time.

Tajiri/Jamie Noble vs. Hurricane/Billy Kidman

Jamie and Billy run the ropes to start until Hurricane sneaks in with a hot tag to take the champ down. Tajiri comes in and starts snapping off the kicks for a bit until a miss allows the tag off to Kidman. Everything breaks down and some heel miscommunication sets up a Hurricane flip dive. Back in and a super sitout powerbomb ends Noble, likely giving Kidman a future title shot.

Rating: B-. They didn't stop moving in the time they had but they only had a little over three minutes. Kidman as the next challenger is fine, especially when you consider the winner is just holding the title until Rey Mysterio gets here. Fun match though as the wrestling actually worked for once tonight.

Rock isn't sure how Coach shrunk and turned to become Marc Lloyd. He went gambling today and the big Vengeance slot machine came up with three Brahma Bulls. Rock will be waiting here to see the end of the show, which sounds like a threat.

Rey Mysterio is coming in two weeks.

John Cena/Undertaker vs. Kurt Angle/Chris Jericho

Undertaker and Jericho get things going with Chris actually winning

the early fist fight. Cena comes in and gets beaten down, only to have Angle go shoulder first into the post. The rookie doesn't know how to follow up though and Angle snaps him over with a belly to belly.

Some Canadian stomping keeps Cena in trouble until he powerslams Angle for a breather. Undertaker comes in as everything breaks down, including a ref bump. The Angle Slam gets a delayed two on Undertaker and it's back to Cena. Undertaker saves his new little buddy from the Lionsault and an Oklahoma roll puts Jericho away.

Rating: C+. Cena getting the pin here is important but not as important as him being treated as someone on this level. He might have gotten beaten up a little bit but he hung in there well enough and wasn't destroyed. You can pencil in Jericho vs. Cena for Vengeance and that should be another good night for Cena.

The brawl continues post match with Undertaker putting Angle in a dragon sleeper. Cue Rock to lay out both guys with Rock Bottoms to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. Even with the star power and rookies being pushed, Smackdown continues to be the most middle of the road show ever. The wrestling and storytelling are fine but there's still very little to actually get excited about. The show certainly isn't bad but it's not the most exciting. Changing a few things up can make this a great show though and it's much better than the horrible Raw shows.

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Daily News Update – December 5, 2016

Injured Name Returning to Road Next Week. December 3, 2016.
<http://wrestlingrumors.net/injured-name-returning-to-the-road-next-week>

When Could Finn Balor Be Back in the Ring? December 5, 2016.
<http://wrestlingrumors.net/when-could-finn-balor-be-back-in-the-ring/>

Former Champion Returning to WWE This Spring. December 5, 2016.
<http://wrestlingrumors.net/former-champion-returning-to-wwe-this-spring/>

Rumor on the Wyatt Family Tag Team Title Reign. December 5, 2016.
<http://wrestlingrumors.net/rumor-on-the-wyatt-familys-tag-team-title-reign/>

Two New Collections Added to WWE Network. December 5, 2016.
<http://wrestlingrumors.net/two-new-collections-added-to-wwe-network/>

Smackdown – June 27, 2002: And Now, Wrestling History

Smackdown

Date: June 27, 2002

Location: Allstate Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

We're in the big city tonight and it's time for a new challenger to

face Undertaker. I know Jeff Hardy is getting a title shot on Raw next week but it's fairly clear that we're getting some combination of Rock/HHH/Undertaker for the title at Vengeance. Why Smackdown is getting back to back pay per view title shots isn't immediately clear. Let's get to it.

Vince is in the ring and brings out Kurt Angle before leaving. Thanks for showing up boss. At least it was short though. Angle says he might as well be the poster boy for ruthless aggression and goes into his big victory speech for making Hogan tap. The wig is finally removed for good and Angle issues an open challenge to anyone he's never faced before.

And now, wrestling history. Cole: "Tazz I know this kid. That's John Cena." Angle asks why Cena thinks he can come out here and face him like this. Cena says ruthless aggression and slaps the taste out of Angle's match to start things off in a hurry. You can feel the intensity in him though of course no one knew how big he was based off those ten seconds.

Kurt Angle vs. John Cena

Cena takes him outside and keeps hammering away before a running splash gets two. Kurt picks the ankle and snaps off the first German suplex to put both guys down. A rollup gets two for Cena but Angle blasts him down with a clothesline. They're certainly going hard out there and it's working so far.

Cena throws him off to break a front facelock and gets two off a good looking spinebuster. The Angle Slam is countered into a DDT for some near falls (Taz: "RUTHLESS AGGRESSION! THERE IT IS!" Is that what it is? Multiple pinfall attempts?) and a powerslam gets the same. Kurt finally has enough and grabs a double chickenwing rollup for the pin.

Rating: B. For a rookie making his debut against a top star, this was a heck of a match as, save for that front facelock, they were going at top speed for the entire match. You can see something in Cena but it takes more than a five minute match to make a career. The presence is there though and that's something you either have or you don't.

Cena offers a handshake but Angle walks away. Kurt teases coming back for more but decides it's not worth it. One important point here: Angle gives a big sigh of relief when he knows Cena can't see

him anymore. Little things like that sell moments like this so much more.

Kidman, Faarooq and Rikishi are congratulating Cena when Undertaker comes up. The champ asks his name and extends his hand for a good job. I know I said they need to make new stars but Angle and Undertaker in less than half an hour? That's a rub that you don't see very often, if ever.

Tag Team Titles: Hardcore Holly/Big Valbowski vs. Billy and Chuck

Hard Val is challenging, apparently after wanting to team up for years. Why they didn't do so isn't explained, nor is the fact that they're making their debut and are apparently the second best tag team on Smackdown on arrival. Chuck charges into a right hand to start but Val does the same, suggesting that he isn't the best student in the world.

Holly gets beaten down in the corner as Cole praises Billy and Chuck for being surprisingly good. They're two time Tag Team Champions at this point and you're still surprised that they're a good team? That's slow even for Cole. A belly to back suplex is enough for the hot tag to Val but Rico offers a distraction, setting up the Fameasser to retain.

Rating: C-. Here's the thing: Venis and Holly are fine for a veteran team and could be perfectly fine as eventual challengers if you give them some promos and a few wins over jobbers. However, since there's no tag division to speak of, they're thrown out there against the champs and already lose. Where are they supposed to go from here? Take the time and build a division as you have a bunch of people sitting around (Kidman, Faarooq and Rikishi come to mind) doing nothing. Make something up and give them a reason to team. The rest can take care of itself.

Here's Torrie Wilson to preview the Divas Undressed special. She takes off her robe, walks around in lingerie and that's it. No angle, no talking, nothing at all. At least it was short.

Tajiri likes looking at Nidia so Jamie Noble offers her to him if they win their tag match later.

HHH has been fighting through an elbow injury and is all tough but had to have it fixed in the operating room. After this deadly operation he'll be out.....FOR TWO TO THREE WEEKS!!! Taz teases he'll

be back next week actually. This got way too much time for something like that, especially when you could just say he was banged up after the pay per view or something.

Mark Henry vs. Lance Storm

Storm is here to prove how unfair American referees really are. We're not ready yet though as we need to look at Mark Henry lifting some 100+ year old 172lb dumbbell. Henry throws him around to start but a rake of the eyes breaks up a press slam. Storm gets tossed outside and then thrown back in because Henry is really strong. Another eye rake gets Storm out of a bearhug and Henry misses a Vader Bomb, setting up the superkick to give Lance the pin. Again: Henry is STRONG. We get it already.

Here's Undertaker for a chat. He recaps the pay per view main event and takes credit for HHH undergoing elbow surgery. Cole: "HHH is actually OUT of the hospital now!" Undertaker wants to know where Rock thinks he fits into that match and here's a clip of Sunday's fighting. Rock will be back here on July 11 (the FULL TIME Rock of course because he doesn't do this part time nonsense) and Undertaker will make him pay for King of the Ring.

This brings out Kurt Angle of all people, who wants a title shot next week, assuming Undertaker gets by Jeff Hardy on Raw. Undertaker eventually agrees, even though Angle had trouble getting by a rookie tonight. That's cool with Kurt, but he asks to touch the title. The champ actually lets him do it (moron) and is in the ankle lock almost immediately. You don't see Undertaker acting that stupid very often and, along with that handshake earlier, suggests a face/tweener turn.

Torrie models more lingerie. Yeah she looks amazing but this is the kind of thing that makes people criticize wrestling.

Test vs. Rikishi

They take turns beating on each other in the corner but the referee won't let Test throw a punch. Rikishi hits a superkick but gets slowed down by a low blow. The Test Drive is broken up and the ref is bumped, earning Test a DQ loss even though Rikishi shoved him into the ref. I don't know why wrestling can never learn that no one cares about referee stories.

Test gets a Stinkface before Christian and Storm can come out for

the late save.

Vince calls Hogan into his office and the boss is really, really happy about Hogan tapping out on Sunday. Hogan implies that they'll fight one day and Vince is aghast.

Test rants about how much America sucks.

Billy Kidman/Hurricane vs. Tajiri/Jamie Noble

The bad guys take over to start and Noble has to bail from the threat of a chokeslam. That's fine with Hurricane as he tries a double chokeslam, only to shove them both down instead. Kidman hiptosses his partner onto Noble but walks into the Tajiri elbow. The Tarantula makes things even worse but a tornado DDT is countered into a sitout powerbomb. Now the chokeslam works for Hurricane and the shooting star puts Tajiri away.

Rating: C+. They're getting close to having something with this division as it's slowly building after being nothing interesting for weeks on end. Add a few more names to the thing, perhaps one being the King of Mystery, and they really could have something special. Imagine that: a division works when you have distinct characters instead of people who look, act and work the same.

Torrie and Stacy Keibler are catty to each other because that's what women in wrestling do. While wearing lingerie of course.

Torrie, now billed as appetizing, wears a third outfit. Stacy comes out in a schoolgirl outfit and gets a far bigger pop. We're not done yet as Dawn Marie comes out as well and the blondes get in a catfight. This is so beyond a waste of time.

Chris Jericho isn't sure what he'll use to beat Hogan tonight but he'd love to make him tap.

Rey Mysterio is coming.

Reverend D-Von/Deacon Batista vs. Faarooq/Randy Orton

This is Batista's in ring debut and the first time he's been seen without a shirt. Orton does his rookie offense on D-Von to start until a dropkick of all things puts Randy down. A superplex is broken up and Orton scores with a middle rope bulldog. Faarooq comes in to clean house but the Dominator is countered with a DDT. It's already back to Orton for a high crossbody, only to have Batista come in off the blind tag. That wicked clothesline blasts Orton and

a spinebuster (with multiple camera cuts, suggesting a botch or an edit) finishes Randy in a hurry.

Rating: C-. They were smart to have Batista only come in at the end for the big power display, making this an effective debut. The thing is you have two teams right here plus the champs and Venis/Holly. These are three teams thrown together in the span of a few weeks and you're getting close to a division. Simple ideas (gimmick/enforcer, two veterans, veteran/rookie) are fine and can grow into something else until the next big team can be put together. Why is that so complicated?

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Hulk Hogan vs. Chris Jericho

The fans are WAY into Hogan here (hardly shocking in a town like Chicago) as Jericho is backdropped to start. It's too early for the big elbow though (always seems weird to be anything but a big leg or boot) and Jericho gets in a low blow to take over. The fans are all over Jericho so he does the hand to the ear before going way old school with the abdominal stretch.

Just in case the words ABDOMINAL STRETCH aren't clear enough, Cole points out that it hurts your gut. Hogan's comeback is countered as Jericho slides under the big boot (that's what happens when you stop fighting giants) and hits the bulldog into the Lionsault for two. Jericho has had enough of the HULKING UP and hits Hogan with a chair for the DQ.

Rating: D+. Not the worst match in the world here with Jericho doing the work and letting Hogan do all of his spots. This isn't a case of Hogan showing anyone up and the match was actually fine, all things considered. There's value in Hogan giving people rubs like this, but he can only do it for so long before it stops mattering.

Jericho loads up a Conchairto the arm but his own countdown comes up. Cue the returning Edge (who Cole can't recognize from behind despite him having a pretty easy shape to recognize) for the save and beatdown. Posing ends the show.

Overall Rating: B-. The wrestling was up and down here but this was ALL about the new talent. That might not always mean new people but it did a lot of good for setting things up for the future. There are skeletons of tag and cruiserweight divisions though that's not what

matters the most.

Tonight we saw a focus on John Cena, Batista and Randy Orton with Rey Mysterio debuting soon. While none of them are stars yet, those four are fresh ideas who could mean something to the company, which isn't what you get around here. They're actually setting something up and that's what matters more than anything else. I liked the show a lot and there's stuff I want to see instead of all the nonsense that keeps going on around here for so long. Good show here (with the least Vince in a LONG time) and a lot of hope for the future.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book, KB's Complete Monday Nitro and Thunder Reviews Volume V at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01MQKDV50>

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Smackdown – May 30, 2002: Brutality, Bald Men, and a Strange Edit

Smackdown

Date: May 30, 2002

Location: Saddledome, Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

We're still in Canada and maybe we can find the next challenger to Undertaker for the WWE World Title. As much fun as it was to see him make Tommy Dreamer drink tobacco juice and then beat him up, I could

go for an actual match with a challenger instead of just random attacks. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of Hulk Hogan's retirement from last week to set up what is likely our show long story. Vince McMahon isn't going to let Hogan retire as punishment for Hogan leaving him ten years ago. An explanation for what he means by that might be nice for the casual fans.

Tag Team Titles: Rikishi/Rico vs. Billy and Chuck

Rikishi and Rico are defending and Rico comes out to the challengers' music. Chuck gets sent into the corner for an early Stinkface attempt but Rikishi has to deal with Rico. A double flapjack plants the big man but he comes right back with a double clothesline. Rico tags himself in as Rikishi sits on Chuck's chest, leaving the Samoan to superkick his partner right into the cover to retain the titles. If this is the best they can do with the Tag Team Titles, drop them already because this is an embarrassment.

Hogan arrives.

Torrie Wilson kisses Maven and sexual escapades are implied. Tajiri watches from behind a door. So in other words, Torrie and Maven are Booker and the NWO while Tajiri is Goldust, even down to sneaking around behind them to eavesdrop.

Christian vs. Maven

Maven knocks him outside to start and scores with a dive as the announcers plug Tough Enough 2. Back in and Maven's middle rope bulldog gets two but here's Tajiri to kick Maven in the head, setting up the Unprettier for the fast pin.

Vince is on the phone for some exposition about how Benoit is allowed to go to either show because he's injured. Since when was that written into the Draft charter? Dawn Marie Rinaldi (the last name was later dropped), a paralegal, comes in to give Vince something to sign. Chris Jericho interrupts them to complain about his match with Faarooq tonight. Vince doesn't think much about that as HHH has to face Test tonight as well. This is your "Still To

Come" segment. The Canadian leaves and Vince gets comfortable with Dawn. I guess Stacy is off this week.

GET THE F OUT!

Chris Jericho vs. Faarooq

We start with the power game, including a clothesline to put Jericho on the floor. A hot shot onto the barricade has Jericho in even more trouble and Faarooq drops a knee for two. Jericho realizes he's only fighting Faarooq and gets in a middle rope dropkick to take over. With the wrestling not working, Jericho pulls off a turnbuckle pad followed by the bulldog. The Lionsault misses though and Faarooq hits that always good looking spinebuster. Not that it matters as Jericho sends him into the exposed buckle for the pin.

Rating: D-. Less than two weeks ago, Chris Jericho was inside the Cell in a major match with HHH. In the last two weeks, he's had a match against Mark Henry and had to cheat against Faarooq. HHH fought Lance Storm and gets Test tonight, which isn't much better but they're almost guaranteed to be stronger matches. How does this stuff benefit anyone?

Lance Storm asks D-Von to take his confession....in the men's room. Storm's sin: being from western Canada. D-Von forgives him but isn't pleased with Storm's small donation to the building fund.

Hogan is in the back for an interview but first let's stop to soak in some cheers. Hulk was all ready to retire last week but Vince wants to treat him like an indentured servant. Vince can stick that contract in a rather uncomfortable place and Hogan will follow it with his size fifteen. After winning the title, Hogan only has one thing left to do: fight Vince McMahon, one on one. Vince comes in for a staredown but Angle jumps Hogan from behind with a steel exercise bar. There's a big match at King of the Ring.

WWE Undisputed Title: Undertaker vs. Randy Orton

Here's a major feud three years from now. Before the match, Undertaker actually sucks up to the Calgary fans for reasons unclear. Orton accepts a handshake to start and is actually granted

a clean break in the corner. Undertaker walks into an armdrag and backdrop before a clothesline puts him on the floor. A big dive follows and I'm stunned at Undertaker actually selling here.

The Oklahoma roll gets two on the champ and a surprised Undertaker clotheslines him down. We get the second exposed buckle of the night but Orton gets caught with some dropkicks. That earns him a running DDT though and it's time for Undertaker to get serious.

Unfortunately serious means being sent into the exposed buckle, allowing Orton to hit the Overdrive (or whatever it's called this week) for two.

I'm not sure why but there's a major edit there as Orton grabs the near leg for the cover but a camera cut shows the far leg being held on the kickout. On top of that, Undertaker loses his bandana in between camera cuts. No idea what that's about. That's enough for Undertaker though as it's Snake Eyes and a big boot for two, followed by Orton grabbing a rollup for his own near fall. A chokeslam retains the title.

Rating: C-. Not terrible here actually as Orton actually got in a lot instead of just getting squashed. I'm not sure what was up with Undertaker being nice at the beginning (just pure cockiness maybe) or the weird camera cut in the middle. At least Orton got a rub here because that's what they need more than anything else: young guys getting to look good. Also, it makes sense to see Orton's offense still being very basic. His big move is that Overdrive and the rest is all basic stuff. He's adding more stuff though and that's how he should be going.

Post match the rookie gets beaten up some more until HHH comes out to clean house. A challenge is issued but Undertaker is sent off by the Game's music. I can't imagine it was intentional, but you could look back at that as a sign that HHH thought something of Orton. Randy joined up with HHH in January so it's not like there's an unthinkable gap of time in there.

Hurricane/Kidman vs. Chavo Guerrero/Tajiri

Hurricane takes Tajiri to the floor to start and does the rocking

horse move to send Tajiri's head into the bottom buckle over and over. Tazz: "Just like Maven and Torrie!" A superkick gets two on Tajiri and it's off to Kidman (who looks really weird in regular trunks) for the Sky High on Chavo.

Tajiri goes with the standard cheating by kicking Kidman from the apron and grabbing a Tarantula to take it a step further. That just makes him cocky though and it's time for Kidman to counter a powerbomb with the X Factor. Hurricane comes back in to clean house with the Overcast getting two.

A flip dive takes Tajiri out again, followed by Kidman busting out a shooting star from the top to the floor onto both villains. Back in and Hurricane's music hits as a message pops up on screen, saying the reveal is next week. As a bonus we see a woman's hands on Hurricane's chest, meaning this is likely going to be ANOTHER love triangle story. Tajiri kicks the distracted Hurricane for the pin.

Rating: B. This is what I'm looking for with the cruiserweights, minus the angle that is. These guys know how to fly around the ring and make the division look like a lot of fun. That shooting star from Kidman looked awesome and is the kind of thing I want out of this division. There's no need for anything beyond basic characters because the action should be the driving force around here.

HHH vs. Test

Fallout from Test attacking HHH last week and I'm having flashbacks to 1999 when this meant something. Triple H knocks him into the corner and out to the floor for a good posting. Cue Lance Storm for a distraction so Test can get in a quick legdrop as HHH gets back inside. A good looking side slam gets two and Storm gets in a better looking superkick on the floor. Back in and HHH gets the spinebuster so Storm jumps on the apron like a good evil Canadian. Storm is finally thrown at Test and eats a big boot from his buddy. Cue the Undertaker for a distraction though and Test kicks HHH in the face for the pin.

Rating: D. Here's the thing: this really doesn't do anything for Test because it was all about HHH being dragged down by the

overwhelming odds. Test really could have been anyone here and that's not doing anyone any good. Orton got in offense on Undertaker on his own and looked like he had potential. HHH beat the heck out of Test anytime it was one on one. That doesn't help Test, which makes this little more than time filler until Undertaker got there.

The beatdown is on post match, including a chokeslam and a bunch of chair shots. Referees and suits finally break it up.

The cage is lowered.

Val Venis tells Edge to rip off Angle's wig. So Venis has gone from an adult star to a censorship advocate to Edge's buddy. That's quite the character evolution.

Angle swears his hair is natural and threatens pain for anyone who tries to show footage of his haircut. Violence against Edge is promised.

The Hart Family, including Stu, is in the crowd.

Kurt Angle vs. Edge

They have a lot of time for this one and it's inside a cage with pins/submissions or escape as winning options. For some reason Edge tries to take it to the mat early on before opting to send Angle flying into the cage. A spear attempt hits cage though and we hit a front facelock. The rolling German suplexes get two on Edge and he gets thrown into the cage a few times to draw some Canadian blood.

Edge's half nelson faceplant has Angle staggered but it's time for a ref bump. You can tell this is going to get stupid now. A belly to back superplex cuts off Angle's escape attempt and Tazz is amazed that Kurt's hair is still on. Edge goes up and gets low blowed back down, setting up one heck of a super Angle Slam. It's always cool looking when someone goes flying through the air into a big crash.

Angle goes over the top and escapes but here's Hogan for revenge from earlier. Back from a break with another Angle Slam getting two. Edge hits his own Slam but gets caught in the ankle lock. Angle is sent into the cage so Edge puts on his own ankle lock (Angle LOVED that stealing finishers spot).

That's reversed as well and Angle goes over the top, only to have Edge kick the door open to crotch Angle back down. Back inside and Kurt tries to run the corner for a superplex but a top rope spear (more like a shoulder but the timing was hard to pull off) gives Edge the pin. So does that make it one fall apiece?

Rating: B+. Hogan really brings this one down as he feels so out of place. You have a match with Angle and Edge beating the heck out of each other but then you do a false finish (with Angle winning completely legally) for the sake of advancing Angle vs. Hogan. I don't see a reason why you couldn't wait until after the cage match and then start the new feud as it's not like losing to Edge is going to take away all of Angle's heat. Hogan didn't help Edge get the win at the end but he was way too big of a factor in the match, which was excellent without him but just very, very good with him.

Post match Hogan goes after Angle but can't get the wig off. Hogan's music plays to end the show because that's how things work around here.

Overall Rating: C+. The first hour or so was dreadful but once you get to the meat of the show, this turned around in a hurry with some hard work and good wrestling. The holes are still there with stuff like HHH vs. Undertaker for the title (though there isn't another main eventer ready for the shot at the moment) and the mess that is the Tag Team Titles. The main event more than bails the show out though and is worth checking out if you have the time.

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Smackdown – May 16, 2002: More Vince

Smackdown

Date: May 16, 2002

Location: Bell Centre, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz

It's the go home show for Judgment Day and luckily hopefully we should get something competent this week. Smackdown may not be great but they're put together far better than Raw. At least this show has more than one top level good guy, which the red show certainly can't say at the moment. Let's get to it.

The opening video recaps Chris Jericho/Vince McMahon vs. HHH from last week, including the announcement of Sunday's Cell match.

Opening sequence.

Here's HHH for a chat because we haven't had that in a long time. See, Vince McMahon just doesn't get it. He thinks you can just send people out here and have Jericho hit him in the head and cut off everything that HHH has done. HHH is going to keep going no matter what because he's never going to stop. As for tonight though, how about Jericho comes out here right now for a preview of Sunday?

Instead HHH gets Edge, who was hit by HHH's sledgehammer last week. Edge says they're both good guys but he's got an itch to play the game. The fight is actually on but here are Jericho and Kurt Angle to beat down the self-described good guys. Angle cuts some of Edge's hair off but HHH makes the save...of someone who punched him in the face a few minutes ago. Well they're both good guys so it's a rule.

Stacy Keibler is about to give Vince a preview of her swimsuit for tonight's contest but Angle and Jericho run in to celebrate cutting Edge's hair. Tag match, main event, you know the drill.

Hardcore Holly/Lance Storm vs. Big Valbowski/Randy Orton

Orton charges in and gets chopped in the corner for his efforts. The

dropkick puts Holly down and it's off to Val to clean house. Orton's high crossbody gets two on Storm with the Overdrive (that weird spinning Fameasser neckbreaker) getting the same. Storm gets in a superkick for two but gives a lazy cover, allowing Orton to roll him up for the fast pin.

Recap of Undertaker and Hulk Hogan's motorcycle hijinks.

Hogan is here.

Maven awkwardly hits on Torrie Wilson and actually gets a date out of it. Torrie leaves but D-Von and Batista come in to yell at him for thinking lustful thoughts. Well yeah. Al Snow comes in because Maven still needs protection.

Ace reporter Gregory Helms comes in to see Funaki and accuses him of being evil. Funaki asks what's wrong with him but has a note on his back. The note says Hurricane will be in for some pain if he wins the Cruiserweight Title tonight. This was amusing for pure goofiness.

Jericho promises to pull off his mask and show how evil he can be.

Reverend D-Von vs. Maven

D-Von beats on Maven like the rookie he is to start but misses the middle rope headbutt. Some rollups get two each for Maven but Batista gets on the apron, allowing D-Von to kick Maven low. Cole: "A shot to the kidneys!" No Cole, not exactly. The reverse inverted DDT (Saving Grace) puts Maven away.

Batista beats up Al Snow post match.

Stacy is on her way to the ring but stops to look in a mirror. A short person pops out from a cupboard and shills a new camera. Stacy is as confused as you would think.

It's time for the swimsuit contest with Tazz emceeing. Stacy and Torrie come out but Tajiri comes out to cover Torrie up, despite us seeing most of what's under her robe. Stacy doesn't want to disrobe but here's Trish Stratus (who can be on both shows since she won the Women's Title) in a robe of her own. What luck that she was here and brought a robe with her own logo on the back. Trish doesn't have a swimsuit but does have some red lingerie. Stacy swings a shoe but gets kicked to the floor, leaving Trish as the default winner.

Post break Stacy comes in to rant to Vince, who gives her a Women's

Title shot on Sunday. D-Von and Batista are in Vince's office so Vince asks D-Von to provide protection. D-Von: "You want a reverend to buy CONDOMS?" Actually Vince means taking care of Bubba Ray Dudley, who will certainly be in Trish's corner. I'm certain that's not going to happen just because Vince suggests it either.

Rico vs. Rikishi

Rico jumps him from behind and gets launched into the air for a one man 3D (probably supposed to be a Samoan drop, as is Rikishi's custom). Billy and Chuck interfere to give Rico an opening but Billy dropkicks Chuck by mistake. The distraction allows Rico to get in a spinning kick to the face but Rikishi sits on his chest for the pin. Rikishi dances post match. Maybe he and Bubba Ray Dudley have a secret alliance?

Billy and Chuck and Rico interrupt Vince and Stacy (dude get a hotel already) to complain about losing to Rikishi. Vince says they'll be defending the titles on Sunday against Rikishi and a partner of Vince's choosing. It's going to be Rico.

HHH promises to destroy Jericho's career just like he did to Mick Foley. Edge comes in and says he'd love to continue their fight from earlier. HHH isn't interested until Edge wins a few more World Titles. Maybe Edge can use HHH's methods and marry the boss' daughter and sleep his way to the top (which Edge would eventually do with Vickie Guerrero). That was a better burn when it hadn't turned into a running joke.

Cruiserweight Title: Hurricane vs. Billy Kidman vs. Tajiri

Tajiri is defending and jumps Kidman during the entrance. Hurricane runs out and the champ gets double teamed until Kidman is smart enough to knock Hurricane outside. Kidman dropkicks Hurricane off the top and hits the shooting star for two on the champ with Hurricane making a last second save. A chokeslam gives Hurricane the title in less than three minutes. It's not like the title means anything anyway so put it on the entertaining Hurricane. It isn't likely to make a difference either way.

We run down Sunday's card.

Here's a limping Hogan, who actually has the nerve to sell that stupid motorcycle schtick from Monday. After a full three minute long ovation, Hogan praises the fans for having his back so many

times. We pause for more cheering before Hogan talks about being in his own fantasy world every time he comes out here. Cue Vince to say he hates Hulkamania and enjoyed Monday night. See, Hulkamania has a terminal illness called cancer.

This Sunday, Undertaker is going to stuff Hulkamania in a cardboard box and bury it once and for all. The fans start singing the Goodbye Song, which I guess is aimed at Vince, even though it doesn't make a ton of sense. Then again neither does cheering for Hogan. Vince says the red is for the blood Undertaker will spill on Sunday and the yellow is the streak up Hogan's back. The boss slaps him in the face so Hogan punches him a few times. The big legs wraps up this very unnecessarily long segment.

Chris Jericho/Kurt Angle vs. Edge/HHH

Edge is stupid enough to charge in before HHH gets out to the ring and earns the double teaming from Angle and Jericho. A flapjack puts Jericho down and the good guys (their official name remember) take over. Jericho offers a distraction though and Angle belly to belly superplexes Edge off the top. A regular belly to belly sets up a missed Lionsault but Edge is too slow to make the tag. Instead Jericho comes in with Three Amigos so Edge gets in a middle rope dropkick for a breather.

The hot (work with me here) tag to HHH allows house to be cleaned. The double teaming doesn't last long and it's back to Edge for a double clothesline. Edge spears a chair out of Jericho's hands, leaving HHH to Pedigree Angle for two with Chris making the save. HHH and Jericho fight into the crowd, leaving Angle to chair Edge in the head so the Angle Slam can give him the pin.

Rating: C-. I was bored with most of this as they were just going through the motions to set up both big matches at once. Edge vs. Angle is going to be fine and Jericho vs. HHH will be long yet watchable. The match was fine but there's only so much you can do when you're trying to fulfill a pretty simple goal.

Overall Rating: D. This show needed a lot more wrestling and a lot less Vince. Most of the show was built around Vince doing whatever he needed to advance stories or try to sleep with Stacy this week. The problem here though is only the main event was long enough to rate. I really need more than a bunch of two and a half minute matches and then a dull main event. Sunday's show isn't interesting

for the most part and this show didn't help anything.