

DEAN~! touches himself to EDDIE GUERRERO~! RIPPA~! touches himself to MARK HENRY~! YOU~! touch yourself to CHELSEA~! SEIYA SANADA~! MR. LEO~! HIROSHI YAMATO~! JOE COFFEY~! NAOMICHI MARUFUJI~! And, of course, TERRY FUNK~! Let's all go to the MALL~!

HIYA~!

Welcome to the Death Valley Driver Video Review Issue #177

Well all that Singles Going Steady stuff had to go somewhere. TWO ISSUES! ONE WEEK!!! 10 DAYS!!! CLOSE TOGETHER!!! TAKE THAT INTERNET!!!!

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SINGLES GOING STEADY

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DAICHI HASHIMOTO/ KAZUKI HASHIMOTO/ TAKUMI TSUKAMOTO vs. ATSUSHI MARUYAMA/ MASAYA TAKAHASHI/ TOSHIYUKI SAKUDA - BIG JAPAN PRO WRESTLING (2/2/2016)

(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

Hey! YOU MIGHT WANT TO SKIP TO...

This is your old pal, Dean. I used to be somebody in the online wrestling community and now I just kinda write wrestling reviews when I finally defeat all the reasons I have for not writing - each of which are preposterous, thus making their grip on the writer that much more infuriating. I am in the middle of writing the next sentence and I am noticing that it just might be the biggest run-on sentence I've ever written - which is impressive because I suck at a crazy little thing called restraint and truly love a good ridiculously long sentence, and I believe THAT I MUST BE FREE! The Hashimoto boys are actually called collectively Team Yamato and I will now figure out if I've seen Tsukamoto before, much less if I have ever seen the three fellas they are wrestling; because the problem with driving 85 hours of wrestling directly into your head every couple of months - as I have kind of settled into a seasonal viewing/reviewing cycle, in that I quit watching wrestling for month and now I have actually been watching a lot of wrestling the last couple of weeks - especially after being hipped to the RuTube channel for whoever used to post everything I wanted to watch on Dailymotion, having actually found a DEEP NET-ESQUE place to put all the fabulous wrestling that has spoilt us for so long- and also there is the development where - for those who used to read these in the 1990s when I was a struggling, comical drunk, note that I haven't been drunk in 15ish years and I have four children, ranging from 10 to 19, SO note that the first three of my kids brushed off all attempts to ever really give a shit about wrestling until my 10 year old got WWE Y2K16 (or whatever its called) for his million dollar PS4 and is now just fucking PSYCHOTICALLY into wrestling. It's like the first time you watched the Super J Cup or the first time you ever got a Dave Scherer comp (or your first Schneider comp for you slightly younger folks.) THUS I have actually been forced into watching WWE after a like 10 year hiatus. Man, is WWE annoying. I hate the whole enterprise. But it is also really fun to see wrestling through the eyes of a child so it is also pretty great. Fatherhood is pretty awesome. So anyway, the POINT is that I have probably reviewed matches with the non-Team Yamato guys in the last two years, but memories of them did not survive the last giant three month Shoving Of Puroresu Guys Into My Head epoch and THUS YOU get to be ENRICHED by the knowledge that I am looking at these punks with fresh eyes and YOU the gentle reader can revel in the fact that I can't remember what the fuck I said before and I have not the WILL to go back and try to

defend anything I said. Well, that was lot of build up but I didn't want to act like nothing happened between the last Driverette and today.

HERE~!

Tsukamoto is Largish-For-DDT DDT guy. Maruyama has mask of a tiger and was a Osaka Pro guy it appears- since he was trained by Super Delfin. Takahashi is from the Asuka Project (yes! The Asuka Project! Kenichiro Arai is their champion. He beat this same Takahashi for the title. After watching this match, I would watch that.) and has been a death match guy for 3 years with a major in JUDO! Sakuda is a Big Japan rookie. I assume his teeth will smashed into powder by Kazuki Hashimoto. What a weird card. This feels like a young lions tournament- if your young lions are actually guys working in a sun glasses kiosk at the mall during the day. Let us view the YamatoCARNAGEMatchBASHING~! Man, Tsukamoto looks even scummier in this match than his cagematch.net mugshot. He is taller than... WAIT! That's Daichi Hashimoto- MAN, he is getting fat and seedy looking. I BACK HIS PLAY ONE HUNDRED PER CENT! YOUR DADDY WAS SHINYA HASHIMOTO. If you want to be a second son wastrel, scouring the underbelly of the industry that your daddy helped create, looking for part-time construction workers to punch in the face, I am all over it. Talk about pathos. Sakuda gets in a lot hilariously botched offense early to set up his immediate death later, as one who has watched these matches for a few decades would assume. Takahashi tries to bring the STIFF to Daichi Hash and thus we rejoice, as this gets all skull-busty and fun. Tsukamoto is also really seedy looking and he will lay it in. I might have to follow him if I can remember him past May. I need to note also that Takahashi will take a beating and fire back, so I dig him. A third guy tags in and he doesn't have a mask so I'm guessing it isn't Maruyama. Unless he lost his mask. YOU, the beloved reader, will probably not lose sleep over this detail. Rookie boy and Takahashi beat up on DDT guy until Daichi Hashimoto tags in the fucking crushing and bashing and stomping and annihilating and smashing and stretching and gouging and mauling of the rookie kicks in. They don't totally murder him but they do hit the median amount of justified kicks to a rookie's teeth to warrant pinning him, so you have that. Nine minutes of WORTH IT just because you can catch up on Daichi Hashimoto transforming into 1995 Tommy Rich right before your eyes.

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SEIYA SANADA vs TATSUHIKO YOSHINO - BIG JAPAN PRO WRESTLING (2/2/2016)

(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

I watched TNA for a while but I missed the Sanada X-Division title reign. You, the one reading, and You, the one who follows TNA very carefully, will inform your gentle writer if I should lose sleep over that fact. Yoshino is from fuckin GUTS WORLD!so I know who I am going for. I'm pretty sure I reviewed his title match against Diasuke and I think I liked it as much as I liked the Diasuke vs Gannosuke match. I'm sure there is a 4 star match against Mr Gannosuke sitting next to some really disturbing pornography on the hard drive of the GUTS World audio-visual specialist. This match has a chance to be cool because Sanada was trained by Osamu Nishimura and GUTS World is actually a really thread-bare version of MUGA, THUS they actually start the match with a lock up and arm bar sequence. HA! I am fucking into this now. MUGA! MUGA! MUGA! Dradition. Straight into a kneebar/headlock sequence! DRADITION! Front Chancery! DORY FUNK, BITCH! Then Sanada reverses into a tricked out takedown that Yoshino reverses into a standing kneebar! TATSUMI FUJINAMI, MOTHERFUCKERZ~! Headlocks and reverses into take-overs into a first near fall. This is fucking WAAAAAY WAAAAAY more than I thought this would be. If there is no highspots, I will declare this an early Match Of The Year Candidate, 70's Throwback Match division. CRAVATE, fuckin CRAVATE out of a quarter Nelson. IT SAYS FUCKING "WRESTLING" ON THE

MARQUEE, MOTHERFUCKERS! Sanada is back to the kneebar until Yoshino escapes and gets to a VERTICAL motherfucking BASE! GORDON SOLIE, DADDY! Sanada loses his cool in a MUGA way by- AND THIS IS THE MOST FUCKING MUGA/DRADITION/FUJINAMI/NISHIMURA way to lose your cool- he doesn't go for a headlock, he INSTEAD lands a European Uppercut. If you can't dig that, then go back to your thing you young people do. Euro-Uppercut and the hideous concession to the Modern World by dropkicking Yoshino while Yoshino is sitting down. Oh man, that shit needs to go away ten years ago. Sanada returns to the 70s by hitting a Murdoch elbow across the throat of Yoshino while Yoshino is hanging off the ring apron. I await Yoshino to punch Sanada in the face and Sanada to check if his tooth is still there. En Lieu, a dropkick to the head as he dangles and Sanada follows up with a piledriver to the mat. Yoshino becomes confused and sells the pile driver as he rolls in the ring- in that he is stuck in a netherworld. I saw Blackjack Mulligan piledrive Harley Race onto the cement floor of the Norfolk Scope in 1979. Race sold it and bled like Blackjack shot him in the face with a gun. The modern piledriver in Japan is a transition move in these junior heavyweight affairs to set up your 120 pound wee folk to do a 360' spinning thigh-slappin' Backstabber! for TWO! Yoshino feels the Dradition and holds his head as Sanada gets the second nearfall of the match. Yoshino sells it as Sanada LEANS INTO A CHINLOCK! This match is fucking awesome. EUROPEAN UPPERCUT! And then Sanada puts Yoshino on the toprope and we are about to lose our MOTY-70sTBD candidate, but first the ninth commercial for that Witch movie. Damn Russians stealing Daily Motion's most annoying business models. Yoshino elbows Sanada to the mat and hits a Missile Dropkick, thus skipping the 80s and heading directly to the mid-90s. Yoshino hits a DDT- which is 80's- but it isn't the finisher, so it is a 90's DDT. Yoshino goes for the nearfall and goes directly into a kneebar at two- which is a 90's Kazuo Yamazaki type of thing. Sanada hits the ropes and does a little selling before clamping on a headlock- 50's/60's/70's wrestling- and they start trading chops (all wrestling ever). Yoshino unviels his 90's FMW Gannosuke roots by hitting a Thunder Fire Powerbomb for a nearfall. Sanada hits a Missile Dropkick and they trade a really elaborate and fun roll-up sequence. Sanada hits a Diamond Cutter, a Tiger Suplex Hold and then wins a perfectly nasty Dragon Sleeper Variation. I THOUGHT THIS WOULD SUCK! It didn't! The dream: They have a 45 minute 70's match in GUTS World.

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GO SHIOZAKI vs. MINORU SUZUKI - PRO WRESTLING NOAH (1/31/2016)

(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

The only other time I can precisely trace the point to where I came around on a wrestler, other than Minoru Suzuki, was when Phil Schneider, Tom Karro-Garsner and I went to the Greensboro Fair and saw Pierroth live. Pierroth live was the walking epitome of violence and menace, something I never latched onto while watching him on tape. It was awesome it was like the moment where I realized that Tenryu wasn't a washed up old guy but a true hurricane of ass-beating. It was a real epiphany. Minoru Suzuki clicked in my mind two days ago when I watched Go Shiozaki and Yoshinobu Kanemaru vs Minoru Sukuki and El Desparado from two days before this match. Maybe it's just that I didn't see Suzuki's strengths presented to me in such a raw manner and I ignored him altogether after the first couple of matches I saw with him in. But anyway, I finally figured out that he is doing what I dig most in wrestling currently- like Okabayashi, Kohei Sato, the ilk. The thing about the tag match that triggered it was the fact that he works stiff as fuck- which I hadn't seen before- but he also is of course really great on the mat, so yeah. It's like a Tenryu moment- when you first realize Tenryu is awesome- and hopefully this will be a string of matches like 1992-2005 Tenryu. The match at hand. They dick around for ten minutes with introductions and stalling and what have you and that is actually good because the running time is

30 minutes, and I'm going to be FIFTY YEARS OLD IN TWO MONTHS so I must conserve all my precious moments, focusing directly on people bashing the shit out of each other, staying away from stupid time-wasting garbage as I sprint to the grave. (Imagine my chagrin now that I have to watch the two and half hours of bullshit that I have to suffer through to watch the 24 minutes of wrestling that is on RAW, now that my suddenly eleven year old son is a fervent wrestling fan now.) Go Shiozaki I've always sorta liked but never really had a match to point where he was worth getting excited about. Here, he and Suzuki beat the dog-piss out of each other and Shiozaki is all fired up firing back from the ass-beating Suzuki starts laying on him. He makes a better "Fuck you old man" face than my 13 year old son makes when I force him to dump the garbage. And I assume my son will also crush my chest with chops before he is 17, as I hide behind my wife- hoping she will fight him. Suzuki bumps to the floor and Shiozaki's chest and palm of his hand are bright red- to the point where you can see the red from a mid-range shot, so that's pretty fucking great. Suzuki starts working on the arm after getting interference from his douchebag second, Taichi, and procuring and TARANTULA! over the ropes. Then the evil duo do the great thing of taking turns beating on Shiozaki on the floor while the other argues with the ref. So Memphis, so sublime. Suzuki carves into Shiozaki's skull with a screwdriver as the ref screams at the second. Shiozaki doesn't blade, which is disappointing. Suzuki goes back to working on the arm leans into a beautiful Wakigatame into a Crippler Crossface into a total Volk Han-ian variation of a Rings Of Saturn for the total RINGS score! Then he kicks Shoizaki in the head a whole lot and starts kicking him everywhere else and it is awesome. Then he focuses on the arm and Shiozaki sells it like a champ before trying a scoffed-at hopespot. Suzuki is sooooo fucking great with the psychology at this point. His face and punches and kicks all add up to him saying, "YOU HAVE GOT TO BE FUCKING KIDDING ME, YOU FUCKING PUSSY. I AM WHIPPING YOUR ASS AND ALL YOU CAN DO STARE AT ME." Fucking awesome. THAT is how you set up your underdog babyface comeback. The crowd watching feels empathy for your face and thus will back his comeback with actual emotional attachment. Can Shiozaki do it? They trade chops and Suzuki switches to punches before beginning to wither to the chops and tries to cut off Shiozaki with a boot to the face as Go comes of the ropes, but Shiozaki stays on offense and crushes Suzuki with a chop in the corner before hitting the swanky Fisherman's Buster for two. Shiozaki gets up and sells the arm for a second and Suzuki sells the Fisherman Buster like this is 1978 and he is Tatsumi Fujinami. Suzuki drags Go into the corner and starts mauling him with chops and kicks- slapping him in the face and laughing at him. Shiozaki fires back with chops and tries to seal it with a lariat; but Suzuki counters with an armbar that he rolls into a Jujigatame for a few seconds- but breaks the hold and just slams his arm to the mat and goes back to stomping on him before sinking in a sleeper hold, because Suzuki doesn't want to just beat Shiozaki, he wants to humiliate him. It's great stuff. Shiozaki judo throws to escape and hits the ropes to try another lariat but Suzuki ducks under and procures another sleeper that Go backdrop drivers out of. Suzuki blocks the first lariat but catches a second and Shiozaki hits a Jackhammer, crushing Suzuki like a bug. Shiozaki sells the arm before making the cover to make the kick out work in the context of the psychology of the match. They run the ropes and Suzuki hits him with a dropkick and just starts beating the shit out of him until the ref gets in between them to scold Suzuki for using his balled up fist to beat the living dogfuck out of Shiozaki. Then, in another Memphian twist, Kanemaru (who is Shiozaki's second but who didn't really help him much when Suzuki and Taichi were taking turns beating on Shiozaki outside the ring) jumps to Suzuki-gun by hitting a Spinning DDT on Shiozaki, THUS, this betrayal helps to set up Suzuki getting the pin by crushing Shiozaki's skull with a cradle piledriver. They evilly beat on him after the bell until Maybach Tanaguchi makes the save? And then Maybach unmask. And I don't watch nearly enough NOAH to figure out when Maybach jumped from Suzuki-gun and became friends with Go Shiozaki but it's wrestling and I feel I've gotten aboard right when this all might start getting interesting. But yeah, you wanna watch this. Shiozaki is set up to be the victim here and it appears that he is going to be the Super Delfin in this variation of the Kaientia Deluxe vs Inshin gun-esque feud. I don't know if Shiozaki has enough fire to counter the sheer awesome

evil of Suzuki but Suzuki brings enough hate to the match make any face a super star if he is up to the task. Very interesting wrestling from something as usually bland as NOAH.

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DELIAH DOOM/LAYNIE LUCK vs. PAIGE TURNER/ALLIE KAT - River City Wrestling (RCW) 6/12/15

(by PHIL RIPPA)

Dean posted this in the 2015 Match of the Year thread and if ever a thread title lied lied lied it is this one. (Again – Dean posted the Villanos/Pyscho Circus Triplemania match in the same thread). So... yeah... this was... God Bless them they try. River City Wrestling is out of San Antonio for those tracking your US indy feds. This is being run out of a High School gym possibly in Nebraska and the ring announcer is wearing a cape and a mask. Clearly this will be more for the wrestling experience than the wrestling quality.

Paige Turner is doing an evil librarian gimmick... or at least an evil nerd gimmick. She has glasses and a book and her name is PAIGE TURNER! There are only so many directions you can go with that. Allie Kat is another in the cat based gimmicks for women's wrestlers. Way to break down barriers folks. Man I am trying to decide if I dislike the terrible puns for names more than the WWE random name generator that would have ended up on Reagan and Cheyenne (because in the WWE – bitches be crazy and Mononymous.)

Delilah Doom and Laynie Luck are nise Tiffany and Debbie Gibson respectively. They come out to "Let's Go To The Mall" and no matter what the match quality I will give this thumbs up because no one else has the balls to do the deepest of deep cuts like coming out TO A FAKE SONG IN A TV SHOW THAT ENDED IT'S RUN TWO YEARS AGO!

You can stop now – with this vision of the way wrestling should be. Or you can then spend the next 10 minutes going through the match. God Bless them they try.

Turner and Kat (the direct to video sequel to Turner and Hooch) are women in the vein of say Nia Jax or Jessica Havoc. Doom and Luck are a shorter Bayley and a pastier Becky Lynch. Lord – Doom has a lot of tattoos. She has a tat sleeve that Randy Orton might have second thoughts about.

To their credit – they work a basic match with this team set-up the way it should be worked. The smaller girls using their agility to strike fast and stay away from the more power offense of the heels. And when the heels are on offense – it is just grind them down time. Turner at least knows to play to her strengths which is just lariats, short leg drops and folding tiny girls in half. No one in this match should ever through a strike again in their life.

Some other stuff happens that involves the faces winning and then them taking their Young Boy Tom to the Mall.

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NAOMICHI MARUFUJI vs. TAKASHI SUGIURA- PRO WRESTLING NOAH (1/31/2016)

(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

I, like most right thinking wrestling fans, wrote off Naomichi Marufuji as boring and useless fifteen years ago. His offense wasn't good, his matches were tedious e. t. c. But it has been like ten years since I watched a Marufuji match with any attentiveness, maybe he has changed. Maybe he gained weight and started laying it in. Maybe he is the under 200 pound King of the Ricki Choshyu Strong Style Revival movement. Maybe monkeys will fly out of Madonna's butt. But let's hold off on the pessimism. My 11 year is a brand new WWE fan and I just spent 75 clams on tickets to the March match at the Richmond coliseum so I must hone my optimism to a razor's edge to not come off as the shittiest smark father who ever lived. Yeah! They are doing stuff and this is awesome! Better than when my dad took me to see Dick Murdo... let us move on. I watched the first minute of this match and Sugiura brings the assbeat so hard the first minute that I immediately turned it off and waited until now to review it with NEW EYES! So now, for GHC WORLD TITLE! I shall watch this and hope that this is violent and awesome and not infuriating. Join me as I hope against hope. I was right there in my grandma's living room when Drew Pearson caught the Hail Mary. My dad jumped up and hit a light fixture. This could happen twice in a lifetime. Today could be the day. I love Marufuji's Ode To Jushin Thunder Liger pre-match getup. There are asses in the seats so I am thinking that maybe I am in the minority in not wanting to ever see Marufuji wrestle ever ever ever. Let's face facts, I'm a bit "focused" in what I like in pro wrestling. I am pretty specific and I like some things that are off the beaten path. But you know me, and you know what I like. They knucklelock to begin and opt for the collar and elbow but Sugiuri takes a swing and misses when they hit the ropes and they then just start beating the total living dogshit out of each other. Sugiura has these sores on chest, like he had a melanoma biopsy the day before the match, so they open up upon impact of Marufuji's chops and blood spews forth. This is 45 seconds in, so I'm guessing this is going to be a match that I treasure more than I should. Sugiura fuckin NAILS Marufuji in the teeth and Marufuji says, "That's all ya got?" and chops deeply into the blood splotch on Sugiura's chest. They kick each other in the face and then miss kicking each other in the face and returning to neutral base. Or whatever. They take it to the floor because it's NOAH. They rented those guard rails and you are going to dive into them. With that out of the way, Marufuji goes back smacking Sugiura's chest into a larger wad of plasma. He switches to kicking the blood area and then just fucking CRUSHING Sugiura's chest with chops. This is pretty fucking great. They do some wrestling things- trying to suplex each other in or out of the ring culminating with Sugiura doing an Angel Wings with Marufuji hanging off the apron, thus putting Sugiura in the driver seat; that begins with a rear chinlock that moves into light kicking. This builds up to very not light forearms to the face. Marufuji's comebacks are really fucking great- as he lays it in as good as he is getting, and he is getting it pretty good. Sugiura hits a spin kick to the stomach and thus protects the giant blood target on his chest for a minute. As does the Body Vice. Sugiura focuses on the stomach with forearms and it is fucking NASTY. Marufuji's stomach pain gets worse and worse when he tries a crossbody block lands on Sugiura's knee, leading to the rib-breakers. Marufuji lands a pescada to TRANSITION himself back to offense. They do other wrestling things that all point back to Marufuji slamming his hand into the blood bespeckled area on Sugiura's chest and Sugiura answering with truly hellish forearms to the head. It is a formula that I back one hundred percent. Your champ has a shitty low-grade junior hvywt offense? Let him try to use it until he realizes it doesn't work on the ass-stomper he is facing, THUS realizing that he must rise to the ass-stomper level himself. That's just good psychology to make me want to watch a Marufuji match. It's weird. Marufuji does ONE good-looking thing on offense, and that is chop. Someone must have sat him down and showed him a Wahoo McDaniels match because Wahoo would fiddle around with other things during the match but the audience attention wasn't galvanized until he and Flair or Valentine would start beating the shit out of each other. Wahoo's chops were so good that they were the psychology of the match: can he get enough in to win, or will Flair stomp his kneecap soon enough to sidetrack him. With the added element

of blood in this match, you now have a decent Wahoo match. Can Marufuji bash enough blood out of Sugiura's chest to keep Sugiura from collapsing Marufuji's skull? That is a question I would like to see answered- THUS you have a successful wrestling match. And they go back to the formula- kick in the face kick in the face kick in the face kick in the face forearms crushes jaw forearms crushes jaw chop makes holes in chest bigger chops make holes in chest bigger. You don't have get to elaborate to make a great fucking match and they are on the way. Fuck your MOVESET~! Sugiura sells the horror of his chest and goes back to the stomach to lead to a ankle lock submission spot. Marufuji reverses it into a very tricked-out cobra clutch series of variations which leads to a nearfall which leads to a battle for the suplex into a Marufuji dropkick. Marufuji Sunset Flips Sugiura off the apron to the floor and does the NASTY brainbuster on the floor to the apron. The strange property of the kinetic energy of anything happening on the apron making it 7 times worse is in full effect. Then Marufuji chops Sugiura while they are on the apron and Sugiura responds by kicking him in the stomach while on the apron. I love this simple formula utilizing odd variations. Like the fucking PSYCHOTIC Snap Suplex off the apron to the floor by Sugiura. Afterwards, Sugiura sits in the corner, resting and pondering the blood coming out of his chest as the ref counts. As Marufuji gets in the ring, Sugiura hits a Toprope Brainbuster to set up an Everest German that Marufuji avoids at first and then succumbs to for a nearfall. So they get back to the basic premise of the match as they head for home. Sugiura hits 5 straight forearms to the head and Marufuji hits two spinning kicks to stop the onslaught. They go back to bashing each other with forearms. Marufuji sells the damage as they land and he sells it all the way to the ground- as the ref checks for a knockout. Marufuji makes it to his feet and gets in a superkick to try to turn the tide as he goes for his SHUIRANUI! But Sugiura stops him and slams his head into the top of ring post. Marufuji is in the Tree of Woe as he takes a knee to the stomach. Sugiura goes up top and Marufuji catches him and hits a really fabulous Spanish Fly. And then they have assorted Team Suzuki run ins which are countered at first, to the point where Marufuji can hit a perfectly fine Shiramui. BUT THEN Minoru Suzuki hits the ring and cradle piledrives Marufuji and mayhem is around the ring. Sugiura hits a Spear for two and Marufuji hits a superkick and THEN THEY BUMP THE REF AGAIN! I await powder and possibly Sugiura's girlfriend to come out with a black eye. So anyway. Sugiura beats on Marufuji with a chair for a while and then tries to wake up the ref. Sugiura hits a Argentinian Driver and gets the win! Then Suzuki's entire 80 man stable storms the ring and beats on everybody in the building. Suzuki spreads out a NOAH flag in the middle of the ring and Sugiura stands on it with the belt. Commissioner Tunney tries to award Sugiura the NOAH Trophy but Sugiura kicks it over. They kick Marufuji a while as you notice that Sugiura's chest looks like it has a buckshot pattern across it. I really dug this match for the most part. I probably didn't need Watts UWF-level booking, but that's what you got. Who does Watts UWF-level booking in Japan? Marufuji is pissed that no one in NOAH came out to help him when Suzuki and his boys were smashing his skull. That's fun booking. I await the Marufuji Crowe make-up. Problematic but you should watch it. It's very violent like you like your wrestling. HOLY FUDGE! I just realized that the booking of this match actually makes me give a shit about how Marufuji responds to this. It's a Valentine's day miracle!

~!~

EDDY GUERRERO /APOLO DANTES/ CESAR DANTES vs FUERZA GUERRERA/ EL SUPREMO/JACQUE MATE - EMLL (11/10/1991)

(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

Eddy, Eddy Eddy. My aunts from my dad's side were visiting us in Arkansas the day that Elvis died. My aunts are Hawaiian so there was different bond with Elvis. They were not from the South so it wasn't like blue haired ladies weeping about the man who was the soundtrack to their youth. With my aunts, it was sullen, silent weeping- like a friend had died. It was the Elvis/Bruce Lee type thing that I still don't really understand, there are things that bind my dad's side to things Asian by proximity. I have trouble getting their perspective on things because it is so different than the mid-atlantic perspective of my mom's side. My guess is that Elvis was an outsider that won the hearts of my aunts right before they left Honolulu in 1959 and they carried it with them to California, then Virginia in 1960, and all that culminated in the triumph and merging of "Blue Hawaii" or something. Its mystical and vague like the entire poverty-stricken lives of my dad's side of the family. SO there are a lot things outside of my experience that I notice since I am first generation on the mainland. Elvis dying was one of those things. Eddy Guerrero was Elvis in this comparison and my aunts are we first generation internet wrestling fans. Eddy was outside of most of the ideas of wrestling that I was raised on but he was awesome from the first time I saw him, I accepted him on his own terms and was a die-hard fan to the end. Everytime he pops up like this on my YouTube feed, or like last week when they showed a match against Rey Misterio on WWC to promote Rey Misterio coming to Puerto Rico, it's like my aunts when "Are You Lonesome Tonight" comes on the Music Of Your Life station they listened to when they played Canasta for 9 hours at a stretch. It's easy to get sentimental about Eddy Guerrero, even at this point after so many wrestlers have died and made many of us fans hardened and immune to the process. The thing about this match is that it also has Apolo Dantes in it. I've seen maybe ten Apolo Dantes matches. For me, the most important match of these was the first one I saw- which was from 1995, if I remember correctly, and was a singles match against Silver King. It was important for me as a wrestling fan because it was a breakthrough- as I had pretty much summed Lucha Libre in my mind at the time as fun outfits and crazy highspots and I was ready to settle my opinions of it and veiwing habits accordingly. This was the first time I said, "WAAIIITTT. Lucha Libre can have really great singles matches? I will start watching more of them." The thing is that the Dantes/Silver King match is, in hindsight, not even all that close to the strengths of a great Lucha Libre singles match. There is no blood, no hate, no primal violence. But it was the doorway to actually paying attention to the next El Hijo del Santo vs Negro Casas match- which then leads you to looking for the unique characteristics of a great Lucha Match- blood, hate, manliness, pride, revenge, honor- you know, the reasons that make pro wrestling actual art. So that is where I start with this match. ONE can only hope that it doesn't suck ass. The match starts with Cesar Dantes who is a better looking than his brother, I believe- though I am not a man who finds other men attractive I keep telling myself. Supremo is coated in gold! He and Cesar do the arm wringers and arm drags and one gets to ease into the match with little things to entertain you as you start to get the blood flowing for the EXCITEMENT to come. Apolo Dantes tags in and body slams Supremo and I remember why I like Apolo despite him being hideous compared to his gorgeous brother (probably. Not gay.) Jacque Mate and Apolo Dante do basically the same as Cesar and Supremo but it is more intense because Apolo makes really great faces to make your mind attach to the submission hold. That is the difference in a lot of wrestling, it matters not from where it comes. But we are still easing in as Eddy Guerrero and Fuerza Guerrera start even more tricked out mat work. Eddy and Fuerza start pulling each other's hair and the fun actually starts as they trade suplexes and Fuerza gets pissed at Eddy being such an upstart punk. Fuerza just starts beating on Eddy and everything breaks lose as EVIL kicks everybody's ass. Cesar gets some offense in and this is where I notice that this is a good example of the father-like yammering that I subject my children to (and I know that they will one day have children and force them to listen to THEIR insane bullshit about stuff nobody else could possibly give a shit about, so it is all cool with me. I can see the big picture and that big picture will be about how 2-d video games were better than these hologram video games, or some bullshit that will annoy my ADOOOORRRRRRABBLLLE grand-children. I will give them candy and money and tell lie to them about their parents. It's gonna be awesome. "You know I

caught your momma eating a stick of butter once. She was 15!"). My 11 year old is into the WWE (though he is being lured into the NBA- by having just started playing NBA 2k16. I love that about him. He gets really into something for a few months then puts it on the backburner once he gets really into something else. Then he re-visits them later. I miss him being really into Kiss and AC/DC. I do not miss him being really into Minecraft.) He watches Smackdown and RAW and NXT (he used his birthday money to get the WWE Network.) and he will record Impact. He likes the action but he hates all the talking. Everytime we watch RAW and he fast forwards over Stephanie McMahon talking for 15 minutes, I sometimes talk to him like my uncle used to talk to me about rock and roll in the 50s- "these GODDAM kids today don't know how to do it! I was playing with a combo at navy bars in Ocean View until FIVE in the morning!" I should show my boy this match to show him that your OLD SCHOOL guys didn't need a five week set up with 180 minutes of talking to tell a wrestling story. Your GREATS could do it all in the ring. LIKE THIS! Eddy is a tecnico in this. I didn't realize that when it started because Apolo Dantes was always a rudo. Supremo and Jacque Mate are on the periphery of my Lucha Libre experience so they could have gone either way and I wouldn't have been surprised. Fuerza is a rudo and that is the only constant I had going in. I don't know who hated who or who did what to who to set-up this match or if there was even anything to get these 6 particular wrestlers together in ring at this particular time. But I watch the match and I know the story because they pick it up cold off the floor and make it come alive as soon Apolo Dantes makes the first facial expression of intensity and annoyance at Jacque Mate, and kicks into gear when Fuerza gets fed up with the upstart tecnico Guerrerro and starts punching everyone. The story is told through wrestling- Eddy and Fuerza are both very technically proficient and both can totally go on the mat in a classic Lucha Libre style, SHOWING you this in the first 45 seconds they lock up. The difference is that Eddy is younger and thus a hair faster- thus all the tricky take-downs. Fuerza is a victim twice, escapes, grabs Eddy's hair, gets up, looks at his life passing him by as this smirking kid makes him look like chump- AND THESE FUCKING FANS CHEER FOR HIM- and he says, "Fuck them, fuck this guy and fuck those guys." They trade SWEET suplexes and Fuerza keeps getting more pissed off to the point of just up and attacking the tecnico corner. The rudos feel unity and also love a good fight, so a brawl breaks out. Nobody has to translate anything from Spanish or direct you towards a Youtube synopsis of the contract signing or whatever. It's all right there in the ring. And it's a pretty basic story here. Great lucha goes deeper then any other style, when it comes to being able to tell a story completely in the ring. I love the whole sub-context that Fuerza knows pretty much all the technical moves that the young technicos know but there is no way the young tecnico knows the depths of cheating that Fuerza will sink to get the edge. And THAT story is as old as wrestling that I can remember. That is every Ric Flair NWA traveling champion match. The Lucha Libre aspect that adds to the allure of this match is seeing what a great bumping rudo Supremo is and how fun the Dantes are with the tagteam moves. Eddy takes the first fall with a missile dropkick and pins Fuerza with one knee across the chest WHICH I'm assuming WILL NOT STAND. Fuerza is ELECTRIC on the apron, clapping for Cesar as he outwrestles Supremo all the way out of the ring, but clapping for Cesar just enough to give him a false sense of security as Fuerza tries to jump on him as he turns his back. Little details of rudoness are the key. Apolo tags in and Fuerza walks over to Eddy and says, "Tag this young punk. I want him." Apolo refuses and Fuerza tries to shake his hand but kicks him in the stomach instead, because Fuerza is awesome. Apolo responds with three hiptosses and double armdrag to the floor. Apolo tags Eddy and Jacque Mate gets a chance at the young fella. Eddy tries to match strength with Jacque and almost wins after bridging all the way to his back and powering back up, just to have Jacque kick him in the stomach for this effort. Eddy has learned a valuable lesson about the advantages of not giving a crap about the rules, or the fans, or the ANYTHING else that gets between you and WINNING! Eddy and Jacque have an awkward exchange that is completely smoked by Apolo Dantes and Fuerza Guerrera just fucking killing it a million miles an hour running the ropes. Fuerza gets monkey flipped by the end and bails out to the floor. Jacque comes over and calls him a pussy, and you get another layer. Jacque

punches Cesar in the face and mauls him with a headbutt and they maul him some more in the corner as Jacque beats on Eddy for trying to make the save. Fuerza sees an opening and goes to settle Eddy's hash as Jacque holds him and punches him in the stomach, throws him to the floor and beats on his punk ass right there in front of his stupid fans! Supremo meanwhile gets the last recorded pinfall from a lateral suplex in the history of wrestling (probably) and then all three grab an Eddy limb and twist and spindle to get the pinfall of EVIL! They kick Apolo as he drags Eddy out of the melee because they are evil and don't give a fuck. Fuerza is in the ring and is all up in Eddy's business, daring him to get back into the ring. So the third fall is Eddy and Fuerza to settle the score. Fuerza punches him dead in the face and they pummel him in the rudo corner until Hermanos Dantes makes the save. Eddy drags Fuerza to the middle of the ring and Eddy is fired up! He hits the Ricky Steamboat forearm and bounces Fuerza all over the ring while Cesar, Apolo, Jacque and Supremo stomp each other at ringside. Then Eddy holds Fuerza so Apolo can hit him with a dropkick after hitting the belly-to-belly but Fuerza ducks. Eddy wrangles him back and Apolo goes up top for a Missile Dropkick but Fuerza ducks again and Apolo nails Eddy, allowing Fuerza to get the pin and then stand on Eddy as people take pictures. Post-match, Eddy goes crazy and beats on the Dantes like a maniac! Eddy turns evil and one of the greatest heel runs in wrestling history kicks off! And you didn't even have to have to know anything about anybody this match to understand every aspect of the turn. This is great. Eddy is fucking awesome because he does a really great fired up babyface comeback in the third caida and THEN does a fucking AWESOME total psycho rudo ass-stomp on Cesar and Apolo Dantes postmatch. The man had range. He was a charismatic face which folks will likely forget in time, because he was just so much fun as a heel. Ah man, fuck the world, Eddy is dead.

~!~

TERRY FUNK vs. MARK HENRY – WWF RAW 1998 (June 1, 1998 - King of the Ring Qualifying Match)

(by PHIL RIPPA)

I love Terry Funk. I love Mark Henry. So excuse me if I pitch a tent while watching this match. Though if we are speaking candidly, it is difficult to go beyond half mast when Vince McMahon is calling the action. Young Mark Henry is awesome and there is nothing better when they put him in with an awesome veteran to help develop him. Really breaking in hosses like you break in a wild horse is fine with me. Granted Henry (nor any wild horse) isn't going to apply the Greco Roman Groin Shot that Funk works in (which is too fucking awesome for words) but you get my drift.

This match is just Funk going "Okay Mark – I am going to hit you as fucking hard as I can and then you are going to hit me as fucking hard as you can." And Mark Henry goes "Ok". It turns into a crazy brawl (Mark Henry head shaking. Check. Terry Funk doing crazy ass old man things. Check. Mark Henry crazy ass ring step bump. Check.) but you wouldn't know it because Lawler sucks up to Vince and Vince yells about Kane and the Undertaker a bunch. JR kinda tries to keep things focused but there is only so many "OH GOD!"s you can drop before it becomes pointless.

Everyone's attention is finally drawn to the match when Funk Barry Bonds Henry's skull with a chair (ignoring what we know now about the subject – Vince does have a good line about how as loud as the chair shot sounded it is way louder inside your own head). Funk then crashes and burns on an Asai Moonsault to the floor (which Henry does a really shitty job of catching but I am thinking that was the first time he ever saw a crazy old man doing that and he froze).

They get back in the ring (sadly too quickly for discerning tastes but understandable given the clear constraints of time they were given) and Henry runs through a bunch of power moves culminating with a

power bomb/splash one/two combo for the win. Such a good use of a veteran who isn't doing anything else. This is four minutes of fun.

~!~

YUJI HINO vs SHIORI ASAHI - K-DOJO (8/9/2015)

(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

You can feel free to skip this: I am CLEANING HOUSE! I am on fire! Actually, I did get my youtube To Watch Later list to 20ish from 400ish, so I feel good about that. So then I went to my Daily Motion Watch Later list, got it down to 7 and then found 30 Joshi matches that I have a passing interest (other than Io Shirai making me feel like filthy disgusting old bastard) so I BULKED it up to past 40 again, so I will chip away at it once a week, like today! This is from K-Dojo and has been buried on my list for a while. Hell, it's only 13 minutes and I love Yuji Hino mauling rookies like a grizzly bear! BUT THEN, I look up Shiori Asahi on cagematch.net to see if he has a background in badminton or JUDO~! and read that he has been wrestling 13 years and is 38 years old! I could be his father! If I mounted beautiful ladies in Japan when I was 11! The career section of a cagematch profile is great; I note that he was beaten to death on two consecutive days in Big Japan in March of 2015. Actually, I'm guessing that I actually watched 6-man where he gets stomped on by Sekimoto, Kazuki Hashimoto and Kawakami. So yeah, I have felt pity for this man before in life and I get the feeling that I will again in this match also, because Yuji Hino will lay it in. Asahi's favorite slimy indie to frequent is Kyushu Pro. Kyushu Pro's champion is Mental Kid- who was trained by Ultimo Dragon because of course he was. Asahi is a veteran because he spends the first few minutes of the match avoiding to make any contact with Hino and his completely assholeish chops. It really goes on for a while. Since I wasn't losing my mind to review this too deeply, I back their Lawler stall one hundred percent. I mean, it's 13 minutes long and they don't lock-up until 2:30. And then they do some clean breaks- but they are breaks that are to humiliate Asahi so dig the amount of old school psychology that they shove into a ten minute match. THEN Asahi does clean breaks to show that he has the WILL not to take advantage of the break. This is actually pretty great since I wasn't expecting anything like this. Who does this kind of match anymore? I remember Johnny Valentine would do these in Mid-Atlantic for no particular reason- because no matter how Valentine tried to portray himself in the match as being afraid of Bill White or Two Ton Harris, you still remembered that he would go toe-to-toe with fucking Wahoo McDaniels. I think it's just a match they would do when they were bored with a regular match. Here, they kill time doing a one hand versus two hand Greco Roman Knucklelock that two-handed Asahi loses and makes a rope break and goes to the floor. Okay, this match is magnificent. If Asahi starts ducking under the ropes to avoid locking up, I would have to make this my 2015 Match Of The Year. Almost as good, Asahi escapes a body slam attempt and heads back to the floor. The build up to the first actually offense for Hino is total fucking textbook old school psychology. And Hino starts chopping and Asahi is completely panicking in a Chris Hamrick-level of Southern scrawny guy greatness, his heels hooked under the top rope to keep him from plunging to the floor as he scrambles to escape. The facial expressions of Asahi as he is a chinlock is pretty classic too. If he bumps like Lee Scott, I may have a lot of old K-Dojo matches to scour. Hino misses a Senton and it allows Asahi to.... flee to the floor again. Yeah, this is great. Hino follows him and smacks him around a little before chopping him back into the ring. At 8:57, Asahi gets his first offense in, very unstuff forearms to the stomach. They have a hilarious armbar exchange and Hino finally starts beating him to death and dragging Asahi back to the center of the ring when he tries to escape. So yeah this is GENIUS because this is pretty much how a match between ME and Hino would go- except I would have sprinted to my mini-van by this point, trying to see clearly through my tears as I drove away. Asahi

gets in three roll-ups as we suddenly have a flurry of Asahi - which leads to few more roll-ups and they jam all this wrestling into 45 seconds before Hino latches on ridiculously stretchy Dragon Sleeper for the win. MILLION BILLION STARS. Hino is a freak. This match is fucking odd and completely anachronistic, but completely psychologically sound. It's like they said "Let's see how much of an actual wrestling match we can produce where hardly anything physically violent happens- all before the crowd can turn on it." And they did it. Here's to you, freaks.

~!~

CHELSEA vs KAORU - STARDOM (9/13/2015)

(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

Hm. I figured I would have heard about this match- on the news at least, as a spree of intergenerational Joshi fans accidentally yank their penises off of their bodies while jacking it to this match. Such a collision of wrestlers who launched several thousand boners- currently and in the 90s. But we are here for more than just the easy masturbation jokes. We also want to see (or maybe just I want to see) how hot KAORU still is. VERDICT: Oh MAN! Allright. KAORU is legit two years younger than me- and yet she looks like this and I look like I just slid off my Amigo at Wal-Mart. Now that the creepiness is sealed back into it's 55 gallon drum, the Actual Wrestling. Chelsea is wearing tiny pants. Really tiny. And the drum is sealed back again. Chelsea is 21, THUS I could legit be her grandfather in some western counties of this sacred soil of Virginia. I make myself sick. Chelsea extends her hand in sportsmanship. KAORU says, to herself, "JESUS, I am old enough to be this girly's MOTHER! And she wants to shake hands? Yeah, right." Chelsea starts with forearms and the stiffness will easily allow you to remember the GAEA between KAORU and Akira Hokuto. Yeesh. KAORU counters with a dropkick to the knee and then a dropkick to a seated Chelsea. I start to turn on this match until they take it to the floor and it starts to MORPH into a brawl and beautiful luxurious hair flies around in the crowd. The action is obscured by a swarm of photographers from wrestling mags and other more specialized media entities (I'm assuming.) Chelsea leans into being posted and I now totally forgive the opening forearms. KAORU stands on Chelsea's head and then throws her into the ring and does a lot of moves where she pulls her soft, managable, youthful hair- seething with rage over the coarsening of her own beautiful hair, as she sprints to next stage of her womanly life. Then it comes full circle as KAORU does the hair-based armdrag variation. KAORU scoffs at Chelsea's forearms to the stomach, mentally screaming, "YOU DO KNOW THAT I WAS GAEA WHEN AKIRA HOKUTO, TOSHIO YAMADA and FUCKING AJA KONG JUMPED, RIGHT?!?! You might want to lay it in a little, child-girl!" KAORU goes back the hair-yanking based offense. She adds the hand-biting section. Chelsea hits a dropkick and does a arm-thing submission and then does more forearms. Her offense is suspect but she will lean headfirst into KAORU's highly diminished offense, thus pretty much saving this match. This Chelsea gal is good. And she wears tiny pants. She sells the KAORU brainbuster like a champ which makes her hilarious chops and kicks easier to take. She goes back to her Double arm leg scissor thing and KAORU makes the ropes again. Chelsea hits a positively WOW-esque Crossbody and maybe I love this youngster. KAORU hits her in the head with a board while the ref isn't looking. Chelsea fucking leans into it like Masato Tanaka in 1998. Yeah, Chelsea is my favorite wrestler to have kinda crappy looking offense- and I base 90% of how much I like a wrestler on how good their offense looks. So yeah, her leaning into stuff to make the match work goes a long way for this little lady. Chelsea does a nice Fisherman Suplex Bridge after her second FFG (without the Flying part) of the match. I formulate the influence of Christy Hemme on the new generation of lady wrestlers but before I can spew any more nonsense, KAORU reminds one that the EXCALIBER~! is still fucking awesome looking. KAORU than hits a beautiful Single Rotation Skytwister Press for the win! Kinda problematic, but I dug it- mostly for Chelsea

going the extra mile to make it look good. This will not change your life, wrestling-wise. Annnnd I will stop there.

~!~

TAKASHI SUGIURA/ MINORU SUZUKI vs. NAOMICHI MARUFUJI/ KATSUHIKO NAKAJIMA - PRO WRESTLING NOAH (2/11/2016)

(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

I recognize all four of these guys. This should be preposterously violent. Pre-match, Minoru Suzuki says something that launches into the Suzuki and Nakajima just kicking the fuck out of each other before Nakajima can even get his shirt off. Marufuji tags in and lays it in as best he can until Suzuki crushes his head with his own head. Sugiura tags in and he really beats the shit out of Marufuji with chops and stomps and THEN the chinlock, as I assume they didn't want to collapse in a heap after two minutes. MAN, Marufuji is the most beaten Ricky Morton in the history of the concept of the babyface taking a beating to get heat for the babyface comeback. If Marufuji gets any more heat beaten onto him, he will just burst into flames. He fires back with all the spunk and fire you would want, but MAN, they really cut him off when they cut him off. He finally lands a dropkick and Nakajima tags in and he and Suzuki just fucking maul each other until Suzuki procures the Tarantula and then it spills to the floor. Sugiura fucking kills Marufuji by the ring while Suzuki pummels Nakajima in the stands. They take it back to the ring and Nakajima starts taking a pretty hellish ass-beating. I dunno. I love this kind of match, but considering the circumstances and violence of the title change that precedes this match, an American watching this would assume that there would be the equivalent to a Tupelo concession stand brawl the first time that Marufuji would get a chance to get his hands on Suzuki and Sugiura. Here, they are just continuing the receiving of the assbeating they received the week before. Sugiura does the odd bleeding from his chest thing and he and Suzuki just fuckin MAUL Nakajima. This is like Vader and Vader against Brady Boone and Brady Boone. Suzuki stands on the back of Nakajima's neck and then picks him up and crushes his face with his knee. FOR TWO! Jesus. Sugiura tags in does a completely uncontested top rope brainbuster and goes straight into a Boston Crab that takes Marufuji ten forearms to break when he makes the save. Sugiura smashes Nakajima's skull with a kick and it is really making me wonder if they are doing a wrestling adaption of the Chicago Bears story and the part of the 1985 New England Patriots is being played by Nakajima and Maarufuji. Luckily, Nakajima fires back and there is hope that they are doing a wrestling adaption of the Comeback with Suzuki and Sugiura assuming the role of the 1993 Houston Oilers. Nakajima channels Frank Reich and fucking lays it in on Sugiura, first with chops and then kicks to the lungs. Nakajima goes for the lariat but Sugiura catches him with a kick when he comes off the ropes. Nakajima fights back and brainbusts Sugiura to nearly make the tag. Sugiura tries to cut him off but Nakajima Dragonscrews to make the tag! And Marufuji! Is the shittiest house-a-fire. Katie need not bar the door. Marufuji does a Stinger splash and Sugiura responds by just fucking knocking Marufuji's head clean off his neck. MARufuji then does better trading chops for forearms with Sugiura but then succumbs to Sugiura's spear and then takes assorted kicks and running knees to the face. Marufuji hits a couple of superkicks and it really looks like Marufuji and Nakajima brought a strongly worded letter to a knife fight. Nakajima tags in and tries to catch up somehow with the mountain of assbeat that has applied to him and his partner. With a missile dropkick. Yeesh. Sugiura counters by punching him in the face. Nakajima backdrop drives and but Suzuki makes the save. Suzuki comes in the starts kicking the FUDGE out of Nakajima. Nakajima tries fire back but Suzuki catches him for the Piledriver but Marufuji makes the save and planchas out of the proceedings as Nakajima tries to kick Suzuki into submission. Suzuki bumps the ref by dragging him into the way of a charging Nakajima!

Shelton Benjamin runs in and hits... that move he does on Marufuji who is trying to make the save from Sugiura crushing Nakajima with a chair. So Nakajima take a chairshot that looks 95% less hellish than Suzuki's forearms to the face. Either way, Suzuki piledrives Nakajima for the win and BILL WATTS IS BOOKING NOAH NOW, it appears. I await a Russian invasion and an NOAH Intercontinental Medallion. This match is as fucking violent as I thought it would be, but MAN, you REALLY don't want to start a blood feud with Marufuji as your babyface. I cannot imagine a shittier idea. This is point where if he was EVER going to conjure any sort of bad-assed-ness- which is ESSENTIAL for this, this would have been the place. Instead, they are punching bags with dropkicks. But you definitely want to see this if you enjoy stiffness and violence in your Pro Wrestling. Because yeah, they fucking lay it in.

~!~

CENTVRION/LATIGO vs. FLY WARRIOR/MR. LEO – CARA LUCHA (Sept 16, 2015)

(by PHIL RIPPA)

God – Cubs is the motherfucking best. If I remember correctly – he said this was the best match he saw live during the year. Four fuckers that I have no fucking clue who they are doing that lucha thing. But the reason Cubs is the best is because he puts captions at the beginning to let you know who the fuck is who.

Mr. Leo – “Guy circling around in black and green with dreadlocks”

The black and green gear is those over sized baggy shorts that are infuriating for old men like me who like to yell at clouds.

Latigo – “Black & white gear with a Cara Lucha shirt (was also Tortuga Ninja Leo for most of 2015)

FUCK YES!!! ONE OF THE FUCKING NINJA TURTLES IS IN THIS MATCH!!!

Fly Warrior – “Has the F t-shirt and half pants/half fringe. Fill in partner for Mr. Leo. Associate member of Los Kriminal Boys coming into the match.”

Attention Dean – when Cubs is saying fringe, he is saying tassels.

Centvrion – “Dark gray/black gear. Friend of Latigo from IWRG and his partner in this match. Not a Ninja Turtle.”

“Not a Ninja Turtle” well fuck that!

Now a word about how this match is shot. A lot of the Cara Lucha that you don't watch is shot from up in the balcony which is always neat as you basically see the entire ring at once in an overhead view but close enough that you still feel like you are getting the full weight of the match. This match is shot right from ringside – in fact the camera is basically being stuck through the ropes. There are some issues with this style as frequently the guys are so close to the camera that their heads are cut off and when the action spills to the sides of the ring the camera isn't on – it is a mad dash to get into position. That being said – being that close makes up for it by the sounds you get to hear. It is totally worth the other quibbles to be able to hear the smack of Centvrion flying into the first row in what clearly wasn't a fun Asai Moonsault.

There is no real way to do the fun of this match other than to tell you to match. So much goes and so many moves that folks need to steal. Mr. Leo does two that would make people lose their shit on an NXT

show but you aren't going to see a double middle finger wacky submission on the WWE Network anymore. (Also knowing the weird ass Vince rules – most guys probably need to stay awake from chokes so no matter tremendous the choke out of a suplex counter is one would presume Finn Balor isn't going start using it. Now Jay Briscoe... that is another story.)

Oh and a move that dudes totally should not steal is Centvrion's "I am going to pick up both opponents at the same time and Death Valley Driver them into the corner" spot. For the "that was ecstasy for your eyes" factor – clearly other people should do it. For the "Holy shit – there are so ways that could go wrong" factor, then maybe not so much.

God I love this match. It is fucking random but soooooo the best thing ever. There is a fat guy who makes sure to move his beverage out of the way before the high spot train. The roll-up sequence with logically partner saves (so you don't have foolishness of the ref trying to keep up with the three counts that Malenko/Guerrero plagued us with.) There is Fly Warrior taking off his shirt for NO reason outside of making the women squeal (Granted if I had his torso – I would never wear a shirt). Mr Leo did some sort of head scissor takedown that I am still trying to figure out the physics of. And.... AND... There were only two superkicks! Aww fuck... I wrote that and then they did three in the finishing sequence. Boo... But all is forgiven as Mr. Leo – the definite MVP of the match – spikes Centvrion with a DDT. That really should have been the finish but the "wrong" team was going over. Plus, Centvrion and Latigo win with their own version of a Meltzer Driver which really is the best looking version of it but don't try and tell Dave about wrestling that isn't New Japan or PWG. He might decide to hold another 15 year grudge against us.

This is a match that if you decided to go and pay \$10 and check out your local indy and then saw this match, you would make sure to go every single time your local promotion ran. There is nothing better than a hot crowd enjoying wrestling and four guys going out and putting on a fucking show. So put on your big boy pants and stop bitching that you don't "get" lucha and watch this.

~!~

YOHEI NAKAJIMA/ YUMA AOYAGI vs. TOSHIYUKI SAKUDA/ YUJI OKABAYASHI - ALL JAPAN PRO WRESTLING (2/15/2016)

(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

This is a fun idea of a match. Yuji Okabayashi and Nakajima (not the Kensuke Sasaki protege) are your veterans from Big Japan and All Japan, respectively. Aoyagi and Sakuda are rookies from All Japan and Big Japan, respectively. The wildcard? Go to cagematch.net. Aoyagi is 6'1". Sakuda is 5'1". There shall be rookie assbeatings. The rookies start off by spinning around each other and the Super Astro-esque Sakuda does the knee scissors to Aoyagi's headlock until Sakuda tags out to Okabayashi- and I assume that they aren't going to have Okabayashi beat the dogpiss out of Aoyagi to piss off Nakajima and we have interpromotional bloodbath. Though that would rule. En Lieu, Nakajima tags in and HA! decides to go ahead and trade chops with Yuji Okabayashi. Are they going to have the greatest mentor-rookie tag ever where Okabayashi beats the living hell out of the All Japan veteran, ENRAGING THE ALL JAPAN ROOKIE who takes it out on the pocket-sized partner of Okabayashi. The dream. If it would only LIVE.... Nakajima seems to get some traction with some karate kicks but Yuji just fucking nails right in the Adam's apple with a chop and you remember why you watch every Okabayashi match, no matter how minor or weird. Teeny Tiny rookie boy runs the ropes with Nakajima and tags Okabayashi back in and Nakajima tags tall boy in and Yuji opts to let the punk get in some his fighting spirit before a crushing

chop cuts him off before he fires back again. And Okabayashi cuts him down with a chop and they do it again. Yuji hits four chops and gets himself and the rookie's offense over without having to slaughter the youngun. Yet. Okabayashi does look annoyed as he tag out and grabs Aoyagi's hair to keep him in the corner as Sakuda uses his shoulder based offense to its highest effect. Sakuda cranks in a frontface lock and Yuji tags back in and it is back to flurry of the rookie with the chop of experience. This time Yuji breaks it up with a really high back drop for two- with Nakajima saving his rookie, to Okabayashi's chagrin. Yuji bodyslams the rookie and shoves the veteran off the apron to the floor to tag in wee Sakuda who procures the CRAVATE~! into assorted chain wrestling to set up the wee man and the tall man to beat the hell out of each- in a desperate rookie manner. Aoyagi goes off the ropes but catches a dropkick and teeny tags in Okabayashi who is ready to end this so he starts legit strongstylin' on tall rookie with slams and chops and the preposterously stretchy Boston Crab until Aoyagi hits the ropes, infuriating Okabayashi who mauls him in the corner and opts to go ahead and rip his skull off with a lariat and THUS beat traffic home. But Aoyagi ducks it and hits a comical Flying Burrito to allow Yohei Nakajima to tag in and hit some hysterical offence that Yuji Okabayashi feels obliged to sell. After a while, Okabayashi hits a nasty powerslam and tags in the wee Sakuda to polish him off with assorted shoulder ATTACKS! He misses on a SabuSault to allow Nakajima to tag in his rookie- who missile dropkicks and then just dropkicks to set up another dropkick after a flying crossbody. Sakuda hits a spear after ducking whatever Aoyagi was trying, which allows Okabayashi to whip Sakuda into the corner like a bowling ball with shoulders, which is followed up with Okabayashi totally crushing him in the corner with a lariat. Yuji bodyslams the corpse and Sakuda hits a quebrada but Nakajima makes the save and hits endless superkicks to leave the rookies in the ring. After Sakuda has a foray into spunkiness and headbutts, Aoyagi hits a flying cross body block to set up a Fisherman Suplex with a bridge for the win! TALLNESS! Okabayashi smacks his runty partner in the head- as if to say, "Let's go home, ya knucklehead." This match is probably more suited for we Okabayashi completists, though this is perfectly fine for a rookie-mentor tag match. So we will always have that. Ah, doowatchalike.

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HIROSHI YAMATO vs. DAIKI INABA - WRESTLE-1 (2/10/16)

(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

I have decided to follow Hiroshi Yamato, the Wrestle-1 cruiserweight champion. The main reason is because he is 32 and looks like he is 57. You gotta respect a guy who will embrace his premature grayness. I think I reviewed one of his matches a while back. Looking at his match list on cagematch.net, first I note that I really have not seen any of the guys in the Wrestle-1 cruiserweight division other than Andy Wu, and that the match I watched was Yamato getting crushed by Hama a few weeks ago. Fun facts: he had over 500 matches in All Japan in his first 6 years and has wrestled 80ish matches a year since jumping to Wrestle-1 3 years ago. He was stomped on by Yuji Okabayashi in a Big Japan midcard match last May. Daiki Inaba has been wrestling since May 2013, has never wrestled on a Big Japan undercard or done anything strange or interesting. Perhaps he is a good wrestler. (Aftermatch note: Yeah, he's good.) Let us find out. Inaba is two inches shorter but thicker than the 5'10" Yamato and they start off with spinny, twirly RINGS NETWORK-styled takedowns before getting straight to punching each other in the face. Inaba lays in the chops and then Yamato lays in the chops! YEAAA! I LIKE WRESTLING! Yamato CRAVATES~1 to facilitate knees to the face and YOU rejoice! Then they do this very odd double rope run standing trust fall spot into an Inaba sleeper. I swear to God, I think they just did that spot because they knew that no one would actually watch this match. I can't quite get my head around it. Inaba stomps on Yamato after he makes the ropes and stomps on him outside of the ring all the way into the ring and then crushes him with a few SWEET running elbows to the corner. Inaba has a

really nice looking offense and emphasizes this by hitting a quality brainbuster. They make with the standing switches and do a really odd rope running sequence before Inaba hits a shoulderblock and a really nice Fisherman Suplex with a bridge. These guys are really strange. IT's like JAZZ! They do really good components of a pretty high end junior heavyweight match and then they throw in something that I have never seen in my 46 years of wrestling watching. It's not gigantically ludicrous or retarded, just odd- the trustfall thing; the crazy running of the ropes- like they wanted to re-invent little teeny parts of wrestling. Inaba procures the Octopus Hold and tries to morph it into a Tombstone but Yamato fights out, runs the ropes and does a backwards in-ring tope like Stuka Jr does off the toprope to the floor. It's very odd. I have to give this match a million stars after five minutes because it has baffled me 3 times. Yamato hits a nice forearm to the teeth and they run the ropes again to allow Yamato to hit a fucking 3/4s legit Spear that moves right into a Northern Lights Suplex and a fucking REALLY nasty running shoulderblock into the corner. For two guys I've vaguely heard of, they both have really world class offenses. They battle for top of the turnbuckle supremacy a bit longer than most would until Inaba hits the toprope Brainbuster and applies the Russian Legsweep after a series of elbows to the back of the head. Inaba comes off the top with a splash but Yamato gets his feet up and Inaba leans into it to the point that his head jerks back in an impossible way. Inaba is becoming god-like. Yamato has REALLY sweet forearms to the face. He should just cut out all of the rest of his MOVESET~! and just crush people's skulls because it looks really great. Inaba does a strange foray into double axe-handles as an offensive and defensive weapon. This match is waaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaay more challenging than I figured it would be. Fuck it. Yamato is an existential figure that we all need to follow his career. He represents regret and failure and also hope and redemption. You want him to win because you want to win. You have taken his journey and you are inspired by his fighting spirit- as he is burning with fighting spirit while a lesser man goes home and weeds the garden! He murders Inaba with released Capture Suplexes. Inaba tries to use driving elbows to the face to get back on offense but Yamato cuts him off with a Capture Suplex that he morphs into a lower angle chokeslam and then he does it again! For two! Inaba is broken beaten man as he tries to fight off the finish by grabbing the ropes. Yamato gets him in the Chicken Fight position, stands on the second rope and dives backwards in the trustfall/Stuka Jr manner and SUDDENLY IT ALL MAKES SENSE. For two. So he hits the Stuka Jr no look plancha off the toprope to the middle of the ring and then follows up with an some kind of OVERHAND Michinoku Driver for the win. FUCKING AWESOME. That was fuckin weird. And great. And weird. And great.

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YUJI HINO vs. MINORU TANAKA - WRESTLE-1 (2/10/16)

(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

I love Hino. I haven't liked a Minory Tanaka match since the days of BattlARTS when Shoichi Funaki would carry him to a good match. I'm sure there were other matches I liked but I would probably not want to go back and revisit them. Here, can Hino beat a good match out of the listless and lethargic Tanaka? One way to find out. I do love Hino but it seems odd to put your belt on him- not that I care one way or the other. I'm not your mom, Wrestle-1 championship committee. Do whatever you want. Tanaka starts by kicking him really hard a few times so this is already better than the last ten Tanaka matches I've seen. Hino crushes Minoru's chest with a chop and this is starting well. Hino is one of the better wrestlers because he demands a really deliberate pacing. Instead of mauling Tanaka with chops,

he builds up to the chop and allows Tanaka to sell it- conveying the pain with his face instead of making the viewer add it all up in his mind if it is all chops and no selling. The methodical sold chops are just as hurty looking so this the best of both worlds. Tanaka is leaning into Hino's offense like a champ, taking the RELEASED SOMOAN DROP~! with a thud. It's really effective, four chops, one chinlock and the Samoan Drop is enough to look like Hino has murdered him because of the psychological set-up of the move. Psychology is what keeps you from getting ten concussions sometimes. Tanaka goes on offense by hitting a TRULY nasty dropkick to the knee when Hino comes off the ropes. He runs and totally smashes Hino's knee in the corner and then drop kicks him out of the ring- and this is odd because when reviewing the Marufuji/Nakajima vs Sugiura/Suzuki match, the weakest moves in the match are the dropkicks by Marufuji and Nakajima compared to the truly hellish chops and forearms of Suzuki and Sugiura. Here, two really vicious dropkicks by Tanaka are more hurty looking than chops by frickin HINO- who can hang without about anyone in the stiffness arena. Tanaka embraces his juniorness and lands a perfectly fine plancha off the corner to the floor. Tanaka stomps Hino's knee as he tries to get in the ring and THUS, we have the story of the match! Tanaka will try to break Hino's knee while Hino just tries to generally kill Tanaka. Hino fires back with a Released Belly to Belly Suplex and run directly into two dropkicks and several stomps to the knee, several kneepunts and a halfspin into a kneebar! Hino, being beloved, fights out be just fucking crushing Tanaka's chest A LOT. Man, it is some nastiness. (Hino is also disregarding all the effort that Tanaka has done to establish the fact that he has been just totally fucking up Hino's knee the whole match. Who knows? Maybe it will dawn on him at some point. Maybe a bone will stick out of his thigh or something.) Hino takes a(n) hilarious eternity to make it to the tope rope. Tanaka kikcks him the head and Supersplexes and stomps him from the top and goes back into the knee bar- not realizing that Hino has some kind of steel knee joints er sumthin. Tanaka kicks the knee and then succumbs to another Hino Released Capture suplex. Hino hits a thoroughly grody corner lariat before hitting a legit Samoan Drop before rushing up to the top to hit a COMPLETE fat boy Frog Splash that just fucking crushes Tanaka who somehow kicks out. Tanaka fights out of the finisher by hitting three really nice kicks to Hino's head and then stomping him from the top rope- which never looks that impressive to we older folk who remember Hikari Fukuoka and her truly fucked up moonsault stomp. Nothing ever could compare to the sheer terror of that move. Tanaka gets a two count and they lay around and sell stuff. Tanaka kicks to the head and Hino lariats and they lay around a little more. Hino charges the corner to get kicked in the face but then kinda punches Tanaka in the throat and then Tanaka fights out of powerbomb to sink in his third kneebar. Hino sells the knee like he remembered all the stuff from before and they drag out the knee bar for a while and it is suitably dramatic when Hino hits the ropes. Tanaka kicks the fudge out of Hino's knee in the corner and Hino actually sells it while flipping off Tanaka and taking a few more kicks to the knee. Tanaka goes for the fourth knee bar but Hino powers out into an EVEREST German! Tanaka goes back to kicking the knee and Hino fights back with savage chops to the chest and they both start flipping each other off and this suddenly went from problematically entertaining to actively good. Yeah, this gets all mega-stiff and harrowing by the end. Hino finally gets in a Powerbomb and then nastier powerbomb and HINO RETAINS! This was really fun by the end. Minoru Tanaka should definitely quit half-assing it being the fourth best guy in six man tags and do more matches like this. Hino is not a perfect wrestler, but he is a very stiff working wrestler who will remember the sell the knee before you can get too annoyed by it.

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CM PUNK/JULIO DINERO vs. TERRY FUNK/RAVEN – TNA (2/8/04)

(by PHIL RIPPA)

Without fail, I will watch a random match from the Weekly PPV days of TNA and immediately will say “Oh right – strippers in cages.” God – they were a sad promotion from jump. Anyway – “The Gathering” (which is Punk and Dinero) have joined with James Mitchell who turned on Raven for... reasons. Also for reasons the random ECW All-Stars have tried to avenge Raven while he was off finding his smile. This week was Terry Funk. Man, there are times I wish Terry would turn down a paycheck.

Raven shows up looking like he missed his Johnny Polo days. Scott Hudson tries to put over that this is the same exact Raven. Uh-huh. A Raven that wasn’t turning down seconds at supper – that is for sure.

The match starts with Dinero cracking Funk with an unprotected chair shot. See it wasn’t Punk who did it because Punk would never ever condone something like that. SAFEST WRESTLER IN THE RING EVER! The purpose of the chair shot was clearly to allow Funk to bleed motherfucking buckets. Which is a good thing since this match has nothing else going for it. Everyone else does some brawling to no reaction from the crowd. Raven is gassed two minutes in (is there no Planet Fitness within driving distance Scott?) and Hudson and Don West spending far too long figuring out various ways to call Funk stupid and old.

Have I mentioned that Funk is bleeding a lot?

I always enjoy that after far too long working the match as Texas Tornado the teams just decide to go back to a straight tag. It makes total sense because everyone was clamoring for hot tag Raven. I guess they did it so upstanding citizen CM Punk could swear at Funk a lot. Anyway – Raven does some punching and yelling and then Funk comes in a goes an Oklahoma Roll. THAT is fun because you watch him stain the mat with blood along the way. Raven then hits Dinero with a DDT and that is that.

Of course – since this is TNA desperately wanting to be ECW – James Mitchell finally comes out with a taser because he is getting paid by the minute and TNA is cheap (Honestly – would that really surprise you with this company?) They go to shock Raven but Funk makes that Hollywood type diving save and takes the electric bullet. We are then supposed to believe he is dead or dying because wrestling. (Don West yells ULTIMATE SACRIFICE a few times and I start wondering if he is peddling a t-shirt.)

Every time I think I should go back and revisit the early TNA PPVs to see if there is something I missed, I am reminded why that is a bad idea.

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KATSUYORI SHIBATA vs. TOMOHIRO ISHII - NEW JAPAN PRO WRESTLING (2/11/2016)

(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

I forced my youngest son to watch this few days ago (my oldest son is more of a Doctor Who dork, so he could give a shit about wrestling). We both noted that, in this match, they really kick the hell out of each other. This is for the Never belt that Shibata is sporting. The Never belt is exactly like the NWA Western Heritage belt- a belt to keep a guy who is over enough to be hugely popular, but who has some sort of defect from making him or her the regular world champion. With the Western Heritage belt, it was built for Barry Windham. Barry Windham was a stunningly great wrestler who was SOMEHOW shittier on the mic than frickin Lex Luger. The Never title was built for Ishii, a stunningly good wresler who must be shittier on the mic than Hirooki Goto or whoever is fourth in line to the New Japan heavyweight title. They start the match out by just beating the shit out of each other. Like really just beating the fucking

hell out of each other. The first two minutes of this match equals the amount of violence one would see in two months of other whole wrestling promotions. Shibata will really beat the dog shit out of you. Ishii will also really beat the living dog shit out of you. Some would say that the selling is very suspect in these matches, but I think the level of stiffness moves it to a BattlARTS idea of psychology- where you sell the legit amount of actual damage that is visited upon you, so the selling is more subtle and I think it is present in this match. They do this thing where they hit brainbusters and no-sell them, but it isn't like Road Warrior Hawk no-selling a piledriver and you wanting to throw your remote control through the screen. This is more like Kawada doing the selling no-sell of standing up and appearing to no-sell but staggering a little to acknowledge the strength of the move. Kawada would do that around the same time that Kobashi started the annoying trend of taking a finisher, not selling it, hitting a finisher and then collapsing to sell the finisher he just took. Kawada's idea was so much cooler, but Kawada was light years ahead of Kobashi. So yeah, they are stealing from Kawada here. After that, they go to Ishii fucking crushing Shibata with lariats in the corner. Shibata calls him a pussy and then he tries to get Ishii to give him his best shot- so it is more of the Kawada selling while no-selling. Ishii then just fucking smashes Shibata's face in the corner with forearms and it had to just fucking suck to be a part of this match. Goddam, this is sooo the most violent thing you will see in a straight wrestling match. You would need mountains of exploding barbed wire to approach the glorious preposterous carnage of this match. Shibata runs and just fucking STOMPS with both feet at full speed right to the face. I was telling my son that since I am forced to watch WWE with him now that he has to listen to me complain about things. The main thing I hate is how the WWE always edits away from the direct impact. It's like they know the punches look like shit and they are trying to fool you into not noticing. Which is probably not the case for the most part, but who can tell? I want to see it. HERE, you fucking see it. They don't cut away because they don't have to. Ishii leans into and Shibata lays it in. Hell, that could be this review in one sentence: Shibata lays it in- Ishii leans into it; Ishii lays it in, Shibata leans into it. Ishii lays around because his face hurts. He gets up and they just fucking kill each other again with forearms. Shibata breaks it for one second with a Snap Suplex! They do a Strong Style battle of lariats(Ishii) vs running kick to the face (Shibata) and Ishii wins but it is now officially an Ishii match as Ishii sells his shoulder. Ishii crushes Shibata with a beautiful Superplex and Stuffs The Powerbomb that Shibata turns it into a Triangle Hold, which one would call no-selling a powerbomb but he is following the precedent of Kazuo Yamazaki- who created the rule that you can no-sell the pro style move if you counter it with a shoot hold- so there you go. Nothing is getting in the way of my brain not loving this match. They bash each other around a bit until Shibata sinks in the front face lock into a Death Valley Driver into a (non-Everest) German suplex into Shibata jumping up and kicking Ishii in the face- so there is more to this than two guys punching each other in the face, not that that would have mattered to me. Ishii sells the damage like a king and then take his bleedin' mouth over to Shibata and releases whatever he has left into crushing Shibata's face with forearms. It goes super Memphis as Shibata is on offense and hitting more forearms but then Ishii starts hitting Shibata harder and does the Memphis thing of punching to TRANSITION~! to offense. Ishii then Lariats and German Suplexes and Lariats again! Ishii does the dick-like headbutts to the chest to set up a Roaring Elbow. Ishii goes for the finisher but Shibata spins and rolls into a cross-armbreaker but cannot get extension before Ishii gets to a vertical base and then hits the rope. Shibata keeps kicking Ishii and lands a URICAN! Ishii is out OR IS HE? No, he headbutts to escape a running kick to the face by Shibata but catches a kick to face while going for a lariat. They trade shots to the face until Shibata gets a sleeper to set up a running kick to the face! FOR THE PIN! Right there! That's how you do it. The thing I noticed the second time watching it, is that the finish starts after Shibata hits the German suplex and the rest of the match is Ishii being out of it but mustering little but very violent hope spots to deny the inevitable, as it is from that point that Shibata is in control. So yeah, this is really great and also a little deeper than your usual total ass-stomp. Though it was definitely an ass-stomping both ways.

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JAY LETHAL vs. TOMOAKI HONMA - NEW JAPAN PRO WRESTLING (2/20/2016)

(by DEAN RASMUSSEN)

I get ROH from two different channels- the national version and the local channel 35 version, and I watch the ROH with the boy because he likes the Briscoes and I got no beef with most of it. That being said, since I don't get their PPVs, I hardly ever see Jay Lethal wrestle. In fact, I think I've seen Honma wrestle more in the last year. So this won't bring that chasm any closer. Honma will beat the hell out of you betwixt headbutts- so this should be good. Honma tells Lethal to take his pansy-assed handshakes back to his bingo halls. Lethal is really good at making an armbar fun by selling the hurtiness. He does a lot of flips and rolls and they have a fun wad of stalemates as they both counter headlocks and armbars, so Lethal hits the floor and goes for the HEEL HEAT. He truly establishes the vaunted heel heat by having a clean break in the corner but opting at the last moment to stomp the living hell out of Honma. It's great- so EVIL! Honma responds with some lowgrade offense until gets distracted by Truth Martinito, allowing Lethal to Dropkick and Tope Honma- and it is a quality Big Feller Tope and he does it twice! YEA! JAY LETHAL WITH ACTUAL DAMAGING TOPES! Honma lays on the ground after being crushed twice against the guard rail. Lethal not only brought the Southern heel acoutrements but also brought the STIFF for the trip as he lays in some chops. Honma, being fucking stiff as fuck lunatic, answers with hellish chops of his own. They take it to the floor and Lethal throws Honma back into rails two more times, this time more directly. Lethal's knee drop is really great. I should watch more Jay Lethal, he is pretty great. Lethal procures a very confusing Reverse Backwards Inverted Sharpshooter That Makes Sense On Its Own Terms that leads into a Brainbuster attempt that Honma powers out of to hit the fucking GLORIOUS EVEREST Brainbuster. Honma goes on offense and there are many headbutts and bulldogs and Buff Blockbusters to set up head-stompiest half crab. Truth Martini gets on the apron and Honma breaks the hold- and this is ingenious. These Japanese people have a different kind of wrestling, THEY EVEN SPELL IT DIFFERENT- "プロレス"! So it would make total sense that these Memphis-styled heel antics would work. See back in the old days you would send the young Japanese wrestlers to work the territories so they would be familiar with these tactics- and hell, FMW was basically a giant hyper-version of Memphis wrestling. But not these kids today. So three cheers for the USA and our evil wrestling concepts. Lethal then does a backbreaker and drives Honma the other way to hit his own variation of the venerable Bray Wyatt's Sister Abigail! Honma has taken a beating and Lethal drops the Macho Man Elbow drop! For two? See, Americans have their own style of wrestling- THEY EVEN SPELL IS DIFFERENT- "wrestling"! So it would make sense that a guy with a Memphis style psychology would be baffled by his big finisher not winning the match. See, this is why ROH brings in all these Japanese guys to gear up the US audiences to differing ideas of wrestling psychology. In Japan, it isn't so much what you do, but how many time you do it at the finish. Since we have another 10 minutes, We will have to kill 8 more minutes, Lethal(Honma) will have to hit his finisher twice, Honma (Lethal) will hit a desperation finisher (or possibly a roll up), and then Lethal (Honma) will have to hit his bigger second finisher for the win. Unless they're dicks and add five more finishers. The only time in Japan you win with your finisher the first time you hit it is if- a.) you are wrestling a rookie or you are a heavyweight and you are wrestling a junior heavyweight; b.) You legit knock out your opponent with an axe bomber and win the inaugural IWGP title (and by "legit", I mean "not legit" but a "shoot angle"- which is where you really try to work the marks into thinking something real happened.) So three cheers for Japan and their questionable concepts of wrestling psychology. Honma counters Lethal's Springboard something with a headbutt and they decide to beat the shit out of each other from across the toprope until Honma headbutts Lethal off the apron into the rail and then dives headfirst onto Lethal from the far top turnbuckle to the floor. I dig the whole 1998 All Japan Big Move feel to this.

Honma drags Lethal to his feet and they exchange superkicks and lariats before Honma hits a pretty sweet brainbuster. But yeah, nothing is really adding up to much until Lethal kicks him in the head and I assume that this is the beginning of the end. Honma gets in his headbutt arsenal until THEY BUMP THE REF! The AMERICAN REF! What is going on! Martini's Japanese contingent storms the ring but only Naito knows Honma secret weakness (his balls). Lethal hits his goofy Springboard Diamond Cutter as the American ref CONVENIENTLY wakes up and makes the 3 count. Well, that was fun. Not a masterpiece or anything, but it was a lot like a good ROH TV match. Best part is post-match which is just everything I could ever want out of an annoying indie hug. Poor stupid Honma.... Okay, jillion stars for the indie hug section.

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5th ANNUAL SQUARE GO MATCH – ICW 1/24/16

(by PHIL RIPPA)

I make a lot of terrible decisions. Like majoring in Journalism. Or trying to learn to play guitar. Or not following through with Andrea the Diver who despite being 4' 11" and having a large birthmark on her neck had an amazing diver's body and was clearly into me. Or leaving this site. Or returning to this site...

The latest in my laundry list of missteps is deciding it was a good idea to review this match. For those unaware ICW does a match called Square Go that is a 30 man Royal Rumble for basically their version of Money in the Bank. The two tweaks they make to the match are that five guys are randomly drawn to bring weapons into the match and they stick to a solid two minutes in between entries. That means a guaranteed 60 minutes but oh no – this goes 75 FUCKING MINUTES! I guess this is my training for the CWF Mid-Atlantic match.

ALSO – ICW's announcers are infuriating. Lots of racism and homophobia. Along with lots of yelling. And apparently everyone involved had a quota of "fucks" that had to be reached because every single person who grabbed a mic had to drop at least one.

Entry #1 – Joe Coffey. Coffey comes out body painted as Izzy Stardust which is always a smart move when you are about to wrestle for awhile (clearly no one watched that episode of Mythbusters). He then tops the ensemble off with an Iron Man mask and comes out to AC/DC. The crowd sings along which is neat.

Entry #2 – BIG DAMO!!! YES THIS IS GOING TO BE FUCKING AWESOME!!!! Oh wait... he comes the evil part owner. Fuck. Anyway – evil heel part owner Red Lightning says that Big Damo can't be in the match and security is going to escort him to the back. Lots of threats of being fired because that is what you want in wrestling.

So real entry #2 turns out to be Lewis Gerwin who is introduced as Drew Galloway's "understudy". They make sure you know that Galloway is not in the building tonight (He legit was at EVOLVE that night but SHH.....) Poor Gerwin spend two minutes getting absolutely covered in Coffey's body paint – which he clearly must have been happy about – before the next person even has to come out.

Trent Seven (#3) , Andrew Wilde (#4) and Solar (#5) are the next three. HOLY FUCK! HOW THE FUCK DID THEY GET SOLAR??? I TAKE BACK EVERY SHITTY THING I ALREADY SAID!!! BRING IT MOTHE.... Oh this isn't the 60 year old luchador??? Fuck...

Coffey does a airplane spin on one dude while giving another dude a giant swing which is crazy. After that, some guy under a mask named Soldato (#6) joins the fray. There are far too many dudes in this this

tiny ring. Oh no worries – here comes Dave Mastiff (#7). Suplexes for everyone and then Mastiff gets rid of the imposter Solar and Soldato. So 12 minutes in and we get our first eliminations. Sigh... I should have packed a snack.

So big dude named Masimo is #8 and tiny Lou King Sharp (#9) replace them since there is no need to have space to see or move in the ring. Somewhere doing this time – Wilde starts taking every bump on top of his head which is really unnecessary (but sadly appreciated since it adds a little spice to proceedings). Joe Coffey takes Sharp and tosses him to the crowd and the crowd surf him back into the ring so he isn't eliminated (creative obviously but I really wish we wouldn't encourage the crowd.)

Our first entry with a weapon is Sebastian (#10). His weapon of choice is... HIS TAG PARTNER TOM IRVIN! Yeah – that is awesome. Dickie Divers – last year's winner – enters at #11. Sure we need more people in this party (including someone technically not in the match) before there are more eliminations. We are over a third of the way through entrants and only two people are gone.

Jimmy Havoc (#12) is next and finally 21 minutes in and the dead weight starts to go. Before Scotty Swift shows up at #13, Sebastian, Sharpe and Divers all hit the bricks. Plus, when Noam Dar shows up at #14 he gets jumped by Red Lightning and Jack Jester and never enters. I mean we are going to the well a lot here but at least people have some elbow room in the ring.

Joe Hendry (#15) takes his turn in the match and eliminates Andrew Wilde. I am fine with a give a penny, take a penny policy to keep things orderly. Mikey Whiplash (#16) and his ridiculous outfit are next. He eliminates Dave Mastiff (Boo!!!!) and then eliminates Trent Seven in a crazy/stupid spot where Seven takes a suplex over the top rope all the way to the floor.

At #17, Stevie Boy comes in and hits a Devil's Halo (aka Canadian Destroyer) on Jimmy Havoc just to remind everyone how stupid that move is. Doug Williams (#18) enters because I think it is in the UK bylaws that he must be in every battle royal held in the land. I think Scotty Swift is eliminated but who the heck knows because the cameras missed it. Wee Man (#19) best comp is Santino I guess. He takes his full two minutes hitting the ring. So Davey Boy (#20) comes out. Yes – there is a Stevie Boy and a Davey Boy.

Wolfgang (#21) comes out and eliminates Masimo and Joe Hendry. He then gives Lewis Gerwin a Last Ride over the top rope and into the crowd and then the crowd drops Gerwin because the crowd is full of dicks. DCT (#22) enters, Wee Man leaves.

When Michael Chase takes his place at #23, we learn that Brock Lesnar finally has some company in Terrible Chest Tattoo City. How anyone can get that ink and ask for it with a straight face is beyond me. At this point – Havoc and Whiplash face off and two masked dudes hit the ring and jump Havoc. They then run off and... Havoc and Whiplash keep brawling. WHAT THE FUCK WAS THE POINT OF THAT???. GRRR.... Anyway - Whiplash goes for the same crazy suplex that eliminated Seven but they both end up on the ring apron, so it's a double clothesline and both men are eliminated. They then continue to brawl to the back. So at least we have that program to look forward too.

Timm Wylie (#24) is the second competitor with a weapon and he has a lead pipe. He smacks a couple around... and gets eliminated. So much for the weapon. BT Gunn (#25) completes all the members of the New Age Kliq or Klan (I can't read my notes and I am too tired to look). Farwell Michael Chase. Somewhere around here is when Coffey (Hey! Remember him – yup still in the match) does his next insane power spot. This time he has BT Gunn and Stevie Boy around his neck (picture if both guys were trying to rana him at the same time) and he just starts swinging them around.

Jack Jester (#26) brings a metallic dildo as his weapon and I officially hate this match. And now we get into my hell. So the NAK are in there and this Black Label group (which Jester is a part of) all team up. DCT is eliminated and then Red Lightning (#27) finally enters so that is what this match needed more hell gang members. OH! Lightning has a kendo stick if you are tracking the guys with weapons.

So #28 is the other owner, Mark Dallas. The man looks exactly like Jim Norton and has a golf club so that accounts for all our weapons. OH! And Dallas announced that he brought an insurance policy. That insurance policy is BIG DAMO!!! (I am sure you are all stunned). Sadly – Damo is the worst insurance policy around as while he is kinda sorta beating on the other guys Lightning beats up Dallas eliminates him because Dallas gets distracted by Drew Galloway on the video screen. Chris – did Heyman book this? (OH! And Damo blew his catching of Dallas too). The Joe Coffey dumps Lightning. This at the 56 minute mark.

Mark Coffey is #29 and Lionheart (who won a match earlier in the night to get this spot) is the last man in. Lionheart is a Chris Jericho fanboy (if you couldn't tell by the name) complete with using Fozzy for his entrance music. Yup not displeased when he is eliminated by Joe Coffey in seconds. Oh did I forget to mention that Lionheart got jumped by Kenny Williams who hit him with a skateboard? Of course – that is like THE FOURTH FUCKING GUY THIS MATCH TO GET JUMPED!!! Moderation people!

Just over the hour mark, Noam Dar charges the ring with a chair and I guess has finally taken his rightful place in the match. Goodbye Doug Williams. Goodbye Stevie Boy. Then a minute later, Gunn dumps Davey Boy (who has nasty welts on his back thanks to Red Lightning not being careful with the kendo stick.) Mark Coffey sneaks up behind Dar and Gunn and that gets us to our Final Four of the Coffeys, Wolfgang and Jack Jester.

The Coffey brothers reunite and it is Coffeymania running wild. Well that is until Mark blows his elimination and has to redo his stop so Wolfgang can chuck him. No one noticed. Nope, not at all. We have two heels from different factions vs. the face who has been in at #1. Eventually Jester goes to hit Coffey with said metallic dildo because why the fuck not? Wolfgang stops him and eliminates Jester. So we hit the final two 70 minutes in the match. They then PROCEED TO GO ANOTHER FIVE MINUTES BECAUSE THERE IS NO GOD!!!

So as we all die a slow and painful death, Wolfgang decides to start bumping like a freak. First off a top rope German Suplex that should not be done by men that big in a ring that small. And then he does the 360 spin off a lariat which almost goes horribly wrong. We tease and tease and tease each man go over and finally we get a double reversal on the hip toss over the rope spot to lead to Wolfgang getting the win.

This means NAK has all the world title and the #1 contendership. Clearly that will become an issue later. And they decided to put Coffey over strong since they have him go start to finish (and working on a “torn” groin that I totally forgot to mention). It would have been nice if they didn't try and book some sort of angle for every single guy in the match but here we are. I have no idea how I could have sat through this live. So... very... long...

~!~