

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XXVII: Miz's Chris Jericho Moment

Wrestlemania XXVII

Date: April 3, 2011

Location: Georgia Dome, Atlanta, Georgia

Attendance: 71,617

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Josh Matthews

This is the Rock's show as he's back to be guest host. Really that's all you need to know here because it's all that matters. We've also got Cena vs. Miz for the Raw Title, which is basically a backdrop for the obvious Rock and Cena interaction. For the blue guys we've got Del Rio challenging Edge for the title and Undertaker's opponent is Shawn's heterosexual life partner HHH. Oh and there's no MITB this year thank goodness. Let's get to it.

Keri Hilson sings America the Beautiful. I'm not sure who she is but I like her voice far better than Fantasia's from last year.

The opening video sounds like the opening to a late night talk show, but it leads to ROCKY, which makes it all better. He does the long walk down the long ramp to get to the ring and the place goes nuts for him. Rock starts off with the FINALLY line after walking around the ring for a bit. He asks if we can feel, taste and smell the electricity. We get a pretty lame "I say Wrestle, you say Mania" bit with the crowd and Rock has goosebumps.

As for the wrestlers here tonight, there's one in particular sitting in the back trying to decide which Fruity Pebbles shirt to wear to the ring tonight. We get the required Fruity Pebbles chant as Rock keeps stalling. Before continuing, Rock has to have some of the People's Water (his words not mine). Now when he says Yabba, the people say Dabba. If it's not clear by now, he has no idea what to say here for the most part.

Rock lists off all of his own nicknames to say he's hosting while rhyming a bit ("Always defiant and standing taller than Andre the Giant") before saying that IF YA SMELL belongs to the people. Everyone says it with him and that's finally that. This was six minutes long and had about enough material to fill in a third of that.

We get the usual Wrestlemania through history video to show how important it's been over the last 27 years.

Cole, a heel here, says this is the fabric of Americana. That's a bit of a stretch I'd think.

Smackdown World Title: Alberto Del Rio vs. Edge

Del Rio is challenging and comes out in a Rolls Royce. The video screen is made to look like a driveway for Del Rio to be driving from in a cool sight. Also at ringside is Del Rio's bodyguard Brodus Clay. Does anyone even remember that association? Christian is of course here to second Edge. Alberto sends him into the corner to start but Edge comes back with some hard slaps. A backdrop puts Alberto down and a second one puts him on the floor.

Back in and Del Rio grabs an armbar to take over, only to be armdragged down. Alberto goes right back to the arm as Brodus talks trash. Back to the armbar but Del Rio misses a charge and falls out to the floor. Edge dives off the top to take Del Rio down again and we head back inside. The champion heads to the top but Alberto pulls him down with a top rope armdrag for two. Edge comes back with a big boot to get himself a breather but he can't follow up.

A running forearm puts Del Rio down again and a flapjack gets two. Alberto grabs a Codebreaker to the arm but the cross armbreaker is countered into an Edge-0-Matic for two. Del Rio rolls through a rollup and grabs the armbreaker but Edge gets his feet on the ropes to quickly escape. Edge snaps Alberto's neck on the top rope but as he goes up top, Del Rio hits the enziguri in the corner for two.

Brodus and Christian get in a fight on the floor but Del Rio kicks Christian down. There's the Edgecution to set up the spear but it hits

post instead. The armbreaker goes on but Edge keeps his hands together...for a minute before Alberto gets the hold on full. Edge gets on top of Alberto to break it up and there's the Edgecator (modified Sharpshooter) but Del Rio rolls away. Not that it matters as Edge pops up and hits the spear to retain.

Rating: C+. For a world title match at Wrestlemania, this was a disappointment. For Edge's last match because his neck was REALLY messed up, this was pretty decent stuff. Edge would retire a few days later and vacate the title, which says to me that he should have put Del Rio over here. At the end of the day it makes Alberto look weak to lose to a guy that banged up but it did give Edge a good moment to go out on. Nothing great though.

Post match Edge beats up Del Rio's car and Alberto...lets him. Christian provides a pipe and the real beating of the car begins. This had to happen sooner or later. Cole brings up a good point: "Someone should arrest them." True actually, but then again Orton didn't get arrested for trying to blow up John Cena, so this is minor by comparison.

Tough Enough is coming. That show was awesome.

Cole taunts Lawler a bit before their match later.

Cody Rhodes vs. Rey Mysterio

Cody used to be Dashing but then Rey hit him with the 619 and the knee brace hit Cody in the face, scarring him and requiring facial surgery. Cody basically became Dr. Doom but in reality his face was fine. However he wanted Rey's mask for retribution. This was an AWESOME character but of course WWE would wind up wasting the entire thing and make Cody a jobber because they got bored with him after a few months. Still though, this part was awesome.

Oh yeah the match. Rey comes out as Captain America this year which is an awesome looking costume for him. Rey is almost immediately sent to the apron but comes in off the top with a dropkick to take over. A forearm to Rey's face takes over and Cody goes after the knee brace which caused the initial injury. Rey kicks his way out of the corner but Cody headbutts

him in the face to take over again because of the hard mask.

The Disaster Kick to the head puts Rey down again and it's off to a chinlock. Cody charges into a boot in the corner but comes right back with the Alabama Slam for two. Back to the knee brace for a second before Cody hits a running knee to the back of Rey's head to keep him down. Mysterio is sent to the apron again and goes up top, only to be sent down in a delayed superplex. Cody stomps away and talks about how Rey hurt his face.

Rey escapes Cross Rhodes and sends Cody out to the floor for a baseball slide to the face. A headscissors sends Cody into the apron and we head back inside to speed things up. Rey hooks a quick quick rollup for two and fires off a kick to the face. Cody charges into a kick to the ribs but comes back with a release German suplex for two. A springboard headscissors puts Cody down but the 619 is caught in mid kick. Cody slingshots Rey's throat into the middle rope for two more and now the knee brace is removed.

Rey comes right back with a moonsault press for two of his own and Cody loses his mask. The 619 hits and a hard kick to Cody's head gets two more. Now Mysterio puts Cody's mask on and hits a few headbutts with it before hitting a top rope headbutt to the chest for two. Cody rolls to the floor and sneaks in a shot to the face with the knee brace, followed up by Cross Rhodes for the upset pin.

Rating: B-. Good match here and pretty easily Cody's biggest win ever to this point. Cody needed this win a lot more than Mysterio and it made him even more awesome than he already was before this match. Mysterio had nothing to gain here and it was a pleasant sight to see the hotter star go over like that.

We go to the back for our comedy segment of the night. Teddy is in the back with Snoop Dog for a talent search. First up we have William Regal dropping some rhymes on us. Snoop says it's not gangster enough for him. Here are Khali and Beth Phoenix to sing Summer Loving from Grease. It would have been better as Natalya but still not bad. Finally we have Ryder singing Friday (now THERE'S a dated joke), only to be blasted with

a chair by Piper. Snoop is...pleased? Masters does his pec dance to We Will Rock You with Yoshi Tatsu providing vocals. Horny raps and we have a winner. The Bellas come in to dance too.

Corre vs. Big Show/Kane/Kofi Kingston/Santino Marella

Corre is the sequel to Nexus and is made up of Barrett/Slater/Gabriel/Jackson. Barrett is IC Champion and Slater/Gabriel are tag champions. Santino and Slater start things off but after a quick hiptoss from Marella here's Big Show. Matthews: "He's certainly not unorthodox." Yeah actually he is, given how big he is. Everything breaks down and Kofi kicks Barrett's head off. In all the calamity, Santino Cobras Slater into the WMD for the pin in just over 90 seconds. This would be the replacement for MITB for the Mania payday.

Rock kind of hits on Eve Torres in the back. But enough of that as Rock says he can make magic with anyone that comes around the corner. I called this one before it happened live: Mae Young pops up and says she wants the People's Strudel. Rock suggests the Moses variety instead and makes various other old people jokes. Mae smack's Rock's pants and leaves so Rock can say he wishes that was ANYONE else.

He turns around and locks eyes with Steve Austin. They look at each other and say it's good to see each other with Rock asking if Austin remembers. Austin says he does and they shake hands. This wasn't a funny moment but one of those where you could actually feel the intensity. Also to brag a bit, I called both of those appearances before they happened live.

We recap Randy Orton vs. CM Punk. Back in 2008, Orton cost Punk the title for no apparent reason by keeping him out of the Championship Scramble at Unforgiven. Two and a half years later, Punk jumped Orton and said he was doing this as revenge for Orton costing him that shot. Punk had since taken over the Nexus and sent them after Orton, who took them out one by one in a few weeks (Note that Cena spent six months fighting them and took out one guy while Orton took out about five in as many weeks). Tonight is the showdown.

Randy Orton vs. CM Punk

The cylinder from last year is now a cube which still has the videos playing on them. Orton immediately takes it to the floor and pounds away, but Punk jumps over the steps and kicks them into Orton's knees. Back in and Orton stays on the knees for a quick two count. Punk of course mocks the knee injury before stomping at the legs even more. Randy grabs a quick backbreaker but Punk comes back with a kind of Stunner to the leg for two.

Punk hits the running knee in the corner but Orton falls down before he can hit the bulldog. The straightedge one stays on the knee and puts Orton in the Tree of Woe. In a cool bit, Orton tries to pull himself up but Punk drops a top rope knee to take Randy right back down. The GTS is countered but Punk breaks up the RKO with a high kick for two. Punk loads up the Macho Elbow but Orton crotches him down instead. A superplex puts Punk down but the cover is very delayed and only gets two.

Punk wraps the knee around the post a few times and Orton is in big trouble. Off to a modified Indian deathlock for a bit but Orton fights back and slugs Punk down to take over. Punk comes back with a basic kick to the knee and there's the Anaconda Vice. Orton rolls over and the fans never once seemed nervous about a tap out. CM heads out to the apron and is rammed into the post, followed by the Elevated DDT. Orton loads up the Punt but the knee gives out. Punk heads to the outside and loads up the springboard clothesline but dives right into the RKO for the pin by Randy.

Rating: B. Good solid match here which should have been the end of the feud, but since this is WWE, there was a gimmick rematch the next month because that's how WWE books feuds. You know, because WRESTLEMANIA isn't good enough to end a story at. Anyway, very good match here between two guys with solid chemistry together.

The Rock and Gene Okerlund are in the back and they meet John Cena's #1 fan: Pee Wee Herman. He's not my kind of comedy but Rock recruits him to Team Bring It. Gene calls Herman a tool.

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Hall of Fame time. The class of 2011: Abdullah the Butcher, Sunny, Road

Warriors, Drew Carey, Bob Armstrong, Jim Duggan (with bowtie on the 2x4) and.....that Shawn Michaels guy.

Here's a Wrestlemania Recall from....Monday night? It's Lawler and Swagger, Cole's trainer for his match tonight, brawling.

We don't bother recapping Cole vs. Lawler, but basically Cole has been heel since November and even cost Jerry the WWE Title a few months ago. After months and months, tonight is Lawler's revenge. Swagger has been training Cole and Austin is guest referee. Booker and JR come out to do commentary with Josh.

Cole comes out in a Syracuse hoodie and headgear to match. He makes fun of JR for being fat and Lawler for having a big ego. This is going to be Lawler's first Wrestlemania match.

Jerry Lawler vs. Michael Cole

Austin rides out on his ATV and sends Cole into his plastic cube. Cole warms up in his cube as Lawler and Austin wait in the ring. Austin rings the bell and Lawler goes right for Michael. He has to punch Swagger out first and sends him into the barricade for good measure. Cole begs for mercy and reaches his hand through the hole in the cube for a handshake, only to be pulled face first into the wall. Lawler climbs in and pounds away before bringing Cole out into the open.

Swagger interferes again and Cole gets a breather before actually hitting a baseball slide. Jack puts on the ankle lock as Cole is in control here. Back in and Michael works on the ankle some more as he's actually maintaining control. Cole loads up a Vader Bomb but can only do it off the bottom rope for two. It's remarkable that a former world champion is in this much trouble after a few shots by an announcer isn't it?

Cole starts going after the ankle again as we're somehow EIGHT MINUTES into this. The crowd chants boring and they're absolutely right. Cole takes down a strap and puts on the An-Cole (yes that's what it's called) Lock but Lawler easily breaks it. After nine minutes plus, Jerry FINALLY comes back and starts pounding away. Swagger throws in a towel but Austin wipes his head with it and throws it back. Jack gets in the ring and is

Stunned for his efforts.

Now Cole gets in Austin's face but walks into a right hand from Jerry as the real beating begins. There's a dropkick for good measure to put Cole down and it's time for the middle rope punch, complete with a point to the sign and the peeling down of the strap. Jerry covers him but pulls it up at two. Lawler puts on the ankle lock and Cole immediately tabs. Austin asks if he gives up veeeeeeeeery slowly. Cole: "YES YES I GIVE UP I GIVE UP!" Austin: "ARE YOU SURE!" The bell finally rings and we're done.

Rating: D-. Oh this was terrible. This ran THIRTEEN AND A HALF MINUTES with Lawler getting beaten up for nearly ten of that. This should have been five minutes long with Lawler not even breaking a sweat. I can live with the lack of a piledriver for company rules, but the fist should have ended it rather than the ankle lock. At least it couldn't get worse though.

Swagger carries Cole out and it's time to drink. Booker comes in for no apparent reason and Lawler (a notorious non-drinker) has a chance to drop his beers. We get a Spinarooni and Booker gets a Stunner for stealing the spotlight.

And then it happens.

We get an e-mail from the Anonymous Raw GM, saying that since Austin got physical, the decision is reversed and Cole wins by DQ. If there has EVER been a dumber idea in wrestling history, I have no idea what it is. Lawler would get the win TWO MONTHS LATER and the GM would eventually be revealed to be Hornswoggle of all people. This is just so stupid. Austin gives Josh, the messenger, the Stunner for good measure. Also to keep the people from booing this out of the building anymore than they already are.

We get a video on Wrestlemania week.

We recap HHH Undertaker. In short, Shawn couldn't do it the last two years, so now it's HHH's turn to try. Both guys talked about how big this was and how awesome they were and it's no holds barred for no real

apparent reason.

HHH vs. Undertaker

HHH comes out with a phalanx of soldiers, in battle gear and to a LONG version of For Whom the Bell Tolls by Metallica. Does it make up for the Thor entrance? No, but it's pretty awesome. Taker comes out to Ain't No Grave Can Hold My Body Down (or whatever its name is) by Johnny Cash. HHH pounds him into the corner to start but gets launched over the top rope for his efforts. The Game fires off more right hands but gets sent into the steps to break the momentum again.

HHH comes back by spearing him into the Cole Mine (JR and King are doing commentary now) but Taker sits up with ease. Back in and Taker hits the jumping clothesline but Old School is countered. A clothesline puts Taker onto the floor and HHH whips him into the barricade for good measure. HHH loads up the announce table but the Pedigree attempt is countered by a backdrop to the floor.

Taker goes back inside and busts out the Taker Dive for good measure. Thankfully this time he had HHH there to catch him. The steps are placed in front of the other table and Taker charges at HHH, only to be caught in the spinebuster through the table to put both guys down again. Back in and HHH walks into a chokeslam for a close two. HHH drives Taker into the corner and starts pounding away, only to get caught in the Last Ride ala Wrestlemania 17. He escapes this time though, only to have his Pedigree attempt countered. Snake Eyes connects but the big boot is countered into another spinebuster.

HHH brings in a chair but gets kicked in the face to give Taker the chair. The Game absorbs a shot to the back and grabs a quick Pedigree for two. Triple H pounds away in the corner again and now the Last Ride connects for two. The Tombstone also hits for two and Taker is getting frustrated. As he picks up HHH, the Game comes back with a DDT onto the chair for no cover. Both guys slowly fight to their feet and there's another Pedigree and a VERY slow count for two.

A third Pedigree hits and the crowd is barely popping anymore on these kickouts as we're reaching the point of ridiculousness. HHH blasts him in

the back with the chair eight times but he's too gassed to follow up. A ninth cracks Undertaker in the head and the Dead Man is in trouble. There are about 45 seconds of nothing in between these shots by the way. Taker can't sit up so HHH yells at him to stay down. A chokeslam attempt is easily shrugged off but Taker gets to his feet in the corner.

HHH tombstones Undertaker but even with the tongue out it only gets two. Again, if your name isn't Kane, THAT DOESN'T WORK. HHH goes to the floor and gets the sledgehammer but walks into the Hell's Gate. He drops the hammer but the hold is locked on tight. HHH starts to pass out but gets the hammer again. Then he drops it again and HHH taps out to make Undertaker 19-0.

Rating: B. I'm pretty sure that's what I gave it live and it barely holds up to that level now. At the end of the day, this was treated like a match where Taker was beaten down so much that he couldn't possibly come back. The problem with the match is exactly that: it only felt like a match designed to be as one sided as possible for him to make the comeback. Think of it like the Aristocrats joke: take it as far as you can go and then get to the surprise ending. As mentioned, the fans didn't even react to the near falls by the end. It also didn't feel natural at all, much like the two Shawn matches. Good, but definitely not great.

Taker is carted out, which was the inspiration for the rematch, as HHH made it sound like he won the match.

Wrestlemania next year is in Miami.

John Morrison/Snooki/Trish Stratus vs. Laycool/Dolph Ziggler

Barely any story here as it's just there to give us Snooki, which is supposed to mean something. Vickie is with Laycool here because she's already screwing Dolph at this point. Trish is STUNNING as a brunette here too. Laycool attacks to start and the guys get involved as well. Michelle shoves Layla to start so Trish comes in and beats Michelle up. The Matrish is broken up with a stomp but Trish escapes the Faithbreaker (Styles Clash) with a facebuster.

Michelle and Stratus slug it out on the top before falling to the floor

at the same time. Layla tries to interfere and gets decked as well, only to have Trish dive off the apron and take both of them out. The Chick Kick gets two on Michelle as the guys come in sans tags. Starship Pain to the floor takes Ziggy out and there's the tag to Snooki for a handspring elbow to Michelle. That and a splash are good for the pin.

Rating: D+. Trish and Laycool looked hot, Snooki did her two moves decently enough, the guys did almost nothing at all and Vickie was kept to a minimum in the less than three and a half minutes this ran. For a match that short with Trish looking that good, how much can you really complain here? Laycool would be split in a month with Michelle leaving the company.

The new attendance record is 71,617. Woot.

Do you need a recap of Cena vs. Miz? Miz is champion and it's Cena at Wrestlemania.

Anyway we do get a video of Miz's rise from MTV to Wrestlemania main event, cut in with great Wrestlemania moments. I'll give them this: Miz's rise from total joke to what he became is nothing short of remarkable. How Cena got the shot isn't even mentioned here. I think he won the Chamber match.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. The Miz

Miz, complete with the SWEET coat, comes out through a set of balloons spelling out the word AWESOME. Oh and Alex Riley is here too. Cena has a full on gospel choir to sing him to the ring. That's rather awesome. We get a prayer set to a Cena career video. If nothing else, this lets us see a gospel choir singing "Your time is up, my time is now." It gets booted out of the building, but it does exist.

Feeling out process to start with Miz being taken down by a headlock. Miz grabs a headlock of his own but gets thrown down yet again. A test of strength is teased but Cena grabs another headlock instead. Not much to see yet. Miz fights into the corner and stomps away before hitting the corner clothesline for two. Matt Hardy's Side Effect gets two more as we're firmly in first gear here. Another corner clothesline misses and

Cena comes back with a regular clothesline for two.

A big boot to the head gets two for Miz as the crowd continues to be dead silent for this. Cena misses a...cross body I think and falls to the apron. A Million Dollar Kneelift gets two for the champion but the Skull Crushing Finale is reversed and Cena fires off the shoulder blocks. The finishing sequence continues but Miz escapes the AA into a low DDT for two. Miz escapes the STF and hits the Reality Check for two more. The champion removes a buckle pad and as the referee puts it back on, Cena gets an unseen small package for two.

Another AA attempt is blocked with Miz grabbing the top rope. Instead it's the STF but Miz quickly gets to the rope. Riley gets on the apron and the distraction is enough to send Cena into the buckle (apparently the referee is a bad repairman) and the Skull Crushing Finale gets two. Another Finale is reversed and the referee is bumped. The AA (ZERO pop) hits but there's no one to count. Riley comes in with a briefcase shot to the head which gets another two on Cena.

Alex tries to come in again but Miz's case shot takes him out by mistake. A BIG release AA hits again but Miz kicks out at two. They head outside and Cena clotheslines Miz over the barricade into the timekeeper's area. Miz tries to get up and Cena spears him down, sending Miz's head HARD into the concrete. I've heard Miz say that gave him a concussion and as a result he doesn't remember a thing about this match. It looked TERRIBLE too, and it actually ends the match, as in the MAIN EVENT OF WRESTLEMANIA, in a double countout.

Rating: D-. The second half of this match got WAY better than the first, but the problem is it's a fifteen minute match and the first seven or so are ridiculously boring. On top of that, did I mention it was a DOUBLE COUNTOUT IN THE MAIN EVENT OF WRESTLEMANIA??? The only good thing here was Miz kicking out of the AA in the middle of the ring. That's how you make a guy look good. The rest of the match however is how you make someone look HORRIBLE, much like the match. Terrible stuff here as Miz wasn't ready for this, which is what almost everyone thought would happen.

Oh wait here's Rock, who apparently has match making powers as host (why he didn't change the Lawler/Cole match earlier is anyone's guess). After ignoring another e-mail, he restarts this under No DQ rules. The bell rings, Cena can't hit the AA, Rock hits the Rock Bottom on Cena, Miz retains.

Post match Rock beats up Miz to a very limited reaction and it's the People's Elbow to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. Back in 2011 when I first watched this, I said out loud "What did I just watch?" That's the same thing I'm wondering now, because this was terrible. Taker vs. HHH and Orton vs. Punk are both solid matches, but other than that this might as well have been Over the Limit instead of Wrestlemania. Basically this was there to set up the next edition of the show, which is pretty much a big screw you to the fans. Nothing to see here other than MAYBE HHH vs. Undertaker, but other than that there's nothing of quality going on. One interesting note though: this is the only Mania ever with no title changes.

Ratings Comparison

Edge vs. Alberto Del Rio

Original: C+

Redo: C+

Cody Rhodes vs. Rey Mysterio

Original: B

Redo: B-

Corre vs. Kane/Santino Marella/Kofi Kingston/Big Show

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

CM Punk vs. Randy Orton

Original: B-

Redo: B

Michael Cole vs. Jerry Lawler

Original: C

Redo: D-

Undertaker vs. HHH

Original: B

Redo: B

Snooki/Trish Stratus/John Morrison vs. Dolph Ziggler/Laycool

Original: N/A

Redo: D+

Miz vs. John Cena

Original: C-

Redo: D-

Overall Rating

Original: C-

Redo: D

Oh man was I too nice to this show back in the day.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/04/03/wrestlemania-27-not-sure-on-this-one/>

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Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XXVI: So Long Shawn

Wrestlemania XXVI

Date: March 28, 2010

Location: University of Phoenix Stadium, Glendale, Arizona

Attendance: 72,219

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler, Matt Striker

Here's a pretty different show from last year. This is a double main event with a Taker vs. Shawn II and Cena vs. Batista II, the latter one being for the Raw Title. Other than that we have Jericho vs. Edge for the Smackdown Title and...uh...wait why would you need anything more than that? It's Cena vs. Batista for the World Title at Wrestlemania. Let's get to it.

Fantasia, I believe from American Idol, sings America the Beautiful. This is one of those renditions where she basically screams the song but it's called soulful or something like that.

The opening video is about how several long careers have led here. Bret

Hart is also back tonight in a match with Vince McMahon. This is one of the first times where there was a big push on the idea of making a Wrestlemania moment.

The theme song is I Made It by Kevin Rudolf. This one really grew on me over the years.

Tag Titles: ShoMiz vs. R-Truth/John Morrison

That would be Big Show and Miz as champions. If there's one thing I'm glad we've moved passed, it's portmanteau tag team names. Miz is also US Champion and the tag titles are still represented by all four belts. John and Miz start things off and there's a fast dropkick for two by Morrison. Off to Truth for a guillotine legdrop for two more.

A big left hand misses for Miz and a side kick takes him down. Off to Big Show and Truth can't do much against him, other than be caught in a fallaway slam. After Show knocks Morrison off the apron, John breaks up a Vader Bomb to put Show down. Off to Miz vs. Morrison again and a running knee takes Miz down. Starship Pain misses though and Show rams Truth into the post. John counters the Skull Crushing Finale into a rollup for two but Show makes a blind tag and knocks Morrison silly with the WMD to retain.

Rating: D+. This wasn't even three and a half minutes long so what else do you expect here? To be fair, Awesome Truth was thrown together and won the title shot in the same night so there wasn't much of a reason for these teams to be fighting. The champions would lose the title in a month while the challengers would never really do anything.

We look at WWE taking over Phoenix.

Cody Rhodes vs. Randy Orton vs. Ted DiBiase

This is the final blowoff to the never ending Legacy story, with the young pups being mentored by Orton until the crowd turned Orton face by sheer willpower. This is his chance for revenge and to bury the feud once and for all. The place goes NUTS for Orton. Oh and before I forget: the set here is AWESOME as it's set up like a big pyramid with video screens

on all sides.

Orton fights them both off to start before bailing to the floor. This is a glorified handicap match in the early going. Orton gets Rhodes down on the floor and stomps away on DiBiase back inside. Cody gets back in though and the two on one beating is on, drawing really solid heat. Lawler says these stomps are like the ones Orton uses. Uh, yeah King. I can clearly see the similarities in kicking somebody.

Rhodes pounds away while Ted holds Randy back and there's a double suplex. DiBiase does Orton's pose which makes Randy punch Cody down, only to be clotheslined by Ted. Legacy goes High/Low on Orton and there's a knee drop from Cody. Cody loads up the moonsault but has to stop to break up a pin attempt by DiBiase. Ted is sent to the floor and Cody gets two off an Alabama Slam.

Legacy goes at it and brawls to the floor and Orton gets back into things. He takes both guys down with his usual finishing sequence but DiBiase breaks up the RKO on Rhodes. Cody tries a dive but Orton sidesteps it, sending Rhodes into DiBiase. They come back in and walk into a double Elevated DDT, sending Orton into "that place." With DiBiase watching, Orton Punts Rhodes and then counters Dream Street into the RKO for the pin on Ted.

Rating: C. The fans loved Orton but that's about all they've got here. Legacy just lost a glorified handicap match in less than ten minutes as Orton never even seemed to be in danger. This would start a MEGA push for Orton as he would become the second biggest face in the company and spend the rest of the year chasing the world title. The pop for the RKO was really good here.

The heel Divas in the ten Diva tag later brag about how Vickie is going to win in her Wrestlemania debut. Jillian Hall, not on the team, pops in to sing. The other girls leave and here's Santino to plug Slim Jims. He bites one and Jillian turns into Mae Young. Another turns Mae into Gene Okerlund in a strapless dress. A third bite makes Okerlund into Melina. No more bites. Ok then.

Kofi Kingston vs. MVP vs. Evan Bourne vs. Jack Swagger vs. Shelton

Benjamin vs. Matt Hardy vs. Dolph Ziggler vs. Drew McIntyre vs. Kane vs. Christian

Kane has a BIG black eye for reasons never explained. Remember when I said eight man matches were too busy? Well here's a TEN man version. It's a big brawl to start until MVP throws in the first ladder. Drew tries to go up but gets shoved over by Matt. MVP hits a big running boot to knock Drew to the floor. Nine people fight for two sides of a ladder to climb but Kane cleans house and sends about five guys to the floor.

Christian and Matt go up but Kofi (in the rare white trunks) makes the save. Ziggler hits a kind of Zig Zag off the ladder to Christian but Kane and MVP get back inside. Things are already really congested here. Kane is put into the corner and has a ladder rammed into his ribs. Kofi stumbles up the ladder and falls onto the steel. Shelton comes in with Paydirt to MVP and loads up the big ladder, only to be stabbed with a ladder by Swagger. Jack winds up inside the ladder and gets speared from either side with the tops of ladders between the rungs of the big ladder by Christian and Matt.

Now the ladders Matt and Christian used are bridged across the top rope like a big cross kind of thing. Matt and Christian climb up while Bourne climbs up the side of the ladder. The ladder Matt is standing on falls out and Bourne kicks Christian down, but instead of GETTING THE CASE, Evan hits the Shooting Star on Christian. Now Matt stops Bourne but Swagger comes up and throws Matt onto the other bridged ladder, leaving everyone down.

MVP and Shelton go up but a rana by Benjamin send both guys out to the floor. Kane is the first person back inside but Ziggler makes the stop. He actually climbs over Kane but the big man shoves the ladder over to make the stop. A chokeslam onto the ladder has Dolph in trouble, much like Kane actually slamming the ladder onto Ziggler so hard he BREAKS THE LADDER. In the creative spot of the night, Kofi picks up the two broken pieces and walks on the like stilts.

McIntyre finally makes the save and brings the big ladder back inside. Hardy finally makes the save by shoving Drew off the ladder and onto the

top rope for a big crotching. Matt is alone but can't quite pull the thing down. Christian and Kane join him on top and it's the big bald being shoved down. Christian hits the reverse DDT (called the Twist of Fate by that schnook Cole) and here's Swagger back inside. It's Swagger and Christian on top and a case to the head allows Swagger to (FINALLY as it takes forever) pull down the case to win.

Rating: B-. C+. WAY too many people in there which led to way too much laying around. It's not a terrible match or anything, but these are getting weaker and weaker as they keep going. Kofi's stilts spot was great but other than that there's nothing to see here. We've seen these same spots so many times now and they're getting repetitive, making them weaker every time.

We get the Hall of Fame video from last night.

Here's the live presentation to the crowd. The class this year is: Stu Hart (represented by his kids), Wendi Richter, Mad Dog Vachon, Antonio Inoki, Bob Uecker, Gorgeous George (represented by his wife) and Ted DiBiase (BIG ovation).

We recap HHH vs. Sheamus. Sheamus was the next big thing in late 2009 and won the WWE Title. HHH beat him inside the Elimination Chamber and Sheamus revealed that he had always wanted to be like HHH. This led to Sheamus attacking HHH over and over again, setting up the obvious match.

HHH vs. Sheamus

I forgot to mention this big cylinder that hangs from the middle of the roof with a mini Tron video for whomever is coming out. They shove each other into the corner until HHH slugs Sheamus down into another corner. Back up and they pound away on each other with HHH taking over with a knee drop. They head to the floor for nothing of note so it's back inside for a chop block and the Figure Four to Sheamus.

After quickly grabbing a rope, Sheamus comes back with more brawling stuff and sends HHH to the floor for a bit. The move which would become known as the Irish Curse hits and there's a second one for good measure. We get into the standard pounding down in the corner by Sheamus followed

by an ax handle to the head for two. Sheamus drops some elbows and puts on a quick chinlock before a powerslam gets two.

We hit an armband of all things on the Game which shows off how different the skin tones of these guys are. HHH comes back with a belly to back suplex to put both guys down and a DDT for the same. Back up and the high knee sets up the facebuster for two but the Pedigree is countered with a leg trip. They fight to the corner but Sheamus slips between the legs to try the High Cross, only to be countered into the Pedigree. That gets countered as well and the yet to be named Brogue Kick gets two.

Back up again and HHH hits the spinebuster for two and both guys are down again. Sheamus staggers to the apron and manages a Brogue Kick from there but can't cover. Back in and HHH grabs the Pedigree out of absolutely NOWHERE for the quick pin. That would be Sheamus' first singles loss.

Rating: C+. Not bad at all here with Sheamus looking more than good in his first Wrestlemania match. This was a good way to make the pale one look good and the win over HHH the next month at Extreme Rules would make that even better. Sheamus was definitely here to stay which would become very clear in the near future.

We recap Punk vs. Mysterio. Mysterio had cost Punk an MITB spot so Punk had set his sights on Mysterio in retaliation. Punk has been stalking Rey and his family for weeks now, leading up to Punk interrupting Rey's daughter's 9th birthday by singing Happy Birthday to her. Punk made Mysterio look like a coward because Rey didn't want to fight with his family in the ring with him. This led to the match and the stipulation that if Rey loses, he has to join the Straightedge Society.

CM Punk vs. Rey Mysterio

Punk has Serena and Luke Gallows (Doc from Aces and 8's) with him. On the way to the ring, Punk gets on the crowd for being high on drugs which makes them think Mysterio is a superhero. Punk isn't a monster but rather a savior who can lead everyone to a better place. After tonight, it will be one nation under Punk with sobriety for all. This year Mysterio is dressed like the aliens from Avatar which is rather different to put it

mildly.

A Gallows distraction lets Punk take over but he gets sent face first into the middle buckl. Rey misses a charge and gets caught in the Tree of Woe for some solid stomping. A baseball slide misses Rey though and we get the Mr. Perfect sliding crotch into the post. Rey tries a rolling cradle to the floor but gets dropped face first onto the steps instead. We head back inside and it's off to a chinlock by the guy whose face you can actually see.

Rey fights up but gets sent to the apron for a seated senton. A springboard seated senton is caught into a belly to belly and another counter into a rollup gets two. Punk counters a rana by flipping Rey onto his feet and hits the high kick for two. They grab a test of strength grip and Rey climbs the ropes and moonsaults into a DDT for two in a cool spot.

The 619 is caught into a GTS attempt but Rey escapes to the apron. A kick to Punk's head looks to set up the frog splash but it only gets mat. That gets two for Punk but Rey headscissors him into 619 position. Serena makes the save but a second attempt connects and it's a springboard splash for the pin for Rey.

Rating: C. Not much to see here but it wasn't bad. These two would go on for months and the matches really did get to be solid stuff. Mysterio was always good for stuff like this and Punk as the straightedge messiah was always a cool gimmick. This really could have used another five minutes or so too.

We recap Bret vs. Vince. Do you REALLY need an explanation for this one? Bret returned back in January and Vince kicked him low. Bret wanted a fight and pretended to break his leg in order to get Vince to fight him at Wrestlemania. Vince signed, Bret took the cast off, and the match was made.

Bret Hart vs. Vince McMahon

Vince says he's bought a lot of lumberjacks: the Hart Family (including the Hart Dynasty), with the idea being that they all hate Bret just like

Vince does. Also Bruce Hart, Bret's brother, is guest referee. Bret asks his family if they all agreed to this and says they must have all gotten paid up front. If there's one thing he's learned from Montreal, it's that there's nothing sweeter than a good double cross. Tonight, the Harts are united because they came to Bret and agreed to sucker Vince in.

Bret pounds away to start and stomps away in the corner before sending Vince out to the lumberjacks for a beating. Natalya hits a HARD slap (Striker: "Best of luck in your future endeavors.") and the beating is on. The Hart Dynasty hits a Hart Attack to the floor as Bret looks on approvingly. Back in and Bret goes after the leg which knocks Vince back to the floor. He finds a wrench or something from somewhere which sends the Harts away.

Back in and Bret knocks it away from McMahon before picking up the pipe. Seven shots with that look to set up the Sharpshooter but instead Bret hits him with the pipe a few more times. There's a hard kick to the balls and a few more for good measure. Natalya: "MAKE EM BLEED!" A chair is sent in and Bret takes a seat. Vince slowly gets up so Bret hits him with the chair EIGHTEEN TIMES and it's the Sharpshooter for the submission.

Rating: A+. I said that when I first did this and I say it here. Now while I shouldn't have to explain this, I will anyway because a lot of people are slow. Am I saying it was a match on the level of say Shawn vs. Razor? Of course not. I'm saying it's the perfect match for what it was supposed to be. This was Bret DESTROYING Vince for a long time and doing it as well as he could given his condition. If you thought it was going to be anything but that and Vince tapping to the Sharpshooter, you completely missed the point of this match.

We're going to Atlanta for Wrestlemania 27. Cole says there's going to be a great guest host for it. I know he couldn't know that at the time, but man that's some AWESOME unintentional foreshadowing.

There's a new attendance record: 72,219. Wait it might not be a record. Why would this make a difference? Either way it gets a fireworks display, which doesn't look great given that it's still daylight.

We recap Edge vs. Jericho. They had been tag champions but Edge snapped

an Achilles tendon and had to drop his share. Edge came back to win the Rumble and gets a title shot tonight. The idea was that Edge was obsessed with spearing Jericho which didn't really work all that well. He did it over and over again until Jericho actually hit him during the charge. Why that was so hard beforehand I'm not sure.

Smackdown World Title: Edge vs. Chris Jericho

Jericho grabs a quick headlock to take Edge down but the challenger comes back with a flying shoulder. A flapjack puts Jericho down but he bails to avoid a spear. Back in and Jericho gets in a boot to the face and a baseball slide sends Edge out to the floor. A belly to back suplex gets two in the ring for Jericho and it's off to a chinlock. Back up and Jericho misses a charge into the post and Edge is to his feet again.

Jericho drops Edge ribs first onto the top rope and we head to the floor again. Edge comes back with a clothesline off the apron and we go back inside. Jericho crotches Edge as he goes up but Edge blocks a superplex. Back on the mat and Jericho can't get the Walls but Edge can hit a top rope cross body, only to have Jericho roll through it for two. Another Walls attempt is broken up but Jericho kicks him in the face to put Edge down again.

The Codebreaker is countered but Jericho jumps over the spear into a cradle into the Walls in the middle of the ring. Edge rolls through that and hooks a small package for two but Jericho kicks him right back down. The Lionsault misses and Edge gets two off the Edge-0-Matic. An enziguri gets two for the champion and what I think was a forearm smash to the back of Edge's head off the middle rope puts Edge down again. Jericho tries a spear of his own, only to charge into a big boot.

The real spear charges into a Codebreaker in an AWESOME counter. Since this is Wrestlemania though it only gets two so Jericho goes after the recently repaired ankle. Now the Walls are put on again but Jericho shifts it over to a half crab which is the smart move here. Edge FINALLY makes a rope and even gets a rollup for two. A Cactus Clothesline puts both guys on the floor and as they head back in we lose the referee, allowing Jericho to hit Edge in the head with the belt for two. Not that

it matters as the Codebreaker retains the title a few seconds later.

Rating: B. Much like Mysterio vs. Punk, this really could have been something special with more time. Jericho winning was a big surprise here but it's one of those things that I can more than live with after this very solid match. Edge not winning was a nice thing to see as it doesn't just hand him another world title. Yeah imagine that: making people earn world titles. Swagger would cash in on Jericho on Smackdown two days later.

Post match Jericho tries to go after the ankle even more but Edge fights back and puts Jericho on the announce table. With a running start, Edge runs over two announce tables and spears Jericho off the table and through the barricade.

We look at the dark match battle royal, won by Yoshi Tatsu.

Laycool/Vickie Guerrero/Maryse/Alicia Fox vs. Beth Phoenix/Kelly Kelly/Eve Torres/Mickie James/Gail Kim

Beth is in white here and man alive it REALLY works for her. She's also a face here which is really rare. Vickie and Gail start with Kim getting shoved backwards. Vickie poses and when she turns around, it's Beth. All the good girls take their turns on Vickie in the corner so she shouts at them. Michelle breaks up a pin by Kelly and we already begin the parade of finishers (Gail totally botches Eat Defeat), culminating with Beth ENDING Fox with the Glam Slam. Michelle saves Vickie from Beth with a big boot before putting Vickie on the top rope. The "Hog Splash" is enough to pin Kelly.

Rating: D. Laycool and Beth looked GREAT out there so it doesn't fail for them. No one else was in there long enough to make much of an impression, but again it's amazing how much better the Divas are at this point. They have personalities and actual emotions instead of just staring at cue cards and botching everything they do.

We recap Cena vs. Batista. Cena survived the Chamber and won the title, but Vince pulled a New Year's Revolution and made him immediately defend against Batista, which was payment for Big Dave helping out Vince

recently. The result was a rematch for the title here at Wrestlemania. Do you need more than that?

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. Batista

This is a rematch from Summerslam 2008. Cena's big entrance this year is a full military honor guard. They lock up to start with the champion grabbing a quick headlock. John grabs one of his own and takes it down to the mat. That goes nowhere so Cena tries pounding away in the corner, only to have Batista clothesline him down. A running boot to the side of Cena's head has him in more trouble and there's a second for good measure.

The idea here is that Batista is going after Cena's neck which he broke back in 2008. Cena comes back with a suplex and the bulldog for two but the AA is countered into a fast DDT for two. Off to a rear naked choke by Batista to crank on the neck even more. John fights up and they slug it out for the boo/yay chants. A quick neckbreaker gets two for the champion and it's off to a front facelock on Cena.

A backdrop finally puts Batista down and there are the shoulder blocks to keep him down. The ProtoBomb sets up the Shuffle but Batista pops up with his spinebuster to plant Cena. The Batista Bomb is countered into the STF though and Batista is in trouble. He finally makes the rope and comes back with a spear for two before sitting Cena on the top. In a cool spot they have a test of strength on the top with Cena slugging Batista down to the mat. Cena busts out a top rope Shuffle but Batista grabs the rope to block the AA.

There's the Batista Bomb out of nowhere but Cena is up at two. Batista loads up another but after a series of counters, Cena this a BIG release AA for two. Cena goes up top and dives right into a spinebuster which is the same move that resulted in his broken neck a year and a half ago. The Batista Bomb is countered into the STF though and after a long time, Batista taps away the title.

Rating: B+. These two know how to have the big time match. Cena winning was the right move to get his win back from a year and a half ago while also taking out Batista for what happened back in February. At the end of

the day, it's John Cena vs. Batista for the WWE Title at Wrestlemania. This had to be good by definition.

We recap Shawn vs. Taker. They had their masterpiece last year and Shawn became obsessed with beating Taker because he made one mistake. Shawn wanted a rematch and after superkicking Taker and costing him the world title in the Chamber, Taker said yes. There was a condition though: it was Streak vs. Career. Shawn said if he can't win, there's no reason for him to stay in the ring. There was no way this couldn't main event the show, and with the match we just got done with, that says a lot.

Undertaker vs. Shawn Michaels

You can only win by pin or submission. They stare each other down and Shawn does the throat slit. Taker charges into some chops in the corner but Shawn is thrown into a Flair Flip in the corner, followed by snake eyes and the big boot. Old School is broken up a few times but the third try hits perfectly. The chokeslam is countered and Shawn goes after the leg. A quick Tombstone attempt is blocked and Shawn tries for the Crossface, only to be grabbed by the throat.

Taker grabs the arm as well but has to back away from Sweet Chin Music. Now Shawn is going after the knee and Taker is in trouble. Michaels goes for some stomps in the corner but the big man gets in an uppercut to send Shawn to the floor. Taker loads up the Dive but Shawn slides back in for a chop block. They head to the floor for Undertaker to take over with the apron legdrop. It hurts his leg again though and the big man can't follow up.

Back in and Shawn takes out the leg again and there's a Figure Four. Taker sits up and has them there crazy eyes...but can't break up the hold. Scratch that as he can with pure power and Shawn lets it go. They slug it out on their feet again with Taker taking over with the strikes. Shawn comes back with the forearm and there's the nipup. Unfortunately he walks into the chokeslam for a close two. Shawn busts out an ankle lock of all things and the grapevine is added as well.

Undertaker gets on his back and punches his way out of it but Shawn sends him to the floor. There's a springboard cross body but Taker counters

into a Tombstone on the floor. Shawn flailing to escape and then stopping cold was perfect. Back in and that somehow only gets two so Taker tries the Last Ride. The leg gives out again and Shawn counters into a kind of X-Factor for two. The big elbow hits knees, but that hurt Taker just as much as it hurt Shawn.

Michaels gets caught in Hell's Gate but he flips forward into a rollup for two, making Undertaker break the hold. Back up again and there's the superkick out of nowhere for two. Now Shawn tunes up the band but Taker catches it coming in and hits a full on Last Ride for two. Undertaker throws him to the floor and loads up the announce table. The Last Ride through the table is escaped and there's a superkick to put Taker on the table. Shawn busts out a moonsault but mainly hits Taker's legs. It would have looked great from a distance though.

Back in again and the superkick hits perfect but somehow only gets two. The fans are calling this awesome and I can't say I'm arguing at all. Another superkick misses and there's a big chokeslam. Taker can't follow up though...until he plants Shawn with a Tombstone. THAT gets two and Taker is shocked. The Dead Man pulls the straps down but stops himself before doing the throat slit. Shawn pulls himself up on Taker's body and does the throat slit himself, admitting that he can't do it. Taker stares at him so Shawn slaps Taker in the face. That does it and it's a jumping Tombstone to end Shawn's career.

Rating: A+. That throat slit is as close to Shakespeare as WWE is ever going to get. Shawn going out in a masterpiece like this was as good as it was going to get and Undertaker gets to have another great match on his resume. Shawn has actually stayed retired which is the right move, because he's not going to top this with one more match. It's excellent even though it's somehow a step below last year's match.

Undertaker isn't sure what to do now as the lights go out and 18-0 flashes on screen. Shawn still hasn't moved. Taker helps Shawn up and they shake hands to a big ovation. Undertaker lets Shawn stand in the ring alone and soak up one last round of applause. Shawn slowly walks up the aisle and slaps hands. Shawn: "I'm going to drive my kids crazy in three weeks." He walks to the back to end the show.

Overall Rating: B+. This was a very solid show for the most part with an excellent main event. On top of that you only have one bad match and that had Beth looking all hot in white. Other than that you have Batista vs. Cena and a good Edge vs. Jericho match. The rest of the card isn't bad either, making this the third straight pretty solid Wrestlemania.

Ratings Comparison

Awesome Truth vs. ShoMiz

Original: D

Redo: D+

Randy Orton vs. Ted DiBiase vs. Cody Rhodes

Original: D+

Redo: C

Christian vs. Matt Hardy vs. Kane vs. Jack Swagger vs. Kofi Kingston vs. Drew McIntyre vs. Dolph Ziggler vs. Shelton Benjamin vs. MVP vs. Evan Bourne

Original: B

Redo: C+

HHH vs. Sheamus

Original: B-

Redo: C+

CM Punk vs. Rey Mysterio

Original: B-

Redo: C

Mr. McMahon vs. Bret Hart

Original: A+

Redo: A+

Edge vs. Chris Jericho

Original: A-

Redo: B

Beth Phoenix/Kevin Kelly/Mickie James/Gail Kim/Eve Torres vs. Vickie Guerrero/Alicia Fox/Laycool/Maryse

Original: F

Redo: D

John Cena vs. Batista

Original: A

Redo: B+

Undertaker vs. Shawn Michaels

Original: A+

Redo: A+

Overall Rating

Original: A

Redo: B+

Dang and I liked it even better on the first view. I might have been closer to right a few years back.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/04/03/history-of-wrestlemania-with-kb-wrestlemania-26-john-cena-vs-batista-do-you-need-more/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of the Intercontinental Title at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

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Monday Night Raw – March 28, 2016: Go Home, Go Home, GO HOME!

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 28, 2016

Location: Barclays Center, New York City, New York

Commentators: John Bradshaw Layfield, Michael Cole, Byron Saxton

It's the final Raw before Wrestlemania and things are almost entirely set in stone. The big question is whether or not anything major happens between now and Sunday, as there's still time for some big moves before we get into Dallas. There's always a chance that it could happen but the go home Raw's have been uneventful at times. Let's get to it.

Here's the Undertaker, who Cole calls the greatest of all time, to open things up. He gets right to the point (thankfully) and says that Shane's blood will be on Vince's hands, but Vince's blood may be on Undertaker's hands. This will NOT be his last Wrestlemania because the Cell is his house.

Cue Shane to say that Undertaker is fighting to not lose while he's fighting to win. Shane is the agent of change that WWE has needed for a long time and no matter what happens, Shane will crawl down the aisle and stand in the middle of the ring to usher in a new era. Undertaker brings up legacies and Shane comes to the ring to get in his face. This talk doesn't worry him because Undertaker's legacy died two years ago at Wrestlemania.

Undertaker doesn't want to hear about this because Shane has belonged to his father since the day he was born. That sets Shane off for his now standard offensive flurry, which still has no effect. They head outside with Shane escaping a Last Ride through the table and hitting Undertaker in the head (hands) with a monitor. Shane goes to the top for the top rope elbow which barely grazes Undertaker's arm. However, since the New York fans are the smarkiest of smarky fans in the world, which translates to "we'll cheer ANYTHING", it's called awesome, despite being borderline sad. Shane leaves and Undertaker sits up.

Chris Jericho vs. Zack Ryder

This is fallout from Jericho ripping into Ryder for being a loser on the pre-show. Before the match, here's AJ Styles to interrupt. AJ still wants to face Jericho at Wrestlemania because that still hasn't been booked for some reason. Ryder gets in a quick rollup for two to start but Jericho sends him to the floor. Jericho charges into the knees in the corner and Ryder's middle rope dropkick puts Jericho in the corner. The Broski Boot is blocked by a Walls attempt but AJ starts a chant to make fun of Jericho, setting up a quick small package to give Ryder the pin at 1:55.

Jericho IMMEDIATELY hits a Codebreaker after the match to keep Ryder in his place. We get an old WCW style tantrum and Jericho agrees to the match.

Charlotte vs. Becky Lynch

Non-title and Sasha Banks is on commentary. They trade armdrags to start with Charlotte getting the better of it as we take an early break. Back with Becky running Charlotte over and Sasha getting to her feet. The distraction lets Ric trip Becky, setting up a big boot and Natural

Selection to give Charlotte the pin at 6:28. Too much in the break to rate but Becky continues to look weak going into the title match.

Vince is in the back to say that he agrees the Cell is Undertaker's yard but Shane wants the yard, the house and the whole WWE Universe. Shane comes in to say yell at Vince for thinking he's the only one that can run Raw. This Sunday, Shane is letting out 40 years of frustration and taking the company from Vince, just like he took it from his dad.

Social Outcasts vs. Kane/Big Show

Barely a match as the Outcasts all come in for the DQ at 32 seconds.

The ring fills up with midcarders in the battle royal for the big brawl. Mark Henry, Kane and Big Show are left alone with Mark taking a double chokeslam. The Outcasts are chokeslammed at the same time.

We look back at Reigns attacking HHH and Stephanie last week.

Here are HHH and Stephanie, the former of which was announced as being on the way to the arena before the break. Stephanie orders all of us to get on our feet and show respect to the champ. HHH talks about how the largest crowd in history will be in Dallas this Sunday to see Reigns fall. It is the dream of every athlete to walk out on that stage and the dream of everyone here in this arena.

However, that's never going to happen because they just don't have the ability. Roman Reigns has that ability because he's a one in a million talent but this Sunday he's going to lose it all. We get a nice rant about how HHH's obsession with this business and how it's lead him to dominate this title for twenty years (not quite). That has allowed him to put on a suit and really run this business, only to have Reigns powerbomb him through that announce table four months ago.

All that did was reignite the fire in him though because maybe people had forgotten who he was. Now it's time for HHH to become the old Game again and destroy Reigns once and for all. Stephanie screeches for a bit and here's Reigns to a lot of booing. Thankfully he doesn't say anything stupid but clears the ring, only to be booed even more.

The thing to remember here is this isn't a response to what Reigns has been doing for the last month but rather to what he's been doing for the last year and a half. The fans aren't going to forget all the stupid promos and illogical booking that we've been subjected to. This has been a good final push for Reigns and things could get better in the future but Wrestlemania is looking like a wash at this point.

Stephanie and HHH promise to fix things.

Here's New Day for a match but first of all they need to plug Booty0's, the official cereal of Wrestlemania. They also question why the League of Nations doesn't have their own cereal, with the theory being because it would suck. The fans LOVE New Day here, especially when Big E. praises New York pizza.

Kofi Kingston vs. Alberto Del Rio

Kingston starts fast and sends Del Rio outside for a quick concert. Back in and a charge misses, allowing Del Rio to hit his reverse superplex for two as we take a break. Kingston is still in trouble when we come back with Del Rio getting two more off a tilt-a-whirl backbreaker. The top rope double stomp misses for Alberto and the SOS gets two. Kofi misses in the corner again and a quick double stomp puts Kofi down. No cover though as Del Rio would rather shout and pose, allowing the armbreaker to be countered into a rollup for the pin at 7:40.

Rating: C-. Not great here as I'm getting tired of this feud. There's a possibility that the titles have been cut out of the match to make it even less important than it already is, which was something you had to expect at some point. Kofi winning is a nice sign though as he's really turning back into the version from nine years ago who looked like he could be something very special.

Post match THE COACH, as in Jonathan Coachman from ESPN, makes a surprise appearance to announce that SportsCenter will be covering Wrestlemania all day. He even dances a bit for fun.

We recap the opening brawl.

Roman Reigns is in the back for an interview when the Dudley Boys interrupt. Yeah because two people from NEW YORK are going to get Reigns cheered. HHH comes in for the sneak attack and Reigns is destroyed.

Konor vs. Kalisto

Non-title. Konor gets in an early headlock but Kalisto speeds things up with his kicks, followed by a dropkick to Viktor. A quick springboard Salida Del Sol puts Konor away at 1:49.

Post match Ryback comes out for a staredown.

Here are Heyman and Lesnar for the hard sell. Heyman talks about being the advocate for the baddest beast on the planet today before hyping us on the fact that we're six days away. This year people have a once in a lifetime chance to see an athlete at the top of his game in Brock Lesnar. That's why they've been looking for the right lunatic to take on Lesnar at Wrestlemania XXXII and Dean Ambrose happens to be smarter than he's given credit for.

Dean has the opportunity to take some weapons and try to survive a no holds barred street fight against Brock Lesnar, which is the good news for Ambrose. However, the bad news is that he has a no holds barred street fight with BROCK LESNAR. Cue Dean with a wagon, which he fills with various "toys" from under the ring. Why he didn't have those in there in the first place isn't clear but he finds the barbed wire baseball bat and the chainsaw. After filling up the wagon, Dean leaves without even looking at Brock.

Paige vs. Emma

This is a preview match for the Total Divas (Paige/Alicia Fox/Brie Bella/Natalya) vs. what seems to be called Team Bad and Blonde (Lana/Naomi/Tamina/Summer Rae/Emma) for Sunday. Emma dropkicks Paige down to start and gets one off the former Emma Sandwich. The THIS IS MY HOUSE clothesline gets two for Paige but the other women get in an argument at ringside, allowing Lana to come in for a cheap shot to give Emma the pin at 2:53.

Post match the Total Divas get beaten down until Eva Marie of all people comes out for the save. The fans boo her almost as bad as Reigns but the rest of the Total Divas don't seem impressed.

R-Truth comes up to Goldust and says it's every man for himself in the battle royal. Goldust doesn't care because they're not a team.

Snoop Dogg is being inducted into the Hall of Fame.

Sami Zayn/Sin Cara/Dolph Ziggler vs. Kevin Owens/Stardust/The Miz

The fans are WAY behind Sami as he starts with Miz. The arm work sets up a tag off to Owens but he tags out to Stardust instead. Off to Ziggler (in a shirt for some reason) to hold Stardust down with a front facelock (notice that they're being VERY safe this week) before superkicking Miz off the apron to take us to a break.

Back with Sin Cara coming in off the ropes for an elbow to Stardust's shoulder. The fans chant for Byron Saxton and then JBL as Stardust clotheslines Sin out of the air. Owens makes Stardust tag Miz as the CM Punk chants break out. Sami comes in to draw an OLE chant (at least it's about the match now) and gets stomped down by Stardust. That's enough of the heels in control as it's off to Ziggler for a lukewarm reaction. Miz gets in a cheap shot from the apron as Owens still won't come in. Ziggler gets stomped down even more and we take a second break.

Back again with Ziggler still in trouble as Miz puts on a chinlock. Now it turns into a NEW DAY ROCKS chant because the "smart" fans are surprised that a go home show doesn't have the most exciting action. Ziggler sends Stardust into the post and gives Miz the Fameasser, setting up the hot tag to Sami. Everything breaks down and Cara makes a blind tag, allowing Sami to dive onto Owens.

Cara's high cross body gets two on Stardust but the Swanton hits knees. Sami comes in again but walks into the Skull Crushing Finale which sets off the Parade of Finishers, capped off by a big Cara moonsault to Stardust. Now Owens comes in but the Pop Up Powerbomb is countered with a dropkick. Miz and Stardust want nothing to do with Owens now (makes perfect sense), allowing the tornado DDT and Helluva Kick to put Kevin

away at 21:22.

Rating: C-. The match was dull but of course the focus is going to be on the crowd who couldn't to five minutes without having some big dive or flip to entertain them, meaning we're stuck with more announcers chants. I liked the basic story they went with here and that's the best thing about the match. Seeing Sami pin Owens was a great touch too, as I don't think he ever did that in NXT.

Usos vs. Dudley Boyz and the Divas tag are now on the USA portion of the pre-show. No word on where the battle royal will air.

Here's the Authority to wrap things up. Stephanie talks about how Reigns is going to fall and promises that there will be no new leadership next week. It's about time they acknowledged this for a change. HHH doesn't want to hear about him attacking Reigns from behind because there's too much at stake. This brings out Reigns for another brawl with Reigns getting the better of it until a bunch of guys (the League, Dudley Boyz and Stardust) come out to pull him off. This brings out some good guys and it's a big brawl. They're finally separated but Reigns does a big dive over the ropes to take out the pile to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. It's a not horrible go home show for a not horribly built Wrestlemania. The crowd had its moments here but it's pretty obvious that Sunday is going to be interesting and not in the best possible way. There's some good stuff going on but they better knock it out of the park with everything they're doing at the pay per view. Other than that, this was your standard go home Raw: not much action, a lot of pushing the pay per view, and little else. Oh and where are the Wyatts? Are they really just stuck in the battle royal? That's the best they can get?

Results

Zack Ryder b. Chris Jericho – Rollup

Charlotte b. Becky Lynch – Natural Selection

Kane/Big Show b. Social Outcasts via DQ when all four Outcasts were in

the ring at once

Kofi Kingston b. Alberto Del Rio – Small package

Kalisto b. Konor – Salida Del Sol

Emma b. Paige – Pin after a kick from Lana

Sami Zayn/Dolph Ziggler/Sin Cara b. Kevin Owens/The Miz/Stardust –
Helluva Kick to Owens

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Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XXV: Dude He Killed Your Dog

Wrestlemania XXV

Date: April 5, 2009

Location: Reliant Stadium, Houston, Texas

Attendance: 72,744

Commentators: Jim Ross, Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

After last year's great show, we get...this. Wrestlemania 25 is often listed alongside the worst Wrestlemanias of all time. I watched it live and thought it sucked other than the candidate for best match ever in the middle of it. This is one of the ones that I wasn't looking forward to but I have to be tortured for this job. Let's get to it.

We open with a video of people being asked what the biggest moment in Wrestlemania history is over the first 25 years (let me get this out of the way: IT WAS TWENTY FOUR AT THAT TIME. This drove me CRAZY at the time because the show was built up as the 25th anniversary of the show, but that isn't how things work. Think about it: when you get married, the day a year later is your first anniversary, meaning that Wrestlemania 2 would be the first anniversary, Wrestlemania 3 is your second anniversary and so on to Wrestlemania 25 being the TWENTY FOURTH ANNIVERSARY, NOT THE TWENTY FIFTH!).

Anyway the answers are exactly what you would expect: ladder match, Hogan slamming Andre, Hogan vs. Warrior etc. This leads to a video of people saying they're making the top moment tonight.

Nicole Scherzinger of the Pussycat Dolls sings America the Beautiful.

MVP vs. Shelton Benjamin vs. Christian vs. Kofi Kingston vs. CM Punk vs. Finlay vs. Mark Henry vs. Kane

MITB here. Henry has Tony Atlas with him, MVP is the face US Champion and Kofi is still Jamaican. BIG pop for Christian here. It's a big brawl to start as the fans are solidly behind Christian here. Christian and Shelton run over Henry with the big ladder but Kofi jumps over it and takes both guys down. There's a Boom Drop onto the ladder onto both guys. The ladder is set up in the ring but here's Kane to beat everyone up.

Henry and Kane go up the ladder but everyone bands together to pull them down. The monsters are both sent to the floor and a second regular sized ladder is set up. A bunch of people go up but Kane and Henry shove everyone down. Kane kicks Henry down and loads up the big ladder again. Henry breaks up that attempt but opts to throw the ladder at Finlay instead of climbing.

Finlay dives through the ropes at Kane and Shelton so Christian can dive onto Finlay and Kane to take them out. MVP dives on all three of them and Kofi and Punk hit stereo suicide dives to take out all four guys. Shelton climbs onto the huge ladder and DIVES onto all five guys, looking like he landed on his head at first look. Now HENRY goes up top but Finlay breaks it up to prevent an earthquake.

Horny slides in his own ladder to climb onto Henry's back and dive onto all six guys on the floor. Finlay is the only guy standing and throws in a big ladder, but he had to fight Kofi. Kofi dives THROUGH the ladder and drops it onto Finlay for good measure. Finlay drops him with the Horny ladder and does the same to Christian and Kane. The Irishman tries to go up but Kofi kicks him down.

Kingston tries for a climb but Henry is back again and shoves down the ladder. In an AWESOME spot, Henry holds the ladder to set it in place and Kofi runs up, only to be dropped down and hit with a World's Strongest Slam onto the ladder. MVP slides a ladder into the standing one to make a kind of platform. Shelton slides under the ladder and kicks MVP in the ribs. MVP comes back with a kind of powerbomb on Benjamin but Punk stops the climb.

Now it's Christian and Punk with Punk on the ladder and Christian on the platform. Now they're both on the same side of the ladder and Christian hits the Killswitch off the ladder. By hits I mean Christian drops him in midair and Punk's head never came within three feet of the mat but you do what you can I guess. MVP climbs up but Shelton climbs a ladder on the floor to get to the platform to get to the ladder for a sunset bomb to MVP. By sunset bomb, I mean he doesn't get MVP over and basically pulls MVP's face down the ladder. That's two big blown spots in a row.

MVP is up first and pounds on Shelton before being powerbombed over the top rope and down onto a few guys. His head looked to smack against the barricade in a scary spot. Shelton and Finlay are on the ladder now and Finlay is knocked onto the ladder platform. Christian takes Shelton down and pounds away until Shelton takes the platform apart.

Shelton and Christian are both standing on two ladders but Christian

shoves Shelton to the floor. Punk however springboards onto the ladders but gets caught upside down in a ladder, which is what Punk did to Christian to win last year. Kane stops Christian and chokeshoves him down to the mat. Punk pops up and kicks Kane down to win his second straight MITB.

Rating: B-. The blown spots REALLY bring this down because they were some terribly blown spots. Punk winning is fine as it was eventually the catalyst for his heel turn but that wouldn't be for about six months. The match was good and having some fresh blood with Kofi out there helped, but the match overall was a letdown compared to other years, as the problem becomes "how do you top the other stuff?". Still good though.

Video on WWE taking over Houston for the week.

Now we get to the part of this show which makes fans' heads hurt: a TWELVE MINUTE Kid Rock song medley. Keep in mind that a unification match for the two sets of tag titles was on the preshow and ran about 9 minutes. THAT can't make Wrestlemania but this nonsense can. This is to set up the Miss Wrestlemania battle royal.

Miss Wrestlemania: Divas Battle Royal

Melina, Beth Phoenix, Santina Marella, Victoria, Brie Bella, Eve Torres, Gail Kim, Jackie Gayda, Tiffany, Sunny, Rosa Mendes, Nikki Bella, Jillian Hall, Joy Giovanni, Katie Lea Burchill, Kelly Kelly, Layla, Maria, Maryse, Michelle McCool, Mickie James, Molly Holly, Natalya, Alicia Fox, Rosa Mendes, Torrie Wilson

The medley contains the entrances for all 25 girls, none of whom get entrances or even introductions, so the fans have no idea who all is in this thing for the most part. Justin Roberts is reading the rules and people are already being eliminated. Not that we're told WHO THEY ARE or anything but whatever. Oh and you can go through the ropes too. Cole: "You can get a look at all the entrants in this on WWE.com!" Yeah, that's the only way to see them because KID ROCK had to eat up all their time.

Sunny, Torrie, Layla and Rosa are out for sure but the rest of them aren't even mentioned. Gail and Jillian eliminate each other as Beth

eliminates Tiffany and some other chick not mentioned. Molly and Kelly are put out as is Maryse. Beth dumps both Bellas and the only Divas left are Michelle, Mickie, Melina and Beth. Mickie and Michelle eliminate each other but Santina eliminates the other two. It's Santino in drag if that wasn't clear. Yeah, THIS is your payoff for bringing back all those famous chicks. This led to months of STUPID jokes and skits about them being brother and sister or something. No rating but this was awful.

Beth is ticked off, which led to months of stupid fights between the two of them. Santina dances post match.

We recap Jericho vs. Piper/Snuka/Steamboat which is built around the Mickey Rourke movie The Wrestler. The idea is that Jericho insulted Rourke and the movie because it's not the same as getting in the ring. Rourke said he'd fight at Mania then backpedaled. We then had Jericho insult Snuka, Piper and Steamboat for sticking around too long. Flair was insulted as well but since Flair can't wrestle anymore, Jericho beat up and challenged the other legends to a match here tonight.

Rourke is at ringside.

Chris Jericho vs. Roddy Piper/Jimmy Snuka/Ricky Steamboat

Flair is here to support his fellow old people. If I had to guess, I'd say he's somewhere between smashed and alcohol poisoning. Jericho has to beat all three legends to win so he starts with Piper. Roddy looks bad but considering less than two years earlier he was diagnosed with lymphoma, this is pretty impressive.

Piper fires away to start and takes it to the mat before hooking a quick sunset flip for two. A kind of dropkick puts Chris down and Roddy pounds away in the corner. Jimmy comes in and the match turns into slow motion. To be fair he's about 65 here. Ricky comes in and starts cranking on the arm as you would expect him to. Back to Jimmy for a double chop although only Ricky's actually hits. Out of nowhere Jericho puts on the Walls for the elimination.

Piper comes back in and works over the ribs before throwing on the sleeper. It only lasts for a few seconds though before Jericho rams him

into the top rope and gets the elimination via a running enziguri. This leaves Steamboat vs. Jericho with the Dragon coming in with the top rope cross body for a VERY close near fall. A snapmare puts Ricky down and Jericho kicks him in the back before putting on a chinlock. In the STUPID part of the show, Jericho throws Steamboat over the ropes for him to skin the cat, but LET'S LOOK AT FLAIR INSTEAD!

Jericho gets backdropped over the top to the floor and IT'S A FLYING OLD MAN to take Jericho down again. Back in and a top rope chop has Jericho reeling. Steamboat jumps over Chris out of the corner and gets a rollup for two. Jericho finally hits the bulldog but the Lionsault misses. Ricky grabs a powerslam out of nowhere for two but gets caught in the Walls. Steamboat reverses THAT into a small package for the hottest two count you'll see in years. If that's not enough, Steamboat backflips out of a belly to back suplex, only to walk into the Codebreaker to let Jericho survive.

Rating: B-. WOW Steamboat had me going here and I knew what the ending was. Steamboat was 56 years old here and hadn't wrestled regularly in FIFTEEN YEARS and just had the crowd actually believing he could beat Jericho five months after he lost the world title. That's ASTONISHING and would lead to a one on one match between these two at Backlash. Snuka and Piper were there for one last hurrah but Steamboat was trying to steal the show and came pretty freaking close. This is a great example of a match with NO reason to be good which wound up being pretty sweet.

Post match Flair comes in but gets beaten down too. Jericho taunts Rourke (a real life former pro boxer) and gets punched out. This somehow took five minutes.

We recap Matt Hardy vs. Jeff Hardy. The idea is that stuff had started happening to Jeff such as pyro nearly blinding him, someone trying to run him off the road, and BURNING HIS HOUSE DOWN, including killing his dog. At Royal Rumble, Matt revealed that it was him behind it because he was jealous of Jeff's success. Naturally, no charges were ever filed or anything like that, because why do that when you can have an extreme rules match here instead?

Matt Hardy vs. Jeff Hardy

Matt now has regular tights instead of the cargo jeans. Jeff takes him down and pounds away to start before heading to the floor. A hard poster to the head doesn't do much to Matt, presumably BECAUSE IT WAS A POSTER. The steps work a bit better and there's Poetry in Motion against the barricade to crush Matt. Back in and Poetry in Motion hits the corner instead of Matt and the Whisper in the Wind only hits chair.

Matt chokes away on the ropes and punches away at Jeff's head. The Side Effect onto a chair gets two so Matt bends Jeff's back around the post. It's table time but Jeff fights off a suplex through said table and hits a running clothesline off the apron. Jeff busts out a kendo stick and a crutch to beat on Matt's back before putting a trashcan over Matt's head for the slingshot dropkick for two.

There goes Jeff's shirt but the Swanton completely misses. The Twist of Fate gets two for Matt and he's getting frustrated. Matt calls for a Swanton but gets caught in a superplex instead for no cover. There's a BIG chair shot to Matt's head which sends him to the floor. Jeff lays Matt on the table before putting another table on top of that table. There's a HUGE splash through both tables along with Matt to leave everyone laying.

Back in and that only gets two, and now it's time for the ladders required by a Hardys match. A legdrop keeps Matt down and the ladder is set up. Make that two ladders with one being bigger than the other. Jeff climbs the small ladder and jumps over the tall ladder, only to miss his big legdrop. Matt puts Jeff's neck in the chair for a Twist of Fate to finally end this.

Rating: B. This was a solid brawl but it would all go downhill from here. Their feud didn't ever quite work for the most part because the audience wasn't all that interested and Matt didn't work as a top heel. As for this match though, they beat the tar out of each other and Matt looked violent and evil. Unfortunately he couldn't back that up for the most part.

Orton is ready for the main event.

Intercontinental Title: Rey Mysterio vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

Rey is challenging. JBL goes on a rant about how much Texas sucks and how they've lost their backbone. After this match is over, JBL is bailing on Texas and heading back to New York where he loves to be. Rey is the Joker from Dark Knight this year. They actually do big match intros here which isn't something you see for a midcard title match. The referee reads them the rules and JBL kicks Rey in the head. Now the bell rings and Rey hits an enziguri, the 619 and a top rope splash for the pin and the title in about 20 seconds.

Post match JBL says he quits, which is his actual retirement as he's never wrestled since.

We recap Shawn vs. Undertaker. Shawn freed himself from JBL at No Way Out and realized he needed a new challenge. What better for Mr. Wrestlemania to do than challenge the Streak? Shawn read passages from the Bible about separating light from darkness to show the differences between the two of them. Do you need more of a buildup than that?

Undertaker vs. Shawn Michaels

Shawn comes down from the top of the set all in white, Undertaker comes through the stage in black. Now THAT is an entrance. Feeling out process to start with Shawn circling around Taker and sticking with a few jabs here and there. Michaels pounds away in the corner and hits a hard chop but taker catches an incoming right hand. Taker LAUNCHES him into the corner and nearly out to the floor, only for Shawn to jump off the top and over Undertaker to get away.

Shawn might have hurt his knee but he's channeling his inner Bret by goldbricking. Taker will have none of that and throws Shawn into the corner for more punishment. Michaels comes back with chops in the corner but gets backdropped down to stop the momentum. Taker drives some shoulder into Shawn but Shawn takes him down with a clothesline. The reverse Figure Four (called a regular one by that idiot Michael Cole) has Taker in trouble but he finally slugs his way out of it.

Taker pounds way in the corner but has to stop to shake life back into

his leg. Snake eyes and the big boot put Shawn down and a legdrop gets two (brother). A chokeslam is countered into the Crossface by Shawn but Taker rolls over onto his side to block a lot of the pressure. After an attempted rollup by Undertaker, Shawn cranks on the hold a bit more, only to have Taker fight up and hit a big side slam for two. Back up and they slug it out with Shawn taking over via a flying forearm.

There's the nipup but Shawn doesn't tune up the band. Instead it's a pair of atomic drops and a clothesline but as Shawn goes up, he jumps into the chokeslam. He escapes THAT and tries the superkick but is too far away, meaning the kick only hits Taker's chest. It puts Taker down so Shawn tries the Figure Four but Taker counters into Hell's Gate. Shawn flails around and gets a foot on the rope for a fast break but he's clearly staggered.

We head to the floor for a bit but Taker misses the apron legdrop. A baseball slide keeps Taker on the floor but as Shawn tries the moonsault to the floor, Taker moves and Shawn CRASHES onto the concrete. Back inside and Taker sits up and busts out the Taker Dive, only to overrotate and CRASH in a terrifying landing. Shawn thankfully pulled a cameraman in the way to block some of the impact but this scared me to death live.

Shawn tells the referee to count in a kind of mid-match heel turn but Taker makes it back in at nine. Another superkick attempt is ducked and a HUGE chokeslam gets an insanelly close two. The fans are getting way into these near falls now. The Tombstone is countered, the superkick is blocked, the chokeslam is escaped and NOW the superkick hits for a very delayed two count. Shawn is up now and looks all ticked off.

Taker grabs him by the throat but the Last Ride is countered into a sunset flip bid, but THAT is countered into the biggest Last Ride ever for two. Watching this match for probably the fourth time I actually thought that was the finish. Think about that for a minute. Taker goes up top and misses a top rope elbow but as Shawn tries to skin the cat, Undertaker catches him in the Tombstone. He sticks the tongue out but THAT gets two, I believe making Shawn either the first or second guy ever to kick out of all three of Taker's finishers.

Taker nearly collapses from the shock and has a look on his face saying he has no idea where to go now. Shawn spins out of a Tombstone bid into a DDT and both guys are down. Michaels slowly crawls to the top and drops the elbow for no cover. Instead he tunes up the band again and the fans are all over him as a result. The kick hits clean and Shawn covers almost immediately but it only gets two. These kickouts are getting better and better each time.

They fight up from their knees and use each other to pull themselves up before slugging it out with everything they've got. A big boot puts Shawn down but Taker charges into a boot in the corner to put him down. Shawn climbs up top and tries a moonsault press, but Taker somehow catches him in mid air for another Tombstone to make him 16-0, and that's your match of the year.

Rating: A+. Masterpiece, excellent, classic, best match they've ever had, best match of all time candidate etc. Pick one, as they're all appropriate. This is one of the only matches ever where I've been on the edge of my seat the entire time and lost my mind on the kickouts. Absolutely outstanding here and one of the best matches I've ever seen, and that covers quite a bit of ground.

Now what gets to follow that?

We recap Edge vs. Big Show vs. Cena for the Raw Title. Edge switched brands at No Way Out after losing the WWE Title and won the World Title in the other Chamber match, because the titles are interchangeable props which you can pass around like this for no apparent reason. Edge's wife Vickie was blackmailed into putting Cena into a triple threat match because Cena had video of Show and Vickie having an affair. This is basically a glorified handicap match.

Raw World Title: Edge vs. Big Show vs. John Cena

Edge is defending and Vickie is STILL in the wheelchair. Cena's big entrance this year: an army of probably 60 guys dressed in Cena gear make a tunnel for the real Cena to run through, complete with the old Word Life theme song. Cena fights off both guys but the numbers catch up with him, allowing the heels to take him down. Edge is knocked to the floor

and it's back to Cena who gets beaten down by the monster.

Show goes outside to get Edge but the champion dropkicks the steps into Show's knees, allowing Cena to hit the top rope Fameasser to drive Show's face into the floor. Back in and Cena tries a quick AA, only to be countered into the Edgecution for two. Show comes back in with a side slam for two on John but Cena comes back with right hands. When those don't do much he tries to hit the ropes but Vickie's nephew Chavo pulls him to the floor. That earns him an AA and we head back inside where John knocks Show into the ropes to tie him up. Show: "GET ME OUT OF HERE!"

Cena beats down Edge and now has a free shot at Big Show. Instead he hits the Shuffle on Edge which is actually pretty smart when you think about it. Here comes the AA but Vickie gets on the apron. Cena drops Edge but avoids a spear, sending Edge into Vickie. The distraction lets Cena roll Edge up for two but a collision puts both guys down. Show gets loose and beats up both other guys including hitting a splash to both guys in the same corner.

Cena escapes a double chokeslam but can't get the AA. Instead Show hits him with the WMD but instead of, I don't know, COVERING, he goes to the floor after Edge. Edge counters a chokeslam into a DDT on the floor and all three guys are down. The champion crawls over to the steps and sets them right next to Show. With a running start, Edge uses the steps as a springboard and dives at Show, sending both of them through the barricade and into the crowd.

Back in and Edge gets two on Cena but the spear is countered into the STF. John pulls it back to the center of the ring but Big Show breaks it up by grabbing Cena's throat. A Vader Bomb elbow misses Edge and everyone is down again. In a rare sight, Edge and Cena team up to suplex Show down and then clothesline him to the floor.

The Throwback puts Edge down but as Cena goes up, Show shoves him off and into a spear from Edge for two. Everyone is inside again and Show charges into a boot from Edge. The champion tries a sleeper on Show, so in the HOW DID HE DO THAT spot of the year, Cena AA's BOTH OF THEM AT THE SAME TIME. Edge slides off and Show takes the full brunt. Cena hits an AA on

Edge onto Big Show and pins the giant for the title.

Rating: B-. Fine but it's another meaningless title change in a year which would be full of such things. Edge would get the title back at Backlash to make sure that these title reigns are as forgettable as possible and give us Cena vs. Big Show for about the ninth time. The match was just ok for the most part until the eye popping finish.

Wrestlemania 26 is in Phoenix.

Now we get the Hall of Fame class: Terry and Dory Funk, Howard Finkel, Koko B. Ware, the Von Erichs and Ricky Steamboat. Oh and Steve Austin. Yeah him too. He takes off his suit and rides his ATV around ringside for one last moment.

This brings us to the main event of HHH vs. Orton. This was basically a continuation of Orton vs. the McMahons with HHH being the big soldier to fight in the war. Vince and Shane had already been taken out and Orton won the Rumble to get us here. With HHH firmly in his sights (again), Orton went on the attack.

One night on Raw, HHH was knocked into the ropes and tied up as Stephanie came down. Orton gave Stephanie the Elevated DDT before kissing her on the lips, further enraging HHH. At one point in the rivalry, HHH broke into Orton's house and threw him through a window. Orton decided to fight HHH at Wrestlemania instead of pressing charges. The stage was perfectly set for the great beat down by HHH, allowing him to let out all of his aggression and rage on Orton.

While not the greatest story in the world, at least there was a solid idea and we should get a solid brawl out of things. There's nothing wrong with a good old fashioned beating of a hated rival is there? Well apparently WWE saw something wrong with it, because there was a stipulation added: if HHH gets countered out or more importantly disqualified, he loses the WWE Title. Upon hearing this, everyone collectively said HUH?

This stipulation made no sense. The whole point of the match was to see HHH beat the stuffing out of Orton once and for all. What possible good

could there be to make it a match where HHH had to keep calm and play by the rules? For some reason, this is what we got at Wrestlemania XXV.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Randy Orton

HHH has a cool entrance here as he swings his hammer at the camera, only to reveal that it's a big mirror that he shatters. They stare at each other for a bit before HHH takes Orton down and pounds away. The champion stomps on Orton in the corner and is threatened with a DQ, showing us how stupid this gimmick is. With HHH yelling at the referee, Orton grabs an RKO out of nowhere a minute and five seconds in. The Punt misses and there's the Pedigree but HHH can't follow up.

Orton is sent to the floor and rammed into the announce table before heading back in for more right hands. HHH catapults Orton throat first into the bottom rope before dropping some knees on the head. Randy heads back to the floor and counters a whip to send HHH into the steps. HHH gets whipped into the timekeeper's table which apparently hurt his shoulder. Orton tries to get the countout to get the title but the Game is back in at nine.

Randy drops some knees and kicks to the ribs and it's off to the chinlock. Back up after a few moments in the hold and HHH punches his way out of the corner. The jumping knee to Orton's face puts him down and there's the facebuster for good measure. The Pedigree is countered into a catapult though, sending HHH face first into the buckle. Not that it really matters though as a clothesline puts Orton down for two as the slow pace finally picks up a bit.

HHH gets shoved off the top but Orton dives off the top into a boot. A rollup gets two for the champion and they slug it out some more. The spinebuster puts Randy down but the Pedigree is countered into Orton's backbreaker for two. HHH gets in another clothesline and goes up for some reason, only to jump into a dropkick. A kick to HHH's ribs is caught and Orton is flipped over the top and out to the floor. They head over to the announce table and HHH picks up a monitor but drops it for fear of losing the title.

The champion tries a Pedigree on the announce table, only to be

backdropped down onto the table which doesn't break. With HHH still on the table, Orton hits the Elevated DDT to drive HHH head first into the floor. HHH still manages to get back in at 9 so Orton stomps away even more. Randy stomps away in the corner and chokes away as this is dragging again. HHH comes back but Orton throws HHH into the referee. There's the RKO but the referee is down.

With no referee, Orton goes to the floor and gets a sledgehammer, but as he gets back inside HHH punts him in the head. A shot to the head with the sledgehammer puts Orton down and HHH pounds away. Orton is out cold so HHH hits another Pedigree for good measure and retains the title.

Rating: D. Erg that was awful. This was the same problem they had with the Cena vs. HHH match from a few years ago, where it felt like they were trying for something epic that told a story but it didn't work at all. Instead it was these two punching and kicking a lot while having to stop because they might get disqualified. This didn't work at all because the match didn't fit the buildup, which was only decent in the first place.

HHH stands over Orton's body like a viking standing over a big kill to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. There's a lot to say here. First and foremost, this show is WAY better than I remember it with only two bad matches the whole way through. Unfortunately, the first of those two matches is after a nearly fifteen minute concert which no one wanted to see. The other match though is the main event which counting recap, entrances and post match stuff is nearly 40 minutes. That match is like a sledgehammer to the knees of this show and is easily one of the worst main events in Mania history.

On the other hand, the rest of the show is shockingly good, but it falls short of what it could have been in places. MITB is probably the worst yet but still solid, the Legends match was good but had absolutely no right to be, the Hardy match was good but nothing more, and the triple threat was about the same. The problem here is that one match is all anyone really remembers from this show other than a few individual moments. The memory of the main event hurts this thing a lot as it's the

only thing people remember other than the Streak match. Much better show than I remember, but it's no classic.

Ratings Comparison

Finlay vs. Christian vs. CM Punk vs. Mark Henry vs. Kofi Kingston vs. Shelton Benjamin vs. MVP vs. Kane

Original: C+

Redo: B-

Divas Battle Royal

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Roddy Piper/Jimmy Snuka/Ricky Steamboat vs. Chris Jericho

Original: C+

Redo: B-

Matt Hardy vs. Jeff Hardy

Original: C

Redo: B

John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Rey Mysterio

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Shawn Michaels vs. Undertaker

Original: A+

Redo: A+

John Cena vs. Edge vs. Big Show

Original: B-

Redo: B-

Randy Orton vs. HHH

Original: F+

Redo: D

Overall Rating

Original: D

Redo: B-

Did I mention this was the first live review I ever did?

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/04/01/history-of-wrestlemania-with-kb-wrestlemania-25-oh-dear-oh-dear-indeed/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of the Intercontinental Title at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01D4D3EG0>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XXIV: One Of The Hidden Gems

Wrestlemania XXIV

Date: March 30, 2008

Location: Citrus Bowl, Orlando, Florida

Attendance: 74,365

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Jonathan Coachman, Joey Styles, Tazz

We're going outside for the first time in a long time for this one. It's also the first time the show has been in Florida which is odd for some reason. Anyway the main events here are Undertaker challenging Edge for the title and Orton defending against HHH and Cena. As for HHH's life mate Shawn, he's facing Flair in what was pretty clearly going to be Flair's last match. Let's get to it.

John Legend sings America the Beautiful.

The set is awesome with palm trees everywhere and a big canopy.

As usual, the big names on tonight's show talk about how important this night is to them. It's a used formula, but it always works.

This transitions into a video about how so many things can change in a year. People can return, champions can fall and surprises can occur, but it all culminates here.

John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Finlay

This is a Belfast Brawl which means street fight. Finlay was revealed to be Hornswoggle's dad and JBL beat up the tiny man as a favor to Vince. Tonight it's about revenge. Horny comes out with Finlay to appeal to the kids. Finlay charges at the ring and gets drilled by a knee to the head. JBL pounds away on the floor but gets sent shoulder first into the steps. We head inside for the opening bell and Finlay slides right back out to

find some trashcans.

As he gets back in though JBL CRACKS him with a can and picks up some cookie sheets. Now the steps are brought in but JBL can't powerbomb Finlay onto them. Some cookie sheet shots to the head put JBL down for two but a big boot does the same to Finlay. JBL stops to yell at Horny, allowing for the shot with that Irish club that I can't spell. Since this is a WWE hardcore style match, it's table time.

The table is set up in the corner but Finlay picks up the steps instead. JBL bails to the floor and beats on Horny, only to be rammed into the announce table by Papa Horny for his efforts. A trashcan lid to the head stops Finlay and gets two back inside, allowing JBL to pick up a trashcan and LAUNCH IT at Horny. That looked great.

Speaking of trashcans, a shot to JBL breaks up the Clothesline and Finlay blasts him with a lid for good measure. JBL is sent through the table for two and the fans are pleased. Finlay picks up the steps but gets blasted in the knee by a kendo stick, allowing JBL to knock him out with the Clothesline for the pin.

Rating: C+. This was fine. The whole point of this was to have a power brawl with some basic weapons which is what we got. I'm really not sure on JBL winning as the fans were solidly behind Horny and Finlay, but at least the match was entertaining and there were some hard shots in there. Good stuff here.

Kim Kardashian is guest hostess. She wasn't famous for the most part yet here. Kennedy pops in and says he'll win MITB and Kardashian is a little disturbed. Well to be fair she disturbs a lot of people so everything is even.

CM Punk vs. Shelton Benjamin vs. John Morrison vs. Chris Jericho vs. MVP vs. Mr. Kennedy vs. Carlito

Morrison is a tag champion and MVP is US Champion, having held it for nearly a year. Jericho is also Intercontinental Champion because what else is he supposed to do? Everyone goes after a ladder to start other than MVP who stays in the ring. Someone slides one in and MVP uses it to

knock everyone down. Jericho brings in a big ladder and it's time for a duel. MVP goes down and here's Morrison to use his own ladder to send Jericho down.

In an awesome move, Morrison goes up top with the ladder and moonsaults down onto a bunch of guys at once. Kennedy uses the distraction to go up but Jericho makes the save. He tries a catapult on Kennedy but sends him onto the ladder by mistake. Morrison dives onto the ladder to stop Kennedy but Shelton climbs his own ladder to make it a three way race. Kennedy loads up a superplex on Morrison but Shelton jumps over both of them with a sunset flip to make it a Tower of Doom. Cool spot.

Carlito tries to shove Shelton off the ladder but he lands on the top rope on his feet. Shelton shoves the ladder at Carlito and tries to dive onto said ladder but it gives way. Punk stops Shelton from going up and hits the GTS but Kennedy stops him with the rolling fireman's carry onto a ladder. MVP is back in now to kick Kennedy in the head but gets sent into a ladder by Carlito.

Shelton's dragon whip CRACKS Carlito in the head but as he goes up, Kennedy and Carlito shove the ladder forward, sending Shelton over the top and through a ladder which was bridged between the ring and the barricade. Carlito and Kennedy go up but MVP breaks that up, only to be broken up by Morrison. Jericho breaks up Morrison's attempt by putting him in the Walls on top of the ladder. Again, awesome. Kennedy tries to use the opening but Jericho throws John down and starts brawling.

Punk and Carlito dive at the ladders to make it a fourway with only Jericho lasting on top. Carlito comes back with the Backstabber off the ladder and everyone is down again. MVP goes up the ladder but here's the returning Matt Hardy to stop him with a Twist of Fate off the ladder. Everyone is back in again and Jericho beats on all of them with the ladder. In a cool visual one ladder is jammed into the bottom of another, so as Morrison climbs the vertical (and unfolded) one, Jericho shoves it back into the corner and onto Punk.

Carlito and Jericho go up but Carlito spits apple in the face to break it up. Kennedy shoves Carlito off but gets hit in the ribs with a ladder by

Punk. Jericho hits a Codebreaker with a ladder onto Punk to put everyone not named Jericho down. Punk goes up to stop Jericho but gets hit in the face by the briefcase. Punk climbs up again and knocks Jericho into the Tree of Woe with a shot to the head, allowing Punk to climb up and win the briefcase.

Rating: B. Good MITB here but as usual the high amount of people hurt it. Nothing here really stood out other than the Walls and Matt's return, as you can only get so much out of the same spots we've seen before. It's certainly good but it's a step below some of the other stuff, and this would only get worse until we got some fresh blood in there. A power guy wouldn't hurt either.

Orton, HHH and Cena are ready.

We look at the Hall of Fame induction ceremony from last night. The big deal of this was having Rock back to induct Rocky Johnson and Peter Maivia, his father and grandfather. The headliner though was Ric Flair who of course had everyone in tears.

Fink comes out to do the live introductions of this year's class. They include the Brisco Brothers, Gordon Solie (represented by his kids), Johnson and Maivia, Eddie Graham, Mae Young (who tries to strip) and Flair (represented by his children, including Reid who died about three days before this was written).

Snoop Dog is here to emcee the Playboy match later and apparently has a friend in Festus. Heel Santino Marella comes up to say that he's going to be at the match later but Snoop rings the bell to send Festus into a rage. Mick Foley pops up for a cameo, complete with Snoop Sock.

Batista vs. Umaga

This is a Battle for Brand Supremacy with Batista on the blue team and Umaga on the red team. Seriously that's the whole story here. Regal and Teddy are here as GM's/motivators. Slugout to start followed by Umaga missing a charge into the corner. Batista sends him to the floor but once back inside Umaga takes Big Dave down with a spinwheel kick (decent one too). A big unbooted foot sends Batista to the floor and Umaga is in full

control.

Umaga gets nowhere off a quick nerve hold and gets even worse off a missed swan dive. Batista can't slam him down though and Umaga falls on top for two. A HARD kick to Batista's back sets up another nerve hold to keep things slow. Back up and Batista walks into a Samoan Drop for another near fall. They fight up again and Batista gets up a boot in the corner to slow Umaga down. After blocking the Samoan Spike, Batista hits a spinebuster and the "Batista Bomb" (read as Batista picks him up and falls backwards to send Umaga to the mat) for the pin.

Rating: D-. This was AWFUL with Batista doing nothing and being booed for most of his comeback. I can't say I blame the fans either as the match was just dull all around. How this makes Smackdown bigger than Raw is beyond me but that's what WWE says so who am I to argue? Match sucked.

We look at the tale of the tape for Big Show vs. Floyd Mayweather, the latter being about as tall as my grandmother.

We look at the battle royal from the preshow with Kane winning a shot at the ECW Title.

ECW Title: Kane vs. Chavo Guerrero

In less time than it takes to type "in less time than it takes to type", Kane chokeslams Chavo and pins him for the title. Match ran about 6 seconds.

Actress Raven Symone is here for some charity thing and SHOUTS ABOUT IT A LOT.

We recap Shawn vs. Flair. This was an odd build up as Vince said that the next match Flair lost would mean his retirement. This basically started Flair's retirement tour as he held onto the title in upset after upset until he was all of a sudden on a roll. This led to Flair challenging Mr. Wrestlemania Shawn Michaels to a showdown at Wrestlemania, because if Flair can't beat him he doesn't want to keep going.

Flair was inducted into the Hall of Fame and it was made as clear as possible that Flair was going down to Shawn in Orlando. This led to a

tear jerking video set to Leave the Memories Alone with a highlight reel of Flair's career. The idea is that Shawn doesn't want to do this but Flair wants Shawn to bring it.

Ric Flair vs. Shawn Michaels

Feeling out process to start with neither guy being able to get the advantage. A hip toss puts Shawn down and Ric shouts about being Old Yeller, which Shawn referenced to set this up. Shawn chops him hard and Flair's lip is bleeding. They slug it out in the corner with Shawn taking over and going up top, only to be slammed down. Now Flair goes up and hits a cross body for two. Jerry: "IT ACTUALLY WORKED!"

Ric goes after the knee but Shawn kicks him to the floor. Shawn loads up an Asai Moonsault and hits table, landing square on the edge ribs first. That looked HORRIBLE and Shawn is in big trouble. Back in and a belly to back suplex gets two for Flair. Naitch stays on the ribs and hits a good looking suplex for two. Shawn comes back with a backdrop to send Flair to the floor and follows up with a moonsault which mostly hits floor.

Both guys make it back inside at nine and they chop it out. The forearm and nippup connect and Shawn starts slugging away. A slam sets up Shawn's top rope elbow but it hurts his ribs in the process. Michaels tunes up the band but can't bring himself to do it, allowing Flair to grab the Figure Four which is quickly broken. They fight to the mat and try Flair's bridge up out of a pinfall into the backslide but Ric is just too old.

Instead it's a sunset flip for two for Shawn but Flair takes out the knee with a chop block. The Figure Four is countered into an inside cradle for two. NOW the Figure Four goes on in the middle of the ring but Shawn finally rolls it over into the ropes. Back up and Shawn hits the superkick out of nowhere but the cover only gets two. Shawn tunes up the band again but gets kicked low for two.

Michaels comes back with a reverse Figure Four but Flair manages to crawl to the ropes. A quick rollup with a handful of trunks gets two for Flair and he fires off chop after chop. Out of nowhere Shawn superkicks Flair down but Michaels can't cover. Flair slowly gets up and says bring it.

Shawn looks at him, says "I'm sorry. I love you." and superkicks Flair into retirement.

Rating: B. This is a hard one to grade. The match itself was entertaining, but it wasn't supposed to be a competitive spectacle. This was designed to give Flair a great match to go out on and they almost did that. They made no secret about who was winning and that's ok, but at the same time it was like delaying the inevitable. It was a good match to send him out on and the fans were happy to see the famous spots one more time.

Flair gets a well deserved standing ovation. This match should have closed the show and was going to, but Flair said no because the title match should close the show. Usually I would agree but in this case, Flair should have ended the show. Ric takes the long walk up the ramp to nonstop applause.

Edge talks about being a Hulkamaniac at Wrestlemania 6 and watching his hero losing. His innocence was lost that day but it's ok. His life has come full circle because people rely on Undertaker to win at Wrestlemania. Tonight he's taking everyone innocence by breaking the streak.

Maria/Ashley vs. Beth Phoenix/Melina

This is a Playboy lumberjill match with Snoop Dogg as master of ceremonies in a golf cart. Snoop of course comes out with all of the lumberjills because that's what Snoop would do. Ashley is her usual self and Maria looks great. Also, her theme song continues to be ridiculously catchy. Oh and Beth is Women's Champion and has Santino with her. Melina has uh...wings.

Ashley tries to fight Beth and is immediately thrown around. Maria tries a double hip toss with Ashley which goes as well as you would expect two talentless models to be able to do. Melina is thrown to the floor and beaten up by the good Divas and takes a bad Bronco Buster from Maria. Ashley gets a running start to climb to the middle ropes to punch Melina as this mess continues. Melina takes over and catapults Ashley into a bearhug by Beth.

Melina hits a moonsault off of Beth's shoulders for two before we get a stupid trip from Ashley. Off to Maria for some kicks as the lights go out. They finally get a spotlight on as this continues to fall apart. Maria tries to counter the Glam Slam into a bulldog but can't even do that right. Melina breaks up the pin and we get heel miscommunication. Maria hits a kind of top rope bulldog but Santino breaks up the pin. Lawler punches out Santino but Beth hits a fisherman's buster for the pin on Maria.

Rating: F+. That's ALL for Maria looking great. I forgot this match was a lumberjill match after about a minute and the rest of the girls couldn't even be seen after that long. Maria was TERRIBLE here and she was the better worker on her team. This didn't work at all and was the disaster to end all disasters for Divas matches.

Post match Snoop lays out Santino with a clothesline and makes out with Maria. I'll give him this: he seemed to be having a blast out there.

We recap Orton vs. HHH vs. Cena. Orton won the title by forfeit at No Mercy and Cena is back from injury to reclaim the title that he never lost. HHH won the Elimination Chamber to get a shot as well.

Raw World Title: Randy Orton vs. HHH vs. John Cena

Cena has a drumline playing him to the ring which is pretty awesome. After some big match intros we're ready to go. Orton immediately blasts HHH with the belt but Cena takes the champion down with a bulldog before Orton can do any more damage. HHH pops back up and throws both guys to the floor before sending Orton into the announce table. Orton and HHH head back in with the champion being put in a sleeper. Cena comes back in and picks them BOTH up at the same time for an FU but both guys slip off the back. Orton's backbreaker puts HHH down as does a shot to Cena to give the champion control again.

Randy takes turns pounding away on both guys, getting two off a knee drop to the Game. Orton starts getting uncharacteristic for himself by going up top, only to be stopped by Cena. John loads up a superplex but HHH pulls Cena onto his own shoulders so Orton can hit a top rope cross body for two. Cena stands up to try the FU on Orton but Randy slides into a

cradle for two. HHH clotheslines Cena down but Orton clotheslines HHH to put HHH down.

It's Orton standing tall again as he sends both guys to the apron for a double Elevated DDT which gets two on both challengers. An RKO to Cena is countered but he shoves Orton into HHH to put both guys down. Cena hits the Throwback (a flipping face first mat slam) and the top rope Fameasser to keep Randy down. He isn't down enough for the STFU though and the champion rolls to the floor. Cena follows him and is sent into the post to slow things down again.

Orton and HHH fight it out in the ring with HHH taking out the champion's knee. Cena comes back in to distract HHH but after the Game puts him down, Orton catches him with an RKO to put him right next to Cena. Orton kicks HHH to the floor but walks into the STFU in the middle of the ring. HHH makes a save at the last second and sends Cena into the floor to put him down on the floor.

Back in and HHH puts on an Indian Deathlock to follow up on the knee work he started earlier. Now it's Cena back in to break up the hold and send HHH into the corner and out to the floor. Back to the STFU but HHH comes in for the save. The problem is that the save didn't work, so HHH puts Cena in a Crossface while Cena has Orton in the STFU. Cena lets go of his hold but manages to crawl over to the ropes to break up the hold.

Orton rolls to the floor so HHH and Cena can slug it out in the middle of the ring. The fans boo Cena's punches and cheer HHH's, continuing a trend for whomever Cena is facing. Cena slams HHH down and hits the Shuffle but Cena's FU is countered into a Pedigree attempt which is countered into an STFU attempt this HHH escapes. The spinebuster puts John down and there's the Pedigree, but Orton comes back in with the Punt to HHH to knock him silly and Orton pins Cena to retain.

Rating: B. This was a fast paced match with all three guys working hard out there in front of a huge crowd. The back and forth stuff worked very well and it wasn't clear who was going to win until the match was over. Orton getting beaten up and winning while stealing HHH's pin is perfect for him, as well as giving him the big win on the big stage that he

needed.

We recap Big Show vs. Floyd Mayweather which is the big celebrity match of the night. Big Show was a bully to the much smaller Mayweather at No Way Out where Floyd legitimately broke Show's nose with a right hand, setting up tonight's No DQ match. The big question was who do we cheer for in this match? The bully or the guy who keeps running his mouth and brags about how no one can beat him? That question was never answered even after the match was over. Mayweather allegedly got \$20 million for this one match. He's a world champion boxer if you're not a fan of his.

Floyd Mayweather Jr. vs. Big Show

You can by pin, submission or knockout. Other than that anything goes. Floyd is in gloves which would seem to be a disadvantage for him but whatever. He bobs and weaves a lot before firing off some nice punches to Big Show. Mayweather stops for a drink from a chalice (seriously) and Show beats up Mayweather's team a bit. Show grabs an incoming punch and tries to stomp on Floyd's hand. Smart strategy.

Show lifts him up for a chokeslam but that lets Floyd get on even level with Show's head. Some rights to the face stagger show but Mayweather tries to choke him out, which actually works for a bit. Show finally flips him over and steps on Floyd's left hand. The guys on the floor FREAK and say that's not allowed before Show chops Mayweather in the corner. Show stands on Floyd's back before putting him down with a side slam.

A headbutt stops Floyd's comeback bid and there's an elbow drop for good measure. Mayweather tries to bail but Big Show chases the team down, beats them up, and throws Floyd back in the ring. Show loads up the chokeslam but a handler hits Show with a chair. He gets chokeslammed down but Mayweather gets the chair and blasts Show with it a few times. A low blow and three chair shots to the head sets up a brass knuckle right hand to Show's jaw for the knockout (and Show was on his knees at 9).

Rating: C+. This is one of those matches where all you can say is "well what else were you expecting?" Again though, who was I supposed to cheer for? The giant bully, or the loud bragging guy who used chairs and brass

knuckles to win? Like I said, the story was head scratch inducing, but this was tremendous fun.

Wrestlemania is coming back to Houston next year.

Kim Kardashian announces the new attendance record: 74,635.

We get a video on the Streak which is interrupted by Edge's theme music. Edge already beat Undertaker once by cashing in MITB last year and then costing him the title at Survivor Series. They're trying to play up Streak vs. streak here but Edge lost in MITB last year.

Smackdown World Title: Undertaker vs. Edge

Edge has Teddy wheel out Vickie who is in a wheelchair as always. The Canadian is defending here. The champ pounds away to start but gets clotheslined out to the floor. Back in and Taker comes back with a Stunner onto the top rope to put Edge down. Taker slugs away but charges into a boot in the corner, only to come back with the jumping clothesline for two. Old School is countered but Taker rolls forward and armdrags Edge down.

Edge sends Taker over the corner by avoiding a big boot, possibly injuring Taker's arm in the process. A spear sends Taker off the apron and into the barricade to work over the ribs a bit. Edge hits a hard baseball slide to send Taker back into the barricade as the match slows down a bit. With Undertaker on the apron, Edge hits a running neckbreaker to snap Undertaker's neck across the top rope.

Back in and Edge pounds away even more before hitting a spear into the corner for no cover. Instead it's a dropkick to put Taker down again and Edge goes up, only to be shoved down to the floor with a sick thud. There's the Taker Dive to continue the Wrestlemania tradition. Taker drops the apron legdrop and heads back inside for the Last Ride but his back won't let him use it.

They head outside again and Edge drops Taker back first onto the barricade, sending the big man into the crowd. Off to a half crab by Edge followed by a very modified Indian Deathlock which Undertaker kicks away.

Back up and they slug it out with Taker getting control and the cheers from Undertaker. The challenger gets the better of it and hits a running clothesline in the corner. Make it a pair of them followed by snake eyes but the big boot is blocked for two by Edge.

The chokeslam is countered into the Impaler DDT for two. The second chokeslam attempt works but it only gets a near fall as well. Old School is broken up again and Edge pounds away in the corner but has to counter the Last Ride out of the corner with a neckbreaker for two. These counters are getting awesome. The Last Ride (more of a regular powerbomb here) hits but it only gets two. Edge counters the Tombstone into the Edge-0-Matic for ANOTHER close two. The fans aren't buying Edge's near falls.

Back up and Taker's big boot hits the referee before Edge takes down the Dead Man. A low blow breaks up a chokeslam bid and Edge blasts Taker in the head with a camera. Taker sits up and like a dolt, Edge tries a Tombstone. Taker reverses into one of his own and here's another referee running a LONG way down the aisle to count two. Cue Hawkins and Ryder (as in Curt and Zack, the Edgeheads) to distract Taker and let Edge hit the spear for two. NOW the fans are fired up about the kickout. Another spear connects but Taker grabs the Hell's Gate submission out of nowhere and Edge taps away the title to make it 15-0.

Rating: A. I kept hearing about how great this match was and while I remember it being good, I don't remember it being this good. It's pretty safe to say that this is Edge's best non-gimmick match ever and it's one of his best ever period. Great match here and it would set up a series of solid gimmick matches between the two over the summer.

A lot of fireworks end the show.

Overall Rating: A-. There's some very good stuff on here along with some historic stuff to go with it. The bad stuff is mostly short and the main event was very solid and better than I remember. I don't know if I'd say it's one of the best ever but it's in the running for that list. Really fun show here which was better than I was expecting it to be.

Ratings Comparison

John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Finlay

Original: C+

Redo: C+

Shelton Benjamin vs. CM Punk vs. Carlito vs. Chris Jericho vs. MVP vs.
Mr. Kennedy vs. John Morrison

Original: B

Redo: B

Batista vs. Umaga

Original: F+

Redo: D-

Kane vs. Chavo Guerrero

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Ric Flair vs. Shawn Michaels

Original: A

Redo: B

Beth Phoenix/Melina vs. Maria/Ashley

Original: F

Redo: F+

John Cena vs. HHH vs. Randy Orton

Original: C+

Redo: B

Floyd Mayweather vs. Big Show

Original: D-

Redo: C+

Edge vs. Undertaker

Original: A-

Redo: A

Overall Rating

Original: C-

Redo: A-

WOW I totally shortchanged this last time. It's a great show and I said a C-? What was I on?

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/03/31/583/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of the Intercontinental Title at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01D4D3EG0>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

<http://www.amazon.com/Thomas-Hall/e/B00E6282W6>

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XXIII: Now That's More Like It Dead Man

Wrestlemania XXIII

Date: April 1, 2007

Location: Ford Field, Detroit, Michigan

Attendance: 80,103

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Tazz, John Bradshaw Layfield, Joey Styles

To say this show was a success is an understatement. Until Rock vs. Cena, this show drew more PPV buys than any show in the history of the company, which says a lot when you consider what came before it. The main event here is Bobby Lashley vs. Umaga, which is the Battle of the Billionaires, as Donald Trump and Vince are backing the two respectively. The losing billionaire gets his head shaved. There's also Cena vs. Shawn in what should be awesome. Let's get to it.

The opening video is a montage of Wrestlemania logos which turns into your usual highlight reel.

We get a clip of the opening of Wrestlemania III before transitioning to Ford Field in the same city. Aretha Franklin is here again twenty years later to sing America the Beautiful again. That's a very nice touch, as are the clips from Tribute to the Troops.

Now we get the video for this year's show, which is the All Grown Up theme. It's a bunch of kids dressed like the stars who then turn into their adult selves.

Mr. Kennedy vs. CM Punk vs. Randy Orton vs. Finlay vs. Matt Hardy vs. King Booker vs. Jeff Hardy vs. Edge

With this match, we start the tradition of having too many people in a single MITB match and overcrowding the thing. Everyone looks up at the

case until Kennedy goes to get a ladder. Orton heads to the floor to stop him as the big brawl begins. Finlay DIVES on everyone not named Edge, allowing the Canadian to make a climb, only to be stopped by Matt. They head to the floor, allowing Orton and Finlay to head up top for a brawl on the ladder.

They topple to the floor so it's Jeff going up, only to be shoved down by Kennedy. Booker goes to pull out a ladder but it's Horny's, meaning it's only about two feet tall. Punk takes it away and pounds on people with it, only to have Edge take over again. This is one of those matches that moves too fast to really keep track of things. Punk is bleeding from the forehead as Edge bridges a ladder between the ring and barricade.

Back inside and Booker takes over with kicks and spinebusters for everyone in sight. Before climbing though, here's a Spinarooni. The distraction lets the Hardys crush Booker with some ladders before Matt and Edge go at it a bit. The Hardys set up a ladder seesaw but Jeff is sent off the top to break up whatever they were going to do to Edge. Instead Edge suplexes Matt onto the ladder, only to be sent to the floor by Kennedy.

Kennedy pounds away on Matt but the Kenton Bomb only hits ladder. Instead it's Jeff with a Swanton to Mr. before the brothers team up to drop everyone in sight with the ladder. Both Hardys go up and start slugging it out on top of the ladder, only to be shoved into the top rope by Finlay. Edge hits the spear on Finlay and one for Orton and Booker as well. Kennedy and Matt take spears too and there's one for Jeff to nearly complete the set. Punk jumps over Edge to send him into the corner and become the only man standing.

Punk puts the ladder around his head and spins around a bit to take everyone out until Edge thinks wisely and DUCKS, allowing him to take out Punk's vulnerable ribs. Edge gets the big ladder and makes a climb, only to gets caught by Orton and shoved down to the floor. Jeff saves that though and climbs up on his own as Matt puts Edge on the ladder between the ring and the barricade. Jeff dives off the ladder THROUGH EDGE AND THROUGH THE LADDER! Needless to say, Edge and Jeff are DONE.

We're down to six people in the match now and it's Orton's turn to take over with RKOs all around. He picks up a regular sized ladder but Punk knocks him down and sets up a second ladder in the middle of the ring. Apparently Jeff is still on the floor despite Edge being taken out. Orton and Punk both climb up and it's an RKO off the top of the ladder to end Punk. Booker goes up but has to stop an RKO attempt with a Bookend off the ladder.

It's Matt vs. Booker on the ladder but Matt drops down and threatens to give Sharmell the Twist of Fate, drawing Booker down. There's the Twist to the King but Finlay (sporting a NASTY cut on the back of his head) shoves the ladder over. The Celtic Cross (White Noise) crushes Matt against the ladder but hurts Finlay's back in the process. Finlay is barely able to stand so here's Horny to climb for him.

Instead though Kennedy pops up the ladder...and gets smacked in the face by Horny. There's a fireman's carry roll off the ladder for the little guy's efforts. Finlay destroys Kennedy with the ladder but gets knocked off the ladder by Matt. Now it's Punk going up but Kennedy meets him on the ladder for a slugout. Punk shoves him off but Kennedy spears him in the ribs with another ladder, allowing Kennedy to climb up and win the case.

Rating: B. This was definitely the weakest of the matches so far as there were too many people in there and no one to have the big spots like Shelton. It's definitely good but this one lacked the pop that most of these matches had over the years. Kennedy would lose the case to Edge a few weeks later.

Video on the premiere of The Condemned so we can clear the ring out.

Kennedy warns every champion that he's coming for them and says he's Mr. Money in the Bank. Bank.

Batista is All Grown Up.

Great Khali vs. Kane

This is when Khali is still a decent monster who could move a little bit.

Kane is easily shoved down to start and then shoved to the floor for good measure. Back in and Kane slugs Khali, only to be chopped right back down. Off to the nerve hold before Khali slugs away in the corner. Kane comes back with punches of his own but is easily shoved down and across the ring.

Kane fires back with a right hand and tries the top rope clothesline but it only staggers Khali. Another shot sends Khali into the ropes and Kane has his opening. Kane heads to the floor and grabs a chain with a hook on the end which he used in the horror movie he was in around this time. Khali knocks him back and rips off the turnbuckle pad to distract the referee, allowing Kane to kick him low. In one of the big spots of the show, Kane slams Khali ala Hogan slamming Andre twenty years ago. That only gets two so they both grab chokeslams, but it's Khali hitting the Punjabi Plunge for the one footed pin.

Rating: D-. The slam was cool and the rest was completely horrible. Khali was nothing good and somehow he would get even worse. Kane was in that weird period for him where he was just kind of there and doing nothing of note. By period, I mean about a five year stretch of course. Terrible match but the slam was good.

Post match Khali chokes him out with the chain and no one makes the save.

The Divas say they're All Grown Up. The idea of taking them seriously is amusing.

Cryme Tyme tries to cheer up a now bald Eugene with an Extreme Expose dance party. That would be Kelly, Layla and Brooke (now Tessmacher) as a dance troupe. Instead Moolah and Mae Young show up and Eugene wants to dance with them. Cue REVEREND SLICK of all people to show us how it's done. This brings in Dusty Rhodes who says you can't have a dance party without him. The music comes back on and here are Sgt. Slaughter, Jimmy Hart and IRS to join in. Ricky Steamboat in full karate attire shows up until we get the Ron Simmons payoff.

Some Detroit Tigers are here.

US Title: MVP vs. Chris Benoit

Benoit is defending and MVP is pretty new here. They head to the mat to start with MVP actually in control. Off to a headlock by the challenger but he has to shove Benoit to the floor to avoid the Crossface. Back in and Benoit can't hook the Crossface as MVP keeps it on the mat with the headlocks. Back up and MVP pounds Benoit into the corner but charges into an elbow. A superplex attempt is blocked and Benoit's arm is draped across the top rope to shift momentum again.

Back in and MVP works over the bad arm with some driving shoulder blocks. He misses a spinning kick though and Benoit busts out the Rolling Germans. The Swan Dive is broken up though and MVP goes back to the arm by sending it into the post. Off to an armbar again, followed by a running clothesline for two. Out of nowhere Benoit reverses a slam into a Crossface attempt but the arm is too weak to hook the hold. This time the slam works and there's the Ballin elbow for two. MVP misses a charge into the corner and it's time to roll some Germans. After four of those, Benoit hits the Swan Dive to retain.

Rating: C. Yeah that's it. The match really never got off the ground and could have used another four minutes or so. As always the scariest part is thinking that Benoit only had about two months left so he likely wasn't sane during this match. The match itself wasn't bad but as mentioned it never got off the ground. MVP would win the title at Backlash and hold it for almost a year.

Video on Undertaker who is All Grown Up...I think.

Donald Trump is in his dressing room and complaining about the lack of food and drinks backstage. Boogeyman comes in for no apparent reason and Trump doesn't seem impressed. Trump asks him for a sandwich. This uh...happened. Yeah we'll go with that.

Hall of Fame time. Mr. Perfect was one of the headliners here and gets a pretty touching tribute. William Shatner inducted Lawler, which is kind of annoying as Lawler had wanted Lance Russell (announcer of Memphis Wrestling for like forty years) to do it but WWE said no and picked Shatner because of a forgotten segment on Raw back in like 1995. The other headliner was Dusty Rhodes who asked to be made an honorary

Horseman. That's just wrong. No presentation to the crowd here which is weird.

The attendance is over 80,000, which is of course a new record.

Here's the Fink because what would Wrestlemania be without him? Oh ok he's doing the Hall of Fame live presentation to the crowd. JR gets easily the biggest pop of the entire class.

82% of the fans think Undertaker will win the title.

We recap Undertaker vs. Batista but there isn't much to say. Taker won the Rumble and picked Batista for an awesome power match. They had to team up at No Way Out and Batista turned on him to give us a one night only heel, even though that's not really too far out of Batista's normal behavior.

Smackdown World Title: Batista vs. Undertaker

Teddy Long does the intros here for some reason. We lso get the druids and the torches, which look AWESOME in the huge stadiums like this. The bell rings and Batista spears Taker down before pounding away in the corner. Undertaker fires off right hands of his own but Batista throws him right back into the corner. The fans are totally behind Undertaker here. They head to the floor with Undertaker being sent knees first into the steps as is his custom.

Back in and Batista hits a top rope shoulder for two. If you're listening to Cole, you would think he had hit a 450. A big clothesline puts Taker down for two but Undertaker comes back with right hands and a running charge in the corner. The Snake Eyes and big boot combo puts Batista down and a legdrop gets two. Old School connects but Big Dave powers out of the chokeslam to huge booing.

The jumping clothesline puts Batista down again but only for two. Taker puts him on the apron for the elbow and legdrops before busting out the Taker Dive as is his custom at Wrestlemania. Taker pounds away even more but Batista counters to throw him through part of the barricade to take over. With Undertaker dazed, Batista loads up a powerslam from one

announce table through the other, which actually isn't countered.

Back in and that only gets two so the champion pounds away more for good measure. Batista loads up the Bomb but Taker plows him into the corner to counter. Dave comes right back with a belly to belly suplex for two. He pounds on Taker in the corner like a schmuck and of course there's the Last Ride for two. Taker has a breather but walks right into the spinebuster.

Batista doesn't cover though and gets caught in a chokeslam for a VERY close two. The Tombstone is countered and Batista hits the spear and Batista Bomb for an even closer two, shocking the champion. Batista loads up another Bomb but Taker backdrops out of it and avoids a spear, setting up the Tombstone for the title.

Rating: A. The idea is that these two were annoyed and decided to have an awesome match to show everyone up. These two would go on to have more great matches on shows where Batista actually had a chance to win. This was the feud of the year and it's hard to argue as they could both work the power game like few others.

Lashley is All Grown Up.

Vince is in the back looking in a mirror when Stephanie comes in with a stroller. Vince goes off on Stephanie before playing with his granddaughter. Naturally there's a camera from inside the stroller looking up at Vince. He promises to fracture Trump's skull.

Joey tries to talk about the ECW Originals vs. the New Breed but we need to get this along.

New Breed vs. ECW Originals

It's Elijah Burke/Matt Striker/Kevin Thron/Marcus Cor Van vs. Rob Van Dam/Tommy Dreamer/Sabu and for no reason whatsoever this is a regular eight man tag instead of the Extreme Rules match we would get on ECW a few days later. Striker starts with Sabu and Matt is in early trouble. It's quickly off to Sandman vs. Burke but before Sandy does much he brings in Dreamer. Cor Von hits Dreamer in the back and comes in to pound

away a bit.

It's quickly back to Burke (the New Breed's leader and more famous as D'Angelo Dinero) for the running knees to the back for two. Thorn comes in to crush Dreamer into the corner and put on a chinlock. Back up and a sitout powerbomb gets two for Thorn and here's Cor Von again. Burke comes in as well but Dreamer takes them down with a simultaneous neckbreaker/reverse DDT combo. The hot tag brings in Van Dam and there's the top rope kick to Thorn. Rolling Thunder lands on Striker as everything breaks down. With everyone else on the floor, Van Dam Five Stars Striker for the pin.

Rating: D+. Seriously, why wasn't this the Extreme Rules match? The whole point of ECW is to be extreme but we got a seven minute tag match which went nowhere at all. The theory was to finally let these guys get on Wrestlemania, but Van Dam had been on it before and won a title here. Nothing to see here at all.

Austin is All Grown Up.

Wrestlemania 24 is in Orlando.

We recap the real main event for tonight's show and the reason why this show was the highest drawing show ever for the next five years. Vince and Donald Trump both agreed to back a guy into a match and the losing billionaire would get their head shaved. This was when Trump was still a big deal and EVERYONE was backing Umaga because they wanted to see Trump bald. Oh except for Rock who actually cut a promo about wanting to see Vince bald.

Trump picked the ECW World Champion Bobby Lashley. Steve Austin was brought in to referee because this is Wrestlemania. The best part of the build was Lashley in a cage with Umaga on the floor. To escape, Lashley shoulder blocked the cage wall, knocking it down to the floor and nearly crushing Umaga in the process.

Bobby Lashley vs. Umaga

The barber's chair gets its own entrance complete with some snappy music.

Oh and Umaga is IC Champion. Trump coming out to a song with the only word being MONEY is perfect. Real money rains down from the ceiling, including \$100 bills. To be fair this show brought in like 50 million dollars in PPV alone so they can afford a bit. They collide to start and slug it out with Lashley pounding him into the corner. Austin pulls Lashley off of Umaga since they're in the ropes and Umaga gets in some shots of his own. Lashley goes up to the middle rope for a shoulder for two.

Umaga's manager Armando Estrada is dragged in by Lashley and powerslammed down with ease. Lashley throws him out to the floor and low bridges Umaga to send him to the floor as well. Back in and Lashley misses a spear, sending him out to the floor this time. We head inside again and Umaga chokes away, only to be pulled off at four and a half by Austin. Austin has to do it again, this time by the hair for good measure.

A BIG clothesline puts Lashley down again and Umaga cannonballs down onto his chest for good measure. The Samoan drop puts Lashley down again as does a failed slam attempt. Vince gets up on the apron and gets dropped down by an elbow from Lashley, only to walk into a shot from Umaga to take over again. Umaga goes up and gets slammed down before being clotheslined down. Both guys down and Austin gets to nine before stopping so it doesn't end in a draw.

Shane McMahon comes out to check on Vince as Umaga hits an uppercut to drop Lashley again. Austin has to pull Umaga out of the corner, earning him a Samoan Spike. Shane comes in and pounds away on Lashley until Umaga is back into things. The running hip attack crushes Bobby's face and Vince throws in some trashcans. Shane hits the Coast to Coast to drive the can into Lashley's face. A top rope splash from Umaga crushes Lashley and Shane has a referee's shirt on now.

Austin breaks up the pin and beats up Shane for good measure, only to walk into another Samoan Spike. Trump isn't sure what to do and shows off those great acting skills of his. Vince comes over to taunt him and TRUMP CLOTHESLINES VINCE! Umaga tries another Spike on Austin but gets countered into the Stunner. The spear from Lashley connects and it's time for Vince to be bald.

Rating: D. This match sucked for the most part until Austin got going. The problem at the end of the day was no one on the planet with any idea what was going on here thought Vince was going to win. It also didn't help that no one cared about Lashley because no one had ever given us a reason to. He was just kind of there for the most part and there was nothing more to him than he used to be a college wrestler and he's muscular. Seriously, that's Lashley's story almost in full.

Post match they take FOREVER to Stun Vince and cut his hair. Austin Stuns him because that's what Austin does to Vince. To their credit though, they SHAVE his head, not just trim it. Vince's face during this whole thing is great as he goes from shock to the patented Vince rage in a few seconds. This led to three months of Vince/Shane/Umaga vs. Lashley which didn't work for the most part. Austin, Lashley and Trump share beers and Trump gets Stunned. I'll give the guy this: he has a soft spot for wrestling. He hosted two Wrestlemanias, was in the crowd for two more and did this.

John Cena is All Grown Up.

For no apparent reason other than we have nothing else to talk about, we look at the dark match with Flair/Carlito vs. Gregory Helms/Chavo Guerrero in a lumberjack match.

Womens Title: Melina vs. Ashley

It's a lumberjill match and all of the other Divas are introduced. Melina is defending here because thank goodness Ashley never got the title. Ashley, who isn't a wrestler, takes Melina down and pounds away. The crowd is audibly quiet for this match and can you blame them? Ashley pounds away in the corner and does some bad choking but Melina comes back by SCREAMING. Off to a bow and arrow for a bit as I have no interest in watching this match at all. Ashley misses an elbow and thankfully Melina reverses a rollup into one of her own to retain.

Rating: M. As in Mickie James, who was on the floor during this match instead of in the ring. Point blank, Ashley cannot wrestle. She was decent looking, but other than that she had nothing going for her at all. This was a popcorn break match and thankfully it was barely three minutes

long as I couldn't sit through much longer.

Shawn Michaels is All Grown Up.

We recap Michaels vs. Cena. Shawn won a triple threat to set this up and then won the tag titles with Cena. The idea is Shawn has turned on every one of his partners in his career and he'll do it again here. No music video here for some reason.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. Shawn Michaels

Remember that they're tag champions here but neither guy wears the belt. I can't say I blame them of course. Cena's special entrance this year is driving a muscle car from "the parking lot" into the arena due to being in Detroit. They circle each other to start before Shawn slaps him in the face. A quick headlock doesn't do much for Shawn so he uses his speed advantage to pop John with some right hands. Back to the headlock and it works a bit better this time as Shawn takes Cena down to the mat.

Cena has had enough of this defense thing and rings Shawn's bell with a clothesline. Shawn is sent to the apron but he tosses Cena from the ring and out to the floor. A BIG chop staggers Cena but Shawn's Asai Moonsault hits mostly table and Shawn is hurt. Luckily for him though Cena is even more hurt as they head back inside. Shawn chops away in the corner before going after Cena's knee. The leg is wrapped around the post and Cena is in trouble. The referee asks Cena if he can continue and of course Cena says yes.

Shawn keeps kicking at the leg before wrapping it around the ring rope. With Cena down in the corner, Shawn stares straight at him to play even more mind games. Back up and John hits a big right hand to send Shawn flying across the ring. Shawn charges straight back at him with a shoulder into the ribs in the corner to keep control. Michaels charges again but Cena's leg gives out and Shawn goes head first into the post, busting him open.

Cena has had enough of getting beaten up so he punches Shawn down before firing off some mounted right hands. The ProtoBomb and Shuffle hit but Shawn punches his way out of the FU. Cena is sent into the corner but

manages to duck Sweet Chin Music. The referee isn't so lucky though and is knocked senseless. Cena tries the FU but is countered into a DDT to put both guys down.

With no referee in sight, Shawn rolls to the floor and hits a sick piledriver onto the steps. The THUD when Cena's head hit was a little scary. The back of Cena's head is cut open BAD on top of that. Back in and here's a second referee but the count only gets two. There are the forearm and nip-up as the blood flows down Shawn's face. The top rope elbow connects but Cena blocks Chin Music with a big clothesline to put both guys down again.

They slug it out in the middle of the ring but the FU is countered again into a sunset flip for two. Shawn's leap frog is caught in the FU but Cena is too banged up to cover. The very delayed cover gets two and the champ is getting frustrated. With nothing else to do he tries an FU off the top, only to be shoved off by Shawn. Michaels dives at Cena but gets caught in the FU position. He counters that as well though by landing on his feet, only to miss the superkick and have Cena try for the STFU. Cena keeps trying for it but gets small packaged down for two instead.

Shawn misses an enziguri attempt and now the STFU is on. Cena cranks back on it but Shawn is only a few inches away from the rope. As Shawn starts to black out he grabs the rope and Cena has to break. He takes a bit too long though and gets in an argument with the referee, allowing Shawn to kick Cena's head off. Another delayed cover gets two and both guys are down. In a cool spot, both guys have to lean on the other to get up. The FU is countered again but Shawn can't avoid the STFU again. Cena cranks back on it and Shawn has no choice but to tap out.

Rating: A-. This was a much better match than the HHH match from the year before for a few reasons. First of all, there was a story behind the match. As simple as it was, Shawn being Cena's partner gave them a bond and seeing them fight was something interesting to see. Second, the drama was better here. Cena felt like he was in real trouble and that the title was in danger, which I never felt last year. It's a better match overall and they would have even better ones in the future.

A highlight package ends the show.

Overall Rating: B+. This is a show where the stuff that is bad is really bad but the stuff that is good is REALLY good. There are only eight matches on the card and three of them are very good to great. The best part about that though is the bad matches (other than one) were all short and pretty easy to get through. The show is completely forgettable other than Trump vs. Vince and maybe Undertaker vs. Batista, but it's worth seeing. I would however recommend fast forwarding through some of the weaker parts.

Ratings Comparison

CM Punk vs. Mr. Kennedy vs. Finlay vs. Randy Orton vs. King Booker vs. Jeff Hardy vs. Booker T vs. Edge

Original: B+

Redo: B

Great Khali vs. Kane

Original: D

Redo: D-

Chris Benoit vs. MVP

Original: B

Redo: C

Undertaker vs. Batista

Original: B+

Redo: A

ECW Originals vs. New Breed

Original: D+

Redo: D

Bobby Lashley vs. Umaga

Original: C-

Redo: D

Melina vs. Ashley

Original: F

Redo: M (for Mickie James)

John Cena vs. Shawn Michaels

Original: A

Redo: A-

Overall Rating

Original: B

Redo: B+

Almost everything goes down and the rating goes up. I'm a complex guy sometimes.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/03/30/history-of-wrestlemania-with-kb-wrestlemania-23-over-80000-people/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of the Intercontinental Title at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

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Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XXII: The New Dark Days

Wrestlemania XXII

Date: April 2, 2006

Location: Allstate Arena, Chicago, Illinois

Attendance: 17,159

Commentators: Michael Cole, Tazz, Jerry Lawler, Jim Ross

We head to the midwest here for a pretty forgotten show. The main events here are Cena defending against HHH and Angle defending against Guerrero and Orton. No that isn't a typo. The triple threat has nothing to do with Rey Mysterio but rather is there to milk every dime possible out of Eddie's corpse. Seriously, that's it. Other than that we have Shawn vs. Vince and Edge vs. Foley in a match that allegedly made Edge a bigger deal. Let's get to it.

Michelle Williams of Destiny's Child sings America the Beautiful.

The opening video is a Wrestlemania montage set to I Dare You by Shinedown. Awesome song and an awesome video.

We also get the usual kind of opening video with hype for the major matches.

Raw Tag Titles: Carlito/Chris Masters vs. Big Show/Kane

The monsters are defending here. Kane and Masters start stuff out and the 6'5 Masters looks tiny by comparison. Show headbutts him from the apron before coming in legally for some chops. A poke to Big Show's eye slows him down and here's Carlito who is immediately chopped down. Masters is slammed down as well with Show throwing Carlito over the top and out onto Chris.

Kane goes up top and dives onto both guys as the challengers are in trouble. Somewhere in between there the turnbuckle pad has been removed and Show misses a charge, going head first into said buckle. It doesn't seem to have much effect though as Show suplexes both guys down with ease. Off to Kane as everything breaks down. Kane pounds away on Carlito in the corner and hits the side slam for no cover.

The top rope clothesline misses Masters though and there's the Masterlock to Kane. Show breaks it up seconds later but there's the Backstabber to Kane. The chokeslam is broken up by Masters and Show is sent to the floor. Kane's double chokeslam attempt is broken up but after causing some heel miscommunication, a solo version to Carlito retains the titles.

Rating: C. Not bad here but this is one of the matches that probably could have been cut for the sake of trimming the show a bit. The match was a squash and not a very interesting one either. That's the problem with a pair of giants like Big Show and Kane: there's no one that can stop them and the resulting matches are dull at times. Not bad but it felt like a Raw match.

The losers argue post match.

Shawn says that when he told Vince to grow up, he was telling the truth. It's pretty funny that a year ago Shawn and Angle stole the show and a year before that he stole the show with Benoit and HHH. This year though it's going to be about violence, not the five star classic. Shawn tells Vince to pray tonight because he'll be enduring quite a bit.

Shelton Benjamin vs. Finlay vs. Ric Flair vs. Rob Van Dam vs. Matt Hardy vs. Bobby Lashley

Money in the Bank here. Shelton is Intercontinental Champion and Matt is

arguably the favorite. It's a big brawl to start with Lashley cleaning house. The crowd favors RVD. Benjamin hits a BIG kick to Lashley's head to put him down as Matt tries to bring in the first ladder. Instead it's Van Dam with a baseball slide to take Matt down, followed by a big flip dive to put him down again. Shelton brings in a ladder of his own and after laying out Finlay with it, he sets the ladder up as a ramp for a springboard flip dive to take out everyone under the age of 40.

Finlay sets up a ladder but here's Flair for the save. Naitch tries to climb but Matt superplexes him off the ladder which is good enough to hurt Flair's back and knock him out of the match. As Flair is taken out, Van Dam lays out Shelton on the ladder but misses Rolling Thunder, hitting only the ladder. Lashley goes for a climb but Benjamin goes up to stop him. Shelton tries a sunset bomb over the top of the ladder but it takes Matt and Finlay helping to complete the move.

Matt gets a running start at Finlay but has a ladder pelted at him to put Hardy right back down. Finlay sets up the ladder but here's Flair hobbling down the aisle. Instead of climbing up the ladder though, Finlay goes into the aisle and gets chopped back down. Ric fights off Shelton and Hardy and goes up, getting his hand on the case. Finlay goes up the ladder though and blasts him with the club to put him back down.

Shelton and Finlay fight on top of the ladder but here's Lashley with another ladder to knock the ladder with two people on it down to the mat. Now Lashley goes up but Van Dam comes off the top rope and dropkicks a chair into Lashley's back to break up the climb. Matt, ever the bright guy, goes up top on the ladder but drops a leg instead of going for the case. Matt goes up and gets his hand on the ladder, only to have Finlay make a save. Hardy takes Finlay down with a Side Effect off the ladder to put everyone down.

Van Dam, also not the brightest guy in the world, comes off the ladder with a splash on Finlay, leaving everyone down again. In the spot of the match, Van Dam goes for a climb but Shelton springboards off the top rope and lands on the ladder to punch Rob down. That looked AWESOME but he has to stop Matt instead of getting the briefcase. Matt and Shelton's ladder fall down though and it's Van Dam pulling down the case to win the match

and the title shot.

Rating: B. Shelton's spot was INSANE but this match was a bit too short. Also the match wasn't as big with the spots as it was last year but the spots that were big certainly did look good. It's not quite as good as last year, but it still lived up to the hype. A better roster would have helped this one too, as Finlay didn't fit in a match like this and Flair didn't exactly either.

Randy Orton interrupts Gene Okerlund and insults the idea of Okerlund being inducted into the Hall of Fame. Gene isn't impressed and says he'll be in the Hall of Fame one day because of nights like tonight. Batista, still injured at this point, comes up and says he's coming for the winner of the triple threat tonight. Batista vs. Orton was the match that never got to have on the big stage they wanted to.

Here's the Hal of Fame (minus Bret because pigs haven't grown wings yet): Okerlund, Sherri Martel, Tony Atlas, Verne Gagne, William Perry (in barely fitting street clothes), The Blackjacks (with a drool inducing Maria) and the co-headliner, Eddie Guerrero (biggest ovation and accepted by Vickie).

US Title: Chris Benoit vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

JBL is challenging and takes over with a quick headlock. Benoit comes back with a drop toehold but can't get the Crossface this early. Back to the headlock by JBL but Benoit gets his back and pounds on the challenger's neck. The Sharpshooter is broken up very quickly and Jibbles heads to the floor. Back in and Benoit avoids a charge in the corner and lays out Bradshaw with the Rolling Germans. The champion loads up the Swan Dive but JBL crotches him to escape.

JBL cranks up the heel by doing Eddie's chest slap. A superplex puts Benoit down but only gets a very delayed two. There's the Eddie dance and JBL hits Three Amigos to HUGE heat. Benoit knees his way out of the third Amigo and pounds away, only to get kicked in the face for two. Off to a lame chinlock (his hands aren't even locked) by JBL but Benoit suplexes his way out. Now Chris hits Three Amigos to a solid ovation before doing the chest slap. Now the Swan Dive hits for two and Benoit counters the

Clothesline into a Crossface attempt, but JBL rolls onto his back and grabs the rope for the pin and the title.

Rating: C+. Just like the opener this was pretty meh but JBL was an awesome heel here. The part of this that sticks in my mind though is Benoit hitting that headbutt. After it hit he was grabbing his skull and was clearly in pain. Every time I see him hit something like that I cringe a little bit more and wonder if that was the point of no return.

We recap Foley vs. Edge. Edge cashed in MITB at New Year's Revolution and Mick was guest referee for the title change for no apparent reason. Foley got beaten up as Edge accused Foley of losing his edge so to speak.

Joey Styles jumps in on commentary for the next match.

Mick Foley vs. Edge

This is a hardcore match and DEAR GOODNESS I forgot how hot Lita looked in this match. Edge comes out in a vest with a ball bat but Foley comes out in....gray flannel? There's a Cactus shirt under it but I didn't come to Wrestlemania to see Foley in GRAY flannel. Edge swings with the bat but only hits buckle. Foley slams him into the mat and puts Edge upside down in the Tree of Woe for the running fist to the face.

Edge comes back with a forearm and tells Lita to send him something. We get various flat metal objects like cookie sheets and stop signs which are smashed against Foley's head. Edge loses the vest and hits the spear before falling to the side and writhing in pain. Foley opens up the flannel and reveals a ring of barbed wire wrapped around his stomach and A RED FLANNEL SHIRT! Edge's arm is hacked open so Foley whips him with the barbed wire and drives it into the arm cut.

Edge is tied up in the ropes and Foley pulls out a barbed wire ball bat. Lita tries to interfere but a Cactus Clothesline to Edge puts all three on the floor. A swinging neckbreaker on the floor gets two for Foley but as he charges at Edge he gets hiptossed into the steps, leg first. Edge whips Foley HARD into the steps, destroying the knees even further. Mick is put on a table on the floor but rolls off before Edge can dive. Edge slams Mick's head into the steel ramp for two and another sick thud.

Back inside the ring they go and Edge covers Foley with lighter fluid. Well that's certainly stepping things up. A piledriver out of nowhere gets two for Foley and he loads up the Conchairto, only to have Lita make a save. Edge hits a DDT "onto" the chair before getting the barbed wire bat for some midsection shots. There's a shot to the face for good measure and Foley is busted open. Edge gets in some psychology by ripping the barbed wire of Foley's forehead like Foley did to HHH in 2000.

Since nothing else has worked, Edge busts out the thumbtacks. Foley blocks a facial damaging bulldog with a belly to back suplex into the tacks to send Edge into shock. It's Socko time but Foley wraps it in barbed wire for good measure. Foley gets in a barbed wire bat shot to Edge's ribs and one to the head as well, cutting his head open something fierce. Now Foley gets the lighter fluid to cover the table, but Lita slows him down with a bat shot to the ribs. The table is lit and Edge SPEARS FOLEY THROUGH THE ROPES AND THE FLAMING TABLE for the pin.

Rating: A. Oh yeah this worked. This was about blood and violence which is something you never get anymore. It helped that you had Foley and Edge out there, as in guys that knew how to wrestle a match and make a wrestling crowd care. That's the difference between this and ECW: this was well built and about emotion and hatred instead of a freak show. Also it's ONCE, not every match on the card.

The look of shock on Edge's face as he goes to the back is amazing.

Booker and Sharmell want to know why Boogeyman wants them. They go to the ring for their match and see Pirate Paul Burchill practicing his sword play. Then it's DiBiase offering Eugene money for dribbling a ball 100 times in a row, only to kick it away at 99. Snitsky is licking Mae Young's foot with Moolah watching.

Goldust is dressed like Oprah (they used to be partners remember) and is apparently the leader of this group of freaks. He tells Booker to embrace his inner freak or he can't beat the Boogeyman tonight. Goldust suggests putting worms somewhere and Booker freaks out. Booker and Sharmell leave and unfortunately there's no Wrestlemania dance party.

Backlash ad. Hey I was there.

Some celebrities are here.

Booker T/Sharmell vs. Boogeyman

The idea here is that Booker and Sharmell are terrified. Booker makes Sharmell start but jumps Boogeyman to get things going. There's a bunch of smoke in the arena from Boogeyman's entrance and you can barely see anything. Boogeyman starts no selling stuff including the Book End which doesn't even get a cover. The ax kick misses and a forearm puts Booker down. Boogey eats a big handful of worms but Sharmell picks up his staff. She tries to sneak up on him but SCREAMS to make sure Boogey hears her. A wormy kiss sends Sharmell running and the chokebomb ends Booker for the pin.

Rating: F. Do I really need to explain this? Booker would somehow be world champion in four months. I don't get the idea behind Boogeyman and it never worked at all. This match didn't need to be a handicap match either as Sharmell didn't add a thing to the entire match. The stupid smoke was annoying too.

We recap Trish vs. Mickie. Mickie showed up as the psycho (and HOT) Trish stalker/lesbian luster. Trish turned her down so Mickie snapped and kicked her in the head. Mickie then kidnapped Trish's friend Ashley and laid out Trish as she tried to save Ashley. Mickie kissed the unconscious Trish, sending 12 year olds everywhere into a frenzy.

Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Mickie James

Mickie is challenging and has those awesome skirts that go all over the place. Trish is looking great too with the usual attire but showing her stomach as well. Trish is all aggressive here and chops Mickie down into the splits. They head to the floor but the Chick Kick hits the post. Mickie wraps the leg around the post and is still looking very psycho. Back in and a dropkick to the knee takes Trish down again, as does a dragon screw leg whip for two.

The fans chant for Mickie and I can't say I blame them. Mickie wraps the leg around the ropes before driving it down into the mat for good measure. Off to a half crab followed by a knee crank but Trish power up

and hooks a spinning headscissors to put James down. Trish comes back with the forearms and a spinebuster of all things for two. Trish's corner splash hits feet but as Mickie goes up, Stratus tries the Stratusphere but gets slammed down for a sexy two. A rana is countered into a powerbomb for two and Trish is TICKED.

Trish tries the Matrish but the knee gives out. Instead she tries Stratusfaction but Mickie gropes Trish's crotch to break it up. It's exactly what it sounds like. Mickie licks her fingers so Trish DRILLS HER with a forearm. Trish keeps firing away but the knee gives out, and then the match falls off the rails. Mickie tries the Stratusfaction but COMPLETELY misses the rope, making it almost look like a botched atomic drop by Trish. Instead Mickie hits a lame Chick Kick to end Trish's reign. JR sums it up perfectly: "The nutjob won the title!"

Rating: B-. This was one of the best Divas matches ever but the ending cripples it. The idea here was that it wasn't a women's match but rather a match featuring women in it. These two were beating each other up and Trish had real emotion out there. Mickie was PERFECT for this character and you really felt like she had a screw loose. The sexuality was there but it wasn't the focus which is nice for a change. It's nice to see a real story and a real fight between two people who happen to be gorgeous women. Good stuff here.

Vince leads his family in a prayer before his match with Shawn. Vince: "God, I don't like you and you don't like me." That's where it starts and I think you get the idea.

Undertaker vs. Mark Henry

This is a casket match and WAY before Henry got awesome. Druids bring out the casket surrounded by torches. Basically Henry has beaten up Undertaker and isn't scared of the dark. No one on the planet thought Henry had a chance here. I'd bet even his mama didn't. Henry pounds away to start and no sells a few clotheslines before running Taker over. They trade shots into the steps with Henry taking control before heading back inside. Back in and Henry chokes Undertaker down like he's not even there.

Taker fights back but has Old School broken up with ease. The casket is opened but Taker kicked his way to safety. The Dead Man gets back to his feet and manages to hit Old School this time but it doesn't drop Henry. A Downward Spiral is easily blocked and Henry controls again by choking on the ropes. Henry misses a charge though and lands in the casket, only to pull Taker down in with him.

They fight out of the casket and head back into the ring where Taker charges into the World's Strongest Slam but Henry covers on instinct instead of carrying Taker to the casket. Henry makes the incredibly stupid yet eternally made mistake of pounding down on Taker in the corner, only to be powerbombed out of the corner. Mark is knocked out to the floor where Taker hits hit HUGE Taker Dive to put Henry down again. Back in and there's the Tombstone, allowing Taker to put Henry in the casket to win.

Rating: D+. It's Mark Henry and this is long before the career resurgence he had in 2011. There was never any doubt that Taker would win his signature match against a guy who just wasn't on his level. Not a good Mania match here for Taker, but he would win the world title at the next two editions so he would be ok soon.

We recap Vince vs. Shawn. Back in December, Vince had been talking about Montreal again and Shawn finally said let it go before nearly superkicking Vince. This led to Vince basically declaring war on Shawn, eventually leading to a street fight here tonight.

Vince McMahon vs. Shawn Michaels

Oh wait actually this is no holds barred rather than a street fight because they're such different things. Before the match Vince unveils a poster version of his cover of Muscle and Fitness magazine, which is indeed pretty impressive. Shawn will have none of this though and goes after the boss, pounding away at him and throwing him over the announce table for good measure. Vince gets choked out with a cable as the commentators lose their equipment.

Shawn cracks Vince over the head with his poster and here's the Spirit Squad to try to save Vince. They're five cheerleaders (one of them being

Dolph Ziggler) who beat up Shawn with their five man lifting slam, but Kenny misses a guillotine legdrop. Shawn gets their megaphone and beats all of them up while Vince is getting a breather. The breather allows Vince to get in a clothesline and take over for a bit.

McMahon rips off his own belt to whip and choke Shawn but his attempt at Sweet Chin Music is easily blocked. The forearm puts Vince down and there's a whipping for Vince. There's the top rope elbow but as Shawn tunes up the band, here's Shane to blast him with a kendo stick. Shane pulls out handcuffs but before they tie Shawn up, Vince takes down his pants. Yeah they're doing this at Wrestlemania. Shane tries to send Shawn's face in but Michaels reverses and we get a very disturbing father/son bonding moment.

Shawn hits Vince low and handcuffs Shane to the ropes. After throwing the key into the crowd and doing Shane's dance, Shawn pounds him with the kendo stick and pulls out a chair. A BIG chair shot cracks Vince's head open even more than it already was. Instead of kicking Vince's head off though, Shawn pulls out a ladder. After ramming that into Vince's head too, Shawn pulls out some trashcans to beat on Vince with as well.

There's a table thrown in too and this can't end well. Vince is placed on the table but Shawn isn't pleased with the ladder he's got. Instead he gets the jumbo ladder and puts the trashcan over Vince's head. Shawn climbs the jumbo ladder and drops the BIGGEST ELBOW EVER through Vince through the table. The Sweet Chin Music is the icing on the carnage and it's finally over.

Rating: C+. This is a hard one to grade as it's really closer to a long segment than a match. Shawn DESTROYED Vince here and that's what the whole thing was supposed to be. Unfortunately this feud would keep going for about six more months with DX reuniting to fight Vince and all his cronies. Still though, it was certainly entertaining and that's all it was supposed to be.

Vince is wheeled out on a stretcher but still manages to flip off Shawn. That's so Vince.

Wrestlemania 23 is coming to Detroit.

We recap the Smackdown World Title match, or the Eddie Guerrero Tribute match. You can call it either thing really as they're the same thing. Guerrero died five months ago and Rey dedicated his Royal Rumble performance to Eddie, so of course he won. Randy Orton told Rey that Eddie was burning, which was enough to get Rey to put his title shot on the line at No Way Out.

Rey lost, but Teddy Long made it a triple threat with Rey involved, even though Rey lost a fair bet to Orton. This gets the music video, set to I Dare You by Shinedown. Oh and Kurt Angle is world champion coming into this and couldn't be more of an afterthought. He was in Wrestling Machine mode at this point though and was completely made of awesome.

Smackdown World Title: Rey Mysterio vs. Kurt Angle vs. Randy Orton

P.O.D. plays Rey to the ring. Rey comes out in some freaky looking eagle headdress which I guess is a Mexican thing. During Angle's entrance, Orton grabs the belt from the referee and blasts Kurt in the face to send him to the floor. Rey tries a springboard cross body but Orton dropkicks him out of the air for two. Angle is back in now for a German suplex on Orton before suplexing BOTH GUYS AT ONCE. Angle is amazing, period.

Orton hits his backbreaker on Angle for two of his own as this is very fast paced to start. A belly to belly puts Orton down and Kurt puts Randy on the top for something, but Rey charges at Angle to break it up. Angle instead launches Rey up at Randy who is taken down in a SWEET hurricanrana by the masked dude. The ankle lock to Orton is quickly broken up by Rey and a big kick to Kurt's head gets two. The fans chant for the 619 but as Rey loads it up, Kurt grabs the legs into the ankle lock with the grapevine.

Orton distracts the referee as Rey taps before finally breaking up the hold. Angle starts busting out the Germans and an Angle Slam puts Rey on the floor. The ankle lock goes on Randy and there's a grapevine for good measure. Orton taps but now Rey pulls the referee out and covers his eyes in a pretty brilliant move. Back to the ankle lock but Rey drops the dime on Angle to break it up. The fans are booing Rey for some reason.

Mysterio misses a charge into the corner and slams his shoulder into the

corner. The Angle Slam to Orton is countered into an RK0 but since this is Wrestlemania it only gets two. Randy limps to the top rope for some reason and you just don't do that with Kurt Angle in the ring. There's the running up the corner suplex but Rey tries the 619 around the post. I say try because he slips off the apron and has to just kick Angle in the head for two.

Angle is kicked to the floor and there's an over the shoulder backbreaker into a neckbreaker for two on Rey. I love that move. Randy loads up the RK0 but gets Angle Slammed for two for Kurt. The Angle Slam to Rey is escaped and an armdrag sends Angle to the floor. The 619 and West Coast Pop to Orton give Mysterio the title.

Rating: C-. Uh....what? No seriously, where's the rest of this match? The Smackdown World Title match with a new champion gets less than nine and a half minutes at Wrestlemania? It was entertaining while it lasted, but there are Smackdown main events that get twice the amount of time this got. Was Rey ever even in trouble in this match? I'm guessing the match got cut short, but we had nearly 20 minutes for Vince to get beaten up? This is a head scratcher if there's ever been one.

Chavo and Vickie celebrate with Rey.

Cena and HHH are getting ready in the back.

Candace Michelle vs. Torrie Wilson

This is your Playboy match of the year. Lillian screwing up the hometowns is the most entertaining thing about this match. They're in their underwear and this is a pillow fight. Torrie coming out to what would become Laycool's music is rather odd. What do you want here? There's a bed in the ring, stuff is turned over, Torrie wins after like FOUR MINUTES. Remember that: this got four minutes, the Smackdown World Title got nine.

Rating: F. Were you expecting more here? Next.

Video on the Wrestlemania press conference.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. John Cena

HHH, known as the King of Kings, is in what can best be described as viking attire and rises up out of the stage on a throne. He had Thor's hammer next to him and a bottle of water in his hand which doesn't quite fit. Before Cena comes out we get a newsreel about Chicago in the Great Depression. The stage raises up and a car from the 30s drives out, complete with machine gun toting gangsters (one of which was played by future WWE Champion and Cena rival CM Punk who we'll get back to later).

Cena comes out in a fedora and the shorts shooting a Tommy gun. After the big match intros (the announcer introducing them when they're in opposite corners) we're ready to go. HHH grabs a quick hammerlock and takes Cena down to frustrate him a bit. Cena gets caught in a wristlock and sent into the corner again as the fans tell Cena that he sucks. All HHH so far. With nothing else working, Cena tries a quick FU but gets punched in the face. After about four minutes of nothing significant, Cena is thrown to the floor, only to come back in with right hands.

A quick fisherman's suplex gets two for Cena and it's off to a chinlock by the champ. The fans tell Cena that he can't wrestle and HHH fights up. A hard whip sends HHH over the corner and out to the floor but he pokes Cena in the eye to break Cena's momentum. HHH can't piledrive Cena on the floor though and gets backdropped onto the steel instead. Back in and HHH hits the jumping knee to the face to a big reaction.

Back to the floor we go and Cena is whipped hard into the steps. They head inside again for a facebuster from the challenger and a big old clothesline for two. A neckbreaker gets the same as the fans alternate between "screw you Cena" and "Cena sucks." Off to a neck crank by the Game which is transitioned into a sleeper and then a chinlock. The champ shoves him off and hits a clothesline to put both guys down again. Back up and Cena fires off some more clotheslines followed by a powerslam for no cover.

The spinning mat slam puts HHH down but the Game pops up for a spinebuster to block the Shuffle. Back to the sleeper but Cena almost immediately suplexes his way out of it. Now the Shuffle hits and there's Cena's new submission hold the STFU. HHH grabs a rope but Cena is in the zone now. The FU is countered but Cena is shoved into the referee.

HHH hits both of them low and gets the sledgehammer which goes upside Cena's head. Since this is Wrestlemania though it only gets two instead of putting Cena in need of perpetual care. Back up and HHH charges into the FU for two so Cena goes up top. A cross body misses and HHH tries the Pedigree, only to be countered into the STF. With nowhere else to go, HHH taps out and keeps the title on Cena.

Rating: B-. This is one of the recurring problems with HHH matches: when he tries to have a big epic match it rarely works. Cena got a solid rub out of beating him here but at the same time the match wasn't all that great. It felt like a way to make Cena a big deal rather than have a match between the two of them. It also didn't help that there was no real issue between the two of them.

A highlight package ends the show.

Overall Rating: D+. This is one of the most forgettable Wrestlemanias in history. There's nothing of note on here, none of the matches are great other than a middle of the show hardcore match which led to some great stuff. Batista being gone hurt this show a lot as Cena wasn't quite ready to shoulder the weight of Wrestlemania yet. It's not horrible, but it's totally forgettable and not required viewing at all.

Ratings Comparison

Big Show/Kane vs. Carlito/Chris Masters

Original: D+

Redo: C

Rob Van Dam vs. Shelton Benjamin vs. Ric Flair vs. Finlay vs. Matt Hardy vs. Bobby Lashley

Original: B

Redo: B

John Bradshaw Layfield vs. Chris Benoit

Original: D+

Redo: C+

Edge vs. Mick Foley

Original: A

Redo: A

Boogeyman vs. Booker T/Sharmell

Original: F

Redo: F

Mickie James vs. Trish Stratus

Original: B

Redo: B-

Undertaker vs. Mark Henry

Original: D

Redo: D+

Shawn Michaels vs. Vince McMahon

Original: C+

Redo: C+

Rey Mysterio vs. Kurt Angle vs. Randy Orton

Original: D+

Redo: C-

Torrie Wilson vs. Candice Michelle

Original: F

Redo: F

HHH vs. John Cena

Original: A-

Redo: B-

Overall Rating

Original: B

Redo: D+

In the first one I said it wasn't something I'd want to see again. Apparently that was accurate as the rating PLUNGED on a second viewing.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/03/29/history-of-wrestlemania-with-kb-wrestlemania-22-i-barely-remember-this-show/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of the Intercontinental Title at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01D4D3EGQ>

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Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XXI (2016 Redo): Got Any Change?

Wrestlemania XXI

Date: April 3, 2005

Location: Staples Center, Los Angeles, California

Attendance: 20,193

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Tazz

If last year's show was about change, this one is ten times stronger. This year is about introducing the newest generation of mega stars into the top of the card and it couldn't happen sooner. JBL and HHH had been very boring champions with HHH cutting the wings off nearly everyone (including Orton, who turned face after taking the title from Benoit, only to drop it back to HHH a month later). With no one left, it's time for someone new. Let's get to it.

Pre-Show: Battle Royal

Raw: William Regal, Tajiri, Rhyno, Hurricane, Rosey, Simon Dean, Snitsky, Chris Masters, Val Venis, Maven, Sylvan Grenier, Rob Conway, Tyson Tomko, Viscera

Smackdown: Hardcore Holly, Charlie Haas, Luther Reigns, Scotty 2 Hotty, Funaki, Spike Dudley, Billy Kidman, Doug Basham, Danny Basham, Orlando Jordan, Paul London, Heidenreich, Mark Jindrak, Booker T., Nunzio, Akio

This would become a tradition and a way to get a lot more people on the show and therefore a Wrestlemania payday. This is also interpromotional so everyone is in a red Raw shirt or a blue Smackdown shirt. Regal and Tajiri are Raw Tag Team Champions, Dean is a fitness guru, Snitsky is a freaky guy, Masters is strong, Tomko is Christian's enforcer, Reigns is another big power guy, Jordan is a JBL lackey and US Champion, London is Cruiserweight Champion and Heidenreich is just weird. I'm not sure why Smackdown has one more name than Raw but it doesn't really matter.

General managers Eric Bischoff and Teddy Long are at ringside.

The rosters stare each other down to start and Hurricane gives Heidenreich a mask. Ever the nice guy, Heidenreich hits him in the face to start the fighting. Spike hides on the apron and we're firmly in the part of the battle royal where you can't tell anything that's going on. Reigns pulls Hurricane off the top and dumps him out but a bunch of guys get rid of Reigns just as quickly.

A bunch of people go after Viscera and knock him down because they're not that bright. Four guys hold him down and Scotty adds the Worm, only to have Masters throw out Scotty, Funaki, Spike and Kidman in a row. Well at least the ring is a little bit clearer. Haas is eliminated and a quick Regal chant goes nowhere. Nunzio is thrown under the bottom rope as the match slows a bit. Maven was eliminated somewhere in there.

Heidenreich, still in the Hurricane mask, rips the turnbuckle pad off for no apparent reason. I told you he was strange. Venis is clotheslined out by Heidenreich and Simon is out a few seconds later. Grenier follows and so does Rosey. Rhyno Gores Snitsky but Holly puts Rhyno out shortly thereafter. There goes Conway followed by both Bashams as the match is now a lot easier to keep track of. Raw and Smackdown square off again and it's Holly planting Regal with the Alabama Slam.

Jordan eliminates Tomko and Viscera sends Akio over the top and face first onto the steps. Masters eliminates Holly who is followed by Regal. Tajiri sprays the mist into Heidenreich's face and he eliminates London by mistake. By mistake because they're both on Smackdown and the idea here is brand vs. brand, even though it's every man for themselves. Tajiri and Heidenreich go to the apron and both guys are out a few seconds later. We're down to Masters, Viscera, Snitsky, Jindrak and Booker.

Jindrak catapults Snitsky out and absolutely levels Viscera with a left hand. Masters dumps Jindrak from behind and we're down to three but Nunzio comes back in because he was never eliminated. He actually makes it a full ten seconds before being eliminated for real and it's Viscera, Masters and Booker to go. Booker fights out of the double team but the

side kick lands on the ropes. Viscera misses a charge and gets low bridged out, leaving Booker to superkick Masters out for the win at 11:36.

Rating: D+. Not the worst battle royal here as they had a bunch of people in there but it was clearly just a way to get them on the DVD for the royalty payment. Still though, Booker winning was a good idea and it's hard to complain about a bonus match that doesn't hurt anything and wasn't part of the main show.

Lillian Garcia sings America the Beautiful.

We get one of my favorite parts of this show: the trailers. The theme of this show was Wrestlemania Goes Hollywood, meaning there were several parody movie scenes with wrestlers in place of the actors. We have Eugene as Forrest Gump, Booker T. as Samuel L. Jackson from Pulp Fiction, HHH as Braveheart, John Cena and JBL as Tom Cruise and Jack Nicholson from A Few Good Men, Undertaker as Dirty Harry, Christy Hemme as Meg Ryan from When Harry Met Sally, Christian, Chris Benoit and Stacy Keibler in the interrogation scene from Basic Instinct and most of the roster as Robert De Niro from Taxi Driver.

Now we get the debut of the final trailer from Gladiator. The emperor comes down to congratulate the gladiator whose face we can't see. The voice sounds very familiar though and he takes off the helmet to reveal Steve Austin, who describes himself as a beer drinker among beer drinkers and the master of the middle finger. He promises to create havoc at Wrestlemania tonight because that's what he does. Good stuff here, as were all of these.

The aisle has a red carpet and there's a movie marquee that advertises Wrestlemania XXI. It's one of their better sets ever actually.

Eddie Guerrero vs. Rey Mysterio

This is face vs. face as they're the reigning Smackdown Tag Team Champions. Eddie however is a bit frustrated because he thinks Rey has been showing him up a bit lately. No superhero gear this time as Rey is in a combination Mexican/USA flag costume instead. The bell rings and Rey

is already adjusting his mask. Rey flips out of a fireman's carry and shoulders Eddie down until Guerrero armdrags him down.

A headscissors puts Eddie on the floor and it's time to adjust the mask again. It has a Velcro hook instead of the usual buttons and that's not going to work very well. Back in and Eddie takes him down with a wristlock until a monkey flip sends Eddie flying. A right hand knocks Rey off the apron though as the aggression is starting. Back in and Eddie gets two off a belly to back before slapping on a surfboard (which takes a good while to finally apply). Eddie has to let go and Rey fixes the mask again.

We hit an STF on Rey but Eddie doesn't pull back on it very well. Mysterio armdrags out of an armbars and Eddie is looking frustrated. More mask adjustment sets up a flip dive from Rey, followed by more time spent fixing the thing. Mysterio tries to speed things up but Eddie drops him with an elbow to the jaw. Three Amigos are broken up but Rey gets caught in a backbreaker. Two more Amigos connect but Rey counters (adjusting the mask in the process) into the 619, only to have that countered into another backbreaker.

The Three Amigos finally work but the frog splash misses. 619 connects and Rey is bleeding from the mouth. The West Coast Pop is countered into a sweet powerbomb for two as the fans are behind Eddie. Back up and a quick hurricanrana gives Rey the pin (with one final mask fix) at 12:36.

Rating: B. Good stuff here but I think they were expecting something even better. This is what happens when you have a masterpiece like these two had at Halloween Havoc 1997: it sets a virtually unbreakable precedent and puts way too much pressure on them to top it every time they square off again. This kicked off a four month long feud between the two which produced some excellent matches, which was tragically followed up by Eddie's death in November.

Eddie shakes Rey's hand.

JBL and company run into HHH and Flair. They compare legacies and HHH laughs at the idea of anyone believing JBL is as good as he thinks. A future showdown is teased but thankfully this never went anywhere. Flair

gets in a WOO just because.

Adam Sandler and Rob Schneider are here.

Chris Jericho vs. Chris Benoit vs. Christian vs. Edge vs. Shelton Benjamin vs. Kane

Money in the Bank, which means a ladder match for a briefcase which guarantees them a World Title shot at any time in the next year. Jericho came up with this one night on Raw and others signed up over the next few weeks. This and the battle royal were a much better idea than the multi-team tag matches we sat through last year. Christian has Tomko with him. Shelton is the Intercontinental Champion and has become one heck of a singles star in recent months. Kane's entrance is again cool as the set has flames all over it, including the ladders set up near the entrance.

Kane starts fighting in the aisle and beats up all four Canadians plus Shelton. Benjamin and Benoit suplex him at ringside but Jericho smacks Edge in the face with a ladder as the bell rings. Jericho beats Shelton up to start but stops to dive on Benoit. Christian dives on all three of his fellow Canadians but Benjamin dives onto all of them plus Tomko. Kane takes out all five of them with a clothesline from the top before hitting Edge with a fresh ladder.

Jericho dropkicks the ladder into Kane but comes up holding his leg. Shelton and Edge take ladders to the face and Edge gets a second dose. Benoit comes back in to German Jericho and the ladder at the same time but Kane breaks up the first climb. That's fine with Benoit as he grabs the Crossface on Kane. Edge gets the same treatment until Kane hits Benoit in the face with the ladder for the save. Kane isn't done with him as he crushes Benoit's arm between the ladder, only to turn into a spear from Edge.

We get a quick Edge and Christian reunion as they crush Kane with ladders, much to the delight of the crowd. Shelton gets back in and kicks a ladder into Christian's face and flapjacks Edge into the ladder for good measure. Jericho and Benjamin fight on top of the ladder but Christian sets up his own and joins them. Benoit climbs up with one arm but here's Edge on a third ladder. Lawler: "It's like open house at Home

Depot!”

Christian takes Benoit down by the arm, Jericho gets shoved off and Shelton hits his t-bone exploder suplex to take Edge down. The ladder falls on the two of them to make it even worse. Christian bridges a ladder up against another one to make a ramp but Jericho puts him down and climbs, only to have Shelton run up the ramp and clothesline him down. Kane comes back in and cleans house until Tomko kicks him in the face. Tomko lifts Christian up ala Rhyno at Wrestlemania XVII but Kane makes a save.

Kane sends the ladder over to send Christian crashing to the floor and onto Tomko. Well it's better than those insane crashes Christian used to take. Jericho and Kane both fall off the ladder with Kane crashing in the middle of the ring. Benoit drops a Swan Dive off the ladder to bust himself open. The bloody Canadian climbs up but Kane does the Undertaker situp, only to get headbutted back down to the mat. Benoit is alone up there but Edge BLASTS him in the bad arm with a chair, allowing him to climb up (JR: "Somebody stop him! Anyone! Even Christian!") and win at 15:20.

Rating: A-. It's amazing how much better these things are when you have a more reasonable number of people. Six seems to be the magic number but the later versions would have seven or eight and the whole thing would get too crowded and watered down. This was awesome fun though with some great spots that would be built on in future years. Edge getting the win is the biggest moment of his career and it felt like a huge moment. Really good way to introduce the concept.

Here's Eugene (Eric Bischoff's, shall we say, slow nephew) with something to say. This is his second favorite Wrestlemania moment after King Kong Bundy squashed one of the midgets at Wrestlemania III and the rest of the midgets got together like an army. This brings out Muhammad Hassan and manager Daivari, a pair of Arab American wrestlers who claimed racism was the only thing holding them back.

Hassan: "Do you know why I'm angry?" Eugene: "You don't like midgets?" Hassan rants about all the fake people here in Hollywood and the

prejudice and bigotry in the city's history. In his way over the top voice, Hassan goes off about taking a backseat to a loser like Eugene. He could not, would not and will not stand for this so he's going to create a Wrestlemania moment of his own. Hassan decks the injured Eugene and puts him in the camel clutch....which brings out Hulk Hogan in the red and yellow.

Hulk cleans house with ease and the fans eat this up with a fork and spoon. Daivari's chair shot goes very badly for him and it's time to pose. This set up a tag match at Backlash with Hogan teaming up with Shawn Michaels. It's a great moment and a great surprise with Hogan bringing the crowd to his feet doing as he can do better than almost anyone else. The American flag drops, just in case you didn't know who you were supposed to cheer for. Keep in mind though: Hassan is from New York and Daivari is from Minnesota.

We recap Randy Orton vs. Undertaker. Orton had lost the Raw World Title to HHH and then lost a long feud to him, meaning it was time to give him something fresh. To get back on track, Orton turned heel again (he pretty much had to after the face turn was ruined so badly) and decided to end the Streak. Even Randy's dad Cowboy Bob thought Randy is crazy for trying this until the RKO put Undertaker down one night on Smackdown.

Undertaker vs. Randy Orton

The druids and torches are back this year. Undertaker, with his hair past his shoulders again, glides to the ring without taking a single step. No Cowboy Bob with Orton here. Orton starts with a slap and nails a nice dropkick for one. That earns him a stiff right hand to the jaw and the RKO is easily countered as Undertaker throws him to the floor.

Old School actually connects but Orton hits another dropkick and punches him in the face. Undertaker comes right back with a side slam for two. Snake Eyes looks to set up a big boot but Orton elbows him in the face to take over. The fans are all over Orton as he pounds away with forearms and right hands. A dragon sleeper (a hold Undertaker used for a bit until it became clear that it didn't fit him) has Orton in trouble spins around and counters with a DDT.

We hit the chinlock but Undertaker would rather not bore the fans so he suplexes Orton down instead. A powerslam gets two on Undertaker and Orton is stunned. I'm not sure why as he never won anything major with that move but that's a young heel for you. He follows that up by being a young stupid heel as he pounds down right hands in the corner, only to get caught in the Last Ride. Orton slips out and tries an RKO but gets sent into the referee for a horrible ref bump. I mean Orton's forearm grazed the referee's chest and it looked like he died.

After Undertaker falls down trying another Last Ride, here's Cowboy Bob (who might have missed his cue to force the second failed powerbomb) to knock Undertaker out with the cast (He had a very slow healing arm injury. Going on twenty years at this point.) but there's still no referee. Undertaker gets up and tries a chokeslam, only to have Orton counter into an RKO in midair. That's one of my all time favorite spots. Orton is stupid enough to try a Tombstone but Undertaker reverses into the real thing to put Orton away at 14:16.

Rating: B-. This show is on fire to start with the third straight good match, which is somehow a step down after a pair of really good matches. Orton looked like a star out there and began the tradition of someone wanting to break the Streak instead of someone having a personal issue with Undertaker. This would become something like another World Title match over the years as the matches would (eventually) become bigger and bigger over time.

We recap evil Trish vs. Christy Hemme. Christy was in Playboy and Trish didn't like not being in the spotlight, setting up a title defense for Trish here. Lita tore her ACL in January to prevent another showdown with Trish and is training Christy to make us think she has a chance. The problem is Hemme is just a model and is making her debut against the best female wrestler of the generation.

Women's Title: Christy Hemme vs. Trish Stratus

Trish is defending of course and easily kicks Christy to the floor to start. Christy is sent into the steps and this is already looking one sided. Back in and the Chick Kick is blocked, followed by Christy kicking

Trish low to take over. It's clear that she has NO idea what she's doing though and Lawler keeps the focus on her very short skirt. Christy sunset flips her out of the corner for two and makes her comeback with some lame kicks, followed by a reverse Twist of Fate. That's it though as the Chick Kick puts Christy out of her misery at 4:11.

Rating: D. This was about Christy looking good and Lita being there for a completely token appearance. At the end of the day, this was going to be the future of the Divas division no matter how many people were disappointed. Your wrestling ability stopped mattering because the only important thing was how good you looked in skin tight shorts. Bad match but they kept it short as they should have.

We recap Kurt Angle vs. Shawn Michaels. Angle was dominating the Royal Rumble when Shawn came in and eliminated him with a quick superkick. This wasn't cool with Kurt and he wanted a one on one match with Shawn at Wrestlemania. You don't have to ask Shawn twice about a chance to show off at the biggest show of the year.

Shawn Michaels vs. Kurt Angle

If this is anything less than a classic, it's going to be a disappointment. They stare each other down to start until Shawn slaps her in the face. That earns him a takedown but Shawn makes it to the ropes. A headlock slows Kurt down and the fans seem to be on Angle's side. Back up and Shawn takes him right back down into a headlock. A hiptoss takes Angle down again and we hit a short arm scissors.

Angle comes up with the customary lifting counter but Shawn rolls into a sunset flip. Back to the headlock as they're doing a nice job of recreating the Bret vs. Shawn story of Shawn wrestling technical when his opponents wouldn't have expected him to go that route. A quick ankle lock attempt is countered and the Cactus Clothesline puts both guys outside.

Shawn is ticked off for some reason and loads up the announcers' table, rolls inside to break the count (a forgotten move) and gets caught in an Angle Slam into the post. Well not really the Slam itself I don't know how else you would call that. Kurt starts in on the back and puts on a body scissors. The fans are split as it's time to trade some chops.

Enough of that though as Kurt grabs a belly to belly and it's time for a reverse chinlock with a knee in the back. Shawn fights up but slaps Angle for some reason, earning himself a big clothesline for two.

Kurt loads up a belly to belly superplex but gets shoved down instead. The top rope elbow misses though and Shawn crashes back first onto the mat. There go the straps but Kurt gets backdropped out to the floor and Shawn, always the crazy one, follows him out with a high cross body. Back up and the German suplex to the floor is teased again but as always, Kurt can't quite pull it off. Mainly because of the whole death thing. Shawn kicks him low for the save instead and puts Angle on the table for a spinning splash from the apron, which DOESN'T break the table in a sick landing.

Both guys are very slow to get back in as you would expect but it's Shawn with the forearm into the nipup to get the fans right back on his side. The elbow connects this time around but the superkick is countered into the ankle lock again. Shawn can't roll out of it but he finally makes the rope. The Angle Slam is countered so Kurt grabs the ankle as a consolation prize. That counter is countered into a cradle for two but now the Slam connects for two.

In another awesome moment, Kurt puts the straps back up so he can pull them right back down, only to miss the moonsault. Might be time for a new strategy Kurt. Shawn loads up another elbow but this time Angle runs the ropes for a super Angle Slam. It still only gets two so Kurt yells at him, allowing Shawn to shove him away and nail Sweet Chin Music for another near fall. Both guys are very slow to get up and Shawn leaves his foot too close to Kurt, setting up the ankle lock with the grapevine for the (very) eventual tap at 27:27.

Rating: A. Outstanding match here with the athletic slugfest at its best. There's something so great about two masters out there showing everything they could do. Shawn is at his best when he gives it everything he has but just isn't good enough, though he would win the rematch later in the year. Great stuff here and I really don't see anything else topping this tonight.

The guys get a well deserved standing ovation.

We get the full Basic Instinct trailer again with Stacy implying there's something between herself and Trish.

Mae Young and Fabulous Moolah are here.

It's time for Piper's Pit with special guest Steve Austin. Piper thanks us for the Hall of Fame induction but wants to make some history. He's been told that Austin is the toughest man in the WWE and he calls that bull. This brings out Austin, who Piper says is supposed to be some rebel. Piper slaps him in the face so Austin swears at him and slaps him right back. Piper: "I kind of like you!"

The WHAT chants get on Piper's nerves quick but he learns how to talk at the right cadence. There's a point Piper wants to differ on but the WHAT chants cut him off again. Piper says he was here when Wrestlemania didn't have a number and was ticking Vince off when Austin was in diapers. For some reason JR thinks that's quite the insult. Austin and James Dean have nothing on Piper when it comes to being a rebel.

It's Austin's turn now and he rips on Piper a bit, in time with the WHAT chants. Piper says this is failure to communicate and here's Carlito if all people to interrupt. Carlito thinks these arguments are stupid because neither of them are cool enough for him (that's and spitting apples at people are pretty much his entire gimmick). Austin invites him into the ring but Piper has no idea who Carlito is.

Carlito wants them both to leave and can we just get to the Stunners already? Piper steals the apple and spits some of it at Carlito. That earns him some left hands to the head as Austin just watches. Austin finally beats Carlito up, throws him to Piper for a thumb to the eye and gives him the Stunner. It's time to drink for a good while until Austin finally Stuns Piper too. This went on WAY too long and I have no idea what they were going for but it completely missed. None of them looked like they wanted to be there and Carlito didn't get anything out of it.

Backlash ad.

Here's the full Taxi Driver trailer which was voted the best by the fans. The highlight is Batista turning it into a Who's On First routine.

Akebono vs. Big Show

Why not have some sumo wrestling on the show? You win by pushing your opponent outside the circle or by knocking him off his feet. Akebono is a sumo champion and would become a full time professional wrestler in Japan soon after this. Cole and Tazz treat this as something serious but the fans clearly don't care. After they go through all the rituals, Akebono wins with relative ease in 1:02. This really, really didn't need to be here and was lost on the fans, which really isn't surprising as it wasn't exactly what they signed up for.

We recap John Cena vs. JBL which is entirely built around a culture clash. Cena won a #1 contenders tournament to earn this shot by beating Angle at No Way Out 2004. JBL is old school and rich while Cena is a brash, in your face rapper who wears throwback jerseys and hats. He had turned the US Title into a spinner belt so JBL helped his lackey Orlando Jordan take the title and then burned it (ok so JBL wasn't all bad).

JBL got in Cena's face and said the only way Cena's family could pay the bills was to have his mama on her back all the time. Since they weren't allowed to touch each other, Cena ruined JBL's car, clothes and limousine to try to get JBL to punch him. Naturally this got Cena arrested and JBL hit him while he was defenseless. The build was good, but there's no question that this is the second biggest match on the show.

Smackdown World Title: John Bradshaw Layfield vs. John Cena

JBL is defending and comes to the ring in a limo with a police escort. To make it even better, JBL dollars fall from the ceiling. I always liked the way JBL held the belt (clasped together but in his hand instead of around his waist). He even sends the Cabinet to the back so this is one on one. Feeling out process to start with Cena getting the better of it until he runs into a boot to the jaw to stagger him.

They trade shoulders with JBL getting the better of it by running Cena over. A big chop staggers Cena again and the champ chokes him on the

middle rope. Cena's comeback is stopped with a spinebuster and punching him in the head. A short arm clothesline (ala Jake Roberts) sets up a sleeper but Cena finally escapes with a belly to back suplex.

There's a double clothesline to put both guys down again and it's JBL up first. Cena takes a neckbreaker on the floor and a superplex keeps him in trouble but JBL can't follow up. JBL eventually gets two and goes to the middle rope, diving right into a powerslam (not a scoop slam Cole) to give Cena an opening. The running shoulders and a hiptoss draw some trash talk and the fans are trying to wake up. The Shuffle connects and Cena ducks the Clothesline, setting up the FU for the pin and the title at 11:27.

Rating: D+. For what was supposed to be a changing of the guard, this was really boring stuff. JBL just could not do it in the ring again at this point and it was clear for months now. Cena winning the first title at Wrestlemania is a big deal and he did what he could but you need a better opponent. JBL had a long run and this was a pretty weak way to end it. Not that I expected anything else though. Their really violent rematch was MILES better and what this match should have been.

Cena celebrates in the crowd.

We look at last night's Hall of Fame inductions, headlined by Piper and Hogan. They had to go in together.

Gene Okerlund introduces the Class of 2005: Nikolai Volkoff, Iron Sheik, Paul Orndorff (who points to Miss Jackie as she escorts him), Bob Orton, Jimmy Hart, Roddy Piper and Hulk Hogan. In other words: pretty much Wrestlemania I as a whole.

Wrestlemania XXII is in Chicago.

We recap the main event. Batista had been Evolution's animal but he was slowly getting better and smarter. This scared HHH, who thought the whole thing was about him. He and Flair put together a plan to manipulate Batista into fighting JBL at Wrestlemania but Batista overheard them, leading to him beating HHH up. Now HHH has to fight the monster on his own and no one, including Cena, is hotter than Batista.

Raw World Title: Batista vs. HHH

Motorhead plays HHH to the ring and seem to forget the words as it's a horrible rendition. HHH is also coming out first and rises up through the stage because his entrance needs to be much cooler than Batista's. They circle each other to start and we get the big power lockup. HHH's headlock doesn't get him anywhere and Batista takes over with something like a powerslam.

The champ gets thrown into the corner for some right hands but HHH finally sends him out to the floor for a breather. Flair gets caught trying to sneak in a shot, which isn't enough for an ejection but whatever. Back in and it's time for choking and stomping, including some extra from Flair. HHH starts in on the back as this is kind of an awkward way to start. An elbow to the back clearly doesn't make contact so HHH drops some knees instead. A backbreaker keeps up the focus and Flair gets in even more choking.

Some right hands stagger HHH but it's a spinebuster (because that doesn't weaken Batista's spinebuster whatsoever) for a few two counts in a row. The Pedigree is broken up with a backdrop but HHH cuts him off AGAIN with a facebuster. HHH goes up top and dives into a clothesline followed by a side slam for two. That's enough offense for now as Batista charges into a raised boot in the corner.

Batista comes right back with a hard whip to send HHH out to the floor but the champ sends him hard into the steps to regain control. The Pedigree onto the steps is countered into a slingshot into the post, drawing blood from HHH's head. Back in and Batista goes after the cut with some big forearms before driving the shoulders in the corner.

The fans are trying to get behind Batista again but that HHH dominance killed a lot of the match. Flair tries a distraction so HHH can get a chair but the referee takes it away. Ric takes out the referee and tries a belt shot, only to walk into a spinebuster instead. HHH gets in the belt shot for two. Now the Batista spinebuster connects but a low blow stops the fans AGAIN. The Pedigree is blocked and Sheamus' White Noise sets up the Batista Bomb to give us a new champion at 21:40.

Rating: C-. Screw off with HHH and his ridiculous ego. Batista won in the end but this was ALL about HHH and making sure he looked as strong as possible in defeat. The fans wanted to cheer here but it felt like every other HHH match in this era but with Batista finally surviving to win the title. The fifteen minutes of dominance here really hurt the match and that's mainly because of HHH not letting Batista get in enough offense until the end. Couple that with HHH's awesome entrance and this felt more like a farewell to HHH than the coronation of a new star.

Batista holds up the title to HHH and poses to take us to the highlight package.

Overall Rating: B. This is a very lopsided show as the last hour and a half is a BIG drop from the first two hours and fifteen minutes. The World Title matches just aren't very good (much more boring than bad though) and some of the other stuff like Piper's Pit and the sumo match was just plain awful. I'm really not sure what the point of the Pit was unless they were going for a rub for Carlito, but you would think that him beating Cena in his debut match in the fall would have accomplished that just fine.

On the other hand though, four of the five first matches range from good to excellent with only Trish vs. Christy (a four minute match with three gorgeous women) falling short. If you could cut out a good chunk of the last third, this is a MUCH stronger show and one of the better ones of all time. Considering that's similar to what I said last year, it's pretty easy to see that pushing four hours (or five last year) is too long for a wrestling show. Obviously you can't expect everything to be great, but cut some of it down or improve it a lot. Still though, the really good more than outweighs the bad here and that's always a positive.

Ratings Comparison

Rey Mysterio vs. Eddie Guerrero

Original: B-

2013 Redo: C+

2016 Redo: B

Money in the Bank

Original: A

2013 Redo: B+

2016 Redo: A-

Undertaker vs. Randy Orton

Original: B-

2013 Redo: C+

2016 Redo: B-

Christy Hemme vs. Trish Stratus

Original: F+

2013 Redo: F

2016 Redo: D

Kurt Angle vs. Shawn Michaels

Original: A+

2013 Redo: A+

2016 Redo: A

Big Show vs. Akebono

Original: F

2013 Redo: N/A

2016 Redo: N/A

John Cena vs. John Bradshaw Layfield

Original: D

2013 Redo: D

2016 Redo: D+

Batista vs. HHH

Original: C-

2013 Redo: C-

2016 Redo: C-

Overall Rating

Original: C+

2013 Redo: B-

2016 Redo: B

This show continues to be something that is better than all of its individual parts.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/03/29/history-of-wrestlemania-wrestlemania-21-best-ad-campaign-ever/>

Here's the 2013 Redo if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/03/30/wrestlemania-count-up-wrestlemania-xxi-another-new-generation/>

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<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B01D4D3EGQ>

And check out my Amazon author page with cheap wrestling books at:

Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XVII: Here It Comes To Save The Day

Wrestlemania XVII

Date: April 1, 2001

Location: Astrodome, Houston, Texas

Attendance: 67,925

Commentators: Jim Ross, Paul Heyman

After putting up with last year's mess, this is my reward. Many people including myself consider this to be the greatest wrestling show of all time and I can't say I argue that point whatsoever. It's a four hour spectacular headlined by the main event to end all main events for this era: Austin vs. Rock II for the world title. Other matches on the card include HHH vs. Undertaker for the first time along with TLC II, Angle vs. Benoit and Vince vs. Shane to FINALLY end their drama. I'm getting antsy now so let's get to it.

The opening video is a history of Wrestlemania along with shots of people around the world watching it. This includes a couple watching it in the back of a car. What kind of a portable TV can get a PPV feed? Anyway this is an awesome video that makes Wrestlemania seem like a worldwide event that everyone can get into. That's an awesome idea and the video makes it work.

Intercontinental Title: Chris Jericho vs. William Regal

Jericho is defending and this is a result of him not liking Commissioner Regal's regime. Basically he thinks Regal is boring and therefore

relieved himself in Regal's teapot. Regal responded by having the RTC and the Dudleys beat up Jericho on various nights. Jericho came back by dressing up by Doink for no apparent reason and putting Regal in the Walls of Jericho.

Regal pounds away to start but Jericho forearm him out to the floor. There's a big dive by the champion to take Regal down before he drops Sweet Willy B on the barricade. Back inside and a jumping back elbow off the top puts Regal down again before they head to the mat. Jericho tries for the Walls but Regal escapes and sends the still injured shoulder (from the aforementioned beatdowns) of Jericho into the post. A quick suplex gets two for Regal and it's back to the arm.

Jericho comes back with an elbow but Regal takes him down with a rollup for two more. Another suplex puts Jericho down again but Regal can't keep him down. The fans start cheering for Jericho as Regal takes off a turnbuckle pad. The referee is ok with this for some reason as Jericho's shoulder goes into the steel. Jericho comes back with a pair of enziguris before a middle rope missile dropkick gets two.

Jericho misses a charge in the corner and nearly hits the post head first. In a surprising move, Regal goes up top for a butterfly superplex which gets a delayed two. Jericho trips the legs and tries the Walls again but the shoulder gives out, allowing Regal to hook the Regal Stretch (STF with a half nelson) but Jericho makes the rope. Jericho fights back again but gets kicked in the shoulder, only to send Regal into the exposed buckle and hit the Lionsault to retain. That was a really sudden ending and JR sounded surprised so maybe it was called on the fly.

Rating: B-. This was exactly what an opener was supposed to be: fast paced, hard hitting and it told a good story. They beat on each other for seven minutes straight with nothing of note looking bad. The idea of the shoulder injury was a perfectly fine story to keep the match going and the Regal Stretch worked for a climax. This was a really good opener and it hit every point it was supposed to hit.

Shane McMahon in his WCW-1 limo shows up. He bought WCW on Monday,

setting the stage for the Alliance.

Bradshaw is worried about Taz not being here for their match so he goes on one heck of a rant about how awesome Texas is before going on about how THIS IS WRESTLEMANIA.

Right to Censor vs. APA/Taz

The RTC is a censorship group with Val Venis, Goodfather and Bull Buchanan with Steven Richards outside. They censor stuff, the other three don't like it, let's fight. Oh and Jackie is with the good guys but no one cares about her. It's a big brawl to start with the RTC getting destroyed very quickly. We start with Faarooq vs. Buchanan with Bull hitting the climb the rope clothesline for an early two. Off to Taz who gets kicked in the head and triple teamed by RTC.

Venis comes in with some knees to the ribs for two before it's off to Goodfather. He continues the destruction of Taz including the non-Ho Train for no cover. There's the hot tag to Bradshaw as the beating shifts. Venis gets caught in the fallaway slam as everything breaks down. A double spinebuster crushes Venis and there's a belly to back superplex for good measure. Goodfather misses a charge in the corner and Bradshaw kills him dead with the Clothesline for the pin.

Rating: C-. This is pretty easily the worst match of the show and it's certainly not bad at all. This was short and almost sweet which is what it was supposed to be. The idea here was to have the censors get beaten up by the Texan and give the fans a good feeling which is exactly what happened. Not a good match or anything but it's completely watchable.

Trish wheels in the comatose Linda to be in attendance for Vince destroying Shane later. Your McMahon Drama Recap of the Night: Vince is screwing Trish while Linda has been medicated to the point where she can't move while Stephanie is being Daddy's Little Girl. Stephanie tells Trish to be ready for the celebration post match and Trish is perfectly fine with this. Yep, perfectly.

Hardcore Title: Raven vs. Big Show vs. Kane

Raven is defending and brings out a shopping cart of goodies with him. Before Show is here, Raven tries to jump Kane for no apparent reason. My guess would be drug related mental issues but that's just speculation. Show makes the LONG walk down the aisle, only to have Raven tossed over the top rope and down onto him. Raven is easily caught so Kane dives off the top and takes them both out, getting two on Kane.

We head into the crowd with Show never getting into the ring and the brawl is on. Bird Boy's philosophy seems to be let the monsters brawl and sneak in some shots where he can. A street sign to Kane's head staggers him, only for Kane to throw Raven nearly through a wall. Show chases Raven away and tries to lock themselves into a kind of storage area. Kane will have none of that and breaks the door down to keep beating up Big Show.

Raven tries to choke Kane with a gardening hose but Kane basically lassos him with it before throwing Raven through the window of a small office. Show knocks Kane through the office door before they brawl through the wall between the offices. Raven stomps away before stealing a golf cart, only to have Big Show jump on the back.

Kane steals one of his own and brings the referee along on the chase. According to Raven, there was supposed to be a chase scene around the arena but it never happened. Also they almost hit some cables that would have cut the power to the entire stadium, which would have been awesome and awful at the same time. They fight to the catering area and the Snapple is destroyed, much to Heyman's chagrin.

Now we head back up the steps to the stage where Kane goes nuts on Big Show, only to get clotheslined back down. Show loads up a gorilla press on Raven but Kane kicks them both off the stage. A legdrop from Kane onto Show is enough for the pin and the title in a crushed part of the set.

Rating: C+. This is a fun hardcore match with the cool brawling spots mixed with the fun and goofy stuff which is how you make for a good hardcore match. These kind of matches were rare, but for the most part this was a more serious kind of Hardcore Title match, which usually makes things better. Kane would hold the title for awhile before it fell back

into the goofy style.

Angle tells Edge and Christian that he didn't tap out to Benoit because there wasn't an official bell or an official referee, so it wasn't an official tap out. The Canadians slowly walk away.

Jimmy Snuka is at WWF New York.

A fan from Australia is here. That's rather cool.

The Rock arrives, 40 minutes into the show.

European Title: Eddie Guerrero vs. Test

Test is defending and Eddie has the Perry Saturn with him. Eddie tries to jump him to start but gets thrown around by the pure power of the champion. A spinning powerbomb gets two for Test and they head to the floor almost immediately. Back in and Eddie gets in a shot to take over before pounding away in the corner. The champion comes back with a clothesline for two before heading up top.

While up there though Test has to counter a hurricanrana before hitting a jumping back elbow to the face for two. A big boot from the champion misses Eddie though, causing Test's ankle to be caught in the rope. The match has to stop for a second to get him loose because Eddie can't pin him while in the ropes. Eddie stomps away on the leg on the floor a bit before heading back inside to work on it in the ring.

Off to a sleeper by Guerrero now as the fans seem to be getting a bit bored. Test fights out of it after a few moments and hits the tilt-a-whirl slam to put both guys down. Another tilt-a-whirl ends in a powerbomb for two for Test but Eddie kicks him low to break up a full nelson slam. Saturn slips in while the referee is yelling at Eddie for the Moss Covered Three Handled Family Credenza (a swinging neckbreaker), giving Eddie a two count.

Test gets back up and hits a pumphandle powerslam for two before kicking Saturn's head off. Eddie gets kicked as well but they have to wait for Dean Malenko to come down for his run-in, causing a stupid looking (fits Test perfectly) pause. As Test beats up Dean, Eddie gets the title belt

and hits the champ with it for the pin and the title.

Rating: D+. Again, if this is the worst match I have to watch, I'm going to be perfectly fine with this. Test was fine here with Eddie doing almost all of the work and making things as simple for Test as possible. It's pretty dull stuff but another Texan winning isn't going to hurt things at all, especially with it just being for the lower midcard title.

Mick Foley promises to call the street fight fairly.

Austin is here, 55 minutes late.

Kurt Angle vs. Chris Benoit

On his way to the ring, Angle rips on Texas for various reasons, primarily the lone star flag. Oh and cowboy hats are stupid. This match was made on Raw because neither guy had anything to do for Wrestlemania. It's as simple as it sounds, but do you need anything more than that for this pairing? Angle still insists that he didn't tap out to Benoit on Raw. Heyman: "This is as excited as a man can get with his clothes on."

Angle takes it to the mat to start which is fine with Benoit as the struggle begins. Benoit sits out and it's a standoff, drawing a nice ovation from the crowd. It worked so well before that they do it again, drawing a bigger ovation this time. Angle hits a kind of suplex to take it to the mat for a third time but Benoit sits out again as they fight for position. They roll into the ropes for another break and the fans are pleased yet again.

Benoit takes it to the mat again and tries the Crossface, sending Angle into the safety of the ropes. Kurt bails to the floor for a breather as he isn't sure what to do with Benoit here. Back in and Angle has to get to a rope to escape another Crossface attempt. Angle blasts Benoit with a right hand to shift the style and momentum here as they head outside. Benoit goes first into the announce table and shoulder first into the steps to keep Kurt in control.

Back in and Angle gets two off a belly to back suplex. A belly to belly gets no cover by Kurt and neither does the second one Angle hits in a

row. Benoit comes back with a clothesline as the only advantage of the match so far is gone. Benoit starts slugging away in the corner before hitting a knee to Angle's ribs. A back elbow to Angle's face gets two as does a snap suplex ala Dynamite Kid. Benoit follows up with a superplex and holds his neck afterwards. He would be about three months from neck surgery that put him out for over a year.

Speaking of neck injuring suplexes, Benoit rolls some Germans but Angle rolls through the third one into the ankle lock. Benoit escapes that into an ankle lock of his own for good measure. The stealing finishers was one of Angle's major deals so this shouldn't be a surprise. Benoit tries the Crossface but Angle blocks it from going on full. Angle puts Benoit in the Crossface for good measure but Benoit gets a foot on the ropes.

Angle accidentally charges into the referee, just before Benoit puts Angle in the Crossface for an unseen tap out. Benoit releases the hold and gets caught in the Angle Slam for two. Angle's moonsault hits Benoit's knees, allowing Benoit to go up for the Swan Dive. That gets two, but Angle rolls through and hooks the tights for the win.

Rating: B+. It's Angle vs. Benoit at Wrestlemania. Did you expect this to be anything less than awesome? This wasn't as good as their masterpiece at the 2003 Rumble, but it would be a match of the year candidate on any other show. That's what you expect from these two though, and this is an excellent match that is overshadowed by the rematches they would have later.

William Regal is annoyed at Michael Cole but walks into his office to see Kamala standing on his desk and rubbing the picture of Queen Elizabeth on his stomach. It's as disturbing as it sounds.

We get a video from the Wrestlemania pep rally at Fort Hood in Texas with a bunch of wrestlers and Divas. There was a parade and the commander got a chair. The WWE people got plaques and Lita looks so unimpressed it's unreal. Angle of course would rather have a medal. This was pretty cool.

Angle says he won but Benoit jumps him and puts on another Crossface, making Kurt tap again.

We recap Chyna hurting her neck and then coming back as a Playboy cover girl. This doesn't sit well with the RTC, who injured her neck in the first place. Tonight it's Ivory vs. Chyna for the Women's Title again, but this is more about revenge than the title.

Women's Title: Chyna vs. Ivory

For one of the only times ever, Chyna looks great here. Ivory holds the belt to her face before the bell, but the referee is shoved away to let Ivory hit Chyna in the back with said title. Ivory gets in a few more shots but Chyna catches a boot in the corner. The destruction begins and Ivory is beaten down in the corner. A powerbomb kills Ivory dead but Chyna pulls her up at two. Instead it's a gorilla press slam for the pin and the title. Chyna would bail on the company about a month later without ever losing the title.

Vince gives Trish some instructions about Linda tonight, making sure that Linda won't be brought out until Shane is totally immobile. Cole comes in to ask about Monday night so Vince promises something shocking tonight.

We recap Vince demanding a divorce from Linda while openly having an affair with Trish. Linda had a breakdown so Vince had her medicated to the point that she was basically a vegetable. Shane returned to destroy Vince and challenged him to a match at Wrestlemania. Vince said ok but there were bigger things to take care of.

On March 26, Vince appeared on Nitro saying that he had bought his competition. At the end of the broadcast though, Shane appeared as well, saying that he had bought WCW when Vince had waited too long. Vince had wanted to sign the contracts here at Mania, allowing Shane to swoop in and steal it. I'm thinking that's not legal, but it's wrestling so how much sense does it need to make?

Vince McMahon vs. Shane McMahon

This is a street fight of course with Mick Foley as guest referee. Shane has some WCW "stars" in a private box. You can see Shawn Stasiak, Stacy Keibler and I think Bobby Eaton up there. Stephanie is here with Vince but Trish and Linda are being saved for later. Vince slaps Shane and

we're ready to go in a hurry. Shane gets pounded down in the corner but comes back with a spear and a bunch of elbow drops.

Stephanie gets in the ring and slaps Shane in the face, causing a chase sequence. Shane stops to hit Vince in the head with a sign before beating him over and over in the back. A clothesline off the barricade puts Vince down again before Shane whips him into the barricade. Shane blasts him in the back with a kendo stick over and over before peppering him with left jabs and a big right cross. Other than the brief flurry to start this is all Shane.

A monitor shot to Vince's head knocks him out so Shane can put him on the announce table. For the big spot of the match, Shane loads up the top rope elbow through the table but Stephanie pulls Vince away, sending Shane crashing through the table. Here come Trish and Linda with Linda completely sedated. Vince wakes up and sees them there so Trish helps him to his feet, with an AMAZING cleavage shot.

Trish surprises everyone by slapping Vince, turning face in the process. Stephanie goes after Trish, triggering a catfight in the ring. Mick pulls Stephanie off of Trish, only to get slapped in the face for his efforts. Stephanie runs from Trish and does the worst looking fall in the history of bad looking falls to let Trish catch up before leaving the arena. Back at ringside Vince wakes up and calls his wife a very bad name but Foley stops any potential domestic violence. Vince is fine with that and blasts Mick in the back with a chair.

The oldest McMahon puts Linda into the ring as Shane is still out cold. Linda is sat in the corner of the ring in a chair as Vince throws Shane back into the ring. Now it's time for four garbage cans to be thrown in as well so Shane can get beaten up yet again. Vince picks up the third can but as he takes too long, Linda stands up to an ERUPTION from the crowd. She kicks Vince between the legs to stun him, allowing Foley to come in and beat the tar out of the owner of the company. Mick knocks Vince down in the corner and Shane hits the Coast to Coast dropkick, sending a garbage can into Vince's face for the academic pin.

Rating: B. All things considered, this was excellent. This is what you

call intricate storytelling with at least five feuds/stories (Vince vs. Shane, Vince vs. Mick, Vince vs. Linda, Stephanie vs. Linda, Trish's turn) being blown off in one single match. On top of that, the match wasn't that bad with some decent bumps considering that they're both non-wrestlers. The drama was the key here though and it worked REALLY well.

The Hardys aren't sure if any of the three teams will ever be the same after TLC II.

HHH and Undertaker are getting ready. To this day I still want one of those X7 baseball jerseys. They were AWESOME.

Tag Titles: Dudley Boyz vs. Hardy Boyz vs. Edge and Christian

The Dudleys are the champions coming in. There's no story to it, but was there ever to one of these things? Edge and Christian get double teamed to start and the Dudleyz hit a double flapjack on Christian. Both sets of Boys fight in the corner with Jeff hitting Poetry in Motion on both at once. Cue Edge and Christian again with the ladder before Edge brings in a chair. The Canadians put Matt in the Tree of Woe and stand on his crotch. No wonder Lita left him for Edge.

Edge stats to climb but Matt makes the stop and goes up himself. That goes badly for him of course as Edge uses the chair as a stepping stone to take Matt down with a clothesline. Jeff dropkicks Edge off the ladder before joining with his brother to dropkick a ladder into the Dudleys' faces. There are two ladders in the ring now in opposite corners. Christian is slammed down and hit with a stereo splash/legdrop from the Hardys. The Dudleys are back in now and there's What's Up.

It's Table Time with Edge being placed on the first one, but Jeff tries a hurricanrana to Bubba, only to be powerbombed through Edge through the table. This is nonstop action so far. The Dudleys set up four tables at ringside as Paul tells us of Big Daddy Dudley's construction company in Dudleyville. Currently there's a table in the corner and three ladders in the ring. Bubba picks up a ladder and CRACKS Matt in the head with it before setting it up next to the other two. All three are set up in a row in the middle of the ring so here's a six way climb.

Matt and Christian go flying first with Matt landing on the ropes and Christian falling all the way to the floor. Jeff and D-Von fall into the opposite ropes and Edge and Bubba fall backwards, to put all six guys down. Edge is the only one halfway standing and Christian sets up a table on the floor. Bubba dumps a ladder to the floor to clear the ring out a bit as Spike Dudley, Bubba and D-Von's cousin, runs in. He hits Edge low and puts Christian through a table with the Dudley Dog off the apron.

Edge and Christian's friend Rhyno runs in and destroys everyone in sight before sending Edge up the ladder to get the belts. Cue Lita to jerk Edge off the ladder. Anyway with the thong sticking WAY out, Rhyno picks her up but gets hit low by Spike. Lita goes up for a rana on Rhyno and Spike cracks him in the head with a chair, sending Rhyno into the ladder, knocking Edge into the ropes. A Doomsday Device puts Rhyno down again but Lita CRACKS Spike in the head with a chair. She then takes off her top, giving us the biggest pop of the night. Not that it matters as she walks into a 3D and is now done for the match.

The Canadians come back in with chairs to take the champions out before Christian brings out the huge ladder. It's on the floor but it's still taller than the ones in the ring. Jeff, ever the crazy man, goes ALL THE WAY to the top and hits a Swanton onto Spike and Rhyno (read as Rhyno barely gets hit and Spike takes every bit of it). The super ladder is set up in the ring now and it's a race between D-Von and Christian. Matt moves the ladder away, leaving both guys hanging from the cord holding the belts.

Both guys fall down, but Jeff gets up on a regular ladder and tries to walk on the other small ladders like a tightrope. Jeff loses his balance though and has to hang from the cord as well. Bubba grabs the ladder and walks away with it while Jeff's feet are still in it, pulling Jeff's body back. The feet pull away and Jeff swings forward, right into a spear from Edge off the super ladder, drawing a BIG gasp from the crowd. That's the spot that made everyone realize Edge was going to be something VERY special.

Matt and Bubba go up on the super ladder, but Rhyno shoves it over, sending them crashing through the four tables at ringside. D-Von goes up

now but Edge grabs his feet, allowing Rhyno to give Christian enough of a boost to beat D-Von to the top and get the titles, finally ending this carnage.

Rating: A+. If you're looking for pure insanity and non-stop violence, this is the pinnacle of the genre. These nine people went for over fifteen minutes and never once stopped beating on each other. The spots are insane and the big spots still have you in awe. This match holds up incredibly well and is just as impressive as it was twelve years ago. Absolute masterpiece that blows away every MITB match that I can remember.

Video on Axxess. I need to go to that someday.

We get the all time attendance record announcement: 67,925. That's AWESOME.

Now for the fun part of the show to give the fans a chance to breathe. Here are MEAN FREAKING GENE OKERLUND and Bobby Heenan to do commentary for the next match.

Gimmick Battle Royal

Luke, Butch, Duke Droese, Iron Sheik, Earthquake, The Goon, Doink, Kamala, Kimchee, Repo Man, Jim Cornette, Nikolai Volkoff, Michael Hayes, One Man Gang (He couldn't fit into the Akeem gear), Gobbledy Gooker (complete with video from Survivor Series 1990), Tugboat, Hillbilly Jim (biggest reaction of the entrants), Brother Love, Sgt. Slaughter

Take eighteen of the goofiest gimmicks of all time, throw them in a match, have fun. I thought this was awesome when I was 13 and it's still awesome to this day. The entrances take nearly three times longer than the match but that's beside the point. Repo Man is put out in about two seconds as is the Gooker. Quake puts Tugboat out before Kamala throws him out as well.

People are thrown out right and left with Doink being eliminated to a chorus of booing. The final four are Brother Love, Slaughter, Hillbilly Jim and the Sheik. Within about 12 seconds it's down to Sheik and Jim

with Sheik winning because he can't go over the top to the floor. This was like three minutes long and it worked just fine all things considered. Slaughter puts Sheik in the Cobra Clutch post match.

We recap HHH vs. Undertaker. HHH beat Austin at No Way Out and then said there was nobody left for him to beat, so here came the Dead Man. HHH jumped him from behind and choked him with a chair a week later. Taker came back with a pipe, earning himself a restraining order from Stephanie.

There was no restraining order against Undertaker's brother Kane though, so he kidnapped Stephanie and threatened to throw her off a balcony unless Taker got a one on one match with HHH at Wrestlemania. HHH responded by destroying Undertaker's motorcycle. Taker called the ring his yard, giving HHH the great line of "Your yard is in the middle of his world." This was the match I was looking forward to more than any other on the card.

HHH vs. Undertaker

Taker gets to do his long bike ride down the aisle, meaning he can speed it way up, which looks pretty awesome. I use that word a lot in this but it's true. The fight starts on the floor with HHH losing a slugout. They break ANOTHER Spanish announce table with Taker still pounding away. We get in the ring for the opening bell where HHH hitting the jumping knee to the face. Taker has no interest in selling that though and pounds on HHH in the corner even more.

A big backdrop puts HHH down as do some clotheslines in the corner. Taker powerslams the Game down and there's the jumping clothesline to do it again. HHH breaks up Old School though and hits a neckbreaker for two. A few elbows to Taker's neck have him in even more trouble and there's a neckbreaker for two. See what psychology is like? It's not that hard. Taker comes back with rapid fire punches but gets caught in a facebuster.

HHH goes to the floor and gets the sledgehammer but the referee takes it away from him. Instead HHH loads up a Pedigree but gets catapulted into the referee, crushing him in the process. There's a chokeslam to HHH but the referee is slow to count, meaning it only gets two. Taker beats up

the referee to knock him out cold before throwing HHH out to the floor. HHH is backdropped into the crowd and the brawl is on. Taker punches him up to the tech area which is a very rare sight.

HHH tries to climb away to escape, but he climbs up higher and higher. Taker catches him anyway and pounds him in the head before sending him up to the next level. HHH finds a chair and blasts him ten straight times about the head and body. He loads up another shot to the head but Taker grabs him by the throat and chokeslams HHH off the tower onto something we can't see. It winds up being a crash pad but the throw looked GREAT. Taker wants more and drops an elbow off the tower down onto HHH for good measure.

Before HHH can be taken to the back by EMTs, Taker beats him up even more and even knocks down the medics. We head back to the ring where the referee hasn't moved for six minutes and hasn't been looked at whatsoever. Back to the ring with HHH basically dead. Taker picks up the sledgehammer but HHH kicks him low to save his life. A big boot to the face of HHH takes him down though and it's time for a slugout.

HHH loads up a Tombstone but since he's not Kane (or Sid apparently, Taker easily counters into one of his own. There's STILL no referee though as he's been out cold for ten minutes (from a kick in the back and an elbow drop mind you). Taker finally shakes him back to life before loading up the Last Ride. HHH grabs the sledgehammer though and knocks Undertaker silly with it....for two. I lost my mind on that kickout back in the day.

Taker is busted open and HHH is having a fit. The Game pounds away at the cut in the corner but makes the fatal mistake of going to the middle rope for more leverage, allowing Taker to grab the Last Ride to plant HHH and make himself 9-0 at Wrestlemania. Taker lays on the ropes after the match and the shot of him busted open but smiling is sweet.

Rating: A. This is one of the great matches that no one talks about for various reasons ranging from their rematches to the match that immediately followed it. It's absolutely great though with both guys beating the tar out of each other and some excellent drama on the near

falls. This was the match that made sure you knew Taker was still a player while keeping HHH strong at the same time. Great fight.

Some fan won a contest here because of a poster.

As JR says, the time is upon us.

We recap Austin vs. Rock II which is summed up by one line from Austin: "The fact is Rock, you got the WWF Title and I want it." This is backed up by the mother of all hype videos, set to My Way by Limp Bizkit. I'm not a fan of their music but this video is AMAZING. Debra was originally involved but thankfully that was dropped after about eight seconds. This was the best kind of build there was: take two superstars who seemingly cannot lose and put them together in a title match. These two beat on each other for months on end until this night arrived.

WWF World Title: Steve Austin vs. The Rock

Heyman says this is the match that both men need to win and neither man can afford to lose. Right before the entrances, Fink tells us that this is now No DQ, which is a surprise to everyone. Austin's pop is awe inspiring as the face absolutely lose their minds at his entrance. Rock gets a VERY mixed reaction as Austin is a folk hero here in Texas. The brawl is on immediately and Austin hits the Thesz Press and middle finger elbow, only to be taken down by a swinging neckbreaker. The Rock Bottom and Stunner are countered and Austin throws Rock to the floor. We're maybe 45 seconds in at this point.

They fight into the crowd with Rock taking over with more right hands. Back to ringside with Austin hitting a clothesline to put Rock down before adjusting his knee brace for a bit. They're back in the ring now with Austin hitting a running crotch attack in 619 position followed by a superplex for the first two count of the match. Austin takes off the turnbuckle pad and pounds away to A LOT of booing from the crowd. A back elbow gets two for Rock before he clotheslines Austin to the floor.

They fight over to the announce table with Austin coming back with a bell shot to the face. Rock is knocked onto the announce table which breaks a few seconds later. We head back inside for Austin to pound away to even

more pops from the crowd. Rock comes back with right hands but Austin drops both him and a leg for two. Rock is busted open and Austin chokes away in the corner. Austin stops to yell at the referee and gets his head taken off by a lariat from Rock.

The champion pounds away with right hands before getting the bell. It goes upside the head of the also bloody Austin but only gets two. We're at the point now where the pinfall attempts get more and more intense. Rock keeps pounding away but Austin won't stay down. Back to the floor with Austin firing off more fists as JR is in all his glory calling it. A slingshot sends Rock head first into the post and man did he BOUNCE off that thing. Back inside and Rock scoops the legs for the Sharpshooter in a call back to WM 13 where Austin is dripping blood while in the hold. He makes the rope this time though and we keep going.

Rock flips Austin off, earning himself a Sharpshooter from Austin. Well there's a twist. It's a terrible Sharpshooter but it gets the job done. Rock powers out though with blood dripping in between his teeth, again ala Mania 13. Back to the Sharpshooter on Rock but he makes the rope this time to escape again. Austin busts out the Million Dollar Dream of all things and the bloody Rock is in trouble. Rock fights up though and we get another callback to a Bret vs. Austin masterpiece with Rock climbing the rope and backflipping onto Austin for two, making him break the hold in the process.

Out of nowhere Rock hits a Stunner on Austin but he can't follow up. It eventually gets two...and here's Vince. Austin's whip spienbuster gets two but he walks into one by Rock which sets up the People's Elbow. Vince breaks it up though by pulling Rock off Austin, earning himself a death stare from the champion. Now we know something is afoot given the history between Vince and Austin. Rock chases Vince but runs into a Rock Bottom from Austin for another very close two.

The Stunner is countered and Hebner is knocked to the floor, allowing Austin to hit a low blow. Vince brings in a chair and clocks Rock with it on Austin's instructions, getting another delayed two count. Now the fans are cheering for Rock a lot more but aren't as pleased when Rock hits a Rock Bottom out of nowhere. Vince gets pulled into the ring for a

beatdown but it's a Stunner to Rock for only two. That probably should have been the finish, but instead Austin gets the chair and gives Rock the mother of all beatdowns with it, hitting him SIXTEEN TIMES. Rock is DEAD and Austin covers the body for the pin and the title.

Rating: A+. Yes there's kind of weak ending, yes there were some lame points, but it's Rock vs. Austin II for the world title in the main event of Wrestlemania. This is a masterpiece by definition alone. I think I might be the only person on the planet that likes this turn still, but it was in front of the wrong crowd. If this was ANY other state in the country it would have been booed like there was no tomorrow, but instead gets cheered, which is where the problem came from. Still though, excellent match and worthy of being the main event of the greatest show ever.

Vince and Austin shake hands, officially ending the Attitude Era. Beer is consumed and Rock is hit with the belt one more time for good measure.

Overall Rating: A++. It's the greatest show of all time. Normally I would say if there was a rating higher than an A+ it would get that, so now there's a rating of A++ for this show and this show alone. With a mind blowing four matches at B+ or higher and absolutely nothing bad at all, how can this not be the best show ever? I've seen this show several dozen times and it doesn't get old no matter how many times I see it. It's still excellent and needs to be seen by all fans.

Ratings Comparison

Chris Jericho vs. William Regal

Original: B

Redo: B-

Right to Censor vs. Tazz/A.P.A.

Original: C-

Redo: C-

Raven vs. Kane vs. Big Show

Original: C+

Redo: C+

Eddie Guerrero vs. Test

Original: C-

Redo: D+

Kurt Angle vs. Chris Benoit

Original: B+

Redo: B+

Chyna vs. Ivory

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Vince McMahon vs. Shane McMahon

Original: B

Redo: B

Edge and Christian vs. Hardy Boyz vs. Dudley Boyz

Original: A+

Redo: A+

Gimmick Battle Royal

Original: N/A

Redo: N/A

Undertaker vs. HHH

Original: A+

Redo: A

Steve Austin vs. The Rock

Original: A+

Redo: A+

Overall Rating

Original: A+

Redo: A++

Yep it holds up.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/03/24/history-of-wrestlemania-with-kb-wrestlemania-17-oh-yes/>

Remember to follow me on Twitter @kbreviews and pick up my new book of the History of the Intercontinental Title at Amazon for just \$3.99 at:

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Wrestlemania Count-Up – Wrestlemania XV: Rock Bottom

Wrestlemania XV

Date: March 28, 1999

Location: First Union Center, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Attendance: 20,276

Commentators: Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

This is a somewhat forgotten show and it's pretty easy to see why: there isn't much on here worth seeing. We're full into Russo era now which means things are going to go REALLY fast but they'll be changing so rapidly that there's almost no lasting impact. The main event here is Austin facing Rock to get back the WWF Title that was unfairly stolen from him in the fall. That's also pretty much the only match anyone remembers from the show. Let's get to it.

Boyz II Men sing America the Beautiful. To say this is better than last year's metal version of it is the understatement of the year.

The opening video is about stars of today becoming legends and how tonight is their night. The show is called the Showcase of the Immortals, which it is still called to this day.

Hardcore Title: Billy Gunn vs. Al Snow vs. Hardcore Holly

So for months leading up to this show, Billy Gunn had been chasing the IC Title and Road Dogg had been chasing the Hardcore Title. Before either of them got the big win, Russo thought it was a good idea to switch those things up and give them the opposite title than they were looking for. You know, because THAT MAKES SENSE. Gunn is defending if that wasn't clear.

Billy tries to do his intro but Snow jumps him from behind. Holly jumps both of them and clotheslines Gunn inside out. Snow and Holly, the only people who actually have business in this match, go to the floor to annoy the Spanish broadcasters. Gunn follows them and is whipped knees first

into the steps. That looked painful. Snow and Bob fight up the aisle with Holly hitting a suplex onto the concrete. Billy comes back and sends Snow into the steps but Al breaks up a piledriver attempt on Bob.

Snow finds a hockey stick from under the ring for no apparent reason and starts beating up both guys. The fans cheer for the Flyers as Billy uses a Gatorade bucket for good measure. Billy gets the stick and breaks it over his challengers' backs before going back inside. Snow comes in with a broom to pound away on both guys and take over. Gunn brings in a chair but gets beaten down by a piece of the broom. Al uses the chair to load up some Poetry in Motion in the corner but he can only hit Gunn.

Holly sends Billy to the floor but gets dropped onto the barricade for his efforts. Snow hits them both with Head but pulls out a table instead of going for a cover. The table is set up in the corner but Holly clotheslines his way to safety. Billy comes back with a shot to Bob's head and throws Snow through the table. The Fameasser onto a chair knocks Snow sane but Holly hits Gunn in the back with a chair and steals the pin on Snow for the title.

Rating: C-. This was fine but again, what sounds better: Road Dogg against two other hardcore experts or Billy Gunn who has had about two weeks in the division? The match here was nothing of note though as it was just the three of them hitting each other with the same spots we've seen a hundred times before. Nothing to see here for the mots part but it was a good enough opener.

Test and D'Lo Brown were the final two people in a battle royal on the Heat before the PPV, meaning they get a tag title shot. Seriously, that's how weak the division is at this point.

Tag Titles: D'Lo Brown/Test vs. Owen Hart/Jeff Jarrett

The challengers fight with each other before the match starts. Owen and Jeff have Debra with them who is in a jacket and bikini. From the neck down she's not bad at all. It's a brawl to start and Test hits a fast big boot to take over. Brown and Jarrett get things going officially and D'Lo hits some fast clotheslines. Jeff charges into an elbow and it's off to Test. He's part of the Corporate Team while Brown has no connection to

them whatsoever. A powerbomb gets two on Owen but he comes back with an enziguri, only to have Brown break up the Sharpshooter attempt.

Brown comes in legally and hits the shaky head legdrop for no cover but Jeff knees Brown in the back to give Owen an opening. A spinwheel kick puts D'Lo down for no cover as it's back to Jarrett. Brown comes back with a double clothesline to both champions and hits something resembling a Sky High on Jeff. There's no cover though as the managers (Ivory for the challengers) are fighting. In the distraction, Owen hits a missile dropkick on Brown to give Jeff the retaining pin.

Rating: C-. The match was ok enough but when the challengers are formed into a team 30 minutes before the match, it's a little difficult to get behind a match like this. The tag division was BEGGING for something to save them here but it wouldn't be until the fall when the Dudleys finally showed up and made the division worth something for a few more years.

Test and D'Lo fight on the floor which has no one caring at all.

We recap Butterbean vs. Bart Gunn in a Brawl For All fight. Oh where do I even begin? So Bart Gunn shocked all of eight people (as in the amount of people that cared) by winning the shoot fight Brawl For All tournament back in the summer. This led to a REAL fight against a REAL world boxing champion here. You know, EIGHT MONTHS after he won the tournament.

Bart Gunn vs. Butterbean

The guest referee is Vinnie Pazienza, former world Middleweight Champion. The judges are boxing trainer Kevin Rooney, Chuck Wepner and Gorilla Monsoon, who would be dead soon after this. He looks AWFUL here as he's lost about 200lbs due to illness. This would be his final public appearance. Bart is introduced as being from western Kentucky. That's probably accurate as there aren't many large towns over there so pinning it down to one single town is hardly an option.

I'd explain the rules and scoring here, but Butterbean DESTROYS Bart and knocks him down twice in 35 seconds. The second is as brutal of a punch as you'll ever see. For the life of me I have NO IDEA what they were thinking here. I could watch Bart Gunn get knocked out like that for

hours.

The San Diego Chicken is here in Philadelphia here for no apparent reason so Pazienza beats him up.

We recap Big Show beating up Mankind on Heat. They're fighting tonight to get to referee the main event. Austin could be seen watching this in the back for some reason.

Mankind says that he's done everything asked of him to be in the main event of Wrestlemania, but they keep throwing more stuff at him. If he has to beat Big Show, that's what he has to do.

Big Show vs. Mankind

The winner gets to referee the title match tonight. Big Show already cost Mankind the world title on Raw a few weeks ago and Mankind is banged up coming into this. Mankind pounds away to start but is easily sent out to the floor by the power of the giant. Mankind is all cool with a brawl though and he sends Big Show head first into the steps. A DDT is broken up by Show though and the guy in a mask tastes the steps as well.

Back in and Show chops him down before hitting a Russian legsweep for no cover. Mankind gets in a shot and loads up the Claw, only to be sent flying for a second. The Claw goes on but Show headbutts him down with ease. Back to the Claw and a low blow is enough to keep the hold on for a bit.

Despite being in a former world champion's hold for about a minute straight, Show gets Mankind on his back and crashes down onto Foley to break the hold. Foley's ribs are messed up bad now and Show stomps away even more. They head to the floor and Show hits him in the ribs with a chair...and that's not a DQ. Show throws two chairs into the ring and sets them up. He chokeslams Mankind through both chairs and THAT is enough for the DQ.

Rating: D. Yeah this sucked. This would fall into the category of matches that were overbooked to overbook another match. If that doesn't sum up the Russo Era in a nutshell, I'm not sure what does. The match sucked on

top of all that, as it was a very slow power brawl. Foley would take awhile to get back into form but at this point he was just kind of going through the motions.

Post match Vince comes out to yell at Big Show but has to talk his way out of a chokeslam. That's the least of his problems though as Big Show knocks Vince out cold with a right hand. The Stooges carry Vince to the back as Foley is taken out on a stretcher.

In the back, Vince wants the cops called.

Intercontinental Title: Road Dogg vs. Goldust vs. Ken Shamrock vs. Val Venis

Dogg is defending and this under elimination rules. Goldust has Ken's sister Ryan as well as Blue Meanie with him. A rana sends Goldust to the floor in the opening melee until we get down to Shamrock vs. Dogg as there are tags in this. Dogg gets in some right hands and a dropkick to Shamrock before bringing in Goldie to pound away on Ken. Venis replaces Shamrock and escapes the Curtain Call.

A spinebuster gets two on Goldust but he comes back with a clothesline to take Val down for two. Goldust loads up a superplex but slips off the rope, allowing Val to bulldog him down for two. A fisherman's suplex gets two for Val but after they collide in the corner, Val's face meets Goldie's crotch. Shamrock comes in to DDT Goldust but Dogg DDTs Venis at the same time, putting both guys out.

Goldust covers Venis for two and Shamrock is furious at the knockout. Did I mention Val slept with Ken's sister of whom Ken is VERY protective? Dogg comes in illegally and pounds away on Val before doing the same on Dogg. The shaky kneedrop hits Shamrock for good measure but Val suplexes the champion down for two. Roadie comes back with the simulated anal rape pumphandle slam to Val before Shamrock puts Venis in the ankle lock.

Val somehow makes the rope and backdrops Shamrock to the floor. Venis goes out after him and it's a lame double countout to get us down to two. Shamrock comes back in anyway and beats up everyone left in the match while screaming and dropping a lot of F Bombs. Ryan trips Goldust for no

apparent reason whatsoever, allowing Roadie to roll him up for the pin to retain.

Rating: C. Decent match until the ending fell flat. Here's Russo's booking in a nutshell: take Billy Gunn, as in the guy that started the whole mess with Ryan out and replace him with Road Dogg who only has the title in this whole mess. That leaves you with Ken as the jealous brother along with Val as guy who loved her and left her, and Goldust as the freak perverting Ryan's mind.

Then you give us Goldust and Dogg to finish things, despite them having no history of problems at all, unlike Billy and any of the three, who had been fighting for months. See the REALLY big issue here? Goldust would win the title the next night, making this even stupider. You know, because you want to change the title on Raw, not AT WRESTLEMANIA or someplace worthless like that.

Big Show is arrested, another Russo trope.

We recap HHH vs. Kane. Chyna had turned on DX and joined the Corporation I believe late last year. A few weeks before this she was holding HHH for a fireball shot from Kane, only to take it herself. HHH standing up for the honor of his friend who isn't his friend anymore because she turned on him. As an act of friendship, HHH painted himself gold and wore a flowery robe while imitating a crossdresser and launched a flamethrower at Kane, burning him again.

HHH vs. Kane

Kane is in the Corporation against his will at this point. As Kane makes his entrance, here's the San Diego Chicken from earlier to jump Kane. He's quickly unbeaked and it's Pete Rose again to continue the running joke from last year. At least he used to play in Philly so there's a connection to the town. After that ends, HHH sneaks through the crowd and hits Kane low to start, which actually hurts him now as opposed to previous attempts at it.

HHH pounds away to start but Kane keeps shoving him away. Kane charges into a backdrop to the floor though and they fight on the floor for a

bit. Kane accidentally clotheslines the post and is sent HARD into the steps. A baseball slide puts Kane into the barricade before they head back inside. Kane boots HHH down and throws him right back to the floor. HHH climbs the steps but gets grabbed by the throat and crotched on the barricade. The Mean Street Posse is here for no apparent reason.

Kane rams the future Game's back into the post a few times before we head back in again. HHH gets slugged down in the corner and an uppercut keeps him down even longer. There's a big leg for two and HHH is in trouble. He gets shoved out to the floor again and Kane DIVES over the top to take him out again, getting almost no reaction from the crowd at all. Back in and HHH breaks up the top rope clothesline with a beal off the top.

HHH slugs away and hits a Pedigree to stagger Kane. The jumping knee to the face puts Kane down and here's Chyna. The tombstone and Pedigree are both escaped and Chyna slides in the steps. Both guys are down from something we didn't see due to the camera being on Chyna but it's Kane up first. He picks up the steps but Trips kicks them back into his face. Yes, he did something not involving his knees.

HHH hits a DDT onto the steps and clotheslines Kane to the floor. How has there not been a DQ yet? A Pedigree onto the steps is easily countered and we head inside where Kane hits the chokeslam. Instead of covering though, Kane lets Chyna come in with a chair. She hits Kane with it though, turning again and drawing a DQ in the process.

Rating: C-. Not bad here but HHH wasn't quite ready to hang in a feud like this. He was on the rise, but it would take the street fight at the Rumble to make HHH into a guy that could hang in a fight like this and make it look believable. Chyna turning was a feel good moment but it would wind up being rather stupid in the end. The match wasn't bad, but much like everything else tonight it's forgettable.

HHH saves Chyna with some chair shots and a Pedigree on the chair.

Vince says he'll referee the title match tonight. Again notice that all these angles are being used on the PPV that we already bought rather than to get people to buy the PPV that was already purchased.

Women's Title: Sable vs. Tori

This is just after Sable turned heel. She's defending against a psycho fan named Tori here who would wind up sleeping with X-Pac and Kane. Sable won't let her get in so she dances a bit. Tori, wearing a Catwoman/Giant Gonzalez body suit, pulls the champion to the floor and sends her into the apron a few times, only to get kicked in the ribs by Sable. You can actually see people coming in and going out with food in hand during this match.

Sable dives off the apron to take Tori out before we head back inside. Tori comes back with some shots to the face and a bad looking sunset flip. They BADLY screw up a backslide which gets two on Sable before a bad looking cross body takes out the referee. Cue Nicole Bass who makes Chyna look like a 12 year old girl to slam Tori down. She tells Sable to pin her and the title is retained off a Sable Bomb.

Rating: F. Do I need to explain this one? I didn't think so. Tori makes Aksana look like Trish and Lita combined if that tells you anything. Their sloppiness in this match was cringe worthy and Sable continues to not be able to do anything of note in the ring other than shake her hips and take her clothes off. Nothing to see here at all.

We recap Shane vs. X-Pac. Basically Shane has no idea what to do in the ring but thanks to the Corporation he took the European Title in a tag match. This led to some humorous skits about how tough the streets of Greenwich, Connecticut were and how Shane is the kind of the streets. Shane challenged Pac to a Greenwich street fight on Raw, allowing the Mean Street Posse to help beat up X-Pac. Tonight is about revenge.

X-Pac says he'll win because Chyna has come home.

European Title: Shane McMahon vs. X-Pac

Test is with the champion Shane here and the Stooges jump Pac in the aisle for good measure. Pac fights them off with ease and we're ready to go. Shane imitates a bad car by stalling a lot and the chase is on. Back inside and Shane gets a nice leapfrog but gets kicked in the face to take him down. Pac loads up the Bronco Buster but Test makes the save before

the Buster can hit. Shane heads up the ramp but can't get away as the challenger brings him back to ringside. Test throws X-Pac into the post and Shane gets a breather in the ring.

McMahon pounds away on X-Pac in the corner and slams him down to set up a Corporate Elbow. Pac rolls away though, only to get caught by a low blow. Shane gets Test's belt and whips Pac's back as Cole talks about Shane getting disqualified. X-Pac sends him to the floor and there's the big dive to take the champion out. The Posse tries to interfere but gets beaten down for their efforts. An elbow puts X-Pac down back in the ring and a middle rope variety keeps him down. Shane goes up top but takes too long, allowing the Greenwich grapefruits to get crotched.

There's a superplex but Test breaks up the pin. X-Pac takes Test out and whips Shane with the belt for some revenge. Now the Bronco Buster hits but Test knocks Pac out with the title belt. That gets two for Shane but his own Bronco Buster misses. Test comes in for the 58th time but gets hit with a Bronco Buster of his own. Cue HHH and Chyna....who turn on X-Pac, joining the Corporation, THIRTY MINUTES AFTER THEY REUNITED IN DX. The Pedigree on X-Pac lets Shane keep the title.

Rating: D. In less than nine minutes, we had six people interfere, two different belts being used, a low blow, about five interferences by Test, and two people turning on X-Pac. This is all for a midcard title match with a guy that can't wrestle getting to keep the title from the fan favorite. Ladies and gentlemen, VINCE FREAKING RUSSO!!! The match sucked for the most part but Pac did what he could.

The Outlaws come out for a save but get beaten down for good measure, because you fans aren't allowed to cheer. Now cue KANE to chase off the Corporation, basically turning face in the process. There's such a thing as WAY overthinking things and this is a good example of it.

We recap Undertaker vs. Big Boss Man. Basically Undertaker has gone cuckoo and is trying to take over the company while impersonating Satan. This led to a cross being burned on Vince's lawn and Stephanie's teddy bear being burned. Taker beat up Vince but Boss Man made the save. This leads to Hell in a Cell tonight, because that recap clearly is enough for

a Cell match right?

Undertaker vs. Big Boss Man

Inside the Cell. In 1999. Just go with it. Boss Man DOESN'T EVEN GET AN ENTRANCE. WOW they're not even trying to hide that this is going to be one sided are they? Boss Man pounds away in the corner and Taker does the same for good measure. A clothesline puts Boss Man down for two as the uninspired stuff continues. Boss Man gets the same for two but a boot to the chest is blocked by Undertaker. They head to the floor with Boss Man being slammed into the Cell. Cole: "This is such a dangerous match. YOU CAN GET A FINGER CAUGHT IN THERE!" Just go with it.

Anyway Boss Man comes back with more punches to the face and handcuffs him to the cage. On the floor, as in where you can't get a win. Boss Man pounds away with the stick as the fans are REALLY not impressed. Undertaker falls down and the cuff is broken off the wall. Well that was rather pointless.

Taker is almost kind of maybe bleeding as he pulls out a chair. This is really boring so far. Boss Man goes face first into the wall as the fans are booing now. Taker hits the jumping clothesline but Old School is broken up, sending the Dead Man out to the floor again. Back in and the Tombstone is countered, only for the second attempt to hit a few seconds later.

Rating: F. No. Where's the real Cell match? You don't go from Shawn vs. Taker to "He may be broken in half" to this. That doesn't work and there's no reason to assume it does work. This was a terribly boring match with the tiniest trickle of blood you can have while still officially having blood. Horrible match that would have been bad as a first hour match on Raw, let alone the next to last match on WRESTLEMANIA.

Post match the Brood lowers from the ceiling and breaks into the top of the Cell, lowering a noose into the ring. Boss Man is hung from the top of the cage in an unnecessary visual.

We recap Austin vs. the Corporation. Austin drove McMahon crazy for most

of 1998 before Vince FINALLY got the title off of him in the fall. Rock won the vacant title by turning Corporate and becoming the Corporate Champion. Austin was screwed out of the Royal Rumble, but Shawn Michaels changed sides and gave Austin the title shot at Wrestlemania anyway.

Jim Ross comes out to call the main event. He's returning from a bout with Bell's palsy.

WWF World Title: Steve Austin vs. The Rock

Vince is guest referee due to the issues earlier tonight. Oh wait here's Shawn Michaels, the Commissioner, to say that Vince isn't referee and that it's going to be a normal referee. The Corporation is barred from ringside as well. Rock is defending if that wasn't really clear. The place of course goes INSANE for Austin, who for some reason is in an Austin t-shirt instead of the trademark vest. It's a brawl to start as you would expect with Austin being knocked out to the floor and sent into the announce table. Apparently Vince does have the power to make this No DQ.

Back in for more punching by Rock but he gets backdropped up and over to the floor a second later. They brawl into the crowd where we can barely see them but it's Philly so it has to be expected. Austin blasts the Rock in the back and they head back to ringside. Scratch that as they're already going back into the crowd on the other side of the arena. Back to ringside again and Austin is choked with a cable for a bit.

Now they fight up the aisle with Austin hitting a fast clothesline. Austin loads up a piledriver on the concrete, only to be backdropped onto a light instead. Rock is thrown into some kind of equipment and they clothesline each other. Now it's Rock being choked by a cable and then being thrown into the Wrestlemania XV sign, which wobbles in a scary sight. Rock suplexes Austin in the aisle and spits some water in his face at the announce table. Austin drops him face first onto the barricade before laying him on the announce table for an elbow drop which doesn't break anything.

The second attempt at an elbow puts Rock through the table and we head back into the ring after about eight minutes of brawling. Wait Rock bails

to the floor and wraps Austin's bad knee around the post. They're still not ready to stay in the ring as Austin sends Rock into the steps and stomps away a bit more. NOW we head back inside but Austin walks into the Rock Bottom for two. Rock brings in a chair but Austin takes it away and cracks the referee with it by mistake.

A Stunner is blocked and Rock elbows Austin down before laying him out with the chair. Another referee comes in for a two count off a chair shot to the head. Off to a chinlock for an understandably needed breather. Austin fights back up, only to be clotheslined right back down. Back to el chinlock but they fight up again, only for the referee to go down AGAIN. The Stunner hits but Earl Hebner runs down for a very close two. Here's Vince again as Austin gets a fresh chair.

The distraction lets Rock hit Austin low to block a chair shot and Vince gets in as well. Vince drops Hebner and it's a double team beatdown on Austin. Cue a hobbled Mick Foley to beat up Vince and count a fast two on Rock. The Thesz Press takes Rock down but Rock comes back with a clothesline and another Rock Bottom. Austin avoids the Elbow, fights out of another Rock Bottom, and Stuns his way to a third world title.

Rating: B-. This one really depends on your taste. They didn't try to have a regular match here at all and maybe that was the right idea. It's definitely the weakest of the Austin vs. Rock at Wrestlemania trilogy but Rock wasn't ready to hang with Austin in a match like this year. The rematch at Backlash would be AWESOME to make up for this, but even this wasn't bad. It's very typical of the time, which doesn't make it dull. This was definitely entertaining, but it's certainly not for everyone.

Austin celebrates for a LONG time post match and stuns Vince for good measure to end the show.

Overall Rating: D. Austin vs. Rock is definitely worth seeing, but the fact that I couldn't think of a single match other than that one when I was getting ready to do this one says a lot. The show is completely forgettable because of how fast everything was moving out there. That doesn't make it entertaining, but rather bad most of the time and one of the worst Wrestlemanias ever.

Ratings Comparison

Hardcore Holly vs. Billy Gunn vs. Al Snow

Original: D+

Redo: C-

D'Lo Brown/Test vs. Owen Hart/Jeff Jarrett

Original: F+

Redo: C-

Butterbean vs. Bart Gunn

Original: F

Redo: N/A

Mankind vs. Big Show

Original: C-

Redo: D

Ken Shamrock vs. Road Dogg vs. Goldust vs. Val Venis

Original: D

Redo: C

Kane vs. HHH

Original: D+

Redo: C-

Tori vs. Sable

Original: F

Redo: F

X-Pac vs. Shane McMahon

Original: C+

Redo: D

Undertaker vs. Big Boss Man

Original: H (For holy goodness why was this a Cell match?)

Redo: F

Steve Austin vs. The Rock

Original: B+

Redo: B-

Overall Rating

Original: D

Redo: D

Individual ratings aside, it still sucks.

Here's the original review if you're interested:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/03/22/history-of-wrestlemania-with-kb-wrestlemania-15-this-is-the-best-they-can-do/>

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