

## WWE Raw Report

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The Big News: Jim Ross and Brian Christopher entered into the Michael Cole-Jerry Lawler feud in Raw's most memorable segment.

### Show Analysis:

The show started with Rock on the screen talking on the phone with someone. He said that nobody laughed at John Cena's promo last week because it sucked. He added that he tried to talk to Cena like a man but Cena acted like a child. Cena's music played and Rock acted like Cena was in his house. Instead, it was a kid in Cena merchandise. Rock raised his eyebrow. The Cena kid did a short rap.

Rock told the kid that when Rock left, Cena took the ball and ran with it. He didn't run very far, Rock said, but he ran. Rock said that Cena owns the 2-5 year old demographic and they had goofy comedy sound effects mixed in. Rock said that Cena will never be as good as the Rock and asked the kid if he knew why. The Cena kid replied it's because he's not that talented. Rock agreed that Cena is not that talented.

Rock asked the kid how that feels and then said it doesn't matter how it feels. The child cried. Rock said people have seen Cena's movies and they're not crying. Rock noted he didn't have toilet paper but did have the next best thing and gave the Cena kid a Cena t-shirt to blow his nose. He then offered the kid Fruity Pebbles and the Cena kid was happy and left.

Rock next looked into the camera and they started playing this goofy dramatic music in the background. He spoke to Miz and said that Miz made the mistake of a lifetime mocking Rock and his family. Rock said he will bring it live at Raw some time before WrestleMania. He vowed to lay the smack down on both Cena and Miz.

Rock's delivery was good as always but there was a lot to not like about the way this was put together, from the stupid music and sound effects to some of the goofy verbiage. It certainly seems like they're trying to make Rock more of a heel given he's making kids cry and the biggest focal point of the feud now seems to be that Rock doesn't come to the shows.

Throughout the show, Michael Cole commentated from a glass box he labeled the Cole Mine apart from Jerry Lawler and Josh Mathews. It was amusing but goofy.

Miz came to the ring for a promo. He said that Rock's shirt says bring it and Rock brings

out-of-date catchphrases, bad tattoos, horrific movies, empty promises and pointless 20 minute diatribes like only a has-been can. Miz said Rock's father and grandfather were good but never WWE champion which means he is better than both of them. He observed that Rock likes to make six year olds cry and said that if Rock steps into the ring Miz will make Rock cry. He said Rock doesn't own Cena; Miz does. He concluded that he hopes Rock does bring it to Raw because he'll be overshadowed by the Miz. This was a good promo.

Great Khali beat Miz via DQ. The GM announced this match and John Cena vs. Alberto Del Rio as two first time matches for Raw. Both Lawler and Cole went to announce the GM e-mail but Lawler took it himself. Miz hit a few punches which Khali did a terrible job selling. Khali hit chops and applied a head vise. Miz got to the ropes and Alex Riley ran in for a DQ. Miz then hit Khali with a chair repeatedly and opened a cut on Khali's back.

This finish was ridiculous given Miz is in one of WrestleMania's top matches and Khali rarely appears and means nothing. Having Riley return two weeks after losing a must leave stipulation match was equally ridiculous. I mean, what on Earth was the point of that? Oh well, at least he's more a man of his word than Cena.

They aired Undertaker-HHH packages throughout the show. Snooki and John Morrison were hanging out backstage. Vickie Guerrero badmouthed Snooki. Snooki made fun of Vickie's weight. Vickie went to slap Snooki but Snooki stopped that and slapped her.

Sheamus won the US title from Daniel Bryan in a match where he would have to leave WWE if he lost. Yes, they did a leave town stipulation the next segment after a guy reneged on a leave town stipulation from two weeks ago. Thankfully the king wardrobe is gone. Bryan hit a tope but then Sheamus took over. He connected with a knee to the head.

Bryan reversed a back breaker into a roll up. Bryan avoided a Brogue kick and applied the LeBell lock but Sheamus got to the ropes. Bryan then reversed a razor's edge attempt into a rollup for two. Bryan gained control with forearms and kicks. He then came off the top but was countered with a Brogue kick for the pin. They tried to sell that Sheamus' "curse" is now over.

Michael Cole vowed to bring someone from the past to expose what Jerry Lawler is all about and brought Lawler's son Brian Christopher to the ring. He asked Christopher why he never used the name Brian Lawler. Christopher replied that growing up he never felt like he had a father and that he was neglected. He accused Lawler of never wanting anything to disrupt his spotlight and refusing to acknowledge Christopher as his son.

Jerry replied that Brian's not the only one glad that he didn't use the Lawler name, which was a pretty cold comeback for a face. Lawler called Christopher a bigger screw up than Charlie Sheen. He said that just associating with Cole says what sort of person Christopher is. Christopher said he competed at WrestleMania before Lawler and slapped Lawler a couple of times. Christopher said he didn't use the Lawler name because he's ashamed of Jerry.

Michael Cole said that Lawler doesn't care about his family or anyone else and that Cole will put Lawler in his place. That brought out Jim Ross. Ross said that this had gone too far. Cole

told Ross to go away because Cole is the voice of WWE now. Ross said that nobody can be the voice of WWE because the fans are the voices of WWE. Ross asserted that Lawler has been carrying Cole and called Cole a rat bastard.

Ross started to leave at which point Cole accused him of leaving the ring with his tail tucked between his legs. Ross dropped his microphone and took off his hat, jacket and tie. Cole did the same and the crowd chanted JR as they started to square off. Jack Swagger then attacked Lawler at the announce table from behind. Swagger kicked Ross and put him in the ankle lock. Lawler made the save but Cole jumped on Lawler's back and Swagger put Lawler in the ankle lock. Finally, Cole put Ross in the ankle lock. This was a great angle.

Randy Orton beat Mason Ryan. Ryan hit a kick to the head and back breakers. He applied a bear hug and hit the side effect for two. Orton then hit the RKO out of nowhere for the win. He punted Ryan after the match. Punk ran to the ring and got into Orton's face. Punk then backed off afraid.

They announced Drew Carey as entering the WWE Hall of Fame. He's the worst entrant ever and that covers amazing ground. Zack Ryder showed off his abs to Snooki backstage as Snooki came to the ring with Trish Stratus. She seemed impressed.

Vickie Guerrero beat Trish Stratus. Snooki watched from ringside. Vickie told Snooki not to lay her hands on Vickie again and claimed Snooki stole her Rolling Stone cover. This led to the second leave town stipulation on the same show where someone flagrantly renegeed on the same stipulation after only two weeks.

Vickie ran away and then tried to attack Trish with her shoes. Trish spanked Vickie with a shoe. Dolph Ziggler ran in and tried to stop things but John Morrison took out Ziggler. Lay Cool ran in and attacked Trish. Michelle McCool hit a kick to the head and Vickie covered for the pin. After the match, Snooki took out Lay Cool with help from Trish. Vickie issued a challenge for Trish, Snooki and Morrison vs. Lay Cool and Dolph for WrestleMania. That's a negative to me, but to their credit the live crowd here seemed to like Snooki.

John Cena beat Alberto Del Rio via DQ. Michael Cole at the beginning of the match said that Rock was in St. Louis. Del Rio worked over Cena. They traded punches. Cena hit shoulder blocks, the five knuckle and went for the FU when Brodus Clay ran in for the DQ.

I continue to completely disagree with the philosophy that you build up a PPV by booking matches between stars with crappy, inconclusive finishes. It just undermines the idea that matches matter. It would be so much more productive to book slightly less marquee matches and have the main eventers win clean. Then when they collide it seems like a lot bigger deal. It's not like this is some bizarre strategy. This is what pro wrestling has done for most of its history and it's what every successful sport and pay-per-view entity does too.

After the match, Rock's music hit but Miz appeared on the stage dressed like Rock with a thing over his hair to make him look bald. There were some slow people in the crowd because they continued cheering even when it became apparent it was Miz. Miz, Clay and Del Rio beat up

Cena. Miz sent Cena into the post, hit Cena with a microphone, and said he will own Cena all the way through Mania. Miz hit a suplex on the ramp. Cena went for the FU but Miz hit a DDT on the stage. He then threw Cena into a big logo and gave him the skull crushing finale on it.

Final Thoughts:

The WrestleMania build this year has felt bi-polar, with alternating effective and counterproductive segments. This show continued that trend, with some compelling and effective stuff mixed in with some head scratchers. The angles and promos that stood out the most were good ones, which helps.