

# Monday Night Raw – December 2, 2002 (2017 Redo): The Best In The World Because They Say So

## Monday Night Raw

Date: December 2, 2002

Location: Frank Erwin Center, Austin, Texas

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

So HHH is back and I'd assume that's about all you need to know for this show. That whole week without HHH around to really run the show must have scared the company as he interfered in last week's World Title match, seemingly setting up another pay per view showdown with Shawn Michaels. I'm as thrilled as you are. Let's get to it.

The opening video is about....well by George it's about HHH coming back last week! To be fair it's not like anything else was treated like it mattered last week.

Opening sequence.

### Dudley Boyz vs. 3 Minute Warning

They don't waste time with the wrestling to start and Rosey gets dropped with a double belly to back. A double crossbody puts Bubba and Rosey down and we get down to Jamal getting knocked back and forth between the Dudleys. Rosey and Bubba chop it out with the latter taking him down into what can best be described as a cross armbreaker. D-Von stays on the arm as this is already more technical than I was expecting.

Rico gets involved for a distraction though and D-Von gets beaten down for a short while. For some reason a DDT stops Rosey but the referee doesn't see the tag. A neckbreaker puts Rosey down again and now the tag brings Bubba back in. House is cleaned but Rico gets in a kick to the back of the head. Cue Spike for the way too fast save, allowing the brothers to hit What's Up. After Rico's interference doesn't go anywhere, a 3D finishes Rosey.

**Rating:** C-. Well that happened. Really I'm not sure what else there is to say about the match as it just came and went. It's good to have the Dudleys back but it's very clear that there's nothing to the division at this point and if 3 Minute Warning is the best they have, they're in big trouble.

We come back from a break with all three Dudleys down, thanks to an off-camera attack at the hands of Chris Jericho and Christian and 3 Minute Warning. D-Von was put in the Walls for a Conchairto and Bubba was beaten down as well while Spike was already carried out. As much as I'd like to have seen it happen, I can greatly appreciate the idea of having stuff seem more realistic instead of having it so rigidly attached to the schedule.

Sean Morely tells Eric Bischoff that he's got this covered. Oh and call him Chief Morely. HHH to come in to say that he wrestled for thirty minutes in the Elimination Chamber but now he has to beat Rob Van Dam to become #1 contender. Bischoff doesn't want to hear it and demands great TV. Morely suggests a guest referee to be announced, likely as Shawn Michaels, so HHH can overcome even more odds.

We look at the Dudleys' beatdown again.

#### Trish Stratus vs. Ivory

They hit the mat to start before trading arm cranks. Ivory gets two off a rollup as this isn't exactly thrilling so far. We hit the chinlock with Ivory pulling on Trish's face until she fights up for a neckbreaker. The Chick Kick gets two as the announcers debate who the guest referee is going to be. Trish hits a very assisted Stratusfaction for the pin.

**Rating:** D. I know Trish would get much better in the coming years but she really wasn't able to lift anything up the ladder at this point. It doesn't help that Ivory is someone who has been the same performer for years and isn't going to have a memorable match no matter what she does. They really need to bring in some exciting talent if they want this division to work as Trish vs. Victoria is only going to take them so far.

Speaking of dull women, Jackie yells at Victoria for going through her bag and a match is made. She doesn't even mind if it's not for the title, because why would she want that? Jackie beats her up because it's Texas and that means Jackie is all tough and awesome.

Jericho and Christian threaten violence against anyone who disrespect them. Christopher Nowinski instantly sucks up to them like the worm that he is. Of note: the champs' bags are chained to their lockers.

### Jeff Hardy/Tommy Dreamer vs. Lance Storm/William Regal

This is the result of Regal dislocating Dreamer's jaw a few weeks back. They start fighting in the aisle with Jeff running around the ring to take both evil foreigners down. Dreamer grabs a half crab on Storm to start and gets his jaw broken again for the gimmick infringement. Regal comes in for a knee to the jaw as there's certainly a target so far. A front facelock allows Dreamer to get over for the tag to Jeff, which the referee naturally misses. With the referee dealing with Jeff, Regal gets a buckle pad off and Dreamer goes face first into the steal for the easy pin.

**Rating:** D. Jeff and Dreamer are a really lame low level team and having them waste Regal and Storm's time isn't that interesting. Then again, it's certainly better than the stupid hardcore feud with Nowinski. You really can tell that Jeff doesn't have any fire in him at the moment but at least he wasn't out there long enough to horribly botch anything.

Ric Flair talks about Batista's rough upbringing but Batista doesn't want to go into it. Flair doesn't seem to mind and brings up Batista bouncing from foster home to foster home. Now Batista gets to use the anger in the ring.

### Batista vs. Hurricane

Spinebuster and Batista Bomb are good for the pin in under a minute. Sounds like Flair has a future as a teacher.

Kane comes out for the save because they were partners for like two weeks.

Shawn and Van Dam go face to face about how horrible HHH is. Bischoff comes in to officially make Shawn guest referee. That was ever in doubt? If Shawn doesn't play it fair, he loses the title.

### Booker T. vs. Chris Jericho

Before the match, Booker makes jokes about Jericho being left without his clothes last week and makes jokes about size. Jericho throws some chops to start and dropkicks Booker out to the floor. The top rope back elbow to the jaw gets two and it's already off to

the chinlock. After a little dance (you always need a little dance), Booker catches him on top for a big crashing superplex.

A missile dropkick gives Booker two and Jericho gets catapulted into the corner for good measure. Christian and Goldust run in but quickly cancel each other out, leaving Booker to hit the ax kick. And never mind as Chief Morely comes out and makes this a tag match, minus any sort of Teddy Long's charisma.

**Rating:** C+. The match was just there to fill time before the ending but it's always helpful to have people this talented in the ring. Even if they have nothing to do and are only having a simple match, they're going to do it well enough that it's something you can watch without getting bored. I mean, it's not good enough to have them get the World Title or anything but that's just crazy talk.

#### Tag Team Titles: Christian/Chris Jericho vs. Booker T./Goldust

Christian and Jericho are defending and this is joined in progress with Christian in early trouble. It's off to Booker to hammer away on Jericho until the champs get in a cheap shot to take over. Jericho's running crotch shot to the back sets up more dancing but Christian's attempt earns himself a crotching.

Goldust comes in to clean house and gets two off a rollup for very hot reaction. Booker's snap spinebuster gets two and he ducks Christian's belt shot. The Book End gives Booker two more with Christian pulling the referee out. Now the belt shot works and Jericho adds the Lionsault for the pin to retain because the Texas guys have to job in their home state.

**Rating:** C+. Another solid outing here with all four working hard before the annoying ending that follows the WWE formula of humiliating the hometown favorites. I guess it's a good sign that Goldust didn't lose in his hometown and it's not like Booker has much more momentum to lose, even if the fans seem to love him. They really need to change the titles soon though as Goldust and Booker have been primed up for months now.

This week's Raw Retro is Austin with the cement truck destroying Vince's Corvette.

F-View shows us Test and Stacy making out on a couch, only to have her stop for the sake of a marketing idea.

#### Jackie vs. Victoria

Non-title. Victoria shoves her down to start and stomps a lot as the announcers make sure to talk about how tough Jackie is. Jackie gets in a hurricanrana for two but charges into a boot in the corner. The slingshot legdrop gets two but the Widow's Peak is countered with a backdrop. Jackie's spinning kick to the head gives her the clean pin and WOO TEXAS! I mean, Dallas and Austin are totally the same thing. They're only two hours apart and if you can have someone the fans don't care about win a non-title match it's completely the same as the popular team losing a title match right?

Steven Richards comes in to check on Victoria. They're still in the ring post match with Victoria demanding that Jackie come back out here. Instead it's Scott Steiner for some rhyming before destroying Steven. Cue a very smiling Bischoff to offer Steiner a contract pitch. The pitch is in the back though, where Bischoff has eight women waiting for him. Steiner says he already has a super freak tonight and opens his limo to reveal....Stephanie McMahon in a short skirt and low cut top. She has things to offer Steiner that Bischoff can't. So to sum this up: Stephanie is now hotter than eight good looking women combined.

We go to the World for RNN Breaking News....but we have breaking news in the arena, where HHH and Flair are looking for Shawn, who is in a referee shirt. Shawn is going to DQ HHH for any broken rule, which is totally going to happen because we're certainly NOT guaranteed to see HHH vs. Shawn for the title again.

#### HHH vs. Rob Van Dam

The winner gets Shawn, the guest referee here, at the pay per view. Actually hang on as Shawn needs to eject Flair before we get going. HHH isn't allowed to throw a closed fist so Rob springboard kicks him down for two. A slingshot dive drops HHH and there's the spinning kick to the back. Rob kicks him in the face for two more, followed by a small package for a fast counted near fall. HHH gets caught in a sleeper with Shawn sitting in front of the ropes for a nice touch.

Back up and Shawn gets bumped and since he's a referee here instead of a wrestler, a single clothesline keeps him down for a good twenty seconds. Shawn gets up to pull a chair away from HHH so Rob kicks him down by mistake. Rolling Thunder hits HHH but a chair shot knocks Rob silly for the slow counted pin.

**Rating:** D. Not only was it short and not very good but this felt like something Austin would have done in his day. His only support is sent outside, he has a guest referee that can't stand him and he can't use a right hand. The only cheating HHH did was swinging a chair after Rob hit the referee by mistake. I know HHH is amazing and the best thing ever (save for Stephanie) but this made him look like a face instead of the top heel.

They fight post match and Shawn gets in a superkick to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D-. Between the two really bad women's matches, the HHH/Stephanie worship and Booker/Goldust losing in Texas in a title match they should have won months ago, this was a really bad show. The Tag Team Title match was fine until the end but the rest of the show was the standard problem this era has: bad wrestling, uninteresting storytelling and pushing people who are only there because WWE has decided they're the best things in the world.

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# Smackdown – May 2, 2017: The Chris Jericho Alarm

# Clock

## Smackdown

Date: May 2, 2017

Location: Save Mart Center, Fresno, California

Commentators: Tom Phillips, John Bradshaw Layfield, Byron Saxton

Things are back to normal now and that means we're in the Jinder Mahal Could Be World Champion Era. Mahal cost Randy Orton the House of Horrors match on Sunday to help set up the title match at Backlash in just under three weeks so Orton is likely out for revenge. Tonight we have Chris Jericho defending his newly regained US Title against Kevin Owens, which sounds like something could be up. Let's get to it.

Earlier today, Jinder Mahal was in a photo shoot with the stolen Smackdown World Title. Shane McMahon came up and took it back while saying Mahal would be facing Sami Zayn tonight.

Opening sequence.

Here's Shane to introduce Chris Jericho as the newest member of the Smackdown roster. See, this is the new Show of Jericho so smack it down man! Cue AJ Styles, who will face the US Champion, whoever that is (Owens) at Backlash. Styles reminisces about their previous issues and says he's looking forward to Backlash where he can take the title.

That doesn't sit well with Jericho, and do you know what happens when you don't sit well with Jericho? It turns out that you get cut off by Owens, who is reminded that he tapped out. Owens wants AJ to get out of his ring so Styles goes up the ramp for a brawl. Shane: "SPLIT EM UP!" Jericho: "LET THEM FIGHT!" Shane gets his way as security breaks it up.

## Sami Zayn vs. Jinder Mahal

Zayn is still banged up after Baron Corbin attacked him last week on Talking Smack, earning Corbin a suspension for the week. Mahal elbows him in the back of the head to start but Sami speeds things

up with a headscissors. A dropkick sends Mahal outside and we take a break. Back with Sami in a chinlock for a good while until Jinder gets two off a clothesline. And never mind as it's right back to the chinlock.

Sami misses a dropkick but starts his clothesline based comeback, followed by the high crossbody for two. The corner climb tornado DDT looks to set up the Helluva Kick but one of the Singh Brothers pulls Mahal to the floor. The other grabs Sami's foot, setting up the cobra clutch slam to give Mahal the pin at 10:57.

**Rating:** C. I think I might be starting to like Mahal and I don't know what that means. Mahal certainly isn't the next big thing in WWE but they've built him (with the Brothers) into enough of a threat that it could make for a good one off match. It's a simple act and sometimes that's all it needs to be.

Becky Lynch comes up to the Welcoming Committee and mentions them all by name for no apparent reason. They think Becky should be getting the shots that Charlotte gets but she doesn't seem convinced.

Dolph Ziggler and some friends of his watch a Shinsuke Nakamura video and aren't impressed. Ziggler runs his mouth about Nakamura and insults Shane, who is of course right behind him.

#### Tye Dillinger vs. Aiden English

English isn't happy with Tye for cutting off his song. Dillinger starts fast with a forearm and clothesline before stomping away in the corner. As usual, the TEN chants seem to be more over than he is but take what you can get. Tye loads up the Tyebreaker but spins English around into a facebuster instead of the backbreaker for the pin at 1:05.

English seems to have a breakdown post match.

Jericho is about to talk to Renee Young (who he calls Ronnie) when he runs into the crying Aiden English. There's no need to cry when you can sing and have a hairy chest. That being said, do you know what happens when you cry on Chris Jericho's new show? HE JUST MADE

THE LIST! And so did Renee for no apparent reason!

Charlotte doesn't think much of the Welcoming Committee so they beat her down.

#### Naomi/Charlotte vs. Carmella/Natalya

And there's no Charlotte due to the attack. An early atomic drop doesn't do anything to Carmella so Naomi kicks the heck out of her leg. Carmella's kick has no effect either and it's time for the dancing kicks. The fresh Natalya comes in and poses a bit before getting sunset flipped for two.

A headscissors puts Natalya on the floor but she blocks a baseball slide (that's a new one) and sends Naomi face first into the steps. The double teaming puts Naomi in real trouble with Carmella shouting about Naomi wanting to kick her. Natalya and Naomi collide on a double crossbody and here's a banged up Charlotte to take the hot tag. Now it's Charlotte's turn to get taken down by the numbers game and we take a break.

Back with Natalya fighting out of a bodyscissors with ease since Carmella really isn't that big of a threat, even when Charlotte is injured. Carmella misses a Bronco Buster and the real hot tag brings in Naomi for a springboard crossbody. The Rear View should finish Carmella but Natalya offers a distraction, allowing Carmella to grab a rollup with tights for the pin at 11:42.

**Rating:** C-. Not much to see here but that's all you can really ask for with people like Carmella and Natalya as your top heels. Natalya has been around forever and still doesn't really have a character aside from being a member of the Hart Family and Carmella isn't exactly ready for this spot. Not a bad match but the heels need a bigger star to make this story work.

The Welcoming Committee beats on Charlotte and Naomi until Becky Lynch slowly walks out. She shakes hands with the Committee before throwing Ellsworth into the women and hammering on all of them. Tamina superkicks Becky down and the Welcoming Committee stands tall.

## Sin Cara vs. Dolph Ziggler

Ziggler elbows him in the mask to start but eats a springboard elbow for his efforts. A big kick sends Ziggler to the floor and Cara only somewhat botches the suicide dive when his feet get caught on the ropes. Back in and Ziggler gets two off a neckbreaker before they botch...I think a reversal to a suplex where Ziggler couldn't stick the landing. Ziggler quickly recovers with a fireman's carry slam but the Fameasser is countered into a powerbomb. Not that it matters as Ziggler gets the superkick for the pin at 4:33.

**Rating:** D. The botches hurt it but Cara got in a lot more offense than you would have expected. That helps a match like this so much as it at least makes Ziggler look like he had to break a sweat. Cara might not be great but he's a step above the Brooklyn Brawler so he should take a bit more effort.

Lana vignette.

And now, the Fashion Files from the Fashion Police. We go to a police station where Breezango are investigating the Usos for a variety of crimes. Fandango: "They're twins." Breeze: "Identity theft!" Along with making their outfits making Breezango's eyes hurt, Tyler thinks they're guilty of Jimmy and Jey walking. The big bust goes down in Chicago on May 21.

The best part here is everything in the background, ranging from a framed picture of the Big Boss Man to various news articles about the tag match to some wanted posters. A few examples are John Cena with whereabouts unknown, Nakamura as the King of Strong No Style and the Colons for real estate fraud. This is what giving a fresh team a shot can do for you as this was the first entertaining thing to happen to the division since American Alpha won the belts in the first place. Breezango might not be the best team in the world but they're likeable and this was funny so give them a one off chance.

## US Title: Chris Jericho vs. Kevin Owens

Jericho is defending and Styles is banned from ringside. They waste no time in getting the fight started with Jericho stomping on the

injured hand that cost Owens the title on Sunday. Owens sends him into the steps though and takes over without too much effort. The backplash keeps Jericho in trouble and he's thrown outside for a Cannonball against the barricade.

Back from a break with Jericho escaping the Pop Up Powerbomb but Lionsaulting onto knees. The second attempt works fine and it's off to the Walls. This time Owens makes the rope but another Pop Up Powerbomb is countered into the Walls in the middle of the ring. A much better tease of the tap out sets up Owens making the ropes again and it's back to the floor. Owens nails a loud superkick and DDTs him onto the ramp. Back in and another superkick sets up the Pop Up Powerbomb to give Owens the title back at 12:40.

**Rating:** B. I wanted to see more of this but they did the right thing by having Owens hit a big move with the superkick on the floor and then get in a few more moves to win the title back. It felt like Owens proving himself to be the better man and that's exactly what it needed to be. The ending wasn't exactly a surprise but Owens has the title back and that's what matters.

Medics come in to check on Jericho, who takes another powerbomb. Owens leaves and a very woozy looking Jericho is carried out. Of course Kevin comes back out and puts a chair around Jericho's neck which is sent into the post. Owens slowly walks up the ramp to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** C+. There was no secret to the fact that this was all about the main event and almost nothing more. You can see a lot of the Backlash card from here and they're actually doing a good job of setting up a show on such short notice. The title change felt like a big moment and it sets Owens on a roll before Backlash. It's not a great show and it was rather dull at several points (namely the women's tag) but it worked well enough.

### Results

Jinder Mahal b. Sami Zayn – Cobra clutch slam

Tye Dillinger b. Aiden English – Fireman's carry into a facebuster

Carmella/Natalya b. Naomi/Charlotte – Rollup with a handful of tights

Dolph Ziggler b. Sin Cara – Superkick

Kevin Owens b. Chris Jericho – Pop Up Powerbomb

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# Monday Night Raw – May 1, 2017: The Two Fisted Problem

## Monday Night Raw

Date: May 1, 2017

Location: Golden 1 Center, Sacramento, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T., Corey Graves

We're past Payback and that means things can finally start settling down around here. The big story continues to be Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman with Strowman beating the injured Reigns clean last night. Extreme Rules is in just over a month and an ambulance match would seem to be the next logical step. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

The women's division is in the ring with a pedestal in the middle and here's Alexa Bliss for her coronation as the new champion. Bliss thanks everyone for being here tonight, even if Kurt Angle forced them to be here. The Queen is gone is gone but not to worry because the Goddess is here. These women are an inspiration, including Mickie James, despite her contemporaries Mae Young and Fabulous Moolah having moved on to a better place.

As for Sasha, she's the woman that Alexa beat to get where she is today. Sasha glares at her and Bliss backs into Nia. Bliss: "We're good. We're good." Alexa gets on the pedestal and laughs at Bayley for losing in front of all her family last night. At least now Bayley's nephews will have someone to look up to. The brawl starts in a hurry and we take a break.

Alexa Bliss/Nia Jax/Emma/Alicia Fox vs. Bayley/Sasha Banks/Dana Brooke/Mickie James

Alexa hides from Bayley to start so it's Emma forearming Bayley in the back instead. Mickie comes in and starts on the arm before it's off to Alicia vs. Dana with Brooke scoring off a running cartwheel splash. Bayley works on Alicia's arm as they're tagging in and out at a very fast pace.

Fox sends Banks outside and it's a big staredown on the floor. Back with Nia throwing Sasha around and dropping an elbow for two. Bliss comes back in for some boot choking but Sasha avoids a charge. The hot tag brings in Bayley to take Alexa down and send her into the buckle ten straight times. Everything breaks down with everyone brawling to the floor, leaving Bliss to rake Bayley's eyes, setting up a DDT for the pin at 14:03.

**Rating:** C-. There's only so much you can do when you have eight people in there at the same time. With so many people floating around, especially people who don't have anything to do at the moment, you're not going to be able to really showcase anything other than a single feud. Bliss pinning Bayley is a good idea and I'm really glad they didn't go with the lame idea of the champion losing her first match after winning the title.

## Enzo Amore vs. Luke Gallows

Enzo says they have bags underneath their eyes (they're Gucci) because their real life is better than their dreams. Anderson and Gallows jump them from behind though and we take a break before the bell. The match is joined in progress with Gallows working on the arm. Enzo avoids a charge in the corner though and scores with some kicks to the face, only to uppercut Amore's head off. Another shot staggers Gallows and Amore goes up, only to have Anderson offer a distraction. The flapjack gives Luke the pin at 5:30.

**Rating:** D. I am so bored with this feud as I can't even remember why they're fighting in the first place. Enzo and Cass aren't exactly the most thrilling team in the world at this point and I don't see that changing anytime soon. The Enzo schtick is starting to get old in a hurry as we have to wait a few minutes so he can say the exact same thing every single week. Then again the fans still react to it so at least it does serve a purpose, unlike this feud that doesn't seem like it's ever going to end.

Neville tells TJ Perkins to stay focused.

Here's Seth Rollins to talk about how he's persevered through everything and is doing everything he's wanted to do. Now though, he wants the Beast. Cue Finn Balor to say while Rollins has done a lot, he's the one armed man who became the first ever Universal Champion. Remember that Seth?

Dean Ambrose comes out to say he wants part of the fight but here's Miz to say he's awesome and Balor is a coward. Miz talks about being a threat until all three tell him to shut up at the same time. Dean asks who wants to see someone beat up the Miz and pulls out his phone to call Kurt. With the call over, Dean says Kurt has made Miz vs. Balor vs. Rollins with the winner getting an Intercontinental Title match.

We look back at last night's main event.

Tony Nese/Brian Kendrick/Noam Dar vs. Rich Swann/Akira Tozawa/Jack Gallagher

The good guys all have umbrellas for their entrances. Tozawa kicks Kendrick in the face to start but Nese runs him over without much effort. Everything breaks down in a hurry and the villains are sent outside, leaving everyone else to pose. Back with Tozawa in trouble at the hands of all three heels.

Tozawa finally gets in a kick and makes the hot tag off to Swann. Rich speeds things way up and hits a running flip ax kick (Booker: "Like a Harlem Hangover!") followed by a running 450. Everything breaks down with Gallagher and Kendrick being left alone in the ring. The Captain's Hook is broken up and Jack hits the running dropkick for the pin at 10:34.

**Rating:** C+. This got MUCH better after the commercial and made me less annoyed after thinking it was the old "throw them into one match" concept. At this point 205 Live needs something to be built up other than the main event so having six guys go out there looking good is one of the best things that can be done.

We look back at Sheamus and Cesaro turning heel last night.

Here are Sheamus (who Graves correctly identifies as looking like Travis Bickle) and Cesaro for their explanation. Sheamus is tired of living in a fog where he had to pretend to like the fans. They were ready to take their titles back at Wrestlemania but then the Hardys were thrown in for the nostalgia reaction.

That moment didn't last long though because it was just a novelty. Now they're ready to dominate again, as only they can. Cesaro and Sheamus go to leave but here are the Hardys to cut them off. Matt talks about being banged up from last night's post match ambush but their response is DELETE. The champs chase them off.

Miz is ready to get his Intercontinental Title back but Ambrose comes in to ask if Miz's hair gel gets in his eyes when he wrestles. Miz leaves so "Mean" Dean Ambrose throws it back to Bobby and Gene at ringside.

Heath Slater vs. Apollo Crews

This is over Titus being annoyed that Slater gave Crews advice on

being a new father. Crews takes him to the mat to start and Slater is already in over his head. A headscissors doesn't get Heath anywhere as Crews nips up for a staredown. Crews misses a charge in the corner though and we get a Titus vs. Rhyno staredown (Perhaps over Main Event issues from last week? I know you know what I'm talking about.). Back in and Crews hits an enziguri, followed by the Toss Powerbomb for the pin at 3:46.

**Rating:** D+. This was exactly what you would expect from these two and that's not a good thing. I know Titus seems like a death sentence for Crews but you have to go somewhere with him so it's not like he has anywhere to go but up. Not a good match or anything but it's getting Crews on TV, which is a good thing for him.

Here's Angle to talk about Reigns vs. Strowman. Last night's matches had consequences with Reigns re-injuring his ribs and Strowman tearing his rotator cuff. Kurt has been thinking about this all day but here's Bray Wyatt to interrupt. Bray is here as a savior after rising from his own ashes with burnt wings. Angle says this is his ring but Bray says it's his world.

Dean interviews Rollins because there are cameras in the locker room and therefore there must be an interview. After listing off some potential names, Dean asks if Rollins would like an Intercontinental Title shot. Tensions are teased but Dean throws it back to Gorilla before it goes too far.

#### Austin Aries vs. TJ Perkins

They trade shots in the corner to start until Aries hits one heck of a shot to the jaw. Perkins comes right back by tying him in the Tree of Woe for a running dropkick to the knee to put Aries in trouble. Back from a break with Perkins putting on a butterfly lock, followed by a springboard spinning forearm for two. Aries' knee is too banged up to be thrown across the ring and his shoulder hits the post to make it even worse.

TJ doesn't even let him fall down before he grabs a half crab in the ropes. Aries comes right back though by kicking TJ to the floor for the suicide dive. The middle rope elbow to the back gets two but the

knee gives out again. TJ tries the Detonation Kick, only to have Aries reverse into the Last Chancery for the tap at 11:20.

**Rating:** B-. The wrestling was good but the important thing was building up the Last Chancery as a potential finisher. If you're just going to have Aries use the move over and over, at some point it has to actually beat someone. Even if he only wins one or two matches with it, the idea is that he can do it again, which makes it an effective finisher.

Post match Perkins puts Aries in the kneebar to leave him laying.

Ambrose interviews Balor and suggests eating a carb. Balor takes a bite of a doughnut before heading to the ring but is replaced by the Drifter, who seems to confuse Ambrose.

Golden Truth's request for a Tag Team Title shot is turned down as they don't have the best win/loss record. Angle will however put them in a Tag Team Turmoil match next week, which seems to work fine.

Last night, Angle said goodbye to Chris Jericho after he won the US Title, sending him to Smackdown.

#### Seth Rollins vs. Finn Balor vs. The Miz

The winner is #1 contender to the Intercontinental Title. Miz heads to the floor like the coward he is so it's Balor vs. Rollins to start. Neither of them seem that interested in fighting though as they keep looking at Miz before finally heading out after him. He finally gets caught and tries to fight, only to be kicked out to the floor.

We get Rollins vs. Balor again but Miz pulls Finn to the floor and hides Maryse so Seth can't hit a dive. All three get back inside, only to have Miz shove Seth off the top for a big crash as we take a break. Back with Balor elbowing out of Miz's chinlock until Rollins tries a high crossbody but lands on his head. Thankfully he's right back up but Miz sends him into Balor to put Finn down on the floor.

Both good guys take kicks to the chest until Finn throws Miz at

Rollins for a DDT but dropkicks Seth down at the same time. They head outside with Balor hitting some HARD kicks to the face (Graves: "Who knew that in twenty four hours the Irish would revolutionize dentistry?"), followed by 1916 for a near fall on Rollins. Balor gets crotched against the post and Miz's low DDT gets two on Seth. Miz starts kicking at the bad knee to set up the Figure Four on Rollins but Balor makes the save.

They trade kicks to the face with Seth getting a near fall of his own. A double Blockbuster sets up a frog splash on Balor and Seth can't believe the kickout. Rollins runs the corner for the superplex into the Falcon Arrow on Miz but here's Samoa Joe to Rock Bottom him on the floor. Not that it matters as Balor is up with the Sling Blade and Coup de Grace....but here's Wyatt to shove him off the top. Sister Abigail lays Finn out and Miz steals the pin at 22:25.

**Rating:** A-. Now that's how you book a match. With the World Title scene basically on hold until July, this set up the Intercontinental Title as a much bigger deal that three former World Champions are fighting over. It also helps set up Balor vs. Wyatt and Rollins vs. Joe, which should be two major headlining feuds over the next few weeks until Reigns and Strowman are back.

**Overall Rating:** C. This show suffered from two problems. First of all is the lack of anything on top as the champion is gone and the two main eventers are both out selling injuries. While that's a good idea and necessary, it makes for a very, very long night. It's not helping when this is the night after a pay per view, which automatically makes things feel long. We're looking at seven plus hours of wrestling in two days and that's a bit much to take. Couple that with a show where they were clearly filling in a lot of time and it's still good enough but it felt like it went on for about four days.

### Results

Alexa Bliss/Nia Jax/Alicia Fox/Emma b. Dana Brooke/Bayley/Sasha Banks/Mickie James – DDT to Bayley

Luke Gallows b. Enzo Amore – Flapjack

Rich Swann/Akira Tozawa/Jack Gallagher b. Tony Nese/Brian Kendrick/Noam Dar – Running dropkick to Kendrick

Apollo Crews b. Heath Slater – Toss Powerbomb

Austin Aries b. TJ Perkins – Last Chancery

Miz b. Seth Rollins and Finn Balor – Pin after Sister Abigail from Bray Wyatt

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# **Payback 2017: Thank You Strowman! And Reigns. Rollins Too. Throw in Joe. Maybe Jericho?**

## **Payback 2017**

Date: April 30, 2017

Location: SAP Center, San Jose, California

Commentators: Michael Cole, Booker T., Corey Graves

And now, the most oddly booked, unnecessary and likely meaningless

pay per view of the year! We're four weeks removed from Wrestlemania and somehow it seems like a far more distant memory. This was going to be your run of the mill rematch pay per view but the Superstar Shakeup has rendered a lot of the top matches worthless. Randy Orton vs. Bray Wyatt is now non-title while Kevin Owens and Chris Jericho haven't interacted in weeks. Fun for everyone you see. Let's get to it.

#### Kickoff Show: Enzo Amore/Big Cass vs. Anderson and Gallows

Enzo and Cass talk about Chinese food and say that Anderson and Gallows' fortune cookie will call them sawft. Amore pounds on Anderson to start and hits a running kick to the ribs. The offense doesn't last long though as Gallows kicks him down and works on the arm until we go to a break.

Back with Anderson breaking up a hot tag attempt at the last minute, only to have the second attempt work a few seconds later. Cass starts cleaning house with the corner splashes, only to have Enzo make a blind tag. Gallows pulls him off the apron a second later for a big crash but Cass breaks up the Magic Killer. A small package finishes Gallows at 6:39.

**Rating:** D+. This was only there so Enzo and Cass could fire the crowd up and there's nothing wrong with that. What there is something wrong with is how lifeless this feud has been over the last few weeks that it's dragged along. Enzo and Cass really could have used the Revival for their next feud but instead we're stuck here thanks to injury. Not bad but really not interesting.

We're not done on the Kickoff Show as we have MizTV with special guest Finn Balor. Miz asks what the deal is with the long entrance and Finn says it's the Balor Club. That doesn't quite make sense as Miz wants to know what it takes to get into the Balor Club. Finn puts it up to the crowd who approve of Maryse but not so much of Miz.

We hear about Balor's success worldwide but Miz thinks Finn might feel like a failure. Balor mentions all the injuries he suffered in a match that he still managed to win and become the Universal

Champion (my goodness imagine where his career would be if he didn't win that match). Miz mentions all the time away and asks what's next for Balor. Finn makes it simple: he wants his title back.

Miz brings up Lesnar being the Beast but Balor is ready to fight a bigger man, just like he has for his entire career. A fight is about to break out but Miz hides behind Maryse. Miz isn't worth the beating so Finn goes to leave, only to have Miz call him out. One Sling Blade later and Miz is quickly shut up as Finn destroys the set.

The opening video is a simple look at the matches with a theme of retribution. Nothing special but it's all it needed to be.

#### US Title: Chris Jericho vs. Kevin Owens

Owens is defending after taking the title from Jericho at Wrestlemania. The story would call for a big violent gimmick here but nah, let's just let it be a standard rematch instead with IT'S RAW VS. SMACKDOWN serving as the gimmick instead. Kevin bails to the floor to start and gets sent into the announcers' table to let Jericho take over. Owens has to roll away from a Jericho dive to the floor but makes the stupid decision to roll back inside, allowing Jericho to hit a top rope elbow to the jaw.

The springboard dropkick is broken up (which should be attributed to Owens being such a big Jericho fan) and Owens nails the Cannonball against the barricade. We hit the chinlock (Owens: "ASK HIM!") as Cole continues running down both guys' resumes. One heck of a clothesline drops Jericho again and it's right back to the chinlock. Back up and Jericho misses a charge but gets in a quick enziguri for two of his own.

A superkick out of the corner gives Owens two more and the Cannonball is good for the same. The Pop Up Powerbomb is countered with a hurricanrana into the Walls. Owens gets to the ropes by a finger again so Jericho crushes the hand beneath the steps. The bad hand means Owens can't hit the Pop Up Powerbomb so it's back to the Walls...for the tap out and the title at 14:06, sending Jericho over to Smackdown.

**Rating:** C. The ending helped it a lot (shock value can indeed do good things) but this felt like it was a long stretch of house show level stuff until Jericho started to go after the hand. Changing the title is a good idea though as they needed to do something to get off to a good start instead of having Owens beat a huge crowd favorite. Odds are Jericho loses on Smackdown anyway so it really doesn't mean that much.

Jericho signs a kid's List on the way up the ramp.

#### Cruiserweight Title: Neville vs. Austin Aries

Neville is defending in another Wrestlemania rematch where Neville raked the eyes to retain the title. An armdrag and a running shoulder in the corner have Neville flummoxed early on and it's time to lay on the top rope. It's way too early for the 450 though as Neville dropkicks the rope for the break.

We're already in the chinlock for a bit before Aries fights up and hits the middle rope elbow to the back. Aries sends him outside for a suicide dive, followed by a suplex back inside. A running forearm in the corner looks to set up the 450 but Neville bails out to the floor for safety. Not that it matters as Aries grabs a sunset bomb to set up the Last Chancery. Neville is in trouble but grabs the referee for the DQ at 11:19.

**Rating:** C+. This was getting good until the ending. I'd assume this sets up a third match at Extreme Rules but they're to the point where Aries almost needs to win the belt. It's still a good feud but this one didn't have anywhere near the steam that the previous one did. I'm not sure they can really drag it out another month but that's never stopped WWE before.

Aries post-match protests don't get him anywhere.

#### Tag Team Titles: Sheamus/Cesaro vs. Hardys

The Hardys are defending after winning the titles at Wrestlemania in a ladder match. Cesaro and Matt start things off as an OBSOLETE chant starts up. Jeff comes in for a BROTHER NERO chant and it's almost immediately back to Matt. So much for that chant. Cesaro and

Sheamus start in on the arm but it's right back to Jeff to speed things up. The legdrop between the legs and a seated dropkick set up the splash for two. Why does no one else ever do that?

Not that it matters as Sheamus sends him hard out to the floor and it's time for the heat segment. Sheamus' middle rope knee gets two and it's off to the chinlock. Back up and Sheamus kicks him in the face with Corey calling him the "alabaster gladiator". It's right back to the chinlock as Jeff seems to have lost a tooth somewhere in there. He's still able to kick Cesaro away and make the hot tag though as things pick up.

A DELETE middle rope elbow sets up the Side Effect for two. Matt's moonsault misses though and it's the Cesaro Swing into the Sharpshooter. A rope is quickly grabbed so Sheamus comes back in for a super White Noise in a great crash. Jeff makes a last second save but Sheamus breaks up the Twist of Fate. Sheamus powerslams Matt but Jeff makes a blind tag and hits the Swanton for the pin to retain at 12:48.

**Rating:** C. Another Raw match here with the Hardys still needing a real team to feud with, at least until Revival gets back to take the titles away. As has been the case both times tonight, the match was fine though it's nothing that I'm going to remember tomorrow. Matt and Jeff are still good in the ring but they don't quite have the same spark from when they made their return. It's not early enough for a big change, but the Broken stuff needs to happen before it goes too long.

Post match the Hardys shake their hands, only to have Sheamus and Cesaro turn on them and beat them up. If that doesn't set up a rematch with the Broken Hardys at Extreme Rules, nothing is going to.

Braun Strowman promises to hurt Roman Reigns.

Women's Title: Alexa Bliss vs. Bayley

Bayley is defending in her hometown. Bliss gets slammed to start and a knee drop gets two, followed by a long series of rams into the

buckle. Alexa comes right back with a HARD shot to the head and the slow beating begins. As is normally the case, Alexa beats on Bayley and looks extra annoyed while doing so. She gets so much mileage out of her facial expressions. The chinlock is quickly broken so Bliss clotheslines her back down. Bliss spends a bit too much time trash talking though and gets caught in a Stunner over the ropes.

A belly to back suplex gives Bayley two but she takes too much time going to the ropes and gets sent hard into the buckle. Bayley can't get the super Bayley to Belly and gets pulled down with a Code Red for two. Bliss gets kneed in the face though and the Macho Elbow gets two more. A rollup gives Bayley two but the kickout sends her into the post. Bayley is so stunned that a DDT gives Bliss the pin and the title at 11:19.

**Rating:** C+. So to clarify, Bayley is NOT Naomi and is no better than anyone else that loses in their hometown. Bliss winning is fine but it really does seem that these hometown losses are just there to show that WWE is still in charge. The match was good enough and proof that playing a character well is far more important than what you can do in the ring. Bliss' in-ring work might not be the best but it's passable enough to be carried by her great mannerisms.

We recap the House of Horrors match, which means we'll finally get to know what the heck it is. The match is non-title due to the Superstar Shakeup but that gives Bray a slight chance of winning, perhaps due to some Jinder Mahal interference. Randy Orton beat Bray Wyatt at Wrestlemania for the title and this is the (meaningless) gimmick rematch.

#### Randy Orton vs. Bray Wyatt

Non-title. The match is going to start in Bray's House of Horrors and will wind up in the ring where it's pinfall, submission or forfeiture. We go to the inside of a limo where Orton is firing himself up and wearing pants. The House of Horrors is an actual house...and a tractor goes by with no one on it. The door is locked so Orton kicks his way in and we start the rapid camera cuts.

Bray's voice says run and he jumps Orton from behind. Randy is

thrown into various things as the House of Horrors looks like a not great house that is being renovated. Bray disappears but reaches through a wall to choke Orton for a second and a half. The next room has baby dolls hanging from the ceiling in various mutilated forms and we hear babies talking.

Cue Wyatt for another attack but Orton throws him through a wall. They head to another room with more dolls and some weird structure made of sticks. That goes nowhere so it's off to a kitchen (the refrigerator says WE'RE HERE) with Orton getting the better of it. Bray tries to climb onto a counter and gets in a low blow. The refrigerator is shoved down onto Randy so Bray walks outside and steals Orton's limo. We'll come back to this later.

We recap Seth Rollins vs. Samoa Joe. Rollins was injured at Joe's hands earlier this year so tonight is really just about payback. As is often the case, the simpler ideas work best.

#### Seth Rollins vs. Samoa Joe

Joe punches him up against the ropes to start and they're quickly on the floor with Rollins chopping away. Seth hits the big suicide dive and a second one does just as well. The big guy gets smart and goes after the knee before hitting the suicide elbow to send Rollins over the announcers' table. Graves: "Like a flying school bus!"

A backslash onto the knee has Rollins screaming and his comeback is cut off almost immediately. The Knee Capper sets up the kneebar until Seth scrambles to the ropes. Joe grabs a powerbomb into a half crab into the Texas Cloverleaf but Joe is at the ropes again. Seth comes back with a Sling Blade, followed by a superkick to the neck for two of his own.

For some reason Seth tries the Buckle Bomb and the knee gives out, though it's fine enough for a Falcon Arrow a few seconds later. That great looking frog splash bangs the knee up even more so the cover is only good for a delayed two. The Koquina Clutch is countered with a quick rope climb but Joe grabs the hold again, only to have Seth roll over for a cradle and the pin at 16:03.

**Rating:** B+. It's definitely the match of the night so far which was what most people had coming in. Rollins winning is the right call as it would have been really stupid to give him the win last time and then job him here. Joe dominated the match until the ending where he got caught (ignore his shoulder being up) so this was about as well done as they were going to get.

Wyatt arrives back at the arena and stumbles into the ring. Cue Orton from behind with a chair (no word on how he got back) to start the beatdown, including sending Wyatt over the announcers' tables. There's the Elevated DDT off the table and Orton follows it up with another chair to the back. Back in and the RKO is loaded up but here are the Singh Brothers to go after Orton. They're dispatched just as quickly and there's the RKO to Wyatt. Now it's Jinder Mahal with the belt to Orton's head twice in a row, setting up Sister Abigail for the pin at 4:22 shown in the ring, not counting about ten minutes in the House.

**Rating:** D. The house stuff was more stupid than bad and that's a major improvement. They would have been in big trouble if it had been stuff like they did at Wrestlemania so it was more just there instead of anything all that terrible. Wyatt winning might be a stretch but I'd much rather him actually get a win than lose all over again with the RKO being the great vanquishing force. Not the best concept here but it's going to be a more forgettable idea than on a list of all time horrible concepts and that's a major victory.

We recap Braun Strowman vs. Roman Reigns. Strowman destroyed Reigns in an incredible segment but has since gone 0-1-1 against Big Show and Kalisto for reasons that aren't clear. Tonight Reigns is back for revenge.

#### Roman Reigns vs. Braun Strowman

Reigns is very banged up coming in. He goes right after Strowman and hits a clothesline off the steps to drop the monster on the floor. The apron kick is pulled out of the air and Strowman chokeslams him onto the announcers' table. A powerslam gets two and Reigns is getting some sympathy for FINALLY being an underdog.

The bad shoulder is sent hard into the steps and it's off to a waistlock back inside. Strowman misses a charge into the corner and Reigns somehow hits a Samoan drop for two. They head outside with Reigns charging at Strowman and managing to send him into the post twice in a row.

The spear gets two back inside (giving us a reaction from a young girl that we'll likely see weekly from now on) but the second attempt hits boot. Two Superman Punches drop Braun but a third is caught in that head and arm choke. The powerslam only gets two so Strowman does it again for the pin at 11:20.

**Rating:** B+. This was WAY better than I was expecting and Reigns losing is probably the right call. I mean, I really don't need to see him vs. Lesnar at Wrestlemania XXXIV but if that's where we just have to go, you have to take Reigns down a few pegs first. Really good power match here and that was easily the way to go.

Post match Strowman throws in some steps (Fans: "THANK YOU STROWMAN!") and drops Reigns ribs first onto the steel in a big crash. Braun lifts the steps over his head and brings them crashing down onto his ribs in a cringe inducing landing. Strowman is as over as free beer in a frat house and Reigns is bleeding from the mouth (Fans: "YOU DESERVE IT!") to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. The really low expectations helped this a lot, as did having Jericho win and not having the House of Horrors match be a disaster. The ending was really good and Joe vs. Rollins was quite the match as well. Raw is looking strong, or at least it would if there was anything for these guys to be fighting over. Good show here, though I still wonder how long they can stretch things out with Lesnar not likely wrestling until July.

### Results

Chris Jericho b. Kevin Owens – Walls of Jericho

Austin Aries b. Neville via DQ when Neville grabbed the referee

Hardys b. Sheamus/Cesaro – Swanton Bomb to Sheamus

Alexa Bliss b. Bayley – DDT

Seth Rollins b. Samoa Joe – Cradle

Bray Wyatt b. Randy Orton – Sister Abigail

Braun Strowman b. Roman Reigns – Powerslam

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# Smackdown – November 28, 2002: Thank You For Stephanie, Wrestling, Stephanie, Brock Lesnar and Stephanie

## **Smackdown**

Date: November 28, 2002

Location: Carolina Center, Columbia, South Carolina

Commentators: Michael Cole, Ernest Miller

It's time for a special Thanksgiving show with guest star Scott Steiner. I'm not sure how wrestling is supposed to have guest stars but in theory it's because Steiner isn't on the Smackdown roster. I

mean, he's not on the Raw roster and wasn't guest starring there but continuity isn't WWE's strong suit. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of Big Show vs. Brock Lesnar from last week, which somehow focuses on Stephanie McMahon. WWE could produce a documentary on the tag team scene in the Nebraska territory back in the 1940s and somehow she would be there to comment on it.

Opening sequence, still prominently featuring the Rock, who hasn't been here in....six months?

Speaking of the devil in a sweater, here's Stephanie to open things up. She's not sure if she should suspend Brock Lesnar and actually says she doesn't speak to hear herself talk. That must be her attempts at comedy. See, she's multi-talented. We know she can dance so maybe we'll get a song later on.

We do get Lesnar's song as he comes out to get in Stephanie's face because he should be here while she talks about his career.

Stephanie bails to the ramp and has security escort Brock out.

Lesnar is officially suspended indefinitely and Stephanie orders him out of her arena. So was that a heel turn? Not that it matters as Stephanie plays a villain on TV, as per her Twitter page.

Post break, here's Stephanie's announcement again. Not that she likes hearing herself talk of course.

Lesnar is escorted out and drives away.

#### Edge/Rey Mysterio vs. John Cena/Matt Hardy

Matt has been to Plymouth Rock and thinks Thanksgiving is boring. Cena now has B Squared with him and the announcers make Vanilla Ice jokes. Edge and Mysterio dropkick Cena down to start and Edge adds a flapjack to make things even better. A missed charge gives Cena two though and it's time to stomp away. The Side Effect gives Matt two and we hit the cravate. B Squared: "COME ON DAWG!"

Edge fights back and hits a middle rope dropkick on Cena and it's Rey time. Things speed way up with the springboard seated senton to Matt and a drop toehold to send Matt's head between Cena's legs. Sounds like something Stephanie would find funny. Matt takes the 619

and Edge dives onto the rap duo. Rey tries a hurricanrana but Matt powerbombs him down and grabs the ropes for the pin.

**Rating:** C. Is there a reason Hardy was in this and not just Cena and Buchanan? I like the idea of making a new team and having two guys who have been working hard in the last few weeks get a win is always a good thing. Edge and Mysterio are a made team for the moment, though I'm not sure how much longer they're actually going to be together. Not a bad little match.

Kurt Angle asks Stephanie if she's ok. So she's funny, a song and dance woman, bossy and in need of attention? Anyway she doesn't like this town and thinks they should love her for bringing them Scott Steiner. Angle brings up his Tag Team Title match tonight when he teams with Chris Benoit. Stephanie asks if everything has to be about him and then brings up her monthly issues (Aunt Flo is mentioned). Kurt doesn't get it and, again, THIS WASN'T FUNNY.

Lesnar has been rumored to be seen coming back to the arena. He left in an SUV so Marc Lloyd goes up to a limo, thinking it's Brock. It's actually Steiner, who flexes instead of talking.

#### Tajiri vs. Chuck Palumbo

Uh....sure. Tajiri kicks him in the head as Miller talks about his Aunt Flo visiting as well. Chuck's right hand has no effect so Tajiri kicks him in the head again. A chinlock doesn't get Tajiri very far and the handspring is countered into something like a belly to back suplex. Why has no one ever tried just stepping to the side and letting him crash? Palumbo gets smart and takes the knee out before grabbing a reverse Boston crab. Tajiri makes the rope and uses the mist, setting up the Buzzsaw Kick for the pin.

**Rating:** D. I always liked Palumbo and the reverse Boston crab could have been a decent finisher but you're only going to get so far as Chuck Palumbo: guy in trunks. This was one heck of a random match but maybe there's a big chunk of the roster gone due to the holiday. Nothing match but at least Tajiri won.

Stephanie fixes herself up for Steiner but gets the Fabulous Moolah

again. The boss insults Columbia until Moolah, who Stephanie calls Lil, comes in. I guess this is like when she was BEST FRIENDS with Andre the Giant and she made sure to tell us about it. Why do I have a feeling she was front and center in anything they put out about Andre too? For reasons of something stupid later on, Stephanie puts Moolah in a match.

Lloyd asks a ticket scalper if he sold Lesnar a ticket but can't get anywhere. This show is really, really stupid so far.

Matt stops Paul Heyman and Big Show and says he's the reason Lesnar got suspended.

Torrie Wilson is dressed as an Indian for a fashion show when she runs into Kidman. She doesn't know what a pilgrim fashion show is but will do whatever it takes to get closer to hurting Dawn Marie.

Miller emcees the fashion show in the role that would usually be filled by Tazz (off due to a family emergency). There's a table of food behind him and I might as well hit fast forward already. Torrie is dressed as an Indian and Dawn is....a stereotypical hot secretary who is supposed to look like a pilgrim because her outfit is black with white trim. A person in a turkey suit comes out and of course it's Al Wilson. Al starts talking about how much he loves Thanksgiving so Cole literally screams for help. Wilson talks about "my little pookins" but Miller calls him a jive turkey.

Torrie takes off her coat to reveal a bikini and Dawn just dances. The catfight ensues and food goes into various faces. Torrie puts a pumpkin on Dawn's head and we get a REALLY obvious fake Torrie chant. You know, it's impressive but they've managed to make a feud involving gorgeous women in swimsuits/lingerie a nightmare to watch. I'm not sure who could possibly make that happen but it's certainly not Stephanie.

Tag Team Titles: Kurt Angle/Chris Benoit vs. Los Guerreros

Eddie and Chavo are defending. Benoit starts with Chavo and elbows him into the corner as they seem to have a lot of time. The champs bail to the floor but Angle and Benoit argue instead of following

up. Eddie comes back in to headlock Angle, who snaps off a powerslam. Benoit grabs a German suplex on Chavo but Angle doesn't like him getting in the ring. With the argument ensuing, the champs walk up the ramp for the countout, only to have the referee say the match isn't ending that way. How dare he take the match into his own hands like that. What a maverick.

Back from a break with Eddie putting Benoit in a seated abdominal stretch as the pace has slowed a lot. Benoit sends Chavo into his uncle and grabs a Crossface, only to have Eddie make a quick save. We hit the chinlock The fans want Angle as the champs hit a double suplex. Eddie's slingshot hilo doesn't quite work as Benoit throws him to the side and suplexes Chavo. Now it's off to Angle for the suplexes, only to have Benoit tag himself back in for some rolling German suplexes of his own.

The Swan Dive only gets two but Eddie hits Angle low. The frog splash only hits mat and it's back to back Angle Slams to drop the champs. Benoit Crossfaces Eddie but Angle breaks it up and puts on the ankle lock instead. Finally they compromise and put on a double submission, which is broken up by the overzealous referee. That means a ref bump, allowing Chavo to put Benoit down. Chavo's frog splash gives Eddie two so he belts Benoit in the head for the pin to retain.

**Rating:** B+. This is still the go to match for Smackdown and that's still a very good thing. Benoit and Angle bickering needs to go somewhere soon though as you can only have them fight so many times before it stops meaning anything. Eddie and Chavo stealing another win fits them so well, though I could go for something other than the belt shot for the pin.

Nidia is glad Jamie Noble didn't call his cousin Nunzio when Scott Steiner comes up. Scott won't shake his hands but will grab a good sized piece of Nidia's, shall we say, hip area.

Post break Nidia and Noble are in the ring with Jamie calling out Steiner. A posedown ensues and Noble is subsequently destroyed. Steiner makes sure to get another grab of Nidia before saying he

hasn't decided on Raw or Smackdown.

It's time for MORE STEPHANIE with Heyman coming in to say Show will defend against Lesnar tonight. Stephanie already has a title defense for Show tonight though, against someone of championship status. Normally that would interest me but tonight it means he'll be facing Moolah because that would be the dumbest thing they could do.

#### Cruiserweight Title: Billy Kidman vs. Crash

Billy is defending but gets pulled to the floor to start for an elbow to the face. Back in and Kidman scores with the fireman's carry into a backbreaker, only to have Crash roll through a high crossbody for two. Kidman's headscissors is countered into a reverse powerbomb (always thought that could be a solid finisher) and a Bodog gets two. Not that it matters as Kidman pops back up with a quick BK Bomb. The shooting star retains the title.

**Rating:** C+. I liked the match but not so much on the booking. Crash looked better than he has in a long time, which really doesn't do much for Kidman. This was your standard "let them do moves to each other for a few minutes because we don't have time to let them have a longer match", which isn't exactly the most thrilling thing in the world. Good enough match but as usual, it doesn't mean anything for either guy.

Big Show and Moolah (good thing she brought her gear) are coming to the ring because OF COURSE this is what they're doing.

#### Smackdown World Title: Big Show vs. Fabulous Moolah

Moolah, challenging here (in case you're REALLY slow) and hides in the corner to start. Heyman jumps on the apron and talks about how awesome Moolah is before saying Show sees her as Brock Lesnar. Moolah is grabbed by the throat but Lesnar comes through the crowd for the save. An F5 through the table knocks Show cold so Lesnar can go after Heyman. Actually never mind because STEPHANIE IS HERE AGAIN, this time with security to stop the suspended Lesnar to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D-. The tag match and Torrie in her costume alone

save this thing as they were clearly putting it in the deep freeze due to the holiday. Big Show vs. Lesnar is a really weird feud as they're still feuding but can't actually have a match together due to whatever their reason is at the moment. Somehow that leaves us with Big Show vs. Moolah because that's as good as it gets around here.

That leaves us with the major problem: WAY too much Stephanie. I have no idea who thinks we need to see this much of her, let alone hear about her various physical issues. How does that make me want to watch next week, buy a pay per view, or go to a show? This felt more like Stephanie vs. Brock which went to a draw at worst. Really weak show this week and just being Thanksgiving isn't enough of an excuse.

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# **Main Event – April 27, 2017: As Raw Goes**

## **Main Event**

Date: April 27, 2017

Location: Sprint Center, Kansas City, Missouri

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

I'm not even sure what to say about this show anymore. It comes and goes with a few interesting highlights and the rest is just a bunch of matches between the standard batch of regular people and then a cruiserweight tag. I could certainly go with a little change of pace but those are very few and far between around here. Let's get to it.

Opening sequence.

### Rhyno vs. Titus O'Neil

It's about time Rhyno and Heath Slater actually appeared in the arena. They start with the power exchange before a clothesline puts Titus on the floor. That's fine with Titus who unloads on him with a right hand to the jaw, followed by his own clothesline for two inside. Another clothesline (because Titus isn't very skilled) gets the same and it's off to the chinlock. Rhyno comes back with some shoulders and a spinebuster for the pin at 5:29.

**Rating:** D. Just long and slow here with Titus not being able to do anything other than hit really low level offense. Also what's up with the spinebuster for the finish instead of the Gore? Rhyno's offense is basically two moves and he only hit one of them. Then again he's still getting some of the most consistent pops of the show so he's doing something right.

Video on Roman Reigns.

From Raw!

### Braun Strowman vs. Kalisto

It's a dumpster match, which means you have to put them inside but don't have to close the lid. Before the match, Braun says everyone here is trash and putting Kalisto in the dumpster will be like putting everyone in there too, including Roman Reigns. In the back, Kalisto tells Angle he has to fight like a man.

Kalisto starts with some kicks but his flip dive is caught in a suplex, only to have Strowman throw him across the ring. A front facelock over the ropes has Strowman in some trouble but he throws

Kalisto down again. Strowman loads up a press slam but Kalisto slips out and dropkicks him into the dumpster for the win at 6:13.

**Rating:** F. I know WWE's official line is that wins and losses don't matter but you're trying to build Strowman up as an opponent for Lesnar. Two weeks ago, Strowman absolutely destroyed Reigns in one of the coolest segments in years. In the two weeks since, he's gone to a draw with Big Show (But he stood up and that makes up for it!) and now he's lost to Kalisto. He'll probably beat Reigns on Sunday and that's supposed to make up for this right? I'm sure no one will EVER reference this loss again and Strowman will be forever awesome.

Post match Strowman destroys Kalisto and puts him in the dumpster. He locks it shut and pushes the dumpster off the stage for what must have been a full two and a half foot fall. If this is how they want to build up Strowman, they have a LONG way to go.

Video on the House of Horrors match.

#### Gran Metalik/Lince Dorado vs. Tony Nese/Drew Gulak

Nese and Dorado get things going with Tony's strikes not having much effect, allowing Dorado to wristdrag him out of the corner. Drew will have none of Dorado's high flying though and shoves him to the floor in a big crash. Back from a break and it's off to Gulak legally now, meaning we hit the mat wrestling in the form of a leg crank. Not that it matters as Nese comes back in and gives up the hot tag to Metalik.

That means it's time to hit the ropes in a variety of ways, which really is a great way to get yourself over. I mean, it won't get you onto 205 Live or anything but at least it looks cool here. A handspring takes Gulak down and a top rope elbow gives Metalik two. There's the handspring Stunner from Dorado to put the villains on the floor, followed by double moonsaults from the top. Back in and the Metalik Driver ends Gulak at 10:28.

**Rating:** C. This one got a lot better after the break when they just let the high fliers fly all over the place like they're supposed to be doing. Metalik really should be on 205 Live but they really do

seem happy with leaving him around here where almost anyone else could fill in his spot. Then again I doubt anyone has actually thought about that, much like everything on Main Event.

And from Raw again.

#### Dean Ambrose/Chris Jericho vs. The Miz/???

And it's....someone who has some issues with being on time as he's not here. Miz says the match is canceled and goes to leave but here's Angle to say the match is on. Jericho takes off the replacement jacket and chops Miz in the corner, setting up some double teaming. Miz gets clotheslined out to the floor and we take a break.

The match is joined in progress with Miz still alone and Jericho's arrogant cover getting one. Ambrose comes in and Miz begs off, earning himself a chase on the floor. Maryse offers a distraction though and Miz gets in a boot to the face to take over for the first time. Back in and the Reality Check gets two but the YES Kick is countered into a rollup. Jericho comes in with the Lionsault but the Codebreaker is blocked.

Miz goes to leave so Ambrose follows him up the ramp. Dirty Deeds is loaded up on the stage but here's Bray Wyatt to knock Dean off. Sister Abigail sends Dean into the wall and a second one plants Jericho in the ring. Miz poses with Wyatt...and takes Sister Abigail as well. Bray kneels down to end the show and we'll say the match was thrown out at about 8:30.

**Rating:** D. So that happened. I'm assuming this was just a way to set up Orton vs. Wyatt as Miz and Ambrose have nothing to do on Sunday, save for hosting a talking segment on the Kickoff Show. Wyatt is an interesting choice for a partner and it's nice to have him actually show up but....yeah this didn't work.

**Overall Rating:** D. This really is a case of as Raw goes, so goes Main Event. The highlights just made me remember how bad Raw was and that's not a good thing, especially with the bad first match and the only watchable second one. I'm not sure why this show is such a

dumping ground, especially when there are a lot of people on the roster who don't get to do anything on Raw. Just pull names out of a hat and let them have a match here. Why is that so far fetched?

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## **205 Live – April 25, 2017: If You Build It, He Will Lose**

### **205 Live**

Date: April 25, 2017

Location: Wells Fargo Arena, Des Moines, Iowa

Commentators: Tom Phillips, Corey Graves

We're closing in on Payback and that means the upcoming title match is starting to run out of steam. One of the problems with 205 Live is you can only get so much mileage out of a single title match and it seems that we've reached that point. Austin Aries vs. Neville is entertaining but they're running out of things for them to do. Let's get to it.

We open with the traditionally long recap of the main feud, which

includes TJ Perkins and Jack Gallagher getting involved with the title participants to add some fresh blood.

Opening sequence.

The announcers chat as the ring is set up because this show MUST air right after Smackdown and couldn't possibly be on earlier, thereby letting the fans go home a bit earlier and not resulting in a horribly empty arena.

#### Rich Swann/Akira Tozawa vs. Noam Dar/Brian Kendrick

Take two feuds and put them into one match. The brawl is on before the bell with the good guys sending them outside for running dives. That's one way to wake the crowd up after spending eight minutes getting to the opening bell on a match that only lasts about fifty minutes in the first place. Swann and Kendrick start things off with Dar kicking Rich's legs out to take over.

That means it's time for the required arm work with Dar cranking and stomping. Kendrick grabs a chinlock before doing a cool midair takedown to stop Swann's dive to the corner. Swann finally kicks Brian in the face and brings in Tozawa to clean house. With Kendrick being knocked to the floor, Tozawa grabs a Saito suplex on Dar, followed by the Shining Wizard for the pin at 5:24.

**Rating:** C. They kept the energy up here with Tozawa continuing to look like one of the better performers on the roster. The problem is they're only on lesson #4 and that means this feud could go on for six more weeks, despite the feud already being done for the most part. Swann vs. Dar needs a little bump as there's only so much you're going to get out of the Alicia Fox breakup, especially when she doesn't seem to be involved anymore.

Tozawa says lesson #4 is always choose wisely, such as picking the right partner.

Neville is ready to destroy Aries on Sunday because everyone must bow to the king.

#### Tony Nese vs. Mustafa Ali

During the entrances we go back to last week where the Caucasian

Drew Gulak held up a sign saying NO FLY ZONE during a match between two wrestlers of Middle Eastern descent. Leave it to WWE to either miss that subtlety all together or just be that stupid. Speaking of which, here's Gulak to hold up his sign and join commentary.

Feeling out process to start with Nese running him over and stopping to pose. Ali comes right back with the same thing in a nice touch as we hear about all the unnecessary high risks for the sake of pleasing the audience. You can hear the politician character in Gulak and that's an interesting way to go. I believe he did the same thing in CZW and it's smart to go with something that worked once before.

We hit a neck crank on Ali as Gulak analyzes the potential damage it could do. You know, like an analyst is supposed to do but hasn't done in about ten years. Mustafa comes back with a Rey Mysterio sitout bulldog and a moonsault press for two. Gulak is VERY displeased because that was so dangerous. The rolling neckbreaker sends Nese to the floor so Ali runs the apron and flips over the corner for another dive. That should set up the inverted 450 but Gulak pulls Nese to the floor for the DQ at 7:28.

**Rating:** C+. They're getting somewhere with this Gulak character, which is what he's been needing for months now. The guy isn't interesting on his own so you give him a character and let the natural talents take over. Why is that something that WWE can't get with the majority of their characters? I'm sure Vince likely having nothing to do with 205 Live isn't connected whatsoever.

Ali dives on Gulak to get some revenge.

### Jack Gallagher vs. Neville

Non-title. Gallagher works a headlock as we hear about Neville not losing a singles match since October. That's a great example of someone who benefits from not dealing with the 50/50 booking, though it might have something to do with being on a show that only lasts an hour a week. Gallagher kicks the champ in the face to knock him outside but Neville grabs William III and throws it up the ramp. That earns him a rare dive from Jack but the champ comes back in

with a missile dropkick.

We hit a headlock on the mat before Neville just stands on Jack's head. That's quite the simple way to be a heel, which is often the best possible option. Gallagher gets in a headbutt and a dropkick but Neville nips up. He shouts at Gallagher, earning himself one heck of a headbutt for two. Jack can't get in a belly to back superplex though as Neville palm strikes him in the face. Some kicks to the back of the head send Jack into the buckle, followed by the Rings of Saturn for the tap at 10:49.

**Rating:** B. They're letting Gallagher get closer to finally beating Neville but I can't picture that happening until after the title change. Gallagher is still great between the bells but there's only so much that he can do when you haven't won a singles match outside of Main Event since February.

Neville puts Gallagher in another Rings of Saturn on the ramp, drawing out Aries for the save (including a discus Fivearm that COMPLETELY missed) to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** B-. This was one of the better shows they've done in a good while with three solid matches and story advancement throughout. I'm not sure what they can do with the upcoming stories as this is the only place to blow them off, though there's no way they can do a special with the limited amount of stories and talent they have. Good show though and that's something they haven't had enough of recently.

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# Great Balls of Fire

That's really what they're calling the July pay per view.

[https://twitter.com/AACenter/status/857973196364029952?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref\\_url=http%3A%2F%2F411mania.com%2Fwrestling%2Fbrock-lesnar-defending-the-universal-title-at-new-great-balls-of-fire-ppv%2F](https://twitter.com/AACenter/status/857973196364029952?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw&ref_url=http%3A%2F%2F411mania.com%2Fwrestling%2Fbrock-lesnar-defending-the-universal-title-at-new-great-balls-of-fire-ppv%2F)

And Lesnar is defending. Was the Wrestling Classic not available? Or The Big Event? Or what about High School Confidential?

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## Monday Night Raw – November 25, 2002: Boring Wrestling and Violent Illness

### Monday Night Raw

Date: November 25, 2002

Location: North Charleston Coliseum, North Charleston, South, Carolina

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

We're still in the Shawn Michaels Era and he's actually defending the title this week against Rob Van Dam. Other than that we're still waiting on the return of HHH, who was injured at Survivor Series but

probably needs to grace us with his presence again. Other than that, I'd assume we'll get a bunch of Testicle jokes. Let's get to it.

We open with a long recap of Shawn winning the title and Van Dam earning the shot last week.

Opening sequence.

#### Tag Team Titles: Christian/Chris Jericho vs. Dudley Boyz

Christian and Jericho are defending. D-Von drops Jericho with a clothesline to start and elbows Christian for the same result. We get some championship miscommunication and Chris gets pummeled in the corner. Christian finally scores with a backbreaker though and the champs take over for the first time.

The pace slows WAY down (as is the Canadian way) but Christian takes too much time yelling at Bubba, allowing D-Von to grab a neckbreaker. Bubba comes in and cleans house but misses the middle rope backsplash. Everything breaks down (as is the tag team way) and D-Von gets two off a small package. Chris rams him into Christian though and a rollup retains the titles clean.

Actually hang on a second as here are Eric Bischoff and Sean Morely (the former Val Venis), who is now Chief of Staff. All four shoulders were on the mat at the same time for the cover so there's no pin, meaning this match MUST continue. I'm assuming this is the "heel bosses act nice to start before going really evil" segment of the night.

The match continues after a break with Bubba slamming his way out of trouble and making the hot tag off to D-Von. Notice the crowd not being as thrilled, mainly because the good guys just got pinned about as clean as you can get but the match continues on a technicality. 3D gives Bubba the pin on Christian.....but Bubba wasn't legal, so Morely restarts the match again.

The third fall begins and you can hear the fans getting annoyed. Jericho nails D-Von from behind and sleeper drops Bubba for two. That earns him a Flip Flop and Fly with What's Up making things even worse. Since there haven't been enough shenanigans in this match,

it's table time but Christian dropkicks it into D-Von's face. Bubba blocks the Lionsault but Christian hits him with a belt, setting up the Walls to retain the titles for real.

**Rating:** D+. WAY too much going on here when they could have done a regular match with some extra time or just done a 2/3 falls match, despite the lack of any reason for this to go longer than usual. If nothing else though, it's nice to have some fresh blood in the title scene and the Dudleys are hardly a stretch for the automatic #1 contendership.

Shawn Michaels is ready to face Van Dam in his first Raw match in five years. He leaves to go talk to Rob for some reason when Christian and Jericho show up with champagne to celebrate. Jericho isn't happy with Scott Steiner but Christian says "forget about his freaks, peaks and Iron Sheiks". Chris goes with it and suggests that they hit the town because they need some Vitamin C. Christian: "YEAH! My name starts with a C too!"

They head into the locker room when the Dudleys come up and want to go after the champs again. Bubba says wait, because he has a plan. I think I like this better than cutting to conveniently timed segments where people just happen to be ready to talk when someone else is done but it was still really scripted.

#### Test vs. Steven Richards

This is fallout from Steven taking a Testicles shirt to the testicles. I think Test is a face now despite doing nothing new other than having the catchphrase. The threat of a big boot sends Steven bailing to the floor but he comes back in with some right hands. We're already off to a reverse chinlock so at least this is going to be short. Some clotheslines and a full nelson slam give Test two and he hammers away in the corner. A low blow (that the referee should have seen) sets up an X Factor for two, only to have Test Roll the Dice for the pin.

**Rating:** D. See, he has a catchphrase which a nine year old would find funny so I'm sure the writers are impressed enough to push Test again. Richards got in a lot of offense here, which probably isn't

the best way to push Test, though then again neither is a bunch of testicle jokes. Stacy is gorgeous but that smile is only going to carry the act so far.

Christian and Jericho are in towels after their shower but the Dudleys have stolen their bags. Chase is given and the champs are locked out of the locker room. So how did the Dudleys know that the champs were getting in the shower when they turned the corner two seconds after Christian and Jericho decided to do that? I guess they overheard them but if that's the case, why didn't they jump the champs when they were standing there talking?

Test and Stacy are happy with the win and Test goes to take a shower (common theme tonight). As Stacy beams, Victoria jumps her from behind and says she'll be thinking of Stacy during the match. Instead of her long hair and long legs though, she'll be thinking of Stacy's fear. Victoria licks Stacy's ear and that's that.

#### Christopher Nowinski vs. Maven

Before we get going, Chris says this is the last time that anyone can say Maven is better than he is. Maven won Tough Enough because of politics when he mentioned his sick mother and that means it's on. Nowinski hits him with a big book and Maven is out. No match.

Jericho and Christian are in a search for clothes and find 3 Minute Warning and Rico's gear. They're far from impressed (Jericho: "Do you get a free bowl of soup with this outfit?") but Rico and the Samoans come in to scare them off.

#### Women's Title: Trish Stratus vs. Victoria

Trish is challenging and looks very nice in blue. They slug it out to start with Victoria grabbing something like a Thesz press before hitting some awkward kicks to the ribs. A rollup gives Trish two and the kickout sends her outside. She lands hips first, with JR saying is like a stone bouncing across a river. Victoria's slingshot legdrop gets two as Lawler thinks there's something in these two's past before explaining the backstory.

We hit a seated full nelson (that could be a solid finisher) until

Trish fights up and gets some rollups for two each. Trish gets sent hard into the steps as this is already starting to drag. Back in and Trish makes another comeback, including a Chick Kick for two. We get an awkward looking shove to send Trish throat first into the ropes but it's enough to set up the Widow's Peak to retain the title.

**Rating:** D. Despite them both looking better than they have in a long time (which covers a lot of ground), the match really did feel disjointed. It was pretty clear that they had no idea how to go from move to move later on in the match, which really makes for some awkward moments. The women were getting better but they weren't ready for something this long yet, which isn't a good sign.

Victoria bites Steven Richards' ear for reasons of general insanity, which he seems to like.

Shawn praises Van Dam's athleticism but says he's missing a little something. Rob slaps him and that's just what the champ was looking for.

Video on Eric Bischoff.

Christian is worried about shrinkage but a shot of the Dudleys in the ring sends the Canadians into the arena. In the ring, the Dudleys are giving away Christian and Jericho's clothes, including a shirt and jeans. Bubba finds a jar of A\*\* Cream, which has him very confused. Bubba: "WHAT DO YOU DO WITH A\*\* CREAM???" The whole bag of clothes is sent into the crowd but they're not done yet. Cue Spike to steal the towels and we have unclothed champions.

Hurricane/Jeff Hardy vs. Lance Storm/William Regal

Jeff dives over the top to take out Storm before the bell and the good guys start fast. Some right hands have Regal staggered and it's off to Hurricane for a high crossbody. The Eye of the Hurricane is broken up so Hurricane has to settle for a chokeslam instead. Regal comes in for the save and starts working on Hurricane's back with a few knees. Storm adds some forearms, only to get caught with a Shining Wizard. It's not enough for the hot tag though as Hurricane tries his own half crab. Regal kicks him in the head for the break

though and Storm grabs a Sharpshooter for the tap out.

**Rating:** D+. Nothing to see here but the ending was a nice touch as they went away from the standard formula for a change. You can only do the hot tag into the finish so many times so it was nice to see something get changed up. Regal and Storm aren't exactly a big upgrade but at least they're a regular team.

Jeff gets beaten down as well.

We look at Shawn's last match on Raw from December 1997 against Owen Hart.

### Kane vs. Batista

Hang on a second as we have Ric Flair instead, telling Kane that he's not out of the woods for what he did to Ric last week. Batista comes in to jump Kane from behind and the beatdown is on. We do get a bell though and Batista gets to hammer on Kane in an actual match. Some clotheslines knock Kane around but he comes back with a big boot. The ref gets bumped so there's no one to count Kane's powerslam. Ric chairs him in the head and the Batista Bomb gives Dave the fast pin.

We get the official terms of the Big Show trade: Big Show for Ivory, D-Von, Val Venis and Maven. That's a horrible trade. Anyway Bischoff tells Morely to bring Scott Steiner to Raw. Morely says he has a connection that can make something happen but RNN BREAKING NEWS. Randy talks about everything he's thankful for, including that good looking nurse at the rehab center.

### Goldust vs. Rico

They trade some armdrags to start until Rico gets in a big kick to take over. A lot of stomping allows JR to list off some of Rico's accomplishments as they seem to be trying to make him into something. Rico grabs an armbars until Goldust makes a short comeback, including the powerslam for two. The Curtain Call gives Goldust the clean pin.

**Rating:** D. This was more filler but you have to deal with that from time to time. JR mentioned that Booker was healing, which might have

something to do with a rash of illness going around the locker room at this point (dehydration due to some issues on a tour of India). If nothing else that would explain some of the odd booking choices tonight, such as this match, which was only going to last so long.

#### Raw World Title: Shawn Michaels vs. Rob Van Dam

Shawn, in what looks to be the early Sami Zayn collection of tights, is defending. The champ fires off a dropkick to start but gets kicked in the ribs a few times, followed by a clothesline to send him outside. Rob is smart enough to throw him back inside for a slingshot legdrop to the bad back. A monkey flip is countered into something like Snake Eyes and Shawn starts in on the leg.

We hit the Ric Flair playbook with the leg being crushed on the ropes, followed by a Figure Four. Rob makes the ropes so Shawn forearms him into the nipup, only to miss Sweet Chin Music. Rolling Thunder onto Shawn's back gets two so Shawn comes back with a DDT. Shawn's top rope elbow gets two more but it's another backbreaker to cut him off. Rob gets in the Five Star to the back...and here's HHH for the DQ.

**Rating:** C+. This was totally fine but you could tell that Shawn wasn't able to hit that other gear. The knee vs. back stuff was fine and I'm glad they didn't go with a clean fall over Rob, who is still recovering from the HHH loss. Speaking of HHH, thank goodness he was back so quickly to save the show. I mean, it had been a whole week without him and now we're likely going to get him in another title match.

HHH goes after Shawn post match and shrugs off a comeback. A side slam puts Shawn through an open chair to end the show.

**Overall Rating:** D. I'd assume the rash of illnesses changed a lot of this show but that really doesn't make the show any more excusable. It's not a good show with all the lame matches and quick build towards Armageddon, which is already looking like a boring show with another HHH vs. Shawn match on top. This wasn't the worst show in the world but it was your standard 2002 dullness.

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## **New Column: The Repaired Hardys**

Looking at one of the most amazing comebacks in wrestling history.

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