

Vince McMahon Officially Returns To WWE

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/vince-mcmahon-officially-returns-wwe-board-directors/>

So there it is. The big story this week has been Vince McMahon planning a return to WWE and that is exactly what he has done. McMahon reportedly came back to oversee media rights deals and a possible sale of the company. There is no word on him possibly returning to creative, though he suggested that he wouldn't in a press release.

In short, this is another depressing announcement from WWE. Things were getting fun for a little while without McMahon but here he comes again, because of course he does. It's another case of McMahon not being willing to let anything go, meaning that even if we don't have the big changes coming, it's going to be hanging over our heads forever. You can probably also expect WWE to have a bunch of sudden budget issues as a bunch of wrestlers that Vince doesn't like get let go because...whatever nonsense reason they have at the moment. Fun times again, as it always is with Vince.

Monday Night Raw – January 2, 2023: Off With An Ok Start

Monday Night Raw

Date: January 2, 2023

Location: Bridgestone Arena, Nashville, Tennessee

Commentators: Kevin Patrick, Corey Graves

We are inching closer to the Royal Rumble and that means it is time to start setting up the show. With so many wrestlers needed to get into the Royal Rumble matches, there are only going to be so many spots left for other matches. At the same time though, only one person has been announced for either Royal Rumble so they might want to start picking up the pace. Then again, they might want to have a lot of surprises this time. Let's get to it.

We open with the Bloodline (minus Roman Reigns/Paul Heyman) wrecking havoc at ringside. Sami Zayn says they're taking over tonight but here is Kevin Owens to interrupt. Sami calls this a hostile takeover but Owens says he wants to punch Zayn in the face. Cue Adam Pearce and company to tell Owens that this isn't happening tonight or all year. Security goes after the Bloodline but gets dropped, drawing Owens into the ring. Some low level stars run in to go after the Bloodline and the team is chased off. Pearce says if the Bloodline is here, they're going to be in a match tonight.

Bianca Belair is ready to face Alexa Bliss, no matter what kind of Bliss she is.

Post break the wrestlers who chased the Bloodline off want some matches, with Elias demanding a fight against Solo Sikoa. Works for Adam Pearce, as does the Street Profits/Kevin Owens vs. the Usos and Sami Zayn in a six man tag.

Women's Title: Alexa Bliss vs. Bianca Belair

Belair is defending and wastes no time in hitting Bliss in the face to start. They head outside with Belair sending her into the barricade as we take a break. Back with Belair running her over with a shoulder and telling Bliss to bring it on. Bliss sends her into the corner, takes a bow, and stomps away.

Belair is back with some right hands and muscles Bliss up with a suplex to block a DDT attempt. Some forearms to the back have Bliss rocked but she sends Belair to the floor, setting

up the running flip dive off the apron. We take another break and come back again with Bliss putting on a chinlock.

With that let go, Bliss' standing flip dive is countered into a rollup but Bliss counters the KOD. Belair muscles her down into a backbreaker and hammers away in the corner. Bliss gets smart by pulling her out to the floor by the hair...where there is a man in a Bray Wyatt style mask. That's enough of a distraction for Bliss to throw her back in...but there is another man in a Bray Wyatt mask (different hair).

Then the Bray logo pops up on screen and Bliss beats up the referee. There's no bell yet so Bliss beats up Belair too and sends her into various things. There's a DDT onto the steps and Belair (with her busted open) is mostly out. Bliss hits another DDT onto the steps and referees come out. The bell never rang but we'll say the match was thrown out at 18:00.

Rating: C+. This was getting good before the ending, which wound up being more Bliss storyline stuff. You can only get so far with that as this was her big chance and now it's just another version of Bliss gets upset and goes violent, which has kind of been shoved into the ground. The match was working fairly well, but you can only go so far when it seems like it is setting something else up. That seems to be the case with a lot of Bliss matches/moments, and it needs to go somewhere soon.

Post break, here's everything you just saw.

Austin Theory is ready for Seth Rollins because he is the future and Rollins is the past.

Elias vs. Solo Sikoa

Street fight. Elias promises to show Sikoa what WWE stands for and we're ready to go, with music themed weapons at ringside. Sikoa powers him into the corner to start and hits a hard clothesline to take over. They head outside with Elias missing

a guitar shot but sending Sikoa right through a drum kit. A drum cymbal to the head knocks Sikoa silly and we take a break.

Back with Elias being sent into a speaker near the entrance, followed by some mic shots to the head. They get inside again with Elias' electric keyboard shot being shrugged off, allowing Sikoa to grab a Samoan drop for two. Another keyboard blast gives Elias two and some tambourines to the head send Sikoa into the corner.

A musical celebrity (Hardy, who sings the Royal Rumble theme song) gives Elias a guitar but Sikoa hits a superkick. Hardy gets in and hit guitar shot to the back has no effect. That's enough for Hardy to run off, leaving Elias to hit the jumping knee. A top rope guitar shot is Samoan Spiked out of the air, leaving Sikoa to Spinning Solo Elias through a piano for the pin at 14:21.

Rating: C-. This was a good bit longer than it needed to be and it felt like they were just filling in time for a good chunk of the match. Again, part of the problem with the Bloodline is that it is hard to buy the members in any serious danger save for any major opponents. That isn't going to be the case with Elias, making this a bunch of goofy weapons shots until a big weapons spot to end the show.

We look at John Cena and Kevin Owens defeating Roman Reigns and Sami Zayn on Smackdown.

Street Profits/Kevin Owens vs Bloodline

The brawl is on before the bell with the non-Bloodline taking over. We get the official start with Jimmy getting a shot on Dawkins, allowing Sami to come in for a front facelock. That doesn't last long either as it's off to Owens, who takes over on Jey while yelling at Jey. Ford is up but doesn't want to tag in as he is worried about Bianca Belair. Owens gets stomped down in the corner and we take a break.

Back with Ford coming in off the hot tag to clean house, including a standing moonsault for two on Zayn. Everything breaks down and Dawkins runs Jey over in the corner. Ford is back with the running flip dive onto Jimmy and Zayn but here is Solo Sikoa to take Dawkins out. Owens goes after him but gets superkicked, leaving Zayn to Helluva Kick Ford for the pin at 11:40.

Rating: C. This got going and I could buy Owens and the Profits as a bigger threat to score an upset here. It was also nice to have Ford be upset about something that happened earlier in the show, as he should have been. There is no reason to have him be all normal so well done on some logic. Sami gets a win back to keep the team happy, but Roman Reigns is going to be waiting on him.

Post match the beatdown stays on but Sheamus and Drew McIntyre run in for the save. Now they feel like a threat to the Usos this week on Smackdown.

AJ Styles is confirmed to have a broken ankle, meaning he will miss the Royal Rumble.

Chad Gable vs. Dexter Lumis

Otis is here with Gable, who runs away from Dexter to start. After hiding behind Otis doesn't work, Gable grabs a hot shot for a breather and starts in on Lumis' arm. A northern lights suplex gives Gable two but Lumis is back with a takedown of his own. Gable grabs a German suplex and sends Lumis outside, where Lumis gets posted. Otis misses a clothesline into the post though, leaving Lumis to counter La Majistral into a cradle for the pin at 4:09.

Rating: C. This version of Gable continues to be a chore to watch, which is a shame as he is a rather talented star. That being said, watching him in the same role week in and week out gets old fast as they have cranked the annoyance up as far as it can go. Gable needs something other than the one note

catchphrase because he is too good to be stuck with it. Lumis getting a more normal win is a good thing for him, as this was more of a way to keep him active.

Video on Cody Rhodes' return last year, including the injury which took him back out of action. More on this later.

Here is Damage Ctrl for a chat. Bayley brings up the team starting here at Summerslam so it is nice to have one good thing come out of this city. However, we need to talk about the Iris elephant in the room. Bayley beat Becky Lynch, which brings out Becky to tell Bayley to shut up. Becky talks about Bayley having to get out of someone's (unnamed) shadow and now she has own team. It is going to be a matter of time before the rest of Damage Ctrl turns on her but Bayley rolls it off. The challenge it out for tonight but Bayley shuts that down too. Instead, Becky can just fight the rest of the team, 2-1. Sure.

Becky Lynch vs. Damage Ctrl

Non-title and Bayley is at ringside. Becky Stunners Sky over the middle rope to start and nails an enziguri to drop her for two. Kai comes in and gets legdropped, followed by a running forearm in the corner. A kick to the face staggers Lynch though and Sky sends her into the apron on the floor. The double teaming is on, including Sky front facelocking Becky on the floor. Cue Michin to join Becky though and the hot tag brings her in to start the house cleaning.

We take a break and come back with Sky Crossfacing Michin, who powers up and kicks Sky into Kai for a tag. A neckbreaker drops Sky so Kai grabs Becky's ankle...and Michin makes the tag anyway. Everything breaks down and Becky hits a missile dropkick. A double superplex hits Kai with Sky having to make the save. Becky goes outside to deal with an invading Bayley, leaving Michin to Eat Defeat Kai. That leaves Michin down long enough though for Sky to hit Over the Moonsault for the in at

13:40.

Rating: C+. They got going near the end and the finish felt like Michin got caught rather than getting beaten. The match worked well too as you don't want Lynch hanging with the champs that long. This should keep us on the way towards a major Becky vs. Bayley showdown and that has all of the potential to steal whatever show it is on.

Seth Rollins is ready for Austin Theory.

Alexa Bliss, with what looks like some dried paint on her face, says she has control of Bianca Belair.

We look at Dominik Mysterio being arrested on Christmas Eve for invading the Mysterios' house.

Dominik Mysterio, having since been bailed out of jail by Rhea Ripley, talks about how prison is an absence of feeling. This isn't a game to him and he's just getting started, so he'll see Rhea Ripley soon. This is a different way to go for Dominik and the more of his own character he can develop, the better.

Video on Bronson Reed.

US Title: Austin Theory vs. Seth Rollins

Theory is defending. Rollins grabs a headlock to start before clotheslining Theory outside. A knee to the face rocks Theory again and we take a rather early break. Back again with Rolling firing off the fast chops but Theory gets in a shot of his own. The rolling dropkick to the back gives Theory two and he hammers away with left hands. A clothesline sets up a chinlock on Rollins to keep him in trouble. They head outside with Rollins being rammed into the announcers' table a few times as we take a break.

Back with Rollins Hulking Up and hitting a backbreaker for two. Rollins catches him on top but Theory slips out of a

suplex. The brainbuster onto the knee is reversed into a small package to give Rollins two more. The buckle bomb is broken up as well and Theory goes up, only to get superplex into...well nothing actually as Theory reversed into a brainbuster own for two.

They trade kicks to the face until an enziguri drops Theory. Rollins can't follow up so it's a double breather. Back up and Rollins wins a strike off, setting up the missed Stomp. Theory tries to leave but gets caught, allowing Rollins to hit a superkick back inside. The frog splash gives Rollins two but Theory shoves him into the referee. Rollins' knee gives out as he escapes a suplex, though he's fine enough to hit a Pedigree for a delayed two from a second referee. Theory tries to send Rollins into the referee again, allowing the low blow to cut Rollins off. A chop block sets up A Town Down to retain the title at 22:15.

Rating: B. This felt like a major main event but more importantly it felt like a huge win for Theory. At some point you need to pull the trigger on him and that might be what they are doing here. The fact that it came after what felt like a showdown makes it even better, and now hopefully we get to see where this is going, as Theory could be getting a rocket built for his back.

Overall Rating: C+. The main event boosted up a lot of this show, which was built around long matches. That's a good thing in theory, but it only gets them so far when the matches are hit and miss. What does help this show is how energized it felt, as it came off like stuff was happening throughout. The only cold match was Lumis vs. Gable and they were in and out in less than eight minutes. It's not a great show, but there was enough to make me want to see what happens next.

Results

Alexa Bliss vs. Bianca Belair went to a no contest when Bliss attacked the referee

Solo Sikoa b. Elias – Spinning Solo through a piano
Bloodline b. Street Profits/Kevin Owens – Helluva Kick to Ford
Dexter Lumis b. Chad Gable – Rollup
Damage Ctrl b. Michin/Becky Lynch – Over The Moonsault to Michin
Austin Theory b. Seth Rollins – A Town Down

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Smackdown – December 30, 2022: Up And Down And Up And Up

Smackdown

Date: December 30, 2022

Location: Amalie Arena, Tampa, Florida

Commentators: Michael Cole, Wade Barrett

It's the final show of the year and that means we are going to be seeing more than a few big things this week. First and foremost, John Cena is back for his only match of the year as he teams with Kevin Owens to face Sami Zayn and Roman Reigns. In addition, we have the Women's Title on the line as Ronda Rousey defends against Raquel Rodriguez. Let's get to it.

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

Here's is Bray Wyatt for an opening chat. Wyatt does not see himself as a good person but he does try. Looking back at how he got here, he doesn't regret much, but last week he did something that he did regret. Last week, he apologized a cameraman in cold blood and...here is LA Knight to interrupt.

Knight cannot believe that the master of the mind games is here to apologize because he doesn't buy any of this. Wyatt has been playing mind games and now it is time to pay the check. Knight remembers Wyatt being something around here and he wants Wyatt to be again. The Royal Rumble is coming up and Knight wants to make his first a special one. Wyatt doesn't think much of Knight and accepts the challenge.

Cue Uncle Howdy for a rather slow walk to the ring (with the lights still down so we can't really see him). Howdy and Wyatt stand next to each other and stare down Knight, but Howdy lays out Wyatt. Knight: "What the h*** is going on? None of this makes any sense." Howdy leaves on his own. That's at least another step forward in the story.

Sami Zayn goes to the Bloodline's dressing room and finds Paul Heyman instead of Roman Reigns. Zayn thinks they need to talk strategy before tonight's main event but first Heyman wants to talk about how happy Reigns is with Zayn's loyalty last week. However, it seems that Reigns might not be happy with the fans getting behind Zayn. He hasn't said anything, but the key is to stay ahead of the future. With that, Zayn goes in and Heyman looks a bit worried.

Sheamus vs. Solo Sikoa

As the match starts, Cole offers condolences to the family of Don West, who made an "impact" on the wrestling world. That's a classy thing to do and it's nice to see WWE acknowledge it in some way. A clothesline doesn't get Sheamus very far to start so he knocks Sikoa over the top instead. An annoyed

Sikoa grabs a chair but the Usos hold him back as we take an early break.

Back with Sheamus fighting out of a chinlock but getting caught with a Samoan drop. Sheamus fights up again and starts hammering away, including the ten forearms to the chest. The Brogue Kick is cut off with a superkick but Sheamus is right back with a running knee for two. It's time for everyone to get in a fight on the floor, with Sheamus hitting a big dive off the top. The distraction lets Sikoa Rock Bottom Sheamus on the apron though and it's the Samoan Spike to give Sikoa the pin at 11:07.

Rating: C+. It's kind of impressive how well WWE has done with Sikoa. For someone who felt like a tacked on midcarder since his debut, WWE has turned him into a solid hand who could win almost any match that you put him in. This was another good outing from Sikoa and I'd like to see where he goes in the next few months.

Post match the beatdown is on and Sikoa wraps a chair around Sheamus' neck. Before the running Umaga Attack can connect though, Drew McIntyre returns for the save to clear the ring.

Women's Title: Ronda Rousey vs. Raquel Rodriguez

Rousey, with Shayna Baszler, is defending and goes right after Raquel's bad arm to start. Rodriguez sends her into the corner though and hits an elbow as we take a break. Back with Rousey bending the arm around the rope and then pulling her down for a multiple limb crank (ouch). With that broken up, Rousey throws her down for two but Rodriguez powers up. A slam with the bad arm hurts both of them though and Rousey is right back with the ankle lock. That's broken up as well and Rodriguez hits a flapjack for a breather. The Tejana Bomb is countered into an armbar and they head outside, where the Tejana Bomb onto the apron rocks Rousey as we take another break.

Back again with Rousey caught in a delayed suplex for two. The

arm gives out though and Rousey grabs a Kimura, only to be powered up again. The Tejana bomb is countered into a choke but Rodriguez powers out again. This time it's a Baszler distraction but Rodriguez is able to hit the Vader Bomb elbow anyway. Baszler puts the foot on the rope just in time, only to get ejected for some pretty flagrant cheating. With Rodriguez standing on the middle rope, Rousey climbs onto her and gets the armbar in the ropes. Rodriguez drops her back but lands on the elbow, meaning Rousey's armbar is good for the tap at 16:20.

Rating: B. These two have some great chemistry together as this was their second good match against each other. Rodriguez not winning here is a bit more acceptable as she has the arm injury and Baszler interference to balance things out. WWE has done a nice job with her in recent months and I'd be stunned if she doesn't win the title at some point in the year.

Post match Rousey and Baszler celebrate...and Charlotte is back! She gets straight to the point: she is challenging for the Women's Title TONIGHT. Rousey is in.

Women's Title: Charlotte vs. Ronda Rousey

Charlotte is challenging. Big boot, spear, Rousey armbar, Charlotte rolls her up for the pin at 40 seconds. WWE is in on the CHARLOTTE WINS AGAIN now joke right? They have to be. And yes, Charlotte is the big hero in this.

Sami Zayn asks Roman Reigns if he's cool with the crowd reactions. Reigns doesn't seem thrilled.

We look at Dominik Mysterio being arrested for invading the Mysterios' home on Christmas Eve. Rhea Ripley has since bailed him out.

A bunch of tag teams mock Top Dolla for his not so great dive last week. Dolla takes it well enough before shoving Ricochet. Holding back ensues.

Bray Wyatt vs. LA Knight is set for the Royal Rumble in a Pitch Black match.

Here is Imperium for a chat. Ludwig Kaiser introduces the team and brags about Gunther's Intercontinental Title reign. We see a video on the title reign before Braun Strowman interrupts. Strowman didn't see himself in that video and he wants his own title shot. Imperium goes to leave instead but Strowman grabs Gunther. The fight is on with Strowman clearing the ring but the run around ringside is sent through the barricade. Gunther wears Strowman out with a chair and they get inside, where Gunther grabs an armbar. Ricochet makes the save with a chair and clears the ring again.

Roman Reigns/Sami Zayn vs. Kevin Owens/John Cena

The rest of the Bloodline is here too. Owens hammers on Zayn to start as Cena does his always good job of playing cheerleader on the apron. With Zayn down in the corner, Owens brings up the SAMI chants, much to Reigns' annoyance. Reigns comes in and stares down Owens, who looks over to Cena. That lets Reigns blast him with a clothesline and a Rock Bottom for two as we take a break.

Back with Owens trying to get the tag but Cena is knocked to the floor. A superkick into the Pop Up Powerbomb gives Owens two, with Reigns making the save. Reigns beats Owens down and tags himself in, only to miss the Superman Punch. Owens nails a superkick and the bullfrog splash gets two.

Reigns counters the Pop Up Powerbomb into a Superman Punch but the spear only hits post. Cena is back up on the apron and there's the hot tag for Cena to beat up Zayn. House is cleaned and Reigns is dropped as well, allowing the tag back to Owens. Stereo Shuffles hit the Bloodline and it's an AA to Reigns, followed by a Stunner to pin Zayn at 10:59.

Rating: C+. This was a question of whether they would do the big angle here or wait for the fallout next week. Cena being

back means a lot though, even if it is likely just a one off appearance. He still feels like one of the biggest stars ever and having him back boosted the show a lot. The match felt like something special and that is a sign that they did it right.

Overall Rating: B. The main thing I'll say about this show is that stuff happened here. Between the multiple returns, the surprise title change and Cena being in the main event, this was a show that did not feel boring in any way. Good, fast paced show and Smackdown feels like it is heading for the new year on a bit of a roll for a change.

Results

Solo Sikoa b. Sheamus – Samoan Spike

Ronda Rousey b. Raquel Rodriguez – Armbar

Charlotte b. Ronda Rousey – Rollup

John Cena/Kevin Owens b. Roman Reigns/Sami Zayn – Stunner to Zayn

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Monday Night Raw – December 26, 2022 (Best Of 2022): Simply The Best

Monday Night Raw

Date: December 26, 2022

Hosts: Jackie Redmond, Corey Graves

It's the final show of the year and for the first time in a long time, we're having a Best Of special. That should make for a pretty easy night, but there are also several things to pick from this week. WWE probably put about 18 seconds of thought into this, but it's nice to have a bit of a week off for once. Let's get to it.

Note that I'll be including the full versions of the matches/segments rather than the edited versions broadcast here.

The Street Profits are in a white room, with Montez Ford saying he doesn't think this is Gorilla. Angelo Dawkins uses his psychic powers to turn the walls into a Profits video. They realize they can make anything (PG at least) appear on the screen so we start with a look at various returns. Ford gets a little too excited over the hype videos so we slow things down a bit.

Opening sequence.

Our hosts welcome us to the show and send us to our first match.

From Summerslam.

WWE Universal Title: Roman Reigns vs. Brock Lesnar

Reigns is defending in a Last Man Standing match....and Lesnar rides to the ring in a tractor. Lesnar cuts off Paul Heyman's entrance and does his own, while standing in the...whatever you call the part of a tractor that holds stuff. Lesnar dives out of the tractor to start and Reigns is knocked outside, setting up a big overhead belly to belly. They fight over to the lighting structure and knock each other into it, with Lesnar getting the better of things again.

A German suplex sends Reigns flying again so it's table time. Heyman begs enough for a distraction, allowing Reigns to Samoan drop Lesnar through the table. Reigns puts him through another table and takes it back inside for a pair of Superman Punches. The spear keeps Lesnar down for a bit but a second attempt is countered into a failed F5 attempt. Reigns gets sent outside in a heap so Lesnar goes to the tractor.

With that going nowhere, he hits Reigns in the head with a piece of the table for about six. Lesnar throws Reigns into the bucket of the tractor, raises him up, and then drops him down into the ring. With that not working, Lesnar rolls some German suplexes and hits an F5 for nine. Another F5 is countered into a guillotine, which Lesnar reverses into one of his own. Reigns is mostly out but dives back to the ropes to break the count at nine.

Lesnar gets back in the tractor...and starts ramming the ring. Then he lifts the ring up to send Reigns sprawling out onto the floor but here are the Usos for the save. Lesnar dispatches them so Heyman tries to call it off, only to get F5'ed through the announcers' table (they've been teasing that for a LONG time). Reigns is back up with a spear and they're both down...so here is Theory to cash in.

A briefcase shot drops Reigns but Lesnar F5's Theory onto the briefcase. The Usos are back up with a double superkick for

nine, followed by a spear for nine more. Reigns unloads with the briefcase for nine more, followed by a belt shot, but Lesnar gets up again. A shot with the other belt knocks Lesnar down and the Bloodline piles a bunch of stuff onto him before standing on top of it to retain at 22:44.

Rating: B-. This is going to be the really divisive match of the night and that isn't a surprise. They did a lot of stuff and the match was a total spectacle, but they lost me at the end with Reigns knocking him down for nine over and over. It's a good example of a match that needed to be trimmed down by a few minutes to hammer the point home better. At the same time, I'm sure the fans on the other side of the ring loved looking up at the video screen, because those front row tickets are pretty worthless when the ring is halfway on its side for the last seven minutes of the match.

The other problem here is simple: who in the world is supposed to be able to stop Reigns? Drew McIntyre is the next big challenger, but is that their solution? McIntyre has already had his time and while you can't really gauge things from the pandemic, I don't know how much of a success it was. Reigns has cleared out the company by this point, and they are going to need something special to get the title off of him, whenever they finally do it.

We get a long video tribute to John Cena.

From Raw, June 27.

Here is Vince McMahon to introduce John Cena, who comes through a tunnel of adoring stars. With Vince gone, Cena says this is a milestone, which he rarely likes to celebrate because he is always looking forward. However, tonight he has been looking back at what he has done and he couldn't do it without these people. Cena has been allowed to do this for two decades and that is because of the fans.

The people have been honest enough to tell him when he sucks

and kind enough to tell him when he doesn't. Cena has been waiting for that right moment and this feels like that right moment. We get a THANK YOU CENA chant and he says his heart is beating out of his chest. Cena thanks the fans for moments like that one and for making him who he is. He has always said WWE prepared him for anything and he doesn't mean Fast and the Furious or Peacemaker.

WWE has made him a better human being, person and husband. Spending moments with the families he has spent time with today has taught him empathy and kindness. The fans have taught him humility and perseverance and every time he gets in the ring, he gives everything he has because these fans give him everything they have. This isn't about a last name but about people coming together and he's 45 years old. He doesn't know when you'll see him again, though he isn't saying it isn't happening. Fans: "ONE MORE MATCH!" Cena: "It ain't just gonna be one. Don't worry about that."

It isn't about him but about us. If you like something, tell the people. If you see something that sucks, tell the people. Cena thanks the people and asks Laredo to show what kind of noise they can make. Some catchphrases wrap us up. Cena didn't say much here, but it felt a lot more real than some of the things he usually says. Good stuff, even if it didn't mean a great deal.

We take a very fast look at Steve Austin returning to a*action at Wrestlemania and beating up Kevin Owens in the main event of night one. This gets maybe two minutes for the setup and match.

We look at Sami Zayn vs. Johnny Knoxville in the Jackass match at Wrestlemania. Not my thing, but dang that crowd reaction was impossible to deny.

Zayn joins us to ask why you would show that. He's not hurt but disappointed, though it doesn't matter as we have enough

Bloodline stuff to make it work.

We get a sitdown interview with New Day, who praise the NXT tag team division. After talking about the origins of New Day, we hear about the importance of their feud with the Usos. Kofi Kingston talks about how they have a lot of quirks, but they have found their way to what they are now. Over their years though, they have fought the Usos many times as their paths keep crossing.

From Smackdown, November 11.

Tag Team Titles: New Day vs. Usos

The Usos are defending and they're starting big here. Jey, with his hand taped, starts with Woods and they stare each other down a bit. Woods grabs a headlock as we hear about the histories between the teams. Kofi springboards in with a crossbody for two on Jey but it's off to Jimmy with a right hand to the face. Everything breaks down and Kofi hits a Trust Fall onto both Usos as we take a break.

We come back with Jey hitting a suicide dive to send Kofi into the barricade and then whipping him into it again for a bonus. The fans want Sami, who is apparently missing due to a personal issue. We slow down a bit to Kofi being sent into the corner, setting up a wishbone leg split. A middle rope dropkick gets Kofi out of trouble though and Jey gets kicked away, only to have Jimmy pull Woods off the apron in a classic move. The pop up neckbreaker gives Jey two and we take a break.

Back again with Kofi fighting out of a chinlock and making the hot tag to Woods so house can be cleaned. Kofi hits a splash to set up a good looking Woods top rope legdrop for two. The Boom Drop connects on Jimmy but Jey makes a blind tag. That's fine with Kofi who hits the SOS for two. Frustration is setting in as it's off to Woods, who gets superkicked down to set up the double Superfly Splash. The 1D is broken up though

and the Midnight Hour hits Jey on the floor.

Back in and a tornado DDT to Jimmy sets up the Midnight Hour for two as Jey makes a VERY last second save for two. The four of them stand up and slug it out with Woods being sent outside and superkicked over the barricade. That leaves Kofi to be sat up top where he goes old school with a double noggin knocker. Kofi tries a diving something, only to land in the 1D to retain the titles at 23:47.

Rating: A-. Yeah these guys are awesome together and this was no exception, as they had a long, pay per view quality tag match. I know it's been done before and I've not been wild on seeing them fight again, but this should have been the final match to give the Usos the record. Unless there is some surprise Tag Team Title match on Monday (and there might be), New Day's record has fallen and it happened after a great match.

Bianca Belair talks about her life starting from childhood, when she found out she was awesome in track. She started at the University of South Carolina but put too much pressure on herself and developed bulimia.

Belair joins us via satellite to talk about how much she loves Christmas and maybe she should make her own wrapping paper. We move on to how great her year has been, with so much of it leading to her Wrestlemania match with Becky Lynch.

From Wrestlemania.

Raw Women's Title: Bianca Belair vs. Becky Lynch

Lynch is defending and gets a special intro (similar to the WWE TV intro as we look at moments from her career)...but Belair one ups her with the Texas Southern University marching band playing her to the ring. They both have special gear, with Lynch coming out in a kind of skirt/jacket combination and Belair in black and red with her top made to look like her

lips logo. They both look like they're on the big stage and it's an awesome addition.

They both take the time to soak it in a bit but Lynch would rather punch than shake hands. The very early Manhandle Slam gets two and Lynch can't believe the Summerslam plan didn't work. Belair goes to the ropes to avoid the Disarm-Her so some covers give Lynch two. They trade rollups for two each and Lynch reverses a suplex into a DDT for two more. Belair tries....something but can't get Lynch onto her shoulders so she switches to a rollup instead.

They head outside with Lynch slipping off the shoulders to send Belair into the steps to take over. Some Bexploders connect back inside and we hit the chinlock to slow things down a bit. With that broken up, Lynch switches to a cross armbreaker but Belair powers up and dumps her outside for the double crash. Back in and Belair drives some shoulders into the ribs in the corner, setting up a gutbuster for two. The handspring moonsault gets two more but Lynch catches her on top.

Belair gets creative with a Chicago Skyline of all things and a middle rope 450 gets another near fall. Lynch is back up with a Molly Go Round, with her feet hitting Belair in the face (OUCH) for two of her own. Belair is back with a spinebuster and a cradle but the kickout sends her into the corner.

The KOD is broken up but Belair KOD's her to the floor. That doesn't work for Belair so she tries to come back inside, only to have Lynch hit the Manhandle Slam onto the steps. Belair dives back in at nine and then kicks out at two, sending Lynch even further into hysteria. Another Bexploder is loaded up but Belair gets to the middle rope, moonsaults over Lynch, and hits the KOD for the pin and the title at 19:09.

Rating: B+. The action was good to great, but what mattered

here was the feeling. This felt like the rise of a new champion, with Belair surviving what Lynch threw at her and then winning in the end, showing that she was the better woman when things were even. It came off like the Wrestlemania showdown with the special entrances and gear and I had a great time with the whole deal. Best thing on the show by a mile so far.

Post match Lynch falls out to the floor and collapses as Belair celebrates, giving us a great visual of the fallen former champion and the new queen.

Video on Gunther vs. Sheamus at Clash At The Castle.

Sheamus joins us from his house to talk about how important Christmas is for him. After a tour of his home bar, Sheamus talks about how the Brawling Brutes work well together because they have no egos. We hear about the Good Old Fashioned Donnybrook at Extreme Rules so you know where this is going.

From Extreme Rules.

Imperium vs. Brawling Brutes

This is a Good Old Fashioned Donnybrook, meaning street fight with some props at ringside. It's a brawl to start, as it should be, with everyone pairing off in and around the ring. Kaiser is tied in the Tree of Woe for a running dropkick but the rest of Imperium comes over for the save. Everyone goes for the weapons and Sheamus is sent into various things at ringside.

With Kaiser and Vinci holding Sheamus over a bar, Gunther chops away and hits the big boot before dropping him onto said bar. Back in and it's Butch and Holland getting beaten up, including the double running dropkick to Butch in the corner. As Imperium poses, Sheamus fights up and it's time to wreck Gunther's minions.

Gunther tells Sheamus to bring it and the slugout is on. A release German suplex drops Sheamus but he's right back up with a clothesline. Holland and Butch are back up to help with the beating until everyone knocks each other down. The teams get up and fight to the floor, with Butch hitting a heck of a moonsault off some barrels.

Gunther is back up and hits the shillelagh shot for two Sheamus. The rest of the Brutes get back in and beat down Gunther, allowing Sheamus to hit a heck of a shillelagh shot to knock Gunther silly. Gunther gets powerbombed through the announcers' table, leaving Kaiser to get Brogue Kicked for the pin at 17:42.

Rating: A-. The good old fashioned part was right as these guys didn't bother with anything more than what was advertised. They beat each other up for about eighteen minutes and you could feel a lot of the pain and violence they were showing off here. Sheamus getting the win was the right way to go and he can probably have a final showdown with Gunther. This was what I was looking for from this match and they delivered hard.

Sami Zayn, wearing glasses and reading from the Bloodline Dictionary, talks about the greatness of the Bloodline.

We look at Drew McIntyre getting ready for Clash At The Castle.

McIntyre joins us to talk about how he is on the mend from a minor injury and can't wait to be back. We hear about his match with Roman Reigns at Clash At The Castle.

Video on Karrion Kross vs. Drew McIntyre.

We look at various returns this year (and there have been a lot of them).

Cody Rhodes (whose return was not shown) talks about how much

his return meant and how much he needed that kind of a reaction. We hear about his history with Seth Rollins, including the Cell match with the horrible pectoral injury. He feels he has paid his price and is ready to pick up where he left off. There is one thing that he came back for and he has made that clear (meaning the WWE Title). It's still weird having Cody sound sane and not going all over the place whenever he talks.

From Hell In A Cell.

Cody Rhodes vs. Seth Rollins

Inside the Cell and Cody has a torn pectoral muscle. Rollins cranks up the evil by coming out in Dusty Rhodes polka dots but Cody's chest steals the show, because it looks AWFUL, making him seem all the nuttier for being out there. Cody starts firing off the left hands and manages a Disaster Kick, setting up a not so great Cody Cutter. The Figure Four goes on but Rollins manages to reach underneath the ring and grab a tool box. That doesn't work so it's a kendo stick to the bad arm to break things up.

Rollins stabs him in the chest with the stick and then knocks Cody into the Cell. Cody manages a whip of his own but can barely follow up. The steps off the shoulder rocks Cody again so Rollins puts on Cody's jacket. He also grabs the weightlifting belt to beat on Rhodes before setting up the table. The fans chant THANK YOU ROLLINS as he steps on the bad arm in the corner. Cody can't powerbomb him through the table but he can avoid the frog splash through the table, leaving Rollins down.

With nothing else working, Rhodes pulls out a bullrope with a cowbell so Rollins is confused. Rhodes ties one end around his wrist and Rollins does the same, giving us an impromptu bullrope match. Cody takes him down and hits a superkick, setting up the cowbell to the head for two. Rollins gets in

another shot and unhooks the rope, allowing him to set up a table. A one armed Cross Rhodes gives Cody a quick two but the arm gives out on a powerbomb attempt.

Rollins cranks on the arm and toss powerbombs Cody through the table for two. It's sledgehammer time but Cody kicks it away and hits a Pedigree for two of his own. Cody grabs the hammer but gets caught with the Stomp for two more. Another Stomp is countered into Cross Rhodes from Rollins but Cody pops up and hits one of his own for the double knockdown. They both go for the hammer but Cody switches to back to back Cross Rhodes. Now Rhodes picks up the hammer and hits a running shot for the pin at 24:18.

Rating: B+. That's on a heck of a sliding scale as Cody was almost literally fighting with one arm. Having him win, especially before he goes off for surgery that might have him missing all the way through the Rumble, is quite the choice. It might be a feel good moment, but Rollins is going to need some time to recover from that kind of a loss. Cody looked like an absolute star and points for an amazing effort, but that arm was about as gruesome as you could get and it was hard to watch at times.

Video on Liv Morgan's rise to the top of the Smackdown women's division, including a cameo from Morgan's mom to talk about what wrestling meant to Liv as a kid.

Morgan joins us to talk about what it meant to her and how happy she has been. She is ready for anything and the best is yet to come.

We get a quick look at Ronda Rousey taking the Smackdown Women's Title from Morgan at Extreme Rules.

Video on the rise of Judgment Day.

Video on the rise of Austin Theory.

We look at Bobby Lashley's year, setting up his nearly getting fired, plus Seth Rolling beating him to get the US Title shot next week on Raw.

From Crown Jewel.

Undisputed WWE Universal Title: Roman Reigns vs. Logan Paul

Reigns, with Paul Heyman (for the sake of clarity, any mentions of "Paul" will mean Logan), is defending and powers Paul into the corner to start. Paul wrestles him down a few times and Reigns actually needs a breather on the floor. Back in and Paul tells him to stop running so Reigns hits an elbow to the face. Some rights and lefts to the ribs set up a hiptoss to Reigns, followed by a running clothesline to the floor. A diving clothesline off the barricade takes Reigns down again and it's a Buckshot Lariat for two back inside.

Paul's springboard is knocked out of the air and Heyman is right there with the big rah rah speech. The chinlock goes on for a bit, followed by the corner clotheslines. The jumping clothesline gives Reigns two and he grabs a one armed camel clutch. Paul fights up and hits a gutwrench suplex for a much needed double knockdown. A Blockbuster gives Paul two and he hits his own Superman Punch (which looked a lot more like a Shawn Michaels flying forearm) into a high crossbody.

The standing moonsault gets two and Heyman is stunned. Sweet Chin Music (complete with Tuning Up The Band) is countered into a release Rock Bottom for two. The Superman Punch is countered with a shot to the ribs and the big right hand, followed by the Superman Punch to give Paul two. They head outside with Logan putting him on the announcers' table. Paul talks to his friends in the front row, with one of them giving him a camera as Paul goes up top.

The splash through the table (with camera in hand) connects but here are the Usos to beat up Paul's friends. Cue Logan's brother Jake (also Paul) to take the Usos out with a right

hand each. Logan hits a frog splash for two and here is Solo Sikoa to go after Jake. Logan dives onto the Usos and goes back inside, where Reigns hits the Superman Punch. The spear retains the title at 24:45.

Rating: B+. They went too far with the run-ins and interferences, but this was GREAT for a celebrity match and I was having a very good time. I didn't think for a second that they were going to change the title, but that isn't the point of something like this. The match was all about Paul getting to blow people's minds and it worked well. Very fun stuff here, as Logan absolutely has the talent to be a special attraction around here. This was highly entertaining (Jake Paul easily dispatching the Tag Team Champions aside) and far better than I would have expected.

The hosts wrap it up to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. I never know how to rate something like this so we'll call this quite good and that's about it. This show did what it advertised and covered a bunch of stuff throughout 2022 while also hyping up future major events. That was more than enough to make a three hour show interesting and they didn't leave out anything overly important. We can move on to the important stuff this Friday and next Monday, but it was nice to have a one off, fun show that didn't mean anything.

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Smackdown – December 23, 2022: I Guess This Counts As Merry

Smackdown

Date: December 23, 2022

Location: Allstate Arena, Rosemont, Illinois

Commentators: Michael Cole, Wade Barrett

It's a taped show from Chicago, which means the fans should be livelier than most regular crowds. Since it is the Christmas season, the main event is a Miracle On 34th Street Fight as Ricochet and Braun Strowman vs. Imperium, but we also have a gauntlet match for a future Women's Title match. Let's get to it.

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

Here is the Bloodline to get things going. Paul Heyman talks about all of their upcoming wins, including the Usos defeating Hit Row later tonight and Solo Sikoa getting another victory. Next week though, it's the biggest televised match of the year, as Roman Reigns and Sami Zayn team up to defeat Kevin Owens and John Cena. Reigns get the mic, but has to pause for a SAMI chant. Next week, Reigns is going to SMASH someone, but Sami is looking a little off.

Reigns tells him to get it off of his chest, so Sami talks

about how he has found family and respect in the Bloodline. You would think that would be enough, but there is a Kevin Owens cloud hanging over him. Owens' existence and the fact that their names have been tied together makes Sami mad because he can't get away.

Now John Cena is coming back too and wants to steal the show, but the Bloodline IS the show. Next week, Owens and Cena will acknowledge Reigns. Sami gets a hug to wrap it up. I'm not sure when it's happening, but the Bloodline turning on Sami and him coming back to fight against them is going to be the reaction of the year.

Tag Team Titles: Usos vs. Hit Row

Hit Row, with B Fab is challenging and Sami Zayn is here too. Adonis armdrags Jey to start but a chop block cuts Dolla off. Dolla fights up and brings Jey in but a chop block puts him right back down. We take a break and come back with Dolla getting over to the corner for the hot tag to Adonis so house can be cleaned. A cheap shot cuts Adonis off though and a Samoan drop gives Jimmy two. Dolla is back in and the Heavy Hitter gets two, with Jimmy having to make a save. Back up and Adonis gets sent outside, leaving the 1D to finish Dolla at 9:06.

Rating: C. The titles weren't going to change hands here and I don't think anyone bought the idea that they were. The Usos have been on top for so long that it is hard to fathom them losing, which is one of the problems with a match like this. There wasn't much drama and Hit Row isn't good enough to create it, so this was just ok at best.

We look at Ricochet coming up short to Gunther last week in a great match.

Imperium is ready to take out Ricochet and Braun Strowman tonight.

Gauntlet Match

For a future Smackdown Women's title match. It's Emma in at #1 and Xia Li in at #2, with Li running her over to start. Emma gets a suplex for a breather, but Li knees her in the face. The Cyclone kick finishes Emma at 1:47 and it's Tegan Nox in at #3. Nox strikes away but gets kneed in the head for her efforts. Another Cyclone Kick finishes Nox at 3:19 total and it's Raquel Rodriguez in at #4.

We take a break and come back with Li working on Rodriguez's banged up arm. Rodriguez fights up and hits the spinning Vader Bomb elbow for two. Back up and Li misses the Cyclone Kick, allowing Rodriguez to grab the Tejana Bomb for the pin at 9:05. Liv Morgan is in at #5 and goes right at her, but has to power out of what seems to be a powerbomb attempt. Morgan's victory roll gets two and they trade rollups for a near fall each. A choke works a bit better for Morgan but Rodriguez powers out for a double knockdown.

We take a break and come back again with Rodriguez hitting a superplex but Morgan manages a shot to the arm for a breather. There's the middle rope dropkick to Rodriguez, setting up the Rings of Saturn for a smart hold. Rodriguez powers up again and swings Morgan off, only to get caught in a Codebreaker for two more. Back up and Rodriguez is fine enough to hit a fall away slam into the springboard corkscrew Vader Bomb elbow for another near fall. Morgan is back up with a sunset bomb but Rodriguez powers her up into a Tejana Bomb for the pin at 19:35.

Sonya Deville is in at #6 to complete the field and starts fast with the rapid fire kicks in the corner. Rodriguez tries to make the comeback but gets sent shoulder first into the buckle. An armbar in the ropes has Rodriguez in more trouble but she has to let go, allowing Rodriguez to plant her down for the pin at 22:35. Hold out though as here is Ronda Rousey to announce that Shayna Baszler is a surprise entrant at #7.

Baszler goes right in and strikes away, even pulling off Rodriguez's arm brace. The posing takes too long though and Rodriguez rolls her up for the pin at 24:11.

Rating: B-. Like most gauntlet matches, this left me wondering why some of the regular matches we see aren't over as fast as some of the falls in this one. At the same time, the Morgan vs. Rodriguez stuff worked well and they had a nice chemistry going. Rodriguez winning was the only real option here and they made her look good in the process, so call this a nice success.

We look at Uncle Howdy being revealed as a real person last week, freaking LA Knight out even more.

Here is Bray Wyatt for a chat. Bray talks about how hard it is to come out here and be yourself, but he'll never be tired of people wanting to see him. He talks about trying to present the realest version of him that he can, meaning LA Knight owes him an apology. No one, including Knight, believed that it was really him with all of those attacks...and then the light switches a bit. Wyatt seems to get sidetracked and crouches down before grabbing the Mandible Claw on the cameraman. The weird stare goes on as Wyatt has to be pulled off, leaving him confused and upset. The mind games continue, but they seem to have a direction.

Angel vs. Rey Mysterio

Karrion Kross and Scarlett are watching from the crowd while Humberto is here with Angel. Rey snaps off a headscissors to start and pounds away in the corner, only to have Angel TAKE OFF HIS PANTS. A backbreaker gives Angel two but Rey sends him into the ropes to set up the 619. Humberto breaks that up, allowing Angel to hit a superkick for two. The Wing Clipper is blocked so Angel tries his own 619. That doesn't work either as Rey hits his own, setting up a slingshot DDT for the pin at 3:51.

Rating: C. Well first of all, oh yeah, Los Lotharios still work here. Other than that, this was a completely watchable back and forth match with Mysterio busting out a nifty new finisher. There wasn't exactly a lot to see here but Mysterio getting in the ring and wrestling a basic match shows you just how good he really is. He can wrestle a completely competent match against almost anyone, which isn't exactly a universal skill.

Ricochet and Braun Strowman are ready for Imperium.

Emma yells at Scarlett and Karrion Kross for getting on Riddick (as in Madcap Moss) and Rey Mysterio. She slaps Scarlett, causing Kross to say Emma doesn't know what she just did.

We look back at John Cena's career before he returns next week. The Make-A-Wish and military stuff gets a look at well before wrestlers talk about what a legend he is. I'm assuming this is airing rather than a Kevin Owens segment as Owens missed the double taping.

Lacey Evans is back next week.

Ricochet/Braun Strowman vs. Imperium

Miracle On 34th Street Fight. Strowman cleans house to start and throws Ricochet into a dropkick to Vinci in the corner. Vinci's middle rope crossbody is pulled out of the air but Imperium starts in on Strowman's leg for a breather. Strowman is fine enough to backdrop the villains to the floor, where Ricochet adds a hurricanrana as we take a break.

Back with Strowman getting posted and Ricochet getting beaten with a candy cane. Strowman gets back up and lifts Imperium onto his shoulders but they rake the eyes for a save. There's a double suplex on the stage as Ricochet is back up. Some right hands stagger the already bleeding Vinci but Kaiser manages a chair shot for a breather. It's time to open the

giant present on stage and it's...a ballerina, who dances away.

Another box is opened to reveal New Day dressed as soldiers to kick Imperium low (Barrett: "They're nutcrackers!") and march away. Strowman is back up and runs Imperium over before dragging Ricochet over to ring announcer Samantha Irvin. Some mistletoe is busted out and the kiss (from his real life girlfriend, in Cole's words) brings Ricochet back to life. House is cleaned and it's the running powerslam into the splash off of Strowman's shoulders to pin Vinci at 11:54.

Rating: C+. What else were you expecting here? They were in a match involving big presents and Christmas decorations at the end of a holiday show. There was one result to this match and it was never supposed to be anything else. The match was completely fine and felt like something you might see on a house show, making this a completely entertaining main event.

Overall Rating: C+. For a show that was taped and the second two hour episode of the night, this was a totally acceptable show, which even had some good stuff included. WWE knew it wasn't going to have a huge audience so why try doing anything important? The biggest development is finding Ronda Rousey's next challenger for next week, which is hardly earth shattering. Nice show here though and I had a good time with it throughout.

Results

Usos b. Hit Row – 1D to Dolla

Raquel Rodriguez won a gauntlet match last eliminating Shayna Baszler

Rey Mysterio b. Angel – Slingshot DDT

Ricochet/Braun Strowman b. Imperium – Splash to Vinci

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Monday Night Raw – December 19, 2022: This Close

Monday Night Raw

Date: December 19, 2022

Location: Wells Fargo Arena, Des Moines, Iowa

Commentators: Kevin Patrick, Corey Graves

It's the last show before Christmas and possibly the last show of the year depending on what they do next week. There is still a lot of time before the Royal Rumble but we have another big match coming up on December 30. John Cena is on his way back to WWE and that should have some people talking. Let's get to it.

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

Paul Heyman and Roman Reigns are here, with Reigns saying he is around here to deal with Kevin Owens. Reigns has been dealing with Owens and now he has to take care of John Cena again. Now, he is going to torture Owens until Raw acknowledges the Bloodline.

We cut to the rest of the Bloodline beating down Mustafa Ali in an NWO style handheld video attack.

Opening sequence.

Street Profits vs. Judgment Day

Finn Balor/Damien Priest for the team here, with their friends and Akira Tozawa at ringside too. Ford goes nuts on Priest to start but gets sent into the corner. We go split screen to see the Bloodline beating up Andre Chase and Elias, the latter with a guitar shot. Back to full screen with Priest sending the Profits to the floor by himself and we take a break.

We come back with Dawkins coming in to clean house but Priest grabs the South of Heaven chokeslam. Ford is right there with the frog splash before Priest can get back up but Balor is in to dropkick Ford into the corner. Everything breaks down and Tozawa throws a drink in Dominik Mysterio's (already injured) eyes, allowing Ford to roll Balor up for the pin at 8:56.

Rating: C+. They had the energy going here and it even tied in to what they did last week. At the same time, it was nice to have a different kind of presentation with the cut to the back. It's nice to have something feel like it is happening in real time and if it takes Elias getting beaten up to accomplish that, good for the Bloodline.

Post match Rhea Ripley punches Tozawa out and challenges him to a fight.

Akira Tozawa vs. Rhea Ripley

Everyone else is here too. Tozawa is really nervous about doing this and gets run over without much trouble. A big boot puts Tozawa in more trouble in the corner and Ripley muscles him over with a suplex for two. Ripley can't quite powerbomb him, allowing Tozawa to grab a hurricanrana out to the floor. The distraction lets Balor trip Tozawa down so the Profits hit

the stereo flip dives. Back in and Ripley misses a charge into the corner but Tozawa misses the backplash. Riptide finishes Tozawa at 4:30.

Rating: C. This was an example of a man vs. woman match that made sense and could be believed. Tozawa is a smaller guy and Ripley is a giant compared to most of the division. Ripley's offense looked fine here and I could buy what they were doing. Throw in Ripley winning the match after capitalizing on Tozawa's mistake and the whole thing worked out well enough.

We look back at Bobby Lashley snapping and getting fired by Adam Pearce as a result.

Adam Pearce won't talk about Lashley, who should be back soon. MVP comes in, but hang on as someone else has been attacked.

Post break and it's Dolph Ziggler who has been attacked.

OC vs. Alpha Academy

Anderson shoulders Gable to start and grabs a hiptoss. A double shoulder takes Gable down again but he takes Anderson into the corner. That's fine with Anderson, who armdrags him right out. Otis comes in and has the power showdown with Gallows. The Academy is sent outside and we take a break. Back with Otis cleaning house but Gable misses a moonsault. Gallows' superkick sets up the Magic Killer for the pin at 8:59.

Rating: C. Another perfectly watchable match, even as the Academy is feeling less and less important every week. You can only get so much when they lose all the time and they don't exactly have much in the way of a story anyway. The OC gets some momentum back and we didn't have to hear SHUSH too often, so we'll call this a success.

Post break the Bloodline jumps the OC.

Back from a break and the Bloodline is still in the ring, with

Adam Pearce telling them to wrap it up. Sami Zayn promises to do even worse to John Cena and Kevin Owens next week. As the Bloodline goes to leave, AJ Styles jumps them but gets pulled off by security.

We look at Alexa Bliss becoming #1 contender and then having to snap herself back to reality.

AJ Styles wants the Bloodline tonight and gets Sami Zayn.

We get a sitdown interview between Bianca Blair and Alexa Bliss. Blair gets right to the point by saying she doesn't trust Bliss, who says she is turning into a shell of a human being she doesn't even recognize. Blair asks about the Bray Wyatt connection, but Bliss says this isn't about him. Bliss was winning titles before Blair got here and that's kind of a mic drop moment. Then Bliss hits Blair in the head with a vase.

Miz vs. Dexter Lumis

Ladder match with two bags of money hanging above the ring and Johnny Gargano at ringside. They go for the ladder to start, with Lumis getting the better of it and crushing Miz in the corner with the ladder. With Miz down in the corner, Lumis teases pushing the ladder down for a low blow. Instead he leaves it a big short and dropkicks it between Miz's legs, sending him outside. Miz is able to get up top and save the money and they go crashing down onto the ropes.

We take a break and come back with both of them on top of the ladder so Lumis can punch him down. Miz shoves the ladder over this time though and goes up, only to have Lumis pull him down as well. The Silencer is countered into a neckbreaker onto the apron and Lumis is down again, much to Gargano's annoyance. Miz crushes Lumis in the ladder and rolls a chair at Gargano.

With Gargano backed up, Miz buries Lumis and the ladder with chairs. A table is teased but Miz beats up Gargano instead of

climbing. Lumis uses the distraction to fight up and Rock Bottom Miz onto the announcers' table covering. Lumis misses a dive off the ladder and through the announcers' table. Miz goes up but Lumis cuts him off again and tries to pull down the money...but Bronson Reed returns and cuts Lumis off. The Tsunami crushes Lumis and Reed helps Miz get the money back at 18:20.

Rating: D+. This was all about the surprise return and that doesn't matter much when the match is rather dull on the way there. This is a match that would have been better served as a regular one on one match at about half the length, as They had far too many instances of "climb, cutoff, climb cutoff, climb, cutoff". This feud is likely to continue, though having Reed back could boost things up quite a bit.

Sami Zayn vs. AJ Styles

No one else is at ringside for a change. Styles starts fast and knocks Zayn to the floor for the slingshot forearm. Back in and a hot shot cuts Styles off, only to have him come back with some kicks of his own. Zayn is sent outside again and dropped for a second time, but he is fine enough to break up the Phenomenal Forearm as we take a break.

Back with Zayn grabbing a brainbuster for two but getting caught with the Phenomenal Blitz. The moonsault reverse DDT is cut off though and Zayn exploders him into the corner. The Helluva Kick is countered into the Calf Crusher though, with Zayn having to make it to the rope. Cue Solo Siko for a distraction though, with Styles going outside to beat him up. The referee is distracted as well though and Siko gets in a Samoan Spike. Zayn adds the Blue Thunder Bomb for the pin at 12:51.

Rating: B-. The Bloodline numbers game continues and that is the way this should have gone. You don't need Zayn losing so close to his huge match with Reigns at the end of the year and

Styles is as bulletproof as you can get around here. If nothing else, this could open up more things by having Styles go after the Bloodline and Sikoa in particular, so they did what they should have done with a good match here.

Here is Seth Rollins (home state boy) for a chat. The fans are REALLY happy to see him and Rollins seems happy to be back. Rollins says Roman Reigns doesn't run Mondays and no one can stop him. Cue Austin Theory to say he can beat Rollins, even if the fans think Theory sucks. Theory thinks Rollins is fine after Bobby Lashley took his frustrations out on a referee, but Rollins praises him anyway.

Rollins talks about how great Theory is, but he'll never be on Rollins' level. Theory talks about wanting to rise up but Rollins calls himself Everest. The fight is teased but here are the Usos, leaving Rollins and Theory to stand next to each other. Theory runs off (shocking) and the beatdown is on but Kevin Owens makes the save. Security breaks it up, but Owens suggests they keep this going. The match is on for later.

Becky Lynch wants to face the best version of Bayley, so let's do this one on one. Tonight it's going to be one on one or one on three but she's ready either way.

Bayley vs. Becky Lynch

The rest of Damage Ctrl is here too. A dancing Becky soaks in the fans' cheers to start and a frustrated Bayley gets armdragged down. Becky boots her to the floor and hits a flying forearm and we take a break. Back with Becky fighting out of a chinlock and winning a slugout to leave both of them down. The Bexploder drops Bayley and the middle rope legdrop gives Becky two.

A backslide gives Becky two but Bayley is back with a sliding lariat. The Bayley to Belly gives Bayley two but Becky is right back with Diamond Dust of all things for two of her own. Damage Ctrl breaks up the Manhandle Slam so Becky threatens

them with a...TV monitor. Before that can go anywhere it's a double ejection, but the distraction lets Bayley get in a monitor shot. The Rose Plant finishes Becky at 14:42.

Rating: B. These two beat each other up for awhile until Bayley had to cheat to win. There is something to that ending as Becky had said she wanted to face Bayley at her best and on her own but didn't get to do that here. Good stuff from two very talented stars and it would not surprise me to see this come back again on a bigger stage, like say the Royal Rumble.

Seth Rollins and Kevin Owens are ready for the Usos, though Owens remembers Rollins trying to steal his Wrestlemania main event earlier this year. Rollins seems ready to go anyway.

Seth Rollins/Kevin Owens vs. Usos

Non-title and the brawl is on before the bell with Owens and Jimmy heading outside. We get the bell with Rollins hammering on Jey in the corner. The fans are pleased as Rollins elbows him in the face and hands it off to Owens for a clothesline. Jimmy manages a shot from the apron though and Jey knocks Rollins to the floor as we take a break.

Back with Rollins getting the hot tag to clean house, including the Sling Blade to Jey. Owens comes back in with a frog splash for two on Jey, but the Swanton only hits raised knees. Cue Solo Sikoa but the Good Brothers come in to take him out. Jey gets Stomped on the floor but Austin Theory pops up with a belt shot to Rollins. Jimmy superkicks Owens for two but Owens is back up with a superkick of his own. The Pop Up Powerbomb finishes Jimmy at 10:57.

Rating: B. While Lynch vs. Bayley was all about getting in a competitive match, this was more about tying all of the insanity together until the ending. The Usos losing is an event these days and even though this wasn't for the title, Owens and Rollins overcame a bunch of shenanigans to score the big upset. That is a rare loss for the Bloodline and it gives

Rollins a nice hometown moment. Imagine that for a change.

Post match Sami Zayn and Kevin Owens have a staredown but nothing gets physical to end the show.

Overall Rating: B. Save for that ladder match, this was a heck of a show with a bunch of good matches throughout. What mattered here the most though was having so many things woven throughout the show. There were plot elements that came up multiple times over the course of the night and it felt like an event rather than just another show. It never made sense to have things be so cut and dry around here, so this was a very nice change of pace. Pretty awesome show and if you cut that ladder match down, it's a great one.

Results

Street Profits b. Judgment Day – Rollup to Balor

Rhea Ripley b. Akira Tozawa – Riptide

OC b. Alpha Academy – Magic Killer to Gable

Miz b. Dexter Lumis – Miz pulled down the money

Sami Zayn b. AJ Styles – Blue Thunder Bomb

Bayley b. Becky Lynch – Rose Plant

Seth Rollins/Kevin Owens b. Usos – Pop Up Powerbomb to Jimmy

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Monday Night Raw – March 10, 2008 (Wrestlemania Rewind): Needs More Rewind

Monday Night Raw

Date: March 10, 2008

Location: Bradley Center, Madison, Wisconsin

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

It's a special three hour show as we have Wrestlemania Rewind. In this case that means every match will be a Wrestlemania rematch, which could make for some interesting combinations a few years after the original matches. Other than that, either Randy Orton or HHH will be in charge tonight, which isn't fair to the other two when they get two hours each. Let's get to it.

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

Opening sequence.

Here is Ric Flair to get things going. Last week, Shawn Michaels came out here and said that he was going to stop Flair's show at Wrestlemania. That means Flair needs Michaels out here right now in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Cue Shaw, with Flair saying that is the best entrance in wrestling today. When Flair got started, the idea of sympathy did not exist and if he can't compete in the ring with people like Shawn today, he doesn't to do this anymore. Flair wants to be a franchise player and someone who can beat someone like Shawn on his best day.

Shawn brings up the "to be the man" line, because at

Wrestlemania, he IS the man, and Flair's career is ending. No matter what happens, the show is going to get stolen. Before Wrestlemania though, Flair has a 3-1 steel cage match against Edge and...uh, his Edge guys. Now Shawn's Friday nights are usually reserved for Dora The Explorer, but he'll make an exception this time. Cue Randy Orton to interrupt, calling this a touching, touching moment. Orton is in charge tonight, so we'll have HHH vs. Kane and Shawn vs. the man he couldn't beat last year at Wrestlemania: John Cena.

Undertaker vs. Mark Henry

Casket match. Undertaker slugs away in the corner to start and hits the jumping clothesline to continue the fast opening. Old School is loaded up but Henry pulls him into a bearhug. With that not working, Henry clotheslines him to the floor, where Undertaker lands on his feet and pulls Henry outside. A whip into the corner slows Undertaker down again so he rams Henry into the casket. Back in and something close to a World's Strongest Slam gets Henry out of trouble, only to have Undertaker pull him into the choke. That's enough to knock Henry out and put him in the casket for the win.

Rating: D+. That might be the shortest casket match I can remember and it felt like a way to have Undertaker on the show in some fashion. There was nothing to this one as Undertaker more or less squashed him in a hurry. Granted that's how it should have been, but this wasn't the most interesting option.

Floyd Mayweather Jr. and company are here.

Boxing people talk about Big Show vs. Mayweather Jr.

Earlier today, HHH talked about being ready to get the title back because it is two years in the making. Cena, Orton, game on.

Mr. Kennedy vs. Finlay

They were in a Money in the Bank ladder match before so this counts as a rematch. Hold on though as JBL pops up on screen to say he'll beat up Finlay so bad that he'll be in a bed next to Hornswoggle. The bell rings and Finlay beats on him with the shillelagh for a DQ in about fifteen seconds.

Post match the beating continues and Finlay knocks him silly.

WWE is doing something with Make A Wish. Apparently John Cena does a lot with the charity. Like him or not, that is another level of work.

Intercontinental Title: Chris Jericho vs. Jeff Hardy

Hardy is defending. JR: "One has to wonder what Chris Jericho's motive is in this match." Lawler: "To win the Intercontinental Title and be the champion." They get on with the brawl (based off of some issues on the Highlight Reel a few weeks back) early until Jericho clotheslines him over the top.

We take an early break and come back with Hardy hitting the dropkick through the ropes. Hardy's barricade running clothesline only hits announcers' table though and things slow down a good bit. Back in and Jericho bends the back over his knee before kicking Hardy in the head. Hardy finally fights up and hits something like a Sling Blade, plus a Whisper in the Wind for two.

They go to a pinfall reversal sequence until Hardy misses some kind of flip. Jericho's high crossbody is rolled through to give Hardy two but the Twist of Fate is countered. The Lionsault gives Jericho two but he misses the running enziguri, allowing Hardy to hit the Twist of Fate. Hardy misses the Swanton though and it's a Codebreaker to give Jericho the pin and the title.

Rating: B. This took some time to get going but the last few minutes were what you would expect from these two. Hardy has

been on a bit of a downward slide at the moment, as at some point he has to actually win the bigger matches. Winning the Intercontinental Title doesn't mean much for him, but it does give Jericho a needed boost. Good match too, at least once things really got rolling.

Nikolai Volkoff/Iron Sheik vs. US Express

Hold on though as Jillian Hall is here for her own version of Born In The USA. That earns her the airplane spin from Mike Rotunda, as we have no match (thank goodness).

Next up for the Hall of Fame: the Briscos. Yeah that works, and as usual the old footage is great.

Video on Big Show.

Kane watches a clip of HHH beating him at Wrestlemania XV. We're still allowed to talk about that one? Anyway, Randy Orton comes in and wants Kane to hurt HHH tonight but Kane doesn't want a history lesson.

HHH vs. Kane

Kane slugs him into the corner to start but HHH punches his way to freedom. Back up and Kane takes it outside, where HHH reverses a whip into the post. Kane slugs away back inside and kicks HHH in the face, only to charge into a spinebuster. The facebuster staggers Kane again but the Pedigree is countered. As Randy Orton comes out to watch, HHH slips out of the chokeslam and hits the Pedigree for the pin.

Rating: C. They kept this VERY simple and to the point, as HHH gets to beat up the monster clean. Then again it isn't like Kane is worth much at the moment and has just been kind of going through the motions. What matters here is HHH though, as he gets the big win and builds momentum towards Wrestlemania, meaning they accomplished the goal.

John Cena talks about how important Wrestlemania is. It's the

reason why he worked so hard to come back from his injury so soon, because Wrestlemania is what matters more than anything else. He respects Randy Orton, but it is going to be a fight to be the best. Cena's time will come again.

Melina vs. Ashley

Beth Phoenix is here with Melina but there's no Ashley, as she is hurt. We have a replacement though.

Melina vs. Maria

Beth Phoenix and Candice Michelle are here too. Maria charges into a boot in the corner to start as the shrieking is on to start. Now it's Santino Marella coming out to watch, complete with a copy of Maria's Playboy. Santino rips it up for a distraction, allowing Melina to hit a reverse DDT for the pin.

Post match Beth helps Melina beat the other two down.

Video on Floyd Mayweather Jr. He has a lot of money.

Here is Shane McMahon for the official Big Show vs. Floyd Mayweather Jr. weigh-in. Mayweather weighs 159lbs and Show weighs 441. Show isn't interested in the photo, but he does bring up Mayweather's posse. Instead he brings out his own posse in the form of the locker room. Show points out that no one here likes Mayweather and promises pain at Wrestlemania. Mayweather pulls out cash, smells it, and talks about how he respects Big Show.

As the WHAT treatment goes on, Mayweather says Show has to catch him to hurt him. Show takes the case and hands it to some of the wrestlers so Mayweather promises to break Show's jaw at Wrestlemania. Everyone goes to leave, but Show grabs Mayweather and throws him over the top, onto a bunch of the wrestlers. Mayweather comes up favoring his shoulder and runs to the back with everyone else going behind him.

Wrestlemania rundown.

Randy Orton says he's HHH and John Cena plus more rolled into one. Wouldn't that get a little cramped?

Edge vs. CM Punk

Non-title and the Edgeheads are here with Edge. Punk kicks him in the face to start but walks into a hot shot for his efforts. Some strikes don't work very well for Punk but he is fine enough to fight out of a suplex. A knee to the face and some kicks set up the springboard clothesline for two on Edge. That earns Punk a quick DDT from Edge but Punk is back up with the GTS attempt. Cue the Edgeheads for a distraction though and the spear gives Edge the pin.

Rating: C. Punk has taken a few hits as of late and doesn't seem to have much going in the way of momentum. Granted some of that might just be due to feuding with Chavo Guerrero for weeks on end, but losing to Edge isn't quite as bad. Punk certainly has the talent, and now all he has to do is put the pieces together to make it work

Here is William Regal to talk about the Raw vs. Smackdown match between Umaga vs. Batista. Regal isn't worried about Batista, which sends us to a video on Umaga. As Regal talks about how he pities Batista at Wrestlemania, here is Batista to interrupt. The fight is on with Batista hitting the spinebuster to send Umaga running.

Vince McMahon is getting a star on the Hollywood Walk Of Fame.

Shawn Michaels vs. John Cena

They trade hammerlocks to start as we talk about their history against each other. Neither can get very far until it's Cena trying to get the STF, sending Shawn to the floor and us to a break. Back with Cena cranking on the arm until Shawn swinging neckbreakers his way to freedom. Cena gets tossed over the top and it's time to start in on the knee back inside.

A quick AA attempt doesn't work as the knee gives out, with Shawn chop blocking Cena to damage the knee even worse. Cena is fine enough to kick Michaels into the corner though and the clothesline comeback is on. The Shuffle connects but the FU is countered into a pinfall reversal sequence.

They collide for a double knockdown and a breather, allowing Shawn to hit the flying forearm. The top rope elbow looks to set up Sweet Chin Music but Cena grabs the foot. That's fine with Shawn, who pulls him into that reverse Figure Four. With that broken up, Cena is sent outside and Shawn hits a dive, only to have Randy Orton run in to deck Cena for the DQ.

Rating: B-. These two are always going to work well together so the quality was hardly a surprise. It also helps that they got some time, but Orton running in was the best way to go given how strong both of them need to be going into Wrestlemania. It's no classic, but Shawn vs. Cena in any form is at least worth a look.

Post match the RKO onto a chair is countered into a shove onto the chair, setting up the FU to drop Orton.

We cut to HHH in the back, who is in charge next week. Therefore, next week it's John Cena and Randy Orton teaming up to face...the entire Raw roster. Oh boy.

Overall Rating: C. The nostalgia was fun, but it was also pretty limited, with some random rematches and cameos, plus some rematches that only kind of took place originally. I can go for an old school show, but this wasn't exactly their best effort. They're making me want to see Wrestlemania though so they are getting the big picture right.

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Tribute To The Troops 2022: The Unspecial Special

Tribute To The Troops 2022

Date: December 17, 2022

Location: Gainbridge Fieldhouse, Indianapolis, Indiana

Commentators: Michael Cole, John Bradshaw Layfield

It's time for another of the annual holiday specials, though in this case this was tacked on after a TV taping over a month ago. These shows are basically short form house shows with a healthy dose of "WE LOVE THE TROOPS" thrown in. There are almost no expectations for one of them as a result so let's get to it.

We get the presentation of the colors and Star Spangled Banner, led by someone who sang it at the 2009 Tribute To The Troops.

The opening video looks at the history of Tribute To The Troops, featuring several clips from the original shows and not so many from the recent editions.

Braun Strowman vs. LA Knight

Strowman throws him around to start but misses a charge into the corner. Knight goes after the knee but Strowman shrugs it off. The Monsterbomb finishes Knight at 2:05.

We meet Morgan Prigmore, who is proud to be in the Navy.

Ronda Rousey/Shayna Baszler vs. Emma/Tamina

Baszler takes Emma into the corner to start and it's off to Rousey. Emma fights up and grabs the Dil-Emma to send Rousey outside. The big dive to the floor takes out the villains and we go to a break. Back with Tamina coming in off the tag with a Samoan drop for two. Rousey catches Tamina on top though and Baszler grabs the Kirifuda Clutch for the tap at 7:34.

Rating: C-. There wasn't much to this one and that shouldn't be a surprise. Rousey and Baszler are monsters and aren't going to be losing to a pair like Emma and Tamina. Rousey was likely there for the star power and Tamina was there for reasons that are still not entirely clear. At least she took the fall instead of Emma, even if Emma has meant nothing since she returned.

Video on Congressional Medal of Honor winner Matthew Williams and how he won the medal.

Video on wrestlers meeting the troops.

Video on the history of Tribute to the Troops. Worked the first time they aired it, not so much the second time, and now it's just reminding you how far this show has fallen.

Imperium vs. Drew McIntyre/Sheamus/Ricochet

Kaiser takes Ricochet down to start and stomps on his hand. The villains draw McIntyre and Sheamus in, allowing Imperium to hit the double corner dropkick. We take a break and come back with commentary talking about previous editions of the show as Imperium takes turns on Ricochet.

Gunther works over Ricochet's back and the minions pull Sheamus and McIntyre off the apron. Ricochet counters a powerbomb into a Code Red for a breather though and we take another break. Back again (after a three minute video where we meet Steven Green, who loves America) with Sheamus coming in to clean house.

McIntyre and Gunther come in for the big showdown, followed by the big double knockdown. Everything breaks down and Ricochet hits the big running flip dive to the floor. The Claymore/Brogue Kick combination sets up Ricochet's shooting star to finish Kaiser off at 16:34.

Rating: C+. Completely watchable six man tag and a fine way to main event the show. This could have been a featured match at any house show and probably could have headlined a few of them. Gunther still feels like a star and isn't in over his head against McIntyre or Sheamus, which has me wanting to see him against either of them again. Good stuff here as we get the feel good ending to the show.

Overall Rating: C. I never know how to rate these things as they are designed as a special with nothing involving storyline advancement or anything important. At the same time, the vignettes looking back at previous editions just show you how worthless this show has become. It used to feel like WWE was putting in some effort but this probably took half an hour to film after a Smackdown. If you want to act like this is supposed to be some big, important and special show, treat it like one.

Results

Braun Strowman b. LA Knight – Monsterbomb

Ronda Rousey/Shayna Baszler b. Emma/Tamina – Kirifuda Clutch to Tamina

Drew McIntyre/Sheamus/Ricochet b. Imperium – Shooting star press to Kaiser

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Smackdown – December 16, 2022: Call It An Early/Late Christmas Present

Smackdown

Date: December 16, 2022

Location: Allstate Arena, Rosemont, Illinois

Commentators: Wade Barrett, Michael Cole

We are just over a month away from the Royal Rumble and it's time for a pretty big title match on the way there. This week will see Gunther defend the Intercontinental Title against World Cup winner Ricochet, which should make for a solid main event. Other than that, Roman Reigns is here so let's get to it.

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

The Usos and a spiffy looking Sami Zayn arrive.

Opening sequence.

Women's Tag Team Titles: Damage Ctrl vs. Liv Morgan/Tegan Nox

Damage Ctrl, with Bayley, is defending. Nox takes over on Sky to start and hits a gordbuster, setting up a double suplex for a near fall. Morgan comes in and knocks Sky to the floor, where she gives chase with the kendo stick. Both champs are sent outside for the big dive from Nox and we take a break.

Back with Nox having to fight out of trouble and handing it off to Morgan to pick up the pace. Morgan nips up out of the corner but gets caught in a double powerbomb for two, with Nox making the save. Back to back Codebreakers rock Sky and the Shiniest Wizard gets two as Sky makes the save this time.

Morgan sunset bombs Kai to the floor, leaving Nox to hit the reverse cannonball on Sky in the corner. Another Shiniest Wizard is cut off with a Shotei palm strike, only to have Nox break up the Asai moonsault. Bayley's interference is broken up but here's a woman in black to kick Nox. Security takes her away and the Over the Moonsault retains the titles at 10:45.

Rating: C+. I like the idea of having something in there as a mystery with the woman in black. Other than that, this was a nice match without much of a chance for the thrown together team to win the belts. The good thing is that the titles are actually being defended though, as it gives them at least some value rather than having them sit on the shelves for weeks if not months at a time.

Video on Gunther, who is ready for Ricochet.

Video on Ricochet, who is ready for Gunther.

Video on Kevin Owens' recent issues with the Bloodline.

Sami Zayn is nervous about his moment with Roman Reigns at the

top of the hour. He goes to get something to eat, leaving the Usos to wonder what Reigns has planned tonight.

We look at LA Knight going after Bray Wyatt last week but only finding his shirt, with the lights going out.

We see a video provided by a QR code, showing a bound and gagged LA Knight, with someone taking a Bray Wyatt mask off of him.

Here is LA Knight to address being kidnapped and attacked for the last few weeks. He's still right here knocking on Bray Wyatt's front door because since Wyatt's return, all he has done is dress like a clown. Then Knight gets jumped by someone like Wyatt but it WASN'T Wyatt? Knight invites him out here right now so cue the Fireflies.

Here is Wyatt himself, to say they both know how this ends. The fight is on with Knight getting the better of things, but then the weird videos pop up and here is Uncle Howdy in person. Knight isn't sure what to think but Wyatt seems glad to see his uncle. As Knight bails, Wyatt and Howdy laugh a lot. So he's a real person. That's at least a step forward and a question answered.

Video on Tribute To The Troops.

Intercontinental Title: Ricochet vs. Gunther

Ricochet is challenging...and hang on as the rest of Imperium is ejected. Gunther powers him down to start and even goes after a leg for some smart strategy. More power tossing has Ricochet in trouble but he grabs a headlock. Some skinning of the cat and a backflip get Ricochet loose but Gunther kicks him out to the floor. Another drop onto the apron has Ricochet down on the floor as we take a break.

Back with Ricochet hammering away but getting slammed down with ease. The Boston crab doesn't last long for Gunther

though and Ricochet kicks him in the face for the escape. A backbreaker sets up another Boston crab though as Ricochet just can't get away. Somehow that one is broken up as well so Gunther goes with a chop into the sleeper on the mat. The bodyscissors is broken up and Ricochet fights out, managing to send Gunther into the corner.

Some enziguris rock Gunther and a running corner dropkick has him staggering even more. A suplex is a bit too much for Ricochet though and it's Gunther's running dropkick to stagger him instead. Gunther tries a powerbomb but gets hurricanranaed to the floor for a crash. There's a big springboard moonsault to take Gunther down again and we take another break.

We come back with Ricochet hitting his big running flip dive to the floor but getting kicked in the jaw. The big clothesline only gives Gunther two but his top rope splash hits raised knees. Now Ricochet manages the suplex for two and the shooting star press is good for the same. Ricochet slugs away and hits a superkick, only to get chopped out of the air. Another HARD powerbomb gives Gunther two so it's the Last Symphony to retain the title at 21:49.

Rating: B+. They had me believing in the possible title change here and that is a heck of a feeling for Ricochet getting the title shot. Gunther sells amazingly well for a monster but then his next gear is almost impossible to stop. Very few people can crank it up to that level and Gunther does it as well as anyone today. Ricochet more than held up his end too here and fought from underneath the whole way. Great stuff here and I was hooked throughout.

Post match Imperium comes out for the beatdown but Braun Strowman makes the save.

Jimmy Uso comes in to see Roman Reigns and asks if Sami Zayn is becoming a full Uso tonight. Reigns doesn't say anything so Jimmy says he's with Reigns no matter what. With Jimmy gone,

Reigns has Paul Heyman call Adam Pearce. Post break, Pearce comes in to see the Bloodline, with Heyman pitching Reigns/Zayn vs. Kevin Owens/a partner of his choosing on the December 30 Smackdown. Works for Pearce, who leaves after a glare from Solo Sikoa.

Video on the history of Tribute To The Troops.

Hit Row vs. Viking Raiders vs. Legado del Fantasma

The winners get a future Tag Team Title shot. Ashante, Ivar and Wilde start things off but everything breaks down rather fast. Legado gets clotheslined outside and it's Dolla left alone in the ring. Erik comes back in to forearm him down but stereo springboard missile dropkicks put Erik on the floor as well. Stereo springboard flip dives have Legado in control as we take a break.

Back with the Vikings getting to clean house but Legado makes another save. Del Toro's Phoenix splash gets two on Dolla but Adonis breaks up the high/low. Everything breaks down again and Dolla loads up a dive...which gets caught on the ropes, leaving him to land on the apron but celebrate the dive grazing the pile anyway (that was BAD). Zelina Vega, B Fab and Valhalla get in a fight on the floor and a limping Top Dollar gets back in for the Heavy Hitter to finish Wilde at 9:14.

Rating: C-. The match wasn't very good in the first place, but Hit Row has become one of the biggest disappointments since their return. They aren't exactly good in the first place, and then you have that kind of a botch. I'd be surprised if the team is still around in three months, as this just isn't working, future title shot or not. The rest of the match was decent enough, but that dive (or whatever it was) is the only thing people will be remembering.

Raquel Rodriguez is ready to come back to face Ronda Rousey...so Rousey and Shayna Baszler jump her for a beatdown.

Here is the Bloodline for a chat. After their very lengthy entrance, Roman Reigns talks about how this is the first time he has seen his team since WarGames, which they dominated. Now though, they have a KO Problem, but Reigns and Sami Zayn are going to get together and take care of him for good.

Zayn says Owens is a problem and no one likes him, which is why he is Owens' only friend. That is NOT cool with Reigns, so Zayn starts backtracking fast. Then John Cena pops up on screen, saying he has gotten a text from Owens, reminding him that he hasn't had a WWE match this year. So what about being partners on December 30? In a rather length answer involving a Santa Claus reference, Cena is in to end the show.

Overall Rating: C+. This was a weird show but the opener was good, the Wyatt segment actually did something, the Intercontinental Title match was great, and the main event worked save for one spot. At the same time, this show gets knocked down a bit by how many video packages we had. It was A LOT of recapping and hyping stuff up, which might be great if you're trying to stretch out a double taping, but it doesn't make for a very great TV show. Cut some video, add in another match of value and this show goes way up, as that Ricochet vs. Gunther match more than makes the rest worth watching.

Results

Damage Ctrl b. Liv Morgan/Tegan Nox – Over the Moonsault to Nox

Gunther b. Ricochet – Last Symphony

Hit Row b. Viking Raiders and Legado del Fantasma – Heavy Hitter to Wilde

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BREAKING: WWE Releases Mandy Rose

<https://wrestlingrumors.net/tommyhall/breaking-mandy-rose-released-wwe/>

Apparently Rose had a page with risque content, which did not sit well with WWE. This comes less than a day after she lost the NXT Women's Title to Roxanne Perez, ending her 413 day reign.

This is a weird situation, as WWE had probably told her to stop, but this is also the same company that allegedly told Ember Moon to dress more like Rose. Unless Rose flat out refused to stop posting the content, I'm not sure this warranted a full out release. Maybe they were trying to send a message, but either way, this feels like quite the extreme response. Rose will wind up somewhere in wrestling if she wants to, but dang this came out of nowhere.