

ECW on Sci-Fi – August 29, 2006: Heyman's ECW Debut

ECW on Sci-Fi

Date: August 29, 2006

Location: Sovereign Center, Reading, Pennsylvania

Commentators: Joey Styles, Taz

It's another week in and the show continues to be decent, at least in theory. Tonight is all about furthering Heyman vs. Sabu in the battle of ECW past, which is probably the best feud this show has going. Also tonight we have RVD vs. Hardcore Holly, which if I remember right has a scary bump in it, but that might be a rematch later on. Let's get to it.

We open with Heyman of course. He talks about how this is his creation and how he's our messiah as usual. Heyman has never wrestled in ECW, although I'd assume that's probably a good thing. Tonight he's getting into the ring against....Sabu. I don't see this going well. He says that Dr. Frankenstein must destroy his own creation and beat his own child tonight in the ring.

Rob Van Dam vs. Hardcore Holly

This is a followup to last week where Holly jumped Van Dam with a chair. Holly goes right for him but gets kicked down and clotheslined to the floor very quickly. Van Dam puts him on the barricade and this his spin kick to the back. Back in the Alabama Slam is countered but Holly throws Rob to the floor to take over. Off to a HARDCORE chinlock before the dropkick gets two. Van Dam kicks his head off to put both guys down but manages to get up first. A superkick and standing moonsault get two. Windmill kick sets up Rolling Thunder but the Five Star misses. Holly brings in a chair but Rob hits him with it for the DQ.

Rating: D+. That was a pretty lame ending to a pretty weak match. This was only about five minutes long and while they would feud for a few weeks before Van Dam beat him in an Extreme Rules match (meaning this wasn't the match I was talking about in the intro), this was a bad opener

to the feud. Not much to see here.

Rene Dupree rides an exercise bike and says he's the most extreme wrestler.

Here's Big Show for a chat. He talks about how dominant he is and how the McMahons saw that. That's why they enlisted him to help in their battles with DX. You mean it's not because there's no way to believe that Vince and Shane can fight Shawn and HHH so they needed to bring in some heavies to do the work for them? DX's fate will be sealed at Unforgiven in the Cell but if they want, they can come face him here next week.

Shannon Moore says fight the power.

CM Punk vs. Stevie Richards

Richards actually gets an intro. They go to the mat to start and Richards fires away with some chops. Punk knocks him to the floor and hits a suicide dive to take over, but back inside Richards crotches him on the top to slow Punk down again. Off to a bearhug from Stevie but Punk breaks out of it very quickly. Punk hammers away with his strikes and hits a butterfly backbreaker for two. Richards ducks the backfist but walks into the Rock Bottom and Anaconda Vice for the tap.

Rating: C+. This was a nice surprise as Punk got tested instead of rolling over the latest ECW jobber that he was facing. Richards is a guy that never quite gets the appreciation that he deserves, because he's most remembered as a comedy guy. He could have some entertaining matches though when he was just being himself, which is what you got here. This was a surprisingly entertaining match.

Video on Sabu.

It's Matt Striker's Classroom. He says he's a teacher and he's here to help. For some reason people don't cheer for him though, because they'd rather cheer for the Sandman. You know, the guy who drinks "giggle water." Sandman is constantly drunk and has a Singapore Cane, but Striker's weapon is his mind. Cue Sandman, but Striker actually beats him down, breaking the chalkboard over his head and hitting him with a

stapler before leaving.

Balls Mahoney is in the back and has something to say when Kelly comes up and flashes him. Ok then.

Taz and Joey explain that Angle is gone and wish him the best in his future endeavors.

Paul Heyman vs. Sabu

It's Extreme Rules. The security guards (the Bashams but I don't think that was ever revealed on TV) jump Sabu on the way to the ring of course. Since this is ECW though Sabu beats up both guards who are in riot gear, but Big Show makes save #2 for Heyman before Sabu can, you know, kill him. Show CRACKS Sabu's head with a chair as I'm sure you can get where this is going already. Sabu is busted already and the three guys not named Heyman beat him down with Big Show holding him so Paul can get in a shot.

We get out first table of the night (that has to be a record for ECW as the show is almost over) as Heyman dances around the ring and calls himself the Messiah. Show lifts Sabu up into a gorilla press position to put him through the table on the floor, but of course he holds him just long enough for RVD to come out for the save. Van Daminator takes down Big Show and it's kicks for the Bashams.

Sabu finally gets his hands on Heyman and destroys him for a bit, even hitting the Arabian Facebuster. Sabu and Van Dam put Heyman on the table but Big Show pulls Sabu out of the air on the dive attempt. That's always cool to see. Cue run-in #5 (I've lost count) in the form of Hardcore Holly. He hits the Alabama Slam to Van Dam through the table as Show hits that walking legdrop thing, giving Heyman the pin.

Rating: C-. This is more ECW's style: a totally mindless and insane brawl with massive carnage. It was clear what they were going for as soon as they said Extreme Rules, but that's ok here. They had to do something to keep this from being Heyman getting killed for eight minutes, and having all these people come out allows for more stories to be advanced. Not a good match or anything but it was fun in an insane sort of way.

Sabu gets put through a table to end the show. Heyman makes the sign of the cross over Sabu's body.

Overall Rating: C-. This wasn't their best show. The main feud is starting to get some traction but it's not exactly the most interesting story in the world. Big Show would hold the title for the next three months or so which didn't really do much for the level of interest in the title. The show here was getting more coherent but it wasn't exactly interesting.

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ECW on Sci-Fi – September 5, 2006: A Big Show Commercial For Raw

ECW on Sci-Fi

Date: September 5, 2006

Location: Columbus Civic Center, Columbus, Georgia

Commentators: Joey Styles, Tazz

Tonight we get really EXTREME as DX is here to face Big Show, which is basically a preview for Unforgiven and their Cell match which will also involve the McMahons. Other than that we have Heyman punishing RVD and Sabu for existing by putting them in a tag match against Knox and Test. Then again that might be punishment for all of us in general. Let's get to it.

DX arrives to open the show. Shawn: "You think this is the place?" HHH: "Bingo."

Sabu/Rob Van Dam vs. Mike Knox/Test

Extreme Rules. Sabu and Knox start because you have to tag in an EXTREME rules match. They have about as technical of a match as Sabu has ever had before it's off to Van Dam. Knox comes in as well and pounds away as Sabu loads up a table. He gets a chair as well as Knox drops a freaking elbow for two. This match is already boring me to death and we're only two minutes into it.

Test comes in with a clothesline and sends Van Dam to the floor. The Originals hit a nice slingshot legdrop and Rolling Thunder combo as things breaks down. Van Dam hits a top rope kick to break up Sabu being thrown through the table. Through a series of counters everyone but Sabu winds up on the apron. He springboards off the chair to take all three of them down and through said table in the first good spot of the match.

Back from a break with Test hitting Sabu with a chair for no cover. Van Dam blasts Test with the same chair and Surfs it into the corner. Knox breaks up the Five Star with a chair shot and hits a superplex. Sabu breaks up the cover with an Arabian Facebuster and puts Knox in the camel clutch. Van Dam kicks the chair into Knox's face but Test saves the pin. Sabu hits Air Sabu in the corner and Test falls onto the chair. Triple Jump Moonsault gets two. Another table is brought in and the Originals mess up the legdrop/Five Star combo through the table so only the Splash hits and gets the pin on Knox.

Rating: D+. Those of you that have read my stuff over the years know that I am by no means an ECW fan. That being said, Van Dam and Sabu are at almost no fault here. Test and Knox sucked the ever loving life out of this match and brought it through the floor. They were the perfect idea for heels in ECW but that doesn't mean they were interesting in the slightest. I can't stand those two and I'm sure they'll be pushed even more in the future.

Kevin Thorn and Ariel pull a tarot card which reveals sexuality. Are they ever going to do anything with these two?

Here's Striker again to talk about Sandman. He says that last week brain prevailed over brawn and that he's smart enough to never go swimming with stingrays. This would be the day after Steve Irwin was killed by a

stingray so the fans give Striker more heat than ever. Here's Sandman so Striker runs away. Sandman writes SUX under Striker's name. What biting commentary.

Balls Mahoney vs. Stevie Richards

Kevin Thorn comes to commentary for some reason and Ariel grinds on Joey a bit. Balls pounds him into the corner to start but Richards clotheslines him down for two. A neckbreaker gets the same and Richards takes over. A bad X-Factor gets two and it's off to a chinlock. Balls slaps the mat which doesn't count as a tap out for some reason and they're back to their feet. Mahoney makes his comeback but has to stop to hit Thorn for some reason. A cane shot to the head of Mahoney gets the pin. Too short to rate but it was more about angle advancement than anything else.

Punk slaps Moore and calls him a poser. Yeah this is who they gave Punk for his first feud.

Big Show vs. D-Generation X

The world champion doesn't even get an intro. Extreme Rules here, at least until Heyman comes out and says it's a regular match. DX doesn't have to tag here so they try to double team Show as much as possible. They get him down with punches but a double suplex is just a bad idea. Show takes over with his usual power offense, chopping both guys in the chest HARD.

DX tries to speed things up but the security guards pull the ropes down. HHH goes after them before they can beat up Shawn but Show pulls Shawn back into the ring for the one on one beating. HHH is down in the aisle and Shawn gets put in the bearhug. Show loads up the chokeslam but HHH makes the save. The Game fights him down and manages a kind of spinebuster as Shawn is back up. He dives onto the security guards but Show blocks the Pedigree. Hardcore Holly of all people comes in, and that's a DQ.

Rating: D. This was like a preview of some sort but it was nothing interesting at all. For what was called the biggest match in ECW history,

I was expecting more than a five minute match with Hardcore Holly coming in for the save. Nothing to see here as the match sucked for the most part, followed by a bad ending.

Shawn gets beaten down until HHH gets his sledgehammer for the save. DX stands tall to end the show.

Overall Rating: D-. This was probably the worst show they've had in the few months this has been on. The main event was basically a preview for a PPV match involving Raw guys and the other featured match was slow and boring because the new ECW guys absolutely suck. Punk was only here for about 20 seconds so there was almost nothing to care about here. Awful show.

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NXT – July 18, 2012: Who Would Have Thought NXT Would Be The Best Show Ever Week?

NXT

Date: July 18, 2012

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: William Regal, Byron Saxton

It's week four or five here and things are seeming to change on this show, which is fine but it also would have been fine if nothing had changed at all. I believe this is the beginning of the second set of tapings so things are likely going to change a bit more here. I don't remember any announced matches for this so it'll be a surprise. Let's get to it.

As I said I don't know any of the matches but WWE has promised me a great

main event tonight.

Welcome Home.

The main event is Slater vs. Gabriel. I forgot about that one.

Tamina Snuka vs. Kaitlyn

Kaitlyn is called the girl next door. I've never had a neighbor that looks like her. Tamina tries her power stuff but results in a chop to take Kaitlyn down instead. Kaitlyn leg whips her down and things slow down again. Tamina is screw this wrestling stuff and chops her right back down again. Now it's a flying chop to mix things up. Kaitlyn hooks a kind of abdominal stretch in the ropes to take over.

Bulldog gets two for Kaitlyn and she hooks a bodyscissors on the mat. Tamina gets up and hits a spinning hair grab to slam Kaitlyn into the mat. Wouldn't that hurt Tamina too? Tamina tries the splash but Kaitlyn grabs her leg. A Russian legsweep puts Tamina down and Kaitlyn hooks an arm hold while using her legs to hold down Tamina's head. Tamina is like SAMOA POWER and uses a Samoan Drop to escape. Superfly Splash gets the pin at 5:20.

Rating: D+. I know that the complaint about the Divas that I usually have is that the matches are too short, but then we have matches like these where I don't care at all no matter what they do. I have no idea who I was supposed to cheer for here or why I'm supposed to be interested in them. This was five minutes of moves with some flow to it but nothing of note. Also, that splash is on the verge of losing the name Superfly Splash because it's barely the same move.

Raw moment is Jericho debuting in 99.

Big E. Langston, a very muscular black guy is coming. He has more personality in his calf than Ezekiel Jackson has in his whole body from what I can tell.

Jinder Mahal vs. Percy Watson

Mahal grabs a headlock to start as Regal tells stories of facing Mahal's

uncles over 25 years ago. I'd love to just hear Regal tell old wrestling stories. Watson comes back with a suplex but Mahal fires in the knees out of the cravate to take over again. A knee drop gets two for Mahal. Apparently Watson and Cena are friends. Ok then.

Regal points out how the hand grips that Mahal has in this chinlock make the hold more painful. Now that's some good analysis. Watson comes back with his jumping attacks and the Heisman Splash for two. Percy takes too much time though and walks into a jumping knee and the camel clutch gets the tap at 4:22.

Rating: D+. They've wanted to push Mahal for awhile here so I guess this works as well as anything else. NXT is a good place for him but Mahal needs more promo time. We really don't know anything about Mahal though other than the Khali stuff from a few years ago. Still though, the idea of having a heel like that here is fine for a show like this. The match was dull though.

Richie Steamboat vs. Leo Kruger

Kruger takes him into the corner with chops to start but you can't chop a Steamboat and gets away with it. Richie rips some skin off Kruger's chest and a monkey flip sends Kruger flying. Steamboat chargers into the corner but Kruger uses a move I've never seen before. He grabs a rollup but uses it to ram Steamboat's head into the bottom buckle to take over.

Steamboat grabs a small package for two but Kruger puts him right back down with ease. Steamboat gets in a clothesline and some forearms to send Kruger to the floor. We get a chase but as they head back in, Steamboat hits a cross body but Kruger rolls through and puts his feet on the ropes for the pin at 4:30.

Rating: C+. This is what we've been building to on NXT for awhile. Not this match in particular, but putting these guys that we've built up together and seeing who comes out on top. That's how you start a new promotion or a brand in this case, and it works very well when it's done right. They're doing that here on NXT and it's working well.

Raquel Diaz promo, I believe the same from last week.

Raquel Diaz vs. Paige

Diaz comes off like something resembling Lady Gaga. She's on a wireless mic and says she wants to give this show a makeover and sounds like a chick imitating Cher from Clueless. Her parents are Eddie and Vickie Guerrero so the genes are there. Diaz takes her to the mat and rams Paige's face into the mat. Paige comes back with a kind of superkick but Diaz will have none of that, and hits the Gory Bomb for the pin at 1:49. That's the kind of debuting squash you need.

Alex Riley is looking for catering and runs into Aksana. Nothing of note happens here but Antonio Cesaro pops up. Aksana says Riley was hitting on her, which Cesaro says is so American. Cesaro wants a match next week, which Riley says is very European of him.

Heath Slater vs. Justin Gabriel

JR is on commentary here as usual for the main event. Gabriel armdrags him down and hooks an armbar for early control. Slater fights up and gets taken down by the exact same sequence again. Gabriel tries to go up but Slater shoves him to the floor as we take a break. Back with Slater holding a chinlock for a few moments followed by a neckbreaker for two. A hard Irish whip into the corner gets two. Back to the chinlock as the fans chant that they want Frostees.

Slater sends him to the apron and catches Gabriel with a knee coming back in. A middle rope neckbreaker gets two as Slater is staying on the neck which was hurt when Gabriel fell to the floor earlier. Gabriel fires off some kicks and a sitout powerbomb gets two. Slater comes back with a good looking spinebuster for two. They trade some counters resulting in Slater hitting a reverse suplex for two.

A neckbreaker out of the corner gets two for Slater and he loads up a belly to back superplex. Gabriel knocks him off and tries AJ Styles' backflip into a reverse DDT, but he doesn't hit it quite right as it looks like he lands in an over the shoulder gutbuster. Not that it matters though as Gabriel hits the reverse DDT for the pin at 8:50 shown of 12:20.

Rating: B-. This is exactly what people like Gabriel and Slater need. They're not going to get this kind of TV time on Raw or Smackdown anytime soon, but here on NXT they can go and have a 10-12 minute match and get the experience that they need. This was an entertaining match and for a TV main event on the lowest level show, that's all you can ask for.

Overall Rating: B. NXT continues to be awesome with only the Divas being weak, but that almost goes without saying. There's one thing here that I'd like to point out that I really like about NXT: Dusty Rhodes is the GM and has appeared I think twice in 5 weeks. What is cool about NXT is that we know who is in charge and who is making these matches, but we don't have to see Dusty making these matches. Think about how much time is spent on Raw and Smackdown just seeing people say hey, you two are in a match. NXT is as fast paced as you could ask for and man is it refreshing. Another good show here.

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NXT – July 11, 2012: A Totally Different Kind of Show But Still Great

NXT

Date: July 11, 2012

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Byron Saxton, William Regal

We're back with the fourth week of the show which I believe is the final show from the first batch of tapings. After the six man that ended the last episode, there really isn't anything set for tonight. I've heard talk of creating an NXT Title but that wouldn't be for at least four more weeks because the next set of tapings is already done. Let's get to it.

Welcome Home everyone.

Tyson Kidd vs. Camacho

See, this is what NXT is good for: you can get a guy like Camacho some ring time. He hasn't had much but he can get some here and it's fine for him to get it at this level. Kidd avoids a kick to the ribs and nips up into a dropkick. Camacho takes over with a fist to the head but Kidd flips through a backdrop and grabs a quickly broken leg hold. Backslide gets two on Camacho and it's off to an armbar.

Camacho sends him to the apron but Kidd skins the cat and sends Camacho to the floor. Hunico tries to interfere and gets ejected for his efforts. Kidd dives on both guys and we take a break. Back with Kidd kicking Camacho in the face and trying the Sharpshooter but a rope is grabbed. Camacho goes to the floor but grabs a running boot, sending Kidd face first into the apron.

Back inside and Camacho is in control and working on the back of Kidd. A backbreaker gets two and he stomps on the chest of Kidd a bit. Another backbreaker gets another two and Kidd gets draped over the top rope. Camacho hooks a seated third cousin twice removed of an abdominal stretch which Kidd breaks, only to be headbutted right back down. A belly to back suplex puts Kidd down and a legdrop gets two.

Kidd tries to speed things up but gets caught in a wheelbarrow slam for two. A middle rope legdrop misses for Camacho and Kidd fires off his kicks. Camacho is draped over the bottom rope and Kidd hits a slingshot legdrop to the head to keep Camacho down. Back in and Camacho hits a butterfly suplex off the top for two. Camacho sends him to the apron but charges into a kick to the head. A Blockbuster gets two on Camacho as he gets his foot on the rope. Dang I thought that would have been it. Kidd loads up the Sharpshooter but here's McGillicutty for a distraction. Kidd knocks him to the floor but walks into a DDT from Camacho for the pin at 12:15 shown of 15:45.

Rating: B-. I was really getting into this by the end of it. It's amazing what guys like Camacho are capable of when they have time and a guy like Kidd to work off of. I'm so glad that Tyson is getting a main show push

as it's long overdue for someone as steady in the ring as he is. This McGillicutty feud has gone on for awhile though and it's hard to see why it needs to continue.

Bray Wyatt video, this time about faith. It's a shame that he's out for so many months.

Hugh Jackman was on Raw once.

Justin Gabriel says he's back to make a statement. Heath Slater comes up and says that Gabriel will make a statement of failure. Slater talks about taking out legends and Gabriel says it'll be a young guy beating up Slater tonight.

Aiden English vs. Bray Wyatt

Wyatt talks on the way to the ring, calling himself the angel in the dirt and singing Time is on My Side by the Rolling Stones. Wyatt pounds him down and sends English to the floor and into the barricade. Back in and Wyatt rolls around on the apron before splashing English in the corner. Wyatt dances with English a bit (literally) before hitting a rolling Downward Spiral for the pin at 1:48. Awesome debut here and a good transition from promos to in ring work which was what I was worried about from Wyatt.

Video on Seth Rollins, who will knock you out.

We run down the MITB card.

Richie Steamboat says he's got a great opportunity here. Leo Kruger comes up and they get in a brawl.

Video on Raquel Diaz, featuring Tweets from her.

Usos vs. Prime Time Players

Apparently Slater vs. Gabriel is next week. JR sits in on commentary for this one and there's no AW for the Players. Jimmy and Darren get us going and Jimmy goes nuclear by going for the hair. Young gets takes into the Uso corner for a continued beating before it's off to Titus for more of

the same. Back to Young who charges into a powerslam from Jey for no cover. The Players head to the floor and Jey has a hair pick.

Jimmy hits a dive onto both Players and we take a break. Back with Jimmy uppercutting Titus, only to be knocked down after looking at Young. Young comes in with a kind of spinning toe hold. It's clear JR has no idea which Uso is which, nor does he care. Jimmy kicks Darren to the floor where Darren trips up Jey before there can be a tag. Back in and Young works on the knee some more and tags Titus.

Jimmy gets in a shot to Titus but O'Neal breaks up the tag at the last possible second. Back to the knee but Jimmy breaks it up. For some reason though he goes to the Players' corner instead of his own. A backdrop puts Titus down and there's the tag to Jey. Jey cleans house and hits the running Umaga attack on Young in the corner for two. Titus takes Jimmy's leg out again which allows the Players to hit the Demolition Decapitator on Jey for the pin at 9:51 shown of 13:21.

Rating: C+. Nothing great here but another win for the Players before they finally get their title match is just fine. The Usos are still stuck in limbo but they're good at a job like this. JR not knowing which was which says a small something, as there's nothing to tell the two guys apart unless you're looking at their chest. That being said, they're a tag team and there's nothing wrong with them being so similar, as it makes them look more like a unit.

Overall Rating: B-. This was a totally different kind of show this week but it still worked. This came off a lot more like a show that the old NXT did and that's ok for the most part. Having a fresh batch of faces makes that work well, and given the match quality was good all around, what more can you ask for? With talk of the tournament coming for a title, there's a lot of upside on NXT in the future.

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NXT – June 27, 2012: The Hits Keep On Coming

NXT

Date: June 27, 2012

Location: Full Sail University, Winter Park, Florida

Commentators: Byron Saxton Jim Ross

We're back again after last week's great debut episode. Tonight we're going to get a lot of new people debuting which is a cool idea. The perk of NXT being merged with FCW is that there are a ton of guys that the masses haven't seen before and they're letting them trickle in, which is a good way to keep people watching. Let's get to it.

Seth Rollins vs. Jiro

Rollins is Tyler Black from ROH. Jiro is a Japanese guy who looks to be a jobber. Regal isn't on commentary this week which makes this show go down a bit already. They chop it out and Rollins sends him into the corner. Rollins hits a kind of running curb stomp called The Blackout for the pin at 1:32.

Rollins says he's here to rip the roots out of the ground and the clouds out of the sky and change the world. Jinder Mahal comes out and glares at him on his way to the ring for the next match.

Jinder Mahal vs. Jason Jordan

Jordan is regarded as a top prospect according to JR. The bell rings twice for no apparent reason. Mahal pounds him down in the corner and hits a neckbreaker for two. Off to a chinlock followed by a butterfly suplex for two. Jordan tries a comeback but is quickly kneed down. Camel Clutch ends this at 2:51.

Mahal says he's going to remake NXT in his vision. My goodness why does WWE think we care about this guy?

Leo Kruger is coming. He comes off like a smarmy heel from Africa. He

says he's the alpha male lion. So he's a white Monty Brown? Apparently he debuts tonight.

The first Raw is a Raw moment.

Leo Kruger vs. Aiden English

Kruger pounds him down but English hits a quick dropkick. That's the extent of his offense though as Kruger chokes away in the corner and hits a snap suplex. Kruger looks like a psycho Al Snow with curlier hair. Rear naked choke/sleeper gets the pin at 1:25.

Richie Steamboat says he's not trying to fill his father's shoes, but rather his own. He looks JUST like his daddy too.

Usos vs. The Ascension

Regal and Chris Russo are on commentary now along with JR. You know the Siva Tao is popular here with a college crowd. The Usos take over to start and double team Cameron for two. Cameron goes insane and pounds both Usos down until he brings in O'Brien for the same kind of stuff. They tag in and out a lot and pound away on Jey with a bunch of pounds and stomps. Jey hits a headbutt to bring in Jimmy who runs over Cameron a bit. Samoan Drop puts him down as does the Umaga Attack in the corner. Jey gets sent to the floor and Jimmy walks into the Downcast for the pin at 3:40.

Rating: C+. The match was nothing of note but I'm more impressed by the entrances. This is something you don't get in the homogenized world of WWE anymore. The Usos had their full screaming entrance while the Ascension looks like something out of a thriller movie. That's not something you get with the big arenas and Cole riffing on half the people that come out and ignoring the other half. The match was basically a squash.

Richie Steamboat vs. Rick Victor

Man they don't waste any time around here do they? Papa Steamboat is in the front row. Richie armdrags Victor down a few times and hooks an armbar. Steamboat chops in the corner and the fans chant W00, so

apparently we have an educated crowd here. A clothesline gets two for Richie and it's back to the armbar. Richie hits a crossbody and some clotheslines followed by elbows in the corner. A running spinning mat slam (Heath Slater used to use it) called the Slingblade gets the pin at 4:25.

Rating: D+. I really wasn't huge on Richie here. He didn't come off as anything special and his offense was just a step above basic. I'm also not a fan of that spinning finisher and I'd have rather seen him use a superkick like he used in FCW. Either way, this was a pretty disappointing debut, but that's just his first match and there's no way you can predict a career off of one match.

Antonio Cesaro is a dangerous man.

Raw ReBound is about the end of the show.

Dante Dash vs. Antonio Cesaro

Dash is a big muscular black guy. Cesaro takes him to the mat almost immediately and rubs his face in the mat. A gutwrench suplex puts Dash down and it's off to a chinlock. A spinebuster puts Dash down again and the Neutralizer gets the pin at 1:48.

Bray Wyatt video with him talking about real love.

Derrick Bateman vs. Johnny Curtis

Curtis slaps him in the face and runs away almost immediately. Bateman chases him back inside and dropkicks him down. Curtis takes over and goes after the leg and we're told Kassius Onoo debuts next week. Curtis hooks an inverted Indian Deathlock but Bateman chops his way out of it. There's a spinning toehold by Johnny but Derrick escapes pretty quickly. He comes back with a falling forward DDT and the falling bulldog which he calls the DVD for the pin at 3:45.

Rating: D+. The match was pretty dull and it wasn't helped by the fact that we saw them fight for the better part of a year. This was nothing of note and it being so short made it even less interesting. At the end of the day these two aren't that interesting as Bateman is kind of an

everyman who has some quirks to him while Curtis is “weird”. Nothing to see here.

Overall Rating: B-. This wasn't quite as good as last week's show but it was still a very solid show. The running idea of debuts is fine as you have to introduce the characters to the audience as a lot of them are new guys. They're putting together some very good stuff here as they have a lot of fresh faces and a GREAT presentation. Also there are no frills to this show and they flew through six matches and some video packages in under 45 minutes. That's not bad.

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NXT – June 6, 2012: End My Pain

NXT

Date: June 6, 2012

Location: Colonial Center, Columbia, South Carolina

Commentators: Matt Striker, Josh Matthews

Back to the land of no storylines allowed. I would usually say that this should be interesting, but for the most part I'm pretty sure it won't be. At the end of the day, we have about 45 minutes of wrestling here which isn't bad between guys that aren't good enough to get into the top two shows. Let's get to it.

Dang it no Regal this week.

Tyler Reks vs. Jey Uso

Feeling out process to start with Reks running over Uso a few times. Jey comes back with a running chinlock (looked pretty cool actually) to take over. Uso charges into a boot in the corner and a belly to back suplex for two. Reks pounds him down with power strikes but misses a charge, sending his shoulder into the post.

Jey goes after the arm and hits a spinning forearm. He starts doing the chants to the crowd the pops are great. Samoan drop gets two. Reks takes him down again and goes up, but Jey slams him down for two. Now Jey goes up but gets crotched for his efforts. Reks puts him up in a Razor's Edge position then spins Jey down into a kind of a DDT move for the pin at 5:00.

Rating: D+. Not bad here but other than the crowd popping for the USO shout, things were pretty dead here. It's not a bad match but it's likely to lead to Usos vs. Reks/Hawkins #19 or so, which isn't a match I can really get behind anymore. I still don't get the appeal of Reks at all. It's just not clicking for him.

Percy Watson vs. JTG

JTG speeds things up to start which actually works. This is supposed to be the new and improved version of him and I guess that's true as the tights are less annoying than what he used to wear. Watson smiles a lot in the ring. JTG controls for the opening until Watson avoids a charge. Watson's headscissors out of the corner is countered and he falls out to the floor.

Back in and JTG pounds away before hooking a seated abdominal stretch. A kind of slam gets two. JTG is getting frustrated. If I had hair like that I likely would be too. He goes to the middle rope but dives into a facebuster to put both guys down. Watson speeds things up and hits his usual jumping attacks. The crowd doesn't seem to care as much this time. Heisman gets two. We get a freaking JTG chant as Persecution gets the pin at 6:01.

Rating: D. This crowd has lost all of its chanting privileges. I mean.....THEY WERE CHANTING FOR FREAKING JTG! The match itself was nothing of note at all as JTG being on offense is never a good idea. Watson again has the same problems: he's the same guy over and over again, doing the same stuff every week.

Tamina Snuka vs. Natalya

Natalya now wears a kind of cape. She quickly powers Tamina down to the mat and they trade headlocks. Back up and Natalya runs her over as Striker calls her Nattie. Whatever her name is she gets dropkicked down for two. The crowd is almost silent for this. Tamina misses a charge and Natalya sits on her with arms folded for two.

Suplex gets two as well. Natalya tries another one but gets small packaged for two. Off to an abdominal stretch but Natalya picks up Tamina's leg on top of the regular hold. Tamina escapes and comes back with chops but Natalya rolls away before Tamina can try for the splash. Sharpshooter is broken up as Tamina kicks her to the floor. Natalya charges back in to a Samoan Drop and the Superfly Splash gets the pin at 6:21.

Rating: D. This was nothing. Both girls have jobs because of their dads, but that doesn't always mean success. Well to be fair Natalya is good but there's nothing going on for her due to it not being her time right now. The match was your usual boring affair from the Divas, but a longer version of it.

Raw ReBound is about Cole's destruction.

Tyson Kidd/Justin Gabriel vs. Heath Slater/Johnny Curtis

Kidd and Slater get us going. Slater grabs a headlock but Kidd makes a blind tag. Kidd and Gabriel kind of mess up a double hip toss and it's

off to Curtis instead. Justin sweeps the legs out and brings in Kidd for a slingshot reverse victory roll for two. Tyson tries the Dungeon Lock but has to settle for a wristlock instead. Slater comes in but Kidd dropkicks them both down at once.

Sharpshooter to Slater doesn't work so it's back to Gabriel. A BIG suicide dive takes Slater out and Kidd/Gabriel pose in the ring as we take a break. Back with Kidd in control of Slater. He goes up but gets distracted by Curtis, allowing Heath to powerslam him off the top for two and control. Off to the chinlock for a bit and then into the heel corner.

Kidd fights both guys off at once but walks into a spinebuster before he can make the tag off to Gabriel. Curtis comes in and hits a suplex for two. After a quick wear down hold, Curtis and Slater try a double team but Kidd counters and drops them both. Slater blocks the tag again with a running neckbreaker for two. His middle rope knee drop misses though and it's hot tag to Gabriel. Justin speeds things up as you would expect and hits a jumping tornado DDT for two on Curtis. A combination Hart Attack/Blockbuster gets the pin on Curtis at 10:05.

Rating: C+. This was by far the best match of the night but it's a far cry from some of the main events we've been having lately. Still though it wasn't that bad and the double team finisher wasn't bad at all. The problem is there was no doubt as to who would win given the levels of talent on either side.

Overall Rating: D. This was really dull. The same problems I've been talking about for weeks are still here and they're not going to change anytime soon. I can't believe I'm saying this, but Maxine being on this show is such an improvement that it's almost uncanny. The show wasn't bad or anything, but it was really uninteresting.

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Backlash 2009: The First Time Cena Got Blown Up

Backlash 2009

Date: April 26, 2009

Location: Dunkin' Donuts Center, Providence, Rhode Island

Attendance: 8,357

Commentators: Jim Ross, Michael Cole, Jerry Lawler

Back with the final chronological Backlash before we jump back to 2006 to close out WWE PPVs. The main events tonight are Edge vs. Cena in a last man standing match and Legacy vs. HHH/Shane/Batista for the other world title which is one of those "whoever gets the pin gets the title" deals. I remember really liking this show so hopefully it's still good. Let's get to it.

The opening video is about Wrestlemania and how this is just a replay of the main matches from there. It worked last year so hopefully it does here too. The Hardys fight again tonight too.

ECW Title: Jack Swagger vs. Christian

Christian recently returned and is getting his title match here after winning an overly complicated competition. Swagger takes him down but Christian comes back with right hands and a jumping back elbow for two. Swagger is like screw that and picks Christian up and launches him to the floor. Back inside and Swagger wraps him up on the mat. That gets shifted to a bearhug and the Canadian is in trouble.

Christian breaks it up with some forearms but Swagger gets behind him into a gutbuster for two. Back to that body vice on the mat which plays into Swagger being an All-American wrestler. The Canadian escapes and hits the pendulum kick in the corner but Swagger drills him again. Vader Bomb hits knees but Christian's tornado DDT is countered as well. Sunset

flip gets a VERY close two for the challenger.

Gutwrench powerbomb is countered but Christian's ribs are getting really banged up now. Swagger puts him on the middle rope and this time the tornado DDT connects, getting two. Jack hits a belly to belly to put Christian down again and they head to the floor. Swagger BLASTS him with a right hand and tries a German off the apron but Christian holds the rope.

Back inside Christian goes up top but gets backdropped down. A top rope Vader Bomb gets two but an Oklahoma Stampede is countered into a rollup for two. The second attempt at the Stampede gets two so they both take off buckle pads. Swagger goes into one first and the Unprettier gets the pin and the title.

Rating: B-. This was the right kind of match for an opener with Christian having to fight from behind until he caught Swagger using his own tricks. Christian would dominate ECW for the next ten months or so until it was replaced by NXT while Swagger would move over to the main shows and become world champion in a questionable move.

Christian celebrates in the back but stops to go talk to Edge. Edge says this must make Christian think he's better than he is now because Edge doesn't have a title. Christian wants to know what changed Edge and Edge says it was Cena. That's why he's not fun anymore.

Chris Jericho vs. Ricky Steamboat

This should be a treat. The story here is that Jericho went on an anti-legend kick in the past few months until he beat three of them (Piper, Snuka and Steamboat) at Mania. The thing is Steamboat, who might have wrestled one match in 15 years, stole the show and looked like he could still go out there and wrestle for 45 minutes and beat half the guys on the roster. He was 56-57 at this point, so he wanted one last match, one on one with Jericho.

Steamboat takes him down to the mat and Jericho has to get to the rope to escape. Ricky goes to the floor and makes Jericho miss him a few times before hitting a dive over the top and out onto the Canadian. Back in and

there's the armdrag into the armbar. The fans tell Steamboat that he still has it. Jericho gets up but walks right back into the armdrag/bar again. They slug it out and Steamboat is knocked over the top but he skins the cat, because he's that awesome.

Jericho clotheslines him to the floor and springboard dropkicks him right back down. Off to a chinlock but Steamboat fights out and hits another armdrag. Back to the chinlock as Jericho talks trash. That's one of the things I've always liked about him: he keeps things from getting completely dull during a usually dull part of the match. Back up and Steamboat shoves off the bulldog and Jericho gets caught on the ropes.

Steamboat goes all the way to the back for a belly to back suplex but the delayed cover only gets two. Some chops get another two count as does a powerslam. Jericho comes back with a running enziguri for two and the bulldog puts Steamboat down. The Lionsault is broken up but Jericho reverses the reversal into the Walls. Steamboat slips out from under them but can't remember how to put on the figure four. That's where the match gets kind of sad.

Jericho escapes and charges into the post, allowing the top rope crossbody to get two. Ricky goes up again but dives into the Codebreaker...for two. We get the WM 3 ending with the small package out of the slam for two, but Jericho slaps on the Walls and cranks hard for the tap. That's one of the only times (if not the only time) I can remember Steamboat submitting.

Rating: C+. This is a really hard one to grade. Steamboat tried as hard as he could, but at the end of the day he's nearing 60 and had wrestled two matches in almost fifteen years. Now don't get me wrong: Steamboat DID NOT look awful out there, but he looked old. It's sad to see him when you know what he used to be capable of, but all things considered, this was a solid performance. It's VERY good that it was the last time too, because it would have gotten bad if he had kept going. The match was fun but it didn't blow me away like the Mania performance did.

Steamboat gets a standing ovation post match, which he deserves.

Santino runs into Beth in the back and talks to "Santina" on the phone,

who says she's coming. Oh geez I forgot about this. Santino won't admit he's Santina and says Beth is the delusional one. Beth breaks up with him.

Kane vs. CM Punk

Punk won MITB and Kane isn't happy about it. Punk holds him off with some kicks but has to stick and move against the monster. Kane charges into a boot and gets caught in an arm hold over the ropes. Punk dropkicks him to the floor but his dive is caught in a chokeslam position. He fights up to the apron and hits a clothesline down onto Kane to take over again. Kane sends Punk rib first into the post and baseball slides into them, giving him his first advantage.

Off to a bodyscissors as it occurs to me how boring matches can become when there's no story to them. The reviews of them become boring too because there's nothing to say here other than the play by play. I don't like doing them like that but there's nothing else to do as there's no story to this at all. Punk elbows out of it but charges into a clothesline. Punk hits a backbreaker to stay on the back which is the same kind of boring match stuff that I was talking about. The wrestling is fine but it's the same stuff we've seen a million times and there's no reason to care about it because of a lack of a story.

Chokeslam is countered into a DDT on the arm and Punk follows up with kicks to the leg. Well of course he does. Punk hooks a kind of crucifix hold on the arm in the corner but the knee in the corner is countered by a kick to the face. Kane goes up for the clothesline but Punk hits a running enziguri. The GTS is countered but there's the bulldog and knee. Scratch that, reverse it. You get the idea I'm sure. Punk tries the springboard clothesline but jumps into an uppercut. Kane gets caught in a Fujiwara Armbar but he comes back with a side slam. Punk fires off the strikes but walks into a two arm chokeslam for the pin.

Rating: C-. Nothing to see here as they were totally going through the motions. The match wasn't bad or anything but there was nothing interesting to it at all. This was there to fill in about fifteen minutes total of PPV time which was fine, but this was nothing you couldn't see

weekly on Smackdown. I was expecting a bit more too.

We recap the battle of the Hardys. Matt went crazy on Jeff after losing the ECW Title and was revealed to be the guy that was causing all kinds of problems for Jeff and ultimately the world title. They had a match at Mania where Matt went insane and got the pin. Then Matt won a stretcher match on Smackdown so tonight it's an I Quit match. The problem at the end of the day was that people didn't really want to see these two guys fight. This gets the music video treatment.

Matt Hardy vs. Jeff Hardy

I Quit rules remember. Jeff goes off on him in the corner and hits a seated dropkick to send Matt to the floor. Jeff hits a dive and the referee asks if they want to quit. Yeah they'll quit a minute into the match, sure. With a running start, Jeff hits Poetry in Motion off the steps. Back in and Jeff hits the slingshot dropkick in the corner. A middle rope legdrop hits Matt and it's off to a chinlock. The lack of covers is always a bit hard to get used to in these matches.

Matt rams him into the buckle to break the hold but can't do much to follow up. Jeff goes up but gets shoved to the floor in a great crash. Matt wraps Jeff's leg around the post and we get the first ask with the mic. Jeff says no both times so Matt bends the knee around the post. Matt puts on a figure four and Jeff still won't quit. Jerry thinks Matt is going after the knee. You can't buy this kind of analysis people!

Jeff escapes but gets put right back in it again. That doesn't work so Matt hooks a seated half crab but Jeff still won't quit. Matt puts him in the Tree of Woe and bends Jeff's head back but Jeff won't quit. Instead of holding him there longer, Matt rants and probably posts a YouTube video about it. He puts Jeff on top but his belly to back superplex is countered into a crossbody.

Jeff hooks a standing Texas Cloverleaf and Matt taps but won't say he quits. They botch a Twist of Fate so the second attempt works a bit better. Matt still won't quit so Jeff gets a table. Matt rolls to the floor but Jeff follows with the Twist to take him down again. Back in the ring now and Jeff puts him on the table.

Before he does anything though, Jeff grabs some tape from under the ring and ties Matt's hands and feet together. Now he gets a rope and ties Matt to the table. Matt still won't quit so Jeff gets a ladder. Jeff climbs said ladder but Matt begs for mercy. He says Mom and Dad wouldn't like it and that he loves Jeff. Matt quits to prevent Jeff from jumping.

Rating: C. This was a fun match but the ending hurt it badly. With all the stuff that Matt has been through over the years, he quits to avoid a legdrop through the table? The match was just ok up to that point but at the end of the day like I said earlier, I don't think people were really that interested in seeing these guys fight. This ended the feud, which is probably best for everyone involved.

Jeff jumps on him anyway.

Orton talks about Batista and how he (Orton) wants the title. He tries to manipulate Dave into believing that HHH is using him.

Here's Great Khali because he wants to kiss Santina. This isn't going to end well at all. Ok so there was a battle royal at Mania for the title of Miss Wrestlemania. Santino wore a dress and said he was his own twin sister and won the battle royal. Beth said that it was Santino in drag but he wouldn't admit it. Khali fell for Santina and wants to kiss her so Santino is in a tight spot. This is one of the dumbest stories I can remember in a very long time, so of course it went on for months.

After Singh says Khali wants Santina, here "she" comes to Billy and Chuck's old music. Santina says she can't kiss Khali because she's not who she says she is. She isn't single because she's in love with another man. That man is....JR. Oh give me a break. From what I can tell, this was another unplanned shot at JR. JR gets annoyed when Santina says he calls her his little slobberknocker. Khali apologizes but wants to see proof of their love in the form of a kiss.

Santina says she's about to faint and here's Beth to complain about how stupid this is. She challenges Santina for the crown RIGHT NOW. Khali complains about what's going on here so Beth explains the whole cross dressing thing to him. She says all of the women in Punjab must be ugly. Either that or Khali is a big idiot. He chops her and the bell rings,

giving Santina a win in three seconds. This is one of the dumbest angles I have ever seen and I had almost completely forgotten it. Khali rips Santina's top off for no apparent reason.

We recap Legacy vs. Batista/HHH/Shane. Orton has basically declared war on the McMahons, having punted Vince and attacked/kissed Stephanie. Shane is the only one left and Batista has been brought in to help with HHH to counteract Legacy. Orton injured Batista and this is his return feud.

Raw World Title: Randy Orton/Legacy vs. Batista/HHH/Shane McMahon

Only Orton can win the title and it can be by pin, submission, countout or DQ. HHH is champion coming in. Legacy is Ted DiBiase and Cody Rhodes in case you're a young'un. HHH goes right after Orton and they head to the floor. The other four are kind of staring at each other. This is all before the bell. Orton has run off somewhere as HHH comes back to clear the ring. The bell finally rings and there's no Orton.

Batista starts with Rhodes and destroys him in the corner with the shoulder blocks. He shouts that DiBiase is next and it's off to Shane who drops a middle rope elbow. Shane works on the arm and it's off to the champ. HHH fires off right hands and a crotch chop in whatever order you would like to think it was in. DiBiase comes in and is clotheslined down. Shane comes in to play Bret in a Hart Attack for two.

Big Dave comes in again as does Cody. Legacy has had no offense so far at all. There's a delayed vertical suplex to Rhodes but Cody rakes the eyes and brings in Ted. Legacy gets in some basic offense in the corner as they double team a bit. Batista shrugs that off and hits the spinebuster on DiBiase but Ted bails to the floor before the Bomb can hit. We're over five minutes into this and Orton hasn't been seen for any of the actual match.

DiBiase and Batista go up the aisle a bit but it's more Ted running than anything else. They head back to the ring and here's Orton to jump Big Dave, sending him into the post. He gets the tag (which wasn't seen) and goes off on Batista. The fans are into the match now, probably because they knew nothing was going to happen without Randy there. Batista gets beaten down in the corner as the tag is made to Cody.

Legacy and Orton work over Batista on the floor and Orton hits the Elevated DDT for two. Back to DiBiase who hooks a Million Dollar Chinlock. Big Dave comes back with a belly to back suplex but he still can't make the tag. This is looking like it's going to be a long match given how early Batista is getting beaten down. Randy comes back in and things slow down again. Even JR is thinking he's going too slowly.

Off to another chinlock which is pretty quickly broken. Batista comes out of nowhere with a freaking flying headbutt of all things. Hot tag brings in Shane who cleans house. Neckbreaker gets two on Rhodes. They head to the floor and Shane pulls the top off of the table but Cody heads back in. The top rope elbow gets two as DiBiase makes the save. Orton sends Shane into the steps and we go into heel control segment #2.

Randy is legal now but he brings Ted back in for fear of being interesting. Shane gets worked over on the floor a bit more and it's back to Cody again. Legacy keeps tagging in quickly as it's back to Orton who pulls Shane back into the wrong corner. He dropkicks Shane down and DiBiase comes in for some elbow drops. It's amazing that this is the peak of DiBiase's career to this point, especially when it was him who everyone thought he was the star of Legacy.

Cody hooks a front facelock which lasts about a full minute before Shane suplexes him out of it. Back to DiBiase who keeps Shane in the ring even longer. There's the Million Dollar Dream but Shane escapes. There's the double tag to Orton and HHH with the Game pounding away in the corner. Legacy gets thrown to the floor and there's a spinebuster to Orton for two.

Everything breaks down and Cody blasts Shane with a chair. Batista gets hit in the throat with it too as the Pedigree and RK0 are both countered. HHH has to take the chair away from Batista to avoid the DQ, but he walks into the RK0 for two. The bell rings but it has to be waived off. The Punt gives Orton the title.

Rating: B-. This was a bit of a mess but after the mess that was the main event of Mania, it was definitely the right idea to bring in four other people. Orton would feud with Batista for awhile until Big Dave got hurt

(again) before feuding with Cena to end the year. HHH would feud with Orton and Legacy for awhile before hooking up with Shawn again for another DX reunion.

HHH gets taken out on a stretcher.

We recap Edge vs. Cena, which is a rematch from the triple threat three weeks ago minus Big Show. That's the match with the double AA to both guys in the mind blowing spot of the match. Cena took the title from Edge and tonight is Edge's rematch in a last man standing match. The theme of the video is that Edge has had Cena's number over the years and it's really well made.

Smackdown World Title: Edge vs. John Cena

The brand of the titles is pretty much a guess at this point as they were moving around a lot at this time. Cena is defending and this is last man standing in case you forgot what you read about 20 seconds ago. Cena took a Conchairto on Raw so he's a bit messed up in the cranium. This is billed as the last match between the two. I'm sure. Edge avoids the bulldog to start and it's a standoff.

The challenger bails to the floor but misses the spear back in. Edge takes over by pounding on him in the corner before walking into a release fisherman's suplex. An Edge-0-Matic puts Cena down as we focus on the back of Cena's head. Edge wins a slugout and puts Cena down with another shot to the head. A flapjack puts Cena down again and we get a logical sleeper. Edge puts him down and finally lets go but Cena is up at seven.

Cena comes back with the shoulder blocks but Edge breaks up the Shuffle. There's a Sharpshooter of all things but Cena gets up again. Edge knocks him off the apron and into the table as we get to the more wild part of the match. That shot only gets another seven so Edge loads up the steps. The spear that Edge tries hits the steps though and Cena gets a breather. At six though Edge comes back and sends him into the steps again, putting the champ down.

Now Edge goes into the steps again as this is feeling like it's on a loop. After another eight count Cena picks up the steps and puts them in

the ring albeit with some difficulty. Edge gets in another shot to the head and Cena is down again. The Canadian crushes Cena in the corner with the steps and dropkicks them into his body but both guys are down as a result. Back up and Cena launches Edge to the floor. We're about twelve minutes into this and it hasn't been all that great so far.

Things pick up a bit with Cena picking up the steps and throwing them over the top rope and right onto Edge's head. Edge is up at eight and Cena is getting fired up. Back in the ring and they slug it out some more with a double punch putting both guys down. Back up and three AA's, an Edgecution and an Edge-0-Matic are all broken up before Edge hits a belly to back suplex to take over.

He brags too much though and Edge gets caught in the STF. He taps but it doesn't matter. As with any submission hold, Cena lets go early (I wonder if he did that with Mickie...allegedly) and Edge is up at 8. The AA is broken up again and Edge spears him down. Edge goes up top and Cena FINALLY hits the AA off the ropes but it doesn't finish things either. Cena goes up but dives into another spear. Now this is getting better.

The spear only gets nine and Edge is stunned. Both guys are barely able to stand at this point. Scratch that as Cena collapses and falls to the floor. Edge won't let the referee count and tries the Edgecution on the table, but Cena counters and hits an AA into the crowd. That wouldn't really do a ton of damage in theory but the landing would, as the fans mostly caught Edge. It gets another nine and Edge is up, although he's leaning on the barricade. Cena is stunned.

Edge is like screw this and runs off into the crowd with Cena chasing him up the stairs. They head into the concourse and Cena catches up with him, only to head right back into the arena. They go back down some different stairs and Cena bulldogs him onto the equipment area. Edge pops up and hits Cena with something metal as they go to the stage.

An Edgecution (the inverted DDT in case you don't remember what that move is) on the steel puts Cena down for nine. Edge goes into the back and comes back with a chair. Gee that's kind of lame now. He gives Cena a Conchairto on the stage....for eight. Edge's spear is caught in the AA and

here's Big Show to chokeslam Cena through an exploding spotlight, giving Edge the title.

Rating: A-. This is one of those matches that really is better when you watched it live. I remember wondering what they could POSSIBLY do to end this and then Big Show came out to blow stuff up. They had to do something like that given all of the stuff they had done so far and the explosion filled that role pretty well. The first ten minutes are just ok but after that it kicks into gear in a hurry. Great match here.

Cena is taken out on a stretcher as Edge watches from the stage. People were BEGGING for Punk to cash in here but that wouldn't be for a few more months.

Overall Rating: B. Another good show here with a solid main event. These Wrestlemania repeat shows are usually good despite having the same matches for a lot of the time. This one wasn't quite as good as the previous year's show but it was still a very solid entry with mostly satisfying matches, other than a few questionable ones here and there. Oh and the Santino stuff was freaking stupid. Other than that, good stuff though.

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Backlash 2008: For A Wrestlemania Replay, This Is Pretty Awesome

Backlash 2008

Date: April 27, 2008

Location: 1st Mariner Arena, Baltimore, Maryland

Attendance: 11,277

Commentators: Mike Adamle, Tazz, Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler, Michael Cole, Mick Foley

We begin the final set of PPV reviews here with the next to last Backlash. The main events are mostly Mania rematches, as JBL has been added to the Raw triple threat from Mania 24 and Edge faces Undertaker again. Other than that we have Shawn vs. Batista which is fallout from Shawn vs. Flair and sets up the Shawn vs. Jericho feud. Dang Shawn had a lot going on here. Let's get to it.

The opening video says Mania was the beginning and tonight is the revenge. Or the backlash you might say.

The announcers welcome us to the show and Mick Foley is revealed as the new commentator.

US Title: Matt Hardy vs. MVP

This is the culmination of a feud that went on for almost eight months as Matt and MVP both got hurt so they had to keep waiting. We get a clip from five months ago where MVP attacked Matt's leg. Matt returned last month to cost MVP the MITB match and tonight it's FINALLY the blowoff. We get some big match intros and we're ready to go. MVP goes for the knee of Hardy and Matt looks a bit ginger on it.

Hardy comes back so MVP bails to the floor. Back in and Matt takes him to the canvas with a headlock. A middle rope elbow to the back of the head gets two but MVP gets in a shot to the back to slow Hardy down. They go to the corner with MVP's belly to back superplex being broken up. Matt's moonsault hits knees though and the champion takes over. He works on the back/midsection which was injured as well apparently.

Off to an abdominal stretch but Matt escapes with a hip toss. He lands on MVP, meaning MVP probably has broken ribs. The champ comes back with a belly to belly for two. A clothesline finally gets Matt a breather and allows him to hit a bulldog out of the corner for two. The Playmaker is countered into the Side Effect for two. The crowd is really getting into this.

Hardy goes up but gets crotched due to a dropkick to the ropes. They go up top and Matt hits a top rope Side Effect for no cover as both guys are down. It eventually gets two as does a backslide from the champ. Matt grabs a fast rollup for two but the Twist of Fate is countered. MVP hits the Drive By (running boot to the face) and Hardy is knocked to the floor. He barely gets back in at 8 and MVP is stunned. Another boot to the face puts Matt down but a running one in the corner hits buckle, allowing Matt to hit the Twist for the pin and the title.

Rating: B-. The idea here was to give the fans something to get all fired up over and that was certainly accomplished. This feud went on forever but the ending was the perfect kind, as the fans were all behind Matt and wanted to see him end the nearly year long reign that MVP was on. Good opener here and I was getting into it by the end.

Matt talks about how great this is and how hard he's worked. It's been worth all the injuries too. And to MVP, I am better than you.

ECW Title: Kane vs. Chavo Guerrero

Kane is defending after having won the title in 8 seconds at Mania. Chavo has his bodyguard Bam Neely. Edge attacked Kane's knee on ECW on Tuesday so the champ is coming in injured. Chavo goes for the knee so Kane hits him in the face. The low dropkick hits Chavo's face but it hurts the knee even more. Kane chokes Chavo over his back and hits a gorilla press to follow up. Guerrero finally takes the knee out and sends him face first into the buckle.

They head outside but Kane catches Chavo in the air and rams his back into the barricade. They head back in but Kane has his knee kicked out to give the challenger control. Neely gets in some shots and we go back in. Adamle is totally lost in calling this, getting basic things wrong and even having Tazz make fun of him. Chavo goes up but winds up on Kane's shoulders for an electric chair drop.

Both guys are down now but Chavo kicks the knee out again. Kane is all cool with that and grabs him by the throat. That gets released so it's a big boot to the face instead. Side slam gets two and Adamle actually called it the right name. He's getting a little better at least. Kane

goes up and hits the top rope clothesline for two. Chavo goes up as well and a missile dropkick gets two. He takes out the knee again but goes up, only to get caught in a chokeslam position. Chavo escapes but the Frog Splash is caught in the chokeslam for the pin and Kane retains.

Rating: C-. Not much here but it wasn't that bad I guess. Kane needed to get a clean win here instead of making it look like a fluke/meaningless win as it was at Mania, but at the end of the day there's almost no way you can spin Chavo as a credible threat to someone like Kane. Not a great match but it could have been a lot worse.

Orton says he's been through a lot lately but he'll come out of this as world champion still.

Great Khali vs. Big Show

No real story here. They're just fighting for the sake of fighting because they're both massive. They stare each other down and slug it out a bit with Big Show moving much faster than Khali. Show headbutts him but it doesn't have much effect. They trade chops and a clothesline puts Show down. Show fights back and tries a slam, only to get clotheslined to the floor.

After nothing of note happens out there they head back in with Khali chopping him down again. A big boot puts Show down and Khali hooks on, I kid you not, a Crippler Crossface. Show fights up but can't slam Khali. Off to a nerve hold which causes a lot of screaming from Big Show. That gets broken pretty quickly but Show gets chopped down for another two count. Khali cranks on the arms as the fans think this is boring. Big Show fights up and slams Khali for two. The Punjabi Plunge is countered into the chokeslam for the pin.

Rating: D-. Next. Seriously, next. This match came, it went, there's nothing to think about here at all. Khali was big and slow and once he lost the world title, it was all downhill from there. Show may be big and slow, but at least he has some skill and a tiny bit of speed to throw in there to make his matches seem like they're actually happening instead of a series of still photographs. Horribly dull match but given who was in there, what else were you expecting?

Cena gives country music advice to Jimmy Wang Yang when Orton comes up. Orton says Cena will lose again tonight but Cena says tonight Orton will go home broken. Cena's hair looks a lot darker here than usual.

We recap Shawn vs. Batista. The idea here is that Shawn retired Flair at Wrestlemania and Batista isn't happy about that. During Flair's retirement ceremony, the camera panned over to Batista for a quick shot, which showed him being very unhappy when Shawn came out. Jericho is involved in this too, as he thinks Shawn wanted to retire Flair which Shawn doesn't like the idea of. He thinks Batista wanted to retire Flair too, which got him beaten up by both guys. Jericho is the guest referee tonight.

Shawn Michaels vs. Batista

Feeling out process to start as Batista tries to figure out how to counter the strength advantage. He tries chops which get him nowhere other than into a Batista Bomb attempt. Back in now as Shawn fires away some kicks to the legs which don't have much effect. Big Dave is like screw this and runs Shawn over to gain control. Shawn gets him down by taking out the leg again and hooks a shortarm scissors.

They actually hit the mat for a bit with Batista trying to roll out, only to get caught by some knees to the arm. Since it's a Shawn Michaels shortarm scissors though, you know the counter that's coming. It takes awhile but there it is, as Batista lifts him off the mat and throws Shawn over the top and out to the floor. Dave goes with him though and both guys are down on the outside.

Shawn rams the arm into the post as Batista is in trouble. Shawn is kind of wrestling heel here which is a natural fit for him if he needs it to be. Back in and he cranks on the arm, tying it up in the ropes for more leverage. Batista tries to take it to the corner but Shawn locks on a standing cross armbreaker which he bends over the ropes as well. That looked sick. Shawn goes up and drops a double ax to the shoulder as he's totally focused on one body part.

Batista finally comes back with a Samoan Drop to put both guys down and buy himself a breather. Shawn gets sent into the corner and flips upside

down, followed by a big clothesline from Batista's good arm. The Batista Bomb is countered into a Crossface which is pretty soon after Benoit. The Animal almost gets to a rope but Shawn floats over into a cover followed by another Crossface back in the middle of the ring. That was slick.

Batista gets the rope and the fans are booing loudly. Jericho has to physically break the hold and Shawn isn't pleased. Batista gets a side slam with the bad arm for two and we get a quick breather. Shawn hits the forearm and nips up but he walks into the spear for two. Shawn goes up and after shoving Batista down he hits the big elbow for no cover. He loads up Sweet Chin Music but Batista counters that into a spinebuster. The Bomb is escaped but Shawn's knee gives out. Jericho checks on Shawn and it's ok to continue. Batista walks over and gets his head kicked off, giving Shawn the pin.

Rating: B. Shawn was on fire in 2008 and this was no exception. This was getting very good when it ended but the ending was fine. It's actually the beginning of a much bigger storyline as Jericho didn't believe the knee was really hurt and called Shawn out on it. These two would feud until October and it was without question the top feud of the year. Good match here but the best hadn't even started yet.

Jericho has to help Shawn to the back.

Buy the Wrestlemania DVD.

Orton comes to see HHH now and says tonight HHH won't succeed. Orton says he'll win but HHH says pride comes before the fall.

Beth Phoenix/Melina/Layla/Jillian Hall/Victoria/Natalya vs. Mickie James/Michelle McCool/Ashley/Cherry/Kelly Kelly/Maria

Mickie won the title from Beth a few weeks ago in a huge upset. There is something to be said about putting 12 good looking women in a single tag match. Beth, with curly hair, starts with Michelle, who looks GOOD in black. Beth counters the speed moves and powerslams her down for two. Off to Melina who hooks a bridging front facelock with a choke. Michelle rolls through a sunset flip and dropkicks Melina in the face.

Off to the champ (Mickie in case you forgot) who hits a rana out of the corner but Melina tags off to Natalya who is in a black and yellow body suit. It's her PPV debut so it's understandable I guess. Victoria comes in and misses her shaking moonsault. Mickie hits an enziguri and the brawl breaks out on the floor. Ashley comes in for a HORRIBLE rana on Jillian, getting two. Thankfully Beth comes in to give her a beating for how bad it was. Ashley escapes the Glam Slam but can't tag. Mickie comes in illegally and the parade of finishers begin. After everyone hits something, Beth pins Ashley with a fisherman's buster.

Rating: D+. The match sucked, but MAN were the girls better back then. They were better in the ring and they looked a lot better too. The girls here actually looked like their outfits weren't made by the same people which is a big upgrade. Also them having more than 90 seconds a week is a big improvement too. Screw them being role models. They exist because they look good in tight spandex that shows off their bodies. Don't try to over complicate this stuff.

Some Baltimore Ravens are here.

We recap Edge vs. Undertaker. Edge tapped away the title at Mania and says he hasn't felt right ever since. Vickie, corrupt authority figure #847, has stacked the deck against Taker by making him have hard matches while Edge has basically had a month off.

Smackdown World Title: Edge vs. Undertaker

Taker actually says I'm going to hurt you to Edge during the big match intros. Edge gets thrown to the floor to start and then is run over by a shoulder block. It's still in the feeling out period here. Taker charges into a boot and gets clotheslined down as Edge takes over for the first time. And never mind as Edge gets thrown into the corner and Taker pounds away even more. Taker cranks on the arm and sends the shoulder into the buckle.

The champ loads up Old School but Edge rakes the eyes to escape. Taker gets clotheslined to the floor and a baseball slide sends Taker into the barricade. Edge dives off the apron but is easily caught and rammed into the posts. That's similar to what Kane did earlier so maybe it runs in

the family. The champ pounds him down some more and drops the leg on the apron but it hurts Taker's bad back.

Back in the ring a slam and legdrop get two, brother. What might have been the tombstone is countered into the Edge-0-Matic for two. With Taker in the corner Edge hits a spear to the back for two. Edge hooks a body scissors and Taker is getting ticked off. The Dead Man pounds away at Edge's face to escape but Edge hits a dropkick to the back to put him down again. Another baseball slide puts Taker on the floor and we head outside for another bit.

That goes nowhere so we head back inside for a Canadian camel clutch. Taker fights out of that by standing up but Edge hooks another body scissors and right back into the camel clutch. That gets broken up exactly the same way and a double clothesline puts both guys down. Now a double big boot puts both guys down in case you're a leg man instead of an arm man. Taker wins a slugout much to the fans' delight and a big boot puts Edge down again.

A running corner clothesline hits Edge and it's snake eyes into the big boot. An elbow drop gets two and Taker is getting a bit gassed. Old School is broken up again and Edge pounds away in the corner. That would be because he's an idiot in case you're wondering. Taker gets him in Last Ride position but Edge THINKS and climbs down as no one else has thought to do. Taker shoves him off and tries a top rope elbow (I've seen him do that live and it's awesome) but Edge moves and gets two.

The challenger rolls to the floor and grabs the belt but Taker grabs the chokeslam. Edge counters that as well, this time into a Russian legsweep for two. Edge goes up again but gets chokeslammed down for a delayed two. The tombstone is countered as Edge grabs the ropes. He pulls on them so hard that the buckle comes off. Taker gets rammed back first into it but manages a Last Ride attempt anyway.

Curt Hawkins of the Edgeheads runs in and hits Taker with the belt but that only gets two as well. The spear is countered into a DDT for two. The chokeslam is abandoned because of Zach Ryder interference (man that would be different today) so Taker opts for the Last Ride again. Edge

rolls through into a rollup but Taker grabs Hell's Gate for the tap out to retain. Sweet finishing sequence.

Rating: B. I was digging this one as it was the kind of interference filled match that you expected at Mania but didn't quite get. The Mania match is better due to the atmosphere and the significance of the win, but this was still a solid match with both guys showing off some solid chemistry together. Edge would eventually get the title back and it would of course be in another good match.

Taker doesn't let go of the hold for awhile. Vickie has to come down and the horror of her running (after being in a wheelchair) makes Taker let go. Edge gets wheeled out on a stretcher.

Orton goes up to see JBL when Punk pops up. He holds up the MITB case and says good luck tonight.

Cena and HHH combine for over 80% of the four person poll of the main event.

We recap the main event. Basically it's the triple threat (Orton defending against Cena and HHH) from Mania with JBL thrown in. This gets the music video treatment.

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

This is no DQ and no countout with elimination rules. HHH gets a big pop and Cena gets a mixed yet louder reaction. Orton gets a lot of booing and no one cares that JBL is here too. Orton immediately gets knocked to the floor by HHH and looks like he's about to throw up a frog. JBL jumps Cena but HHH says he's mine and gets in a fight with Cena on his own. Orton is still hiding on the floor so Cena takes him down.

JBL knocks Cena off the apron and onto the announce table with a LOUD landing. Orton and JBL beat on HHH in the ring with the Game being in trouble. He comes back with a double clothesline and sends JBL to the floor. Orton's shoulder hits the post and HHH goes to the floor. He sends JBL into the steps and loads up a Pedigree but JBL escapes. Cena hits the

Throwback on Orton followed by the top rope Fameasser into the STFU. JBL comes back in and sets to break it up then realizes there's no reason to do so and tells Orton to tap.

HHH grabs JBL and puts him in a Crossface right in front of Orton who is still in the STFU. JBL pokes Cena in the eye for some reason which breaks the STFU, allowing Orton to shout at JBL to tap in a funny bit. Cena knocks Orton into HHH and JBL, breaking the Crossface. Orton throws Cena to the floor again but JBL kicks Randy down for two. Orton comes back with a clothesline and goes up but gets crotched.

JBL loads up a superplex but JBL and Cena make it a Tower of Doom. Cena and the Game slug it out until Cena hits a release fisherman's suplex for two. ProtoBomb takes HHH down again but the Shuffle is broken up by a spinebuster. HHH loads up the Pedigree but JBL tries the Clothesline for some reason. That results in an FU for him followed by the STFU for the tap. We're down to three but Orton immediately punts Cena for the pin and we're down to two.

So it's Orton vs. HHH in a one on one match for the title. HHH throws him to the floor where Orton lands with a thud. Randy goes into the table but HHH goes into the steps, meaning advantage champion. Orton launches him into the barricade and into the crowd. A suplex brings HHH back to ringside and Orton poses a bit. Orton stomps on HHH back in the ring and poses some more before covering for two.

HHH tries a comeback but walks into the backbreaker for another near fall. We hit the chinlock for awhile but HHH fights out of it. Orton takes him down AGAIN, this time with the powerslam for two. The RKO is countered and they slug it out. HHH hits the high knee and both guys are down again. Facebuster gets two for the Game. He clotheslines Orton to the floor and throws him over the announce table.

Orton comes back by sending HHH into the barricade and loads up a piledriver on the steps but gets countered instead. Back inside and a spinebuster puts Orton down again. The Pedigree is countered as is the RKO and the referee goes down. The RKO hits out of nowhere but the slow cover only gets two. The Punt is countered into the Pedigree for the pin

and the title for HHH.

Rating: B-. The match was good although you could pretty easily write out Cena and JBL and have the same thing. They added a bit but more than half of the match was the one on one stuff. That being said it's probably the best match Orton and HHH ever had and is certainly better than the Mania main event they would have the next year. Not a classic or anything close to one, but for a B-level main event this was perfectly fine.

Overall Rating: B+. The show isn't a masterpiece or anything but when almost all of the matches are good save for one which is relatively short, that's a pretty solid show all around. Good stuff here but the year would go downhill a bit as the feuds would get driven into the ground with the same three guys dominating everything. Still though, this was a solid show and while it's not a classic, it's worth checking out.

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Backlash 2007: I'm Not Here Anymore. I'm Over There. The Ending Sequence Blew Me Away

Backlash 2007

Date: April 29, 2007

Location: Phillips Arena, Atlanta, Georgia

Attendance: 14,500

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

It's the final show in this set of WWE reviews as I jump over Backlash 2006 because I'm saving it for the final review in the series. The main event here is a fourway for the belt as well as Undertaker vs. Batista II

in a last man standing match. ECW is around now too and we get Vince/Umaga/Shane vs. Lashley for the ECW Title in what I'm sure will be riveting TV. Let's get to it.

The opening video is about how everything began at Wrestlemania but everything continues tonight.

Raw Tag Titles: Hardy Boys vs. Lance Cade/Trevor Murdoch

The Hardys are defending. We're back to co-branded shows here so everyone is here tonight. Matt and Cade get us going. The fans are all behind the Hardys here of course, even though Cade knocks Matt down in the corner. Matt comes back with some hiptosses for both guys before taking Cade down with a headlock. Lawler makes the always stupid statement that they're the same height on the mat.

Off to Murdoch who is quickly slammed down as well. Jeff comes in to a quick pop and things speed up. The Hardys clear the ring and Jeff hits Poetry In Motion over the top and out to the floor. Back in and Matt hits a middle rope elbow on Murdoch for two. Matt's bulldog is countered though and the challenges take over. Cade comes in for a powerbomb attempt but gets caught in a Russian legsweep which lets Jeff get the tag.

Jeff cleans house, probably finding Cade's drugs in the process. He misses a dropkick through the ropes though and crashes to the floor, changing the momentum again. Sitout Rock Bottom gets two for Cade. Murdoch comes in and blocks Jeff's jawbreaker and hits a neckbreaker for two. A big boot puts Jeff down for two. Cade and Murdoch were pretty talented in the ring, but they were just boring at the end of the day. That and the lack of competition is why they're not remembered that well at all.

The challengers keep double teaming but it's Cade that gets caught in the jawbreaker, proving that Murdoch is more of a ring technician than his partner. Murdoch also breaks up the hot tag and hits a suplex for two. Jeff mule kicks Cade down but Murdoch breaks up the tag again. Man when that tag hits the roof is going to come off. Murdoch sets for the jump off the middle rope for the sake of jumping into boots, but he blocks the

boots, bringing a smile to my face. Jeff makes the tag almost immediately thereafter and the pop isn't as great as I was expecting.

Matt also cleans house (probably looking for drugs as well), destroying everything in sight. Cade is sent to the floor but the Twist to Murdoch is countered. Side Effect gets two instead as Cade makes the save. Murdoch hits a standing sunset flip bomb for two on Matt. Trevor's fireman's carry is countered into the Twist and Swanton, allowing Matt to get the pin to retain.

Rating: B-. This was formula tag wrestling and it worked pretty well. The Hardy reunion didn't do anything great but it gave both guys something to do for awhile and brought some credibility back to the belts for about ten seconds. Jeff would go on to bigger things of course, moving into the main event scene by the end of the year while Matt would move into the Smackdown midcard.

Umaga gets a pep talk from the McMahons. Shane says he's ready. Vince says Shane should be ECW Champion but Shane says Vince should get the title instead. Vince likes the idea.

Women's Title: Melina vs. Mickie James

Melina is defending. Mickie is getting her return match here and is looking very bouncy tonight. They head to the mat to start with Mickie hitting a monkey flip for one. Off to a headlock by the challenger which is reversed into one by Melina. Mickie escapes that with ease so Melina pounds away as she can't win a wrestling match here. Mickie mounts her (lucky) and pounds away as well.

James goes up top but gets sent out to the floor to give Melina control. She chokes Mickie in the ropes and then hooks a full nelson with her legs. Now it's a choke in the corner but Mickie escapes. And never mind as Melina comes off with a seated senton to take over again immediately. That gets two so Mickie tries her spin kick. That fails also as Melina counters, sending Mickie down into the splits. James hooks Melina's legs and they slug it out with both girls in a splits position.

Mickie makes her comeback with forearms and hair tosses. She's very fired

up here and it looks like a good comeback instead of the usual lame Divas offense. Mickie's rana out of the corner is countered as Melina sends her to the apron. She pops back up and hits a top rope cross body for two. Back to the corner and Melina hits a kick to the head followed by a reverse DDT to retain.

Rating: C+. This was one of the best Divas match I've seen in YEARS. Mickie was awesome as was Melina, but most importantly of all: this was treated like a match between two women, rather than a Divas match if that makes sense. The match wasn't treated like anything different, which is the best thing they could do with the Divas anymore. Also it got time, which helped a lot.

Edge is in the back and says he liked Cena and Michaels having an hour long match on Raw. Maria has a note asking how Edge won his first title, which he says was by cashing in MITB. Mr. Kennedy pops up as the guy that asked him. He's also the current Mr. MITB and implies he'll cash in tonight.

Video on The Condemned.

US Title: MVP vs. Chris Benoit

Benoit is defending here and is announced as being from Atlanta for a good reaction. These two had an impromptu match on Smackdown where MVP walked out. A quick Crossface attempt sends MVP to the floor and things slow down. Back in the ring MVP takes over with a headlock on the mat. Benoit bridges up into a backslide for two and then hits a belly to back suplex to break the hold.

The Sharpshooter goes on and MVP is in trouble. He makes the rope before sending Benoit into the corner. A boot to the back of the head takes Benoit down and it's off to a cravate. Benoit fights out with elbows but walks into an overhead belly to belly for two. Back to the chinlock as the fans chant that MVP is a Power Ranger. Back up and MVP misses a clothesline, allowing the Canadian to hit Rolling Germans on the American.

He goes up for the Swan Dive but MVP hooks his foot before he can get up

top. MVP sends him into the corner, further jarring the neck and getting two. Benoit gets a quick Crossface but MVP grabs the ropes. Back to the neck lock but MVP gets caught using the ropes. A big kick to the head puts Benoit down but he snaps off more Rolling Germans to take over. He tries the Swan Dive but it hits knees to change momentum again. MVP hooks a half crab for some reason but it's broken pretty quickly. Out of nowhere Benoit reverses a suplex into a small package to retain.

Rating: C+. The constant neck holds got repetitive but the match itself was pretty good. MVP would get the title the next month in a 2/3 falls match and would hold the title for almost a year. Benoit wouldn't live through the end of summer of course, and it's scary to think that he was in the ring as a champion so close to the end of his life.

Cena says nothing before Orton pops up and talks about how similar they are. He wants an alliance tonight but Cena makes gay jokes. Ron Simmons appears, next.

We recap the ECW Title match but there isn't much to say here. Lashley beat Umaga at Wrestlemania to have Vince's head shaved. You know this isn't cool with Vince so tonight it's about revenge.

ECW Title: Vince McMahon/Shane McMahon/Umaga vs. Bobby Lashley

Lashley is champion and whoever gets the fall is champion. Shane starts us out and is promptly destroyed. Lashley throws him around and suplexes him down before throwing him to the floor. Bobby wants Vince but Shane staggers back in instead. Off to Umaga who is sent into the corner but Lashley charges into a boot to the face. Well foot tape to the face but you get the idea.

Bobby sends him into the corner again and hits some clotheslines including a big one to send him over the top rope and out to the floor. Down goes Shane so there's only Vince left on the apron. Instead Shane gets back in and takes a delayed vertical suplex. Umaga tries a headbutt but it hits the Boy Wonder by mistake. Shane finally does something effective by pulling the top rope down to send Bobby out to the floor.

Umaga sends Lashley into the steps as we continue the filler until Vince

comes in. Lashley is in trouble but Vince still doesn't want the tag. Shane puts on a Fujiwara Armbar followed by a hammerlock with knees. Off to a cross armbreaker/triangle choke hybrid which Lashley can't quite power out of. Scratch that as he hits a kind of powerbomb for two. Back to the Samoan for a headbutt followed by a bearhug.

Bobby escapes for a second but gets caught in a Samoan Drop to put him down again. Shane hooks a camel clutch for longer than should be humanly possible to survive. Lashley gets out of that too with pure power and hits a Torture Rack backbreaker (Shock Treatment ala Abyss) to Shane. Umaga gets speared and it's a Dominator to Shane but Vince finally comes in for the save. In the confusion Shane gets a belt shot in for two from Vince. Vince is ticked off now and brings in Umaga for a top rope splash. That gets two for Vince as well so Umaga does the exact same thing again to give Vince the title.

Rating: C. This was fine I guess but it would start a huge ordeal with ECW fans saying that Vince was killing the legacy of ECW. You know, because it was SO healthy after guys like Big Show was champion and we got a single ECW Rules match a week if we were lucky and guys like Matt Striker and Elijah Burke and Mike Knox and Test were featured on the show every week. Lashley would get the title back in a month or so before the title fell into the midcard level it would stay at until it was axed.

Vince and company celebrate for awhile before heading to the back and laughing at the ECW Originals.

We recap Taker vs. Batista, which is just another rematch, but this time it's Last Man Standing. The Mania match was good so hopefully this is too.

Smackdown World Title: Batista vs. Undertaker

Undertaker is defending here. Apparently he's never lost a last man standing match. I wouldn't have guessed that. He also might have a bad right arm coming into this. The chokeslam is broken up but the flying clothesline takes Batista down. Old School hits and Batista is in trouble early. Big Dave comes back with something called a powerslam for about four.

Out to the floor and Batista sends him into the barricade to take over. Scratch that as he gets sent into the steps, but Taker's arm isn't holding up that well. Batista has a bunch of tape on his leg so Taker has a target as well, making the arm not as much of a handicap. Taker puts him on the apron and drops the leg for a five count or so. Now Undertaker gets sent into the steps but no one can follow up.

They head back into the ring with Batista going up, only to get dropped by an uppercut. A superplex puts Batista down but Undertaker can't get up either. Batista gets a seven count and they slug it out. A big clothesline puts Taker down for eight, followed by a slam and legdrop from Batista for about six. Taker sends him out to the floor and starts setting up the announce table. Batista avoids the pain though by sending Undertaker into the barricade.

Big Dave sets for a powerslam through the announce table but gets caught in a Russian legsweep, sending him into the barricade for about seven. Undertaker hits him in the face with the steps and Batista barely makes it to his feet. It's table time with Batista being placed on the table as Undertaker walks the barricade for a legdrop through Batista and the table. That looked pretty awesome but it only gets nine. Something, probably the steps, busted Batista open.

They head back in and Batista hits a spear out of nowhere, getting an eight. Batista snaps and hits three spinebusters but that gets nine as well. The Bomb is countered and Undertaker hits a chokeslam to put both guys down but Batista is up at nine to keep things going. Taker channels his inner idiot and pounds away in the corner, and he deserves the Batista Bomb that he gets.

That still doesn't end it so Batista cracks him with a chair. Taker backdrops him onto the chair, followed by the Tombstone which STILL only gets nine. The look on Taker's face is great. They head back to the floor and Taker punches him up the ramp. Batista pounds away at him but the Bomb attempt is countered. Taker tries to throw him off the stage but Batista escapes and spears him off the stage into the electrical equipment, causing an explosion. The match ends in a draw as no one can get up in time.

Rating: B. The ending was a cop out and got booed out of the building, but the rest of it was pretty good. It wasn't a masterpiece or anything and it really became a rehash of the match at Mania, although with a counting system instead of pins or submissions. Still though it was entertaining and felt like a big time match. They would have even more matches that were good too, so this was a good second match in the series.

Cena dominates the texting poll of who will win, getting 50% of four options. Shawn got 34%, meaning that Edge and Orton combined for 16%.

Music video recaps the main event. Cena is defending against Shawn, Edge and Orton. Shawn was his opponent at Mania and Edge/Orton are here because DX is injured so they have no one to face.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. Shawn Michaels vs. Edge vs. Randy Orton

One fall to a finish. This is coming off the one hour match between Shawn and Cena on Raw. Shawn talks trash to Cena to start and it turns into a four way argument. Rated RK0 yells at the other two until the other two hammer Rated RK0 to the floor. Shawn immediately chops Cena into the corner. John comes back with a release fisherman's suplex for two.

The other two come in and have a staredown of their own. They slug it out with Orton dropkicking Edge to the floor. Cena throws him back in and this time it's Orton going to the floor, only to be beaten up by Shawn on the other side of the ring. All four head outside now and it's only Edge on his feet. Shawn slams him down and goes into the ring for a moonsault onto all three guys. That always looks great.

Shawn and Edge get back into the ring but they clothesline each other. Cena comes back in and hits a double top rope Fameasser to take both guys down, getting two on Edge out of it. He goes to cover Shawn but Orton takes his head off with a clothesline. Orton throws out the guys with long hair and hits the backbreaker on Cena for two. A knee drop gets the same and Orton sends Cena shoulder first into the post.

Cena goes to the floor and it's Shawn taking his place. Forearm and nip up follow but Edge spin wheel kicks him down for two. Orton is mad at

Edge now but they team up to put down both guys. Cena gets sent into the table and it's 2-1 on Shawn in the ring. They both grab a leg and put on what I guess you would call a double half crab. With Shawn in trouble, Cena comes in to take out both guys and save Shawn.

Cena cleans house and hits various signature moves on various opponents. Edge takes the Protoplex and Shuffle after everyone else has been shouldered out. Shawn Orton pull Cena out to the floor and send him into the post, followed by Shawn putting Orton into the same post. Shawn loads up a piledriver onto the table to Orton but Edge cracks him with a chair to break up it. Orton gives him a thumbs up and takes a chair shot for his efforts.

Edge comes into the ring and tries to use the chair on Cena but gets caught in the STF instead. Edge makes the rope and Orton comes in to replace him in the same hold. Shawn comes back in and almost gets caught in the STF but instead it's a small package on Cena for two. Shawn clears out the ring other than Cena who takes the top rope elbow for two. He loads up the superkick but has to dodge an Edge spear. Edge goes down and the top rope elbow hits him as well.

Orton comes in for the same move but Cena breaks it up before Shawn can jump. Cena tries an FU on Shawn off the top but gets caught in a double electric chair drop off the top with Shawn crashing even harder. Edge and John are the only ones left in the ring but all three of the FU attempts fail. Orton and Shawn come back and it's an RK0 for Michaels. That gets two as Cena saves, as does the Edgecution on Cena. Everyone but Shawn tries finishers on everyone but only Edge hits a spear on Orton. Cena FU's Edge and gets superkicked onto Randy for the pin. That was a great finish!

Rating: B+. I was really getting into this at the end and Cena getting superkicked down into the pin was a great way to keep everyone looking strong. The ending was so fast that I gave up trying to keep up with everything that was happening. It didn't come off as a huge main event but at the same time it wasn't supposed to. Very good stuff here though and everyone came off looking great.

Shawn yells at Cena to end the show.

Overall Rating: A-. DANG this was a solid show. When you have six matches on the card and no filler, it means the matches all get time and are able to develop. Also when the worst match is a good one, it's hard to call it anything but great. The ending to the main event had me glued to the screen, which is saying a lot when I already knew who was pinning who to win it. This was a great show and well worth checking out.

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Backlash 2006: A Shoulder Injury, A Forgotten Classic, And God In A Dance Off (Plus Final Thoughts On WWE PPVs)

Backlash 2006

Date: April 30, 2006

Location: Rupp Arena, Lexington, Kentucky

Attendance: 14,000

Commentators: Jim Ross, Jerry Lawler

I can't believe I just typed that. Since I started these reviews I knew this would be the final PPV I would do for one simple reason: it's the only PPV I've ever attended live. I graduated high school around this time so it was kind of a gift to myself. I went with a friend of mine and sat in the upper deck to watch this show and I'll never forget it. This is actually the first time I've seen the show in full since the night it aired, so this is going to be an interesting experience. We've got Vince/Shane vs. Shawn/God tonight as well as Cena defending against HHH and Edge in the main event. For the last time on an old PPV, let's get to

it.

As a rare bonus, I'm throwing in the match from Heat.

Rob Conway vs. Goldust

This was in essence our dark match but it aired on WWE.com as well so it's not a big deal. Conway was doing a Buff Bagwell style gimmick at this point. The announcers waste their time by trying to come up with stupid nicknames. The guys talk some trash before Goldie takes over with some rights. Goldust freaks Conway out with his usual antics and things slow down already. Conway comes back with some basic offense and gets two off a whip into the corner.

A clothesline puts Goldust down and it's off to the chinlock. Yes a chinlock two minutes into a three and a half minute match. They hit stereo crossbodies to put both guys down for another spot you wouldn't think was needed in a match this short. Conway wins a slugout and hits a swinging neckbreaker for two. He ducks his head off a whip though and Goldie hits that uppercut of his. Goldust starts his comeback and takes him into the corner for ten punches. A powerslam gets the pin for the human Academy Award.

Rating: D. Yeah whatever. No one cared about this but then again it was a match to get the crowd warmed up. Conway tried and was a big deal in OVW so he was kind of a hometown boy but his gimmick killed him. Goldust did his thing which wasn't really intimidating anymore but no one had cared about him for the most part in years. Nothing too bad due to the length but nothing good either.

The opening video is about the two main event matches. Vince and Shane are beating up Shawn because Shawn beat him at Mania and Vince went insane. The title match is a rematch from Mania with Edge thrown in.

I would have been sitting in the upper deck opposite the cameras on the right hand side.

Chris Masters vs. Carlito

These two were partners for awhile but have since had a parting of the

ways. Carlito turned on him just after Mania, hitting him with a Backstabber. He would be your face in this match. They slug it out to start with Masters taking over. It's so weird to hear about how the Kentucky Wildcats play in this arena. I would graduate from high school in the same arena in less than a month.

Carlito comes back with right hands but gets backdropped down. The announcers talk about God's in ring debut tonight as Masters gets two. Carlito throws on the Master Lock (you read that right) and Masters bails to the floor, where Carlito hits a good looking dive. Back in and Carlito pounds away in the corner at a very fast pace. No counting in Spanish from the Lexington crowd though so they officially suck.

Masters counters a rana into a buckle bomb and Carlito is in trouble all of a sudden. Off to a neck crank and Masters breaks up a comeback attempt by Carlito. Masters clotheslines him down and things slow down even more. Here comes the Masterlock but apparently shouting the name of the move you're about to use is a bad idea as Carlito counters into a rollup for two.

A springboard reverse elbow puts Masters down and it's apple time. Carlito throws it to him and dropkicks the knee out to take over even more. Masters never was the smartest guy in the world. Carlito fires off some left armed clotheslines and a dropkick for a delayed two. Masters sends him into the corner but a belly to back superplex is broken up. Carlito "hits" a moonsault press for two. Masters was halfway down before Carlito even touched him. Masterlock is countered by sending Masters' face into the buckle and the Backstabber with feet on the ropes gets the pin.

Rating: D+. This felt like a long Raw match. Carlito wasn't that popular but they were trying with him I guess. It's certainly not bad but it was very dull, which is the exact opposite of what you're looking for in an opener. I didn't really like this one live and it didn't work any better six years later.

Outside shot of Rupp Arena. I live five minutes away.

Maria screws up the result of the previous match and we get some fans'

opinions on the winner of the triple threat later. Lita interrupts and makes fun of the Lexington fans. Maria implies Lita is...well that she enjoys men, so Lita threatens her. Tonight after Edge wins, it's a private sex celebration.

Umaga vs. Ric Flair

Umaga debuted less than a month before this so this is his first real match. When you need a new kid tested, call in Naitch. Flair jumps him in the aisle and that goes badly for him. We go into the ring for the bell and Flair gets pounded into the corner. Flair pokes him in the eye and hits him low a few times, only to get chopped right back down.

The running corner attack (NOT FROM RIKISHI YOU NXT ANNOUNCERS) misses and we go to the floor. Umaga misses a charge and hits the post and it's time to go after the leg. The Figure Four is broken up and Flair is put in the Tree of Woe for a headbutt. The running hip attack sets up another headbutt which sets up the Samoan Spike for the pin.

Rating: C+. This was a total squash for Umaga but the idea here was perfect: Flair made Umaga look like a monster here which is exactly the point of something like this. Umaga would be a destruction machine, not losing until January when Cena finally put him down with a rollup of all things. This was a textbook example of how to put someone over using a legend.

Vince is in the back when Shane comes in for a pep talk. Vince insists it's a tag match and not a handicap match. Also, let him take care of God. There's nothing God can do that Vince can't do. To prove it, he takes Shane's bottle of water and pours it in on the floor. He stomps on it and declares that he's walking on water. Now he takes a well placed loaf of bread and a fish. He throws the fish away and breaks the bread and throws it away. Someone off camera throws a lot of bread at him as well as the fish. It's a "holy mackerel." Shane drinks the water and now it's purple. Get it?

We recap Mickie James vs. Trish for the title. Mickie is a psycho that is obsessed with Trish. She won the title from Trish at Mania using some VERY un-PG actions. Mickie was HOT as the psycho.

Women's Title: Mickie James vs. Trish Stratus

The girl I went to this was a lesbian so this was by far her favorite match of the night. Trish is in skin colored attire trimmed with Kentucky Blue. Nice touch. Actually that's a bit lighter than Kentucky Blue but close enough. Trish grabs a quick rollup for two and blows a kiss. She Ma-Trishes out of a clothesline and fires off forearms. A HARD bicycle kick puts Mickie down and there's a Thesz Press off the apron by Trish. That gets two back in the ring and we get a great upskirt shot of the champ.

Trish pounds away in the corner but gets dumped over the top to the floor, dislocating her shoulder in the process. You can see the bulge in her back where it's not in place. The referee throws up a quick X and Mickie covers a bit. She chokes away for the DQ after like four minutes.

Rating: N/A. I can't give this a fair grade as the injury derailed it maybe two minutes in. The shoulder injury was SICK live as you could see it out of joint on the big screen and the crash that hurt it was terrible looking. Trish would be out for about two months because of this which is a shame as this was one of the best Divas feuds in years. Also, as someone that has seen these girls up close, cameras do not do them justice. They are stunning in person, as are most of the Divas.

Maria corrects her mistake about Masters earlier and brings in Shawn. He says God is with him as always and he knows it's a handicap match.

Money in the Bank Briefcase/Intercontinental Title: Rob Van Dam vs. Shelton Benjamin

It's winner take all with Rob holding the case and Shelton holding the title. Shelton takes him to the mat to start and rides Van Dam a bit. The fans are completely behind RVD, namely because this is during the opening part of Shelton's heel run. Shelton backflips out of a wristlock to show that he can hang with Rob in all of the high flying stuff. RVD gets his rolling cradle for two and Shelton bails to the corner.

Shelton keeps getting frustrated and heads to the floor for a breather. Back in and Benjamin pounds him down and fires off some forearms. Rob

will have none of that and kicks Shelton down. The champ (Shelton) bails to the floor again to avoid Rolling Thunder so Rob dives to the floor to take him out. Shelton runs back in and hits a sunset bomb to the floor to take over again.

Back in and Benjamin works over the back before hooking a chinlock with a knee in the spine. Rob quickly escapes that but gets caught by a knee lift for two. Back to the chinlock which might be a choke. Not that it matters as Rob makes the rope. Rob fights up and tries Rolling Thunder but Shelton catches him in a Samoan Drop in a SWEET counter. They go up and Rob knocks him off the top, but Shelton JUMPS up the corner (not runs the corner. He JUMPED from the mat to the top rope and superplexes Rob down for two.

Off to a kind of rear naked choke which is broken up again. A spin kick takes down Shelton as do some clotheslines. Van Dam kicks him down a few more times and FINALLY hits Rolling Thunder for two. See? Build it up, then pay it off. Not that hard. Split legged moonsault out of the corner gets two. Shelton counters the monkey flip but another spin kick puts him down. Five Star misses and Shelton hits a DDT for two. Actually make that six as it's three two counts, the third having feet on the ropes.

Shelton goes to the floor for no apparent reason. Oh ok he's grabbing the briefcase. Rob goes to the floor after him but gets knocked down quickly. Back in and Shelton hits a top rope cross body which Van Dam rolls through for two. Dragon Whip misses Van Dam and he hits a rana to take Shelton down. Shelton goes for the case and there goes the referee. Rob ducks a shot and hits a van Daminator with the case. Five Star gives Rob the title.

Rating: B. This was a very fun match and the Five Star absolutely has to be seen to be believed. He didn't hold the title long but he would cash in the case in about a month and a half for the WWE Title at One Night Stand. Shelton never got back to the point he was at a year before this, which is a shame as he was on fire at that point. Good match here.

We recap Kane vs. Big Show. They were tag champions until Kane started hearing voices that said May 19. The reason for this would never be

explained but it would be the date See No Evil came out, as well as the date that it was revealed that Undertaker lit the fire that killed his parents. It might not have been that but it was something related to it. This would result in a fake Kane in the mask feuding with real Kane without the mask. In short: it was ridiculous.

Big Show says Kane has a movie coming out on May 19th and he needs to get over whatever issues he's got going on. Kane attacked Big Show recently and Show's eye is messed up, so tonight it's an eye for an eye.

Kane vs. Big Show

Kane jumps him before the bell so Show GORILLA PRESSES him. That is SCARY power. Show charges into a boot and Kane goes for the eye. They go to the floor and as they get back in, Kane sends him into the post to take over. Some choking and a corner clothesline hit Big Show and with a loud whisper of GO DOWN, another clothesline puts Show down. Show slams him down but misses an elbow drop, allowing Kane to work on the arm.

The arm work goes on for awhile with Show on his knees. While in that position, he's up to Kane's shoulder. Kane goes up but jumps into a fallaway slam as Show takes over. A corner charges hits and Kane is in trouble. The chokeslam is countered into what was supposed to be a DDT but was rather an arm on Show's back that he fell down from. A big boot that literally has four inches between itself and Kane's face gets two.

JR is calling it an ugly match which is the code for "we know it sucks too". Powerslam gets two for Show and he goes after the eye. Kane blocks that and kicks Show in the head, sending him out to the floor. And now we bring out the suck, as the arena goes red and Kane's voice fills the arena, talking about May 19. Kane freaks out and has a bit of a fit on the mat. Show is concerned about him so he grabs a chair and blasts Kane in the head with it to knock him out. The match just ends.

Rating: F. There's no other way to put it. The premise was stupid, the match SUCKED with some of the worst looking miscues I've seen this side of a Divas match, and the ending was ridiculous. The live crowd thought the match sucked, but MAN watching this again shows me what this match

was: it wasn't just bad. It was REALLY bad. These two can never have a good match together it seems.

Candice Michelle has a chest cold and goes to Vince to heal it because he's God. Vince puts his hand on her chest and prays for her in a parody of a spiritual healer. Candice sounds like she's having an orgasm. This is so stupid I can't comprehend it. The arena hated it too. Shane comes in to take Vince away and he's annoyed.

We recap the "tag" match. Before Mania, Shawn told Vince to get over Montreal so Vince declared war on Shawn. The idea is that Shawn is a Christian but he has to resort to levels he doesn't want to in order beat him, which he did at Wrestlemania. Vince created his own religion: McMahonism. This resulted in some skits in a church which reached new levels of bad taste. Vince made a "tag" match between himself/Shane vs. Shawn/God. I was really worried about what they were going to do for God here.

Shawn Michaels/God vs. Vince McMahon/Shane McMahon

Vince introduces God and we get a spotlight. His tron video is clouds and he comes out to harp and piano music. Vince stops and criticizes God before challenging him to a dance contest. I kid you not, this is really happening. The spotlights gets in the ring and Vince tells the referee to check him out. Vince makes the match no holds barred because the idea of Vince wrestling an actual match isn't pleasing. Sexy Boy finally hits to end this stupidity.

Vince starts to run his mouth some more and Shawn finally drills him to get going. The daddy goes to the floor while Shawn beats up Shane. Shawn dives on Vince before clotheslining Shane to the floor and hitting a flip dive to take him out. Michaels chops Shane up the ramp but Shane comes back with knees to the stomach. Shane tries to piledrive Shawn off the stage but gets backdropped instead.

Shawn comes back but here's Vince with a chair as they're all on the stage now. Shawn blocks the shot and takes Shane down again before hitting a cross body on Vince off the stage. This looked like nothing live but it looked good on camera. Shawn climbs back up to the stage but

gets hit in the face with the chair by Shane. Michaels is busted which I never noticed in the arena.

Shane and Shawn head back to the ring and Shawn goes into the post. Shawn gets sent into the barricade and then back into the ring as Shane is in complete control. The top rope elbow misses and both guys are down. Vince is on the apron now and apparently they have to tag. Shane DDTs Shawn down and it's off to Vince. Vince takes his belt off and whips Shawn's back because he's that evil. Shane throws in a garbage can and Shawn gets his head caved in.

Vince wants a mic and taunts God a bit. God walks out and Vince says come back. Vince declares that God has left the building, but Shawn hasn't. He stands Shawn up and tries a superkick but the kick gets caught. Shawn makes his comeback and hits the forearm and nip-up. Shane misses a chair shot and caves in Vince's head by mistake. It's a forearm for Shane followed by an atomic drop and some clotheslines. Shawn's top rope elbow hits and both McMahons taste superkicks.

Shawn, ever the genius, doesn't go for a cover but rather goes to the floor for a table. Make that two tables. My fellow Lexingtonians (yes that's what they're called) want ladders because much like other wrestling fans, they're greedy people. Both McMahons are put on tables and here comes the ladder. It's the jumbo sized ladder too. Shawn climbs up but has to dive on the invading Spirit Squad. That was incredible live but the camera didn't get a great shot of it. The main problem was you didn't see them until the dive so Shawn looked crazy.

The numbers catch up with Shawn and he gets beaten down by the five male cheerleaders who are currently tag team champions at this point. They throw Shawn back in and get the McMahons off the tables. The Squad takes Shawn into the ring and hit their finisher on him, which is them all picking him up at once and dropping him through a table. Vince gets the pin. JR calls this BS but the uncensored version.

Rating: D. The match was boring, but JR put it best during the match: this was uncomfortable. On top of that, the whole thing was stupid. This would set up a feud that ran for the whole year which didn't work all

that well either. It did lead to the reformation of DX which was pretty interesting, but dang this first part was torture to sit through. Not a horrible match but dang this was a chore to sit through.

The Squad put the McMahons on their shoulders with the man that would become Dolph Ziggler cheering the loudest.

Cena, drawing mostly boos, says that he doesn't have to get pinned tonight so the wins HHH has gotten over him lately don't matter. He's heard everything lately and the fans are divided. The silence is the voice of the people that want Edge to win the title. The cheers are for HHH, but there's one voice that will stand tall at the end. That would be the voice of Lillian Garcia who will declare Cena still WWE Champion. I missed most of this promo the first time as I was watching what was being set up in the ring.

It's time for Matt Striker's Classroom because we can't fill in a three hour PPV with just Raw matches. Striker says that there's another miracle tonight: there's an intelligent person in Kentucky. He talks about what Kentucky is known for: illegally recruited basketball players and fried chicken. It's not known for its education though, but he's here to remedy that. Striker brings out the best educated person ever from Kentucky: Eugene, who was mentally slow. Literally, that was his character. His music was very catchy though.

Striker calls Eugene proof that you shouldn't marry your sister. Eugene may be the smartest person ever from Kentucky but Striker doesn't think he can even spell his own name. He hands Eugene a piece of chalk and asks him to write it on the chalk board. Eugene writes that Striker enjoys human waste. Striker criticizes the grammar and punctuation, but Eugene is picking his nose. He starts to eat it but Striker stops it. I think you all know what's coming, and there it goes into Striker's mouth. Eugene stuns him too. This would result in a match a few weeks later on Raw which Striker won.

We recap the world title match. Cena beat HHH at Mania to retain but HHH said he wanted another title shot. Edge came out and said he earned the shot by beating Foley in their famous hardcore match. The solution is of

course a triple threat match.

Raw World Title: John Cena vs. HHH vs. Edge

Cena is defending if that wasn't clear. HHH is the huge crowd favorite. The girl I was with was a huge Cena fan so I was for Edge all night. Well I liked Edge so it wasn't completely because of her. Edge tells the other two to go at it and heads to the floor. That's cool with HHH and Cena as they slug it out, won by the champion. Some shoulders take HHH down and there's the release fisherman's suplex for two. Edge makes the save and bails right back to the floor.

Cena punches the Game some more but walks into the high knee which gets two and some applause. Edge makes another save and heads right back to the floor. HHH and Cena finally have enough of the Canadian and they both go after him. Cena clotheslines Edge to the floor and takes turns with HHH ramming Edge into the announce table. This is awesome as it turns into a contest to see who can do it harder. Edge goes into the table about 10 times and looks mostly dead.

All three go back in but HHH throws Cena to the floor. Cena pulls HHH off the apron and rams his face into said apron. A top rope splash gets two on Edge and Cena loads up the Shuffle, only for Lita to pull the rope down and send Cena to the floor. HHH rams Cena into the steps and goes back in for a facebuster on Edge. The knee to the face gets two as does the spinebuster.

Edge counters a suplex and hits the Edge-0-Matic for two. HHH shrugs that off and puts on a sleeper but Edge reverses into one of his own. We have a Cena chant as he gets both guys up for the FU at once. That blew my mind at the time and he didn't even hit the move. Edge gets off the top and spears Cena down while HHH is still in the FU position, giving the Game a Samoan Drop from Cena. Cool spot.

HHH and Edge head to the floor and HHH gets catapulted into the post to bust him open. Edge DDTs HHH on the table, leaving blood everywhere when the table doesn't break. That made me cringe in the arena. HHH is COVERED in blood. Back in and Edge dropkicks Cena for two. He spears Cena in the corner but Cena counters the regular one into the STFU. Edge is about to

tap but HHH pops up and blocks the hand from coming down and hits Cena in the head with the mic to break the hold.

HHH caves Edge's head in with a chair shot, knocking him into the crowd. He heads back inside and walks right into the STFU just like at Mania. There is blood everywhere. HHH keeps his arm up (there need to be more arm checks from the referees. I miss those) and finally makes the rope. FU is countered into a Pedigree but that's countered back into the STFU. Edge breaks it up and there goes the referee.

Cena tries to FU Edge from the middle rope but HHH gets beneath Cena to make it a modified Tower of Doom. Everyone is down so Lita brings in a chair. She charges at HHH with it but walks into a spinebuster which got a big pop in the arena. HHH gets the chair but throws it down. Instead he pulls out the sledgehammer but Edge spears him down. Edge gets the hammer but Cena loads him into the FU. HHH breaks that up with a low blow but the Pedigree to Cena is countered into a rollup for the pin to retain.

Rating: B+. This was WAY better from this perspective as I wasn't all that impressed when I saw it live. This was actually an awesome match with a great blade job from HHH and almost non-stop action. Cena getting another win over HHH was another big step in his push towards the top of the company as he wasn't quite there yet. This was a great match and it really impressed me on a second viewing.

HHH blasts them both with the hammer and leaves to King of Kings to end the show. To this day I'm not sure why they went with that ending.

Overall Rating: C+. Leave it to me to go with right in the middle to end things. This show is a strange one as it's barely a B-level show, but there are two very good matches on it, including what you could probably call a forgotten classic of a main event. The problem with the show is that the bad parts are VERY bad and they really bring the show down. That being said, it's still the first and to this point only PPV I've attended live so I have to give it the benefit of the doubt.

That's the end of WWE/F. This has an even longer history of PPVs than the other two companies (combined actually) and maybe it's the fanboy in me, but I say they've done it best. WWF (screw those panda people. I grew up

calling it WWF so it's WWF) has mastered the art of putting together a major show. That being said, they often times forget how to do it and I'm sure you can name a ton of entries where they did just that.

On the other hand, they pulled off stuff like Wrestlemania X7 and Summerslam 2002 which put just about any other company's stuff to shame. Over time they've had a ton of shows and therefore they've had a lot more practice to pull them off. The days of the Big Four are long gone and I don't think they're ever going to drop down below one a month again. That being said, it's nowhere near as bad as people make it out to be but that's another topic.

Overall, WWF has had better luck in my eyes on PPV, but they're far from perfect. The Brand Split shows never were that good as they flat out did not have enough talent on each show to run full three hour PPVs. I'd love to see the In Your House idea come back as a mid level PPV that was only two hours but cost less money. That's just one of a number of possible solutions that could work, but again I'm getting off track. Just like with the other two companies (ECW only had 21 PPVs so I'm omitting them), the WWF has had its ups and downs but when they shows are good, there's nothing better.

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