

No Mercy 2006 (2021 Redo) : The Benefit Of Low Expectations

No Mercy 2006

Date: October 8, 2006

Location: RBC Arena, Raleigh, North Carolina

Attendance: 9,000

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're back to the pay per views and this time around it's another pretty low level one with one of the weaker Smackdown shows. The main event, as of two days ago, is now a four way with King Booker defending his title against Finlay, Batista and Bobby Lashley. Other than that we have Chavo Guerrero vs. Rey Mysterio in a Falls Count Anywhere match as the second biggest thing on the card. Let's get to it.

The opening video looks at the four way, with everyone saying it is time for no mercy. It's not a good sign when there is nothing else to talk about.

Matt Hardy vs. Gregory Helms

Still non-title because the Cruiserweight Title still doesn't matter. Helms is the hometown boy and Cole goes over their history and tries to put over the idea of the match being the battle of North Carolina. They fight over a headlock to start until Hardy shoulders him down. Matt's takedown gives us back to back standouts as the fans are behind Hardy. Helms takes him into the corner and stomps away but Hardy is right back with a clothesline.

They head to the floor with Matt hitting a quick slingshot dive to take him out again. Back in and a neckbreaker into a backbreaker puts Hardy down and a super Russian legsweep gives

Helms two. Helms grabs a Codebreaker for two more and it's time to crank on the arm some more. Hardy fights up with a reverse DDT before winning the slugout to take over. Some clotheslines set up the bulldog out of the corner for two and the middle rope legdrop gets the same.

Helms comes back with a reverse Unprettier and then hits it twice more, only to get punched out of the air. Back to back to back Side Effects get two but Hardy's moonsault hits knees. The Shining Wizard gets two so Hardy gets in a shot to the face and heads up top. That earns him a crotching and running Shining Wizard for two but Hardy is right back with the Twist of Fate for the quick pin.

Rating: B. This was a very nice surprise as I had no interest coming in and they had a heck of a match here. Ignoring everything about the title and how many times we have seen the match now, this was a rather good opener and I dug everything about it. Call it a hidden gem as this was one of the bigger surprises I have seen in a long time.

King Booker needs to focus but also tells William Regal that he needs help tonight. Regal is willing to help and is tasked with getting Finlay to help Booker in the four way. He's up to the crusade.

Tag Team Titles: KC James/Idol Stevens vs. Paul London/Brian Kendrick

London and Kendrick are defending and Michelle McCool/Ashley Massaro are here too. Stevens hammers London in the corner but London is right back with a headscissors. Kendrick comes in to crank on the arm as JBL actually compares London and Kendrick to the Simpson Brothers. It's off to James, who is taken down with a double clothesline and the champs hit stereo dives to the floor.

Back in and McCool offers a distraction, allowing James to shove London off the top and put him in trouble. James hammers

away and hands it back to Stevens for a double underhook crank on the mat. London breaks free and goes for the tag but Stevens pulls Kendrick to the floor. The second attempt works a bit better though and it's Kendrick coming in to clean house.

London hits a dive onto Stevens, leaving James to superplex Kendrick down for a near fall. McCool offers a distraction so the illegal Stevens can hit a chokebreaker to give James two on Kendrick. London breaks up a double suplex and launches Kendrick for a double dropkick. Sliced Bread into a step up shooting star press finishes James to retain the titles.

Rating: C+. These guys work well together and London/Kendrick have turned into the latest awesome young high fliers. That's the kind of thing that is always going to have a place in the wrestling world and they have looked great for a long time now. They could use some fresh competition but they have earned a spot on a pay per view like this one.

William Regal goes to find Finlay but finds Vito in a dress jumping rope (Regal: "You're sweating like Vince McMahon in a church."). Vito pulls up his dress to reveal the thong, freaking out Regal (who is jumping rope and singing London Bridge) and making him fall into the concession stand.

Teddy Long is in the ring with a cake and a huge birthday present for the birthday boy....The Miz! Cue Miz, who shouts a lot of HOO-RAH's, but Long has something for him: that would be Layla, who is barely concealing her rather limited clothing. She has Miz sit down and the lap dance is on, then blindfolds him (with Miz talking about whips and chains). Cue the most obvious payoff in the world, freaking Miz out as he sees who is dancing in front of him next. Layla and Big Dick Johnson dance together as Miz runs.

MVP vs. ???

This is MVP's in-ring debut and he has the big inflatable

tunnel for his entrance. Before the match, MVP talks about how great he is, though the fans chant POWER RANGER at his offense. The opponent is a rather skinny man named Marty Garner, who is slapped down before the bell. MVP takes him down and rides him a bit, followed by a snapmare of all things for two. The fans call this boring and MVP snaps a bit, setting up the yet to be named Playmaker for the fast pin. JBL really doesn't seem to like him.

Regal is in a towel after the shower but Vito comes in to freak him out again. That sends Regal running off with the towel falling off. Teddy Long isn't pleased and puts Regal in a match for later. This was a bit of a problem as Regal's penis was accidentally exposed for a split second during the segment and WWE had to apologize.

We recap Mr. Kennedy vs. Undertaker. Kennedy isn't scared of Undertaker's power, as we put a completely fresh spin on an Undertaker feud.

Mr. Kennedy vs. Undertaker

Non-title and for some reason we wait about thirty seconds for the referee to ask if they are ready. Undertaker charges at him to start and sends the arm into the corner. That's enough to send Kennedy outside for a breather so Undertaker sends the arm into the post this time. Back in and Old School is countered with an armdrag, which commentary is sure has never happened before.

Kennedy stomps away in the corner but walks into a Downward Spiral for two. Undertaker is knocked to the apron though and Kennedy drives him into the apron to take over again. Another shot knocks him off the apron again and a DDT out of the ropes catches Undertaker on the way back in. The running crotch attack to the back of the neck gets two and Kennedy slowly pounds on him.

Kennedy grabs a piledriver, which freaks commentary out,

partially because they call it a Tombstone. That's good for a pair of twos so it's off to a chinlock to keep Undertaker in trouble. Undertaker is right back up to win the slugout and there's the jumping clothesline. Snake Eyes into the big boot gets two but Kennedy grabs the referee to block the chokeslam.

Kennedy's neckbreaker gets two but Undertaker is right back with the chokeslam for two. Back up and Kennedy sends him into the exposed buckle, setting up the Kenton Bomb for two more. Kennedy goes to get his title and leave but Undertaker takes it away and hits him for the DQ.

Rating: C+. This was getting good until the fairly weak ending, but I will absolutely take that over a champion losing again. They could come back with a rematch in a few weeks, though it isn't like the title is doing anything for Kennedy in the first place. Undertaker did give him a good bit here and that's always nice to see when there is a chance to put someone over.

Post match Undertaker beats up the referee to blow off some steam.

We recap Chavo Guerrero vs. Rey Mysterio. Chavo claimed that Rey was sponging off of the Guerrero name (fair) and cost him the World Title. The feud ensued and this time it's Falls Count Anywhere.

Chavo Guerrero vs. Rey Mysterio

Vickie Guerrero is here with Chavo and it is Falls Count Anywhere. Chavo elbows him down to start but Rey slips out of a rollup and hammers away. The EDDIE chants begin as they head up top and then both crash down for the double knockdown. That's enough of the ring so they fight up to the entrance with Rey having to hurricanrana his way out of a powerbomb.

Rey knocks him into the barricade but is quickly Gory Bombed onto the same barricade to put them both down again. Chavo is draped over another

barricade for a clothesline to the back of the head but Chavo sends him head first into some hockey boards for two. There's a head first swing into a chair and it's time to fight into the crowd.

Rey gets in a few shots to the face and runs off the barricade to hit the seated senton for two more. They fight towards the ring, with the camera being knocked around quite a bit each time. It's finally into a bit of a clearing for a 619, setting up a crossbody off of a tunnel to give Rey the pin.

Rating: C-. This was only so good though they needed to have a more violent match/brawl like this one. Chavo is somehow managing to overcome a career that has not seen him as a major player for the most part so it was nice to see him working this well in such a role. That being said, it was a lot of walking around and punching, so they were only going to get so far.

Post match Vickie is REALLY not pleased.

William Regal vs. ???

The mystery opponent is...Chris Benoit, who is making a rather long awaited return. Benoit drives him into the corner to start so Regal start in on the arm. A headlock takeover has Regal down but Benoit fights up and wristlocks his way to freedom. Back up and the test of strength lets Regal bridge on his neck and then flip backwards, only to get caught in a bodyscissors.

Regal steps on the arm to get out so Benoit chops him into the rolling German suplexes. A headbutt busts them both open and Benoit's Swan Dive gets two. They head to the apron to tease the super German suplex but Regal knocks him out to the floor instead. That's fine with Benoit, who tries the Sharpshooter but gets kicked in the face for the block. Something like a hybrid dragon sleeper/abdominal stretch has Benoit in more trouble but he slips out and hammers on Regal's cut.

Some suplexes send Benoit flying but the Regal Stretch attempt is countered into a Crossface attempt, which sends Regal to the ropes. Back up and Regal ties the legs up to put on a dragon sleeper for some hard

neck cranking. That doesn't last long as Benoit grabs a dragon suplex and puts on the Crossface for the tap.

Rating: B. These two beat each other up for a long while and if it had some more time, it could have been a classic. Benoit hasn't missed a beat and I don't think anyone was expecting anything else. These two have always worked very well together and they made it work here again. Heck of a match and it's very nice to see Benoit back.

In the back, King Booker yells at Regal for not finding Finlay and doesn't want to hear excuses. Finlay comes up to say he's here to fight for the title so Booker yells at him as he leaves. Booker yells at Regal and tells him to get out, including a slap to the face. Regal drops him with one left hand.

We recap the main event. King Booker is World Champion and was scheduled to defend against Bobby Lashley. Then Teddy Long added Batista and Finlay to make it a four way earlier this week.

Batista and Bobby Lashley will see each other out there.

Smackdown World Title: King Booker vs. Finlay vs. Bobby Lashley vs. Batista

Booker, with Queen Sharmell, is defending and it is one fall to a finish. Finlay gets knocked outside to start so Booker gets double teamed in the corner until Finlay runs back in for the save. Lashley is tossed as well, leaving Batista to take the double teaming for a change. Finlay and Batista head to the floor so Lashley comes back in with a spinebuster for two on Booker.

Batista takes Lashley's place so Finlay and Booker double team him down again. An elbow to the face drops Batista but Finlay jumps Booker, sending JBL over the edge. Finlay sends him face first into the apron and then sits on his chest for two back inside. Batista comes back in and gets caught in a Fujiwara armbar. A Samoan drop doesn't get Batista out of trouble though as Finlay switches to a keylock, followed by a half crab to Lashley.

That's broken up as well and Booker kicks Finlay in the face for two. It's Lashley up with a gorilla press gutbuster for two on Finlay. That draws out the Leprechaun for a low blow, setting up Finlay's Shillelagh shot to Lashley. Batista is back in with a Jackhammer to Booker but has to knock Finlay down. We're down to Batista vs. Lashley, with the former nailing a fast spear for two.

Batista is busted open off of what might have been an accidental collision so Lashley hits him with a spinebuster. Finlay pulls Batista to the floor, leaving Booker to grab the Book End for two on Lashley. A kick to the face gets two more but it's Batista back in for spinebusters all around. The Batista Bomb hits Finlay but Lashley spears Batista, allowing Booker to pin Finlay to retain.

Rating: B-. It was a smart move to let them all get in there and do their things in shorter bursts than trying to have something coherent for all four of them. Booker retaining is fine, even if it seems pretty clear that he is just keeping the title war for Batista. This was a well put together match and they went with the best way out of it that they had available. Nice job here, especially for a match with about two days' announcement.

Overall Rating: B. Where the heck did this come from? This was in and out in a hurry at just over two and a half hours with three very good matches included. WWE has a strong track record of surprises when it comes to shows like this, as the card looked terrible coming in. Maybe it is the lack of expectations but what we got here worked rather well and that was a great surprise.

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Smackdown – October 6, 2006: I'm Not Sure What Else They Can Do

Smackdown

Date: October 6, 2006

Location: Kansas Coliseum, Wichita, Kansas

Attendance: 5,585

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's the go home show for No Mercy and I'm not sure what else there is to set up for the show. The card has been set in stone for a good while now and while there are still a few things that could be firmed up, everything else is ready. Hopefully they keep the interest up, though a boost would certainly help things out a lot. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

King Booker, with Queen Sharmell, is ready to make Bobby Lashley pick Batista as his poison tonight.

Bobby Lashley is cool with that and picks Finlay as Booker's poison. No matter what happens though, nothing changes for Sunday.

Rey Mysterio/Matt Hardy vs. Gregory Helms/Chavo Guerrero

Take two feuds and mix them together. Vickie Guerrero is here with Chavo. Rey wants Chavo to start but gets Helms instead,

meaning it's quickly off to Hardy to hammer away. A springboard ax handle to Helms' shoulder connects but he spinebusters Rey down to take over. Now Chavo is willing to come in for a few cheap shots before handing it back to Helms. That means a drop toehold into the corner and everything breaks down in a hurry.

Helms hits a Codebreaker on Hardy and grabs a triangle choke, followed by some stomping from Chavo. The Side Effect gets Matt out of trouble and it's the lukewarm tag to Rey to clean house. There's the big kick to Chavo's head and Poetry in Motion sets up the hurricanrana into the 619. Rey Drops The Dime and pins Helms, with commentary not even throwing out a token mention of the Cruiserweight Title.

Rating: C. Totally run of the mill tag match here but it worked out fine for what it was supposed to do. I'm still not thrilled with the Cruiserweight Title being the most worthless belt I've seen in years. Hardy can't go after the thing and there is no mention of someone wanting to be champion, so the little value it already has goes lower and lower every day.

Maryse welcomes us back to the show, which is a rather obvious excuse to show off...yeah I think you get this one.

Elijah Burke vs. Tatanka

Sylvester Terkay is here with Burke, who praises himself before the match. Terkay offers a distraction and Burke gets in a cheap shot, only to get chopped down in a hurry. Burke gets in a knee and hits a dropkick in the corner, followed by a driving shoulder to keep Tatanka in trouble. The running Vader Bomb elbow gets two and the chinlock goes on. Tatanka fights up with a flapjack and the Papoose To Go, followed by the top rope chop to the head for two more. Terkay offers a distraction though and Burke hammers away, allowing Terkay to get in a cheap shot. Burke hits a Stroke for the pin.

Rating: D+. They're doing the right things with Burke and

Terkey here but nothing is clicking. Burke has the charisma and Terkey is the muscle, which is a formula that has worked for years but it isn't working for them. Granted having to cheat to beat Tatanka isn't going to make things better for them. This Tatanka gets cheated story needs to wrap up too, as it is approaching a few months now.

Trailer for the Marine.

King Booker asks Finlay if he will lay down for the king, but Finlay asks William Regal if he would do the same. Regal says of course he would, but Finlay isn't going to do it. Booker: "DON'T DO THIS! DON'T DO THIS!"

King Booker vs. Finlay

Non-title and Queen Sharmell is here too. Sharmell offers an early distraction so Booker can jump him from behind for an early two. Booker hammers away but Finlay shows him how it's really done and grabs the chinlock. Some forearms keep Booker down and there's a stomp to the ribs, followed by an elbow to the jaw.

Booker gets sent shoulder first into the post and Finlay grabs another chinlock as he continues with the simple yet effective offense. They exchange forearms until Booker drops him with a side kick. Cue the Leprechaun with a mouse to scare Sharmell and the distraction lets Finlay get in a Shillelagh shot for the pin.

Rating: C-. Not much to this one but that wasn't the point. This was about showing Booker as a bit weaker than you might expect and they had a short match to prove the point. You don't need to do much more than that here, though Finlay continues to look completely comfortable against anyone in there. I know he isn't going to be a long term main eventer, but he's really good in the brawling enforcer role.

Bobby Lashley vs. Batista

We get the big staredown and handshake to start. They shove each other around and the test of strength goes nowhere. Lashley backs him into the ropes to escape a headlock and then runs Batista over with a shoulder. Batista hits a shoulder of his own but it's way too early for the Batista Bomb. Instead Batista pulls him down into a chinlock with a bodyscissors, followed by the shoulders in the corner. A big boot cuts off Lashley's comeback attempt but a double clothesline gives us a double knockdown. Cue Finlay to jump Batista for the DQ.

Rating: C. This was a bit more fun but it was exactly the same as the previous match: there was no point in trying to do anything here because the entire point was to get them in the ring and then do the DQ. There is nothing wrong with that and they did things as they were supposed to. Good enough stuff here, and Lashley hanging in there with Batista makes him look better.

Post match the beatdown is on with King Booker coming in to go after Lashley. Cue Teddy Long to say enough of this, because we'll just make Sunday's match a fatal four way. Dang that's rather unfair to Lashley.

Post break Booker and Sharmell yell at Long but Batista, Finlay and Lashley come in to yell/thank Teddy as well. Long doesn't want to hear it and makes the tag main event.

Sylvan vs. Jimmy Wang Yang

Yang talks about how he likes NASCAR, cold beer and beating people up. There are no fast cars or beer around here, so that leaves a bad Roddy Piper knockoff line instead. Yang kicks him down for an early one as JBL freaks out about everything Yang related. Sylvan is back up with a clothesline and a bearhug, which is broken up in a hurry for the clothesline comeback. A missile dropkick gives Yang two and a kick to the face gets the same. Yang tries a victory roll but Sylvan stacks him up and grabs the rope for the pin.

Rating: D. It says a lot when even WWE seems to have given up on the Yang gimmick so soon. There is nothing to the whole thing other than a one note joke and it wasn't that funny in the first place. Sylvan isn't much better, but at least they have dropped the ambassador thing and are going with him as a generic foreign heel, which fits him a bit better. Not much better mind you, but it is an improvement.

Clip from the No Mercy press conference.

Here is MVP for a chat on the platform. He talks about how everything is changing but no one is ready for his debut. JBL loses it because MVP hasn't even gotten in the ring yet.

Mr. Kennedy is in a black shirt in a black room and talks about how successful Undertaker has been through his mind games over the years. Last week Kennedy came face to face with it but he wasn't scared. All of those plans mean nothing to him and nothing will prepare Undertaker for the devastation coming for him at No Mercy.

Michelle McCool, KC James and Idol Stevens are ready for Paul London/Brian Kendrick/Ashley Massaro.

Michelle McCool vs. Ashley Massaro

Both tag teams are here too. They trade shoulders to the ribs in the corner to start as JBL is in quite the bit of lust. Ashley hits her in the back and puts on an abdominal stretch, followed by the Boston crab. KC James pulls McCool to the ropes so Ashley tries a high crossbody, only to have Michelle roll through and grab the trunks for the pin.

Rating: D. Again, I think you get the point here and they aren't exactly trying to hide that fact. That makes all the sense in the world but points to Ashley for being able to hang in there well enough. I know she isn't a career wrestler but she is trying out there and you can see it even in such a short match.

Clips from the Marine premiere at Camp Pendleton.

No Mercy rundown.

King Booker/Finlay vs. Bobby Lashley/Batista

Finlay jumps Batista to start but Batista takes him into the corner for the shoulders to the ribs. They head outside with Batista hitting a clothesline and bringing it back inside so Lashley can come in. Booker gets the tag and walks into a suplex for two with Finlay having to make the save. They head outside again with Booker sending him into the steps, allowing Finlay to grab a chinlock. A knee to the ribs gets two on Lashley and Booker adds a basement dropkick to the face for the same.

Lashley suplexes his way out of a front facelock (Booker's stunned face is great) but Finlay is back in with some elbows to the face. Booker takes Lashley outside again and starts striking away, followed by a crossface from Finlay back inside. Lashley powers over for the tag to Batista but Booker has the referee so we keep going (still a classic spot). A spear gets Lashley out of trouble and the hot tag brings in Batista, only to have William Regal come in for the DQ.

Rating: C-. Much like the two singles matches, this wasn't about the action itself but rather having the wrestlers in the ring before Sunday. It's coming off like WWE has no confidence in the title match as you don't often see two more people thrown in two days before. It should be fine, but they aren't really hiding how B level show the four way is starting to feel.

Post match Batista cleans house and Lashley doesn't look happy to end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. This was the hard sell show for the pay per view and while they hit all of the bases, it still isn't the most interesting show. No Mercy doesn't feel like a major

pay per view and there isn't much they can do to get around that. The show wasn't the worst and it did its job, but No Mercy isn't an interesting show no matter how much they do on the go home effort. They were trying, but there is a limit to what can be done.

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Smackdown – September 29, 2006: Cena Brought It

Smackdown

Date: September 29, 2006

Location: Convention Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're less two weeks away from No Mercy and most of the card is set. That's a good situation to be in as it means the next two weeks can be spent firming everything up and adding something here and there. This week is about the guest star though, as John Cena is here for a six man main event. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

We open with a look at King Booker's Court invading Raw and making John Cena kiss Booker's foot. Of course you know this means match.

Here's Cena, with a banged up arm, to get things going. Before he gets into dealing with Booker and company, he is glad to be back on Smackdown because it's like hosting Saturday Night Live. He's the WWE Champion again and now he has a new movie coming out. Cena: "Go and see it a million times."

Cena is glad to have the big fist and Tony Chimmel as the ring announcer. Then there's JBL, who Cena remembers taking a beating the last time they saw him. Next to JBL is Michael Cole, the Whitney Houston to his Bobby Brown, and Cena has a gift for him. After handing Cole some balls, Cena talks about King Booker's Court being here, but so are Batista and Bobby Lashley. Tonight, the odds are even.

Video on Vickie Guerrero joining forces with her nephew Chavo.

Rey Mysterio vs. Sylvester Terkay

Elijah Burke is here with Terkay...who tells Burke to take his place.

Rey Mysterio vs. Elijah Burke

Rey snaps off a headscissors to start as JBL goes into a rant about how Mysterio's success in Mexico means nothing in the USA. Burke knocks him into the corner as we see the Guerreros being rather pleased in the back. That's leg to in a hurry but Burke misses the top rope elbow. As JBL again called Terkay and Burke the best interracial team since the APA, Mysterio hits the spinning springboard crossbody to put Burke down. The 619 lets Rey Drop The Dime for the pin.

Rating: C-. Not much to this one other than Burke taking a loss that he probably didn't need to lose. Terkay continues to be the star of the team, but that doesn't mean his partner needs to be losing. Mysterio needed the boost on the way towards his match against Chavo at No Mercy,

but I would think there is someone better to take the loss than Burke.

Post match Terkay jumps Mysterio from behind and lays him out with a Muscle Buster. We see the Guerreros seeming rather pleased in the back.

Ashley Massaro introduces a video on Brian Kendrick and Paul London.

Pit Bulls vs. KC James/Idol Stevens

The winners get a Tag Team Title shot at No Mercy and Michelle McCool is here with James and Stevens. Stevens gets pounded down to start so it's off to James to get taken into the wrong corner. A kick to the chest gets two on James as JBL gets on Cole for playing soccer. Everything breaks down in a hurry and Kash's moonsault press gets two on James. A small package has James in trouble but McCool turns it over to give James the pin.

Rating: C. Again, not much time to go anywhere but it could have been a lot worse. The problem is we've already seen Kendrick and London beat both teams so there is only so much interest in watching either of them get another shot. The lack of time might be annoying, but it was the right move here.

Marine video. Just have the thing come out already.

Matt Hardy vs. Chavo Guerrero

They trade some standing switches to start until Hardy drops him with a right hand. Back up and Chavo pulls Matt off the middle rope for a crash and it's off to a seated armbar. That's broken up as well and Matt hits some clotheslines into a backdrop. The bulldog gets two and there's the middle rope legdrop. Vickie Guerrero gets on the apron for a distraction though, allowing Gregory Helms to come in for the real distraction. That's enough for Chavo to grab a tornado DDT into the frog splash for the pin.

Rating: C. Two talented guys getting to do their thing for a few minutes is almost always going to work and the interferences both made sense. Chavo is starting to feel like more of a player than Eddie's sidekick and while I'm not sure how far up the ladder he can go, it's nice to see

someone as talented as he is finally getting a chance of his own outside of the Cruiserweight Title.

Post match, Helms hits Hardy with a Shining Wizard.

This Week In Wrestling History: Andre the Giant knocked out Gorilla Monsoon in a boxing match.

Here's Mr. Kennedy to bid farewell to Undertaker. There is a black wreath in the ring as Kennedy talks about how this is a tribute. Undertaker has taken on and beaten some of the all time greats and we see a video package on his career. All of those accolades leave him with nothing to prove though, which makes Kennedy feel bad about No Mercy. He doesn't want to end Undertaker's legacy, so he certainly doesn't want to face him at Wrestlemania.

Therefore, as a man of good conscience, he cannot wrestle Undertaker at No Mercy. Cue Undertaker and, after about a five minute entrance, he promises to show no mercy and make Kennedy rest in peace. Then Kennedy goes to hit him with the microphone but it blows up in his hand to send him running.

King Booker's Court is ready to make John Cena, Batista and Bobby Lashley hail the king tonight.

Commercial for Eric Bischoff's Controversy Creates Cash book.

Miz vs. Tatanka

Miz sings his version of Sexy Back on the way to the ring. JBL: "I hate him." Tatanka whips him into the corner to start but Miz gets out to the apron. A slide between the legs lets Miz hit the warpath as JBL makes every Native American joke he can think of in the first minute. Miz's Russian leg sweep gets two but Tatanka is back with his own for one. Now it's Tatanka going on the warpath but Miz rolls him up with trunks for the fast win.

Rating: D+. The best thing about the way they are pushing Miz is he is racking up wins while not overstaying his welcome. I don't think any of his matches have gone more than about five minutes or so and he is out

there almost every week. Keep him warm, give him something to do and build him up a bit. This isn't rocket science and what they're doing is working well for an early stage.

Teddy Long is proud about last week's debut being the second highest viewed show among adults on Friday night. Next week, Bobby Lashley and King Booker will pick each other's poisons and you can find out their picks over the weekend on WWE.com.

Jimmy Wang Yang is a redneck and ready to face Sylvan.

Jimmy Wang Yang vs. Sylvan

Yang has the Confederate flag on his vest (JBL: "Who is he sponsored by? George Wallace?") and comes out to I Might Have To Punch Someone Tonight. Sylvan hits him in the face to start but walks into a headscissors into a dropkick. A toss sends Sylvan out to the floor for a crash as Cole compares Yang to Dick Murdoch to needle JBL in a funny bit.

JBL: "I hate you. I hate everyone in the ring. The referee is Canadian so I hate him too." Yang jawbreaks his way out of a chinlock and hammers away, including a spinwheel kick. Sylvan catches a charge in the corner though and grabs a rollup with feet on the ropes for the pin.

Rating: C-. As has been the case tonight, not much in the way of a match but at least the JBL rants were funny. Yang losing doesn't matter in the slightest as he is nothing more than a goofy one note character who was never going to be a big star. Sylvan isn't either, but that reaction in Montreal last week probably earned him one more win, which is fine.

Vito says it's the man that makes the dress.

MVP has signed with Smackdown and we get clips from his signing press conference. He debuts at No Mercy.

No Mercy rundown.

King Booker/Finlay/William Regal vs. John Cena/Batista/Bobby Lashley

This does feel like a big match and we see a clip of Cena getting beaten

down on Raw during the entrances. It's a big brawl in the aisle to start before the bell and we take a break. Joined in progress with Batista shouldering Regal in the corner and nailing the spinebuster, which draws Finlay in for an early save. Booker comes in to hammer away on Batista, who is right back with the Jackhammer.

It's off to Lashley, who gets kicked in the face by Booker. That's fine with Lashley as he counters a leapfrog into a powerslam to plant Booker for two. Finlay comes in and gets caught in a gorilla press gutbuster but Lashley misses a charge into the post. He's fine enough to make the tag to Cena and everything breaks down with Cena cleaning house. The STF to Booker is broken up and the Leprechaun slips Finlay the Shillelagh to hit Cena in the bad arm.

We take a break and come back with Regal working on the arm as only Regal can do. The villains take turns working on the arm until Cena suplexes Finlay away. Finlay pops back up with a clothesline though and the armbars goes on again. Another clothesline gives Finlay two and it's back to Booker, who (after a bit of mistiming) misses the side kick to hit the ropes. Lashley gets the hot tag to clean house as everything breaks down. Batista almost gets caught with the ax kick but Lashley spears Booker down for the pin.

Rating: B-. This was a pretty long match for a TV main event but it felt like it was something that mattered and that makes up for the problems. Above all else, the star power was here as you had this week's version of the Super Best Friends against the top Smackdown villains and his cronies. That sounds like an important match and it worked out rather well, even if it was that long.

Post match Edge runs in to spear Cena to end the show.

Overall Rating: C. Cena brought the star power to the main event and that's what mattered the most here, but the rest of the show was a bunch of quick matches (similar to this week's Raw but not that bad). That made it feel more like a show that wasn't designed to be a big deal on its own but rather a way to build towards the future. That's not a bad thing, but it doesn't make for the most thrilling show.

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Smackdown – September 22, 2006: Welcome To The New Home

Smackdown

Date: September 22, 2006

Location: Bell Centre, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

Attendance: 13,500

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're now officially on the way to No Mercy and we even have a main event for the show. Last week Bobby Lashley became the new #1 contender to King Booker, but tonight Booker has to face Vito. That's what we're getting on a Season Premiere as the show moves to a new network with the CW. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

King Booker and Queen Sharmell come in to see Teddy Long. They don't like that Booker's hands are going to be sullied by a match with Vito because everything they have is the finest. After a look at Sharmell's gown, Teddy has good news for them: Vito has stepped aside and Undertaker will face him instead. The accents are dropped in a hurry and panic sets in. So why

advertise Vito when you could advertise Undertaker?

New opening sequence, featuring the wrestlers turning into comic book style caricatures.

William Regal/Finlay vs. Batista/Bobby Lashley

Batista wants to start with Finlay but gets jumped by Regal instead. That goes as well as you would expect for Regal, who gets sent into the corner for the shoulders to the ribs. Finlay runs away from Batista on the floor so Batista settles for a spinebuster to Regal instead. Lashley comes in for a double delayed vertical suplex (not bad) and a snap suplex gets two on Regal. It's off to Finlay, who gets caught in a torture rack dropped into a backbreaker but a low bridge puts Lashley on the floor.

Regal nails a clothesline and the villains (you know they're villains because Regal's trunks say "villain") take over with Finlay dropping some elbows. It's back to Finlay, who mocks Lashley for not being able to make the tag and kicks him in the ribs like an evil one would do. Regal's t-bone suplex gets two as JBL talks about how much he can't stand the French, Canadians or French Canadians. Regal jumps Batista on the apron so Batista comes in sans tag and cleans house. The Shillelagh is taken away from Regal so Lashley can nail the spear for the pin.

Rating: C. Nicely done here as they give Lashley a bit of a boost and let Batista vs. Finlay stay on the burner, likely for a showdown at No Mercy. They didn't have much time here but the formula can work out well in short bursts too so this worked out fine. Good choice for an opener on the new network too, with a star like Batista and a hard hitting fight to give Lashley some nice exposure.

Here's Layla, who promises to make Smackdown hot and dances a lot. Cue Krystal to say not so fast because she's the hot one, meaning the brawl is on. Jillian Hall runs in for the save and

rips off Krystal's top. Then she rips off Layla's top, followed by her own. And we move on.

Long video on Rey Mysterio and Chavo Guerrero being friends/family and then splitting up over Chavo and Vickie Guerrero not liking Rey cashing in on the Guerrero name. Still a totally fair point.

Matt Hardy vs. Gregory Helms

Non-title. They go straight at it with Helms being backdropped out to the floor. Back in and Helms slips out of something off the top and snaps Hardy throat first across the top. A swinging neckbreaker gives Helms two and an elbow drop gets the same. The chinlock doesn't last long so Helms hits what would eventually become the Codebreaker for two more.

Hardy jawbreaks his way out of another chinlock and grabs the Side Effect for two. A moonsault press gets two on more on Helms, who is right back with the Shining Wizard for the same. Helms goes for the turnbuckle pad so the referee puts it back on, allowing Hardy to hit a low blow into the rollup pin (ala Helms last week).

Rating: C. Hardy doing the same thing to Helms as the previous week was a nice touch, but I'm still not sure what the point of this feud is if Hardy can't (and doesn't seem interested in) win the Cruiserweight Title. The wrestling was fine enough, but it feels like we're going in circles here. I know the title doesn't mean anything, so why is it even a thing at this point?

Miz promises to win his next match.

Jimmy Wang Yang thought about debuting tonight but doesn't feel very comfortable in Montreal. Not too many rednecks you see, so we'll do it in Oklahoma next week.

Miz vs. Funaki

They fight over wrist control to start with Miz wristdragging him down. Another takedown sets up a suplex, followed by the Mizard of Oz (which lands in a reverse DDT this time instead of a neckbreaker) to keep Miz undefeated. Keeping Miz short is the right idea at the moment.

Rey Mysterio has had it with the Guerreros and today is the first day of the rest of his life.

Video on the Marine.

Rey Mysterio vs. Chavo Guerrero

Vickie Guerrero is here with Chavo. They start fast again with Rey hammering away to take it to the floor. The fight goes into the crowd with Rey still getting the better of things until his hurricanrana is sent into the barricade. Things go back into the crowd and Rey sends him into the barricade over and over. Rey doesn't seem to notice that the referee is telling him it's over and they get back to ringside with Chavo getting kicked in the ribs. Vickie throws Chavo a chair, which Rey dropkicks off his face. Vickie's interference doesn't work as Rey hammers away again and referees come in to break it up. I'm not sure this was a match.

Rating: C. It wasn't much of a match as it was much more of a brawl than anything else, but I want to see these two fight again, which is a lot more than I could say coming in. You could feel the anger and hatred here and that's the best thing that could happen in a segment like this. Good stuff and I'm sure No Mercy waits for them.

Maryse welcomes us back to the show. I think you can get why she has a job.

Tag Team Titles: Brian Kendrick/Paul London vs. Pit Bulls vs. KC James/Idol Stevens

London and Kendrick are defending and Michelle McCool is here

with James and Stevens. It's a brawl to start with James, Kendrick and Noble getting things going. The Pitbulls beat on Stevens and Kash pounds him down for two. Stevens breaks that up and Kash gets knocked down into the corner, including a snapmare for two more.

Kendrick comes back and hammers away, allowing the hot tag off to London to pick the pace way up. A dropkick gets two on Stevens with the Pit Bulls making the save. Michelle gets on the apron for no apparent reason as Kash brainbusters London. Sliced Bread takes Kash down but Stevens hits a heck of a spinebuster on Kendrick. Noble sends him outside and rolls London up, only to get reversed into another rollup for the pin.

Rating: C+. As the champs tend to do, they got in and out without wasting time and had a high energy match. They really have become one of the most consistently entertaining things on Smackdown and this should be the blowoff to the three way feud. I'm sure it won't be because there aren't any other teams to come after them, but at least they had a nice match here.

Elijah Burke introduces Sylvester Terkay. Sylvester: "I'm Sylvester Terkay." End of segment.

Video on Batista visiting the Philippines.

Here's Sylvan to a crazy hero's welcome and he seems fired up to be here. After saying something in French, we're ready to go.

Sylvan vs. Tatanka

Sylvan chops away to start but Tatanka comes back with some right hands and is booed out of the building. A backbreaker sets up a chinlock but Sylvan is back with a spinebuster. There's a dropkick to put Tatanka down again and a spinning belly to back slam gets two more. Tatanka tries a sunset flip

but Sylvan sits down and grabs the rope for the pin.

Rating: D+. The wrestling was nothing to see here but WOW that crowd was behind Sylvan. That is the kind of thing that has never happened before and will probably never happen again, but thankfully WWE was smart enough to capitalize on it once. Let the fans have something to cheer and let a scrub like Tatanka take another loss. This was nice to see and I don't get to say that very often.

John Cena visits Teddy Long and thanks him for the contract offer that was ready had Cena lost at Unforgiven. Long has an idea: Cena visits Smackdown next week and teams with Batista and Bobby Lashley against William Regal/Finlay/King Booker. Cena is in and leaves so Long dances in celebration.

No Mercy rundown with Batista vs. Finlay and Mysterio vs. Guerrero announced.

King Booker vs. Undertaker

Non-title, Sharmell is here with Booker and Mr. Kennedy is on commentary. Kennedy gets freaked out by Undertaker's entrance and JBL isn't much better. Undertaker strikes away to start and knocks Booker to the floor early on. We take a break and come back with Undertaker hammering away even more, setting up the knuckle lock lift to have Booker in more trouble. The arm is wrapped around the top rope but Old School is broken up.

A Sharmell distraction lets Booker grab a superplex and it's time to choke on the ropes. Booker knocks him outside for a ram into the steps, followed by a DDT for two. The side kick misses though and Undertaker hits a jumping clothesline. Snake Eyes into the big boot gets two but Booker is back with the jumping kick to the face. Undertaker is right back to load up the Tombstone but Booker slips out and hits a low blow for the DQ.

Rating: C. As has been the case almost all night, this was all

about making an appearance rather than the match itself. Undertaker being in the ring is still a treat and it was a good idea to have him on a special show. These two haven't always had the best chemistry but they weren't out there very long and it's not like the bad finish came after a pay per view title match.

Post match here's Bobby Lashley to throw Booker back inside, meaning it's a chokeslam and Tombstone. Undertaker stares down at Kennedy to end the show.

Overall Rating: B-. This was a show where the wrestling did not really matter but the presentation was very good. For a season premiere on a new network, they did a great job of keeping things moving and having all of the big names come in and out throughout the show. They set up things both for the pay per view and next week so some fans might want to come back again. I don't get impressed by WWE very often but they did a rather nice job here and that's great to see.

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Smackdown – September 15, 2006: Fix That Soon

Smackdown

Date: September 15, 2006

Location: DCU Arena, Worcester, Massachusetts

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're on the way to getting ready for No Mercy and the big story coming out of last week was Finlay attacking Batista to cost him the World Title. The post match beatdown would suggest a hoss fight between Finlay and Batista, which could make for one heck of a brawl. I'm not sure what else to expect from this one so let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Here's Finlay, with the Leprechaun (under a sheet), to get things going. Finlay reminds us that he loves to fight and we see a clip of the end of last week's show with Batista being left bloodied. Back in the arena, Finlay talks about taking Batista's manhood...but here's Bobby Lashley to interrupt. What Finlay did last week was an act of cowardice and the luck of the Irish has just run out. Cue Teddy Long to make the main event with the winner facing King Booker at No Mercy for the title. The brawl is nearly on with the Leprechaun attacking Finlay by mistake. Finlay throws him to the floor.

Post break, William Regal fires up Finlay before the main event.

Gregory Helms vs. Matt Hardy

Non-title and Matt comes in through the crowd to jump Helms from behind. The Side Effect sends Helms out to the floor but he's right back in with an elbow to the face. Matt is bleeding from the nose as a result and Helms grabs a half crab. That's

enough to make Matt crawl over to the rope so the chinlock goes on. Matt suplexes his way to freedom and hits the middle rope legdrop for two. The referee gets bumped off the kickout though and Helms hits Hardy low for the DQ.

Rating: C-. I'm glad to see the champ actually win a match but I'm not sure where this is going to go. I don't need to see Hardy feuding with the Cruiserweight Champion when he isn't a cruiserweight, but who else is supposed to feud with Helms for the title at this point? The match was fine, though I'm not sure where Helms is going next.

Rey Mysterio and his rather young son Dominik are here. Dean Malenko says hi.

Jimmy Wang Yang is tired of the "Orientals" straight off the boat not being able to pronounce things. He's a real redneck from Georgia though.

The Miz vs. Scotty 2 Hotty

Scotty knocks him down to start but Miz is back up with a running shoulder. Miz flips out of a hiptoss and snaps off a good armdrag. The stomping ensues in the corner and a neckbreaker lets Miz choke. JBL freaks out over Cole comparing him to Miz, especially when Cole lists off Miz's reality shows as accomplishments. JBL: "SO WAS HULK HOGAN'S SON NICK!" Scotty fights up with a flying forearm and the Worm is loaded up but Miz bails to the apron before Scotty...whatever it is that he does. Miz snaps his neck across the top and hits a swinging neckbreaker (the Mizard of Oz) for the pin.

Rating: D+. I know it's not that big of a deal but Miz got in a few moves here and looked a bit more polished than usual. Miz has a very long way to go but there is a charisma to him that makes me want to keep watching him. If nothing else, hearing JBL lose his mind over everything Miz does is worth a laugh.

Remember John Cena being in the Marine? He's still in it.

Brian Kendrick vs. Kid Kash vs. Idol Stevens

Paul London, Ashley, KC James, Michelle McCool and Jamie Noble are all at ringside. Kash and Stevens slug it out to start but commentary ignores the match to talk about King Booker being invited to ECW next week. Kash and Stevens start double teaming Kendrick but get in the required fight over the cover. Kendrick fights up and dropkicks them both down but Kash's release suplex cuts him off. Stevens is sent outside though and it's a tornado DDT to give Kendrick the pin on Kash.

Rating: C. It was a short match but the time was spent on nothing but action, which is all you can hope for in a match like this. Kendrick and London continue looking good and it's nice to have a few teams challenging them for a change. I'm not sure I can imagine them losing the titles, but it's nice to have something going on instead of having the champions floating around.

William Regal is talking to King Booker and Queen Sharmell. Finlay comes in and Booker wants to talk about the #1 contenders match. The Court cannot be shaken up but Finlay is fighting tonight.

Rey Mysterio leaves Dominik in the locker room to watch his match. Oh Rey, you glorious moron.

Rey Mysterio vs. Mr. Kennedy

Non-title. During Rey's entrance, Chavo and Vickie Guerrero go into the locker room to watch the match with Dominik. Kennedy takes him to the mat and grabs a chinlock as Cole goes into a rant about the Guerreros. Rey's springboard crossbody is broken up and Kennedy slams him down, setting up a reverse chinlock. Back up and a hard whip into the corner gives Kennedy two more, followed by a spinebuster to cut Rey off again.

Kennedy keeps mixing things up (thank you) with a seated abdominal stretch. Mysterio gets up again and this time it's the wheelbarrow bulld...actually a DDT for a change, followed by a kick to the head for two. Back up and Kennedy catapults him chest first into the buckle (which Cole sees as head first into the post, despite the foot and a half between the two). Rey is right back with the 619 to send Kennedy outside and a springboard corkscrew dive takes Kennedy down again.

We take a break and come back with Kennedy stomping away in the corner. Rey's back is sent hard into the corner with his back bending around the post for a nasty landing. The standing abdominal stretch goes on this time as JBL explodes about dealing with problems while in the ring and yells at Cole for defending Mysterio. Those rants are still great. Kennedy puts Rey down but misses the Kenton Bomb, allowing Mysterio to get two off a springboard seated senton. Cue the Guerreros with Dominik for a distraction though and Kennedy grabs the rollup pin.

Rating: C+. This was kind of a weird one as they were building to a good match but it was pretty clear that something was going to happen with the Guerreros and Dominik. That's what should have happened but I was into the match and the ending is a bit annoying. Still though, good stuff here as they continue the idea of Rey being distracted and don't have a champion lose.

We get a special message pair for by MVP's worldwide fan base.

MVP talks about how he is not scared to sign a contract with Smackdown. Teddy Long needs to bring the check and sign him up.

Vito vs. William Regal

Regal is so angry at Vito's actions last week that he dropped the lawsuit to set up this match. Vito grabs a headlock so Regal rolls him up, meaning it's time for the blurry

censoring. JBL loses it again over what he is having to watch as Regal forearms Vito down without much effort. JBL: "WHY CAN HE NOT KEEP HIS DRESS DOWN??? HE'S LIKE HALF OF OUR DIVAS!" Vito makes the comeback and pulls the dress up, only to get taken down into a hammerlock. Back up and Vito sends him outside so Regal tries a sunset flip, only to have Vito sit down on it (with the dress going over Regal's face) for the pin.

Rating: D. Regal and JBL made this a lot easier to sit through and I guess it's an upgrade over having Vito beat up jobbers in the same way over and over again. At least he's sticking with the lower level stuff and it's not like this is taking up any serious time week to week. It's not funny, but it could be a heck of a lot worse.

Regal's stunned face makes up for a lot of this.

Raw Rebound.

King Booker isn't happy with Teddy Long, who isn't overly worried. Booker promises to beat everyone but here's Vito to interrupt. That doesn't please Booker, so Vito says try him. Teddy makes the match for next week so Vito raises the dress. So much for everything I said a few minutes ago.

Sylvester Terkay vs. Todd Smith

Smith grabs a headlock to start and gets shoved down for his efforts. Terkay knees him in the ribs as we hear about how awesome Terkay is at everything. A belly to back suplex puts Smith down for some forearms to the face (JBL on Terkay and Elijah Burke: "We have not seen an interracial team as good as this since the APA.") and an armbar makes Smith tap. Smith would do a bit better when he bulked up, grew a heck of a beard and changed his name to Ivar.

Fit Finlay vs. Bobby Lashley

The winner gets King Booker, on commentary with Queen Sharmell (and William Regal off headset), for the title at No Mercy. They take their time to start with Lashley backing him into the corner. A shoulder puts Finlay down and the cover sends him bailing out to the floor. Back in and Finlay sends him outside for a change but gets run over again.

We take a break and come back with Finlay working on the leg, which he damaged during the break. The leg is sent into the post and we hit the half crab as Cole accuses Booker of sweating Crisco. For some reason this is deemed racist so we'll cut back to Lashley kicking Finlay in the face to start the comeback. A clothesline to the back of the head gives Lashley two and a torture rack goes on.

Lashley drops down into a backbreaker for two so Regal throws in a chair for a distraction. Finlay grabs the Shillelagh but can't swing it, as Lashley gorilla presses him instead. Regal offers another distraction so the Leprechaun throws Finlay the Shillelagh again but this time the referee sees him hit Lashley for the DQ.

Rating: C. These two know each other rather well and they had a nice match here, as Finlay stays strong and Lashley gets to move on to something bigger and more important. What we got here did its job well enough and could set up some issues with Booker and Finlay going forward, even if it's a little early to consider breaking up the Court so far.

Post match the beatdown is on but here's Batista (from his car in the parking lot, with his music playing) with a pipe to go after Finlay. Lashley spears Booker to the floor (Booker: "I'M GONNA BUST YO A**!") to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. It's more of the same from Smackdown as there are enough things going on around here to make me like the show but at the same time, a lot of the stuff just makes me want to move to anything else. The show was far from

terrible, but at the same time, the lower card still has some major holes. Fix those things up and this is probably the best show going at the moment, assuming it isn't already.

Smackdown – September 8, 2006: What Should Have Been

Smackdown

Date: September 8, 2006

Location: Civic Center, Columbus, Georgia

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

We have a major match this time around as Batista is challenging Booker T. for the World Title in a rematch from Summerslam. In other words, this is the big special edition episode since there is no Smackdown pay per view this month. These things have hit and miss results but hopefully they can live up to the hype. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

Opening sequence.

JBL and Cole are on their feet for their intro this week. I don't remember the last time I saw that. Anyway they preview the main event.

Finlay vs. Rey Mysterio

Rey is a bit shaken up after what Chavo and Vickie Guerrero have been up to as of late. The Leprechaun is seen looking from underneath the ring skirt during Rey's entrance. Eh fair enough as it's not like he's a surprise most of the time. Finlay powers him around to start so Rey kicks at the knee in

a smart move. That earns him a hard atomic drop to cut him down again, allowing Finlay to wrestle him down without much effort. The headlock goes on for a bit, followed by a gutwrench suplex for two on Rey.

We take a break and come back with Rey still not all there and getting put into a nerve hold as a result. That lasts all of five seconds as Rey is back up with a headscissors for two, only to get caught in the Tree of Woe. A backbreaker out of the corner gets two and Finlay drives him back first into the corner again.

The some city in Ireland crab goes on but Rey gets a leg out and kicks Finlay in the face. That doesn't work on someone as mean as Finlay, so he switches to a kneeling half crab. Rey fights up again and starts kicking at the leg for the real comeback, including the springboard seated senton for two. Another springboard doesn't work though as Rey slips and it's the Celtic Cross for the pin.

Rating: C+. This was an interesting way to go as Rey was messed up in the head and Finlay was good enough to take advantage of what happened. Rey vs. the Guerreros seems like it could be a long form story but it is also nice to see Finlay getting a boost out of it. He has had a nice run in WWE so far and I could go for seeing a lot more of it soon.

Post match JBL gets in the ring to ask Rey what's wrong (or asking why the Guerreros think Rey is a piece of garbage) but Rey leaves without saying anything.

Mr. Kennedy vs. Danny Giamondo

Non-title and Kennedy says Giamondo is a former Olympic silver medalist in power lifting and a six time NCAA Champion. Cole can't find any of that information anywhere, even as Kennedy takes him into the ropes and chokes on the rope. The neck crank doesn't last long as Giamondo fights up and hammers away in the corner. That's about it though as Kennedy blocks a

superplex attempt and hits the Green Bay Plunge to win.

Post match Kennedy calls out Teddy Long to say he might go to Raw if John Cena comes to Smackdown. Long doesn't like that, so Kennedy can face the Undertaker at No Mercy. It's a meme for a reason.

Video on the Marine.

Michelle McCool/Teacher's Pets vs. Brian Kendrick/Paul London/Ashley Massaro

Stevens and London start things off with neither being able to get very far off a headlock. James comes in and gets his arm cranked, with everyone getting a shot in on said arm. Stevens low bridges London to the floor though and it's a chinlock back inside. London grabs a rollup for two and gets over for the hot tag to Kendrick. Everything breaks down with the women getting in a fight, with the focus being on the skirts flying up. Kendrick comes off the top with a sunset flip to James, with London adding a dropkick so Kendrick can get the pin.

Rating: C-. They didn't have much time here but the women being there does keep the match feeling different enough. The tag team division is hardly deep at the moment but there are enough teams out there for London and Kendrick to face for the next few...ok maybe not months but they should be fine at least through No Mercy. If nothing else, London and Kendrick are fun to watch.

Video on King Booker.

Vito comes out to do commentary for William Regal's match. Regal comes out to say this was supposed to be against Vito, but after last week, Regal was considering a sexual harassment lawsuit. As Vito shows off his legs, we have a replacement.

William Regal vs. Bobby Lashley

Vito is on commentary as Lashley powers Regal into the corner

to start and then pulls him back inside. Regal is sent outside and Vito pulls up the dress to show off the thong. That's enough to have Regal panicking again so he pulls Lashley face first into the steps instead. Back in and Regal slugs away in the corner, only to charge into a boot to the face. Lashley can't hit the powerslam but he can hit the spear for the pin.

Rating: C-. This was more about Vito, so at least he's doing something other than beating up jobbers. It's still not exactly a story that has any kind of legs to the whole thing but I'll take any kind of a change over the same stuff if it has to be around. I'm not sure how long this is going to go, but Regal and Vito could have some comedy possibilities.

Post match JBL runs away from Vito's handshake. Lashley shakes his hand though and there's your endorsement.

The Miz vs. Matt Hardy

Miz insults the crowd before the match, including the local Little League World Series Champions. JBL classes things up by making all kinds of gay jokes about Cole and Vito before switching to something a little better by saying it's stupid to brag about Miz being undefeated when he's 1-0.

Matt starts fast by pulling Miz out of the corner into a powerbomb but Miz knocks him down in a hurry. The chinlock doesn't last long as Miz fights up and hammers away as JBL is ranting about reality TV. Matt's middle rope elbow to the head gets two and he sends Miz outside for a slingshot dive. Back in and the referee gets bumped, allowing Gregory Helms to run down and shove Matt off the top. Miz grabs a rollup with tights for the pin.

Rating: C-. The action worked while it lasted and Miz getting to brag about being undefeated is going to be rather entertaining. I've been a fan of the guy for years and it's fun to see one of the most improbably rises in the history of wrestling. Miz isn't very good in the ring but he's a great

character and personality and that's what matters here.

Jimmy Wang Yang is still coming and doesn't like people think Asians are smart. He got straight B's!

Chavo Guerrero vs. Tatanka

Vickie Guerrero handles Chavo's intro and says he is dedicating this match to the Guerrero legacy. Tatanka works on the arm to start but Chavo dropkicks the knee out for a knockdown. Leg cranking ensues as JBL rants about everything Guerrero related he can think of. Tatanka fights back with the chops, including the top rope version. The Papoose To Go connects but Chavo gets his foot on the rope. That's enough to make Tatanka yell at the referee, allowing Chavo to jump him from behind. The frog splash is enough to finish Tatanka.

Rating: D+. Does Tatanka have photos of Vince with a sheep or something? He's far from the worst thing around but is there a reason he's getting on TV week after week? Nothing match of course, but I'm not sure why you would expect anything else. Chavo and Vickie should be fine as a team and odds are they are going to be a focal point for a long time to come.

MVP runs into Teddy Long and says he wants John Cena money to come to Smackdown. Long is tired of dealing with MVP's lawyers so MVP gets serious, meaning Long has to wipe the spit off of his face.

Video on Batista.

Smackdown World Title: King Booker vs. Batista

Booker is defending and Queen Sharmell handles the ALL HAIL KING BOOKER's this week. Before the match, Booker gives Batista a chance to bow down or take this whipping. The bell rings after the break with Batista unloading in a hurry. Batista hammers away in the corner and grabs a keylock of all things.

The shoulders in the corner send Booker bailing to the floor but Batista rams him into a few things for two back inside. Booker gets in a kick to the face for two and is stunned on the kickout. We take a break and come back with Batista unloading on the floor and glaring at Sharmell for daring to get involved. An ax kick to a hanging Batista drops him to the floor and the side slam gets two back inside.

Batista fights back again and hits his own side slam for two more but Booker uses the trunks to send him outside. After decking William Regal in the crowd, Batista comes back in with the spinebuster. Sharmell grabs a chair so the referee deals with her, allowing Finlay to come in with the Shillelagh shot to the head to retain the title.

Rating: C. One of the good things about these major shows is they build things up well enough to make you believe that something could happen. I'm not sure they need to do Batista vs. Booker III at No Mercy but Batista vs. Finlay could be a heck of a power match. Booker will likely have to face Batista again but I'm not sure if that happens so soon.

Post match Finlay unloads with the Shillelagh to bust Batista open. A shot into the exposed turnbuckle and a chair to the head leave a pretty bloody Batista laying to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. This was a weird one as there was nothing overly great on the show but they had enough stuff going on to keep my interest. In other words, it is a show that felt like it had a lot of good things to pick from but it didn't wind up working out in the end. Smackdown continues to trot out some fresher, younger wrestlers though and that makes for a pretty quick two hours. Not a great show, but an easy one to watch.

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Smackdown – September 1, 2006: Off In The Distance/Thaddeus?

Smackdown

Date: September 1, 2006

Location: Sovereign Center, Reading, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

We are a long way off from No Mercy but it seems that we are going to be moving towards Batista vs. King Booker II for the World Title. I'm not sure how much interest there is going to be in seeing that match again. Other than that...uh...well last week was the post Summerslam show so we don't have much to build towards. Does Rey Mysterio vs. Chavo Guerrero count? Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

We open with a recap of Vickie Guerrero officially joining forces with Chavo Guerrero (I guess it does count) and helping him in the beatdown of Rey Mysterio last week.

Opening sequence.

Here's is an upset Rey Mysterio for a chat. Rey apologizes for not being himself but he doesn't understand what Vickie did last week. Maybe he

doesn't want to know why but he wants Vickie and Chavo out here right now. Cue Vickie sans Chavo to say Rey is one of the people who cause her to cry every day.

It's time she thought of herself, even though Eddie Guerrero saw Rey as his brother. She sees Rey as part of her past, so he isn't included going forward. From now on, she is going to be Chavo's business manager, which draws the required EDDIE chant. Vickie slaps Rey in the mask to cut off said chants and storms up the aisle. Chavo joins her on stage for the posing.

Matt Hardy vs. Gregory Helms

Non-title. Matt shoulders him down and grabs a headlock takeover but has to fight out of a cross armbreaker attempt. Back up and Helms sends him into the corner but gets pulled out into a sitout powerbomb for two. Matt goes up top so Helms catches him with a kick to the ribs, meaning it's a crash out to the floor.

Back in and a swinging neckbreaker drops Matt again so we hit the chinlock. Make that a figure four necklock but Matt fights up again, only to get driven into the corner. A heck of a clothesline drops Helms and the Side Effect gives Matt two. There's a middle rope elbow to the top of the head but Matt misses the moonsault press. Instead Matt ducks a title shot to the head and grabs a jackknife rollup for the pin.

Rating: C-. The match was fine enough, but I'm not sure what the point is in having a feud like this when Matt isn't even a cruiserweight. What exactly is this building towards other than making the Cruiserweight Champion look weaker? Matt winning by avoiding some cheating was fine, but the title has been weak for a long time and now it is getting worse.

Mr. Kennedy asks Finlay for a US Title shot and Teddy Long is willing to make the match. He wants it to be bigger though, so Finlay says let's make it a cage match. Kennedy says let's make it a barbed wire steel cage match. Finlay: "How about I take you out back and beat the h*** out of you right now?" The match is on for later tonight.

Miz vs. Tatanka

This is Miz's debut, sending JBL into a rant over his weird shorts. After a quick intro from Miz, he drives Tatanka into the corner but spends too much time HOO-RAHing, allowing Tatanka to switch places with him. Granted Tatanka doesn't do anything to follow up, but he does switch places. Miz hits the stereotypical war dance for this week's mockery so Tatanka chops him down.

The arm work begins, but JBL thinks he has it worse for having to watch Miz. Tatanka goes shoulder first into the post and Miz's belly to back suplex gets two. The cobra clutch goes on so Tatanka is up in a hurry to slug away. Now the war dance sets up more chops to keep Miz down, including one to the floor. Back in and Miz sends Tatanka into the referee and grabs a backslide, with feet on the ropes, for the win.

Rating: D. This is one of those moments that kind of blows your mind when you know what it is going to mean. If nothing else, the idea of hearing JBL's reaction to knowing where Miz's career would go is hilarious. Miz wouldn't get good in the ring for a LONG time, but he has a weird charisma that makes me want to see more of him.

John Cena is in the Marine.

US Title: Mr. Kennedy vs. Finlay

Kennedy is challenging...but hang on because here's Teddy Long to make it a triple threat (Pla...actually that doesn't work here so we'll move on.).

US Title: Mr. Kennedy vs. Finlay vs. Bobby Lashley

Finlay is defending but it's Kennedy trying to get an alliance going, earning himself a belly to belly from Lashley. Kennedy and Finlay do get together to beat Lashley down but Kennedy sends Finlay shoulder first into the post. The Kenton Bomb gets two on Lashley so Finlay puts Kennedy in the Boston crab. That's broken up again so Finlay kicks Kennedy outside to brawl with Lashley.

Finlay gets sent outside in a hurry though so Lashley throws

Kennedy inside instead. A suplex gets two on Kennedy with Finlay making the save. Lashley hits a gorilla press gutbuster to drop Finlay again, only to get jumped by Kennedy. Finlay sends Kennedy throat first into the bottom rope and pulls Lashley outside. Kennedy gets caught in the ring skirt so Finlay can pummel away but Lashley breaks that up. A delayed vertical suplex drops Kennedy on the floor but the Leprechaun pokes his head out from underneath the ring.

We take a break and come back with Lashley getting double teamed in the corner, with the alliance lasting all of thirty seconds. Finlay shoves Kennedy down so Kennedy punches him in the face, allowing Lashley to come back, only to get stomped down in the corner. The double teaming has Lashley in more trouble but Finlay turns on Kennedy again, which makes me chuckle for a change.

Cue the Leprechaun to beat up Kennedy as well, allowing Finlay to get two on Kennedy back inside. Lashley is back up and cleans house on Finlay, who can't even get in a Shillelagh shot. The running powerslam connects for Lashley but Kennedy sneaks back in and rolls Lashley up with trunks to win the title.

Rating: C. They went a bit longer on this one than they needed to and I'm not wild on the stolen ending pin, but it makes sense to get the title on Kennedy. WWE has treated him like a big deal for a long time now so putting the title on him is one of those things that had to be done. Putting Lashley in there was a good idea as they needed to keep Finlay strong and they got the ending right, so well done.

We look at King Booker escaping Summerslam with the World Title over Batista.

Raw Rebound.

MVP, surrounded by his women, come to their ringside seats.

Vito vs. William Regal

Regal (rocking the red white and blue robe) looks disturbed by Vito, and says King Booker wants Vito to know that he isn't the toughest man to ever wear a dress. Some shoulders put Regal down to start so Vito pulls the dress up to scare the heck out of him. That earns Vito some shots to the back of the head but Vito fights up again. The dress goes over Regal's head so Regal, looking TERRIFIED, bails for the countout.

Jimmy Wang Yang is enjoying some ribs and doesn't like being asked about Japanese restaurants. I'm kind of liking these things.

Michael Cole talks to MVP, who insists that he is not hiding behind his agent and would gladly beat up Batista and Bobby Lashley. He's a world class athlete and no one here deserves to be in his presence.

Pitbulls vs. Brian Kendrick/Paul London

Non-title and the Pitbulls jump the champs from behind to start. Some double dropkicks put Jamie Noble on the floor and it's time to start in on Kid Kash's arm. A top rope double stomp to Kash's standing back gives London two and he knocks Noble off the apron for a bonus. Noble pulls London outside though and hammers away, allowing Kash to hit a release vertical suplex for two.

A double clothesline drops London again and they even draw Kendrick in to keep up the beating. Noble gets in some trash talk in the corner but London manages to send him face first into the buckle. That's enough for the tag off to Kendrick and the pace picks up in a hurry. Everything breaks down and London shoves Kash off the top, leaving Kendrick to roll Noble up for the pin.

Rating: C. Hokey smoke the champs won a match! I know they're smaller guys but they have some really good chemistry and look

like a team who are thinking as one out there. The young high fliers are always going to work as a concept and that is what we have here. The Pitbulls work well in the ring too but they have a lot of size issues to overcome due to the style they're using. It works, but it could go south rather easily.

Post match here are KC James and Idol Stevens to drop the champs and stare the Pitbulls down.

The Boogeyman is still coming.

Here is Teddy Long to call out King Booker (with Sharmell) and Batista to sign the contract for their rematch next week. They both come out (Batista can always rock a suit) and Booker thanks Thaddeus (JBL: "Thaddeus?") before saying Batista couldn't beat him at the Summerslam Games.

A King shouldn't be breathing the same air as a peasant like him. Batista says Booker (Booker: "THAT'S KING BOOKER!") kept the title via a technicality so Booker calls him a peasant again. They both sign but Booker takes a swing, earning a spinebuster...ok not quite through the table, but the second one puts him through it to end the show.

Overall Rating: C-. This was a pretty flat show and the wrestling didn't help things very much. I'm a bit surprised at the title match taking place next week instead of at No Mercy but at least they aren't stretching it out far longer than they should. I'm liking the pushes/debuted of Miz, MVP and Kennedy, as it's nice to see a new generation coming together. There is something of a future coming together, but it's still kind of off in the distance at the moment.

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Smackdown – August 25, 2006: Not These Guys

Smackdown

Date: August 25, 2006

Location: Wachovia Arena, Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

We're done with Summerslam and Batista didn't quite take the World Title from King Booker. That means it is time to start getting ready for No Mercy, but that is a pretty long way off. In other words, we are going to need something to bridge the gap and maybe we can find out what that is tonight. Let's get to it.

[Here is Summerslam if you need a recap.](#)

We open with a recap of the big Summerslam matches.

Here is King Booker with his court to get things going. Booker has shown that Batista can't beat him and now Batista's chances of being the World Champion have smoldered. He owes a thank you to his court though and that means Queen Sharmell has a proclamation. Booker has officially knighted Finlay and William Regal, complete with a sword onto the shoulder.

Regal is near tears as Finlay talks about making challengers kiss Booker's royal feet. That lets Regal hail King Booker as many times as he can manage until Bobby Lashley runs in to

jump Finlay. Batista has to come in to break up the three on one beatdown, meaning it's Teddy Long to set up the handicap main event.

Mr. Kennedy vs. Matt Hardy

Gregory Helms is on commentary. Matt headlocks him over to start and then scores with a shoulder. A hiptoss puts Kennedy down for a third time and the middle rope elbow gets two. Kennedy finally scores with a belly to back suplex but gets sent into all four corners in a row. There's the Side Effect for two so Matt loads it up again, with Kennedy elbowing his way to freedom. Matt knocks him to the floor and dives onto him as well to send us to a break.

Back with Kennedy knocking Hardy to the floor and sending him hard into the steps. The armbar goes on for a bit, with Kennedy cranking away on the mat. Kennedy gets caught on top though (that's a bad place for him) and Matt brings him down with a superplex for two more. The corner clothesline into a bulldog gets the same on Kennedy and another Side Effect gets another two. The Twist of Fate is broken up though and Helms gets in a cheap shot from behind. Kennedy's neckbreaker is good for the pin.

Rating: C. This wasn't bad, but Helms vs. Hardy isn't exactly a feud I want to see. Kennedy getting another win helps, but it might help if he picked a finisher and stuck with it for more than a few matches. At least they're pushing someone though, which is a place that can always use a chance.

Ashley Massaro talks to Miz, who explains the concept of the Mizfits.

Post break Miz is in the ring and introduces Layla for a chat. Miz appeals to the Mizfits and after the silence, Miz announces that his in-ring debut takes place next week. Layla didn't say a word.

Sylvester Terkay vs. Tatanka

Elijah Burke is here with Terkay and we see a clip of Tatanka's recent losing streak. Terkay powers him into the corner to start but gets kicked out. That's fine with Terkay, who hits Tatanka in the face to put him down. After a blast of water from Burke, we hit the standing choke to keep Tatanka in trouble. The double arm crank goes on but Tatanka fights up and strikes away. A top rope chop to the head drops Terkay for two as the foot is on the rope. Tatanka yells at the referee and gets kicked in the face for the pin.

Rating: D+. As usual, I have to wonder why Tatanka is the one getting a story right now. Terkay won the match, but the focus was on Tatanka's issues with the referee. I'd hope that there is no false hope in the idea that Tatanka is going to be anything important, but there are other people who could use this kind of attention.

We look at Chavo Guerrero beating Rey Mysterio on Sunday, thanks to Vickie Guerrero.

The Marine trailer.

Here is Vickie Guerrero, to Eddie Guerrero's music, to explain what happened at Summerslam. She loves the song and it always makes her smile, but it is the last time you will be hearing it. Vickie is not proud of what she did at Summerslam so she would like Rey Mysterio to come out here. Cue Rey, who hugs Vickie but Chavo Guerrero comes out to join them. Vickie apologizes for slapping her family and hugs him as well...but then he jumps Rey. Chavo brings in a chair but Vickie takes it again, only to hit Rey herself. A brainbuster onto the chair leaves Rey laying as the Guerreros leave together.

Paul London vs. KC James

Brian Kendrick, Michelle McCool and Idol Stevens are here too. London hammers away to start but gets punched in the face.

James takes him down and we're in the chinlock in a hurry. That's broken up even faster and London kicks him in the chest. Some running knees in the corner connect and there's the dropsault to put James down again. Cue the Pitbulls to jump London for the DQ out of nowhere.

Post match the three way brawl is on with London and Kendrick being left alone in the ring.

MVP, flanked by some women, arrives in his front row seat.

The Boogeyman is coming back.

Kristal vs. Jillian Hall

Kristal jumps her from behind to start but stops to pose, earning herself a shot to the face. A hair toss sends Jillian down again and some choking keeps her in trouble. Jillian comes back with a handspring elbow in the corner and then rubs Kristal's face in her chest. Kristal grabs a rollup and pulls the jeans for the win. That's about as stereotypical of a Divas match as you could get from this era.

Jimmy Wang Yang says he isn't a kung fu fighter because he's a redneck. Well it's something new.

Vito vs. Sylvan

Sylvan talks trash to start but gets sent to the floor in a hurry. That's fine with Vito who follows him out to hammer away, only to get taken back inside. Sylvan hits the running crotch attack to the back of the neck and a slam sets up the chinlock. Vito suplexes his way to freedom and the dress comes up a bit. Some shots to the face set up the armbar with the dress over the head to make Sylvan tap.

Rating: D-. This has got to be one of the dumbest things they have done in a long time. The gimmick itself isn't the worst, but how many weeks in a row do we need to see the exact same thing before WWE thinks we get the concept? Beating a bunch of

losers and then a bigger loser in Sylvan while doing the same stuff over and over again isn't likely to work, but that has never stopped WWE before.

Post match MVP laughs at Vito, so Vito challenges him to get in the ring. MVP gets on the apron but stops to answer a phone call. His agent says no without the big money deal so MVP backs off and leaves with the girls. I wouldn't waste my debut on Vito either.

We look at the opening segment.

William Regal/King Booker/Finlay vs. Batista/Bobby Lashley

Batista clears out Finlay and Regal to start and grabs Booker, only to have Finlay jump him from behind. The running corner clothesline connects and Batista sends him outside, where Lashley is waiting. Back in and Batista beats up Finlay and Regal again before Lashley tells Booker to bring it. Booker heads to the floor again and we take a break.

Back with Lashley kicking Regal in the ribs in the corner and handing it back to Batista for a suplex. Lashley's suplex gets two but Booker gets in a cheap shot from the apron. Booker comes in and stomps away, allowing him to pose a bit. The villains get to take their turns on Lashley for a change, with Booker kicking him in the face for two.

Finlay pulls Lashley to the floor and a distraction lets him pull the Leprechaun out for an apron splash. Back in again and Lashley is fine enough to hit a rather delayed suplex for two on Booker. Batista gets the hot tag and cleans house with spinebusters and slams. Booker gets in a shot from behind but Batista hits a spinebuster and gets the pin in a hurry.

Rating: C. Totally standard main event tag match here, at least until the ending which came out of nowhere and did what it was supposed to do. Batista has now shown he can defeat Booker and that is going to be enough to set up the main event

of No Mercy, or at least get us in that direction.

Posing and trash talking end the show.

Overall Rating: D+. This is a weird period for Smackdown as Batista has lost a lot of his spark and there is nothing on the show that feels important or something that you need to see. There is nothing very good or even that feels worth your time on here and that has been the case for a bit. Smackdown could use some kind of a spark and I don't see that coming from Vito, Tatanka, and whatever the women are fighting over this time.

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Smackdown – August 18, 2006: How Bamboozling

Smackdown

Date: August 18, 2006

Location: Verizon Center, Washington DC

Attendance: 8,500

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's the go home show for Summerslam and that means it's time to take one of the biggest matches from that show and move it here. This time around it's Great Khali vs. Undertaker in a Last Man Standing match, as Khali might not be trustworthy to put in the ring on live television for more than about two minutes flat. Let's get to it.

[Here are last week's results if you need a recap.](#)

The opening recap looks at Undertaker vs. Great Khali, which does not exactly scream all time great and original feud.

Opening sequence.

Batista vs. Sylvan

Batista is the hometown boy and finishes with his namesake Bomb in less than a minute.

Video on the Diva Search finals from earlier this week in New York City, where Layla won. Given that she clearly had more charisma than anyone else in the competition, this shouldn't be surprising.

MVP, surrounded by a group of women, are watching from a sky box.

Scotty 2 Hotty vs. Sylvester Terkay

Terkay has Elijah Burke with him and sends Scotty to the apron to start. A big boot knocks Scotty to the floor and Burke throws him back inside. Back in and Terkay grabs a standing head and arm choke, setting up a belly to belly. Hold on though as we need to pause for some water for Terkay. It seems to help as a Muscle Buster finishes Scotty.

Rating: C-. I'm never sure what to say about something like this as Terkay looked like a monster, though the match itself was a complete squash. Terkay is looking like a monster, though he isn't the most charismatic guy in the world.

Hopefully Burke can help move that forward and they are off to a pretty decent start.

We get a video on the history between Rey Mysterio and Eddie Guerrero, at least the good part of it.

Paul London and Brian Kendrick love the idea of competition but get jumped by KC James and Idol Stevens, the team who beat them last week.

Mr. Kennedy vs. Tatanka

Kennedy talks trash to start (duh) so Tatanka starts cranking on the arm. Said arm is sent into the corner and a chop puts Kennedy on the floor. Back in and Tatanka takes out the knee, followed by a hard clothesline. Kennedy is back up with some stomps in the corner before working on Tatanka's leg, complete with mocking the war cry like a real villain. Tatanka fights up and sends him into the corner, followed by a clothesline but the knee gives out. The Papoose To Go is loaded up but Kennedy rakes the eyes for the break and rolls him up with trunks for the pin.

Rating: D+. Tatanka continues to be one of the least interesting people in WWE but at least he isn't winning anything of note. Kennedy continues to gain some momentum, which he is going to need after that long hiatus completely derailed everything. If he can step it up in the ring, they have a potential breakout star on their hands.

Video on Chavo Guerrero's relationship with Eddie.

Vickie Guerrero begs Teddy Long to cancel Chavo vs. Rey at Summerslam but Teddy can't do it.

Great Khali vs. Undertaker

Last Man Standing and Khali has Daivari in his corner. Khali chokes him into the corner to start and hits a clothesline (with an awkward camera cut, likely the first of several in

this match). Undertaker strikes away but gets kicked out to the floor, with Khali sending him into the steps. Some right hands from the floor rock Khali though and a Stunner over the ropes make it worse.

There's the apron legdrop into a triangle choke (from the side) but Undertaker lets go with Khali still moving. Daivari's chair shot just annoys Undertaker, who stalks Daivari to the stage. Khali follows and the distraction lets Daivari hit a low blow. Undertaker fights out of a chokeslam but has to boot Daivari down, allowing Khali to throw Undertaker off the stage. That's good for a nine and we take a break.

Back with Khali beating on Undertaker near the stage before taking it inside again. Khali strikes away and ties his arms in the ropes, setting up the big chop to knock Undertaker silly. Granted it takes a bit to get his arms out of the ropes so the count can begin, but Undertaker sits up at nine anyway. A running clothesline puts Khali on the floor, where he whips Undertaker into the steps.

Back in again and Undertaker hits him in the face with the steps, followed by a chair to the back to drive Khali face first into the steps. Khali is busted open and another chair shot knocks him down again. Undertaker starts going after the knee and some chairs to the head sets up the chokeslam (there's that edit again) and Khali is done.

Rating: D+. The match wasn't great or even very good by any means, but this could have been miles worse. Granted I'm sure there was a ton of editing to make it work as well as it did, but they could have done far worse. Undertaker winning in the end was the right move as Khali got his big win at Judgment Day and will be fine going forward. Plus it completes the same formula from the Giant Gonzalez feud in 1993.

Boogeyman is back and JBL panics.

Summerslam rundown.

Vito vs. Scott Fowler

Vito puts the dress over Fowler's head to start, dances, and drops a leg. The headlock on the mat goes on, followed by Vito flipping the dress up and down. JBL screams and it's the Implant DDT into the armbar for the win. JBL: "AND THE LOSER IS ME!!! HIS NIPPLES ARE SHOWING!!!"

US Title: Bobby Lashley vs. Finlay

Finlay is defending. Feeling out process to start with Lashley backing him into the ropes and knocking the champ out to the floor. Back in and Lashley hammers away but Finlay claims a poke to the eye. That's just faking of course, allowing Finlay to hammer away. Lashley can't see but he's fine enough to hit a gorilla press gutbuster for two. Cue William Regal to ringside for a distraction, allowing Finlay to post Lashley and we take a break.

Back with Finlay holding a chinlock and then posting Lashley again. Finlay works on an armbar but Lashley powers up and hits a belly to belly. The one armed delayed vertical suplex (JBL: "Haven't seen that since Rick Rude.") but Regal gets up for a distraction. Cue the Leprechaun so Finlay picks him up, only to have Lashley spear them both down (JBL: "YOU CAN'T SPEAR A LEPRECHAUN!"). The running powerslam hits Lashley but Regal pulls the referee for the DQ.

Rating: C. They were getting to the next level by the end and there was so much going on that you felt they could do a title change. I get why they didn't want to go there with the ending though and odds are we get the big blowoff match between some combination of these three on a special Smackdown. Lashley needs something else to do though and I don't think the US Title is going to mean much to him at this point. He's in a weird place where he needs to move up but there isn't much room for him with Batista back.

Lashley cleans house post match.

Here are King Booker and Queen Sharmell in the throne on the ring for the big close. Booker knows that Batista is coming for the title that he lost when he forfeited the title due to a small injury. Batista has no heart, passion or intestinal fortitude though, nor does he have any idea what King Booker is all about. Batista has BAMBOOZLED you people and now he has run amuck.

Now Booker has to beat Batista to a pulp, but there is an option B, which Batista can find out if he comes to the ring right now. Cue Batista, with Booker saying that option B is Batista kneel down and kiss the royal feet. Booker even has a royal foot pillow for the occasion. The shoe comes off and Batista leans forward before stepping on the bare toes. Batista puts on the robe to end the show. This was perfectly acceptable for a quick final push toward the World Title match.

Overall Rating: C-. This was a weird one as they had a Summerslam level match on the Summerslam go home show, but they also did their usual lower card drek along with the Summerslam push. What we got here wasn't the worst, but it was a strange mixture of a lot of things. As usual, the top level stuff is good enough, but the stuff underneath is just hard to sit through most weeks. It's not an awful show and Summerslam looks ok enough. The problem is that was the case coming into this show and much like Raw, it didn't make me want to see the pay per view any more than I already did.

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Royal Rumble Count-Up – 2003 (2017 Redo): They Didn't Do Well

Royal Rumble 2003

Date: January 19, 2003

Location: Fleet Center, Boston, Massachusetts

Attendance: 15,338

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

This is a really odd entry in the series as the namesake match is being treated as secondary to almost everything else. Really, coming into this show, there's a good argument to be made that Torrie Wilson vs. Dawn Marie is being treated as a bigger deal than the Rumble itself. Let's get to it.

The opening video is your standard montage of wrestlers talking about what it means to go to Wrestlemania because the road starts tonight.

Big Show vs. Brock Lesnar

The winner is in the Rumble and the loser is out in the cold. They do the customary exchange of shoves to start with the fans almost entirely behind Lesnar. Brock drives him into the corner to little avail but the belly to belly works a bit better. A second works just as well but the third is countered with a scary toss over the top. Back in and we hit the choke, which you can tell is serious because Cole starts talking about Show's shoe size.

Brock comes right back with the release German suplex but Heyman offers a

distraction to break things up. A big boot and side slam drop Lesnar for all of ten seconds before he's back up with an other belly to belly. Cue Heyman but he gets caught in an F5 attempt, only to have Show make the save with a chokeslam for two. A second attempt is countered into a sloppy F5 to send Lesnar to the Rumble.

Rating: D+. It was short (less than seven minutes) and had the only possible ending (it's not like there are many other potential Rumble winners) so it's hard to complain that much. The F5 didn't look great but it was how the match should have ended. This probably needs to be about it for Big Show as a main event guy but you know that's not going to be the case, which is part of the problem on Smackdown.

Chris Jericho is ready to win the Rumble and gets his World Title back at Wrestlemania.

Raw Tag Team Titles: Dudley Boyz vs. William Regal/Lance Storm

Regal and Storm are defending. Bubba punches Storm in the corner to start and hits something like a spinebuster. To really mix things up, Bubba grabs a leglock for a few seconds before handing it off to D-Von. Regal comes in and gets punched as well as this isn't exactly shaking the feeling that it's a glorified Raw match. The champs take over on D-Von with Storm drop toeholding him down into a sliding knee from Regal (nice spot).

We hit the cravate for a bit and a chinlock keeps D-Von in trouble. That doesn't last long either though as D-Von fights up and makes the hot tag to Bubba for the house cleaning. Regal takes What's Up but here's Chief Morely for a distraction to prevent the 3D. It doesn't quite work so well though as D-Von uses the distraction to grab Regal's brass knuckles and knock Storm silly for the pin and the titles. Lawler: "I'm as confused as a baby in a topless bar." He's confused enough to refer to Regal as Steve.

Rating: C-. This was just a Raw match with a title change and considering Booker T. and Goldust never even got a rematch after losing the titles, I have no idea what the thinking here is. Were Booker and Goldust really that bad of a team? I know it's a sin to get over without the company

swearing off on it but it's some of the oddest booking of the year.

House show ads. They didn't edit this off the Network? I like having the complete versions but it's a strange choice to keep in.

Nathan Jones vignette.

We get a long recap of the Al Wilson Saga, which still doesn't make much sense and went on WAY too long if this is their big idea. Basically Dawn Marie decided she wanted to destroy Torrie Wilson's life (I think?) by marrying Torrie's father. She eventually went through with it but had so much, ahem, fun with Al on their honeymoon that he died.

Dawn blames Torrie for this and the match is on, even though it was booked before Al died. If this was all some big con by Dawn, what does she get out of it? Getting a match with Torrie? She seems upset and we haven't gotten any scene of Dawn saying it was all made up so I guess we're supposed to take it at face value. I know I harp on this a lot but I still don't get how this was supposed to work.

Dawn Marie vs. Torrie Wilson

Dawn is in regular ring gear and a black veil, which makes her look more like Jimmy Jack Funk (from the neck up) than anything else. Dawn elbows her in the face at the bell but Torrie takes her down as well as these two are going to be able to do. Torrie gets caught in a Fujiwara armbar as the announcers cover the story in detail. Well the recent part at least as basically everything after Armageddon has been forgotten at this point.

Dawn stays on the arm (that'll teach Torrie for killing Dawn's husband) and grabs a flapjack. They collide in a bad looking spot and the boring chants begin. Dawn actually hits a decent looking middle rope spinning clothesline, only to fall victim to that horrible swinging neckbreaker to give Torrie the pin.

Rating: F. Really, what else were you expecting here? The feud was as soap opera level as you're going to have and the wrestlers are both models and little more. Somehow that's about as much as you could have

thought these two would do and hopefully it wraps up the story for good. I know it won't but it would be nice.

Eric Bischoff and Stephanie McMahon run into each other in the back with Stephanie being smug about Eric's thirty days to fix Raw deal. Eric asks if her job is safe too but she doesn't seem worried, partially because she has her own surprise for Raw. As with most cases of both GM's on screen at once, this was a big waste of time.

Sean O'Haire tells us not to go to church.

We recap Scott Steiner vs. HHH. Steiner showed up in November and was immediately shoved into the title picture but hasn't actually had a match yet. Instead it's been stuff like a posedown, a bench press contest (which didn't happen), arm wrestling and a pushup contest. The idea is that Steiner can do everything HHH can and might also be completely insane. The fact that they've barely been allowed to get physical should be a bit worrisome but HHH wouldn't let us down.

Raw World Title: HHH vs. Scott Steiner

Steiner is challenging and HHH is in the ultra rare red trunks. Before the bell, Hebner holds up the title and insists that he's the law around here no matter what. Steiner wins the early slugout and chops away in the corner, followed by the gorilla press to send HHH rolling to the floor. The champ's back is sent into the post a few times and a hard Irish whip makes his back even worse.

We hit a Boston crab for a bit with HHH crawling to the ropes a few seconds later. That's not very noteworthy, but Steiner falling over when the hold is broken isn't the most encouraging sign. The facebuster is no sold and we hit a quickly broken bearhug. Steiner gets in the first belly to belly for two and Flair pulls him out to the floor.

Back in and Steiner charges into a boot to the face before being sent into the steps for good measure. HHH stomps and chokes in the corner with Flair adding choking of his own. Another neckbreaker gets two for the champ and you can see how winded Steiner already is. Flair chokes on the ropes again to fill in as much time as possible before Steiner reverses

the Pedigree.

Scott catapults him into the buckle and grabs the second overhead suplex....before just collapsing next to the ropes. We're not even nine minutes into the match and the guy can't even stand up. Steiner picks him up for what looks like a Tombstone and you would think he was about to go into labor. HHH slips out and tries a Diamond Cutter but Steiner goes backwards with it like a regular neckbreaker. After all those years of working with Diamond Dallas Page he can't take a standard face first bump?

You can hear the crowd losing their patience with this one. Flair plays cheerleader and the fans actually cheer for HHH, who may be boring but he's at least looking competent here. The champ dives into another overhead suplex but Steiner still can't follow up. Some Steiner Lines set up suplexes four, five and six, followed by a spinning version for two.

Steiner tries a tiger bomb and falls down, drawing straight up boeing from the fans. The announcers are trying as hard as they can to make Steiner sound like a threat here and it's going as badly as you would expect. HHH heads up top so it's a superplex for two more. That's enough to send HHH and Flair up the aisle but Steiner isn't done yet and drags them back. As lame as an ending as that would be, it was the right call at this point.

A belt shot to HHH's head draws some blood and they continue to stagger around ringside with no idea what to do. Another belly to belly (ninth suplex total) sends HHH outside again and they brawl into the crowd because THIS MATCH JUST CAN'T END. Back in again with Steiner doing the pushups and laboring through some right hands in the corner. Now Flair tries to get the referee to stop the match but the referee keeps going because he's that kind of evil.

Steiner hates the match as much as everyone else does so he throws Hebner outside but THAT'S NOT A DQ EITHER. The tenth suplex gets two and you can see Steiner looking desperate. HHH gets in a low blow and rolls Steiner up for two. That's FINALLY enough for HHH as he grabs sledgehammer and hits Scott in the ribs for the DQ, earning a chorus of boos that would

make Roman Reigns proud.

Rating: N. For Not HHH's Fault. For once, this can't be blamed on HHH, who was just stuck in a horrible situation and couldn't do anything with it. To be fair though, no one was going to be able to get anything passable out of this mess. Steiner wasn't ready for this match and had no business going more than five minutes, let alone eighteen. The interesting thing here though is the first eight minutes ran more than well enough. It was a boring start but it was nowhere near a disaster or even really bad. The problem is the second half of the match where EVERYTHING falls apart.

You'll hear a lot of comparisons between this Steiner and Brock Lesnar's Suplex City but the key is in the delivery. Lesnar suplexes the heck out of people and then pops up to do it again. Steiner was suplexing HHH here and then taking twenty seconds to get to his feet out of pure exhaustion. When you can see wrestlers go twenty minutes without even breathing hard, there's no excuse for a main eventer nearly passing out from exhaustion in the first ten minutes. There's a reason this is remembered so horribly and it more than lives down to its reputation.

Post match Steiner hits him with the sledgehammer and grabs the Steiner Recliner. JR: "There's no way out of this hold." In other words, yes they're actually doing a rematch. Bischoff eventually comes out and gets Steiner off of HHH as the fans are so apathetic towards any of this.

We recap Chris Benoit vs. Kurt Angle. Kurt won the title with help from his new agent Paul Heyman, who also represents Big Show. Benoit beat Show to become the new #1 contender and you know this is going to be a classic no matter what. That being said, there's not much of a secret to the fact that they're building towards Lesnar vs. Angle at this point. At least we can have an incredible match on the way there.

Smackdown World Title: Chris Benoit vs. Kurt Angle

Angle is defending. Benoit has to deal with Team Angle to start so that's a double ejection. Chris tries a very quick Sharpshooter (which Tazz calls a Boston crab for some reason), sending Angle outside for a breather. Back in and another leg hold sends Angle to the ropes as it

seems that they have a long time here.

Benoit easily wins a battle of the chops and gets two off a clothesline to the back of the head. A DDT onto the apron makes things even worse but Angle rolls away from the Swan Dive. The Angle Slam is reversed though and we hit the Sharpshooter. Angle grabs the ropes as well as a belly to belly (after that last match, I'm surprised those weren't banned like bar stools on Frasier) to really take over for the first time.

We hit the chinlock with a bodyscissors on Benoit for a bit before a double clothesline puts both guys down. Back up and they trade German suplexes with Benoit getting the better of it. Chris takes too long going up top though and Angle runs the corner for the belly to belly superplex. The Crossface goes on a few seconds later with Benoit switching to the ankle lock (that's like a Bingo space in an Angle match).

Kurt's ankle lock is reversed into the Crossface which is reversed into a rollup which is reversed right back into the Crossface. Angle gets to his feet for an Angle Slam but there's no cover. There go the straps though and it's back to the ankle lock. Benoit gets two off a rollup as the announcers are losing their minds (rightfully so).

Kurt is sick of this submission stuff and tries a German suplex, only to have Benoit reverse into a release version, drawing quite the round of applause. With Angle three quarters of the way across the ring, Benoit hits the best looking Swan Dive I've ever seen for a delayed two. Angle grabs a powerbomb but drops Benoit face first onto the buckle, followed by another Slam for two.

We're right back to the Crossface but Angle rolls through into the ankle lock which can't be reversed this time. Benoit kicks him away instead, only to get caught in the ankle lock again. Chris tries to pull him into the Crossface but Angle holds on and gets the grapevine to FINALLY make Benoit tap because he was beaten and he knew it.

Rating: A+. I've seen this match several times now and I'm still exhausted just watching it. These guys were beating the heck out of each other with everything looking anywhere from great to unbelievable (that Swan Dive in particular). This was outstanding stuff and one of the best

wrestling matches I've ever seen. There's also a bit of a HHH vs. Cactus Jack vibe to it with Angle being backed into a corner and having to fight, only to prove that he is indeed the better man, at least on this night. Check this out if you haven't seen it in awhile, or just because it's worth seeing multiple times.

After an Anthology ad, Benoit gets the big standing ovation, which probably should have sent him to a World Title shot (at least) at Wrestlemania. Instead it was a spot in a three way for the Tag Team Titles because that's how WWE worked in 2003.

Rob Van Dam and Kane agree that it's every man for himself tonight.

Royal Rumble

90 second intervals (though Fink says two minutes) with Shawn Michaels at #1 and Chris Jericho at #2. If nothing else, at least Shawn is starting to look like a wrestler again instead of the tiny thing he was back at Survivor Series. Actually hang on a second as it's Christian in Jericho's clothes instead of Chris himself. Cue Jericho from underneath the ring to hit Shawn low. One heck of a beatdown ensues with Jericho busting Shawn open with a chair as Christopher Nowinski is in at #3. He's willing to stay on the floor while Jericho beats on Shawn some more and easily eliminates him.

Nowinski is still on the floor as Rey Mysterio is in at #4. Rey tries to speed things up and slips out of a gorilla press, only to get punched out to the apron. As usual, Jericho celebrates early and gets dropkicked into the ropes. Nowinski FINALLY gets in and it's Edge in at #5. Outside of Nowinski, that's quite the first four. Spears abound as Rey gets back into it and Nowinski is sent outside but not eliminated.

Jericho is sent into the post and through the ropes to the floor. Rey and Edge shake hands and go at it with Rey hitting the 619 but he gets powerbombed to put both guys down. It's Christian in at #6 with an offer to reform the team with Edge. That earns him a spear but here's Nowinski to throw Edge and Mysterio to the apron. Chavo Guerrero is in at #7 as the Smackdown is strong with this Rumble.

Rey and Chavo do a quick lucha sequence with the 619 setting up a springboard seated senton. Christian eats a 619 of his own, followed by a hurricanrana to get rid of Nowinski. Jericho comes back in for a hard clothesline to get rid of Mysterio and here's Tajiri in at #8. Things settle down a bit with Chavo choking Jericho in the corner and Tajiri not being able to eliminate Christian.

Bill DeMott is in at #9 and attacks various people in short order. The fans aren't exactly thrilled here as we're waiting on the big name to clean out some of these names. Tommy Dreamer is in at #10 to give us Dreamer, Jericho, Edge, Christian, Chavo, Tajiri and DeMott. Dreamer brings weapons with him and Edge knocks DeMott out with a kendo stick. Jericho and Christian hit a con-trashcanlid-o on Dreamer and get rid of him without much effort. Tajiri takes them both down with a handspring elbow but the Tarantula is easily broken up, allowing Jericho to get rid of him.

B2, still with the Cena entrance theme, is in at #11...and Edge gets rid of him in less than thirty seconds. Chavo is speared out next, followed by a bloody Jericho (from a Dreamer kendo stick shot) dumping Edge and Christian to leave himself all alone. Rob Van Dam is in at #12 because Edge/Van Dam vs. Christian/Jericho was out of the question for some reason. A superkick has Jericho in trouble and he's catapulted all the way to the apron. Matt Hardy, who strongly dislikes mustard, is in at #13 and drops Rob with a Side Effect.

Van Dam gets double teamed for a bit until he flips over Jericho and kicks Matt in the face for good measure. The Five Star hits Jericho and it's Eddie Guerrero in at #14. We get a rehash of Eddie vs. Van Dam from last year until Matt helps Eddie set up an ugly frog splash. That earns Eddie a Twist of Fate (Eddie is smarter than that) and it's Jeff Hardy in at #15.

Jeff doesn't buy the reunion idea either (like anyone would buy a Hardys reunion in 2003 or beyond) and beats Matt up, only to have Shannon Moore dive onto Matt to save him from a Swanton. That's fine with Jeff so he crushes both of them as Rosey is in at #16. Matt gets backdropped to the apron as the eliminations have slowed WAY down. Test is in at #17 and

gets to clean house a bit without eliminating anyone. You know, because Rosey needs to stick around.

A rapping John Cena is in at #18 giving reasons why he's going to win this. The camera stays on him and for once it's not the biggest problem as nothing is going on in the ring. Van Dam beats him up on the floor (maybe for wrestling in jeans instead of jean shorts for a change) and it's Charlie Haas in at #19. Where are Lesnar and Undertaker to clear these people out? Jeff tries to run up the corner so Rob eliminates him, still leaving us with far too many people.

Rikishi is in at #20, giving us Rikishi, Jericho, Rob Van Dam, Matt Hardy, Eddie Guerrero, Rosey, Test, Cena and Haas. Rosey and Rikishi have a weird family reunion as Shannon comes in to protect Matt. That just earns him a double Stinkface, or at least it would have if Rosey hadn't clotheslined Rikishi instead. Jamal is in at #21 to superkick Rikishi, who pops right back up with a Stinkface for his....brother I believe.

Kane is in at #22 to clean house but he brings Rico in with a chokeslam to fill the ring up even more. Rosey is tossed in a hurry and it's a double chokeslam for Matt and Shannon. Shelton Benjamin is in at #23 as the ring is WAY too full with eleven people in there, plus Shannon and Rico at various times. They all fight near the ropes and it's Booker T. in at #24. We go to a weird closeup for an ax kick on Kane and there's the Spinarooni. Eddie gets backdropped out and it's A-Train in at #25.

A good looking A-Train Bomb (chokebomb) plants Cena and another one hits Van Dam but Rikishi superkicks A-Train in the face. Jericho is sent to the apron AGAIN but here's a bandaged Shawn to go after Jericho, allowing Test to knock him out. Shawn stays on Jericho and that's a Wrestlemania match. Maven is in at #26 (because this match needed two Tough Enough names) and goes after Kane as things slow down again. Goldust is in at #27 and doesn't even last a minute before Team Angle puts him out. They do the same to Booker T. a few seconds later, making sure that the Booker T./Goldust team is swiftly beaten again.

Batista is in at #28 and gets rid of Test (after EIGHTEEN MINUTES, or longer than Edge and Mysterio combined) and Rikishi. Brock Lesnar is in

at #29 and becomes the most obvious winner since...well last year with HHH actually. He wastes no time in getting rid of Team Angle before throwing Matt onto both of them. Now that's how you clear out some bodies. Undertaker is in at #30 to give us a final group of Undertaker, Van Dam, Cena, Jamal, Kane, A-Train, Maven, Batista and Lesnar. Not the worst field actually.

Undertaker dumps Cena (Which could have set up a heck of a Wrestlemania match today but we wanted a reality show moment instead. Yes you did want that and Kevin Dunn told me so.) and Jamal (Why was he still there?) before Maven hits the same dropkick as last year. This time there's no effect though, making Maven's celebration a bit amusing.

After Maven is launched out, A-Train hits the A-Train Bomb on Undertaker. Van Dam and Kane get rid of A-Train and we're down to five. Kane loads up Rob in a gorilla press...and throws him out in a smart move (not a heel turn). Batista and Kane are put down with a double clothesline and it's time for Lesnar vs. Undertaker.

That's broken up before anything can happen though and the Brothers of Destruction start taking over. Brock takes care of Batista and Kane so we can have the Undertaker showdown. The F5 is countered and Brock takes a Tombstone, followed by Undertaker dumping Batista and Kane. Batista comes back in and eats a chair shot, leaving Brock to eliminate Undertaker for the win.

Rating: B. There was a REALLY bad dead spot in the middle and some of the choices were all over the place (Test, Jamal and Rikishi all getting over fourteen minutes while Los Guerreros, Edge and Mysterio were all afterthoughts) but the ending was the right call. The final four wasn't a bad group at all and having Lesnar dump Undertaker to win is as good a move as they could have made.

There was VERY little build to this match and they did well enough with it while they could. It's not a terrible Rumble but there are many better options. Fix the middle part and get rid of people at a faster clip and it's a great one, but as it is it's just pretty good. Then again, for this year that's quite the compliment.

The big problem here though is how weak the midcard and lower card is. Maybe it's just the way some of them were booked but aside from Lesnar, Undertaker and MAYBE Jericho, was anyone a real threat to win here? Having an obvious winner is fine but it would be nice to build up someone else as a possible winner.

Overall Rating: B-. The World Title matches cancel each other out and thankfully the Rumble is there to make up for a nothing lower card. Lesnar winning was the obvious ending here and that left the rest of the show to really carry things. Angle vs. Benoit is must see and Steiner vs. HHH may be as well if you're into unintentional comedy. The rest of the show though....egads there's nothing to see there. It's a perfectly good show but the problems are very big and the Rumble isn't good enough to make it a classic.

Ratings Comparison

Big Show vs. Brock Lesnar

Original: D

2013 Redo: C+

2017 Redo: D+

Dudley Boyz vs. William Regal/Lance Storm

Original: C

2013 Redo: D

2017 Redo: C-

Dawn Marie vs. Torrie Wilson

Original: DD

2013 Redo: D-

2017 Redo: F

Scott Steiner vs. HHH

Original: G-

2013 Redo: H (For HHH)

2017 Redo: N (For Not HHH's Fault)

Chris Benoit vs. Kurt Angle

Original: A+

2013 Redo: A+

2017 Redo: A+

Royal Rumble

Original: B

2013 Redo: B-

2017 Redo: B

Overall Rating

Original: B-

2013 Redo: C-

2017 Redo: B-

This is a rare instance where the original is much closer to the new ratings than the first redo. Maybe I was in a bad mood that day?

You can read the original review here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2011/01/22/royal-rumble-count-up-2003-best-match-ever/>

And the 2013 redo here:

<http://kbwrestlingreviews.com/2013/01/16/royal-rumble-count-up-2013-redo-2003-best-of-both-worlds-and-a-boring-rumble/>

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