

Thought of the Day: Lie To Me WWE! Lie To Me!

This is another sign of the times and it's something else where they need to take the lead from old school. So I'm watching Survivor Series 2002 and there's a backstory about Victoria vs. Trish. The story goes that they used to be fitness models together and Trish abandoned Victoria. This alone sets up a story for the PPV match. Notice what they did here: they MADE THE STORY UP. This is something you rarely see anymore. Today, most feuds are about wanting to challenge the champion and are very based in reality. I get enough real life in real life. When I watch wrestling, I like things being over the top instead of down to earth. Make up some stories. Tell me about Kane getting burned alive or Undertaker being a demon or something these guys did before they got to the WWE. In short, LIE TO ME.

Monday Night Raw – December 3, 2001: Vince Needs To Be Arrested

Monday Night Raw

Date: December 3, 2001

Location: Bradley Center, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's the go home show for Vengeance and the star of the show is still Vince. The main events for the show are set and that's really all that

matters for the PPV. Seriously I have no idea what else is going on with the show because the company hasn't bothered to tell us. This show absolutely has to be better than last week's though. Let's get to it.

Here's Jericho to open the show. He says that he can win the big one and he's going to do that on Sunday. Jericho doesn't like that Austin and Rock have basically decided they're meeting for the Undisputed Title because they're overlooking Angle and himself. Jericho doesn't like Austin very much and the disrespect is going to end on Sunday when he wins the title.

Cue Flair and Jericho says it must be an honor for Flair to be in the ring with him. Flair asks if it's Jericho or Y2J. Jericho would prefer to be called Mr. Jericho. Flair doesn't think Jericho can win the big one because he didn't see Jericho beat the Rock. Naitch makes Austin vs. Jericho in a non-title match later. Shorter segment here but it sets up a match and there was no Vince, making it better than anything last week.

Rock is here.

Kane vs. Bubba Ray Dudley

Bubba charges at him but gets slugged and backdropped down. Kane and Show face the Dudleys on Sunday for the titles. Stacy tries to distract Kane which doesn't work at all. D-Von gets in some shots to Kane, allowing Bubba to hit a side slam for no cover. Middle rope splash misses and it's clothesline and chokeslam for the pin. Basically a squash.

The Dudleys hit the 3D on Kane but Show saves. When was this match announced? Smackdown I guess?

Vince is on the phone with Taker and the big man won't be here tonight. Angle comes in and feels awful about what Rock did to Vince on Thursday. Angle has a plan for revenge but we don't hear it.

Albert vs. Test

Scotty is on commentary and therefore getting on my nerves. This is your standard power match: Albert hits Test, Test hits Albert, Test takes over. Albert fires off some right hands but Test suplexes him down. The elbow off the top is broken up by a slam and Albert punches away some more. Test knocks him down again but Scotty gets on the apron for a distraction. After the Wormy one is taken down, Albert hits the bicycle (Brogue) kick for tow. Test takes him down again and goes for a chair. Scotty disarms him and blasts Test with said chair before the Baldo Bomb gets the pin for Albert.

Rating: D. Nothing to see here other than Test being his usual self. Albert (now known as Tensai in case the chants didn't make sense to you) has never been exactly interesting but he is what he is: a big bald monster who beats people up. Why they made him a hip hop hippo here is beyond me but at least they made him a wrecking ball again soon.

Trish (looking GREAT here) is looking for Rock. She finds Crash instead and we see why he was used for over the top comedy instead of chatter.

RVD doesn't get why Undertaker hates him. Christian comes up and makes fun of him by saying he's not better than Taker. RVD suggests a title for title match but Christian won't put the European Title up. Oh and the capital of Belgium isn't Waffles.

Trish finds Rock and thanks him for saving her from Vince. She kisses Rock on the cheek and Rock is taken aback. He says he'll say you're welcome, and proceeds to give her a kiss that most movies with they could pull off. The arena ERUPTS and Rock gives the eyebrow. This worked perfectly and didn't come off as goofy at all.

Hardy Boys vs. Tajiri/Spike Dudley

Spike and Jeff start and the idea here is again about the Hardys having problems. Jeff tries the sitout gordbuster but his head messes up. Must be that cheap cocaine tonight. Off to Tajiri who gets caught in a move the Hardys used called the Spin Cycle, which was basically a double rolling belly to back suplex. Jerry talks about Lita's rack while Jeff is caught in the Tarantula. The Hardys get in another argument and Matt almost gets rolled up for the pin but it's just a two. Not that it matters as Matt hits the legdrop but Jeff tags himself in for the Swanton and the pin. This was nothing again other than storyline advancement.

The APA makes fun of Regal for kissing up to Vince. Bradshaw vs. Regal is made for later.

The Hardys argue again and Jeff is tired of being pushed around. Lita tries to intervene and gets shoved down again.

Chris Jericho vs. Steve Austin

Non-title again. Austin pounds away before he even takes his vest off. They head to the floor and Jericho gets knocked into the crowd. All Austin so far. Austin fires off some HARD chops and they head back inside where Jericho gets in some stomps. Jericho chops away but Austin shrugs them off and chops Jericho back. Both guys try Stunners but Austin knocks him down and puts the Walls on Jericho. We're three minutes into this now and Jericho has been on offense for about 6 seconds.

Jericho goes shoulder first into the post but fires off a low blow and enziguri to give himself a breather. We reach about 45 seconds of total offense before the Thesz Press takes Jericho down. Jericho sends Austin's shoulder into the post and then to the floor where Austin is sent into various metal objects. Austin fires off a clothesline but gets sent into the post again. Back in and there's the Thesz Press but Jericho trips Austin up as he dismounts. The Walls go on but are quickly broken and the Stunner gets the clean pin.

Rating: C-. So yeah, we've got Jericho on the verge of being one of four potential world champions and he just got beat 100% clean by Austin six days beforehand. When he wins the title on Sunday, is it any wonder why he was considered a weak champion and that his first title reign went nowhere at all? This was just a step above a squash for Austin and he was never in any real danger at all.

Booker is hot wiring Austin's truck in the parking lot.

Here are Vince and Angle to talk about Rock. Angle demands that the people respect Vince and gets the WHAT treatment. We get a clip of Vince disrobing in front of Trish before Rock saved her. Angle rants about Rock and references anal rape for some reason. He demands an apology and here's Rock to give one. Rock runs his mouth a bit but Vince calls him an ingrate.

Vince rambles so Rock says he'll come and slap the toupee off his head if the sick freak doesn't get to it. Vince finally does get to the point: it's Angle/Vince vs. Rock/Trish. If Rock/Trish lose, Rock has to join Vince's club. If he won't do it, he's out of the tournament. Flair comes out and says if Vince's team loses, Vince has to kiss Rock. If he refuses, Angle is out of the tournament. Flair and Rock do each others' catchphrases.

Hardcore Title: Christian vs. Rob Van Dam

Van Dam is sent to the floor but he pulls off a backdrop from the apron to send Christian to the floor. There's the spinning legdrop to the back for two and we head back inside where Christian gets the same on the reverse DDT into the backbreaker. A powerslam gets another near fall for Christian and it's off to some choking. The Canadian wedges a chair between the top and middle rope but gets kicked down for his efforts.

A kick puts Christian into the corner and Rob skateboards the chair into Christian's face for two. Rolling Thunder onto the chair doesn't work,

BECAUSE HE'S LANDING ON THE CHAIR. Reverse DDT puts Van Dam down and it's Conchairto time. Since that would put Van Dam on the shelf for a long time, Van Dam blocks it and hits a quick Five Star for the pin to retain.

Rating: C-. Just filler here but man alive Van Dam was being wasted here. The guy was way over and these random Hardcore Title defenses aren't giving him anything at all. He just beat the European Champion and it's another day at the office for him. Christian would get a lot better in the next few years of course but here, RVD was way ahead of him.

William Regal vs. Bradshaw

This is still during the phantom brass knuckles stage for Regal so if you don't see the ending coming here, I can't help you. There's about 50 seconds before the knuckles shot and then it's over. Fill in the blank spot with whatever basic and generic offense from either guy you want.

Taz pops up on screen from WWF New York and talks (and flubs lines) long enough for Edge to run in and beat up Regal. They're fighting at the PPV.

Austin Desire video.

Angle and Vince talk about kissing mens' rectums.

Trish Stratus/The Rock vs. Vince McMahon/Kurt Angle

Why is Jerry always so shocked that Vince is ripped? Rock and Angle start things off and a Vince distraction gives Angle the advantage. Rock grabs a legsweep for two and shrugs off some punches to hit a Samoan Drop for two. A belly to belly throw sends Angle into the corner and he accidentally tags Vince. Vince immediately tags out and Rock gets suplexed down again. Now Vince comes in and we get the old technique of cutting the camera at every moment of contact of the punches from Vince.

Vince knocks Trish to the floor to really prove he's evil. Well he has to after doing the incredibly popular stripping. Trish gets back up as Vince gets slammed down. There's the tag to Trish who beats the tar out of Vince, which I don't think he's complaining about for the most part. She goes to hit Vince low but Angle shoves her down. Trish hits Angle low and there's the hot tag to Rock.

He cleans house and hits the DDT on Angle for two but accidentally clotheslines the referee down. Angle Slam gets no count and here's Jericho for a Lionsault on Rocky. That eventually gets two and now it's time for Vince to go after Trish. He chases her up the ramp, likely from attempted rape, and there's Austin. He beats up Vince because that's what Steve Austin does, before clotheslining Angle onto the top rope. Rock Bottom gets the pin.

Rating: C. This was fine I guess but man this Vince stuff is creepy. I don't mean it makes him evil. I mean it's CREEPY. We have Trish running away from a man that is obsessed with shoving her face onto his body. That's freaking WEIRD and I really don't want to know what goes on inside Vince's psyche. The match was fine.

Vince and Angle argue to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. Other than the tournament matches, I defy you to name two matches on Sunday. Also at the end of the day, they've made it seem impossible for anyone but Austin or Rock to win the title, because they've done a great job at making Angle and Jericho look like total jokes. Like I said: guess who wins the thing and then became a lame duck as a result.

Here's Vengeance if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2012/08/26/vengeance-2001-they-picked-vengeance-to-unite-the-titles-really/>

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I Want To Talk A Little Bit About Building A Storyline

This is going to be shorter than most of the entries in this series I think. I'm watching Backlash 2004 and it has a Jericho vs. Christian/Trish Stratus match on it. This was part of the storyline the three had which turned Jericho face as he was in love with Trish but Trish turned on him for Christian, setting up a kind of a revenge feud. This is a good example of a well made storyline and I wanted to break it down to give you all an idea of how a good storyline is built.

Now to begin with, we'll start with how this story got going. As you may or may not remember, Christian and Jericho started hitting on Lita and Trish Stratus respectively. This went on for a few weeks and was almost instantly intriguing. Now why was this intriguing? In short, because it was something different. By that I don't mean something we had never seen before, but because it was something out of nature by Jericho and Christian. There's an expression in journalism that says "Dog bites man, not news. Man bites dog, news." In other words, we pay attention to stuff that is different.

Jericho and Christian had been jerks for months but now all of a sudden they were being nice. It got people's attention and you started wondering if it was because of feelings for the girls or because of some other reasons they had. The idea is that it made us want to keep watching because we had interesting people in these stories. That's a very necessary key. People like Jericho and Christian could read a phone book

and somehow make it interesting. Throw in a couple of hot women and it's hard not to be interested.

Then we got the next step of the story, as Trish said that she was starting to fall for Jericho. For a few weeks there was a relationship developing while Lita kind of faded away. The twist came soon after this, as Trish overheard Jericho and Christian talking about how this was all because of a bet between the two of them over who could get their respective lady in bed first. This makes sense as it's something evil that the two of them would do.

However, something very important is that we weren't told of it right up front. We had to wait awhile, which is something that makes a reveal all the better. We saw Jericho and Christian doing things and only after awhile did we find out that there was an ulterior motive to it. That's how you do a twist: not all at once before filling in the pieces later. You can do it that way, but it can cause more holes in a story. When you build up to it, the writers have had a better chance to fill in plot holes along the way.

Now once Trish was upset, Jericho revealed that he wasn't lying and actually did care for Trish. Trish of course didn't believe him, but Jericho kept at it. Through good storytelling, it became clear that Jericho really did have feelings for Trish and that he was sorry for his actions. Now THIS is where things get important: people can identify with that. Almost everyone has had their heart broken at some point and knows what it's like to want someone that you can't have for one reason or another. It builds sympathy for Jericho who is trying to change and is telling the truth after all his lies but it's not working.

Finally Trish seemed to come around but Christian wasn't happy. On Raw he

hit Jericho in the head with a chair, saying that it was tough love. Trish was blamed for breaking up their friendship and changing Jericho, with Christian wanting the old Chris back. It's a natural story progression with the actions of each person connecting with other people and more actions spawning off that. That is what you call a story.

This leads us to Wrestlemania and a match between Chris Jericho and Christian. There was one very important thing about this match above all other things: it was good. You can have the best story in the world, the best promos in the world, the best build in the world and all that, but if your match sucks it brings things WAY down. See Dusty vs. Flair in 1985 if you want more details on that.

So anyway, the match at Wrestlemania was good and after Trish accidentally cost Jericho the match, Trish turned on Jericho after showing feelings for him in the previous weeks. This was a possibly nonsensical twist, but at the end of the day it extended the storyline and gave us another reason to side with Jericho. The idea here was that while Jericho wanted Trish, at the end of the day she wasn't someone worth wanting because she was actually evil.

We now had another reason to side with Jericho, because how many of you have had a crush on someone but they were a jerk and treated you like dirt? My guess would be more than one of you. Now how many people would love to have seen that person get what they had coming to them? This is a key part, as if you can't relate to a story, it's hard to get into it. So anyway, they had their rematch at Backlash, which was a handicap match involving Trish as well. Jericho won to even up the score, so we had a blowoff match inside a cage (note that the gimmicks built up over time: non-gimmick, handicap, cage).

Now the problem was that Christian got hurt in the cage and was out for months. They had a ladder match at Unforgiven for the vacant Intercontinental title which could have come earlier, but it was a good cap of to the feud, even though it was late. So at the end of everything, it was Jericho that came out with revenge as well as a championship, giving him something to be happy with.

Let's take a quick look at a few other reasons why this story worked.

Most importantly: IT HAD TIME TO BUILD. This wasn't a feud that was settled in about five weeks. It had several months to get things set up and for the characters in it to develop. That's one of the big problems in a lot of modern wrestling angles: everything moves so fast that there isn't time for something to develop. This story started in late 2003 and wrapped up in May. It had some twists and turns in it, but for the most part they mad sense and followed a coherent path.

Second, it had a good conclusion. Jericho winning wasn't required, but it was definitive and there was no doubt as to who won. In other words, we didn't feel like we wasted our time with the story. It had romance, intrigue, twists and a conclusion, all tied together with good wrestling matches. Those are all parts of a good storyline. That leads me to the final part of this.

The feud was ENTERTAINING. Like I said, Christian and Jericho could do almost anything and it would be entertaining. Trish was great in the evil chick role and looked great in the part too. There was nothing in this angle that wasn't at least passable, which helped even more. The matches worked well too, meaning that in total there was nothing wrong with this storyline.

All of the parts worked and had the right people in the roles, which is what makes a great story.