

SHOW OPEN

[*♪ "DEFY" by Of Mice & Men ♪*](#)

Salt Lake City welcomes DEFIANCE as the Maverik Center is hyped for DEFtv 174! Pyro explodes from the top of the rampway. There's a giant FIST logo to walk out from and the DEFatron above the entrance.

Signs and excitement, as always, are everywhere!

TERI MELTON IS READY FOR HER CLOSE-UP
MARSHMALLOWS ON PIZZA > PINEAPPLE ON PIZZA
I AM BEING PAID TO STAND AROUND AND LOOK INTIMIDATING AND HOLD THIS SIGN
REAPER CYAN ASKING THE TOUGH QUESTIONS
THE HOUSE OF THE WHAT NOW?
DOMINOS IS THE SPOOKIEST PIZZA CHAIN
KOALA REAPER > REAPER THE GREY
SLOTH REAPER > CRIMSON LORD
BUMBLEBEE REAPER > HIVE
THE THREE HOUSES OF THE KABAL ARE THE THREE TOES OF THE TREE SLOTH
DENIM JEANS FOR \$12?? PREPOSTEROUS
JJ DIXON IS POOR
TERI MELTON'S STILL ALIVE?
HIDE YOUR SALT FROM TERESA AMES
LINDSAY TROY SHOPS AT TJ MAXX NOT FOREVER 21
I GOT A \$100 FOREVER 21 GIFT CARD BUT STILL SHOPLIFTED
LET'S BE CLEAR: AMES FUCKED A TOILET, RIGHT?
MALAK + GILBERT = LIGHT AND EXTRA BUTTER
I JUST WANT TO HAVE A GOOD TIME
DON'T TRUST A SNOWFLAKE, CONOR
I NEED MY URANAGE FIX
TERESA, TRY THE HANDRAIL IN SECTION 69
LINDSAY TROY AIN'T WHAT SHE USED TO BE
WHOEVER IS HOLDING THAT LT SIGN, MEET ME IN THE PARKING LOT IN 15 MINUTES, WE'RE GONNA FIGHT

***YOU MAY BE THE D, BUT I'M DOUBLE Ds
TROY FEARS ARES
TROY ALWAYS FEARS ARES
TROY FEARS EVERYONE THAT'S WHY SHE'S GOT VV
TROY IS CLOWN SHOES
FALL OF TROY, EVEN BEFORE ITS BUILT
CONOR FUSE DISTRIBUTED HUNDREDS OF ANTI-TROY SIGNS BUT I SAID NO
CONOR FUSE'S MOM STILL DRESSES HIM
I BET SHE CUTS THE CRUSTS OFF HIS BREAD TOO
CONOR FUSE'S MOM LIKES TYLER FUSE BETTER
EXCUSE ME WE DONT LIKE THE BAD GUYS HERE
NOT TRUE, EVEN BRONSON BOX HAD PEOPLE CHEERING FOR HIM
I'M A SMARK WHO RESPECTS VV'S IN-RING ABILITY, IF NOT THEIR VIEWPOINT***

An UPDATED FIST tournament bracket appears and then to the announce table with Lance Warner and Darren Quimbey!

DDK:

Welcome everyone! Tonight, we will see the other side of the FIST bracket.

The graphic appears.

***FIST TOURNAMENT, SECOND ROUND: LINDSAY TROY vs. ELISE ARES
FIST TOURNAMENT, SECOND ROUND: OSCAR BURNS vs. CONOR FUSE***

Lance:

We have more action for you, too! Scrow will be out here, ADV will show his face and much more! Let's get to it!

FIST TOURNAMENT, SECOND ROUND: LINDSAY TROY vs. ELISE ARES

DDK:

Where can we ever start on Night Two to top Night One?

Lance:

It's got a tall task ahead of it for sure, Darren! I think Salt Lake City is up for the challenge, though. We have A LOT on tap here toni...

All I wanna do is...

♪ "Emperor's New Clothes" by Panic! At The Disco ♪

Red show open lights in the Maverik Center shift to a flood of violet and gold. The Faithful rise to their feet as Elise Ares immediately struts out to a chorus of cheers. With a mischievous smirk on her face and her arms extended, she's accompanied by The D who marches out behind her and assists her by taking off her purple leather crop top jacket while her trademark LED sunglasses flash "YOUR" "NEXT" "FIST."

Darren Quimbey:

Introducing first from Beverly Hills, California. Weighing in at 122 pounds. Representing the Pop Culture Phenoms. THE QUEEEEEEN OF SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT STYLE. EEEELIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIIISE AARRRRRRRRRRRRRES!

The D swings Elise's jacket over her shoulder and gives her a pat on the back before they continue. Her hips sway as she swags down to the ring, playing up to the Faithful before walking up the stairs, entering the ring as suggestively as possible, with assistance, and climbing up to the top rope to hurl her sunglasses far into the SLC crowd.

DDK:

There has been a lot of speculation over the past few years that Elise's window to become FIST of DEFIANCE had passed. That her shot against Mikey Unlikely was her time and now the window had closed forever. This tournament gives new conviction to Elise. A chance to take back a spot that many people thought would be hers.

Lance:

That's true. That's the wonderful part of the ACTS Tournament. A talent that had been "passed by" can take on a Lindsay Troy and pick up a win, then suddenly she's right back in line. In the forefront of the discussion. However, one doesn't just simply beat Lindsay Troy.

DDK:

It's a tall task for sure, Lance. Resume wise it looks like a mismatch, but Elise's entire career has been a mismatch. Lazy. Dumb. Uninvested. All completely accurate descriptions of her at times but longest reigning Southern Heritage Champion in DEFIANCE history? Multiple time Tag Champion? Main Eventer? Crazier things have happened!

The D talks up Ares from the apron, who for a singular point in her career, looks poised and focused, with something to prove. As they're standing there, the lights in the Maverick Center cut out, and the Faithful immediately get their cellphones out to bring some light to the darkness. A lone white light shines brightly down on the stage with Sonny Silver standing in the glow. He reaches his hand into the air and his OLD SKOOL MIC~! Is lowered into his palm. He grins a Cheshire cat grin as he points to Elise and The D in the ring.

Sonny Silver: *[in a Don LaFontaine-style voice]*

In a world where DEFIANCE accepted whatever garbage is spoon-fed to them by a bunch of little starfuckers... in a world where DEFIANCE cried out for REAL killers to come in, grab the status quo by the balls and say "NOT TODAY, SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT..."

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

DDK:

Oh come on, is this going to be a thing every show?

Lance:

You know, I'd say "I hope not" but I feel like that would be a fool's errand.

Sonny Silver: *[still in Don LaFontaine-style voice]*

Comes a group led by one woman with two goals... winning the ACTS Tournament... and liberating the FIST from the lumbering clutches of Deacon. COMING SOON... to that very ring... your Lady of the Hour! Your Queen of the Ring...

♪ "Stranger Fruit" by Zeal & Ardor ♪

Two words occupy the super-sized DEFIATron:

V A E V I C T I S

♪ *Stranger fruit, how it grows and grows,
We all saw the shoot, but we tend to the rose...* ♪

Sonny Silver:**LINDSAY... TROY!**

Through the curtain walks Henry Keyes, Kerry Kuroyama, and the Lady of the Hour herself, Lindsay Troy. The three bump fists before Troy makes her way down the aisle with Sonny by her side.

DDK:

In last night's main event, Henry Keyes went to war with Dex Joy but wasn't able to put The Biggest Boy away. And that wasn't the only sour note for the group...Matt LaCroix returned to challenge "The Kraken" for the Southern Heritage title at ACTS of DEFIANCE!

Lance:

The Reaper of the Pontchartrain has been out of action for several months with an arm injury. While it remains to be seen just how well he's healed, the Faithful sure were glad to see him again.

Troy slips between the ropes and sheds her duster while Silver begins prowling along the outside of the ring, shooting barbs at The D as he goes.

DDK:

Carla Ferrari doing her standard checks and...wait, what's this?

Both announcers turn their heads away from the ring as a swell of cheers rise up from the crowd. From behind the curtain walk Flex Krueger and Klein with camping chairs, which they set up right in front of Vae Victis!

Lance:

If I didn't know better, Darren, I'd say that Flex in a Box want to make sure Vae Victis don't get any ideas.

Henry rolls his eyes while Kerry looks perturbed, but neither man makes a move toward the other members of the Pop Culture Phenoms, content to let them be for now.

DING DING

E-LISE AR-ES! LIND-SAY TROY!

E-LISE AR-ES! LIND-SAY TROY!

E-LISE AR-ES! LIND-SAY TROY!

The self-proclaimed ACE of DEFIANCE fake yawns and steps out of her corner as the self-proclaimed Leading Lady of DEFIANCE bounces back and forth from one leg to the other before darting out of her corner like she was fired out of a rifle. Troy sidesteps the bullet and Elise leaps onto the ropes and springboards back with a crossbody that LT rolls

under. Adjusting in mid-air, Elise superhero lands in the middle of the ring to a small cheer from the Faithful before catching the former FIST on her way up with a somersault into a hurricanrana! Snapmare. Arm Drag. Leg Kick. Leg Kick. Snapmare. Lindsay Troy rolls out of the ring and Elise throws her arms up in the air to try and get the Faithful behind her to a mixed reaction.

DDK:

Elise Ares has started this match fast and aggressive! It looks like Lindsay might've under-estimated her.

Lance:

If DEFtv 173's backstage altercation was any indication, that's exactly what might be happening here! Elise looks explosive!

Troy waves off Ares in the ring and consults Sonny Silver at ringside before suddenly the Queen of Sports Entertainment Style goes sailing over the top rope in a front flip before crashing down on both LT and Sonny Silver at ringside. Carla Ferrari quickly checks on the chaos as Elise bounces back up to her feet and tosses Troy into the barricade before performing a one-woman Blacklist on her, stomping repeatedly. Carla screams a count as Sonny Silver screams at Carla while Elise grabs a handful of hair and begins to bash Troy's head into the barricade screaming, "*Que tal eso?!?*"

DDK:

Elise has firmly established control early but needs to watch it or else she might find herself disqualified.

Eventually, Ares jerks LT up from the barricade and throws her into the ring. The Leading Lady of DEFIANCE hops up onto the top rope and when Troy reaches her feet...

Lance:

AMETHYSTATION!

DDK:

Elise Ares just NAILED Lindsay Troy with that flying punch!

Lance:

Could it be?!

Elise quickly goes for the cover!

ONE!

TWO!

NO!

Lindsay Troy kicks out with authority and the Faithful cannot believe what they are witnessing. The D continues to bang his fists on the apron while Sonny Silver paces back and forth outside the ring. Up on the stage, Flex Kruger and Klein rise up from their seats and cheer on their fellow PCP member leaving Vae Victis unable to see. The Faithful are still on their feet while Ares sets up on the apron for another superman punch, Lindsay Troy is back on her feet and Elise connects with a second punch!

DDK:

AGAIN!

Lance:

Is this really happening?!

Ares again with the cover!

ONE!

TWO!

THR- NO!

Lindsay Troy kicks out again! Ares looks back at Carla Ferrari in shock that her two punches didn't put Troy away. The D spins his finger in a circle above his head while Vae Victis moves in front of Klein and Flex on the stage, making their way just a smidge closer down the aisle. Meanwhile Ares sets up for Amethystation for a third time. Troy slowly rises to her feet. Ares sails! Ares eats a rolling elbow and crashes to the mat. The former FIST drops to a knee after sustaining a flurry from the former SoHER, looking back at Sonny Silver with a little bit of shock and pain on her face, trying to catch her breath.

DDK:

A clutch elbow from Troy right into Elise's face might've just saved the match! Are those words that just came out of my mouth?

Lance:

Both women are down. Ares has dealt a TON of damage so far, Darren! It feels like the momentum halted with that blow but she's not far from getting right back into this match!

DDK:

This feels like a fever dream!

Klein and Flex leave their chairs behind and start walking down the ramp. They grab signs from the pro-PCP Faithful on the barricade and stop in front of Henry and Kerry again. They hold the posterboard in the air, blocking Vae Victis' view once more and hoping Elise will see the messages:

**ELISE ARES: NEXT WORLD CHAMP
TROY FEARS ARES**

Both women reach their feet and Ares goes for another leg kick that's caught. Hopping and trying to escape, Ares goes for an enziguri that Troy ducks under, leaving Elise in a precarious position. She rolls forward, sending Troy flipping forward, then Ares goes to stay on the offensive before she's turned inside out with a leaping lariat!

On the outside, Keyes and Kuroyama stomp in front of PCP. PCP moves in front of VV. On and on it goes until the remaining members of both factions are at ringside proper. Flex and Klein join The D while Henry and Kerry make their way over to Sonny Silver.

LT spends a second getting her breath back before hoisting Elise up off the mat and chopping her repeatedly against the chest until she is backed into the corner. Then again. Then again. Then again before Carla finally calls for a rope break. Ares falls to a seated position clutching her chest as Ferrari backs LT away, who pushes her way past the official to drive a knee into the side of Elise's skull sending her slumped over onto the ropes.

Lance:

Lindsay Troy unleashing her frustration with a series of violent strikes.

Troy finally leaves Elise be, but only to dart back to the adjacent corner. Elise shakes the cobwebs out, but doesn't see the Queen barreling back toward her with a head of steam.

DDK:

Facewash by Lindsay Troy!

Lance:

We know how particular Elise is about her face, having worn that plastic guard for several months. Troy might be

trying to rearrange a few things to make the South Beach Starlet wear it again.

Elise slumps onto the mat and Lindsay drags her out of the corner by her arm. She drops to the mat and hooks the leg.

ONE!

TWO!

THR-NO!

This time, it's Elise's turn to kick out. Without wasting any time, the Queen of the Ring grabs ahold of the Queen of Sports Entertainment Style's leg and locks in a kneebar! Elise screams out, pain shooting from her leg. PCP look on, concerned, while Vae Victis yell for Lindsay to lock the hold in tighter.

DDK:

Lindsay Troy smartly targeting Elise's legs with this submission, hoping to take away her speed and wear her down.

Lance:

This is a tactic Troy's own opponents use against her. She knows how effective it is.

Elise does all she can to try and block out the pain while stretching her arms toward the ropes. The Faithful and PCP clap their hands and cheer her on, which causes LT to grit her teeth in annoyance and keep the pressure steady. Elise is very nearly to the bottom cable when Lindsay abruptly releases the hold, leaps forward, and rocks the smaller woman with vicious forearms to the face.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

The jeers only seem to fuel the High Queen DEFIANT even more. She rips Elise off the canvas and introduces her to a hard middle kick to the ribs. And another. Carla Ferrari starts admonishing LT for the attack, but Lindsay pays her no mind. Instead, she cracks Elise with a solebutt. Then another. A high savate kick, more middle kicks, and a third solebutt. Ares falls to a knee, clutching her ribs, and then, to add insult to injury, Lindsay lifts her knee and cracks Elise in the face. She falls backwards to the canvas and Troy covers again.

ONE!

TWO!

THRE-NO! Elise throws her shoulder up *right* at the last second!

DDK:

How did Elise come back from that? How?

Lance:

It must've been out of instinct, Darren, because I don't know either.

Lindsay looks murderous, incensed that Elise kicked out of that. The South Beach Starlet has rolled over, crawling for the ropes to try and pull herself up, but Troy grabs ahold of her leg and slams the knee she worked over with the kneebar onto the canvas! Elise screams and clutches her leg, but Troy grabs it again and slams it down once more! Carla's right back with the warnings, but this time Lindsay throws Elise's leg over her shoulders and locks in a Stretch Muffler!

DDK:

Lindsay Troy standing tall with that Stretch Muffler locked in, wrenching on Ares' leg. Elise is risking permanent damage if she doesn't find a way to break this hold.

Lance:

Sometimes it's about self-preservation, Darren. We know how badly Elise wants to be the FIST of DEFIANCE, but sometimes you have to make a business decision in order to live to fight another day.

Elise is in agony but refuses to give up! She flails her arm, and when Carla asks if she gives up she shakes her head *no*. Vae Victis all pound their arms on the mat, trying to will Troy to put Elise down for good. The PCPers scream for Elise to hang on and keep fighting, and as Elise waves her arm about, her fingers graze the top rope.

DDK:

That's a rope break!

Lance:

Carla's trying to tell that to Lindsay, but she won't let go!

Carla starts a count and Troy finally releases Ares at 4.9. The Queen of the Ring yells out in frustration; annoyed at Elise's tenacity and refusal to just die already. She walks a few steps away from Elise, then whirls on her heel and runs back toward her, looking for a running knee strike, however Elise rolls out of the way! She gets up to her feet, favoring her injured leg, but tries to ignore it the best she can. She grits her teeth and runs back toward Lindsay, adrenaline taking over, and connects with a running single leg dropkick! The force of the kick sends Troy to a knee, and Elise capitalizes with a gamengiri! She covers!

ONE!

TWO!

THREE-NO, TROY KICKS OUT!

DDK:

Lindsay Troy is not done yet, Lance!

Lance:

Look at Elise, she was sure that was enough!

Elise pounds her fist on the canvas while Lindsay struggles to get back to a seated position. Carla starts her ten count and both women are slow to get back to their feet. Ares is up first, meeting the count of six. She backs up, waiting for Lindsay to get vertical. Once she does, Elise charges forward again...

DDK:

AMETHYSTATION!

Lance:

No, Troy moved!

Indeed, this time Lindsay avoids the Superman punch and runs to the far ropes as fast as she can, gaining momentum. Elise stumbles a bit after the miss, which prevents her from seeing what's coming for her until it's too late.

DDK:

QUEEN'S GAMBIT!

Lance:

The cover!

ONE

TWO

THREEEEEEESHoulder UP! ELISE GOT THE SHOULDER UP!

Neither Vae Victis nor the Pop Culture Phenoms can believe it. Elise falls back flat to the canvas, eyes glassy and trying to get her bearings.

Lindsay Troy, however, has had about enough of this. She immediately grabs Elise and locks in the Divine Right!

DDK:

Koji clutch! And it's locked in tight!

Lance:

Elise needs to counter this and fast!

But there's no getting out of this. Battered and out of strength, Elise succumbs and taps out.

DING DING DING

Sonny Silver swipes a microphone off the timekeeper's table while Lindsay slowly gets to her feet.

Sonny Silver:

The winner of this match.....and one step closer to the top of the mountain...LINDSAY TROY!

Unlike in her match two weeks ago, Lindsay allows Carla to raise her arm in victory. Flex looks dejected at the outcome, Klein's shoulders slump, and The D reaches for Elise to help her out of the ring.

DDK:

This was a war, Lance. Even though she didn't pull out the win tonight, Elise Ares has nothing to be ashamed about.

Lance:

She gave one of the best wrestlers of all time the absolute fight of her life, Darren. She took it to Lindsay right from the get-go and it wasn't until Troy grounded her with those leg submissions that the momentum shifted in the Queen of the Ring's favor.

DDK:

We knew Lindsay Troy would be hard to beat and she proved it again here tonight. We'll find out who her third round opponent will be after the main event is in the books.

Lance:

Either Oscar Burns or Conor Fuse...another barnburner in the making. We've got to take a quick commercial break. Don't go anywhere!

DEFTv fades to commercial on the image of Henry Keyes and Kerry Kuroyama holding open the ropes for Lindsay to exit the ring, and the Queen staring out at the Faithful with a DEFIANT smirk.

COMMERCIAL: ACTS of DEFIANCE 2022

TURNING OVER A NEW LEAF

The scene switches to a backstage interview location as The Gamers erupt in !RANK chants. Conor Fuse stands beside Jamie Sawyers, sporting his typical lime green outfit, although Conor's bandana, tights and arm sleeve are littered with hashtags directly influenced by The Comments Section and likely handpicked by Malak Garland himself. As usual there are slanderous comments towards the fans but they don't care, knowing it's not a true representation of a guy who's held against his will in a stable he wants absolutely no part of. There are also plenty of hashtag comments about Deacon, Kerry Kuroyama and, of course, the DEFIANCE soccer mom herself, LiNdSaY tRoY. For example, some read:

TROY AIN'T PRIME

WORST FEDHEAD EVER

TROY'S DEFIANCE COMEBACK TROY WISHES SHE COULD STILL SHOP AT FOREVER 21

TROY SITS WHEN SHE PEES

Sawyers realizes the cameras are rolling.

Jamie Sawyers:

Conor Fuse, you survived a hell of a match against Corvo Alpha. How are you recovering after that hellacious battle?

Conor nods with excitement at first, until his mind reflects upon the punishment he went through two weeks ago.

Conor Fuse:

I was lucky to survive, Jamie, let's be honest. I had a couple of Mega Man E Tanks ready to go and I needed every last life bar. Corvo made me bleed, he made me suffer; I barely did it.

Fuse cracks his sore neck.

Conor Fuse:

But I DID do it. In the end, I won.

!RANK

!RANK

!RANK

Conor Fuse:

Corvo, you're the size of a mini boss with the skills of a mega boss. I'll see you again, NO DOUBT and we will settle the score because maybe... I *should have* lost. You were the better man for ninety-nine percent of that one.

The Ultimate Gamer changes course.

Conor Fuse:

But now Twist and Shouts, Oscar Burns. THE DEFIANT. The last level legend who I gotta fight in the mid-levels of this tournament. The two-time FIST and posterboy of this game. The mecca. Well game on you SOB, because I remember beating you. DEFTv 161, November 11th, 2021. It was a BIG night for me. A massive victory... steering me into MAIN EVENT Conor, starting me on the path to the top. The character I've always DREAMED about playing as. And you know what? It was a big night for you, too...

Fuse pauses to reflect.

Conor Fuse:

Because you showed your true colours after our match. You proved to be a bad guy, an 8-4 boss and not a first controller player. You beat the shit outta me and you know what?

Conor pauses again, shaking his head.

Conor Fuse:

It was the right move for you. In our rematch at DEFIANCE Road, you won.

Conor raises his right hand and holds up his index finger, while making a popping sound. He then raises his left hand and holds up his index finger, making another popping sound.

Conor Fuse:

1-1. Rubber match, yo. Who moves on to face The Queen of the Bling? Who's gonna take that smug righteous smile off her face? I am. The eight bit badass. You can take that promise to your memory card and save it.

Fuse looks to close out the interview.

Conor Fuse:

But let's not get a level ahead here, Jamie. Oscar Burns is up first. And Oscar, I'm gonna be the face of DEFIANCE now. I'm not only gonna be the high flying guy but I have a surprise for you tonight, I've added a couple of submissions to my game. Serious murder-death-kill shit. *Finish Him* stuff. Can't wait to show you my level-up. Let's settle the score for good.

Conor begins to walk off, leaving a gobsmacked Jamie Sawyers standing there. The footage still rolls and shows a shadowy figure catching up with Fire Flower Fuse. In a zoomed in shot, the camera reveals Malak Garland clapping and walking alongside the gamer. The Power-Up King sighs as he looks over at Malak who is sporting a High Octane Wrestling branded "8 BIT BADASS" t-shirt. Fuse has a facial expression suggesting something along the lines of "what the hell are you doing?"

Malak Garland:

Great speech, Conor! Really hit all the high points! Speaking of high, what do you think of my shirt? Isn't it the BEST!? I found it in your backpack when I helped myself to it. Oh by the way, I left some special gift cards in there for you! Don't worry, I didn't play favorites. Each company got some money. Even Forever 21.

Conor stops dead in his tracks.

Conor Fuse:

Ummmmmm okay?

Conor seems extremely conFUSED.

Conor Fuse:

What do you want, Malak? I'm getting ready for a serious match, bro.

Malak puts his arms out trying to proclaim innocence.

Malak Garland:

Hey, hey, hey now. Conor, don't you get it? I don't WANT anything! I am on your side! In fact, I decided to turn over a new leaf entirely! This is me now. This is who I am. Heck, this is *us*. We're in this together and I just wanted to let you know how much you mean to me across space and time. I feel our inner chakras aligning, Conor. Don't resist, embrace it.

There aren't many times Conor Fuse is left at a loss for words. Obviously, this is one of them. He stares blankly at Malak who weirdly reaches out to caress Conor's elbow.

Malak Garland:

I got you. Nothing to worry about. I'd never do you dirty like how the Queen of the Ring treats her friends. I'm trustworthy. I'm selfless.

Garland looks over Conor's tights.

Malak Garland:

Amazing hashtags by the way.

Garland leaves it at that and heads in the opposite direction Conor is facing as DEFtv goes elsewhere.

Conor Fuse:

You made them.

ADV OPEN CHALLENGE

DDK:

Our next match on the card is Alvaro de Vargas making an open challenge here to anyone on the roster - albeit I'm told it's a unique challenge we'll find out about momentarily. We've seen the mood he's been in since being bumped out of the ACTS Tournament. I'd have to argue he has a great pedigree to be included. He's racked up key signature wins over his career.

Lance:

All true. A lot of in-ring accomplishments, being top ranked, but he was left out as a punitive measure due to putting Jack Mace on the shelf. Favoured Saints decided they were not going to reward ADV. He ran afoul of Masked Violator #1 - who also wanted in the tournament to face off with Corvo Alpha - and the two got into it. Then we saw ADV mow right through Elijah Cross on UNCUT. He's not in a good mood.

DDK:

Unfortunately, we'll have to turn it over to ADV's manager, Tom Morrow, here in just a moment. So let's do that... Ugh...

Sure enough, Tom Morrow walks out from the back to loud jeers! Wearing a half-red and half-green suit and a matching sequined neck brace, Morrow flicks on the BFTA headset and starts speaking to the crowd.

Tom Morrow:

Ladies, gentlemen, and those gentlemen's sister-wives...

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Tom Morrow:

Don't boo me cause you all did it wrong. You're supposed to RENT multiple women, not MARRY multiple women!

Lance:

Wow. You can always count on Tom Morrow to keep it classy!

Morrow chuckles at his own horrible and degrading knee slapper while the crowd boos.

Tom Morrow:

Momentarily, my client who was WRONGFULLY excluded from the ACTS Tournament is going to take out his frustrations in an open challenge... but this isn't just ANY open challenge. That masked piece of garbage, Masked Violator #1 tried to step to El Sol Dorado last week, only for his face to get violated via Alvaro's backfist! And we hear people in the back may have taken umbrage with that...

He points to the back.

Tom Morrow:

So here's your chance to do something about it. Alvaro de Vargas... against ANY masked wrestler from the back! You want a shot? Come on down and take it...

Now Tom gets ready for his intros.

Alvaro de Vargas:

introducing my client... the FIVE-STAR MONSTER! He stands at 6'8" and weighs in at 278 pounds of fireball-throwin', headbutting, piledriving mayhem! He is **"EL SOL DORADO" ALVARO DE VARGAS!**

♪ "Wherever I May Roam" by J Balvin ♪

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOM!

Fire erupts from either side of the stage and coming out from the back in wrestling gear - dark purple tights with orange and yellow flames, red Adidas sneakers, a sleeveless hoodie is the man called Alvaro de Vargas. He stomps right past Tom Morrow on the ramp and throws off both his red-tinted sunglasses and his hoodie and then climbs on in to the ring.

DDK:

A motivated de Vargas is the most dangerous de Vargas! Who's going to step up to the Cocky Cuban?

Lance:

And they asked for ANY masked wrestler from the back. Are the not-so-subtly directing this challenge at Masked Violator #1?

ADV paces in circles, not taking his eyes off the ramp while his music cuts out. They are awaiting the arrival of someone...

♪ "Pyrotechnics" by Cliff Lin ♪

Sho Nakazawa, the masked man from the land of the rising sun, walks through the curtain to a subdued but audible round of cheers from the DEFIANCE Faithful who, despite his less than win/loss record, still knows what he can do in the squared circle. And...he has a microphone?

DDK:

Wow! I'm a little surprised to see Sho Nakazawa here! BRAZEN Graduate! He's been looking for a signature win of his own... will tonight be the night?

Li'l Nak motions for the music to cut. In broken English, he addresses the men in the ring.

Sho Nakazawa:

Tom Morrow... Everyone wants you... to shut the hell up!

A nice cheer from the crowd! Morrow points and yells at Sho from inside the ring while ADV remains unamused.

Sho Nakazawa:

Alvaro... you want fight? I will shut you up... RIGHT NOW!

He drops the microphone and with some cheers from the crowd, slides into the ring! Morrow takes a beat as ADV swings! Hector Navarro calls for the bell!

DING DING

The bell rings as ADV tries to cut off the quick Li'l Nak with a big boot, but he slides underneath! He pops up behind Alvaro and when The Cocky Cuban turns, he gets kicked in the leg with a trio of hard snap kicks! Alvaro flinches as Sho moves on to a series of alternating kicks followed by a leaping back kick! The blow knocks Alvaro back a few steps!

DDK:

Sho Nakazawa with some extra fire tonight! He's going to need it against a guy who literally proclaims himself to be a golden sun, though!

He leaps off the ropes and then catches Alvaro with a flying arm drag that sends the big man rolling across the ring! Sho gets up and he's all fired up when he points to the ropes. He charges...

But catches a HUGE big boot on the way back!

Lance:

Oooh! Sho Nakazawa had him going for a few moments, but that's one of the advantages being a bigger competitor has... one big move to turn the tide.

DDK:

Indeed! And now Alvaro about to take over!

He doesn't waste any more time by shooting Li'l Nak into the ropes, only to obliterate him with a running back elbow off the return! Nak flips back off the canvas while ADV continues to walk the ring, basking in the jeers.

Alvaro de Vargas:

LET ME HEAR IT, PENDEJOS!

ADV tilts his ear to take in more jeers before he turns his attention back on Nakazawa. He grabs him by the arm before pulling him back up to his feet. He throws him off the ropes again, this time picking him up for a hip toss... into a STIFF backbreaker!

DDK:

OOOH! That's a new one by Alvaro! Hip Toss into a Backbreaker!

After the vicious move, Alvaro continues to pace around the ring.

Lance:

He could probably go for a cover right now if he wanted to... but seems like he wants to savor this beating.

And he does just that by hoisting Sho up in the corner and then throws him FORCEFULLY across the ring with a huge hammer throw right into the turnbuckles! Li'l Nak gets shaken up by the impact and then collapses to his knees. The Japanese native clutches his back in severe pain while Morrow watches on gleefully.

DDK:

ADV trying to make sport of Nakazawa. He hasn't won as many matches as he'd like, but that's no reason to treat him this way. All of our competitors deserve respect

Lance:

ADV's only respect is like the members of Better Future Talent Agency. They're only respect is for their bank accounts.

El Sol Dorado continues to punish the young Nakazawa. He hoits Li'l Nak up again and then hammer throws him back to the previous corner! The crowd jeers as ADV stands over him and puts a boot down on his back, stomping away at him!

DDK:

Alvaro de Vargas now trying to work over that back! He's stomping away on it!

He then drives a boot down on Nak's back, eliciting groans from the masked wrestler! ADV then WALKS on him against the ropes as Hector Navarro gives him a five-count to back off from the ropes or risk a disqualification.

Hector Navarro:

Back off! Now! One! Two! Three! Four...

ADV finally does so and then takes in more jeers while Nakazawa holds onto his back in pain!

DDK:

You better pay attention to Sho! You give him any opening and you may regret it!

He picks up Sho and tries to launch him a third time... but this time, Nakazawa flips through the ropes to land on the

apron!

Lance:

You called it, Darren! Nakazawa just saved himself!

ADV charges at him, but Sho leaps up with a leaping kick from the apron to his face! ADV stumbles back as Sho tries to get to the top rope... then dives off with a corkscrew cross body on top of ADV! The crowd cheer as Nakazawa rolls off of him, holding his back. He can't follow up with the cover right away, but he does realize that time is of the essence! Tom Morrow is having a fit on the outside while the crowd cheers on Li'l Nak!

DDK:

Now what's Nakazawa doing?

ADV is still trying to get up, but Nakazawa hits a stiff thrust kick to Alvaro while he's on his knees! He knocks a gob of spit out of ADV's face and then a snap reverse STO to bring him down flat to the canvas! Alvaro rolls over flat on his back while Li'l Nak leaps to the top rope and hits a big springboard moonsault! The crowd cheers him on!

DDK:

We might have a big upset in the making! Cover!

ONE...

TWO...

NO!

El Sol Dorado kicks out just after two and throws him off, but Li'l Nak scrambles to his feet!

Lance:

Alvaro kicks out, but Nakazawa remains undeterred! He wants this win tonight to not only close ADV's mouth, but for himself as well! He's one signature win away from bigger things and he can do it tonight!

When Alvaro tries to get up to his feet, he takes a running dropkick from Nakazawa that sends him backwards a few steps into the nearby corner. El Sol Dorado is stumbled back while Li'l Nak feeds off the crowd while still holding his back. He points at the corner and charges full speed ahead...

Right into a SICK standing thrust kick from Alvaro! The crowd cringes as he hits the mat!

DDK:

Oh, no! ADV with The Scorcher! He nearly kicks Sho's head off his shoulders!

Lance:

He debuted that move last week against Elijah Cross! Looks like it works here, too!

ADV is through playing around as he grabs Nakazawa off the mat. He places him on the shoulders and then speeds forward to THROW him right into the corner with the Cuban Missile! The lawn dart sends Sho crashing hard, then ADV pulls him up again. Sho can't defend himself as he stands on spaghetti legs... then gets SMACKED with the backfist!

DDK:

Garre del Tigre! This one is over!

The Salt Lake City Faithful jeer Alvaro as he hooks a leg and meanmugs the crowd.

ONE...

TWO...

THREE!

DING DING DING

♪ "Wherever I May Roam" by J Balvin ♪

Darren Quimbey:

Here is your winner.... **ALVARO DE VARGAS!**

ADV pulls his arm away from Hector Navarro trying to raise it... so he can let Tom Morrow do the job.

DDK:

Alvaro de Vargas taking Li'l Nak lightly for a bit before he turns it up and shuts him down. Sho Nakazawa with a great performance... And they're leaving the ring.

ADV gets the jeers from the crowd before he starts heading up the ramp, then moving just to the right, where Jamie Sawyers is waiting.

Lance:

Uh-oh... and we're not done with them, either. Joy.

MASKED VIOLATION

After the conclusion of the previous match, Alvaro de Vargas and Tom Morrow go storming up the ramp and head on over to the interview stage where Jamie Sawyers is already waiting.

DDK:

Alvaro de Vargas has been on a warpath the last few weeks and another win to add to his utter domination on UNCUT last week.

Lance:

Now what does he want to do with Jamie Sawyers? Another whine sesh?

El Sol Dorado and The BFTA Brainchild both come storming towards the interview setup on stage. ADV looks down at Jamie Sawyers while Tom Morrow moves slightly ahead of him. Jamie Sawyers greets both men.

Jamie Sawyers:

Tom Morrow... Alvaro de Vargas...

Morrow stares across the podium and scoffs.

Tom Morrow:

Talking Head #5.

Sawyers tries to remain professional in spite of Morrow's bitterness showing. ADV is quietly chugging a bottle of water behind him.

Tom Morrow:

Go ahead and do what you're programmed to do. Ask your ridiculous pro-company questions so we can cut through the crap and tell it like it really is.

Jamie Sawyers:

I'd like to consider myself a bit of an unbiased journalist, but I will ask. For the last few weeks, we've seen Alvaro de Vargas go on a warpath since MAXDEF when he injured Jack Mace. Then two weeks ago, Masked Violator #1 was out here pleading for a spot in that tournament that Alvaro was excluded from. He had nothing to do with anything you have going on right now, so why attack him? Why get involved with him at all? His goings-on had nothing to do with your own?

Morrow lightly slaps his own forehead and can't help but laugh into the crook of his arm. ADV chugs from his water bottle.

Tom Morrow:

I fell for it, Al. I fell for it. I thought after he said he was unbiased, that we'd get a smart, well thought-out question. And then it's right back to the sympathy card. All right, you want to take this one or should I?

ADV shrugs. He doesn't care.

Alvaro de Vargas:

I said all I needed to say to the rest of those pendejos in the back when I destroyed Sho Nakazawa.

Tom Morrow:

Very well.

He turns to Sawyers.

Tom Morrow:

Jamie Sawyers, you MORONIC DUNDERHEAD! Was it not clear why we did what we did? Before he started asking for a spot in that tournament, Masked Violator #1 wouldn't have been worth ANYONE's time! Even his own tag partner and Lord Nigel are trying to forget he was ever affiliated with that masked sad sack. But he had the nerve to come out and ask for a spot in the ACTS Tournament when he's won... what... a match? And it wasn't even a big event. Weeks of peeling back the layers on UNCUT: UpClose were dedicated to that schmuck, and the message we got from it was that he hasn't stopped being the same loser he was five years ago!

He points at Alvaro.

Tom Morrow:

Then you look at this stud here! 6'8"! 278! Backfisting people into the shadow realm! Lobbing fireballs! He isn't some wizard... he's El Sol Dorado. The Golden Sun of DEFIANCE. Walks like! Talks like! Breathes like! Smells like money! Everything Alvaro de Vargas screams out "STAR!" Everything about Alvaro de Vargas is money! De Vargas es Deniro! In fact, that last one's going on a shirt. Tell your marketing monkeys to get to it and make that happen, Sawyers. It'd be the first useful thing you did tonight!

Sawyers shakes his head and while Tom Morrow is playing around, it appears ADV isn't. He starts to inch closer to Jamie Sawyers. Uncomfortably so.

Alvaro de Vargas:

Apparently... my message on UNCUT fell on deaf ears. I said people were going to get hurt, pendejo. La gente se va a lastimar. This place DISRESPECTED me by not including me in the ACTS Tournament, not once, but TWICE when there was a spot opened by Brock No-Show. So maybe this place will finally get the message not to disrespect me... Hago otra cosa...

He puts a hand on Sawyer's microphone and pulls his arm up close.

Alvaro de Vargas:

Maybe I stop limiting myself to attacking wrestlers... maybe I'll start looking ELSEWHERE for fights instead until this company gives me what I want...

♪ "The Fixer" by Pearl Jam ♪

DDK:

Uh-oh...

Morrow and ADV spin back towards the curtain just as it parts, Morrow's eyes aghast. De Vargas' demeanor: uber annoyed. Dressed to wrestle in a bright red singlet trimmed with blues and yellows with an old school wrestling mask to match it, he stomps through the curtain holding a single index finger in the air-

Lance:

It's Masked Violator #1!

-the camera briefly cuts to a wide crowd shot, a handful of single index finger's being thrust in the air, peppered throughout the building. MV1 brings a microphone to his lips as his music quickly fades.

MV1:

Just 1 moment, just 1 moment...

Broad smile stretching his mask, MV1 holds his free hand out in a peaceful, conciliatory gesture. The fans feel something coming. ADV does also. Tossing his half empty water bottle over his shoulder, Alvaro is all intensity. MV1 playfully waves towards him, to a decent amused-pop from the Faithful.

MV1:

I hate to interrupt, I really do. It's not something my parents raised me to do. I was raised with something called

manners. So this “interrupting” thing is not entirely my style and I’m sorta out of practice. But a few weeks back, seems like you fellas wanted to make a statement at my expense. Seems to me “interrupting” is partially how folks like you communicate. I heard you loud and clear two weeks ago and I want to be sure you boys hear me tonight so I figured I’d try’n speak your language.

MV1 takes a step towards the interview stage and the mercury rises. Morrow works to restrain and talk ADV down a bit but can’t be heard over the rumble reverberating through the Maverik Center. Jamie Sawyers gingerly and hesitantly steps between #1 and Morrow & ADV, visibly eager to be anywhere but the position he finds himself in. MV1 eyes Morrow.

MV1:

That’s right, Mr. Morrow. My story is no secret. I came back to DEFIANCE with a singular purpose. I came back to DEFIANCE to make a difference. To bring a family back together and to right the most painful of wrongs. Yeah, that’s why I’m here. But... now that I’m here... if your client needs a good olde fashioned lesson on *manners*--

MV1 glares back at ADV for a moment.

MV1:

--well then, I guess I’ll have a DUAL purpose being back in DEFIANCE.

Morrow sputters.

Tom Morrow:

Wait just a second!

MV1 takes another step forward, Sawyers pleading with him to cool down. MV1 doesn’t take his blue eyes off Morrow & ADV.

MV1:

I do believe that *I* am doing the interrupting tonight!

1 turns back to ADV again, leveling an index finger at him.

MV1:

You feeling disrespected lately? You feeling slighted? Overlooked? Feeling left out? Well... you made your statement two weeks ago. I heard you on UNCUT. You’ve got my full attention, Mr. DV. I’m standing right here. Allow me to make MY statement: DEFIANCE doesn’t belong to you, sir. It doesn’t exist for you. It belongs... to them!

MV1 turns the finger on the Faithful and they light up. He continues pointing, seemingly connecting with every fan in the building before one last fingerpoint into the camera in his face.

MV1:

It exists for THEM! And... I’ve gotta tell ya... it sounds like *they* hate your guts.

Boy, do they. The Salt Lake City Faithful are especially salty re: ADV.

ADV is seething now, Morrow struggles to keep him at bay. Sawyers approaches the pair – and Morrow SHOVES Jamie Sawyers flying towards MV1.

DDK:

What the--

MV1 is quick to catch Sawyers and delicately help the announcer to stable footing before turning back and--

Lance:

ADV WITH THE BACKFIST! MV1 never saw it coming! Just DEAD-ON the side of his head!

The crowd shudders as ADV is all over MV1, sitting atop him, laying in blow after blow after blow. Morrow cackles, shoving Jamie Sawyers out of the way once again, barking obnoxious encouragement to his top client.

DDK:

Enough! Someone get de Vargas out of here!

A smug Alvaro de Vargas pulls MV1 half up to his feet by his red wrestling mask before delivering a thunderous double arm DDT on the stage.

Two DEFmed staff rush towards the stage but Morrow is able to put himself between them and ADV.

Tom Morrow:

Nothing to see here! Nothing to see here!

Back up to his feet, ADV shoves one of the DEFmed techs to the ground, the other quick to come to his co-workers aid.

DDK:

This is despicable! Get these two OUT of here!

MV1 stirs in the background, crawling first up to his knees. The front row fans cheer him on – calling ADV's attention to the resilient masked man. ADV charges at him.

CLANNNG!!

Lance:

CURBSTOMP TO MV1! On the stage!

Allowing not a moment to recover, ADV is smothering his prey.

DDK:

Where is security!? He BLINDSIDED MV1! The man doesn't stand a chance!

Lance:

El Sol Dorado, Alvaro de Vargas, is making ANOTHER statement it seems! I wonder if Masked Violator #1 is getting it, Keebs.

The camera cuts to ADV sitting on MV1's back, tearing at the red mask, untying it at the back. A sick smile spreads across de Vargas' face.

DDK:

No... he can't do this.. He's trying to TAKE MV1's mask off!

Lance:

MV1 is in no condition to stop him!

And before you know it, he's done it – much to the vocal displeasure of the Faithful, ADV holds his prize high above his head, springing to his feet. Leaving MV1 to clutch at and cover his face, clearly in pain on the interview stage, Morrow snatches the mask out of ADV's hands and parades with it to a chorus of boo's.

DDK:

I can't believe what I'm seeing... what am I saying? Of course I believe what I'm seeing! Alvaro de Vargas, you are a scumbag!

At the curtain, Morrow tosses MV1's mask back to ADV, who is quick to use it to wipe under his arms. Morrow guffaws as he waves goodbye to MV1, who by now is finally being attended to by members of DEFmed.

DDK:

Just when you think Tom Morrow can't sink any lower...

One can still hear Morrow's cackle, even off screen.

DDK:

...he reminds you just who he is.

Camera cuts to MV1 who is finally moving, careful to hold a white towel over his face and head.

COMMERCIAL: UNCUT 125**SEMIS: Dex Joy vs. Rezin****SEMIS: Lindsay Troy vs. Oscar Burns or Conor Fuse**

LOVE LANGUAGE

The broadcast returns from commercial break as Lance Warner sits in one of two directors chairs in the middle of the ring. The other chair is empty, for now. Lance raises a microphone to his mouth.

Lance:

Faithful, at this time, it's my pleasure to introduce to you, the one, the only, TERESA AMES!

♪ "The Ending" by Papa Roach ♪

All eyeballs shift forward to the entranceway as Teresa bursts out on stage. She's followed by Shawn Steele who keeps a fair distance. Teresa stops halfway down the ramp to truly marvel at the Maverik Center. She looks at the surroundings and appears to be even more in love now that she can see the innards of the building as DDK mutters his own observations into his headset.

DDK:

I think it's fair to say that this interview will be quite interesting. Teresa has been acting erratic the last few weeks, which is saying something for someone of her variety. I wish Lance the very best in that ring and I told him beforehand that I do have DEFsec on speed dial. All he has to do is give me the universal sign for trouble and I'll send them in.

Teresa wipes her feet on the apron with diligence. She gazes over to Lance and points at the ropes as if requesting he gets off his lazy ass and helps her inside the ring. Lance rises from his seat, only to be shown up by Shawn Steele who whisks him back with a few hand motions. Shawn inserts himself into the situation by sitting on the middle rope, allowing Teresa a generous entrance into the squared circle.

DDK:

One has to wonder what role that idiot Shawn Steele plays into things too. He's not even signed to a DEFIANCE contract.

Ames basks in the crowd's jeers as she extends her arms out wide and falls to her knees. She closes her eyes as it appears her breathing has picked up substantially. Shortly after her little ciesta, Teresa comes back to reality, grabs a mic and takes a seat adjacent to Lance Warner.

Lance:

Teresa, thanks for being here tonight. Let's cut right to the chase because the wrestling world has been buzzing about you in the last few weeks. Everyone wants to know what's going on. Everyone wants to know who you're claiming to be in a relationship with. Everyone wants the scoop. So, in your terms, please "spill the tea." The floor is yours.

Teresa stares out to the crowd which gets hot at her opportunity to talk. She pauses a moment and smiles. She looks up to the rafters and blows a kiss before speaking.

Teresa Ames:

First of all, Lance. You're welcome for HAND selecting you to break such an earth shattering announcement because I'm not just anyone. I'm the Tasty Gurl, dammit!

The fans react negatively before she continues.

Teresa Ames:

Lance, it's pretty plain and simple and the fact none of you imbeciles were able to piece it together further validates the fact you're all little numpty tramps!

DDK:

What's a numpty? Whatever you do, probably not a good idea to google it on a work device.

Teresa Ames:

Anyways, let me spell it out for each and everyone of you. I'll admit it, okay?

Ames appears to get emotional.

Teresa Ames:

I've decided to move on from dating "typical" types because no one seems to be a fit for me and my vaunted love language. Judge me as you may, but if you do, then you're no better than disposable teenage relationships. No one seems to be able to live up to my expectation to express heartfelt commitment to me, which is what I'm all about. Shit guy, shit, no one even compliments me on my ring gear for crying out loud! How hard is it to fish for basic compliments!?

The boos grows stronger.

Teresa Ames:

It's the reason why I got into pro wrestling in the first place; to find a suitable husband. Yet here I am, over two and a half years in and coming up empty. My love language is a complex web of physical touch and acts of service. Like, how hard is it to subscribe to that?

The fans are even more impatient.

Teresa Ames:

But it's okay.

Her eyes examine the structures around her.

Teresa Ames:

Because I KNOW my new crush is capable of all this and more and there is no talking back. I don't have to cater back to anyone. It's finally ALL ABOUT ME!

She snidely smirks as Shawn Steele motions to the crowd that it's him. Lance leans in from his chair.

Lance:

Point blank, Teresa. Who is your new crush?

Ames has fire in her eyes as she locks in on Lance.

Teresa Ames:

Not who but WHAT. And you know what? I don't appreciate all the disrespect this crowd is showing me right now.

The restless fans begin infringing on her ability to speak with loud obscenities. A bit rattled, Teresa looks from left to right and right to left before the vindictive vixen rises up within her.

Teresa Ames:

I'm done. This interview is over. You people make me sick. I don't have to share ANY information with the likes of you. Do you even know where you are right now!? You all have the PRIVILEGE of being in the Maverik Center. The fact I have to share this place with you is straight up BONKERS! I ain't sharing! Not right now, anyway. I will probably share what it is in intimate detail on the next DEFtv because this booing has soured my social experience for today. Shit guy, shit.

Teresa throws down the microphone with authority. She exits to Shawn Steele waiting for her by the apron. Speculation runs wild once more.

DDK:

Teresa teases us by revealing that she's not in love with someONE but dare I say, someTHING!? This keeps getting weirder and weirder. Well folks, hold on because who knows what is going to happen NEXT!

JJ DIXON'S LAST STAND

At the top of the interview stage stands JJ Dixon. He has his hair pulled back in a ponytail, wearing a shirt with the sleeves cut-off that reads "DRINKIN' WHISKY AND RYE" around a shot glass, jeans and brown cowboy boots with fringe. He walks out, looking nervous, as he paces back and forth with the microphone in his hand.

JJ Dixon:

Now, last week, I said some things after my loss that were pretty revealing about myself. All I've wanted to do my whole life is be a professional wrestler. It's the only thing I've wanted to do since I was a little boy sitting at home, watching the big stars on TV. But I have to face facts. My record ain't too good. And if you want to make it in this business, you need to win big matches on the big TV shows. And, well, I can't even get on the big TV shows, let alone win a match on them. And I'm just about at the end. I've got six figures worth of debt. I've been sleeping in my car and, well, that might have to end because my car has 200,000 miles on it. So what I want.... What I want right now is just one chance. I just want one last chance to prove to myself that I have what it takes.

JJ DIXON! JJ DIXON! JJ DIXON!

JJ Dixon:

Now, there's another wrestler here in DEFIANCE who is a good buddy of mine, and he's in the same position, and that's Nicky Synz. He's struggling to get some wins and get some attention. So, I asked him to take this match on with me. Because he's in the spot as me. He's got bills to pay. He just paid a steep down payment for a house for him and his lady, and he wants to put in a recording studio. He knows just how damn important it is for wrestlers at our level to win just to survive in the real world. And I also know that he's built like me and believes in doing things the right way. Let the better man win. And if wins, well... then I'm going to have to say good--

♪ "Toccata and Fugue" in D Minor by Bach ♪

The lights go out as the familiar dark organs play before a spotlight shines, which blinds JJ. In front of him, not paying any attention, is Teri Melton, wearing a black-and-yellow leopard print turban around her black looped curls, a short-hemmed flapper dress with a gold shawl over it, black gloves up to her wrists, her eyes bug-eyed open as she blows kisses to her fans. Behind her, dressed in his bleak funeral director black, is Zoltan. She snaps her finger and he hands her a cigarette holder and lights it for her. She blows up a large puff of smoke to the air.

Teri Melton:

Hello, Mr. Dixon. Don't you know who I am?

JJ Dixon:

Yeah... you... you're Teri Melton. I remember you from when I was a kid. You were a huge star. You... you were big.

She sneers.

Teri Melton:

I am big! It's the promotions that got small!

She points to a DEFIANCE banner above her head.

BOOOOO!

JJ Dixon:

Well, I'm not sure what you're out here for, ma'am--

Zoltan steps forward between JJ and Teri.

Zoltan:

Madame. You will always address her as MADAME.

Zoltan takes a step back. Teri starts to pace around JJ, staring him up and down, a manic smile on her face as she looks, suggestively looking at JJ's crotch, before moving looking at his eyes and stepping a bit too much into his personal space.

Teri Melton:

It's simple, JJ. I'm Teri Melton. THE STAR OF STARS. The greatest manager in professional wrestling history! This industry's most gifted mind! And the most beautiful face this industry has ever seen! And I'm here in Defiance because these people, these little tiny people, have DEMANDED that I return! Why, just look at all of the signs that have demanded my return over DEFIANCE's many years of existence!

Booooooo!

Teri Melton:

And you, Mr. Dixon... Well, you figure into my plans quite a bit. I see a lot of potential in you, Mr. Dixon. Potential nobody else sees in you. Potential that you don't even see in you.

JJ is as awkward looking as one can possibly be. He takes a step back and moves her hand off of his body.

JJ Dixon:

Now, Ma'am --

Zoltan starts to step towards him and points.

JJ Dixon:

I mean... Madame... I don't know you. I don't know what you're about. But I have a lot on my mind. So, if you don't mind --

JJ starts to walk away but Zoltan steps in his path. Teri nonchalantly takes a drag from her cigarette holder.

Teri Melton:

Yes, I know all about your problems, Mr. Dixon. I know all about them all too well. And I know that no one has ever offered you any form of... assistance, have they? Your friends in, what are they called, The Southern Basterds? Your mentor Earl Lee Roberts? Well, Mr. Dixon... they don't seem to really care about you now, do they? But I'm here to offer you my assistance. The paperwork, Zoltan.

Zoltan has a rolled up piece of paper that he hands to JJ that he nervously accepts.

Teri Melton:

I am making you an offer, Mr. Dixon. You will not have to worry about your debts. You will not have to worry about your expenses for the next several years. You won't have to worry about your car breaking down. Nor will you have to worry about where you'll sleep at night. Because you'll stay with me, at my estate on Sunset Boulevard, where you will be gifted with all you need to reach the potential that I--

Teri jabs her finger in his chest. JJ keeps reading the documents, unsure what to do.

Teri Melton:

And only I see in you. And in exchange for all I will provide you with... all you have to do is bring me the jewelry that a woman of my station deserves to be adorned in. You will bring me gold. And you will do this by accepting all of my guidance and direction. Now, what do you say to my offer, Mr. Dixon?

JJ takes the documents and drops them on the floor.

JJ Dixon:

Ma'am-- I mean, Madame... Thank you for the offer, but I just need to focus on my match later tonight before I think about anything else.

JJ walks off as Teri sternly looks at him before starting to slowly cackle, before her cackle grows louder and louder as she takes a puff on her cigarette holder and blows a puff into the air.

JJ DIXON vs. NICKY SYNZ

Darren Quimbey:

Ladies and gentleman... Now in the ring, from Houston, Texas... JJ DIXON!

DDK:

Now, we have just heard some brutal truths the past few weeks from JJ Dixon, and he has said that if he loses this match tonight, it will be his last one!

Lance:

Professional wrestling is a really hard business. And it's very hard to keep on hanging on in this business without amassing wins. We've seen thousands of wrestlers come and go over the years just for those very reasons. The one thing that has always kept JJ Dixon back, in my opinion, is just a lack of confidence. And once you lose your confidence, professional wrestling is impossible.

♪ "Prime Mover" by Synester Sledge ♪

Darren Quimbey:

And now making his way to the ring... from Los Angeles, California is "The Frontman" Nicky Synz!

Nicky walks down to the ring with his Flying V guitar on a strap around his neck, his long hair flowing. He slaps hands with fans on the way down before placing the guitar on a chair next to the ring railing.

Then, all of a sudden, the whole arena turns dark.

GASPS!

♪ "Toccat and Fugue in D Minor" by Bach ♪

A spotlight turns on right at ringside, showing Teri Melton and Zoltan! Teri Melton take a drag of her cigarette before blowing a puff of smoke into the air. She gestures to the audience with her over-the-top theatricality. The lights of the arena turn back on and JJ Dixon is leaning over the ropes, yelling at Teri and Zoltan!

DDK:

JJ Dixon is asking Teri and Zoltan what they're doing at ringside, and is telling them to go back to the dressing room!

Teri Melton:

No, Mr. Dixon! We're here to support you!

DDK:

JJ shakes his head and turns to Nicky. They shake hands.

DING DING

DDK:

Referee Mark Shields calls for the bell and the match begins. JJ and Nicky lock up. Lance, what do you make of the sudden reappearance of Teri Melton and what she is doing at ringside?

Lance:

I was absolutely shocked to see her return. But decades ago, she was a top star in this industry and managed a long line of champions. But she earned herself a really bad reputation for her attitude backstage. Nobody has heard from her in close to 20 years, probably. But I have no idea what she's doing at ringside, and JJ doesn't seem to know, either.

DDK:

JJ gains the advantage and gets Nicky into a headlock. Snapmare takedown. Now he quickly gets back to his feet and

whips Nicky into the ropes -- dropkick from JJ! Cover!

One!

Two!

No!

DDK:

Now JJ quickly gets back to his feet and slides around Nicky Synz with a rollup!

One!

Two!

No!

Lance:

This is a great start from JJ! You can really see him wrestling with an urgency tonight.

DDK:

Now JJ has a reverse chinlock. And Teri Melton is at the ring apron, cheering him on!

Lance:

You just have to hope for JJ's sake that she doesn't provide a distraction at ringside, considering the stipulation he placed upon himself.

DDK:

Nicky Synz gets up to his feet, and elbows JJ in the stomach. Whip into the ropes, Synz with the leapfrog, and a back elbow to JJ! Now he has a headlock, running bulldog! Cover!

One!

Two!

No!

DDK:

And JJ Dixon slides out of the ring to catch his breath... and there's Teri Melton and Zoltan now right behind him. JJ is exasperated, and telling them to leave him alone!

Teri Melton:

Right knee! Attack his right knee! He's got a brace on!

Lance:

You know, I can't help but think that is actually sound advice. Nicky is trying to shake his right knee a bit, which he may have tweaked a bit after that running bulldog since it looked like he came down awkwardly on it.

DDK:

Now JJ slides into the ring and stands up. They go to lockup again... and Nicky with control. Knee to the midsection. Another knee to the midsection... Snap suplex! He pops the hips -- and another snap suplex! And Nicky kips up to his feet as the crowd cheers! But JJ chop blocks him in that right knee and Nicky screams in pain!

Lance:

That seemed to have been a bit of a cheap shot from JJ Dixon, but you can't blame him considering the pressure he's

under tonight.

JJ shoots a glance at Teri who nods approvingly!

DDK:

Now JJ has Nicky by the right foot and wrenches it... kick to the thigh! And another kick! And JJ really is attacking the right knee, courtesy of the uninvited advice from Teri Melton!

Lance:

Say what you will about her theatrics and seemingly delusional nature, but she does know what she is talking about!

DDK:

JJ now spins the knee, but Nicky uses his left foot to bounce JJ off the ropes. He gets up, Japanese arm drag! Now into an arm bar! And Nicky is playing air guitar on the arm as the crowd howls!

Lance:

You can't help but think Nicky's gloating here a bit because JJ took a bit of a cheapshot earlier.

DDK:

Now Nicky gets off the mat runs off the ropes... back elbow to JJ who goes into the turnbuckle! He charges -- SPEAR into the corner! He calls that Double Platinum! He now whips JJ into the other corner... He charges, springboard back elbow -- no, JJ dodges! Now JJ with a legsweep targeting the right knee after Nicky bounced out of the corner. JJ quickly bounces off the ropes -- RUNNING KNEE TO THE BACK OF HIS HEAD!

One!

Two!

No!

DDK:

JJ is now howling to the fans, stomping the mat to rally the fans!

Lance:

I just hope JJ isn't losing focus right now. But he has shown a real opportunistic offense tonight, which we aren't used to seeing from him.

DDK:

JJ now whips Nicky into the corner -- no, Nicky drops down to his left knee to block! He reverses... suplex into the turnbuckles! Now Nicky up quickly --- he waits for JJ to get back up... Jumping Facebuster! And now he's pointing to the ring apron! He goes, he's setting him up for the Flying V!

Lance:

He might be taking too long!

DDK:

Wait! Teri Melton is on another side of the ring apron! What is she doing?

Teri has her back to the ring, with her eyes closed, waving her hands as if she is conducting an orchestra.

DDK:

Referee Mark Shields is telling Teri to get off the arpon while Nicky goes to springboard up -- Zoltan, all 6'7" of him, reaches up and grabs the top rope and shakes it! Nicky collapses to the mat and is holding his knee in massive pain!

Lance:

What a well-timed distraction, but I don't think JJ Dixon even knows what happened as he's still groggy!

DDK:

Now Zoltan slides a chair into the ring! Referee Mark Shields sees it and warns him and goes to retrieve the chair. Teri now off the apron and back on the floor and Nicky is leaning on the ropes to get back up -- OH NO! TERI MELTON JUST JABBED HER CIGARETTE HOLDER INTO HIS EYE! TERI MELTON JUST JABBED A LIT CIGARETTE INTO NICKY SYNZ'S EYES!

Lance:

They timed that perfectly when the ref's back was turned.

DDK:

JJ hops up - full nelson into a forward legsweep! He just planted Nicky Synz right on that eye that was just burned! COVER!

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING DING DING

DDK:

JJ Dixon wins! JJ Dixon wins! JJ Dixon is on the mat, clenching his fists and yelling! I've never seen him so happy in my life! He is so jubilant he is in tears! But now he sees Nicky Synz, his good friend, holding his eye in major pain!

Lance:

JJ Dixon has no idea what occurred outside the ring! He has no clue whatsoever! He has no idea that Teri Melton and Zoltan are the ones responsible for his victory! But JJ is pointing at Teri, thanking her for the advice to target Nicky's knee!

Teri nods at JJ and then turns her back to the ring and walks two paces up the ring steps and pauses. She's wildly gesturing to her public as she sees the camera.

Teri Melton:

Teri Melton... Is Ready... For Her Closeup!

Teri takes a Broadway bow and then rises. She then does a "come hither" finger without even turning around as JJ Dixon comes to her side. Zoltan stands next to JJ and presents him with the papers from earlier in the evening, along with a pen. JJ scribbles something on the papers and hands them back to Zoltan. And without looking, Teri feels JJ at her side and clutches his elbow as they begin to walk up the ring ramp together, Zoltan right behind.

STORY TIME

DDK:

Coming up next, I see on my makeshift schedule that we should expect words from one half of the tag team that Vae Victis defeated at MAXDEF, none other than the incorrigible Jack Harmen.

Lance:

Jack Harmen's recent partnership with Rezin has helped re-endorse him to the Faithful. Even in a losing effort against Vae Victis. Harmen is also supporting Rezin in his quest for a shot at Deacon's FIST.

♪ "IDOL" by Tech N9ne (feat. Hollywood Undead) ♪

Emerging from the backstage area wearing his full bodied red half duster and crimson tights is none other than the Neighborhood Lunatic, Jack Harmen. The Wildcard has his hair dyed his natural black, with what appear to be silver lines of age whisked amongst the viral stark contrast of normalcy. He takes a moment to look over the Faithful, who are cheering his name, and he wipes away an imaginary tear. He storms to the ring.

DDK:

It's been thirty years, Lance. Thirty years of flying high throughout Mexico and Japan and Europe and the states.

Lance:

He jokes that the only continent he hasn't wrestled in is Antarctica. Odd for the snowman.

Harmen slides into the ring kneeling and shouts, "It's Snowman time!" Before winking to the camera and falling on his back in the ring to do a trademark snow angels taunt.

He chuckles as he stands to his feet. He walks over to the time keeper and catches a mic thrown by Darren Quimbey. Harmen taps the mic once against the side of his head to do a sound check.

Jack Harmen:

I remember my first day in this ring. I was so excited to punch Ned the Crow in the face. Share the ring with Cappy again. 2016, Team VIAGRA debuts, for the second to last time. It's me Mary and Tony, and we're doing this four way angle that leads to us and HOSS for the Trios straps. You guys, you guys almost break me like David Spade in a Chris Farley sketch. You literally chant "We've got Boners," at a tag team called Team VIAGRA.

Jack wipes away an imaginary tear.

Jack Harmen:

So we come up short, but it's a great match, one of my proudest. But then Eric and I never got along and I felt a bit scared at how... easy it felt to be part of DEFIANCE. So I disappeared... but then you all took in Mary, absolutely fully integrated... pushed so hard and merged her love of wrestling and law as the head of DEFIANCE's legal team... Mary said ages ago, and I always denied it, I never said it to you all... but... it's true.

Jack winces. It hurts him to say this. To be vulnerable.

Jack Harmen:

DEFIANCE is our home.

Harmen nods, and the fans swell in cheers.

Jack Harmen:

And that's hard for a nomad to say.

Harmen's shoulders slump as he hesitates.

Jack Harmen:

If you look at my history here, it seems I've had my eye on DEFIANCE's demise since my return in 2018... but I never wanted to destroy DEF, I, I honestly've loved this place since the day I punched Ned the Crow in the face... even when I invaded this place as part of UTAH, I didn't do it to destroy DEF. I did it for my kid. See, DEF couldn't sign him as a 16 year old cause of insurance, but if they acquired WrestleUTA... that's a different story.

Harmen starts pacing in the ring, gestating wildly.

Jack Harmen:

So I made sure my kid got a contract in Utah, so he could wrestle in Louisiana. With his career secured, signed in with the Faithful, a BRAZEN star... why would I want to destroy this place?

Jack rubs the back of his head.

Jack Harmen:

It's why I called Stevens-Douglas straight... and I hate I didn't just make Douglas champ. It's why I was willing to put up my hair against Elise. And I truly believed Arthur meant to make DEFIANCE better, so I followed him...

Boos. Harmen shrugs.

Jack Harmen:

I never said I didn't make mistakes. But it doesn't change the fact I did what I did to make this place grow. I never said this on TV, but it's why I gave up the Odessa to Mary, to help Cappy train the next generation in BRAZEN with 'Pulse.

Harmen bites his cheeks, wincing.

Jack Harmen:

But it wasn't enough. So I went to Lee, I joined up with Lindz and her misfits. I wanted to wrestle. It wasn't the same. I had fun, but Lee bought High Flyer, and got a HIIIIIGH Flyer.

Flyer mimes, pinching two fingers near his lips. There's a few in the crowd who do an inhale that grows and swells as more and more people join in on Flyer's mime. He smiles.

Jack Harmen:

I shoulda told Rezin I got mic time. Eh, he'll understand. GO REZ!

Small Rezin chant as Harmen continues.

Jack Harmen:

God. I missed this place. See, I want to train the next generation, impart all the knowledge I can so it doesn't die with me, but I also want to wrestle that next generation too. I want people to look back and say that Jack Harmen wrestled forever. Because that's all I've ever lived for. I want to fight everyone. Once. For you. For the Faithful. But honestly? It's for me too. I just... Absolutely. LOVE. Wrestling.

♪ "Machinehead" by Bush ♪

BBBOOOOOOOOOOOOO.

DDK:

We have company.

Lance:

And Jack was pouring his heart out, too.

The crowd jeers at the unexpected interruption as the elder Fuse brother shows his face for the first time since defeating Mushigihara at MAXIMUM DEFIANCE. Tyler sports black Adidas track pants and a plain black t-shirt with a

red and blue fire IWO logo on it, which used to be the major wrestling company Jack Harmen made his name in. The crowd isn't sure what to make of this, as Tyler methodically walks down the ramp and slides into the ring. He asks for his own microphone and is handed one through the top and middle rope.

Tyler's theme comes to a close. He slowly strolls to the center of the ring as Jack Harmen eyes the former Tag Team Champion down.

Tyler Fuse:

Excuse me for a second.

Tyler takes a moment to loosen his neck, although he seems to be respectful and legitimately means to ask for the excuse.

Tyler Fuse:

Jack, it's nice to see you... and by nice to see you, I mean I've been waiting a very long time for this.

Harmen seems confused at first, but turns to amused as he stands there to listen.

Tyler Fuse:

I want to tell a story. You told a story; you ran through your career. Maybe my story will be quick, maybe it won't. Either way...

Tyler pauses to look around. Then he gets into it.

Tyler Fuse:

My story is about a boy... a boy who fell in love with wrestling at a very young age. A boy who watched one of the top promotions in the world every Monday and Thursday night. Now, this boy loved wrestling, he was wide eyed and hopeful to one day, if everything aligned correctly, become a wrestler himself. He watched this wrestling program religiously. It was a great show filled with tremendous talent. But there was one man who stood out amongst the rest.

Tyler gives the story some space. He takes a moment.

Tyler Fuse:

This man could do things no one else could. This man went above and beyond. He was so skilled in every single aspect of wrestling... but the wrestler's high flying abilities were top notch. Forever, he will be known by this attribute. Everytime the high flyer stepped into the ring he made the boy believe. And oh, the boy believed alright. The boy had a wild imagination. He was with the flyer every step of the way.

Tyler pauses again. It's becoming clearer Fuse is speaking about the man in front of him.

Tyler Fuse:

But, when needed, the flyer could also brawl with the best of them. Some would say he was always willing to get a little bit... crazy.

Tyler smirks.

Tyler Fuse:

"ALL ABOARD!" They shouted. Every fan in attendance and at home, jumped on the train. Particularly this little wide-eyed little boy. He was the first to jump. He was the loudest to scream "LET'S GO".

Jack Harmen continues to stand there and take in the story. He thinks he knows where this is heading.

Tyler Fuse:

However, there's more. The boy had a brother. And the boy would often point his brother in the direction of the high flyer. He'd tell his brother how amazing this man was. He would even go as far as to ask his brother to join him on this

wrestling journey. But for a while, the brother declined. The brother was young and scared. He didn't know what to make of this flyer.

Fuse starts walking around the ring, recalling more moments.

Tyler Fuse:

It didn't matter. Years passed and the original boy still watched. Other wrestlers would come and go but this flyer, this lunatic of a man, he kept soaring through the air. Over and over again. And still, to this very day. He soars. Maybe not as high as he used to. Maybe not as far, either.

The OG Player points to the exact spot in the canvas Jack Harmen is standing under.

Tyler Fuse:

But he still soars. Right here.

The fans cheer. Everyone is aware who Tyler's talking about. Harmen just shrugs, unable to deny any of Tyler's claims.

Tyler Fuse:

And this boy...

Tyler pauses again.

Tyler Fuse:

He made it, too.

The crowd cheers, if nothing more than respecting the story Tyler tells. Even Harmen smiles. Fuse points to the canvas underneath his feet.

There's another pause.

Tyler takes a deep breath before walking up to Jack. He stands nose-to-nose with the legend.

...And then Tyler's demeanor changes.

Tyler Fuse:

But that boy isn't in the ring right now.

Tyler sneers. Harmen's jovial smile turns stern.

Tyler Fuse:

His brother is.

The Faithful boo as Jack Harmen eyes a resentful Tyler Fuse in front of him. 'Intensity Personified' takes another moment to collect himself. He looks down at the canvas both men are standing on and then raises his head to Jack Harmen.

Tyler Fuse:

It has been well documented in other circles that a wide-eyed, head-in-the-clouds gamer worshiped the ground this legendary high flyer walked on. The flyer is **the** reason why that boy is in the wrestling business.

Pause.

Tyler Fuse:

And it is, by default, also THE reason why his brother is, too.

Tyler grins sarcastically at Harmen.

Tyler Fuse:

But for very different reasons. You see Jack, I just happen to be good at this, on a much very different level than the person you influenced. I didn't care about you. *You* didn't influence *me*. But because you influenced the closest person to me, I went along for the ride.

Tyler opens his arms to the space in front of him.

Tyler Fuse:

And here I am.

Fuse gets into Harmen's face again.

Tyler Fuse:

I'm not here to settle a score you have with the "wide-eyed boy". Whatever takes place between you two is none of my business and, in fact, never been discussed in DEFIANCE. But here's the thing, Jack.

Pause.

Tyler Fuse:

I only work in DEFIANCE. And I have a score to settle.

The tension grows. Harmen lowers his head and prepares for an attack.

Tyler Fuse:

...With the man who indirectly influenced me to get into wrestling. Full disclosure, a business I can't fucking stand.

Fuse shrugs. The Faithful boo.

Tyler Fuse:

I just happen to be good at it.

The OG Gamer turns to the crowd.

Tyler Fuse:

You want to say I've wasted my time in DEFIANCE? I'm not wasting it now. Because here I am to make a challenge against one of the biggest names in all of wrestling history. Jack Harmen, Mr. High Flyer himself. You were an incredible wrestler, there is no doubt about this but now you're hanging on by a thread.

Harmen raises his shoulders and grows in size to intimidate. Tyler doesn't stand down.

Tyler Fuse:

I am watching your twilight years tick away. And I want a piece before the last tick is notched. I want Jack Harmen. I want High Flyer.

Fuse turns right back into Harmen's face.

Tyler Fuse:

And I want to be the one who ends him.

The crowd boos.

Tyler Fuse:

Make no mistake, there will be no attack. No brutal beating. No special message. Instead, I am simply challenging you

to a match and this is where I will end you. I will put you out of your misery so the high flyer can ride off into the sunset and inspire no more. You have a receipt coming, thirty years in the making. And I'm going to be the one to give you it.

Tyler shakes his head at Harmen.

Tyler Fuse:

From the wide-eyed boy who loved you... to his brother who honestly thought you were just meh, I'll finally prove it.

Tyler drops the microphone and stands eye-to-eye with Harmen. The two jaw jack at each other off mic as Tyler raises Jack's Devil horn taunt at him, and calmly backs out of the ring.

COMMERCIAL: DEFIANCE LIVE

MIRROR, MIRROR

Elsewhere. Some other time.

Imagine an unending series of reflections. That infinite loop of photons bouncing and shedding off of silver atoms. And on and on that light goes. Until some of it finds your eye. Following that light carefully back to its source would be a challenging but not impossible task. Succeed and you'd find not a reflection, but the flesh and blood that that light had first bounced off of.

To some this would be known as a "funhouse". A claustrophobic maze of turns and twists. And mirrors. Many, many mirrors. Seated Indian style somewhere within this labyrinth of glass and echos, his long dark hair slick and tangled thick about his shoulders, shirtless and dirty, we find Corvo Alpha. Head downcast, we can't know his expression... but from his slumped posture, one might surmise.

Slowly lifting up his head, Alpha eyes the mirror just in front of and above him. Standing – somewhere – within the tangle of corridors, Lord Nigel Trickelbush is dressed in his finest finery. Opting for a bowtie over his usual stately windsor knot, his bowler cap is as crisp as ever. White hair smoothed into place behind his ears, his forged smile repels.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

How did we get here, my boy?

His voice drips distress, his concern is almost forced. All around Alpha, in every direction, is Lord Nigel – his soft, grating voice somehow booming in our ears. He steps forward, ever closer. His persistent presence everywhere at once and impossibly close.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

Oh, it's been a trying year, has it not? First proving yourself on UNCUT after UNCUT... then making the most iconic pay-per-view debut your sport has ever seen...

The Lords Nigel all suddenly frown at once, stiff and scowling.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

...only to be confronted with poisonous LIES from a man who claimed to be your friend.

The frowns all fade back to something more melancholy. The Lords slowly kneel, all of them surround Alpha. They all reach bony pale hands towards him. Alpha absently shudders, dropping his head and gaze.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

But you've made me *so proud*. Don't you know? This latest... setback... two weeks ago–

The word **setback** seems to echo and linger. But there's no way it could have.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

–you've made me *so proud*.

Rising back to their feet, the Lords Nigel regard themselves – and each other – in the mirror, flattening a lapel into place.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

For now I must insist you put the child, Conor Fuse, out of your mind.

Alpha snorts, pulling his legs in tight to his body with booth hairy, muscular arms.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

While under normal circumstances, I would encourage a more... *aggressive* and direct response to the shocking

events of DEFtv 173...

Lord Nigel looks down at Corvo once more, something approaching pity in his eyes.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

It's plain to see that you are bothered. Perhaps even more than I. Look at the state of you.

An endless sea of thin smiles spread like plague across the plain faces of the reflected Lords Nigel.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

It pains me so to see that you just don't *know* who you are.

The ocean of Trickelbush's kneel once more, this time removing their bowler caps and tucking them under an arm on the way down, like synchronized swimmers. Getting just barely visibly slower and hazier in the mirrors unceasing false-distance. They reach out once more.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

If only you could see the man that I see. *Be* the man I've always believed you to be. Truly and finally. Once and for all.

One of the hands is the genuine article. Alpha doesn't flinch when the gangling hand finds its place on Corvo's heaving shoulder.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

Rise, my boy.

Together, they all do so.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

You're so close. But there is still much work to be done.

Alpha spins out of Nigel's warm embrace, bashing the nearest mirror with a forearm. It shatters, sending glass everywhere, sending broken reflections all about them in a million directions. Nigel seems unphased by the beast's response. He pulls him back towards him, shushing his charge reassuringly.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

Come now... there will be time for that. First... it seems you need a **project**. Come.

And so he does. They both wind their way out of the mesh of bright halls, leaving us where we first found Corvo sitting. Only we aren't alone.

One single, distant reflection of Lord Nigel remains. As does his sick flash of a smile, staring at us.

Black.

DOING GOD'S WORK FOR HIM

A camera crew gathers backstage in front of Malak Garland who is staring at the lens head on. He still clutches his phone by his side but for once, his entire focus is on the camera in front of him.

Malak Garland:

Hello everyone and welcome back to DEFtv. It's me, Malak Garland. I've requested this time to conduct something very special. Follow me please.

The Social Media Savant walks down the hall, pretending to give friendly kudos to everyone he passes. Finally, he stops at a locker room door with a star on it. He simply reads the letters engraved into it.

Malak Garland:

P. C. P. How delectable. What a nice star. I wonder how they affixed it to the door? They probably used biodegradable command strips. I know it.

Anyways, Malak knocks once and allows no time to pass for whoever is on the other side to answer before he lets himself in. What was the point of knocking if an impatient little snowflake just enters regardless? Malak rushes in to see two beefy sweaty hosses grappling each other on a pair of mats. A few feet behind them sits The D, in a director's chair, looking at a portable monitor and stroking his non-existent beard. The D notices Malak and stands up, shouting.

The D:

Alright cut!

Elise and The D rush toward the entrance as D rubs the bridge of his nose and sighs. Elise shows a bit worse for wear after her match earlier tonight.

The D:

You ruined a great shot! Are you here for the auditions? You're a week late.

Ares shakes her head.

Elise Ares:

Thanks for trying to cheer me up with an elaborate photoshoot, D, but I can't hold this pose anyway, everything HUUUURTS. Have his people call my people, if he wants to get his ass beat he's going to have to wait in line. I've already done my work for the night.

The D:

Plus, full disclosure, we're really drunk right now.

Elise Ares:

Like, Epic.

Undeterred, Malak starts his rant.

Malak Garland:

Whoa, whoa, whoa dude and dudette. Before anyone gets their panties in a bunch, just let me explain why I'm here. You see, I come in peace. I'm not the same Malak you once knew.

Elise and The D mouth silently to one another as Malak talks over them.

Elise Ares:

Do you know him?

The D:

No. Do you?

Elise Ares:

Nah. Wait... errrr, nope. Not at all. Sorry not sorry.

Garland continues.

Malak Garland:

I'm different now. I cleared my cache and I am turning over a new leaf which means I have a responsibility to ensure my friend Conor gets what he wants.

Klein in the background nods enthusiastically, understanding Malak entirely.

The D:

Oh, right. Conor. Hey Elise, did we ever send Conor that "thank you" card for helping against BFTA?

Elise Ares:

That's a real thing? I thought people only did that on old-timey TV shows. Ugh, just tell him I had a lot going on. Saving the world. Looking B-EAU-TIFUL. Never sent one to Henry either. I wonder if that's also a bit of why he's now an angry pirate instead of a party pirate. Shit, I just saw him earlier. I should've asked him while I was kicking Lindsay Troy's head into the guardrail.

Flex leans in and raises his hand.

Flex Kruger:

Klein and I sent him an Ice Cream cake shaped like a NES controller. Put your names on it.

The D:

See, this is why you have people...

The Gatekeeper Guardian continues his ignorant rant, like The D and Ares weren't even talking.

Malak Garland:

You see, I know Conor always wanted to have a Fuse Bros. versus PCP match. It was his dream. Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond his control, he can never have that match because some ass wipe won't ever let him and his brother tag again. I don't know who would do such a thing and if I knew the person, I'd spit in their faces. Anyways, I need to calm down a bit because I feel like I am getting triggered right now.

The D and Ares are confused.

The D:

We don't pay attention to things that don't involve us... so, I'm sure there's a nice tongue and cheek jab in there to something I've never seen.

Elise Ares:

OH WAIT! Maybe I do know him! I think I saw him on TikTok as a meme!

The Leading Lady of DEFIANCE quickly searches around the phone for her cell phone, which for some reason she doesn't keep in her magic pocket that she always keeps a flask of booze in. Throwing stuff around, everyone watches in silence for a few seconds awkwardly as she scrambles through piles of stuff before triumphantly holding a cell phone in the air.

Elise Ares:

FOUND IT!

Everyone in the room begins to clap except for Malak.

The D:

Are you going to find the meme?

Elise Ares:

Nah, I stopped caring. OH and my last TikTok is doing AH-MAY-ZING. TAKE THAT LINDSAY TROY YOU STUPID BITCH.

Malak Garland:

Oh she most definitely is but what I was saying is, I am officially and humbly requesting a match in the future on behalf of Conor. Malak Garland and Conor Fuse against The D and Elise Ares. It's the next best thing and let's face it, this is what Conor would want. This is what everyone but myself would want. I am being totally selfless here. I am practically doing God's work yet still identifying where my humble space and time are. I'm doing this for my friend.

The D crunches his face together.

The D:

Seems to me if you were really Conor's friend, you'd let him off your leash. Hell, at DEFCon, PCP and Flex in a Box tore down the house and, well, win or lose, if Klein really wanted to forge his own path... I'd be HAPPY for him to.

Elise Ares:

And like, why does Conor even care about wrestling stipulations? Nobody else does.

The D:

Yeah, you know how many retirement matches actually mean retirement? Like... None.

Elise Ares:

I'm pretty sure I had our lawyer Sir Reginald Boxington the 3rd Esquire put a clause in our hair vs. hair match that required Harmen to remain bald forever, but... he's got hair now!

The D:

And that was an IRONCLAD contract!

Klein nods in the background, agreeing.

The D:

Yeah, so, like, just do a Fuse Bros reunion tour. It'd be better than...

The D looks up and down at Malak, taking an extra long look at his crotch, seemingly unimpressed. The D just points toward Malak.

The D:

Whatever this is.

Garland, again, acts like nothing else was said other than his own voice.

Malak Garland:

Think about it. I am just trying to make things right and be a good bUdDaY to Conor. Bless.

Malak turns and goes to exit. The D holds his hand out and blocked Elise from charging after him.

The D:

I know.

Elise Ares:

He can't say bless!

The D:

I know!

Elise Ares:

Now I can't ever say "Bless!"

The D:

It's alright. It's alright. You'll find another word.

Elise Ares:

Not the same, D! Not the same! It's forever tainted.

Elise throws up her hands as The D shakes his head at the departed Garland.

PROVING GROUNDS MATCH: SCROW vs. THE REAPERS

♪ "Welcome 2 Hell" by Eminem and Royce da 5'9 ♪

Scrow's DEFTRON video plays as the Raven's Eye steps from behind the curtain about a couple of moments later. His wet black hair draped over his right eye, his monocle now with an etched Raven's eye in the glass. He is in yellow ring gear with black trim and white birds on the shin pad and on the side of his trunks. His new logo is of a bird trying to escape a puddle of ooze on the front of his trunks. That same logo is on the back of his black leather coat.

Scrow heads to the ring, he doesn't pay much mind to The Faithful, but it does seem he has earned a bit of their favor. The majority are boobirds though. Scrow slides into the ring under the bottom rope and removes his jacket and drops it to the ring crew before circling the ring.

The lights turn off, only leaving a spotlight in the ring illuminating Scrow in the center of the ring.

♪ "See you...in Hell" by Christopher Drake ♪

A blacklight from under the entranceway illuminates each reaper on the stage...

First to the left side entranceway, in order Reaper fluorescent masks. Two Tone reaper Red/Blue has a different reaper mask than the traditional reapers with red and blue designs on them.

Next to him is the reaper in yellow, much like RB, his mask is illuminated by nothing but yellow.

To the right side entranceway, Two Tone reaper Yellow/Green has a different reaper mask than the traditional reapers with yellow and green designs on them.

Next to him is the reaper in pink, much like YG, his mask is illuminated with nothing but pink, finally.

Finally Reaper the Grey steps from behind the curtain to be the arrow point of the group. His mask has highlights of white and silver but the eyes can not be seen in the light (think Undertaker half mask for him).

The lights turn on and Reaper in the Orange is already in the ring, and attacking Scrow from behind as the rest of the lumberjacks for this match head to the ring and surround it. White Orange is stomping away at Scrow in the corner.

DING DING

While all this is happening Ravanna has found her way from the back to join Darren and Lance at Commentary.

DDK:

It appears Ms. Ravanna will be joining us for this match.

Lance:

Welcome, Ravanna.

Ravanna:

A pleasure gentlemen, I just wanted to come out here and see the end of Scrow at the hands of Mr. Lord's Harvesters.

DDK:

I thought they were reapers?

Ravanna:

No, Mr. Keebs these men are enhanced by the wonders of The House of The Harvest. They have become more than just "reapers." Mr. Fear has his reapers, which no longer seem to be in existence, but these! {As Scrow gets thrown out of the ring and jumped on by the lumberjacks} are Harvesters.

Lance:

Well, it appears we should be calling them Harvesters now I suppose.

Scrow is in the corner being stomped by Orange. The Harvester turns around and showboats to the crowd. Scrow limbos out of the corner, and as Orange turns around The Raven's Eye drops him with a stiff knife edge chop. Orange gets up only for Scrow to kick him in the gut and then right into a DDT! Scrow doesn't waste a lot of time and locks in a guillotine choke! Orange quickly taps.

Darren Quimbley:

Orange has been eliminated!

DDK:

One down, Scrow didn't waste a whole lot of energy there.

Lance:

Were you expecting that Ms. Ravanna?

Ravanna:

He still needs to take care of five more Harvester's and Mr. Lord's muscle Reaper the Grey.

Pink quickly slides in and without much rest time for Scrow begins to assault Scrow, before he fights back the two slam into the corner, and Pink rakes the eyes and then nails an exploder suplex. He floats to the top rope with impressive agility and leaps off with a frog splash!

ONE.

TWO.

TH....Shoulder Up!

DDK:

Pink is pretty light on his feet and almost got that near fall.

Lance:

Very impressive.

Pink drives a few forearm shots to the chest of Scrow, before getting him up to a vertical stance, Scrow quickly swats Pink's arms from him and nails a spinning backhand that sends Pink through the second rope to the floor. As Red/Blue and Yellow/Green try to help him. Scrow dives through the ropes in a suicide dive! Like bowling pins, he knocks all three Harvesters down! Scrow gets up and shows a bit of emotion before returning to the ring. Motioning for Pink to get in the ring. The Harvester is a bit woozy but slides in the ring. He charges Scrow with a spear, The Unhinged leapfrogs his attack. Scrow turns around and grabs Pink whose neck is now draped over the second rope. He falls back forcing Pink's back of his head to ricochet into the top rope and slam his throat against the second rope!

DDK:

Like a rubber band with that guillotine choke move from Scrow.

Lance:

Scrow is back on the offense here.

Ravanna:

...

Scrow grabs Pink out of the ropes, and Pink quickly is lifted up into a belly-to-belly suplex. Scrow quickly gets up poised for his victim to get up. Just as Pink does...

DDK:

Raven's Call!

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

Darren Quimbley:

Pink has been eliminated!

Ravanna:

Idiot.

Lance:

Sounds like you are getting a bit annoyed here, he has survived two of your Harvesters now.

Ravanna:

Relax Mr. Warner the match is still in its infancy.

Red/Blue gets in the ring next. Grey is not very happy outside, as he is now down to four harvesters. Much like the opening moments with Pink, RB and Scrow unload on each other, each trade stiff shots until they move to try to overpower each other with stiff knife edge chops. Each chop makes each man cringe in pain before they deliver their retort. Finally, Scrow gets the better of the exchange and drops RB to the ground. He rubs his chest for a moment and goes to pick up RB...

DDK:

Small package!

ONE!

TWO!

THR...Kickout!

Lance:

RB almost got Scrow there.

The two get to their feet at the same time and lock up and RB launches Scrow off the ropes. He tries a lariat and Scrow ducks, on his return Scrow tries a flying elbow strike but RB drops to the mat and Scrow flies over him and hits nothing but the mat. RB quickly gets up and locks in an STF!

DDK:

Scrow is in trouble here, RB has that locked in tight!

Lance:

He has to try and find a way out of this. The ropes might be his only option here.

Ravanna:

All is according to the plan.

Scrow is able to reach for the ropes, but RB refuses to break the hold!

ONE.

TWO.

THREE.

FOUR!

FIVE!

Carla Ferrari:

BREAK IT NOW!

DDK:

RB is refusing!

Carla Ferrari:

Break it now or I will disqualify you!

RB refuses to break the hold, Grey has a grin on his face, as Carla calls for the bell!

DING DING DING

Darren Quimbley:

I have just been informed that Red and Blue has been disqualified therefore is eliminated from the match!

DDK:

Come on, Ravanna tell him to break the damn hold!

Ravanna:

Do you expect me to shout it from here? Sorry I will do no such thing.

RB still has not released the hold and now officials rush to the ring to pry him off of Scrow!

Lance:

Come on this is enough, the DEFIANCE staff can't seem to get this lunatic to release the hold.

Finally, they are able to, as he is taken away Yellow and Green has resumed the match now with a Scrow to his feet, driving him down into a brainbuster!

ONE.

TWO.

THRE...Shoulder up!

YG mounts Scrow and drives shots across the side of his skull. When he is satisfied with that he picks Scrow up and throws him on his shoulder and runs across the ring into a running powerslam!

DDK:

Scrow is in a lot of trouble here, it looks like Grey wants him to do it again.

Lance:

RB did a lot of damage and Scrow has not had a chance to catch a breather either. YG is all over him and all you are doing over there Ravanna is smiling.

Ravanna:

Why wouldn't I be smiling? Scrow was living the high life as a member of Mr. Lord's house and he threw that all away. Now he is getting EXACTLY what he deserves for thinking he ever had a choice to leave Mr. Lord's house.

YG obliges and this time mid run Scrow floats over his back and shoves YG into the corner as his chest slams off the turnbuckles. Scrow hits a codebreaker! Although Scrow is unable to continue the attack as both men are down. Carla begins the standing ten count. At about eight, YG is up and helps Scrow to his feet he lifts him up in a spinebuster, but again Scrow locks in a guillotine choke!

DDK:

Scrow found an opening again, and has another guillotine choke on these harvesters! YG finally taps!

Darren Quimbley:

Yellow and Green has been eliminated!

Ravanna:

Disappointing.

DDK:

Only two remain, and Scrow is in really bad shape.

Lance:

Looks like Yellow Harvester is next.

Yellow slides in the ring, but does not go in for the kill. He is almost stalling waiting for Scrow to get his second wind. Grey is slamming his hands on the mat wanting Yellow to attack. Scrow finally gets to his feet but stumbles into the corner. Yellow charges and drives a knee into the gut of Scrow, soon to follow are repetitive knees into the gut of Scrow, before an Irish whip into the opposite corner soon followed by a charging elbow strike into the chest. Scrow stumbles out of the corner. Yellow dropkicks Scrow in the back of the head!

Ravanna:

Now, you two gentlemen will see the end of a young Defiant who had such a bright future until he threw it all away.

DDK:

You know Ms. Ravanna, there are other ways to achieve greatness in this business.

Ravanna:

If you like the slow and difficult path, more power to you.

Grey wants Yellow to finish it, Yellow though seems to be taking his sweet time. Yellow steps back and sits in the corner, almost like he is mocking Scrow now. Scrow who is on his hands and knees trying to catch his breath looks over his shoulder to see the mind games Yellow is playing on him. He gets up and Yellow limbos out of the corner, just like Scrow does. The two trade shots and it seems Scrow is being countered each time and taking more punishment than he is dishing out.

DDK:

Yellow seems to be the better striker, which says a lot since Scrow is one of the deadliest strikers in DEFIANCE.

Lance:

Exhaustion could also be playing a major part as well.

Scrow swings wildly and Yellow ducks and locks in a cobra clutch sleeper hold! Scrow tries frantically to get free, but Yellow has it locked in. Grey smirks, as Scrow is trying to get to the ropes but can't do it. He begins to try and find something to grab on, he gets a hold of Yellow's mask and rips it off. Yellow quickly releases the hold. Scrow falls to his knee with the Yellow Harvester mask in his hands. He looks over laughing, then suddenly his laughter turns to shock...

DDK:

It's Minerva! She was the Yellow Harvester!

Ravanna:

Well, gentlemen, I would say it was a pleasure but then I would be lying to you.

Lance:

Ravanna has just left the broadcast position. She is heading to the ring.

Scrow gets to his feet, as he mouths "why?" Without warning, Grey gets in the ring with a chair and clobbers Scrow in the back! Carla quickly calls for the bell! Grey slams the chair repeatedly over Scrow's defenseless body. Carla finally grabs the chair out of Grey's hands. Minerva grabs Carla and you hear her say "We are sorry." before she tosses Carla out of the ring. Grey slams the chair on the mat, as the bell starts to ring. He picks up Scrow...and drops him on the chair with a powerbomb, Scrow immediately recoils on impact.

DDK:

Reaper the Grey is decimating Scrow...AGAIN!

Lance:

Scrow has never had a counter to this beastly man. From the looks of it, he is not gonna be able to fight back again.

Hive grabs the chair and wedges it in between the top and second rope in the corner. Grey picks up Scrow and, like a shot put launches Scrow right into the chair wedge in the corner. The former SOHER dangles across the ropes. The bell continues to ring, and Carla is motioning for help from the back. Security rushes to the ring and get in between Grey and Scrow. Hive tries to convince Grey to stop. Grey though is having none of it as Ravanna gets in the ring. Grey tries to break through the guards. Hive tries to convince Ravanna to call him off. It takes some time but when she sees there are too many staff and security blocking the path. She motions for Grey to leave the ring. The House of The Harvest backtrack up the ramp. Carla slides in the ring and checks on Scrow, she quickly motions for medical in the back. Medical rush to the ring to check on Scrow.

DDK:

This was a hit, and The House of Harvest may have just taken care of Scrow for good.

Lance:

Scrow is coming around, and now he is refusing help?

Scrow stumbles through the gaggle of staff members and falls on the top rope. He shouts off the microphone.

Scrow:

Scrow is still standing!

Grey wants to go back to the ring, but Ravanna stops him. They exit, as Scrow crumbles to the mat again. Medical and Carla are trying to help him, but he continues to refuse help.

♪ "Welcome 2 Hell" by Eminem and Royce da 5'9 ♪

The Faithful start to clap as Scrow tumbles out of the ring, barely able to walk, holding his back. Finally, he accepts the help of two security guys to be his crutches as he leaves the ring.

COMMERCIAL: BRAZEN



CELEBRATION!

The camera goes backstage and there is quite a sight to behold.

It looks to be Aaron King dancing to a song in his own head and an open bottle of whiskey in his hand ... which might explain the dancing.

Aaron King:

K!!! I!!! N!!! G!!! KIIINNNGGGG!!!!

He gets approached by Chris Trutt who realizes he might be on to a breaking scoop.

Chris Trutt:

Hey ... hey? Aaron King?

Aaron King is still dancing around with the bottle and knocks back another drink.

Aaron King:

What up! Chris Trutt! Hey that rhymes my guy!

King holds the bottle towards Trutt.

Aaron King:

Want a drinky drink? The Pensacola Playboy is about to *cel-uh-brate!!!*

Chris Trutt:

Um ... I don't think I'm allowed to do that any more while I'm on the job after this time Rezin took me ...

Aaron King:

PFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFFT dork. Whatever. Just ask a question so I can leave.

Chris Trutt:

Last night ... you could have been one of the Unified Tag champions if you'd helped your old partner Theodore Cain and ...

Aaron King:

nope. I'm not rehashing that crap. I told people I'm done with the past! I'm only doing things for me and my wallet ... and my wallet grew three sizes earlier tonight!

Another drink goes down the old gullet.

Chris Trutt:

What does that mean? Did you get a raise or something? Did you ...

Trutt stops talking when he sees a man walk up to Aaron King.

Tom Morrow!!!

Tom Morrow:

Aaron my boy ... the papers have been finalized.

Morrow's hands are wide open.

Tom Morrow:

Thank you for securing your investment ... in a Better Future! Welcome to the team! The Lucky Sevens are looking forward to working with a talent of your caliber very closely!

Aaron King:

My guy!!!

King gives Tom Morrow a giant hug with the bottle still in hand and then picks him up with a big spin. He puts Morrow down and puts a big kiss on his forehead. Morrow has to fix his neck brace.

Aaron King:

Sorry about the brace ... let's roll! Some of *this* ought to dull the pain!

Morrow is just as elated and King offers him the whiskey bottle. The two men leave. It takes a few more awkward seconds after that for Chris Trutt to understand what has just happened. He finally does and his eyes bulge with his realization.

Chris Trutt:

Hey ... wait a minute!!! That ... Tom Morrow's neck brace! I don't think his neck is hurt at all!

Okay ... maybe he hasn't figured it out quite yet.

FIST TOURNAMENT, SECOND ROUND: OSCAR BURNS vs. CONOR FUSE

The match graphic shows the main event and the crowd anticipates a hell of a battle forthcoming.

DDK:

Folks, last November, Conor Fuse UPSET Oscar Burns. It was the last straw for Twists and Turns, who snapped and beat up Conor post-match. These two faced off at DEFIANCE Road where Oscar Burns grabbed a victory back. We now have a rubber match but under very interesting circumstances.

Lance:

That's right! It's round two of the FIST tournament! Oscar Burns vs. Conor Fuse, the winner will get Lindsay Troy in the semifinals next week!

DDK:

Let's go to ringside and Darren Quimbey.

Darren Quimbey:

This is a second round match for the FIST tournament and is the MAIN EVENT of the evening! Introducing first... from Toronto, Ontario, Canada... weighing two-hundred pounds... he is The Ultimate Gamer... CONOR
FUUUUUUUUUSSSSSSSSSSSSSEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE!!

♪ "King DeDeDe Remix Theme" from Kirby's Dream Land ♪

A battered, bruised but determined gamer appears from behind the FIST logo, ready to go. He sports the same apparel he wore earlier in the night during Jamie Sawyers' interview. Conor smacks hands with a couple of fans in the front row but he's ultimately all business in this one.

♪ "Ultimate Battle" by Fredriech Habetler ♪

Darren Quimbey:

And his opponent... from Wellington, New Zealand... weighing two-hundred-thirty-seven pounds... he is DEFIANCE... OSCAR BURNS!!!

The opening montage plays some of Burns' greatest hits over the opening intro to the theme... Burns with his two previous FIST and WrestleUTA World Title wins... Burns with his DEFy wins... Burns with his record fiftieth win and his SIXTIETH win DEFIANCE! Oscar emerges from the darkness and then power-walks to the ring, not taking his eyes off the man inside of it.

DDK:

You can feel the tension. This is big.

Burns slides into the ring. He's ready to go. So is Conor Fuse. Why waste more time?

DING DING

The crowd is HOT as Jonny Fastcountini calls for the bell and is rather caught off guard himself at how loud the Salt Lake City crowd has become after seeing Burns and Fuse standing across the ring from each other.

Unlike the first time they met, everyone is on the gamer's side.

!RANK

!RANK

!RANK

The Faithful send their chant commands to the center of the ring at a very high volume while Conor swings his arms around and tries to work out the kinks from the damage he took at the hands of Corvo Alpha two weeks ago.

Meanwhile, Burns convinces himself the fans are, somehow, someway, chanting for him.

Oscar Burns:

HEY, GC I-

DDK:

LOOK OUT!

Fuse FLIES through the air with a leaping superkick attempt but it does NOT catch Oscar Burns! The former two time FIST of DEFIANCE is able to move away at the last possible second! Conor hits thin air and Burns falls to a knee, attempting to catch his breath.

Lance:

Oscar knows he was a shot away from it being over right there!

Burns collects himself rather quickly, however. He shoots to his feet and grabs Conor Fuse before the gamer's able to center himself in the ring.

Burns connects with a German suplex!

He holds on...

Another.

He holds on...

Another!

He holds on...

ANOTHER!

The face of Conor Fuse suggests he's already reeling and the fans boo mercilessly as Burns tries for a fifth German suplex, this one of the release variety.

Burns hits it.

But Conor Fuse lands on his feet.

WHACK!

DDK:

Superkick by Conor!

Fuse jumps to the top rope and attempts a Super Splash 450!

...

...

BURNS MOVES!

Both men take a moment to recover as The Faithful give a round of applause!

Lance:

This makes all the sense in the world. It's a FIST tournament, the talent shouldn't be aiming for a bravado one-up-manship. Conor has clearly taken damage at the hands of Corvo two weeks ago. It makes so much sense for him to try ending this match ASAP!

Burns is up and so is Conor Fuse. The two race towards one another at the center of the ring. Burns tries to latch onto Conor's waist but this time Conor breaks free from Oscar's grasp and hits the ropes. Fuse bursts forward but Burns leaps over Conor and The Power-Up King is into the next set of ropes. Fuse sprints towards Burns...

And Burns catches Fuse with a release German suplex! If it wasn't for the top ring rope, Conor might have flown out of the ring!

The crowd boos as Burns successfully connected with that fifth German. As Fuse finds a knee, Burns marches over and crushes Conor's forehead with a hard out headbutt. Another. Another. Four. Five. Six. Seven. Burns has worked Conor into a corner. He takes Fuse by the arm and Irish whips The Codebreaker to the other side of the buckle.

THUMP, not only does Fuse meet the padding hard, he flips right up to the top of the turnbuckle and rests on it with a groggy look in his eyes. Burns smirks, turns to the crowd to bask in their "BOO-URNS" cheers (or so he thinks), before racing to meet Conor Fuse at the buckle.

Burns climbs it, grabs Conor by the waist and connects with a top rope backdrop! Burns flips over and hooks a leg.

ONE.

TWO.

KICKOUT!

Likely knowing this wouldn't be a three, Burns slides into position flawlessly and applies a cobra twist submission!

The crowd is already on their feet... thinking there's a chance Conor might pass out.

DDK:

He's definitely not one-hundred percent, Lance. Corvo Alpha beat the living hell out of Conor in round one.

Lance:

Alpha did. Fuse is going to have to fight like nobody's business!

The gamer struggles to make his way towards the ropes but knows he has to get there. Burns has the hold locked in and so far, Fuse has made little progress-

DDK:

CONOR FALLS BACKWARD... HE LANDS ON TOP OF BURNS! Burns' shoulders are on the mat!

ONE!

TWO!

BURNS RELEASES THE HOLD AND SLIPS AWAY!

A furious Oscar Burns shoots to his feet and goes ballistically apeshit insane with stomp after stomp after stomp on Conor Fuse, for figuring a way out of one of Burns' key submissions.

Oscar Burns:

LET'S GO BURNSIE! [*Stomp, stomp, stompstompstomp*]

LET'S GO BURNSIE! [*Stomp, stomp, stompstompstomp*]

LET'S GO BURNSIE! [*Stomp, stomp, stompstompstomp*]

Burns is having a field day in the center of the ring, slowly gaining back his focus as he stomps out his frustrations. Through every stomp, Conor Fuse is trying to get on his feet but he's hammered back down into the canvas.

Fuse keeps trying. The look on his face shows a level of determination not yet seen upon the gamer. It's an angry, yet frustrated conviction.

Oscar Burns:

LET'S GO BURNSIE! [*Stomp, stomp, stompstompstomp*]

LET'S GO BURNSIE! [*Stomp, stomp, stompstompstomp*]

LET'S GO BURNSIE! [*Stomp, stomp, stompstompstomp*]

Finally, Burns stops the boots. He leans down, deadlifts the smaller opponent up and throws Fuse onto his shoulders...

Burns tosses Conor up into the air and then lands a WICKED knee strike flush into Conor's temple, knocking the spit out from the gamer's mouth in the process. Fuse crumples to the ground and Burns has a look on his face suggesting this may have been easier than he initially thought.

...But Burns ain't complaining.

Oscar drags Conor to the middle of the ring and signals for the end. A belly-to-back lift into a backbreaker morphs into...

The Graps of Wrath!

DDK:

He's got the octopus stretch locked in!

Lance:

In their second battle at DEFIANCE Road earlier this year... Burns had Fuse in the Graps of Wrath for a LONG time! Conor tried to fight it but eventually, he passed out!

Burns' facial expression suggests there is zero fucking around, while the crowd continues to hope their cheers revive their hero and he can do something in order to find his way out of the hold.

!RANK

!RANK

!RANK

It's clear Conor Fuse is trying to feed off the cheers by shaking his head and his extremities, even in the slightest.

The support for Fuse gets louder and Burns becomes disgruntled. It's clear what was a textbook move has become a secondary thought as Oscar shouts into the crowd he's going to end Conor Fuse once and for all-

DDK:

Conor escapes!

In an amazing display, Fuse relinquishes his body and submits to Burns' arm wrenching entirely, therefore, pushing Burns VERY slightly off balance, which is enough for Conor to flip himself up and over Oscar and stumble into the ropes.

BOOM!

Burns with a leaping knee strike, knocking Fuse back down.

Oscar points to his head and laughs.

DDK:

I guess Burns was only off his game for a millisecond.

Lance:

It was still a millisecond Conor Fuse turned into a positive. Yes, Burns continues to have control of this match but the octopus hold, the very DEADLY submission Burns owns, was broken!

DDK:

I have to think if Burns had that locked in on the ground, it would've been over. Conor Fuse is one of the only guys I wouldn't want on his feet... in ANY hold!

Burns props Fuse to his knees and then pumps Conor with another knee. He drags The Character Formerly Known as Player Two onto his feet and sends a wild knife-edge chop into the chest of Fuse.

Burns hits Fuse with another. Over and over he whacks Conor. It doesn't take long for The Ultimate Gamer's chest to become a deep shade of purple. After all, he's rather pale skinned to begin with.

Burns whips Conor into the ropes and then connects with another jumping knee strike. This is followed by a cravate, with added knee strikes straight into the gamer.

DDK:

Oscar Burns is in FULL control! I'd say he's taken well over ninety-percent of the match!

Lance:

Might be more. We're in a very critical period, too.

Burns throws Conor into a corner and comes racing in RIGHT behind the former Tag Team Champion. Once Fuse meets the buckle, Burns is there to add an extra emphasis and slam into Conor all over again. Then he takes Fuse and connects with a release German suplex, sending a limp and near DOA Conor into the middle of the ring.

There are no more *!RANK* chants. The fans are concerned.

Burns points to another turnbuckle. He does the exact same thing. He whips Conor Fuse towards the padding and then runs along right behind him. Once Conor meets the padding chest-first, he bounces out a tiny little bit but meets the former FIST, who slams into Fuse once more and Conor smashes against the turnbuckle for a second time. Add another release German suplex and Fuse is in the middle of the ring.

DDK:

We may need a medic out here...

Burns stalks his prey. He's ready to go. He points to turnbuckle number three.

And does the exact same thing.

Whips Fuse in, follows right behind. Conor slams against the pad, then slams against Burns only to hit the pad again and a third German suplex to the canvas.

Well... every good thing apparently comes in fours. Burns points to turnbuckle four. He tosses Conor towards it and follows suit.

YYYYEEEEAAAAHHHHHHH!!!

Somehow, someway, Conor Fuse applies the breaks before he meets the turnbuckle padding. He hops up and clears

an incoming Oscar Burns who runs in chest-first instead! Fuse follows with a backstabber!

DDK:

And Conor is out!

Lance:

It's all he had in him, Keebs! Now, Conor needs time to recover. Burns will no doubt be up first, but it's bought Fuse a moment!

The crowd rumbles their feet. Anything to get the gamer going... anything to deter their once favourite DEFIANT, Oscar Burns and now someone they despise.

As Darren Keebler called it, Burns is up first. The former Technical Spectacle snaps his arm back and slams it against Fuse's chest with a knife-edge chop. A couple more follow and then Burns is back to bringing the knees of fury. Pummeling Conor into the canvas, Burns tosses Fuse into the ropes and readies to catch him on the rebound...

DDK:

Oh no! Oscar could be going for the Head-Drop-O-

OOOHHHHH!

The crowd cheers as Conor Fuse leaps into the air at the last possible second and comes crashing down on Oscar Burns with a hard out headbutt of his own!

Adrenaline coursing through the gamer's veins, it's clear Conor is running off fumes, or, perhaps, shrooms (legal shrooms) as he marches around the canvas at a fast pace, trying to knock the cobwebs out and get himself psyched.

Conor leans over and smacks Burns across the chest.

Conor Fuse:

Forgot to Weapon Get that from you, loser.

Fuse drags Burns to his feet and out of everyone's surprise, Burns is bleeding! It's not a lot of blood but it definitely shows why Burns hasn't been able to pull it together yet and a woozy AF Conor Fuse has an opportunity in front of him.

Conor whacks Oscar with a hard left forearm... but Fuse is then surprised when the blow is returned by Burnsie! Conor hits a second left forearm, but Burns comes back with another! The crowd cheer and boo along as both men are going blow for blow in the middle of the ring and both men are hammering the other as hard as humanly possible.

Lance:

This is a war, Keebs!

DDK:

For a shot to face Lindsay Troy in the SEMI finals! Both men want it bad!

Eventually, Burns out works Conor in the forearm department. It's now exclusively Oscar Burns drilling Conor Fuse with blow after blow, working Conor into a corner before Irish whipping The Video Game Kid out and to the buckle across the way.

Conor jumps onto the top turnbuckle and leaps off. A surprised Oscar Burns can only witness seeing Fuse soar through the air and crush the Kiwi with a spinning heel kick, catching Burns right under the chin! Fuse pops to his feet, it's more than clear he's barely holding onto reality but has a fire lit under him. The crowd roars in support as most of the people are already on their feet. Conor shoots into the ropes and performs a perfectly placed lionsault with a hook of the legs!

ONE.

TWO.

SHOULDER UP!

The crowd believes the match is over but Conor Fuse does not. He kips to his feet and immediately takes Oscar Burns, hurling him into a corner. Conor races to the buckle across the way from Burns and readies to charge in...

But before The Power-Up King does, it's time for some MANA RECOVERY.

Fuse pulls back his messy, dirty blonde hair. He takes hold of the turnbuckle pad and slams his hand against it while screaming "¡RANK".

The crowd, of course, *!RANKS* along.

Conor slams the padding.

!rank

Conor slams the padding.

!Rank

Slam.

!RANK.

SLAM.

!RANK

SLAM!

!RANK

!RANK !RANK !RANNNNNKKKKKK

On and on it goes. The entire arena is going ballistic and at the height of the noise Conor Fuse bursts forward, leaps in the air once he reaches the CENTER of the ring and then flies halfway across the canvas, crashing down upon Oscar Burns with a wildly impactful stinger splash!

Burns stumbles out of the buckle but he's still on his feet. Oscar wobbles and bobbles around, looking to be put out of his misery. Fuse grabs Burns by his head and screams into the rafters, ready to perform one of his Resolution DDTs.

For THIS kinda match, Fuse goes for the full, 8K-DDT-QLED. Burns is flipped in the air, twisted around and dropped on the crown on his head. Conor floats over and hooks a leg.

ONE.

TWO.

KICKOUT!

The crowd is stunned! Conor looks up at Jonny Fastcountini and wonders why he didn't live up to his family's last

name-

DDK:

A Fruit-Roll Up by Burns! He's got Conor in a roll up!

ONE!

TWO!

THRE-

KICKOUT!

The crowd breathes a massive sigh of relief but the air is rushed right out of them again as Oscar shows signs of life and works Conor into The Graps of Wrath!

DDK:

Determined! Oscar Burns is DETERMINED to win this match with the octopus stretch!

Lance:

He wants Conor Fuse to suffer. I get the sense there aren't many men Oscar Burns hates with an absolute PASSION but Conor Fuse is one of them. Dex Joy may be the other...

Burns screams for a burial as he has the hold locked in and begins to move down to the canvas this time, which the announcers emphasize is likely the smarter call.

DDK:

Conor is fading here... it may be no use...

And right before Conor collapses to the mat, he shoots his free leg out and slides it underneath the bottom rope!

Jonny Fastcountini tells Oscar Burns to break the hold.

Oscar Burns:

NO WAY, GC! NO WAY!!!

Burns PLEADS with the referee, believing Conor's boot is NOT under the bottom rope!

But Jonny is convinced that it is! He starts to peel Oscar's arm off Conor WHILE administering a five count!

Lance:

Burns is going to get himself disqualified!

DEFIANCE, as he is self-proclaimed, holds on until 4.9999999 and then drops the submission to a chorus of boos. Replays show the call is AWFULLY close.

DDK:

Oh boy, you could say Conor's foot is under the rope.

Lance:

You could also say it's not!

Burns is irate! He's frothing at the mouth, screaming at Jonny Fastcountini while the crowd continues to create an atmosphere fostering this type of meltdown.

DDK:

For all the good Oscar Burns has done in this match... don't let THIS decision get you down, Burnsie. Conor Fuse is still there for the taking...

Lance:

Of course Burns is seeing red. It's been his ONE downfall. At times, he has lost focus!

Eventually, Burns turns to Conor Fuse and pounds the gamer with a knee strike-

That's blocked!

Conor with a leg sweep from up and under. Fuse pulls to his feet. In a world of pain he winches into the ropes, flies off them and performs a twister press off the second rope! The crowd, once again, begins to drown out the announce team as Conor Fuse kicks the bottom rope, grabs a turnbuckle pad and then hammers his forearms all the way down the next top rope, shaking the ring for all its worth.

Fuse sees Burns coming but connects with a superkick com-bo, followed by a sprint into the ropes. He races at Burns but Burns ducks a clothesline attempt so Conor is off into the next set of ropes. Burns is slow to turn around but he crushes his right arm against the side of Conor's face in a forearm smash. Then he hurls Fuse into the ropes and follows right behind-

No! Conor adjusts himself, side-stepping Burns as both of them collide into the ropes at the same time. Conor leaps on top of Burns, using the side of the ring as leverage and spins into all three ring ropes.

DDK:

Tarantula submission!

Burns screams as Jonny Fastcountini begins a five count.

Lance:

It's not a LEGAL move, Keebs! Using the ropes for a submission is not allowed!

Conor Fuse knows this, however. He drops the hold at 4, nowhere near a 4.9999. Burns stumbles around the ring while Conor Fuse slingshots himself up and over the ropes, jumping through the air-

WHAM!

The crowd is STUNNED!

DDK:

Oscar Burns hit a superkick to Conor Fuse!

Fuse is DOA on the mat. Oscar has the wherewithal to realize what he's done, smirk and fall to his knees.

Oscar Burns:

And I Weapon Get you, GC.

Burns hooks a leg.

The crowd is quiet. They know it's over.

ONE.

TWO.

KICKOUT!

And once more, the arena is revived!

DDK:

CONOR FUSE KICKED OUT!

Lance:

In my life, I don't think I've ever seen an Oscar Burns superkick and I don't think we'll see an Oscar Burns superkick AGAIN!

The crowd rumbles their feet as Conor Fuse tries to get on his and Oscar Burns is beside himself but still determined to put the final nail in the video game coffin.

Burns is up. Conor's half up. Burns knocks Conor in the side of the head with a knee and then throws The Ultimate Gamer on his feet. Both men are nose-to-nose, leaning into each other. Oscar Burns mouths off to Conor Fuse... and Conor Fuse just grits his teeth.

Conor pushes off Oscar, stumbles backwards and cracks Burns with a superkick! Fuse runs into the ropes, jumps into the air again and looks for his tilt-a-whirl DDT-

Burns holds on! He powers Conor into an exploder suplex!

DDK:

This wasn't the wrist-clutch one Burns is known for!

Lance:

It wasn't a GREAT exploder, either. I mean catching a guy who's about to ram your head into the mat is no small feat in and of itself. It's the best anyone could've done!

Burns pulls Conor upright. He drills forearm smashes into Conor's face, turns and bounces off the ropes...

When Conor leaps in the air and lands on Burns' head!

DDK:

HEAD STOMP!

!RANK

!RANK

!RANK

The gamer is gassed AF. He's on roller skates... but he knows the Head Stomp wouldn't be enough to keep Burns down. Conor points to the top rope. He's about to walk over there but he determines he doesn't have the balance to do so. Instead, Conor drops down to his knees and flips Burns onto his chest...

Anaconda vice.

DDK:

Fuse has the hold locked in!

Lance:

As Conor mentioned earlier tonight, he has a few SUBMISSION surprises for Oscar! I believe he's calling this DPS... Damage Per Second!

Burns kicks his feet around but Conor Fuse has the hold locked in. It looks like Burns is trying to talk smack to Fuse... but he's fading!

DDK:

Oscar's going out! I don't believe this... Oscar is going to pass out in the anaconda vice!!

At the last possible second, Burns moves an extra inch to his right, kicks his foot as far as it can go...

And has it under the bottom rope!

The crowd boos but the SECOND Jonny Fastcountini tells Conor Fuse what happened, The Ultimate Gamer releases the hold!

DDK:

Fuse is up! Burns... is up!

Both men are a mess! Burns tries for a forearm smash but Fuse blocks it, smacks Burns in the shoulders and spins the former FIST around... lifting him up...

Package piledriver!

DDK:

I think Conor Fuse just hit LINDSAY TROY'S finisher, Thy Kingdom Come!

The crowd watches on intently, as Conor drags Burns to his feet once more, smacks him in the chest and hits Thy Kingdom Come x2!

Conor collapses onto Oscar Burns. The referee slides into position to make the count with the fans.

ONE.

TWO.

THREE!

DING DING DING

DDK:

I don't believe it...

The fans cheer upon the three count and the ring announcer's message.

Darren Quimbey:

The winner of this match... CONOR FUUUUUUSSSSSEEEEEEE!

DDK:

The gamer did it! The rubber match goes to Conor! What a war!

Conor hasn't moved off Oscar Burns. In fact, he may have passed out in the process.

Fuse's theme music plays as the fans continue to cheer and referee Jonny Fastcountini checks on both men.

Soon after, Malak Garland power walks down the rampway with a concerned look on his face. Most of The Faithful don't even realize it until The Snowflake Superstar enters the ring.

Finally, Conor is on a knee as Malak marches over...

...And pulls Conor to his feet, giving him a congratulatory hug.

Fuse is slowly coming to. He realizes what's going on and his facial expression suggests the highest amount of confusion one man can possibly have.

DDK:

Folks, what a battle. Next week on our UNCUT special, we'll have Dex Joy vs. Rezin and Conor Fuse vs. Lindsay Troy. What a semifinals coming up! Thank you for being a part of DEFtv and we will see you all next week!

The DEFIANCE signature appears in the bottom right hand corner of the broadcast feed as Malak Garland releases his hug on Conor Fuse and instead, begins to rub the gamer's shoulders. The crowd cheers for the victory while Conor tries to figure out a middle ground between celebrating, recovering from this hellacious beating and determining what in the living hell is Malak Garland's true motivations are for being out here.

THIS.

IS.

DEFIANCE.