

Wrestler of the Day – November 15: The Patriot

Today we're looking at a real American: the Patriot.

The Patriot, played by Del Wilkes, got his start in the AWA as the Trooper, a police officer. Here he is at some point in 1990 on AWA Championship Wrestling on ESPN.

Trooper vs. Kent Carlson

There's a masked man sitting in the audience. Trooper hammers away with left hands out of the corner to start before slapping Carlson across the ring. A left hand to the ribs drops Carlson again and a belly to back suplex gets two. Trooper plants him with an Alabama Slam and a bad looking dropkick puts Kent down again. The Big Pinch, a nerve hold, makes Carlson submit. Total squash.

Next up was the Dallas based Global Wrestling Federation. From some point around 1991 under his better known name.

Tom Davis vs. The Patriot

Davis takes him into the corner to start as Scotty Anthony (later known as Raven) comes to commentary to say the masked Patriot is a Russian spy named Vladimir. A rollup sends Davis to the apron and Patriot works on the arm. Anthony praises Joseph McCarthy as the last real patriot in America. Patriot takes him down with a headlock as Anthony needs quiet from the audience to do commentary.

Tom bails to talk with his brother Mike before getting caught in a headlock back inside. Davis snapmares him down and gets two off a legdrop as Anthony thinks Davis writes Garfield. Anthony: "A win over the Patriot would be a feather in his cap, if in fact he had a cap on." The full nelson slam plants Davis and the Patriot Missile (top rope shoulder) is good for the pin.

Rating: D+. The match was nothing to see but the commentary was

hilarious. Raven is one of the funniest guys in wrestling and can crack me up almost every time he's given the chance. Patriot was good for a spot like this but he was ready to move up to a bigger role soon after this.

Patriot would jump to WCW in early 1994, including this match on Saturday Night, March 20, 1994.

Lord Steven Regal vs. The Patriot

Regal's TV Title isn't on the line here. They circle around for well over a minute to start with Patriot getting the crowd behind him. Patriot takes him down with an armdrag into an armbar for early control. Regal fires off a European uppercut as Bischoff and Ventura have a bet over who is going to throw a punch first.

Patriot hooks a short arm scissors but Regal uses some nice technical stuff to fight up into an armbar. More uppercuts stagger Patriot and Regal cranks on an armbar of his own. Back up and the arm gets wrapped around the top rope but Patriot sends him face first into the buckle. Patriot throws the first punch and Jesse wins the bet. Regal gets caught in a quick Boston crab but Regal's manager Sir William comes in for the DQ.

Rating: C. The ending hurts this as it needed another five minutes to keep going. The arm stuff worked here as we had a nice back and forth technical match instead of just doing the usual style that didn't go anywhere. Regal can make that style work very well and Patriot was hanging with him while the match lasted.

Patriot would join forces with Marcus Bagwell in the team Stars N Stripes. Here they are challenging for the titles at Fall Brawl 1994.

Tag Titles: Pretty Wonderful vs. Stars N Stripes

We see Barry Darsow AGAIN but this time he's being thrown out. Seriously, Paul Orndorff and Paul Roma are the tag champions and it's 1994. Let that sink in for a bit. Bagwell shakes hands with Penzer. I kind of like that for some reason. It's

nice if nothing else. What the heck happened to this kid? He became the biggest dick I've ever seen, and I've seen my share of big dicks. Oh just leave it alone.

The Patriot apparently changed houses between this and Halloween Havoc as he's billed as from DC here and South Carolina next time. Roma and Orndorff are reminding me of Billy and Chuck. They actually call the previous sham a match. I've heard it all now. Other than Admin KB, but I think that could come this year. Stars N Stripes beat the champions in a non title match to set this up. They make fun of the WWF and say these are wrestlers and not bodybuilders.

Keep in mind that Bagwell would become Buff Bagwell in a few years and Orndorff was Mr. Wonderful for his muscles. And yeah you guessed it, the match sucks. Nothing at all of note goes on here as it's just four guys with no heat having a tag team match. Thankfully it's shorter than their rematch next month.

Yes, Orndorff and Roma got to fight on PPV again, but as challengers where they won the belts again. Anyway, this is just boring as all goodness . Orndorff dumps a cooler with soda and ice onto Bagwell for no apparent reason and miscommunication between the faces ends this.

Rating: D+. Now remember, Regal and Austin lost their titles tonight, but Roma and Orndorff keep theirs. Let that sink in a bit. To further the pure stupidity of this company, these teams fought again SIX DAYS LATER and the faces won the belts, which they held until October, only to lose them back to Paul and Paul, before Stars N Stripes won them AGAIN, before losing them to Harlem Heat for their first reign. Did Orndorff save Hogan from drowning in cocaine or something once?

The team would win the belts on TV soon after this and defended them at Halloween Havoc 1994.

Tag Titles: Stars N Stripes vs. Pretty Wonderful

Pretty Wonderful are the former champions here as Stars N Stripes beat them about a month earlier. Good night do those teams sound generic. Pretty Wonderful is made up of Pretty Paul Roma and Mr. Wonderful Paul Orndorff. Stars N Stripes are Bagwell and the Patriot. I really am not looking forward to this. This just sounds like a bad match on an indy show or something like that.

Heenan suggests that the Patriot is Al Gore. Something tells me that Bobby is going to be all that gets me through this match and show. Bagwell was a five time champion with four different partners. That either says he's a great tag wrestler or he has no direction so they kept throwing him in random tag teams because he had a big contract and they had nothing else to do with him.

You can tell the announcers are just bored to death as they're arguing over what a tag is and then there's something about Dennis Rodman. This is just BORING. They actually say this is the last night Hogan will face Flair. That's just hilarious. They wrestled 15 years later and likely will in TNA also. They discuss the Lions' Super Bowl chances. This is just amusing. Nothing at all is going on in the match.

They say that Tiger Stadium and Yankee Stadium are the last great ballparks. The real last great ballparks are the ones still in use today: Fenway and Wrigley. Heenan says that once all of the matches are over, no one is going to take a shower because they'll all be watching the cage match.

Ok, number one, why does Heenan know the showering habits of the wrestlers and why would no one take a shower after their match when they have about an hour and a half before the main event? How clean do they like to get? The fans are more or less dead for this by the way. Bagwell hits the suplex and Wonderful hits an elbow on him to get the titles. This was somehow worse than the previous match.

Rating: D-. I have never cared less about a match than I did here. I've always thought Bagwell was hot and there's a former Horseman in there though so it's not a failure. The announcers were bored too as this was just bland as all goodness. The match didn't work, but the tag division around this time was a disaster anyway.

One last match at Clash XXIX.

Tag Team Titles: Stars and Stripes vs. Pretty Wonderful

This is Pretty Wonderful's titles vs. the Patriot's mask. The teams have traded the titles over the last few months with Pretty Wonderful starting as champions but losing the belts to Stars and Stripes before taking them back a month later. Orndorff and Bagwell get things going and it's quickly off to Roma as the champions gain an early advantage. Roma jumps over Marcus twice in the corner and hits a quick cross body for two but Bagwell comes back with a dropkick and the challengers clean house.

Back in and it's off to Patriot vs. Orndorff and both guys miss elbow drops before trading hammerlocks on the mat. Patriot takes control on the mat for a bit but Orndorff buries a knee in the ribs to give the champions the advantage. Roma comes back in for three straight backbreakers followed by a top rope fist to the face and a near fall. Back up and Patriot scores with an atomic drop and a second for good measure. A Thesz Press gets two and it's off to Bagwell for some arm work.

Marcus dives at Roma but gets dropped over the top with the camera missing most of whatever happened. Orndorff goes outside for some knees to the ribs and it's back inside for some right hands to the face. Roma comes back in for a nice dropkick and a powerslam but he poses instead of covering. Back to Orndorff who gets caught in a backslide by Marcus for two and a sunset flip for the same. Everything breaks down and the champions load up their suplex/top rope splash combo, but Patriot shoves Roma off the top and Bagwell counters the suplex into a pin for the titles out of nowhere.

Rating: C. It's not a great match but the fans loved the ending and

there's nothing wrong with having the fans explode to open a show. Stars and Stripes were another young team who didn't last long but were easy to cheer for and had decent enough matches to validate the push.

Here's another title shot at Clash XXX.

Tag Team Titles: Harlem Heat vs. Stars and Stripes

Harlem Heat won the belts earlier in the month and this is the rematch. We have no Stars and Stripes to start but we do get Nature Boy Ric Flair with two very nice looking women. He walks by Vader with no incident and goes to his seat. Booker and Bagwell get things going with Marcus stomping him down in the corner but running into a boot in the corner. He comes right back with a dropkick for both champions as Stars and Stripes stands tall.

It's off to Patriot for a double backdrop on Booker for two. He cranks on Booker's arm as the fans chant USA. Stevie comes in but walks into a wristlock from Patriot before it's back to Bagwell for the same hold. A knee to the ribs stops Marcus cold and the champions take over. The advantage only lasts for a few seconds though as it's quickly back to Patriot for more arm work. A belly to belly gets two on Booker but Stevie saves his brother from a monkey flip.

Back to Stevie for some heavy stomping and he draws in Patriot so Booker can choke from the apron. A running forearm gets two for Booker and it's off to the chinlock. Marcus fights up but both guys try cross bodies to put him right back down. Sherri gets up on the apron for a distraction so Bagwell's tag to the Patriot doesn't count. She takes her shoe off but accidentally hits Booker by mistake. Bagwell rolls him up for two but Stevie kicks Marcus in the face to give Booker the pin to retain.

Rating: C. It's not bad and more entertaining than the other matches tonight. They let the match have a little more time and things got better as a result which is usually the case. Harlem Heat was getting much better and this more or less ended Stars and Stripes as a team. Good enough to get by.

After a few years in All Japan, Patriot would be signed by the WWF.

Here's one of his first matches on Raw, July 28, 1997.

Bret Hart vs. The Patriot

Bret is all evil and Canadian here and Shawn is on commentary. We can't start immediately though as Bret insists on O Canada being played. That's not cool with Patriot who wants to hear the Star Spangled Banner. Like a true villain though, Bret jumps him during the song and we're ready to go. The song is still going as Bret hammers away before choking on the ropes. Hart stomps away in the corner as Shawn says he stands for truth, justice and the American way. Patriot fights back with a big right hand and they fight outside with Patriot in control.

Back in and the Patriot Missile connects for two and we take a break. We come back with Bret suplexing Patriot down as we see him putting the Figure Four on around the pole during the break. A backbreaker sets up the middle rope elbow but Patriot fights back in the corner. He loads up Uncle Slam (full nelson slam) but the referee gets bumped. Bret nails a piledriver but there's no referee. Shawn trips Bret up though and the distraction lets Patriot grab the longest rollup in history for the pin.

Rating: C+. This was a natural matchup during the Border War with Patriot being the Kurt Angle of his day, minus the whole Olympic Gold Medal part of course. Bret and Shawn would have their issues until the end of time, including six days after this with Shawn refereeing Bret's WWF Title match at Summerslam.

That win alone was enough to give Patriot a title shot at In Your House XVII.

WWF World Title: Bret Hart vs. The Patriot

Patriot comes out to what would become Kurt Angle's theme song. Bret jumps him to start before tying Patriot up in the Tree of Woe for some kicks to the ribs. The fans chant USA to tick Bret off even more so he rakes Patriot's eyes through the mask. The left handed Patriot comes back with a clothesline and a nice dropkick before clotheslining the champion out to the floor. Bret takes his sweet time on the floor before heading back inside to hide in the corner.

Some nice armdrags put Bret down as the pace picks up a good bit. We hit the armbars Patriot sends Bret's shoulder into the buckle before slapping on the armbars again. Hart finally makes it to the corner to break up the hold but Patriot wraps the weak arm around the ropes again. Bret comes back with some kicks to the ribs before focusing in on the knee. He cannonballs down onto the knee a few times before just punching the side of Patriot's leg.

Patriot limps around the ring while holding the top rope but Bret kicks his knee out again to take him down. There's a spinning toe-hold of all things from the champion before he locks on the Figure Four around the post. Back in and Patriot fights up as British Bulldog makes his way out to ringside. Bret takes Patriot down with a Russian leg sweep and the fans chant for Austin. Patriot comes back with a kick to the side of Bret's head and gets two off a sunset flip.

The challenger starts coming back with a left hand to the ribs and a leg drop but Bulldog's distraction lets Bret take over again. Bret accidentally hits the Bulldog, allowing Patriot to get a rollup for two and a BIG pop from the crowd. The Uncle Slam (a full nelson slam) gets two for Patriot but Bulldog makes the save. Patriot goes after Bulldog and here's Vader to help deal with the Englishman. Bret and Vader get in a fight but the match continues.

Vader and Bulldog are taken to the back and Patriot goes up top for his Patriot Missile (top rope shoulder) but Bret gets up at two. There was nowhere near as much of a reaction for that count as the previous ones. A suplex gets two more on Bret but he grabs a quick Stun Gun to put Patriot down again. The bulldog and middle rope elbow get two for Bret but Patriot slugs away at him in the corner.

The referee gets hit in the face with an elbow and as luck would have it, Patriot hits the Uncle Slam again just a few seconds later. It's only good for two when the referee wakes up but it's too late. A double clothesline puts both guys down but it's Patriot up first, sending Bret chest first into the buckle. With nothing left to try, Patriot puts Bret in the Sharpshooter but Bret counters into one of his own and Patriot gives up, despite being about a foot from the rope.

Rating: B. The match worked well but the ending hurt it a good bit. Patriot is fighting for America and all that jazz, but he gives up instead of crawling another ten inches? The match took awhile to get going but once we got to the interference and all that jazz, things picked up a good bit.

Here's Patriot on Raw, September 8, 1997.

Patriot vs. Hunter Hearst Helmsley vs. British Bulldog

Shawn and HHH jump the Bulldog on his way to the ring. They ram his knee into the ramp and crush it with a chair to set up the match at One Night Only. Back from a break and Savio has jumped into the match and is replacing Bulldog I guess. This is back when the match wasn't a total cliché that was required at least once a month. HHH gets double teamed and elbowed down but the alliance ends quickly with Patriot clotheslining HHH down and getting kicked in the face for his efforts.

Savio gets knocked to the floor and HHH drops a knee on Patriot for two. HHH pounds away on Patriot's head but Savio comes gets jealous and pounds away on Patriot instead. I've never understood the logic behind that: why not let HHH expend energy and then jump him later on? Shawn comes out for commentary as we take a break.

Back with Savio hitting a spinwheel kick in the corner on HHH, followed by a DDT from Patriot on the future Game for two. Patriot and Savio take turns beating on HHH but neither guy can get more than a one. Patriot suplexes Savio down but HHH breaks it up before there's even a cover. Savio tries a sunset flip on HHH and after Patriot breaks up HHH's hold on the ropes, it gets two.

The fans are booing something here and to be fair, it's probably the match as it's not working at all for the most part. Shawn is ripping Vince apart on commentary because of how stupid Vince sounds. Savio kicks HHH's head off, making Shawn speak Spanish. Savio puts a headscissors on HHH and Patriot puts a headscissors on Savio at the same time as we take a break.

Back with Patriot chopping away on Savio and vice versa. HHH breaks up a

cover on Savio and the booing gets louder. Patriot and HHH literally stand still and choke each other as a LOUD boring chant breaks out. Vince complains about Shawn's change of attitude. Shawn: "Well it was you that told me to change."

The Pedigree is countered and Savio lands on the referee. HHH throws Patriot to the floor and loads up a Pedigree on Savio, only to be catapulted into Patriot, crotching the guy that comes out to Kurt Angle's music (Patriot if you're kind of slow). Savio kicks HHH's head off but Shawn distracts him before the cover. HHH rams Savio into the Patriot and rolls up Vega for the pin.

Rating: D-. WHO THOUGHT THIS WAS A GOOD IDEA??? They should be made to sit and watch this match over and over again until they scream for mercy. I mean DANG this didn't work at all. Someone thought giving this SEVENTEEN MINUTES was a good idea. Savio comes completely out of nowhere (he had been feuding with the original Nation of Domination) and jumps in the match, which makes absolutely no sense. Taking Bulldog out was a problem as at least he would have given us three distinct groups (Harts, Anti-Harts, future DX) in the match, but instead it was a total mess and VERY dull. Terrible main event.

Maybe he'll have better luck in England. From One Night Only.

Flash Funk vs. The Patriot

Flash Funk is more commonly known as 2 Cold Scorpio and is a pimp without the name of being one. Patriot showed up a few weeks before this and somehow had a title shot at the previous PPV which went nowhere. Naturally he "came within an eyelash" but that didn't mean anything after that show.

Patriot has Angle's old music which it's just odd to hear in 1997. He's more or less a heel here since he comes out with the American flag. Patriot says he wears a mask because he represents the face of every American. I don't know that many men that have golden skin like that. Flash is wearing a freaking zoot suit. This isn't as good of a match as it could be but it's ok I guess.

It's about as generic as you could get but that's fine. Vince calls Flash the Funkmeister. I'm done. Patriot was just annoying at this point. He wasn't that good at all but was built up to be this great worker which he just wasn't at all. They keep saying the reason they're not being all violent and such is because they don't hate each other. That's better than nothing I guess.

If nothing else this should tell you everything you need to know about Patriot: his finishers are a full nelson slam called the Uncle Slam and a top rope shoulder block called the Patriot Missile. Funk's finisher is called the Funky Flash Splash. A full nelson slam ends this. That was a waste of time.

Rating: C-. Again, this was just there. It wasn't particularly good or bad, but Patriot got some decent heat which is really all you can ask for. Funk went for a big move from the top and it missed for the Uncle Slam. That's better than nothing I guess. It could have been a lot worse I guess, but this just wasn't the best choice of a pairing.

We'll wrap it up at In Your House XVIII with a flag match.

Bret Hart/British Bulldog vs. Vader/The Patriot

This is a flag match and you can win by pinfall, submission, or capturing your country's flag from the poles in the corners. It's a big brawl on the floor to start with everyone fighting on the floor. Vader pounds on Bret with a Canadian flag pole but Bret sends him into the steps. Now it's Bret hitting Vader with the pole as Bulldog does the same to Patriot in the aisle. We're still waiting for an opening bell. They change positions and the Foundation members are both down.

We finally get a bell as the Americans are alone in the ring. Why they don't go up for the flag is anyone's guess but everyone stands around instead of doing anything. Patriot finally goes up for it but gets pulled down by Bulldog. A snap suplex puts Bulldog down but Bret distracts Patriot from climbing. Vader comes in and runs Bulldog over before it's

off to Bret for the first time. Hart tries to slug it out and is easily punched down into the corner for his efforts.

Bret avoids a charge into the corner and takes Vader down with a Russian legsweep. Vader easily breaks up an attempt at climbing with a low blow before sitting on Bret's chest for two. Back to Patriot vs. Bulldog with the masked man mostly missing a dropkick for two on Davey. Patriot goes for the flag very slowly and Bret breaks it up again. Vader does the same to the Bulldog as things slow down. Bret sends Patriot's shoulder into the post and puts on the Figure Four around the same post for good measure.

Back in and Bret drops a headbutt to the abdomen before putting on the Sharpshooter, but Patriot easily reverses into one of his own. That's broken up just as easily until all four go into the same corner. Bulldog throws Patriot off and the match slows back down again. Patriot kicks Smith away and finally makes the tag off to Vader to almost no reaction. Bulldog scores with a quick belly to back suplex but Vader runs him over and drops a splash for two.

Vader can't get to the flag either as Bulldog pulls him back down and we hit the chinlock. Back to Bret for a Sharpshooter but Vader is right next to the ropes. Patriot comes in without a tag to break up the hold anyway and Vader takes over. Now it's a Sharpshooter from Vader to Bret as the fans are trying to get into the match. Bulldog breaks up the Sharpshooter so it's Patriot in again with a Figure Four. Smith breaks it up again and comes in for the delayed vertical suplex. Patriot is knocked down again while trying to climb so it's back to Bret.

Hart drops some knees and elbows but Vader easily stops him from getting the flag. Now it's back to Vader vs. Bulldog but the masked man misses his moonsault, only to LAND ON HIS FEET. That's INSANE. Anyway he pounds Bulldog down into the corner but Bret stops an attempt at the flag. Instead Vader clotheslines Bulldog to the floor but gets nailed in the head with the bell.

They head inside again where Bret easily slams Vader and drops a few legs. Vader fights up and clotheslines both Foundation members down,

allowing for a lukewarm at best tag to Patriot. House is cleaned and the Uncle Slam gets two on Bret. A fan comes in and is easily taken out by security. The Vader Bomb crushes Bret but Vader isn't legal, so Bret gets a quick rollup on Patriot for the pin.

Rating: D+. This wasn't a horrible match but again it just went on WAY too long. This was nearly half an hour long and could have easily been done in about twelve minutes. The flags weren't a factor at all as none of the attempts to get them even came close. It would also be the last major appearance of Patriot who tore his triceps a few weeks later and retired as a result.

Patriot is a guy that fills in a very logical role. He looks great, he has an easy character and he can have a decent match. It's a shame that he tore his triceps and was released less than a year into his WWF run. Patriot was a good hand in the ring and could have been something better in a different era of the WWF. With Austin rising up the card though and DX soon to turn face, there just wasn't room for him though.

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