

# Main Event – December 22, 2017: Even Dana Brooke Can't Help

## Main Event

Date: December 21, 2017

Location: Dunkin Donuts Center, Providence, Rhode Island

Commentators: Nigel McGuinness, Vic Joseph

We're almost to the end of the year here and hopefully the show does well on the way to 2018. Thankfully we have a lot of clips from both shows this week, but Smackdown might not be the most thrilling option in the world. I think you can guess what's going to get the focus from Raw though. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

## Kalisto vs. Ariya Daivari

Kalisto does a standing backflip to start and Daivari isn't sure what to think. A standing hurricanrana and an armdrag out of the corner send Daivari outside for a flip dive. Back in and Daivari gets in a cheap shot to escape the Salida Del Sol and grabs a quickly broken chinlock. An abdominal stretch keeps Kalisto in trouble until he slips out and tries a sleeper. Daivari has had it with these holds and grabs a spinebuster for two instead. The frog splash misses though and the hurricanrana driver plants Daivari. Back up and Daivari talks trash, setting up the Salida Del Sol to give Kalisto the pin at 6:03.

**Rating:** C-. Daivari is fine in the ring but basically a black hole of charisma. There's only so much you can do to overcome that and we're nowhere near the point where Daivari is going to pull that trick off. Kalisto is still the same guy he's been for a long time but that finisher is going to carry him as far as he needs to go.

From Raw.

Here's Kurt Angle to get things going. He recaps last week's main event as well (they really need to stop doing that just after we watched a video saying the same thing) and promises to solve the problem by the end of the night. Strowman comes out to say he should get the shot, followed by Kane to do the same. Before anything can happen, Paul Heyman comes out to say Lesnar needs to be involved in this. Brock hits the ring and Angle speeds through an announcement of the triple threat at the Rumble so he can get out. Lesnar cleans house and F5's Kane.

From Smackdown.

Here's Bryan to get things going. After mentioning the women's Royal Rumble, he plugs tonight's main event. Cue Shane and it's time for the awkward conversation. They talk about Sunday's match and Shane says the emotions got the better of him. When he was about to count the three, he thought of Owens beating his father up and the two of them screwing Smackdown at Survivor Series.

Bryan cheated too though, and Shane wants to know why. Daniel says he did it to protect Shane from himself, which Shane says he doesn't need. What Bryan did on Sunday was to protect their idea: making this place the land of opportunity for everyone, not just the people Shane likes. Shane warns Bryan that Sami and Kevin will turn on him when they've gotten what they can out of him. Bryan accuses Shane of doing what's best for business, and if that's the case, fire him now because he doesn't want to see Shane turn into Mr. McMahon. Shane teases firing him but says he'll let Daniel run the show tonight.

And from later in the same night.

Randy Orton/Shinsuke Nakamura/AJ Styles vs. Jinder Mahal/Kevin Owens/Sami Zayn

Rematch from Tribute to the Troops. Orton and Mahal get things going but everything breaks down before anything happens. Everyone winds up on the floor with Orton bouncing Mahal off the announcers' table. Back in where Nakamura is driven into the wrong corner so Sami can start in on the arm. Nakamura lays on Sami's chest on the ropes and pulls his chest hair out for a rare bit of offense. Orton drapes Sami over the top rope for two

and it's back to Mahal. The referee tells him thirty seconds and about thirty seconds later we go to a break with Owens stomping on Orton.

Back with Orton fighting out of a chinlock and bringing AJ in to...get sent outside in short order. Sami gets in some right hands for two of his own as the villains start taking turns on Styles. AJ DDT's his way to freedom and brings in Nakamura for the real house cleaning. A series of kicks and knees to the head rock Sami and that means Good Vibrations. More strikes look to set up the exploder but Nakamura settles for a cross armbreaker instead.

Owens is right there with the backsplash for the save but gets sent outside. Everything breaks down again with AJ slingshotting onto Owens with the forearm. The Singh Brothers break up the Kinshasa but only get ejected instead of drawing a DQ. Not that it matters as Mahal eats an RKO, drawing them back to ringside. That means a double draping DDT, a Phenomenal Forearm for Owens and Kinshasa for the pin on Sami at 15:21.

**Rating:** C+. Standard house show main event here and that's fine enough. I like the idea of Nakamura getting some feature time for a change as he could become a big time player in the main event scene soon enough if need be. That being said, was there ANY reason for Sami to take the pin here instead of Mahal? Come on already.

#### Apollo Crews vs. Curt Hawkins

Crews armdrags him into an armbars to start as the announcers talk about the 145 match losing streak. I'd pay to see his performance evaluation. Back up and Crews flips over Hawkins, sending him out for a breather. For some reason Hawkins lays down for Crews, only to try to pull him in for a small package. Back in and Crews is sent shoulder first into the post and we take a break. Back with Crews getting two off a standing moonsault and putting Hawkins on top. That just means a sunset bomb for two, followed by the Toss Powerbomb to end Curt at 8:42.

**Rating:** D+. Can we please find someone else to beat Hawkins up? We've covered this one about as long as possible and it's not getting any better. Even having Dana Brooke as the secretary/analyst on the floor didn't help here as there's only so much you can do with a pairing like

this.

Video on Stephanie McMahon announcing the Women's Royal Rumble, plus reactions to the announcement.

From Raw.

### Seth Rollins vs. Jason Jordan

Joe is at ringside. Jordan wrestles him to the mat for a bit until Rollins superkicks him in the ribs. A clothesline knocks Jordan at Joe's feet and we take a break. Back with Jordan working on the back off some Irish whips into the corner. It's off to a chinlock with a knee in the back before the running shoulder in the corner gets two.

Jordan gets in another suplex and we take a break. Back again with Rollins getting in some offense of his own, including the springboard clothesline. Jordan clotheslines him down again but gets knocked outside for a suicide dive. The second springboard clothesline is countered into rolling northern lights suplexes for two more as this keeps going.

Jordan takes him up top but gets shoved down, setting up the frog splash for two more. They head outside with the Wind-Up Knee smashing into Jordan's face. Seth throws Jordan into Joe before superkicking the Samoan down. Back in and the Wind-Up Knee finishes Jordan at 19:49.

**Rating:** B-. WAY longer than necessary here and another match that showcased the problem with Jordan: he can have good matches but he's one of the most annoying, whiny characters around. The good thing is they seem primed to turn him heel (the right move) so it might get better, but for now he's being rather annoying.

And from later in the show.

### The Bar/Samoa Joe vs. Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose/Jason Jordan

Jordan tags himself in and gets to face Sheamus, who clotheslines his head off. The triple stomping sets up a Sheamus knee drop for two as Jordan is in trouble. Back from a break with Rollins in trouble this time, including a Demolition Decapitator for two. The Irish Curse keeps

Seth down but a DDT gives him a little hope. Joe breaks up the hot tag attempt though and hits the corner enziguri.

Sheamus goes shoulder first into the post but Rollins still can't make the tag. Everything breaks down with a big brawl on the floor with Ambrose cleaning house. Cesaro cuts off another hot tag attempt but Dean comes in anyway. A big suicide dive cuts everyone off but Dean is holding his elbow. The referee calls the doctor over and a very quick Brogue Kick ends Rollins at 13:30.

**Rating:** C. Well that's not good. They went straight to the finish and while they did keep the camera on Dean longer than they usually would in an injury, that seemed a bit too realistic. Hopefully he's not hurt and doesn't have to miss any time, though given how things have gone for the Shield it wouldn't surprise me.

Joe and the Bar attack Rollins and Ambrose, including crushing the bad arm with an anvil case.

**Overall Rating:** C-. The lack of Smackdown material is far from surprising as there just wasn't enough going on Tuesday to warrant a spot here. The Women's Royal Rumble is the biggest story of the week and that deserves a lot of attention on this show. Just having a little Smackdown stuff helped though and that's what this show has been needing. Well, one of many things but it's a start.

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# Monday Night Raw – December 18, 2017: It's About That Time

## Monday Night Raw

Date: December 18, 2017

Location: Dunkin Donuts Center, Providence, Rhode Island

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

We're officially past the last pay per view of the year and that means it's time to get ready for the Royal Rumble. Tonight we might find out what's going on with the Universal Title match as Brock Lesnar is here and Braun Strowman and Kane are both ready to meet him face to face. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of last week's main event with Kane vs. Strowman going to a double countout in a #1 contenders match.

Opening sequence.

Here's Kurt Angle to get things going. He recaps last week's main event as well (they really need to stop doing that just after we watched a video saying the same thing) and promises to solve the problem by the end of the night. Strowman comes out to say he should get the shot, followed by Kane to do the same. Before anything can happen, Paul Heyman comes out to say Lesnar needs to be involved in this. Brock hits the ring and Angle speeds through an announcement of the triple threat at the Rumble so he can get out. Lesnar cleans house and F5's Kane.

## Seth Rollins vs. Samoa Joe

Hang on as Jason Jordan comes out and says he should be the one facing Samoa Joe, which he's been wanting to do for two weeks. Rollins says he

doesn't care but here's Joe to say fight each other and the winner fights him later tonight.

### Seth Rollins vs. Jason Jordan

Joe is at ringside. Jordan wrestles him to the mat for a bit until Rollins superkicks him in the ribs. A clothesline knocks Jordan at Joe's feet and we take a break. Back with Jordan working on the back off some Irish whips into the corner. It's off to a chinlock with a knee in the back before the running shoulder in the corner gets two.

Jordan gets in another suplex and we take a break. Back again with Rollins getting in some offense of his own, including the springboard clothesline. Jordan clotheslines him down again but gets knocked outside for a suicide dive. The second springboard clothesline is countered into rolling northern lights suplexes for two more as this keeps going.

Jordan takes him up top but gets shoved down, setting up the frog splash for two more. They head outside with the Wind-Up Knee smashing into Jordan's face. Seth throws Jordan into Joe before superkicking the Samoan down. Back in and the Wind-Up Knee finishes Jordan at 19:49.

**Rating:** B-. WAY longer than necessary here and another match that showcased the problem with Jordan: he can have good matches but he's one of the most annoying, whiny characters around. The good thing is they seem primed to turn him heel (the right move) so it might get better, but for now he's being rather annoying.

Post match Joe lays out both guys. Booker: "It's called a love tap in our business."

Back from a break with Rollins, Jordan and Dean Ambrose saying they want a piece of Samoa Joe. Angle makes a six man tag match with the three of them facing Joe/the Bar.

We look back at Matt Hardy being woken.

Bray Wyatt wants to know why people are drawn to Matt. Is it the childish laugh? Or maybe the funny faces he makes? Bray is here to make sure that the right people get hurt, like Matt and all of the fans. He starts

singing before saying she is sorry because the Great War must end.

### Finn Balor vs. Miztourage

Bo Dallas starts for the team as the announcers can't stop laughing at each other in that forced way that only they can do. Balor takes care of him in short order so it's off to Curtis Axel for some stomping in the corner. Axel right hands Balor down and continues his variety of stomping, followed by some knees from Dallas. Finn knocks Axel off the top and loads up the Coup de Grace, only to have Dallas come in for the double beatdown and the DQ at 5:44.

**Rating:** D+. I can live with a loss like this as you don't want Balor to be that much of a world beater. Miz should be back soon so we can do the real feud, which should be Balor destroying him in all of five minutes. If nothing else this gives Balor a much needed win in a feud as they try to rebuild him. Granted that won't help if he just keeps losing but it's better than nothing.

Post match Hideo Itami makes his main roster debut for the save. I love it when WWE basically admits that 205 Live means nothing.

### Hideo Itami/Finn Balor vs. Miztourage

Joined in progress after a break Itami working on Dallas' arm and handing it back to Balor, who gets caught in a backbreaker. We hit the chinlock for a long while with Cole explaining Itami's WWE history (minus the series of injuries). Back up and Itami gets the hot tag to clean house, including a running knee for two on Dallas. Balor takes Dallas down, leaving Itami to GTS Axel for the pin at 4:29.

**Rating:** C-. Itami is a rather small guy but it's cool to see him thrown in there with the heavyweights. If nothing else it continues WWE's rather hilarious attempts to pretend like 205 Live needs to exist, given the fact that Itami just beat up two heavyweights with practically no problem. That being said, it would have been interesting to see him debut next week in Chicago and hitting the GTS there, assuming it didn't set off two hours of CM Punk chants.

Cedric Alexander is only going to be overlooking Drew when he's looking over him with his hand raised in victory.

### Drew Gulak vs. Cedric Alexander

The winner gets Enzo Amore for the title at some point in the future. Before the match, Enzo talks about his microphone being a lightsaber. Drew: "If we're talking Star Wars, I've always considered myself a Jar Jar Binks." The PowerPoint is loaded up but Cedric cuts him off as you knew he would. Cedric starts fast and sends Drew to the floor for a big flip dive.

Drew suplexes him over the top but gets pulled out as well, leaving them both in a heap as we take a break. Back with Gulak in control as Enzo keeps making up names for Drew. A chinlock sets up a pinfall reversal sequence, followed by Drew walking into a C4 for two. Gulak comes back with something like a sitting STF but Cedric makes the rope. Enzo looks at his phone and leaves, much to Gulak's dismay. The springboard clothesline (the third of the night) into the Lumbar Check for the pin and the title shot at 12:52.

**Rating:** C. This was any given 205 Live main event and while completely acceptable, it was again mostly about Enzo. Cedric winning is the right call (despite Gulak rocketing up the entertainment charts as of late) but good night he better win the title. Enzo has destroyed everything he touches as of late and a change is needed.

Post break Enzo comes up to see Nia Jax, who seems interested in a little alone time. Gulak, with a bloody piece of gauze in his nose, comes in to ask if they can go over what happened. Enzo shouts that he did a lot of things wrong and leaves.

### Asuka vs. Alicia Fox

They circle each other for a bit until the screechy Fox bails from the threat of a cross armbreaker. Back in and Fox's northern lights suplex sets up a chinlock, only to have Asuka kick her in the head. The armbreaker makes Fox tap at 3:43.

**Rating:** D. Is there a reason Asuka isn't just mauling people like Fox? Since WWE doesn't let Asuka actually beat anyone of note, we're stuck with her having issues with Fox and Dana Brooke. I mean...they clearly get the idea of her dominating everything but she doesn't actually dominate most of the time. Why is this so complicated? Just let her fight a name already.

### The Bar/Samoa Joe vs. Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose/Jason Jordan

Jordan tags himself in and gets to face Sheamus, who clotheslines his head off. The triple stomping sets up a Sheamus knee drop for two as Jordan is in trouble. Back from a break with Rollins in trouble this time, including a Demolition Decapitator for two. The Irish Curse keeps Seth down but a DDT gives him a little hope. Joe breaks up the hot tag attempt though and hits the corner enziguri.

Sheamus goes shoulder first into the post but Rollins still can't make the tag. Everything breaks down with a big brawl on the floor with Ambrose cleaning house. Cesaro cuts off another hot tag attempt but Dean comes in anyway. A big suicide dive cuts everyone off but Dean is holding his elbow. The referee calls the doctor over and a very quick Brogue Kick ends Rollins at 13:30.

**Rating:** C. Well that's not good. They went straight to the finish and while they did keep the camera on Dean longer than they usually would in an injury, that seemed a bit too realistic. Hopefully he's not hurt and doesn't have to miss any time, though given how things have gone for the Shield it wouldn't surprise me.

Stephanie arrives. Oh come on now we were doing so well without her.

Matt Hardy is playing chess with a goldfish named Napoleon. After beating the fish and agreeing to a rematch, Matt talks about Bray Wyatt and how WWE is like a chess board. Matt goes back to the board (whose pieces have been moved) and promises to delete Bray and Sister Abigail.

Joe and the Bar attack Rollins and Ambrose, including crushing the bad arm with an anvil case.

### Heath Slater/Rhyno vs. Revival

Slater gets punched in the face to start as we see Titus Worldwide, including a note taking Dana Brooke now in black with glasses, watching in the back. Wilder and Slater bang heads but Wilder is up in time to pull Rhyno off the apron. The Shatter Machine ends Slater at 3:04.

**Rating:** D+. Pretty much a squash here but it's just nice to see Revival back and being dominant again. They're still awesome and could be a good addition to the title scene, assuming they don't break down again in all of five minutes. Slater and Rhyno are good for something like this and that's all this needed to be.

Post break Angle comes up to Slater and Rhyno, saying they need to step it up if they want opportunities next year. Slater panics but Rhyno says his attitude needs to change and has an idea of how to fix it. Slater: "Is this going to hurt?"

Elias is in the ring and talks about being an inspiration to Tom Brady. This turns into a list of insults about Brady as Elias continues to know how to work a crowd. Angle is scared of him and it's going to be even worse when he's in the Royal Rumble. Elias is about to sing a song about Roger Goodell but Sasha Banks' entrance cuts him off.

### Sasha Banks/Mickie James/Bayley vs. Absolution

Banks throws Paige around to start but gets caught in the wrong corner. Absolution takes turns on her with Paige stomping her down. Paige gets tossed to the side though and the bot tag brings in Bayley as everything breaks down. The fight heads outside until Banks hits her top rope double knees on DeWille, only to have the rest of Absolution come in for the brawl. The referee throws it out at 3:08.

**Rating:** D. That ending screams a post match angle and I'm pretty sure that's where we're going. I mean, we're less than two months away from the Royal Rumble and a women's version has been discussed. They certainly have the numbers to pull it off at this point and with Stephanie around, it sounds like announcement time.

Post match the brawl is on with the rest of the roster (including Brooke changing from her street clothes to ring gear and changing her hair) coming out. Cue Stephanie to talk about the Women's Revolution and how important it is. We hear about all the things the women have done and the women's Royal Rumble is announced to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D+. This show felt very long and that's not a good thing. The announcement at the end helped a lot (save for Stephanie's regular screeching and everyone stopping their hatred because of her mere presence) but the wrestling wasn't great and it felt like it was eighteen hours long again. I do however take some solace in the fact that WWE continues to treat 205 Live like it's nothing, with Itami debuting and the #1 contenders match taking place on Raw. This wasn't a very good show, but it's Rumble time and that means things will get good in a hurry.

### Results

Seth Rollins b. Jason Jordan – Wind-Up Knee

Finn Balor b. Miztourage via DQ when Axel and Dallas double teamed Balor

Finn Balor/Hideo Itami b. Miztourage – GTS to Axel

Cedric Alexander b. Drew Gulak – Lumbar Check

Asuka b. Alicia Fox – Cross armbreaker

The Bar/Samoa Joe b. Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose/Jason Jordan – Brogue Kick to Rollins

Revival b. Heath Slater/Rhyno – Shatter Machine to Slater

Mickie James/Bayley/Sasha Banks b. Absolution via DQ when Absolution triple teamed Banks

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# Tribute to the Troops 2017: It Is What It Is

## Tribute to the Troops 2017

Date: December 14, 2017

Location: Naval Station San Diego, San Diego, California

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Byron Saxton

It's the fifteenth annual special and that's rather impressive. You never can know what to expect from these but it's always cool to see WWE do something like this. The wrestling means very little at this show and there's going to be a lot of filler but to complain about that would be missing the point. Let's get to it.

The show is outside again for the first time in a good many years for a very cool setting.

Lillian Garcia performs the National Anthem at her usual amazing standard.

We look at a history of the show.

## Shield vs. Samoa Joe/The Bar

Rollins and Reigns start things off with the troops in the audience

telling Sheamus he'll get sunburned. Some rapid fire elbows have Cesaro in trouble and it's off to Dean for more of the same. Ambrose gets caught in the wrong corner though and it's Joe hammering away. Everything breaks down and it's the Shield cleaning house in short order. Back from a break with Rollins hitting a suicide dive and making the hot tag to Reigns. Everything breaks down again with Reigns Superman Punching Cesaro for two. The Wind-Up knee into Dirty Deeds drops Sheamus and it's a spear to end Cesaro at 9:49.

**Rating:** C. I'm going to be a lot more lenient on the wrestling tonight because like I said, it's just not the point. I'd be stunned if a heel wins tonight because this is the definition of a send them home happy show. You're going to see these teams fight again on a big stage at some point and this was a nice preview.

Post match Reigns says the Shield brings the fight but the people in the audience here bring the big fight. Rollins and Ambrose say similar things and everyone smiles.

The cast of Star Wars loves the troops.

Clips of John Cena's involvement with the troops over the years.

### Carmella vs. Charlotte vs. Ruby Riott

Non-title with most of the division on the floor. Ruby bails to the floor to start before sneaking back in to jump Charlotte from behind. Charlotte gets in a few shots of her own but here's Natalya to offer a distraction as we take a break. Back with Charlotte making a comeback but getting caught on top. Carmella pulls Ruby down and hits a Stratusphere for two on Charlotte and things slow down. Charlotte is back up with a double suplex and the rapid fire chops. A big boot sets up the Figure Eight to make Carmella tap at 10:04.

**Rating:** C. More of the same here with the face dominating and pulling off a win without much effort. Above all else though, how nice is it that the women aren't in the Santa's Little Helpers matches or whatever they want to call it this time? It's really cool to see them have an actual match, even if it's something this simple.

Charlotte thanks the troops, particularly the women.

Package of the wrestlers with the troops.

The cast of Pitch Perfect 3 love the troops.

Luke Bryan loves the troops.

Stephen Colbert loves the troops.

Machine Gun Kelly performs.

The cast of Daddy's Home 2 loves the troops.

Sgt. Slaughter doesn't want a fake Marine like Miz pretending to be the real thing. Dolph Ziggler is here too but doesn't have much to say. Mark Henry comes in to tell Sarge to keep at it.

#### New Day/Usos vs. Shelton Benjamin/Chad Gable/Rusev/Aiden English

Before the match, New Day changes up their signature chant to a USA version. Big E. hits the abdominal stretch with some spanking on Gable to start and it's off to Jey for a running Umaga Attack. Jey gets sent outside and into the barricade though as we take a break. Back with Rusev keeping Jey in trouble and Shelton coming in for a hard spinebuster. The Samoan drop allows the hot tag to Jimmy so house can be cleaned. Everything breaks down and the Midnight Hour puts Shelton away at 8:03.

**Rating:** C-. New Day was a requirement on a show like this as the fans are going to eat them up and the chants are always fun. It was perfectly fine with the right guy taking the fall and the right team winning. If nothing else it's cool to see English getting a chance to do something with that sweet voice of his.

The cast of Ferdinand loves the troops.

The cast of This Is Us loves the troops.

The cast of the Today Show loves the troops.

## Sasha Banks/Bayley/Mickie James vs. Absolution

Mandy shoves Bayley into the corner to start but gets forearmed away for her efforts. Mickie comes in to kick away at Sonya and a running forearm gets two. Everything breaks down and they fight on the floor as we take a break. Back with Mandy kneeling Bayley in the face for two but getting caught in a Stunner. Sasha comes in for the running knees in the corner but Sonya makes a save. Mickie's top rope Thesz press gets two on Paige and she dives onto the other two for good measure. Not that it matters as a quick Rampaige ends Mickie at 10:06.

**Rating:** C+. If any heels were going to win tonight, this makes the most sense. Absolution needs to stay strong, which includes a match like this. The match was rather energetic and it's fine to have Mickie take a fall as that's pretty much all her job entails at the moment. Of course none of this matters for the most part as Asuka is the big target but we'll get to her soon enough.

Stormtroopers were at the base today as Star Wars: The Last Jedi debuts this weekend.

Machine Gun Kelly performs again.

Clint Eastwood loves the troops.

The cast of Father Figures loves the troops.

## Randy Orton/Shinsuke Nakamura/AJ Styles vs. Jinder Mahal/Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens

Orton wastes no time with the threat of an RKO to send Owens bailing to the floor. Back from a break with Owens stomping at Orton long enough that he can bring Mahal in. Nakamura comes in for the knees to the ribs, including the big knee drop for no cover. Mahal takes him into the corner for a bit but Nakamura fights away and gets it back to Styles.

The belly to back faceplant gets two on Owens and Mahal has to break up the Calf Crusher. Orton DDTs both Singh Brothers but walks into a superkick from Owens. Nakamura and Zayn come in as everything breaks down. We hit the parade of finishers, capped off by Kinshasa for the pin

on Sami at 10:18.

**Rating:** C+. Like there was any doubt in this one. Nakamura might not have gotten the best reaction in the world but he has a good looking finisher and this isn't exactly a normal show. Styles and Orton were crazy over of course and there's nothing like beating up three foreigners to end the show.

One last music tribute wraps things up.

**Overall Rating:** C+. As you might expect, the ratings here mean nothing. This is like wondering what the audience is for a Best Of show or something like that. Tribute to the Troops is for the live crowd and there's nothing wrong with that idea. The wrestling doesn't matter and as long as there's a good atmosphere, which there was, everything is fine.

### Results

Shield b. Samoa Joe/The Bar – Spear to Cesaro

Charlotte b. Carmella and Ruby Riott – Figure Eight to Carmella

New Day/Usos b. Shelton Benjamin/Chad Gable/Rusev/Aiden English – Midnight Hour to Benjamin

Absolution b. Mickie James/Bayley/Sasha Banks – Rampaige to James

Randy Orton/AJ Styles/Shinsuke Nakamura b. Sami Zayn/Kevin Owens/Jinder Mahal – Kinshasa to Zayn

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# Monday Night Raw – December 11, 2017: Which Way Is Philadelphia?

## Monday Night Raw

Date: December 11, 2017

Location: Quicken Loans Arena, Cleveland, Ohio

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

It's officially time to start getting ready for the Royal Rumble as we have a #1 contenders match to crown a new challenger to Brock Lesnar. Tonight it's Braun Strowman vs. Kane for that title shot in a match that seems to be so simple that there almost has to be something screwy going on. Let's get to it.

The narrated recaps are back, this time setting up tonight's three singles matches between the Shield and Samoa Joe/The Bar.

Samoa Joe is in the ring to talk about how the Shield has taken out so many people over the years. He's not impressed though because he's already taken care of Reigns and Rollins and tonight he'll add Ambrose to the list. For now though, he wants Reigns to come out here like a man. We cut to the back where Rollins sends Ambrose to get Roman. Dude go get him yourself. Joe goes on about how no one can face him until Reigns finally joins his partners in the back, only to come out a few seconds later. The fight is on but here are the Bar for the beatdown. Shield comes in, only to get beaten down in short order.

## Bayley/Mickie James vs. Mandy Rose/Paige

Before the match, Absolution says they're here to destroy everything and

there's nothing anyone can do about it. Bayley and Mandy start things off but Paige is in almost immediately. Mandy breaks up a double suplex but Absolution is sent outside. That means a double dive from the apron and we take a break.

Back with Bayley fighting out of a chinlock but getting kned in the chest for two. Paige hits a running knee of her own and mocks Bayley not being able to get to the corner. You really can see how much more experienced she is than either Mandy or Sonya. Bayley rolls away and the hot tag brings in Mickie for some house cleaning. A flapjack and top rope Thesz press gets two on Mandy as everything breaks down. Paige kicks Mickie in the head though and Mandy steals the pin at 8:22.

**Rating:** C-. Absolution continues to roll, as they should, but that pre-match promo is a great reason why the division has a lot of its problems. The speaking in catchphrases and awfully scripted lines takes me out of a lot of the promos and it's getting worse and worse. If you really can't have them say "we're Absolution and we're awesome", maybe it's time you found a different way to teach these women to talk.

Clash of Champions preview.

Bray Wyatt is here but Matt Hardy is WOKEN.

Post break, Wyatt talks about how there will always be darkness vs. light but Matt, with a WOKEN graphic (erg), says the Great War has gone on for eons. They both talk about being light and dark with Matt saying he's met Sister Abigail before when they walked hand in hand, admiring the Gardens of Babylon. The Woken Warriors are preparing for battle against the Wyatt swarm and they shall delete. A laugh off ensues, going on so long that it becomes funny.

We look back at Nia Jax having a thing for Enzo Amore.

Enzo is admiring his Cruiserweight Championship when a suited Drew Gulak comes in. Tonight there is going to be another fatal four way with the winner getting to face Gulak next week in a #1 contenders match. Enzo mentions Jax and Gulak is rather confused. Drew says he gets it before saying that was Enzo trying to teach him to be ready for anything.

## Finn Balor vs. Curtis Axel

Axel mocks Finn's entrance and THE BRACE IS OFF! Bo Dallas gets in a cheap shot to start and we're ready to go after a pre-match beatdown. Curtis gets in an early Hennig necksnap and cranks on the neck. Balor pops up, hits the shotgun dropkick and finishes Axel with the Coup de Grace at 1:39.

Kane is ready to enter the abyss with a fellow monster. He'll climb back out alone though.

## Seth Rollins vs. Sheamus

Seth wastes no time in knocking him outside for a suicide dive. They get back in with Sheamus hammering away to take over with the power offense. Sheamus misses a kick in the corner though as Booker rips on CrossFit. A Blockbuster connects and Sheamus is knocked outside again, only to knee Seth down as we take a break. Back with Sheamus holding a bad looking chinlock before Sheamus starts in on the knee.

We hit a modified Brock Lock before Seth tries a hurricane. That's quickly countered into a Cloverleaf which is countered into a small package for two. Seth gets two more off a DDT, followed by the low superkick for the same. Sheamus goes after the knee but gets caught in the superplex into the Falcon Arrow for a very delayed two. The knee is shot though and Rollins can't follow up. Sheamus grabs a Regal Roll but misses the Brogue Kick. Seth's Wind-Up knee is good for the pin at 13:47.

**Rating:** B-. And so, they have another match. These two and their respective partners have been having these same matches for what feels like forever now and there's no reason to believe they're going to stop anytime soon. Just mix things up a bit or (just work with me here), FIND SOMEONE NEW FOR THEM TO FEUD AGAINST. I know that's crazy talk but it just might work.

Ambrose's strategy for tonight: avoid getting kicked in the face and avoid the Koquina Clutch.

## Ariya Daivari vs. Mustafa Ali vs. Cedric Alexander vs. Tony Nese

The winner gets Gulak, on commentary here, next week. Cedric and Tony slug it out to start before heading outside so Ali can hit a good looking flip dive off the top. Back in and Daivari hammers away on Cedric as Gulak won't answer if he'll lay down for Enzo should he get the title shot.

Nese comes back in but can't hit a pumphandle slam on Ali. Daivari hits Nese by mistake but Ali DDT's Alexander to put all four down. Back from a break with Ali fighting out of a chinlock, only to get pulled right back down. The fans are almost eerily silent because we're in a rest hold in a four way. Ali's rolling X Factor gets two with Nese making the save. Nese gets dropped for the 054 with Cedric making a save of his own this time.

Cedric and Ali slug it out until a Lumbar Check plants Ali. Daivari tries to steal the pin, only to have Cedric pull him out as well. Nese adds a big flip dive to the two of them, followed by the running knee. Ali gets in a save of his own but Alexander cleans house, capped off by a Lumbar Check to end Daivari at 13:02.

**Rating:** C. I can't get over that chinlock eating up so much time in the middle. That being said, I'm very happy with Cedric winning, even if I can't imagine him winning the title whenever he faces Enzo. Not a bad match here, but longer than it needed to be, which is often a bigger problem than being bad.

Post break, Gulak comes up to Enzo and says he'll win next week then go on to become champion. It's just some friendly banter but Enzo doesn't like it, saying Gulak works for him. Enzo says there's one word to describe the PowerPoint presentations, but Gulak says that word is informative. Nia comes up and says she and Enzo should talk when he's not busy. Gulak: "Informative."

#### Intercontinental Title: Roman Reigns vs. Cesaro

Reigns is defending and starts fast with uppercuts and clotheslines. They fight to the floor and we take an early break. Back with Cesaro cranking on the arm after swinging it into the barricade for a sick thud during the commercial. Reigns fights out with a backslide for two, followed by a rollup. That's reversed into a Fujiwara armbar and then a regular armbar.

Reigns fights up again and hits the apron kick to the face for two, only to get pulled into a Crossface.

Reigns reverses into a Samoan drop for two, only to be sent HARD into the post. It doesn't seem to matter that much though as Reigns scores with a Superman punch off the apron. The arm won't let him follow up properly though, allowing Cesaro to grab another Crossface. The Swing is reversed into a sitout powerbomb for two more but Reigns can't follow up. Cesaro slugs away in the corner but the Neutralizer is countered with a backdrop, followed by the spear to retain the title at 16:53.

**Rating:** B+. It's a long match but it actually needed a little more time. I would have liked a lot more of Reigns fighting back and something better than "spear, ow my arm, pin". Cesaro working on the arm for that long looked like it was going somewhere but then they just went to the finish. That being said, they beat the heck out of each other for a long time and it was a heck of a match. Just have a better finish and it's a classic.

Strowman is ready to go to the Royal Rumble.

#### Alicia Fox vs. Asuka

And no match as Absolution has attacked Fox. Absolution jumps Asuka as well with the rest of the division running out for the save.

Jason Jordan still wants a match with Samoa Joe but angle turns him down again. Angle says he'll get there eventually but it's when Angle says so. Jordan: "Ok Kurt."

#### Dean Ambrose vs. Samoa Joe

Jordan comes out to watch from the stage, allowing Ambrose to jump a distracted Joe. A crossbody bounces off of Joe so he stomps away for a bit. Dean goes after the knee and takes it to the floor but gets sent into the steps as we take a break. Back with Joe missing the backplash but peppering Dean with jabs to the face.

Joe grabs a suplex to cut him off again but here's Jordan for a distraction. Jordan and Joe go face to face but Dean dives on him. Dean

gets in his face so Joe dives on both of them as well, followed by a backplash to Jordan. Back in and the Koquina Clutch knocks Ambrose out at 10:49.

**Rating:** C. Just a match here with Jordan again messing with things he doesn't need to be involved in. Joe is likely the next challenger for Reigns and the Intercontinental Title but it could be interesting to see where Jordan goes in the middle. That being said, Joe is the far better challenger and that's where they should go.

Titus Worldwide announces Dana Brooke as statistician and head of research and development. Anderson and Gallows come in to laugh at them but Strowman comes up and scares everyone away.

Video on Strowman vs. Kane.

#### Kane vs. Braun Strowman

The winner gets Lesnar at the Rumble. Strowman wastes no time by splashing Kane in the corner, followed by a running dropkick for one. Kane avoids a charge though and a chokeslam gets two. Another chokeslam gets the same before Strowman chokeslams Kane for good measure. They fight into the crowd and Strowman spears Kane through the barricade for a double countout at 4:31.

**Rating:** C-. It was fun while it lasted in a Brock Lesnar vs. Goldberg at Wrestlemania kind of way but that's about all it had. I don't think anyone expected Kane to win here and Strowman not winning is likely a good idea, especially if it would have meant losing to Lesnar again at the Rumble. I really hope Lesnar does defend at the pay per view (assuming he's not injured or something) but this doesn't give me a lot of hope.

The fight continues post match with both guys picking up steps. Said steps are rammed together with Strowman getting the better of it but he can't crush Kane's throat again. Kane chairs Strowman in the knee and then the back, finally taking the monster down. Kane sets up a table but a double clothesline gives us a double situp. Strowman muscles him up for the powerslam through the table to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C. The wrestling was strong here but they're completely out of steam with this Joe/Bar vs. Shield stuff. I really don't get why they didn't just do the big blowoff six man match and move on to anything else, but annoyingly enough it seems to be little more than they don't have another idea. The rest of the show was hit and miss but those three matches and the main event dominated. Not the worst show but they need something to build towards soon.

### Results

Paige/Mandy Rose b. Mickie James/Bayley – Kick to Mickie's head

Finn Balor b. Curtis Axel – Coup de Grace

Seth Rollins b. Sheamus – Wind-Up knee

Cedric Alexander b. Mustafa Ali, Ariya Daivari and Tony Nese – Lumbar Check to Daivari

Roman Reigns b. Cesaro – Spear

Samoa Joe b. Dean Ambrose – Koquina Clutch

Braun Strowman vs. Kane went to a double countout

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# Monday Night Raw – December 4, 2017: I Like The Wrestling Shows

## Monday Night Raw

Date: December 4, 2017

Location: Staples Center, Los Angeles, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

It's off to the big city this week as the build towards whatever their next big show will be. In theory that will be the Christmas night episode but they won't be on pay per view again for a good while. The big story is the issue between Kane and Braun Strowman, because for some reason Kane needs to be built up to be fed to Strowman. Let's get to it.

We open with a recap of Roman Reigns defending the Intercontinental Title against Elias and then being choked out by Samoa Joe.

Here's Kurt Angle to get things going. He's ready to announce that Roman Reigns will be defending the Intercontinental Title against....someone but Jason Jordan comes out to interrupt. He wants Reigns, despite his bad knee. Jordan lists off the people he's been in the ring with, bad knee or no bad knee. This brings out Reigns to say he wants Joe. Jordan still wants the shot so Reigns tells him to step up and take it. Now it's Joe coming out to say Reigns knows he can't beat him. Jordan actually suplexes Reigns so Roman says it's on right now.

## Intercontinental Title: Roman Reigns vs. Jason Jordan

Reigns is defending and knocks Jordan outside to start. Back in and Jordan's right hands don't have much effect and Reigns clotheslines him outside again. Jordan fights out of a chinlock and drives Reigns into the corner four times in a row. The running shoulder doesn't work but Reigns

is sent shoulder first into the post.

Back from a break with Jordan working on the arm and Samoa Joe watching from the stage. Reigns fights up and hits the corner clotheslines, only to walk into a dropkick for a near fall. They head outside again with Jordan driving him into the steps a few times. That's only good for two more though and we take a second break.

Back again with Reigns putting the bad knee in a half crab. Jordan reverses into a small package but gets his head taken off by the Superman Punch. Some rolling belly to belly suplexes (with the bad knee raised in the air) give Jordan two more but it's the spear to retain the title at 20:34.

**Rating:** B-. Jordan is a rather interesting case as he's death on the microphone but can put on an entertaining match. Reigns is in a similar place but his talking has gotten far better over time. Jordan might be able to get somewhere in due time but this character really, really isn't working. At least the match was good though.

Post match Joe comes in and chokes Reigns, only to have Jordan make the save with a suplex. Ever the grateful one, Reigns Superman Punches Jordan to the floor.

Post break Jordan wants a match with Samoa Joe but Angle finally snaps, telling him to quit demanding things. Angle finally says he'll take it under advisement but here's Joe to deck Jordan from behind, knocking him head first into a wall.

Video on Absolution attacking Bayley and Mickie James last week.

### Paige vs. Sasha Banks

Alexa Bliss is on commentary again and Banks has Bayley and Mickie with her. Sasha wastes no time in throwing Paige down and hammering away both on the mat and in the corner. Paige kicks her down and stomps away as well before hitting the chinlock. Some shouting sets up a front facelock as things stay slow.

Sasha fights up with a high crossbody for two before grabbing a cross arm

choke. Paige makes the ropes so Sasha just hammers away to keep her in trouble. The Bank Statement is broken up and they fall out to the floor as we take a break. Back with Paige grabbing her front facelock as Bliss calls Cole rude for bringing up her leaving last week.

Banks fights up with a clothesline and some dropkicks, only to miss the running knees in the corner. Paige heads up top and catches Banks with a sunset bomb. The Rampaige is countered into the Bank Statement but Paige gets her foot under the rope. The other four get in a brawl on the floor though, allowing the Rampaige to put Banks away at 16:06.

**Rating:** B. Another good match here and the best thing is that Paige looked like she hadn't lost a step. This was her first match in a year and she was every bit as good as she used to be. Paige can be a very valuable asset to the division and if she can bring the other two up with her, then it's all the better.

Post match Absolution takes out the other two, including Rose gordbusting Banks onto DeVille's knee.

Elias comes in to see Angle and wants another shot at Roman Reigns. Since there's no match though, it's just going to be a concert. Angle offers to give him a match later anyway.

Video on Braun Strowman vs. Kane.

Enzo Amore gives the Zo Train a pep talk. The team leaves and Nia Jax of all people comes up and asks Enzo how he's doing. The fans seem very, VERY interested in this.

Cedric Alexander vs. Mustafa Ali vs. Drew Gulak vs. Tony Nese

The winner faces Rich Swann next week in a #1 contenders match. Alexander dropkicks Gulak to the floor and Ali takes care of Nese, giving us a good guy showdown. Ali headlocks him to little avail but we're quickly off to a standoff. Gulak and Nese pull Ali outside though, leaving Cedric to take them down with a big flip dive.

Back in and Cedric gets caught in the Tree of Woe so Nese can do the situps into the kicks to the ribs. That's still a great little spot and

works so well for him. Gulak won't let Nese go up top though, allowing Ali to come off the top with a high crossbody. It's Cedric coming back in and cleaning house, including a springboard Downward Spiral to Gulak.

Ali is back in with his rolling X-Factor to Nese, followed by the springboard clothesline to Gulak as we take a break. Back with Cedric fighting out of a chinlock and hitting the moonsault kick to Gulak's head. Nese tries to make a save but gets sent outside. A standing C4 catches Ali for two with Nese making another save.

Cedric goes up top so Ali returns the favor with a springboard C4 but this time it's Gulak breaking it up. Ali can't hit the 054 though, leaving Alexander to hit a pair of Lumbar Checks. That's fine with Gulak, who slides in with a knee to Alexander to steal the pin on Ali at 15:54.

**Rating:** B-. The good matches continue, even if they won't pull the freaking trigger on a Cedric push already. The guy has a good look, can go in the ring and is popular with the fans. It's not like there are many people in the division with that kind of resume but we have to go with the heel vs. face match instead. At least the match was solid again, which is better than you usually get with something like this.

Gulak teases a PowerPoint presentation but we see Elias walking through the back instead.

Here's Elias to say he's awesome and sing about it to make everything clear.

### Elias vs. Braun Strowman

Elias bails so Strowman catches him without too much trouble. A toss sends Elias flying out to the floor, meaning it's guitar time. That has no effect whatsoever and it's the running powerslam to plant Elias. The bell never rang so no match.

Strowman throws the steps inside but here's Kane on the screen. He talks about Strowman forgetting how to be a monster among monsters and offers to take Strowman into the abyss.

The Shield is ready to get their titles back.

## Asuka vs. Alicia Fox

Fox actually throws her down to start so Asuka smiles up at her. A shoulder just annoys Asuka and it's a big hip attack to drop Fox. One heck of a kick to the face gives Fox two but the ax kick misses. Asuka kicks her in the head and the cross armbreaker makes Fox tap at 2:23. Fox got in WAY too much offense here and almost looked like an equal to Asuka for a bit. Just let Asuka massacre her, as she should. I mean, it's Alicia freaking Fox.

Post match Absolution comes out to stare Asuka down but they let her leave. Instead they surround Fox, who Paige calls her only friend. Paige is sorry though and the triple beatdown is on.

Preview of Charlotte in Psych: The Movie.

## Finn Balor vs. Bo Dallas

Dallas wastes no time in trying some rollups, only to get dropkicked in the face for his efforts. Balor goes up but Curtis Axel kicks the steps for a distraction, allowing Dallas to shove him down. Some kicks to the ribs set up an armbar for a good while. Balor fights up with some forearms and a jumping double stomp. The Sling Blade sets up the shotgun dropkick and the Coup de Grace ends Dallas at 5:20.

**Rating:** D+. Can someone explain to me why Balor didn't beat this goon in about a minute? At least he won, but the bigger issue here continues to be Balor's lack of momentum. In theory he's gearing up for a feud with Miz, which isn't the worst idea, but he needs to get back to that level he was at before. I'm just not sure how that happens when he spent so much time as cannon fodder for Kane.

We look back at Matt Hardy going nuts and look at his Twitter.

Bray Wyatt asks who Matt Hardy is. The universe knows but Bray doesn't think Matt knows. Broken Matt pops up on the screen and says he's traveled through space and time. Back to Bray, who says Matt knows nothing of what is actually will. Matt says he's familiar with all facets of the multiverse and has danced with Cleopatra and meditated atop the

pyramids of Giza. He has laid dormant in this vessel called Matthew Hardy but now he is WOKEN. Bray promises to burn him but Matt sentences him to DELETION. A battle of laughter ensues and the fans are rather behind Hardy. Cole: "You catch all that Book?" Booker: "Yeah."

Kane vs. Strowman is set for next week.

### Tag Team Titles: Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose vs. The Bar

The Bar is defending. Ambrose armdrags Cesaro down to start but it's off to Sheamus to take over. A double kick to the ribs has Dean in trouble and we hit the choking on the ropes. That doesn't last long though as Dean leapfrogs over Sheamus and makes the hot tag off to Rollins. The Sling Blade give Seth two but Sheamus posts him as we take a break.

Back with Seth not being able to get away as the champs clothesline him down. The ten forearms to the chest rock Seth again and a top rope clothesline gets two. Ambrose gets knocked off the apron, leaving Sheamus to drop Rollins onto an uppercut for another near fall. It's off to an armbar for a bit until a superkick gets Rollins out of trouble.

The hot tag brings in Ambrose and house is cleaned in a hurry. His suicide dive is cut off by an uppercut though and Cesaro adds the high crossbody. Everything breaks down and Sheamus' cheap shot gives Cesaro two on Dean. A powerbomb is broken up and Seth superplexes Sheamus into a Falcon Arrow for a very near fall.

The Neutralizer is broken up and the Wind-Up Knee gives Seth two with Sheamus making a save. The referee is shoved though and the Bar retains the titles via DQ at 17:11. Actually hang on as Angle comes out and says restart the match with No DQ. The double dives takes the Bar out and a frog splash to Cesaro gets two. Cue Samoa Joe to lay the Shield out though, drawing out Reigns to chase him off. The distraction lets Sheamus Brogue Kick Ambrose to retain at 20:03.

**Rating:** B. Another solid match here and I can actually go with the screwy ending as you can pencil in either a six man tag or a pair of title matches as a result. These teams have some great chemistry together and while this one wasn't up to the other matches' standards, it was still a

lot of fun.

**Overall Rating:** B+. Now that was a better show, just with all the really good wrestling throughout the night (the lack of Stephanie McMahon helped a lot too). They're pretty clearly setting up for the Christmas show, which is as good of a night as anything else (New Year's would work too) to blow off a bunch of this stuff. Easily one of the best shows they've done in a long time with almost nothing bad all night and some really solid action.

### Results

Roman Reigns b. Jason Jordan – Spear

Paige b. Sasha Banks – Rampaige

Drew Gulak b. Cedric Alexander, Mustafa Ali and Tony Nese – Lumbar Check to Ali

Asuka b. Alicia Fox – Cross armbreaker

Finn Balor b. Bo Dallas – Coup de Grace

The Bar b. Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose – Brogue Kick to Ambrose

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# Main Event – November 9, 2017: As Good As It Gets

## Main Event

Date: November 9, 2017

Location: Manchester Arena, Manchester, England

Commentators: Vic Joseph, Nigel McGuinness

It's the British version this time around and, as usual, that means it depends on how you liked Raw this week. You can almost never guess what you're going to get on here, especially now that the Dash Wilder vs. Heath Slater/Rhyno epic is over. This week's show could be a lot of things so let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

## Matt Hardy vs. Curt Hawkins

Hawkins gets in a shot to the back and immediately bails to the ropes. A neckbreaker takedown gives Matt two but Hawkins sends him outside as we talk about the losing streak. Hawkins' side suplex gets two and we hit the chinlock. Matt pops up and sends him into each of the buckles in the corner, followed by a bulldog. The Side Effect into the Twist of Fate puts Hawkins away at 4:52.

**Rating:** D+. Just Hardy beating a jobber to the stars here as I keep wondering where the losing streak is going. I mean, odds are it's nowhere but at least they're having some fun with it in the process. Hawkins' entrance alone is entertaining and I'm more than glad that he's still around. You can keep the number going higher and higher and if you need to do something with it, cool. If not, at least it's entertaining while it lasts.

We recap Braun Strowman returning and stalking the Miz and Miztourage.

We look at Kurt Angle adding Finn Balor, Samoa Joe and Jason Jordan to the Survivor Series team.

From Raw.

### The Miz vs. Braun Strowman

Non-title because why would Strowman want something like a belt? Miz bails to the floor to start and has a huddle with the Miztourage. They get inside and the beating is on in a hurry with Strowman throwing him around like the tiny man that he is. The spinning Big Ending plants Miz again and Dallas looks scared on the floor. That is only made worse as Strowman goes outside and hits an incredibly loud right hand to Dallas' jaw. Miz gets thrown onto the Miztourage but here's Kane for the showdown and a DQ at 5:05.

**Rating:** D+. This was much more of an angle than a match and that's fine. Miz getting destroyed is fine as long as he doesn't get pinned, which is what would have happened in other times around here. At least Strowman got to look awesome all over again, which is exactly what should be happening to him.

Post match Kane can't chokeslam Strowman, who hits the running powerslam. Kane pops up and gets clotheslined to the floor, where he lands on his feet. The Miztourage tries to jump Braun and gets beaten up again.

And again from Raw.

### Tag Team Titles: The Bar vs. Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose

Rollins and Ambrose are defending. Ambrose jumps Cesaro to start and it's a Hart Attack with Rollins hitting a Sling Blade instead of a clothesline for two on Sheamus. The champs hit dives to the floor and knock them outside again as we take a break. Back with Ambrose in trouble and things getting worse as the Bar hits double superkicks to the ribs.

Cesaro kicks Rollins off the apron to break up a tag attempt but can't get the top rope superplex on Ambrose. A middle rope clothesline is enough to bring in Rollins so house can be cleaned in a hurry. Rollins hits a suicide dive on Sheamus and a Falcon Arrow gets two on Cesaro.

Swiss Death cuts Rollins off but can't put him away just yet. Everything breaks down and the champs' double dives are broken up.

Dean is sent back first into the barricade and a top rope clothesline/powerbomb combo gets two on Rollins. Back in and Dirty Deeds takes Sheamus down for the frog splash but Cesaro knocks Dean into the cover for the save. Cue the New Day of all people in the crowd for a distraction though, with Woods congratulating the fans on staying awake. As New Day talks, Angle rallies the troops in the back.

New Day says it's Under Siege 2 (that's getting into some dark territory) as the Raw roster surrounds the ring. They go after New Day, leaving Sheamus to Brogue Kick Rollins for the pin and the titles at 18:55. That's actually a finish lifted from WCW where Harlem Heat took the Tag Team Titles from Sting and Lex Luger while the NWO came into the arena.

**Rating:** B. These four are just incapable of having a bad match and that's always a good problem to have. I like the booking a lot as Rollins and Ambrose can do other stuff while Sheamus and Cesaro pretty much had this or nothing else. The ending was a nice touch too which protects both teams and advances the story. Well done all around.

#### Anderson and Gallows vs. Heath Slater/Rhyno

This could almost be a Raw match. Slater and Anderson start things off with Karl not letting him give his shirt to a fan. Now that's some heel work. Rhyno comes in for a double elbow but it's off to Gallows to give Rhyno a beating in the corner. Anderson and Gallows are sent outside and we take a break. Back with Slater fighting out of a chinlock but getting forearmed right back into it. A faceplant is enough for the double hot tag and Rhyno grabs a superplex for two on Anderson. Gallows breaks up the Gore though and, after taking out Slater, the Magic Killer ends Rhyno at 8:20.

**Rating:** C+. Heck of a Main Event match here with teams who actually come off like bigger deals than a lot of the people normally on this show. It's not a classic or anything close to one but I can always go with seeing something feel like an effort and that's what you got here. When else do you see a superplex around here?

And, in a real twist, from Smackdown.

### Smackdown World Title: AJ Styles vs. Jinder Mahal

Mahal is defending. AJ grabs a headlock to start but gets LAUNCHED out to the floor as we take an early break. Back with AJ caught in a headlock on the mat but they're quickly on the floor with Mahal slamming him onto the announcers' table. We hit the armbars as Mahal slows things down a bit.

Mahal drops a knee but dives into a pair of raised boots, followed by the Phenomenal Blitz. The fireman's carry backbreaker gives AJ two as you can tell the fans are way into this one. Something like a backdrop into a faceplant gives Mahal two of his own but he gets kicked out of the corner.

The Calf Crusher is quickly broken up and Jinder turns him inside out with a clothesline. That's fine with AJ who sends him outside for a slingshot forearm. Back in and the springboard 450 connects, only to have the Singh Brothers pull Mahal to the floor. AJ takes out the brothers but jumps into the Khallas.

That's only good for two though as AJ gets his foot on the ropes and the place goes NUTS at the new hope. Jinder loads up a super Khallas but AJ slips out and snaps his throat across the top, setting up the Phenomenal Forearm for the pin and the title at 16:47 as the fans go coconuts at the pin.

**Rating:** B. Pretty easily Mahal's best match ever as champ but I think you can guess where that's from. I can't imagine Mahal isn't champion again by the end of the India tour. There's nothing wrong with that, as long as we don't have to sit through Mahal vs. Lesnar at Survivor Series. Styles winning was the right call here as he can have the dream match against Lesnar and then do whatever with the title as necessary.

**Overall Rating:** B+. They clipped a lot of stuff out of the broadcast version of course but they packed the heck out of this show with two very big and important (as well as rather awesome) matches from the week. They were smart to have the Smackdown main event on here as it was the biggest thing to happen in England and really, it's not a big deal to mix things

up a bit. Great show this week.

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up the Updated History of the Intercontinental Title in E-Book or Paperback. Check out the information here:

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# Monday Night Raw – November 6, 2017: British Invasion II: Smackdown Bluegaloo

## Monday Night Raw

Date: November 6, 2017

Location: Manchester Arena, Manchester, England

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

We're on the other side of the world this week as Raw takes its annual trip over to England. That means the show has been spoiled in advance, but it also means that we're nearly guaranteed to see something happen. That could range from a title change to a big surprise and all points in between so let's get to it.

We open with a message of condolences for the attack in Texas yesterday. Nothing wrong with that, as always.

Long recap of Braun Strowman returning last week and destroying Miz and the Miztourage.

Miz is in the ring for MizTV. He starts fast by saying if Baron Corbin ever talks about his wife or unborn daughter again, he'll take Corbin's head off. Then Corbin got on Twitter and said at Survivor Series, Miz will be calling him daddy. Corbin is the bathroom break of Smackdown but Miz is the whole show on Monday nights. At Survivor Series, Miz is going to make him relevant for the first time. As for tonight though, Miz brings out Raw's captain at Survivor Series: Kurt Angle.

They're rather salty with each other and Miz makes it worse by showing Angle's dressing down from Stephanie McMahon last week. Angle says Smackdown has had a good run, but it's always going to be known as the B show. Miz shows the siege (again) as well as Kane attacking Daniel Bryan last week. Angle apologized to Bryan but Miz brings up the Strowman situation, which has left Axel in a neck brace. Kurt laughs it off and says Strowman is on Team Raw in exchange for a match. Tonight. Against Miz.

Here's Elias for his guitar on a pole match but first, a little A Capella. The fans want Wonderwall but get a song about how horrible Manchester is.

### Jason Jordan vs. Elias

Guitar on a pole and you win by using the guitar rather than by pin. They both go after the guitar and are stopped just as quickly as we take an early break. Back with Jordan rolling some suplexes until Elias slips over and grabs the guitar. Jordan takes it away and the chase is on until Jordan blasts him in the back to win at 7:20.

**Rating:** D. Uh, yeah. I have no idea why Jordan couldn't just get a pin here unless this feud is continuing for whatever reason. The feud hasn't exactly been lighting the world on fire but at least the fans haven't been completely rejecting Jordan either. They're bringing him along slowly here and that's FAR better than they could have done.

The Bar comes in to see Angle because they want a Tag Team Title match

tonight. Angle grants the request.

### Asuka vs. Stacy Coates

Asuka wastes no time in kicking her down, followed by the hip attack. The Asuka Lock is good for the submission at 1:15. Squash.

Alicia Fox pops up and announces that Asuka is on Team Raw.

Titus O'Neil is ready to take care of Samoa Joe.

### Samoa Joe vs. Titus O'Neil

Joe jumps him during the entrance and chokes Titus out on the ramp. No match.

Joe gets in the ring and issues an open challenge...so here's Finn Balor.

### Finn Balor vs. Samoa Joe

The announcers start talking about the history between these two until Finn kicks him in the head. It's too early for the top rope double stomp though as Joe moves away and scores with a kick to the head of his own. The backplash gets two on Balor and Joe cranks on the neck until Balor fights up with a forearm to the jaw. Balor sends him outside for a shot to the chest and Joe stops for a breather. That just earns him another running forearm and we take a break.

Back with Joe avoiding the shotgun dropkick and getting two off another backplash. Balor gets caught on top again but he comes down and hits the shotgun dropkick. The Coup de Grace misses again and the Rock Bottom out of the corner gives Joe two. The Koquina Clutch is broken up and Joe is sent outside for a heck of a flip dive over the top. They fight up the aisle and it's a double countout at 14:39.

**Rating:** B-. It's amazing how much better Balor looks when he's not getting dropped on his head by a 50 year old Kane. This felt like a match I'd like to see more of and it's not surprising given how awesome these two were in NXT. Hopefully they do some more of this and Balor can get some steam back.

The fight continues until referees break it up. Angle comes out and puts them both on Team Raw, making it Angle, Strowman, Balor and Samoa Joe. Balor isn't done and dives onto Joe.

Miz and the Miztourage are worried with Axel suggesting they just run now.

Angle puts Jason Jordan on the team as the fifth member.

Bayley and Sasha Banks want in on Team Raw and are ready to prove it tonight.

### Bayley/Sasha Banks vs. Alicia Fox/Nia Jax

The fans bring back the HEY BAYLEY song and she looks rather pleased with the return. Fox bails from Bayley to start and it's Jax driving her into the corner without too much effort. Banks comes in and has her rollup stomped away. Fox comes in and gets double teamed in the corner with the good ones in control as we take a break.

Back with the fans still singing, even as Nia drops an elbow on Bayley. Some forearm to the head don't do much to Jax and she hits a running Snake Eyes to drop Bayley again. For some reason Jax decides to bring Fox back in and it's all of three seconds before the hot tag brings Banks in. Everything breaks down in a hurry and Jax gets sent outside, leaving Fox's rollup to be reversed into the Bank Statement for the tap at 11:49.

**Rating:** C-. Not much here but it's a good way to (likely) round out the rest of Team Raw. Bayley and Banks are kind of obvious on the team as there's not exactly anyone else to fill out the roster. There's a story to them not getting on the team yet though and if you can get two stories out of one match, rock on.

Post match Fox puts Banks on the team but not Bayley.

We look at Strowman being garbage trucked at TLC.

### The Miz vs. Braun Strowman

Non-title because why would Strowman want something like a belt? Miz

bails to the floor to start and has a huddle with the Miztourage. They get inside and the beating is on in a hurry with Strowman throwing him around like the tiny man that he is. The spinning Big Ending plants Miz again and Dallas looks scared on the floor. That is only made worse as Strowman goes outside and hits an incredibly loud right hand to Dallas' jaw. Miz gets thrown onto the Miztourage but here's Kane for the showdown and a DQ at 5:05.

**Rating:** D+. This was much more of an angle than a match and that's fine. Miz getting destroyed is fine as long as he doesn't get pinned, which is what would have happened in other times around here. At least Strowman got to look awesome all over again, which is exactly what should be happening to him.

Post match Kane can't chokeslam Strowman, who hits the running powerslam. Kane pops up and gets clotheslined to the floor, where he lands on his feet. The Miztourage tries to jump Braun and gets beaten up again.

Ambrose and Rollins are ready to fight because that's what they do. They haven't forgotten about Team Blue and after Survivor Series, they'll be Team Black and Blue. Ambrose: "And yellow. And purple." Rollins: "What kind of bruises...."? Anyway back to Sheamus and Cesaro, no one wants them to win and the Shield fist is the real bar. They leave and Renee does the Shield fist as well.

Here's Enzo Amore for a chat. He talks about everyone who wants to follow him around and see what the champ is up to. Recently he saw a kid who asked what was next...and here's Kalisto to interrupt. Kalisto sits by the barricade though as Kurt Angle comes out to announce a surprise opponent for Enzo.

#### Pete Dunne vs. Enzo Amore

Non-title. Dunne takes him down with a single shot as Kalisto watches from the floor. Back in and Dunne works on the fingers until Enzo pulls him throat first into the top rope. Enzo grabs something like a camel clutch until Dunne fights up and kicks him in the face. Kalisto distracts Enzo though, setting up the Bitter End to put Enzo away at 3:35.

**Rating:** D+. I'm more and more impressed by Dunne every time I see him. He's one of those guys who just seems to get it and, to steal a phrase, you can't teach that. I can't imagine this is anything more than a one off appearance and there's nothing wrong with that for the sake of the live crowd. Nothing to the match, but that's what you have to expect with Enzo in the ring.

Kalisto raises Dunne's hand.

Video on Brock Lesnar vs. Jinder Mahal.

Lesnar and Paul Heyman will be back next week.

Alexa Bliss didn't run from Natalya but will run circles around her at Survivor Series. Isn't it interesting that Natalya never won the title when Alexa was on Smackdown? Bliss is a two time champion on both shows and two and two makes one. That's one goddess of WWE you see.

Roman Reigns is back next week.

#### Tag Team Titles: The Bar vs. Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose

Rollins and Ambrose are defending. Ambrose jumps Cesaro to start and it's a Hart Attack with Rollins hitting a Sling Blade instead of a clothesline for two on Sheamus. The champs hit dives to the floor and knock them outside again as we take a break. Back with Ambrose in trouble and things getting worse as the Bar hits double superkicks to the ribs.

Cesaro kicks Rollins off the apron to break up a tag attempt but can't get the top rope superplex on Ambrose. A middle rope clothesline is enough to bring in Rollins so house can be cleaned in a hurry. Rollins hits a suicide dive on Sheamus and a Falcon Arrow gets two on Cesaro. Swiss Death cuts Rollins off but can't put him away just yet. Everything breaks down and the champs' double dives are broken up.

Dean is sent back first into the barricade and a top rope clothesline/powerbomb combo gets two on Rollins. Back in and Dirty Deeds takes Sheamus down for the frog splash but Cesaro knocks Dean into the cover for the save. Cue the New Day of all people in the crowd for a distraction though, with Woods congratulating the fans on staying awake.

As New Day talks, Angle rallies the troops in the back.

New Day says it's Under Siege 2 (that's getting into some dark territory) as the Raw roster surrounds the ring. They go after New Day, leaving Sheamus to Brogue Kick Rollins for the pin and the titles at 18:55. That's actually a finish lifted from WCW where Harlem Heat took the Tag Team Titles from Sting and Lex Luger while the Outsiders came into the arena.

**Rating:** B. These four are just incapable of having a bad match and that's always a good problem to have. I like the booking a lot as Rollins and Ambrose can do other stuff while Sheamus and Cesaro pretty much had this or nothing else. The ending was a nice touch too which protects both teams and advances the story. Well done all around.

**Overall Rating:** C. For a taped show, this actually wasn't half bad. They accomplished a lot for Survivor Series and that's more important than filling the show with good yet not important matches. The title change at the end is a good idea and things should be even bigger next week when Lesnar and Reigns are back. Good enough show here, which is quite the compliment given the circumstances.

### Results

Jason Jordan b. Elias – Jordan hit Elias with the guitar

Asuka b. Stacy Coates – Asuka Lock

Finn Balor vs. Samoa Joe went to a double countout

Sasha Banks/Bayley b. Alicia Fox/Nia Jax – Bank Statement to Fox

Braun Strowman b. The Miz via DQ when Kane interfered

Pete Dunne b. Enzo Amore – Bitter End

The Bar b. Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose – Brogue Kick to Rollins

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# Tables Ladders and Chairs 2017: When a Disease is a Better Booker Than Creative

## Tables Ladders and Chairs 2017

Date: October 22, 2017

Location: Target Center, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Commentators: Michael Cole, Corey Graves, Booker T.

Now this one has my attention as the card has almost been thrown out the window due to a string of medical issues. AJ Styles is replacing Bray Wyatt to face Finn Balor, but in a bigger story it's Kurt Angle's first WWE match in over eleven years as he replaces Roman Reigns in the show's namesake match. Let's get to it.

### Kickoff Show: Alicia Fox vs. Sasha Banks

Rematch from Raw. Fox bails to the floor to start before taking her down and grabbing a way too early chinlock. Sasha fights up and knocks Alicia outside and we take a break without much having happened so far. Back with Fox messing with Banks' hair and shoving her off the top in a heap. Alicia pulls at her hair a bit and it's mostly one sided so far. Back in and Fox slams Sasha right back to the floor but there's no immediate

count. Fox to the fans: "EVERYBODY HELP THE REFEREE DO HIS JOB!"

A backbreaker gives Fox two and Booker compares her to the Missing Link of all people. Sasha kicks her to the floor without much effort and a headscissors takes Fox down back inside. Another backbreaker has Banks in trouble but only for two, meaning Fox screeches a lot. Not that it matters as the ax kick misses and it's the Bank Statement makes Fox tap at 10:12.

**Rating:** D+. So we had a short match on Monday and now a longer match tonight. I still have no reason to believe that Fox is in Banks' league and it's kind of a waste of time to make this work at all. Fox isn't going to beat Banks anytime in a competitive match but the fans went nuts for Sasha's entrance, which is the point here.

The opening video looks at all of the changes to the card with a focus on Angle, as you would probably expect. The rest of the card gets a shorter look.

#### Emma vs. Asuka

Asuka is making her main roster debut and the fans are VERY excited for her entrance. An early cross armbreaker has Emma in early trouble and the hip attack puts her down again. Asuka can't get the ankle lock and Emma kicks her down for two, meaning it's time for the confidence to start. A hard shot to the back gives Emma two more and the fans are all behind Asuka.

Emma slaps on a seated full nelson but makes the mistake of slapping her in the face. That earns Emma a sliding knee to the face, only to have Emma hit a sliding kick of her own for two. It's time for the pain though as Asuka snaps off a German suplex, only to have Emma head outside and pull Asuka outside by the hair. Not that it really matters as Asuka kicks her in the head and slaps on the Asuka Lock for the tap out at 9:21.

**Rating:** B-. That's the most obvious ending of the whole match and there's nothing wrong with that. Asuka was a killer here and, despite Emma getting in more offense than I was expecting, she looks like someone who is going to be a star for a long time. Now if only I could believe that

WWE won't manage to screw her up.

Miz gives the Bar a pep talk until Strowman comes in to yell at them. Kane comes in as well and promises to turn the main event into a nightmare.

Here's Elias to talk about how awesome he is and play a little song. As he's playing though, vegetables are thrown into the ring by...Jason Jordan. This goes nowhere and is as fillerish as you can get.

### Jack Gallagher/Brian Kendrick vs. Cedric Alexander/Rich Swann

Kendrick has turned Gallagher evil and they targeted Alexander. Swann came in to help out his buddy. Cedric and Gallagher start things off but it's already off to Swann to speed things up (not the worst idea when you need a shot of adrenaline) with his flips. Jack is sent outside where he trips Cedric, only to be taken down by a Swann flip dive from the apron. Cedric isn't about to be outdone and hits a flip dive of his own over the top.

Back in and Kendrick cravates Swann to slow things down and Rich is sent head first into the buckle. Swann escapes a belly to back and brings Cedric in off the hot tag. Cedric cleans house, including a spinning kick to Gallagher's head. Kendrick takes him outside and scores with a northern lights suplex, to put Cedric in trouble. Back in and the Captain's Hook is broken up as Swann drops a Phoenix splash. The Lumbar Check ends Kendrick at 7:57.

**Rating:** C+. It was fun, but this was something you could see on almost any given episode of 205 Live. They flipped around and did their thing for about eight minutes but that doesn't make it anything too fancy. The story is standard and that's really all there is to say about it. It's not going to help 205 Live that much but these guys deserve a little spotlight.

Alexa Bliss thinks Mickie James is only mad at her over the age jokes, but the truth is that Bliss idolized Mickie growing up. Mickie has gone toe to toe with Hall of Famers, but after tonight the good old days will just be old.

## Women's Title: Alexa Bliss vs. Mickie James

James is challenging and headlocks Bliss to start, much to the champ's annoyance. Bliss pulls the hair to escape a few times before snapping Mickie's arm across the top rope. That means it's time to rip at the arm and slap on an armbar for good measure. You can feel Bliss' confidence here, which is exactly how this story should go. A near fall only frustrates Bliss more and Mickie fights out of the corner with a good looking hurricanrana.

They slap it out until a forearm from Bliss and a high kick from Mickie connect at the same time. It's Mickie getting the better of it and hitting some running forearms. Bliss goes to the arm again but Mickie slugs her down and nips up. Mickie gets crotches on top but Twisted Bliss only hits mat. A bad looking missile dropkick gives Mickie two but Bliss seems to be hurt. Mickie goes for it of course and gets pulled shoulder first into the corner. Bliss adds the DDT to retain at 11:30.

**Rating:** B. I liked this one more than the opener and I'm only somewhat surprised by that. Bliss is getting better in the ring and she's getting that DDT over as a finisher. Of course I can't imagine her holding the title by the end of the Royal Rumble as Asuka should win the belt in the near future but we can enjoy Bliss while she lasts.

Post match Mickie says she's disappointed but she'll be back. We get a thank you to the fans and Mickie is out.

Angle is getting ready in the back when Ambrose and Rollins come in. They're ready for the match but have a gift for Angle: his own riot squad gear. Angle says he's in all the way.

Here's Elias to try his song again but one more time he's delayed by Jordan throwing vegetables, this time from a shopping cart. Even Graves mentions that we're filling time.

We recap Enzo Amore vs. Kalisto. Enzo won the Cruiserweight Title last month but Kalisto won it in a big surprise. That wasn't cool with Amore, who said that he was the only real star in the division. Tonight is the rematch.

## Cruiserweight Title: Enzo Amore vs. Kalisto

Kalisto is defending. Before the match, Enzo, with a hoarse voice, does his usual shtick and says he's not going to be one of those people who stands around while everyone else gets whatever they want. Enzo bails into the corner to start and the chase is on with Kalisto grabbing a headscissors for his first big offense. Another spin sends Enzo bailing to the floor and we hit the stall button. Back in and Enzo sends him head first into the top turnbuckle to take over for the first time.

A hard kick to the ribs keeps Kalisto down and there's the baseball punch for two. We hit the chinlock with Enzo grabbing the mask to pull Kalisto right back down. Kalisto finally fights back up and sends him hard into the corner, followed by a springboard seated senton. Enzo gets two off a middle rope DDT but the Jordunzo is broken up. Not that it matters as Enzo pokes him in the eye and hits the Jordunzo for the pin and the title at 9:02.

**Rating:** D+. Well duh. This was only slightly less obvious than Asuka winning as they were just trying to make Enzo sweat a bit before becoming a two time champion. Hopefully they can have other people get title shots now but otherwise, we could be in for some stretchy booking to keep him defending the title. Enzo remains a necessary evil, but that doesn't make him any easier to sit through.

Post match Enzo thanks himself.

The announcers give all the preview they can for AJ Styles vs. Finn Balor. There's no story here but they had to give us a huge match with so many last minute changes. For once, this actually lives up to the term Dream Match and that's a nice change of pace.

## Finn Balor vs. AJ Styles

Balor is the Demon and the fans are split here. A lockup goes nowhere so they trade shoulders for no advantage either. They try a technical sequence and it's a standoff as the fans are very pleased. Balor goes to the apron and scores with a kick to the head, setting up a kind of awkward sequence where Balor didn't seem to realize that AJ was on his

stomach and tried to cover.

It's a surfboard instead though with Balor starting in on the leg. Back up and AJ catches him with a hard forearm, followed by a slingshot Phenomenal Forearm for two. The fans are split as Balor comes back with a series of shots in the corner, including a hard shot to knock AJ off the top and to the floor. That means a big flip dive, which the fans think is awesome. Back in and Balor scores with the Sling Blade but AJ grabs the fireman's carry backbreaker to cut him off.

The Styles Clash is broken up so it's a belly to back faceplant to give AJ two of his own. Now it's Balor back up and stomping away in the corner, followed by a running kick to the face. That just earns Balor the Calf Crusher until he has to grab AJ's head and slam it into the mat for the break. The Phenomenal Forearm is loaded up again but this time it's Balor shoving him off the top for a big crash to the floor.

Balor follows him up with a running dropkick to send AJ into the barricade, only to have AJ drive him over the announcers' table. They dive back in at nine and stereo crossbodies put them both down. The Phenomenal Blitz staggers Balor but he's right back with the Pele to give us another standoff. A reverse implant DDT takes AJ down but a Pele cuts off the Coup de Grace. AJ isn't about to be outdone so it's a super springboard hurricanrana. He misses the springboard 450 though and the shotgun dropkick puts AJ in the corner. The Coup de Grace ends AJ at 17:54.

**Rating:** B+. This was the only option they had with all the changes. WWE had to deliver something special and that's what they did with something that actually lived up to the dream match moniker. Balor winning was the right call as there's no point in not giving the Raw guy a rub on the Raw show. It's also a very good match with both guys looking like stars the whole way through. WWE did what they could here and that's very nice to see for a change.

They shake hands post match and we get the TOO SWEET that will be talked about to a completely unnecessary degree.

Elias is out here a third time and this time he's in the ring. At least

there's a match this time around.

### Jason Jordan vs. Elias

Bonus match. Jordan wastes no time in powering Elias down to the mat so Elias shoves him in the face. Elias bails to the floor for a breather, followed by a headlock back inside. Something like a powerslam takes Elias down but Jordan gets sent hard into the post. Elias grabs a seated abdominal stretch as Booker changes his mind on Elias in the span of a minute. A regular abdominal stretch keeps Jordan in trouble until he powers Elias into the corner.

There's the belly to belly and a swinging Saito suplex gets two more. Jordan can't hit the belly to belly superplex so Elias slams him into the corner instead. Elias tries a suplex but gets reversed into a small package. Jordan lets him go at two but the referee counts the pin anyway at 9:54. It looked like Elias' shoulder was up and Booker is borderline livid.

**Rating:** D. Standard Raw match here but they had to fill in the time with something. Jordan winning that way seems to set up another match down the line (by which I mean tomorrow night) but at least they seem to be pushing someone. Now of course watch them have Elias win the rematch and make this a big waste of time.

Quick video on Angle's career, followed by a recap of the main event. The Shield members were dealing with Miz and company and decided there was strength in numbers. Ambrose made the mistake of saying the team could face three, four or five men so Miz took him up on it. Then Reigns got sick so Angle is taking his place.

### Dean Ambrose/Seth Rollins/Kurt Angle vs. Miz/Braun Strowman/Kane/The Bar

Tables, ladders and chairs but you win by pinfall or submission. Angle is in Shield gear for a nice touch and it's Rollins diving on the pile, allowing his partners to grab some chairs and take over to start. Strowman gets chaired down and Kane gets the same treatment, allowing Ambrose and Rollins to hit stereo dives. Sheamus and Cesaro remember that they're in the match and save Kane from going through the announcers'

table.

The Shield guys take over again though and Kane is set on the table, only to have Strowman fight back. Rollins saves Kurt from going through a table and Strowman is chaired down again. It's double ladder time with Strowman and Kane being laid on the tables, setting up a splash and elbow drop for the first big spot of the match. With everyone else down, Angle throws Miz back inside but gets met by Cesaro and Sheamus. Ambrose and Rollins get back in to break up the TripleBomb, leaving Angle to roll some German suplexes on Miz.

Cesaro and Sheamus take one each as Angle is all fired up. Speaking of fire being up, Kane sits up but gets taken right back down with an ankle lock. Strowman makes the save and it's a running powerslam through a table to knock Kurt silly. The villains come back with chair shots and it's Angle being taken to the back by medics, only to fall to his knees in the aisle. Booker actually rants about how selfish Angle was as Rollins is thrown head first into a chair in the corner.

The beating continues for a good while as the fans want Lesnar. Ambrose and Rollins try to fight back and Kane accidentally chairs Strowman. For some reason the Shield guys break it up, which is enough to end the brawl. It's table time but the double Razor's Edge sends Ambrose bouncing off the table in a SICK crash. Miz has the Bar take Rollins up the ramp and it's a garbage truck backing into the arena. Ambrose and Rollins fight out of the truck though and hit dives onto everyone but Miz in the big hope spot.

Kane gets beaten down but Strowman is back up to stop a suplex through a table. For some reason Kane slugs away at Strowman, setting up a chokeslam through the stage. Strowman is still getting up so Kane grabs the chairs hanging from the ceiling and pulls about eight of them down, burying Strowman on the floor. Kane isn't done yet and chokeslams Ambrose and Rollins onto tables (neither breaks AGAIN). The Bar helps carry them to the truck...and Strowman is up.

Miz begs him to stop but Strowman takes out all of his partners, setting up the fight with Kane. Everyone gets together and Strowman is thrown

into the truck, which turns on. Rollins is thrown back into the ring and it's Miz/the Bar doing the Shield entrance. A springboard assisted White Noise plants Seth but Dean makes the diving save at two. Kane calls for a chokeslam...and here's Angle back again.

The Bar takes Angle Slams on the floor but Kane takes him down with a clothesline. Ambrose and Rollins come back in with chairs before driving Kane through the barricade. The Skull Crushing Finale takes Angle down from behind for a heck of a near fall. The ankle lock has Miz in trouble but Miz sends Kurt outside for the break. Rollins gets back in for the wind-up knee into Dirty Deeds into the Angle Slam and Miz is basically done. The TripleBomb is good for the pin at 35:23.

**Rating:** A-. WOW. I'm really not sure what to say about this but I think we can call it the most ridiculous, insane, over the top and crazy entertaining match that will mean a grand total of nothing in recent history. I mean....THEY PUT A MAN IN A GARBAGE TRUCK AND CRUSHED HIM! LIKE SHREDDER IN TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES! And that's not even the first time someone has used a large truck to try and destroy him this year!

The match was a complete over the top mess and that's all they could do here. Instead of trying to have a match (which would have been ridiculous given how one sided it was on paper), the whole thing was just a chaotic mess and that's the best possible outcome. I could have gone with Sheamus, Cesaro or Kane taking the fall but at least it was after a lot of offense. Angle looked fine and I get the break he took, though it makes me wonder if Reigns would have taken that break as well had he been in there (probably not of course but it's not out of the question). Insanely fun main event and really all they could have done.

**Overall Rating:** C+. I'm not sure what to think of this one, but it's safe to say that they weren't able to put forth their best show given all the last minute changes. That being said the matches we got were probably a lot better, which brings up the fact that a horrible disease is booking the pay per views better than the Raw creative team (I wish I could take credit for that but I saw it elsewhere). It's not a show that anyone needs to see again (though the last two matches were a blast in different ways) but all things considered, this was good stuff.

Oh and by the way: they added two segments, a bonus match, admitted they were filling in time and STILL MANAGED TO GO OVER! I don't know if that's really impressive or pathetic but it made me chuckle.

## Results

Asuka b. Emma – Asuka Lock

Cedric Alexander/Rich Swann b. Jack Gallagher/Brian Kendrick – Lumbar Check to Kendrick

Alexa Bliss b. Mickie James – DDT

Enzo Amore b. Kalisto – Jordunzo

Finn Balor b. AJ Styles – Coup de Grace

Jason Jordan b. Elias – Small package

Kurt Angle/Dean Ambrose/Seth Rollins b. The Miz/Braun Strowman/The Bar/Kane – TripleBomb to Miz

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# Tables Ladders and Chairs 2017 Preview

Let's get this in as fast as I can before another performer is taken off the card due to illness. In a rare case, two top level wrestlers scheduled to appear on this show have been taken off the card due to medical issues. That changes the whole dynamic of the show, but that doesn't mean the show is worse as a result. It should be interesting to see where the card goes from here so let's get to it.

## Kickoff Show: Sasha Banks vs. Alicia Fox

So this might have been scheduled to be Nia Jax in Fox's spot but Jax not getting to face Asuka was enough to make her leave the promotion for the time being. Banks already made Fox tap out earlier in the week on "Monday Night Raw", which makes me wonder what the point is in having the match all over again. Maybe they're trying to convince us that there will be a surprise ending?

If that's what they're going for, I'm certainly not buying it. I have no reason to believe that this won't end with another Bank Statement and there's really no reason for Fox to win the thing. Fox is nothing more than a warm body for Banks to defeat and there's nothing wrong with that. Banks is someone who is going to fire the crowd up as soon as she comes into the arena and that's exactly what you want a dark match to do. Good choice for a match, but not exactly a questionable ending.

## Cruiserweight Title: Kalisto(c) vs. Enzo Amore

Over the last few weeks of "205 Live", I've been finding Amore more tolerable than I have in recent months. However, that doesn't mean he's any less annoying that he's been for the last...well ever actually. Kalisto won the title a few weeks

back and it seems that we've just been counting down the time until Amore gets the title back for the sake of making "205 Live" interesting again.

In other words, of course Amore gets the title back here as Kalisto is little more than a quick way to make Amore a two time champion. It helps that they let him keep the belt for more than a few days, though it doesn't make things any better. Amore dominates any show he's on and that can get old in a hurry. I get why he's around and he's a necessary evil, though that doesn't make him getting the title back any easier. So yeah, Amore wins, much to the rise of my blood pressure.

### **Finn Balor vs. AJ Styles**

This is the first of the two lineup changes we've had to undergo as Styles is replacing Bray Wyatt, who has been taken off the show due to medical reasons. That's a major problem as Wyatt was supposed to debut Sister Abigail and Balor was supposed to bring back the Demon character. It seems that Balor will still be the Demon in what is now a glorified dream match.

I'll take Balor to win as "Monday Night Raw" shouldn't have one of its top stars lose, especially with a potential World Title challenge in the next few months. That's a problem when Styles seems to be up next for Smackdown World Champion Jinder Mahal. However, the tie goes to the wrestler with home roster advantage so I'll take Balor winning in a heck of a classic.

### **Women's Title: Alexa Bliss(c) vs. Mickie James**

This is the classic "I'm young and awesome and you're old and lame" story which could very easily be set up for the sake of giving James the big feel good win, only to have Bliss get the title back in very short order. On the other hand, it could be little more than a way to give Bliss a quick win and there's nothing wrong with that.

I'll take Bliss to retain here, though the idea of giving James a win is tempting. James has been teasing tying Trish Stratus' record for the most Women's Title reigns in company history though I don't think they'll actually pull the trigger. Bliss can move on to facing someone else (hint: her name rhymes with Shaska) later on and James isn't going to lose anything if she doesn't pick up the title. So yeah, Bliss retains, even though I'm not feeling as sure as I was just a few days ago.

### **Asuka vs Emma**

Did you know that Jesse Ventura and Roddy Piper filmed a pilot for a cop show back in the 1980s? The show was called "Tag Team" and it was looking strong to be picked up but that never quite came together. Now what does this have to do with the match? Well nothing, but what else am I supposed to talk about for the build towards this one?

Of course Asuka is going to destroy Emma and of course that's what should happen. Asuka hasn't lost since she came to WWE and Emma is little more than an appetizer before she gets on to someone more important and/or a bigger challenge. Emma was the obvious option for this as she can get destroyed and lose nothing, mainly because she has no value in the first place. Asuka wins here and it's a glorified squash at worst.

### **Cedric Alexander/Rich Swann vs. Jack Gallagher/Brian Kendrick**

To paraphrase a certain song: "This is filler. Filler night. And no one's gonna save you from this match actually being on pay per view." Yeah there's no hiding the fact that this is taking place because the main event is featuring eight people and they need something else to fill in part of the card. It's nice that the cruiserweights are getting another spot on the card but it's the popcorn match of the night.

I'll take Alexander and Swann to win here and I'm not particularly sure why. Neither of them is interesting and

while the story worked well enough, they're just showing how unimportant the rest of the division really is. There's a story to the match (revenge, basically) and that's all well and good, but if the participants feel so unimportant, the match isn't likely to be worth watching.

### Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose/Kurt Angle vs. Miz/Kane/Braun Strowman/The Bar

Hokey smoke what a match this has turned into. The original idea, and the match the entire show was built around, was the Shield vs. these five, though Roman Reigns was taken out due to another medical issue. That leaves Angle to fill in and...I have almost no idea what to think of the change. Angle is a special attraction and I'd like to see him get built up for a lot longer, but desperate times call for bad builds.

I'll definitely take Rollins/Ambrose/Angle as there's just no reason to have any other option. Angle is probably a one off appearance and there's nothing wrong with that. Hopefully he doesn't die or something in the ring, though that's almost par for the course whenever Angle gets in the ring. The match should be violent, but Kane, Cesaro and Sheamus are all there to take a fall for any of the winners and that's the way to go.

### Overall Thoughts

This is an interesting show as the whole thing has been turned upside down in the span of a few days. The top two matches have been thrown out (well only somewhat in the main event's case) yet somehow the show is even better on paper than it was just a few days ago. I could go for a long Balor vs. Styles match and Angle...well let's just hope he's ok. The show's gimmick has gone from interesting to something I only remember because of what the show is called, which isn't the best sign. This show really is a once in a long time situation and it could be interesting to see how WWE handles things.

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## **Monday Night Raw – October 17, 2017: All Your Shields In One Basket**

I apologize for the delay but the in-laws are in town and I had to pick them up at the airport. They'll be around for a few weeks so things might be a bit slow. The shows will be up that night but they won't likely be on time. Sorry about that.

### **Monday Night Raw**

Date: October 16, 2017

Location: Moda Center, Portland, Oregon

Commentators: Corey Graves, Michael Cole, Booker T.

It's the go home show for Tables, Ladders and Chairs but tonight we're focusing on a cage match with Roman Reigns facing Braun Strowman. In addition to that though we have Dean Ambrose and Seth Rollins defending the Tag Team Titles against the Bar. There's a good chance of a title change with the TLC match this Sunday. Let's get to it.

As expected, we open with a four minute recap of last week's Shield reunion.

Here's Kurt Angle to open things up. Angle hypes up Sunday's main event but here's Shield, through the crowd, to the old music and in the riot gear, drawing a VERY strong THIS IS AWESOME chant. Now why couldn't they do this last week??? Angle lets them have the ring and it's Rollins saying he can't believe they're back. It's been five years since they debuted and he couldn't be happier than to be here with his brothers again.

Ambrose, looking more fired up and charismatic than he has in years, says they divide and conquer like no one else. Maybe he got a bit ahead of himself last week when he said they could fight four, five or six guys but he'd do the same thing again all over. He wants to fight right now so here are the Bar, Miz and Strowman. Angle cuts them off though and says if this fight happens, there's no cage match later. Tensions cool, at least for now.

Elias is with the Club and has a song but the Club wants to warm up their vocal cords. Gallows sounds like a small dog barking before calling us all nerds. Anderson on the other hand clucks like a chicken...and belts out COOL COCKY BAD! Next up is a song about Jason Jordan, meaning it's time for a six man tag.

#### Elias/The Club vs. Jason Jordan/Titus O'Neil/Apollo Crews

Titus and Gallows start things off as we hear about Titus trying to recruit Jordan to Titus Worldwide. A big clothesline puts Gallows on the floor and everything breaks down as we take a break. Back with Gallows kicking Crews in the head and handing it off to Elias for some stomping. Crews kicks him in the face and dives over to the hot tag to Jordan so house can be cleaned. A belly to belly gets two and it's time for the

running shoulders all over the place. Crews makes the tag and hits the Toss Powerbomb for the pin on Anderson at 6:48. Not enough shown to rate but this was fine.

Short pay per view rundown.

Video on Asuka.

Emma is sick of hearing about Asuka but here's Alexa Bliss to say she feels the pain. Bliss shifts the focus to Mickie James, who body shamed her last week. They're ready for a tag match later tonight.

Video on Brian Kendrick and Jack Gallagher tormenting Cedric Alexander.

#### Cedric Alexander vs. Jack Gallagher

Hang on a second though as here's Rich Swann to even the odds against Kendrick and Gallagher. Jack wastes no time in slugging away and drops Cedric with a headbutt. We hit the chinlock for a bit before a dropkick to the back has Cedric in even more trouble. Another kick to the chest and it's off to another neck crank. Kendrick offers a distraction, and gets DDT'd by Swann. The distraction lets Cedric hit a Lumbar Check on Gallagher (with an outstanding sell job) for the pin at 3:21.

**Rating:** D+. Nothing to see until the ending, though you can see the tag match from here. I'm digging Gallagher and Kendrick as a team as of late and they're good for opponents in a match like this. Unfortunately I'm not sure if they're going to go anywhere near the title, which makes this a bit of a waste of time. The sell of the ending was great though.

It's time for MizTV with Miz being flanked by the Bar and Curtis Axel but no Bo Dallas. Miz talked about how they're ready to destroy the Shield right now but they'll wait until Sunday night. Sheamus says the Shield will be broken into three pieces. They're ready to destroy Shield and here's tonight's guest: their partner on Sunday, Braun Strowman.

Braun says it's time to destroy the Shield forever and it starts tonight inside the cage. The fans get in a YES/REALLY battle with Miz, who has a bit of a surprise: there's going to be a fifth member of the team. The fans want Curtis Axel but here's Kurt Angle to say this isn't happening.

Kurt has a deal for Miz though: if Strowman wins tonight, the fifth man can join. If Reigns wins though, Strowman is out and it's 3-3 again. Miz says it's on but Angle says everyone is banned from ringside in both the cage match (kind of redundant) and the Tag Team Title match.

### Sasha Banks vs. Alicia Fox

Banks made Fox tap in the elimination match last week. Before the match, Fox says she was scratching her nose last week and deserves more respect. Oh and a t-shirt! Sasha wastes no time in trying the Bank Statement but Fox is in the ropes in a hurry. Fox kicks her down and we hit the chinlock in a hurry. There's a backbreaker into a second chinlock on Banks but Sasha won't have any more of this. The comeback takes all of a moment and the Bank Statement makes Fox tap at 2:51.

Fox screeches after the loss.

Post break, Fox attacks Banks in the back and sends her into various things. More screeching ensues.

Here's Enzo Amore for a chat as Graves wants an air sick bag. He misses his title and we see Mustafa Ali costing him the belt last week. Last week, Enzo got ripped off and Kalisto robbed him of the title. This brings out Kalisto for the trash talk but Drew Gulak, Tony Nese, Noam Dar and Ariya Daivari come in for the long form beatdown. Cue Mustafa Ali for the save until the numbers game gets the better of him. This seems a little Survivor Series-ish.

### Tag Team Titles: The Bar vs. Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose

Rollins and Ambrose are defending. Sheamus starts with Ambrose with Dean stomping him down in the corner. The champs clean house in a hurry to start and the stereo dives put Sheamus and Cesaro down with little trouble. Sheamus forearm Dean down back inside and we take a break.

Back with Rollins fighting out of Sheamus' chinlock but getting caught in the Irish Curse for two. Stereo kicks to the ribs get two on Rollins and he can't power out of Cesaro's front facelock. Cesaro isn't taking the risk though and kicks Dean off the apron. The fans chant for Ambrose but

settle for Seth striking away. Cesaro gets backdropped to the floor and a diving tag brings in Ambrose.

Everything breaks down and Cesaro avoids the catapult into the post ala the teeth incident. Double dives take the Bar down and the top rope elbow gets two on Cesaro. Something like a Hart Attack gets two on Dean but the double crucifix is broken up. Instead it's a pair of superkicks to the ribs, setting up Dirty Deeds to put Cesaro away and retain the titles at 12:10.

**Rating:** B. These teams work very well together and it's amazing how much more interested I was in seeing them fight when the Club and no one else was around to waste our time. It also helps to have Miz doing most of the talking, which was one of the major issues in the previous part of the feud. Good match here, though nothing was coming close to the previous version.

Post break Axel gives the Bar a pep talk because he wants in the main event. Strowman comes in and the pep talking continues. Axel NEEDS to be in that match and is ready to go fight Reigns right now. Strowman: "Then go find him." Axel: "You mean now?"

We look back at Bray Wyatt becoming Sister Abigail last week.

Here's Finn Balor for a chat. He talks about the Celtic festival of Sowan, which sounds like Halloween cranked up to eleven. Last week Finn say Bray's tricks but he has his own too. This Sunday, the Demon will slay a monster of his own. Finn's demon has no fear...and the Demon paint appears on his face. It disappears and Finn says his Demon dreams of nightmares (paint on and off again) and it wants to meet Sister Abigail. Run. Never let WWE get supernatural.

Emma/Alexa Bliss vs. Bayley/Mickie James

Mickie armbars Emma to start and it's quickly off to Bayley for a double back elbow and a Paisan elbow drop. Bliss comes in and takes a kind of Twist of Fate over the middle rope. Emma breaks it up at two and a bunch of yelling takes us to a break. Back with Emma sending Bayley into the buckle a few times for no effect. Emma going into the buckle has some

effect though and Emma is all staggered. A knee drop gets two on Emma but she sends Bayley outside and into the barricade to take over.

Back in and Bliss hits a running slap to the face, followed by a chinlock to slow things down again. Bayley finally sends her throat first into the ropes and it's a hot tag to bring in Mickie. House is cleaned in a hurry and Mickie's top rope Thesz press gets two with Emma making the save. That's fine with Mickie who superkicks Bliss for the pin at 11:21.

**Rating:** C. Just a quick match to set up something for Sunday. It didn't have anything special to it of course and Mickie isn't likely to win the title but it's a simple enough story that isn't hurting anything. Mickie is great in this role and helps bridge the gap until we get to another big challenger.

Axel goes after the Shield and we cut to a break.

Miz gives his future team a pep talk but asks where Axel is. Braun tells him the news and Miz looks terrified.

Mickie is ready for revenge on Sunday. Those insults hurt but Mickie is proud of her career. She has a three year old at home and can't wait to bring the title home to him.

Sasha vs. Alicia is the Kickoff Show match.

PPV card rundown.

Miz goes looking for Axel...and finds him hanging unconscious upside down from a forklift.

The cage is lowered.

Miz isn't worried about losing his fifth man, because Axel was never in that spot.

Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman

Inside a cage and Miz jumps in on commentary. Strowman sends him into the corner to start but it's way too early for the running powerslam. Reigns slips out and tries to climb, only to get pulled down. Some clotheslines

have almost no effect but some big boots have a big more effect. Strowman goes shoulder first into the corner and there are the rapid fire clotheslines. One heck of a spinebuster gets two on Roman and we take a break.

Back with Reigns tasting the cage a few times. Strowman throws him at the cage so Reigns grabs the top for a climb. Now why did he think that would work with Strowman looking at him. Strowman misses a charge and hits the cage though, allowing Reigns to score with some kicks to the face. A Samoan drop gets two with a heck of a kickout so Reigns makes another escape attempt. Cue the Bar to cut Reigns off so Ambrose and Rollins are outside to cut them off. THEN WHAT WAS THE POINT IN BANNING THEM BOTH FROM RINGSIDE???

Braun gets up in time to pull Reigns back inside with a superplex off the cage. Miz: "COVER!!!" Everyone not in the match brawls up to the stage as we cut away from the match entirely. Miz joins them and the fight heads backstage. Again, we're not even looking at the CAGE MATCH WITH TWO MONSTERS FIGHTING EACH OTHER because we need to see this instead. For all we know there's a tango contest going on at the moment as Miz closes a metal door, locking the four of them in the parking lot.

Back to the ring with Reigns fighting to his feet after suffering from a bad bowl of soup as served up by Chef Strowman (prove that it didn't happen). Miz is back on commentary as Reigns goes up top, only to slip down and crotch Strowman. A Superman Punch staggers Strowman and a second puts him down. Strowman throws Reigns in the air but gets Superman Punched again for two.

It's spear time...and Kane's lights come on. Strowman splashes Reigns but eats a spear anyway. Kane comes up through the mat though and stares Reigns down, followed by a chokeslam. A second chokeslam sets up the running powerslam, followed by a Tombstone for good measure. Strowman adds another powerslam and Reigns is done at 17:24.

**Rating:** C-. Let me make sure I have this straight. Angle bans everyone from ringside so we have SIX PEOPLE interfere? And Reigns loses his first match after the reunion (not fairly but it's a loss)? Here's the thing:

Kane was in Shield's first match and Reigns retired his brother at Wrestlemania so there's definitely a connection there. Unfortunately we didn't hear anything about that and it's basically just the idea that Miz got Kane to join for no apparent reason. Of course the announcers sold things well here, though there's a better story to tell.

Miz, on top of a ladder, announces Kane as the fifth member of the team to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. Sunday really is a case of a one match card and the more they add to that, the less I'm sure it's going to work. Putting eight people into one match isn't often a good idea and it takes away a lot of what you might be able to get elsewhere. Really, what else is there? Sister Abigail vs. the Demon sounds more like a joke than anything else. The women's match feels standard and I'm not thrilled with two cruiserweight matches. There's a good chance I could be wrong, but if that main event doesn't work, they're in major trouble.

### Results

Jason Jordan/Titus O'Neil/Apollo Crews b. Elias/The Club – Toss Powerbomb to Anderson

Cedric Alexander b. Jack Gallagher – Lumbar Check

Sasha Banks b. Alicia Fox – Bank Statement

Seth Rollins/Dean Ambrose b. The Bar – Dirty Deeds to Cesaro

Mickie James/Bayley b. Alexa Bliss/Emma – Superkick to Bliss

Braun Strowman b. Roman Reigns – Running powerslam

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