

COLD OPEN

"IMMORTALS..."

Ha.

"I suppose the time has come to put that name to the test."

Flash cut to the FIST OF DEFIANCE, Henry Keyes, and PRIME UNIVERSAL CHAMPION, Cecilworth Farthington.

"Who will walk away with victory?"

Flash cut to Lindsay Troy.

"Who will hang their head in shame?"

Flash cut to Lindsay Troy again.

"It's PRIME versus DEFIANCE."

Flash cut to Hayes Hanlon, Kerry Kuroyama, Scott Hunter, Ria, The Anglo Saxon, and Ivan Stanislob...

...followed by Bronson Box, Malak Garland, Oscar Bruns, Uriel Cortez, Doctor Ned Reform, Levi Cole, and Dan Ryan.

"It's the crossover event of 2026!"

Flash cut to The Kael Family, then to the Brothers Fuse, and then to the Boys of Doubleday.

"The stars of today, tomorrow, and even yesteryear will clash to find out who gets to lay claim to the title."

Flash cut to Erik Black, Justin Sane, Jack Harmen, and Declan Alexander...

...followed by Blaze Claymore, Luc Labelle, and three time PRIME rookie of the year, Fred Dick...

"Both PRIME and DEFIANCE's biggest stars..."

Flash cut to the Masters of the Moscowverse.

"I said both PRIME and DEFIANCE's biggest stars."

Flash cut to The Atomic Punks with Doctor Ayumi Sata.

"I SAID BOTH PRIME AND DEFIANCE'S BIGGEST STARS!"

Flash cut to Coral Avalon.

"Fine. I'll do it myself then, but don't go blaming me because no one else got a rub in the COOL OPEN. I tried being civil. I tried playing nice. I didn't even crack a joke about Hayes Hanlon when I could. Oh well. FLASH CUT TO ME, KING COOL, THE NEXT FIST OF DEFIANCE, CANCER JILES."

Flash cut to should've seen that one coming.

"Who wants to live forever?"

Flash cut to TEAM PRIME.

“Who wants to be immortalized?”

Flash cut to TEAM DEFIANCE.

“STAY. TUNED.”

SHOW OPEN

From the opening video package the scene shifts to the inside of the sold-out Kaseya Center in Miami, Florida, where 20,000 PRIMEates and DEFIANCE Faithful are amped up and ready for the action to begin.

But first, it's sign time baybeeeee!

MAY THE BEST MUSTACHE WIN

AS LONG AS CONOR LOSES BOTH COMPANIES WIN

FUCK REVEREND BLACK — WE NEED REZIN BACK TO BLOW UP ICE

EGGS GO GREAT WITH PANCAKES

IF DABNEY DOUBLEDAY LOSES WE RIOT BUT ONLY IF HIS MOM SAYS IT'S OK

IF JACK HARMEN WINS, IS HE THE LINEAL DOGZ \$20 GIFT CARD CHAMPION?

DON'T TELL TAL THAT HE MIGHT THROW THE MATCH

WHO SAYS THIS SHOW IS NON-CANON?

I AM, IN FACT, DOWN WITH THE SICKNESS

THIS SIGN IS IMMORTAL

MALAK FEARS CECILWORTH

I SUPPORT BOTH FEDS

I JUST WANNA SEE BOTH FEDS HAVE FUN

TOO LATE

MAYBE IMMORTALS IS THE FUN WE HAVE ALONG THE WAY

IF JILES LOSES, HE'S THE NEWEST RAINBOW REAPER

SANE IS GONNA KILL YOU BLUE

I CAME HERE FOR HIGH FLYER. WTF IS JACK HARMEN?!?

I HAVE A MAGIC TRICK – MAKE THE AMARETTOS DISAPPEAR

**DOES HENRY KEYES ACTUALLY STEAL SHIPS ON INTERNATIONAL WATERS? ASKING FOR A FRIEND
NOT IN THE FBI**

IF THE REVEREND WANTS TO GET HIGH, MEET ME IN THE PARKING LOT

I'M TONY DAVIS LOOK AT ME!

JILES HASN'T EARNED AN ALIAS TITLE SHOT

JILES HAS EARNED THE SHOT FOR BACKSTAGE CATERING CHAMPIONSHIP THO

I REMEMBER MY FIRST UNDERCARD

I NEED THIS SHOW BECAUSE *GESTURES BROADLY AT AMERICA*

IMMORTALS – BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE PROMOTIONS THAT GAVE US A MANNEQUIN AND THE REAPERS

THE INTRUDERS RAN OVER JESSICA FEAR

SO-US? NO. UGH.

THIS ONE'S FOR THE SICKOS

A PIRATE'S LIFE 4 ME

LUC LABELLE (PRIME) vs. DECLAN ALEXANDER (DEFIANCE)

DDK:

Welcome everybody to IMMORTALS, presented by PRIME and DEFIANCE Wrestling! I'm "Downtown" Darren Keebler and I'm joined tonight by PRIME's Hall of Fame commentator Richard Parker. And Richard, we're starting off this inaugural cross-promotional event by seeing what most people would call the future of both companies on display. DEFIANCE's soon to be 25 year old "DEC4L" Declan Alexander of M4NTRA is taking on PRIME's "L'Assassin Rouge" Luc Labelle at disgustingly only 20 years old. Do you remember those days, Richard?

Richard:

Sometimes I try to forget... Keebs? Keebler? Like the elf right?

DDK:

Please, just call me Darren.

Richard:

It's better than being called Lance, I bet. Right?

DDK:

Let's just... stick to the action in the ring for now.

In the middle of the ring, Vince Howard stands before nearly 20,000 strong in the Kaseya Center. PRIMEates and the Faithful. Together. Ready for a historic partnership.

Vince Howard:

Our opening contest is scheduled for ONE FALL with a 15-minute time limit.

♪ "Émeute dans la prison" by Michel Pagliaro ♪

Out walks Luc Labelle, with perhaps an even larger scowl than usual. The last time he was in a PRIME ring, he lost the Alias Title, and his hopes of establishing an MMA division were dashed in an instant. Tonight, despite his love-hate relationship with the company, he's expected to represent it. He steps into the ring, no taunting, no insulting the crowd. Tonight, he's focused solely on the task in front of him.

Richard Parker:

I'll tell you right now, Not-Lance, I highly doubt that your boy in the locker room has faced anybody as dangerous as this guy. Luc Labelle isn't concerned with his followers, or his gaming, or his gear. He's focused on one thing, and that's delivering a win for the good guys tonight!

DDK:

That's a highly-charged statement. Declan Alexander has faced a lot of high-level competition in his career, but I will admit that I was impressed by what I saw from Labelle back at Uncut 192. It's rare to see a talent as young as him so uniquely set on achieving success inside the squared circle. He seems exceedingly difficult to distract, but if anybody can get inside his head, it'll be Declan Alexander.

Vince Howard:

Representing PRIME, from Montreal, Quebec. Weighing in at 91 kilograms, he is The Montreal Main Event...DOUBLE L, LUUUUUC LABELLLLLLEEEEE!!!

The scene stays on The Montreal Main Event as the arena goes dark. A guitar lick plays repeatedly before a set of drums kick in. As the synth joins the drums, each drum hit reveals a yellow letter on the tron.

D E C 4 L

♪ "Joker And The Thief" by Wolfmother ♪

The Faithful cheer as on the last drum hit leads into a rhythm guitar lighting the arena in a party of green and gold. A

spotlight shines down on the entrance where "DEC4L" Declan Alexander is standing, pointing a finger gun down towards Luc Labelle in the ring. Wearing green and gold board shorts with matching vest, knee pads, and boots, the Intrepid Influencer fires his finger gun towards his opponent before beginning his march down to the ring.

DDK:

I'm not going to lie to you, Richard, it's a little odd watching Declan Alexander come to the ring completely by himself. His M4NTRA tag team partner is not taking part in the event tonight due to prior obligations and his usual "Chief Vibes Officer" Makayla Namaste was injured by the hands of the tag team Kill or Be Killed, leaving the PogChamp on his own.

Richard Parker:

I'm going to tell you something that might be nuts. This kid was trained by Lindsay Troy and Vivica J. Valentine, probably two of the best you can find out there but I... just don't get it. The rizz and the cap and the six-seven? What do they see in this kid?! Actually, what does ANYONE see in this?

DDK:

I think this is just a side-effect of getting old, I'm afraid.

Richard Parker:

Speak for yourself, elf boy. I'm still in my PRIME! Get it?

Vince Howard:

And his opponent hailing from Brookline, Massachusetts. Weighing in at 240 pounds. Representing M4NTRA. "DEEEEEEEEEEEEC4L" DECLAN ALEXAAAAAAAAAANDER!

The DEFIANCE Faithful in the audience M4NTRA-Ray in appreciation as Alexander walks across the apron and joins in before stepping through the ropes and into the ring. Labelle clears the ring as Declan marches across to the far corner and climbs to the top rope. He M4NTRA-Rays along with the crowd before dropping his vest to the ground and dropping from the ropes. Wearing his signature eye black under his left eye, Declan smirks at Labelle and beckons the Montreal Main Event to join him in the ring.

DDK:

This will be a good test for Alexander, who has been focusing more on the tag division over the past year along with Nathaniel Eye, but is a former BRAZEN Champion and has an upset victory over Oscar Burns already on his resume. Many have pegged him to be the future of this business.

Richard Parker:

If you want to see the future, you're already looking at it. Luc Labelle. 20 years old. Already a former champion in PRIME. If you want to know what the learning curve is going to be for the future of this business, you're in the ring with it, sticker boy.

Jimmy Turnbull checks both competitors and IMMORTALS starts riiiiight... now.

DING DING

Monsieur Métropole starts the match with aggression, doing an immediate collar and elbow attempting to push Declan right back into his corner, but the PogChamp surprises Labelle with a drop toe hold into a side headlock. Luc counters with an attempted pinfall on DEC4L, but Alexander rolls through the attempt and keeps on the pressure with the headlock. Taking a second to point to his head to show off his smarts, Declan leaves an opening for the Montreal Main Event to get back up to a vertical base and shoots Alexander into the ropes.

Labelle goes for a Savate Kick but Alexander quarterback slides under the strike and doesn't even break stride getting back up to his feet and hitting the opposite ropes. Double L is all out of sorts as DEC4L rebounds back from behind him and hops over him, grabbing the head and almost hitting the Play of the Game as Luc jumps backwards, narrowly avoiding the finisher. The crowd cheers before quickly groaning in disappointment.

DDK:

It was almost over, just like that! That Play of the Game cutter can end the match from anywhere. We've seen it take out the likes of Oscar Burns and the Pop Culture Phenoms before.

Richard Parker:

Close only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades. Coulda woulda shoulda, but it's not because Labelle is prepared.

Unfortunately, Labelle was worried more about avoiding the finish and less about getting the upper hand and quickly falls victim to an elbow strike to the face and a dropkick that sends him back into the corner. DEC4L gives some space before closing in with a big splash that Double L avoids, however, Alexander lands on the middle rope and spingboards back with a Red Line enziguri directly to Labelle's face, sending him hard to the mat. Le Bourreau staggers back up, trying to stay off the ground but walks right into a flurry of offense. Arm drag. Back elbow. Snapmare. Neck breaker rolled into suplex backbreaker rolled into...

DDK:

C-C-C-COMBO BREAKER!

A lungblower backbreaker steals the air from inside Labelle's chest with a roar from the crowd. L'Assassin Rouge has no choice but to roll out of the ring to escape the Intrepid Influencer's assault. M4NTRA-Raying, DEC4L plays up to the crowd before stomping his foot on the canvas and getting the crowd to clap along.

Richard Parker:

Alexander is pulling out the greatest hits here, but Labelle is still standing.

DDK:

I'm not sure if you can call that standing. It looks more like running to me.

Richard Parker:

Discretion is the better part of valor. There's a wise man who once said you need to know when to hold 'em and know when to fold 'em. Surviving the barrage is just as important as serving it.

DDK:

Surprisingly insightful, Richard.

Richard Parker:

What did you expect from me? An ignorant blowhard like Angus?

With the PRIMEates and Faithful alike firmly behind him, Declan runs towards the ropes and dives through, catching Labelle in the air and crashing them both back into the barricade. Those around the ring pound of the steel barricade as both men struggle to catch their bearings, but it's Alexander up to his feet first, grabbing the head of Labelle and attempting to throw him back into the ring before suddenly Monsieur Métropole drops to the ground with the PogChamp's arm trapped, forcing him to fall face first across the steel barricade outside the ring.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Turnbull continues the count now at three as Double L shoves the body of Alexander off of him and begins crawling to the ring. He rolls in at the count of five and lays on his back staring up at the lights, taking a much needed breather to get himself back into ring shape.

DDK:

I don't think I've seen Declan move since that nasty shot across the barricade, Richard. I hate to say it but Labelle might've KO'd the PogChamp here and stolen a victory.

SIX!

Richard Parker:

You say stolen, I say calculated. He let his opponent wear himself out and the second the opportunity arose he struck. That's why Labelle is the future of this business. That's why the Alexander's of the world are behind the curve.

SEVEN!

Declan rolls over onto his back, the first movement he's made since the blow to his head and reveals a cut above his left eye and a trickle of blood runs past his eye black and down his cheek. Not a crimson mask by any means, but enough to show just how hard he cracked his head against the steel.

EIGHT!

Luc Labelle is now back up to his feet in the ring. Jaw jacking the fans in the front row, Le Bourreau cements himself as the man whose mouth never stops. Outside the ring, Declan Alexander is trying to get back up to his feet but dizzily falls back down to the floor. He reaches out with his arm trying to find purchase but nothing is there.

NINE!

Realizing he's going the wrong direction, DEC4L reaches his feet and sees the crowd. Turning around he sees nine fingers in the air and his jaw drops.

TEN!

The Intrepid Influencer dives into the ring, narrowly beating the count.

DDK:

It's not over yet, Alexander beats the count!

Richard Parker:

Out of the frying pan and into the fire!

A look of frustration grows on Double L's face, he obviously thought he had done enough to get the job done. As DEC4L begins to struggle to his feet, Labelle cuts him off with a sharp downward elbow to the back of the head. Nothing fancy, but it brings Alexander back down to the mat with a thud.

Richard Parker:

I bet Declan wishes he was back in the frying pan right about now.

Labelle lays in some stomps, and Alexander, while still conscious, can't seem to defend them very well. Luc knows that he won't win this hard-fought contest with stomps alone, though, so he brings Declan back up to his knees and seems to begin cycling through his mental rolodex of moves. The Montrealer begins to run the ropes.

DDK:

What could he be looking for here?

We'll never know, as the PogChamp quickly pops to his feet and LEVELS LABELLE WITH THE GGEZ! Labelle crumples, he's writhing in pain and clutching his jaw! It may very well be broken!

Richard Parker:

There's no way Lindsay Troy taught him how to do THAT!

Declan is still on shaky legs, but the cobwebs seem to be dissipating as he hypes the crowd up, leading yet another M4NTRA-Ray! As Luc checks his mouth for blood and slowly gets his bearings, it looks like the Intrepid Influencer could be calling for...

DDK:

The Play Of The Game!

As Declan dives for his cutter variation, Labelle, thinking quickly, PULLS JIMMY TURNBULL INTO THE LINE OF FIRE! But Alexander manages to recognize Labelle's ploy at the last second, and he lets up, managing to avoid planting the referee with the Play of the Game!

A look of horror stretches across Luc's face as he realizes that he's been caught. Declan flashes a shit-eating grin and looks at Jimmy Turnbull excitedly. The official brushes himself off and faces the timekeeper's area, before beginning to take a few steps towards it, looking like he's going to call for the bell!

DDK:

Luc Labelle just got himself disqualified!

Desperately, Luc grabs Declan by the arm and whips him into Turnbull, and poor Jimmy goes tumbling awkwardly face-first into the middle turnbuckle before getting the chance to motion for the end of the match! He's out cold, that was a rough landing! This one's still going on after some quick, devious thinking from Le Bourreau!

Richard Parker:

You spoke too soon! You can outsmart Luc Labelle, but he'll just outsmart you right back!

Declan pounds the mat in exasperation and gets to his feet, charging at his opponent, but Labelle deftly gouges at the streamer's eyes! A quick go-behind from the former MMA fighter, and he hooks the arms! He's going for La Fin! Declan flips out of it, spins Luc around and CATCHES HIM WITH THE PLAY OF THE GAME, SPIKING LABELLE VIOLENTLY! Declan rubs the pain out of his eyes and goes for the cover, but Turnbull is still too unconscious to count the pin! The crowd does the honors, of course.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

FOUR!

FIVE!

SIX!

The Play of the Game would have been enough to secure DEC4L TWO pinfall victories, but it doesn't matter now! Desperately, Alexander rolls off of Labelle and tries to wake Jimmy up, shaking him vigorously. When that doesn't work, he powders out of the ring and borrows a metal water bottle from a DEFIANCE fan in the front row. He rolls back in and empties the content into Turnbull's face, shocking him into a state of half-awakenedness.

DDK:

Turnbull's conscious, but he still doesn't quite know where he is.

Richard Parker:

When does he ever?

Declan tosses the water bottle away and begins to shake Turnbull even harder, but he doesn't notice Luc Labelle fighting his way to his feet! Double L picks the water bottle up and grabs Declan by the shoulder, spinning him around!

CLANG!

Luc brains Alexander with the bottom of the steel bottle, right in the temple! Declan's out on his feet as he stumbles into the ropes! He rebounds and falls right into Labelle's arms! Luc gets Declan in position, hooks the arms and lifts him up! This time, HE LANDS IT! LA FIN! Turnbull groggily rolls towards the pin and begins to count!

ONE!

DDK:

Not like this! He doesn't deserve this!

TWO!

Luc barks at Turnbull, asking him to count faster.

THREE!

DING DING DING

♪ "Émeute dans la prison" by Michel Pagliaro ♪

Vince Howard:

And your winner, representing PRIME...Double L, LUUUUC LABELLLLLLEE!

Richard Parker:

That's 1-0, baby! An early lead for the home team!

DDK:

This is neutral territory. A tremendous performance for Luc Labelle, and he continues to be very impressive in his young career, but Declan Alexander showed out here, and it's hard to say that the result would have been the same had Labelle not bent the rules!

Richard Parker:

Excuses, excuses. I can guarantee that everybody in Montreal is celebrating this one, and I am too!

DDK:

Nevertheless, if these two are the future of this sport, then it's in very good hands.

Labelle checks his mouth for blood as he gets his hand raised, and as the boos ring out from the DEFIANCE faithful and the cheers ring out from the PRIMEates, he can't help but crack a smile.

We move on.

IMMORTAL NEWS: A DOLT THEATER

...The NEWS...

...IMMORTALS EDITION...

“For the first time ever...”

The image of Max Kael in a black three piece suit, standing on a podium while the US flag billows behind him.

“THE NEWS with Max Kael is kinda, sorta, not exactly but not exactly not DEFIANT!”

The PRIME and DEF logos replace the US flag. Also some stock footage of kids throwing flowers and birds flying in the sky.

...Snark Darkly Presents...

...THE NEWS!...

With the introduction done we're taken immediately to the *new* NEWS Stage for the year 2026! Gone is the old, retro style-looking talk show stage and NEWS DESK. Now there is one absurdly massive black stone throne, probably near twenty feet tall from the base to the tip of its highest unnecessary spikey bit. Jagged black stone is highlighted by veins of strange green-black glass like ore that pulse with their own sickly light. A craggy, winding set of steps leads to the seat of the throne.

Which is exactly where we find Maximillian Wilhelm Kael!

He's dressed exactly as he appears in the intro video in a three piece black suit, Max is splayed out on the seat lazily. His eyes quiver and dance with the same sickly light the cracks of his throne emanate.

Max Kael:

WORMS of PRIME uh... And DEFIANCE! It is I, lead Anchor Maximillian Wilhelm Kael, the MOST trusted voice in NEWS on the ACE Network! If you don't know who I am, look to your left, look to your right, look up, look down. Someone you just looked at knows who I am and can verify my credentials. Indeed-indeed!

Nodding enthusiastically to himself as rigor smile stretches a little wider, Max Kael kicks his feeties in the air as he continues his address from the NEWS THRONE.

Max Kael:

Those of you familiar with the NEWS can see we've made a few new changes for the New Year! We'll go over the major renovations on the fresh new ReVival of the new year but I'll let this work as a little teaser! *Heh-heh!*

His evil little giggle announces his body turning and shifting. Uncoiling himself from the seat, Max begins to slither down the throne steps. His eyes dance with the crackling green light making it difficult to see where exactly the Mayor of Arkham is looking.

Max Kael:

2025 was a mixed bag year for your boy, poor ole'lil Max Kael. We had some big wins and some crushing losses. We didn't achieve as much as we would have hoped in PRIME but did manage to capture the Mayoral office of my beloved Arkham! My day to day work with the city has started energizing economic growth and is looking to secure an energy independent Arkham before the end of my term! Go me! Hah-HaH!

Reaching the bottom of the throne, Max gestures to someone off camera.

Max Kael:

I know 2026 is gonna be an even bigger year for Max Kael and a break-out year for THE NEWS! But before all that begins, I want to be selfless. I want to be thoughtful. I want to be thankful but more than anything, I *want* to be a good father.

Nodding enthusiastically toward the camera, Max attempts to look somber. It's pretty obvious just looking though that he's being a sarcastic twit failing his charisma check to appear empathetic.

Max Kael:

That's why I'm on this godawful show tonight, instead of back in Arkham, a real City with real people I care about, not whatever farce you call this place. Because I'm being a *GOOD* person and good people like me, sometimes we have to sacrifice for the people we care about. And so tonight, I sully my name, Maximillian Wilhelm Kael, and help my son's Make-A-Wish dreams come true when he finally gets to pin his childhood bully or something, A Dolt Conor Fuse and his brother, Tyler, to.

His empathetic expression is thankfully thrown away and replaced with a false bravado, the Lead Anchor again nodding enthusiastically to himself.

Max Kael:

So tonight, WORMS, enjoy my magnanimous display of good, Fatherly accountability and kindness! Tonight, watch as I, Maximillian Wilhelm Kael, patriarch of the Kael Family, lead my team to victory over the Fuse Brothers and fulfill a lifetime wish of my son, Sutler Reynolds-Kael!

The Son of Scions is pulled into frame by Max Kael. Unlike his exuberant and excitable father, Sutler is cold, dispassionate and clearly doesn't look like he wants to be on screen.

Max Kael:

So get ready PRIMFIANCE! And that, I believe... is THE NEWS!

Manic giggling spills from Max's lips as we cut to black.

THE DASHERS (BRAZEN) vs. THE AMAZING AMARETTOS (BRAZEN/DEFIANCE) vs. POP CULTURE PHENOMS (PRIME) vs. MYSTERY TEAM! (???)

DDK:

Up next, we have a tag team fourway spectacle. Some of the most colorful tag teams in PRIME and DEFIANCE are battling it out for their own egos... plus, we have a mystery fourth team!

Richard Parker:

I don't know who it's going to be exactly Keebler elf man, but I know it's a PRIME tandem, and we are going to make sure the PRIME-ates get their money worth!

DDK:

The Dasher Siblings and the Amarettos are newer tandems to DEFIANCE, but both quite talented...

Richard Parker:

We have magicians, we have twins, and we have a bunch of degenerate hollywood wannabes!

DDK:

I'm not sure they're twins. I think they're just siblings.

Richard Parker:

Are you sure?

DDK:

Why wouldn't they just call themselves the Dasher Twins then?

Richard Parker:

Good point.

"Abracadabra" by the Steve Miller Band swings over the PA. Gold spotlights dance across the stage in large figure-8 patterns.

Then out of nowhere...

KA-POOOMF!!

The Amazing Amarettos magically appear from two plumes of purple smoke that suddenly erupt from the stage!

Carlo & Gomez Amaretto:

AVANTI!!!!

The Amaretto twins flourish their capes and pose majestically as they prance across the stage, Carlo fanning a deck of cards and Gomez slinging dead doves out of his sleeve into the crowd. Their not-so-lovely assistant Suzie shuffles out through the curtain and poses with about as much enthusiasm and grace of a wet, wilted turnip in a gold cocktail dress.

Darren Quimbey:

Ladies and gentlemen, the following contest is an eight-man tag team spectacular, scheduled for one fall! Introducing first, accompanied to the ring by their not-so-lovely assistant, Suzie... they hail from Las Vegas, Nevada and weigh in at a combined four-hundred and eighty pounds... please welcome, the AMAZING AMARETTOS!!

Carlo & Gomez Amaretto:

AVANT!!!!!! HAHHAHAHA!!!

The Amarettos strut to the music as they make their way down the aisle. Suzie reluctantly follows, indifferently puffing off a menthol Pall Mall.

DDK:

The Amazing Amarettos are making a magical one-time appearance for this event tonight, on loan from our friends at Classic Wrestling!

Richard Parker:

Your friends, you mean. I have no interest in those kooks they got over in Classic.

“The Distance” by Cake blast through the speakers as blue, red, and white lights strobe throughout the Kaseya Center. Jets of white smoke shoot up around the stage as the Dashers race down the ramp, shoulder to shoulder in matching white racing suits and aviators. They each have a pair of championship belts strapped over their shoulders, and both seem to have gone heavy on the hairspray.

Darren Quimbey:

Next, from Silverstone, Northamptonshire, England...they are the TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS of both CLASSIC WRESTLING, AND BRAAAAAZEN...Tommy! Maggie! The DASHERRRRRS!

Richard Parker:

Speaking of Classic kooks!

DDK:

Right on cue, but as Darren Quimbey pointed out, they also hold tag team gold in BRAZEN, which is where many of DEFIANCE's top stars first made names for themselves! This sibling duo has had an incredible run of matches in recent months, and they sure know speed!

Tommy and Maggie step through the ropes simultaneously in a fluid motion before standing shoulder to shoulder, arms crossed, stoic and steady.

♪ “Live For The Night” by Krewella ♪

It isn't unanimous, but the reaction is *loud*. A cacophony of cheers, boos, and everything in between meet the Pop Culture Phenoms as a synthwave of hot pink and teal lights cascade the Miami fans. Various Cuban flags wave next to hate signs as Elise Ares and The D walk out side by side, wearing matching “Miami Vice” styled gear with Klein marching behind them. The D gives the former PRIME 5*Star and DEFIANCE Southern Heritage Champion a spin before she flips her hair and they begin their trek towards the ring with her trademark LED glasses flashing “I'M” and “BACK.”

Darren Quimbey:

Hailing from Hollywood, California. They are two time DEFIANCE Tag Team Champions. Representing PRIME, they The D and Elise Ares. They are the POP. CULTURE. PHEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEENOMS!

DDK:

Richard, I have to say watching these two come out to the ring representing PRIME is in a word... surreal.

Richard Parker:

Well we're glad to take them off your hands. Arguably the greatest tag team in DEFIANCE history. Heck, one might even argue that Elise Ares was the heart and soul of the DEFIANCE roster.

DDK:

That case probably could've been made, yes.

Richard Parker:

What'd you do with it? You *screwed* 'em, Keebler! Now they're back home, with us, where they belong. Your loss. OUR GAIN.

The D and Klein open the ropes and Elise passes through as suggestively as possible before they split up on opposite turnbuckles. The D points to The D on the crotch of his tights while Ares goes to throw her sunglasses into the crowd, hesitates, and decides to just drop them instead. The trio meet in the corner to discuss strategy as the arena returns to normal.

The music cuts out, and there's a small tremor of excitement beginning to grow in the crowd.

DDK:

The fourth team in this match has been billed as a mystery entrant - who's your money on, Richard?

Richard Parker:

I've been thinking about this, and I've got one for you - Team V.I.A.G.R.A.! Bring back the Hall of Famers, baby!

DDK:

That's a deep cut! If it's one of ours, oh man, wouldn't it be something if the Triple 7's were here? Plenty of history between Max and Mason Luck and the Pop Culture Phenoms, I'll tell you that for free.

Richard Parker:

The suspense is killing me! Who is it??

The silence continues for another beat...

And another beat...

And then?

...

WAIT

DON'T HOLD YOUR BREATH FOR GOODNESS' SAKE

NOBODY'S HOME

The PRIMEates in attendance, and pockets of DEFIANCE Faithful, pop out of their seats as "Razzmatazz" by I Don't Know How But They Found Me tastefully blasts through the speakers. Teal, orange, green, and white lights pulse throughout the arena as spotlights illuminate the stage. Two cardboard cutouts rise up from a platform near the stage, one of PRIME's Neck Collector, FLAMBERGE, and PRIME's Prince of Jolf, Joe Fontaine.

On the DEFIAPRIMEtronview, "GLUEMINATI" and "JoeBERGE" pulse to the beat of the music, alternating with images of a bearded dragon on a branch; a knife with a green bedazzled handle; steel chairs that have been dramatically modified and transformed into "jolf clubs"; and assembly line footage of the machines they use to bottle glue.

Darren Quimbey:

Aaaaand introducing tonight's mystery opponents! Representing the GLUEMINATI! Hailing from Phoenix, Arizona and Strasbourg, France! Coming in at a combined height of 11 feet, 9 inches! JOE FONTAINE! FLAMBERGE! JOOOOOOOOEBERRRRRRRGE!

The real-life FLAMBO and Smooth Joe Cool dramatically karate-kick down the cardboard versions of themselves. FLAMBERGE freezes in place and remains motionless for longer than you'd think someone would be comfortable

doing, while Fontaine dabs relentlessly.

Richard Parker:

IT'S THE GLUE BOYS! I knew it was going to be them!

DDK:

Is that right?

Richard Parker:

Listen, I said bring in the Hall of Famers, right? FLAMBERGE is a PRIME Hall of Famer, it counts! And if there ever was a time for a few Classic Wrestling geeks to run into the business end of a golf club, it's here at IMMORTALS!

The pair eventually break out of their contrasting fugue states and make their way to the ring as teal white sparks shoot up from the stage. They find their way to their respective corner and probably start telling each other incredible jokes that could only come from their strange shared brain cell.

Mark Shields pulls a cigarette out of his mouth and calls for the bell.

DING DING

Then immediately gets dropped with a flying superman punch from Elise Ares!

RAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!!!!!!!!!!

Richard Parker:

It's like going to a hockey game!

DDK:

I hate to say it, but Mark had that one coming!

The rest of the competitors just look on in shock as Ares holds onto the ropes and stomps away at the official for the match before shoving him out of the ring with her boot and forcing him to fall limp onto the concrete floor. Klein runs over and tries to talk the former FACE of DEFIANCE out of her revenge attack against the man that screwed her out of the FIST, but she wasn't having it, pushing her way right past the Boxman and hoisting Shields up by his collar and belt and launching him into the steel stairs behind The Dashers corner. Klein winces as she does.

All the teams simply watch with a mix of shock and amusement as Elise then pulls a barely mobile Mark Shields up by his ear and begins dragging him up the aisle. The Faithful and PRIMEates all reach out to try and touch the Queen of Sports Entertainment Style as she lays some stiff forearms into the back of Shields before she throws him into the backstage area

Elise Ares:

I'm done dealing with this lazy prick! Bring us another one!

She screams before following Mark Shields further backstage as he crawls away.

Cut back to the ring where the remaining seven competitors try to sort out what to do now.

DDK:

Well uh... looks like we're going to need another referee out here?

Richard Parker:

And good riddance! I think, right? That guy is a total scumbag.

The D turns to the other six competitors and just shrugs his shoulders.

The D:

That's Elise!

Gomez Amaretto throws a large curtain out and throws down a smoke bomb. When he lowers the curtain, the D is gone!

DDK:

And now the D just disappeared!

Richard Parker:

He's outside of the ring with Elise discussing strategy. I saw him slide out.

DDK:

Oh. I thought it was real magic.

Richard Parker:

We know.

The D, Elise, and Klein all huddle up on the outside, discussing amongst themselves. The six men in the ring just look at each other. Unsure how to start this matchup.

So Joe Fontaine grabs the top rope and hits a springboard shooting star press to the outside. Klein dashes out of the way before Fontaine lands on both members of PCP.

Richard Parker:

That's another explosive opener! This just got kicked off fast!

DDK:

What exactly does he call that maneuver?

Richard Parker:

You've got google, don't you? It's a dedication to a guy who isn't dead.

DDK:

Oh... But what a maneuver.

Richard Parker:

You ain't kiddin'.

Now, rushing out from the backstage area is DEFIANCE official Carla Ferrari, taking Mark Shields' place. She slides into the ring, and immediately cues for the bell.

DING DING

DDK:

And now it's officially underway!

Richard Parker:

Good luck getting it under control...

Fontaine grabs the D and tosses him in under the bottom rope. The Amarettos and the Dashers each go to their respective corner, as Carla ushers FLAMBERGE to the Glueminati's corner. He makes sure she knows his name should be capitalized.

DDK:

Carla Ferrari is trying her best to direct traffic in the ring! Meanwhile, Joe Fontaine is continuing to put the pressure on The D!

Richard Parker:

Teehee!

Fontaine quickly tries to stomp on a back peddling D's groin, as the D's eyes widen with each stomp. He finds himself backed up into the Glueminati's corner, and FLAMBO tags in. Fontaine starts laying into the D with the Jazz Trumpeter Murder Method, which is literally just a series of kicks to the crotch. The D's eyes widen as FLAMBERGE grabs the D's arms and traps it on the top rope.

Richard Parker:

And here come the kicks and headbutts combo!

FLAMBO strikes and attacks over and over as Joe slips out. Joe tags himself back in, and rushes halfway across the ring. As FLAMBERGE hits one last brutal headbutt, Joe flies in and hits WANG TEN in the corner.

DDK:

The D with a taste of his own medicine! D in your face!

Richard Parker:

I believe that's called Wang Ten Darren.

DDK:

Po-tai-to, po-taut-o.

The D stumbles out of the corner standing between FLAMBO and Fontaine. His eyes roll into the back of his head, but then he suddenly does a split, and low blows BOTH men.

DDK:

Da-Dick-Punchah!

Richard Parker:

These two are made for each other Darren.

DDK:

The D... is he just rolling across the ring?

Indeed, the D just rolls himself completely over to the Amaretto's corner, slaps their leg, and then rolls himself out of the ring by their corner. He is clutching his crotch in immense pain.

DDK:

The hardest working D in the business Richard.

Richard Parker:

I love this sport.

DDK:

And here comes Carlo Amaretto into the ring!

Richard Parker:

Is it? I thought it was Gomez...

Rather than keeping things below the waist, Carlo/Gomez Amaretto bring the dignity back to the squared circle by way of an eyerake to Joe's face. Clutching both face and balls, Fontaine flails backwards, his hand errantly catching

Tommy Dasher on the way down.

DDK:

Intentional or not, the tag is made to Tommy Dasher! Tommy into the ring, and now he's trading rights and lefts with Gomez Amaretto!

Richard Parker:

I thought that was Carlo?

DDK:

I don't know... screw it, we're just calling that one Gomez.

Tommy steadily gains the upper hand, his background in English pugilism coming through, and he eventually backs Gomez up into the ropes before pushing him off and sending him running.

DDK:

Here goes Gomez Amaretto in motion!

Tommy Dasher waits in the center of the ring as the Killer Kadabra hits the opposite set of ropes and comes running back.

Only to suddenly come to an abrupt stop and pull out a deck of cards, held face-down and fanned out.

Gomez Amaretto:

Pick a card! ANY card--

Dasher boots him in the gut. Card goes flying as Gomez doubles over and has his head introduced to the canvas.

Richard Parker:

He picked a card alright! The Rolling DDT of Spades!

DDK:

Dasher making the first pin attempt in this contest...

One...

Two...

And Carlo Amaretto comes in to break it up!

Ignoring the referee's demands to return to the corner, Carlo lays a few more stomps into Tommy's head before pulling him up. Gomez recovers, and the two push him off the ropes with a double whip.

DDK:

TAG made to Maggie on the rebound!

The Amaretto twins connect their arms for a conjoined clothesline... only for Tommy to SLIDE through them, under the ropes, and out to the opposite apron. Carlo and Gomez look both ways, unsure of who to focus on. In a flash, Maggie and Tommy yank themselves over the top rope and springboard into the ring from both sides.

DDK:

STEREO SPRINGBOARD DROPKICKS from the Dasher Siblings!

One of the Amarettos (not sure which) rolls out to the floor. Ferrari, now fully into "fuck it" mode, shrugs her shoulders and focuses on the one still between the ropes. Tommy pulls up Carlo(?) and sends him to one corner while Maggie

backs into the one opposite.

DDK:

Carlo Amaretto seated in one corner, and now Tommy sends Maggie out of the other with an Irish whip... HIP ATTACK smashes Carlo's head against the turnbuckles!

Richard Parker:

It should have been me!

DDK:

The Dashers both working on Carlo Amaretto, getting him out of the corner and back onto his feet...

Maggie goes behind. As Tommy connects with a rolling elbow, the other Dasher sibling yanks the Evil Abra to the mat and ensnares him into a mouse trap pin!

DDK:

SMASH AND GRABS by the Dashers! Maggie with the pin!

One!

Two!

BROKEN UP! Elise Ares interjects herself into the mat with a strong double ax handle to the back of Maggie's head. She tosses Maggie to the PCP's corner, and then tosses Carlo in after her! Elise slips out of the ring, and tags herself in, taking Maggie out of the contest. The D then tags in Carlo!

DDK:

PCP, trying to do their signature move of pinning each other to win a match!

Richard Parker:

They can't do that!

DDK:

Indeed! Carla Ferrari is discounting the tag the D made and only Elise is now legal. It's Elise and Carlo as the legal men.

FLAMBERGE takes offense and walks over on the apron, shouting at the D. The D defends himself, and then the two rush at each other, attacking. Elise grabs Maggie Dasher and throws her into an oncoming Joe Fontaine, stunning him.

Gomez hits the ring to defend Carlo and everything breaks down. FLAMBERGE grabs the D and powerbombs him off the apron, just before Elise tosses Maggie into FLAMBERGE who falls off the apron. Elise shoves Maggie completely out of the ring nextt.

Fontaine slips away from Gomez and strikes Carlo down with Go Back 2 Chicago, his dabbing shining wizard.

DDK:

Did you hear that echo throughout the arena! Carlo is OUT!

Gomez charges and shoves Fontaine into a nearby corner, peppering him with lefts and rights. Tommy Dasher tries to sneak behind Elise but she ducks, and back body drops him over the top onto both FLAMBERGE and the D. Gomez and Fontaine turn to Elise, and they charge, only for Elise to duck and pull the top rope down, sending all six men out of the ring.

DDK:

What is Elise doing!

Richard Parker:

Big move maybe!

Elise looks to the outside to the recovering pile of bodies that keeps getting added to it.

Then she looks at the ring, where she sees an unconscious Carlo Amaretto.

DDK:

Extreme Makeover! Into the ring on Carlo! Straight into a cover!

FLAMBERGE is first up but the D grabs his foot, preventing him from entering the ring.

One.

Two.

Fontaine and the Dashers both slide in.

THREE!

But it's a second too late to break up the pinfall!

Elise Ares takes a few good shots, but the bell rings and "Live for the Night" starts back up over the PA System.

Darren Quimbey:

Your winners, via pinfall... Elise Ares... the D... the Pop, Culture, PHENOMS!

Elise quickly rolls out of the ring and joins the gloating D as they two quickly make their great escape. Klein meanwhile, tries to apologize at ringside before Elise and the D snap at him to follow. He reluctantly does so.

In the ring, FLAMBERGE and Fontaine just kind of shrug and go about their business, but the Dasher Siblings lament their loss on one of the biggest stages of their young careers. Meanwhile, Gomez checks on his fallen partner, who looks to have a small cut above their left eye.

DDK:

Say what you will about the PCP, they are one of DEFIANCE's most decorated tag teams, and they know when to take an opening.

Richard Parker:

Without a doubt. I didn't expect that match to finish so quick, but Elise Ares with the pinfall victory!

DDK:

The Amarettos and the Dasher Siblings have nothing to be ashamed of, they came out here on the biggest stage of their careers and gave it their all!

Richard Parker:

And I'm sure we're going to see more Dick punching affairs in PRIME between the GLUEBOIS and the Phenoms.

DDK:

Wait... why are we going to a news break?

Richard Parker:

Oh, you're gonna either love or hate this Darren...

BAFFROOM FIGHTS: XTREME EDITION (BLUE)

The arena bathroom.

Pristine, fluorescent.

A white, porcelain sink.

A golden Sketti Bucket rests in its bosom.

Zoom out.

There's Fred Dick. He wears a salmon colored suit as an accessory to his toothy, gross smile.

The song starts.

Fred Dick: *[singing]*

We don't haaaave a jingle yet, but this is my fuggin shooooooooowww. PRIME and DEFIANCE, it's a special edition, and this is my fuggin shooooooooowww. It's Baffroom Fights and ya better be ready, it's mothafuggin Freddy and a Bucket of Skettiiiiiiii... which ya win if you kick my ace! Bahaha!

Fred claps the bathroom lights off.

He claps them back on.

An old baffroom fighters trick: installing a clapper.

Fred Dick:

Well, reckon half of y'all are excited as shid and the other half of y'all ain't got nary a damn clue what tha fug is goin' on. This here? This is Baffroom Figjts. And the next person to walk through that mothafuggin' door and step on this bit of God's poorly tiled URF? ...Dey gon' get to fight MY ACE for a Sketti Bucket Prize. And if they ain't put the Sketti Bucket over, I swear to god, I'm gonna turn this whole fuggin' special event into god damn Waco.

Fred eyes the bathroom door, awaiting his opponent.

The fluorescent lights of the bathroom flicker like a bad horror movie before they go out. From somewhere in the bathroom, a drum beats from a cranked up JVC KABOOM BOX™

Can you feel that?

A periodic flashing of light shows Fred Dick clapping and looking around the bathroom trying to find the source of the music before the lights go back out.

Awww shit.

Kicking the door open, Dick sees a JVC KABOOM BOX™ sitting on the back of a toilet. He goes to turn off the music right as...

OOOOOOH WA AH AH AH!!!!

"Down With The Sickness" by Disturbed

The sterile, sanitary lighting turns blue as a huge monster of a man comes crashing down on the Street Cat from above. Rising from a pile of humanity, toilet water, spic and span, early 2000s nostalgia, and presumably traceable amounts of human feces is the giant facade of a man. Over 7 feet tall, but even bigger if you could the ridiculous blue liberty spikes stabbing out from his skull. Nearly 300 pounds of Tripp pants, eyeliner, and questionable decisions.

Justin Sane has entered the bathroom.

Justin Sane:

Are you ready to get... XTREEEEEEEEEEME?!

Fred claps the lights back to normal, and sneers.

Fred Dick:

Shut tha FUG UP. You must be one of dem DEF JAM boys what showed up to rassle us PRIME BEEF BADDIES. Well, if you think you some HOT SHID, some XTREME diarrheen? Then c'mawn and getcha ace whooped.

Fred puts his fists up and humps the air several times.

Fred Dick:

LET'S. GET. IT. THA. MUH. THA. FUG. OOOOOOOOOOON.

Justin Sane's eyes grow wide and he makes what can only be described as a Disturbed-style safari noise before he kicks the bathroom stall door off the hinges. Fred watches as it skitters across the floor. Sane looks the Street Cat square in the eyes, unblinking.

Justin Sane:

Your mind can't COMPREHEND the specimen of MAN you have standing in front of you, FREDERICK DICK. People call me CRAZY. People call me INSANE. They don't understand what you're looking at is PEAK MAN.

The Nuclear Ninja of NuMetal drags the steel stall door across the bathroom floor with a screech before lining it up with the sink. The seven foot monster begins to climb up onto the arena bathroom sink.

Justin Sane:

This is your last chance to bow before the PSYCHO. More energy than a can of Rockstar Energy. Tougher than a Nokia 3310. More infectious than a song from LimeWire. On top of all that, I TOTALLY BANGED YOUR MOM LAST NIGHT.

Sane turns his back to Fred and executes the most awkward corkscrew shooting star press you've ever seen before landing neck first onto the steel door.

Justin Sane:

FUCK. Ow.

Fred laughs and laughs and laughs.

Fred Dick:

I met myself some STEWPID SUNS A BENCHES in my day, but you really yo' own unique level of dipshid.

Fred walks over to the urinal and bare-hands the urinal cake. He takes it over to Justin.

Fred Dick:

If you really wanna show me how xtreme and bad ace you is, you'll eat this hyunh urinal pie.

The Superbeast snarls as he pushes himself up off the battered and beaten door. Running his hand through his blue hair, he looks as Fred slops the urinal cake into his hand. He looks at it for a second, then looks at Fred, then looks back at the cake again.

Justin Sane:

Am I joke to you?

Sane roars and smashes the urinal cake against his probably fractured skull before he kicks the Street Cat square in the chest, forcing him to stumble back towards the urinal and set off the automatic flush feature. Now with soggy shorts, Fred stumbles back and kicks Sane right in the family jewels.

Justin Sane:

NOOOOOOOOOOOO!

His voice grows high pitched as he collapses onto the floor.

Justin Sane:

My only weak point... my... massive... dong.

Fred Dick:

That's the difference in you and me, acehoe.

Fred grabs Justin Sane by his dong region.

Fred Dick:

I ain't got no dong.

Fred DDTs Justin's Sane's dong region.

Justin Sane:

No. I...

Half hunched over and half crawling across the bathroom floor, Sane tries to scoot away with one leg and one hand while holding his crotch belly down.

Justin Sane:

You haven't seen the last of me Dick. I. CAN. NOT. DIE.

Very slowly, Justin Sane continues to crawl out of the bathroom before reaching the door. He struggles to reach his feet, still favoring his substantial injury (the dong, not the skull fracture, that one is fine) before slowly pushing the door open and gingerly limping out of the bathroom. Leaving only various streaks of blue hair dye, a broken door, and plastic shards that were once a JVC KABOOM BOX™ to remember him by.

With little left to do, Fred walks over to the Golden Sketti Bucket.

He reaches in and scoops out a handful, devouring it.

With Sketti sauce all over his face and hand, Fred gives a big thumbs up.

Fred Dick:

Now THAT'S good sketti!

We cut elsewhere.

FOR SOMETHING!

Suddenly, the visual feed begins to slowly fade into a sea of static and white noise. A slow, deliberate droning subtly slides into our ears, as the static begins to take new shape. A face forms, in goggles and mask, as a mouth slowly spreads into a sharp rictus. The screen now takes the shape of the environment we're shooting from, and our guest breaks the cacophony with a cheerful, excitable...

Dr. Ayumi Sato: GREETINGS, PUNY MORTALS!!!

The upper half of her face is covered in a purple, cowl-like mask, a consequence of being attacked with a fireball at DEFIANCE Rising last month in Paris, but her enthusiasm does not seem to be dimmed one bit. If anything, she seems giddier than the Faithful are used to.

Dr. Ayumi Sato: Ever since the news of PRIME and DEFIANCE Wrestlings united for a night to present a showcase of the squared circle's mightiest, I, Dr. Ayumi Sato, had been busy optimizing MY Atomic Punks for such an event!

Sure enough, as she finishes her sentence, from either side of the camera come the neon-painted visages of Fission and Gigaton, games faces on and eyes aglow with the thrill of battle.

Dr. Ayumi Sato: And though I had a recent encounter with a wayward flame and was advised to stay in my lab and let my wounds heal...

She points to her mask, a pallor of anger of rage taking hold for a split second before returning to her cackling, jovial self.

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With a soft chuckle, she looks in each direction at her Atomic Punks, before continuing.

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Dr. Sato raises her arms to her side dramatically, her grin growing impossibly wide.

Dr. Ayumi Sato: My Atomic Punks! Tonight, we shall strike a mighty blow... FOR CAPIT...

The mad scientist stops in her tracks, putting a finger on her chin and tilting her head in contemplation.

Dr. Ayumi Sato: OK, maybe not for CAPITALISM, but... for something!

Her grin returns.

Dr. Ayumi Sato: Yes! For SOMETHING! Ha-HAAAAAA!

Dr. Sato dramatically turns on her heels and walks off-camera, her Punks following faithfully.

Cut to the ring!

BAFFROOM FIGHTS FOR THE COVETED SKETTI BUCKET: FRED DICK (C) (PRIME) vs. JUSTIN SANE (DEFIANCE)

The arena bathroom.

Pristine, fluorescent.

A white, porcelain sink.

A golden Sketti Bucket rests in its bosom.

Zoom out.

There's Fred Dick. He wears a salmon colored suit as an accessory to his toothy, gross smile.

The song starts.

Fred Dick: (*singing*) We don't haaaave a jingle yet, but this is my fuggin shooooooooowww. PRIME and DEFIANCE, it's a special edition, and this is my fuggin shooooooooowww. It's Baffroom Fights and ya better be ready, it's mothafuggin Freddy and a Bucket of Sketti!!!!!!... which ya win if you kick my ace! Bahaha!

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Cut.

JACK HARMEN (DEFIANCE) vs. THE ANGLO LUCHADOR (PRIME)

The arena lights go down, and a square-jawed man with a black towel around his neck appears on the PRIMEview.

Richard Parker:

My least favorite part of the show, coming up right here.

DDK:

Really? Even worse than if Jiles were to walk out of here with the FIST of DEFIANCE later?

Richard Parker:

Hey, can we get Nick back here? Please?

"Wrestling is a sacred sport!" reads the subtitle underneath the man as he speaks in Japanese. The PRIMEview shuts off, pyro rating about 2.4 out of 10 on the Erika Kirk scale goes off, and the hard guitars start in.

"Cynic." Local H.

RAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHH

The Anglo Luchador saunters out from the back, black towel around his neck and "POM ACADEMY" gray-and-pink shirt over his chest to accompany his ring gear. He soaks in the reaction for a moment before trotting down to the ring. He slides into the ring, pops up, removes the towel and shirt, and tosses them both into the crowd before he turns to await his opponent for the evening.

"Crazy Train" by Ozzy Osbourne signals the arrival of the Neighborhood Lunatic, Jack Harmen. He throws his dyed white for one night only hair back and raises his Devil Horn taunt to the sea of Faithful & PRIME-ates. Jack storms down to the ring and doesn't look pleased as the fans slowly start to boo his demeanor. He wears his DEFIANCE "How do you do fellow kids" t-shirt.

DDK:

There he is, the wily 29 year old veteran, Jack Harmen.

Richard Parker:

Wait, are you saying he's 29 years old, or that he's wrestled for 29 years?

DDK:

If you ask Jack these days, he'd say both.

Richard Parker:

I didn't know Jack was such a fan of Drew Berrymore flicks from the 90s...

Harmen climbs up the apron to the turnbuckles and smiles a wide cheshire cat like grin. He throws his hands up one last time for a devil horn / metal taunt and then hops into the ring. He bounces from side to side, keeping the energy up.

The Luchador extends his hand, which in another universe might mean a code of honor would be adhered to. Harmen looks at it cockeyed for a moment before he reciprocates, causing a cheer to come up from the audience.

The two wily veterans begin the match circling each other, each putting their hand out to suss out an opening, trying to gain an advantage. Neither one bites at the other as the tense atmosphere leaves the crowd in a pregnant silence. Finally, both men look back at the audience, and the crowd cheers in appreciation at the first collar-and-elbow tie-up of the match.

The first tie-up ends in stalemate, as they break. The Luchador shakes his head and goes in again, but Harmen dodges him, pointing to his head like a Perfect wrestler from another reality. This action frustrates The Luchador, so he

deftly swoops behind Harmen and grabs him in a rear waistlock, struggling and jockeying, trying to get him over. Harmen blocks, slips out and behind, and grabs The Luchador in a rear waistlock of his own. The roles are reversed, but not for long, as The Luchador's turn to wriggle out and dash behind comes up. This process repeats three or four more times until Harmen, sure he has the advantage this time, attempts to hoist The Luchador up for a German suplex. He can't even get him a quarter-of-the-way up before The Luchador blocks it, slips down and out to the canvas and ensnares Harmen in a modified victory roll for the first near fall.

Richard Parker:

Ooh, I thought he had it. Really wouldn't like that result this early.

DDK:

Rich, aren't you supposed to be rooting for the PRIME guys?

Richard Parker:

I'm trying. I really am, but this rat luchador tests my patience. Plus, Harmen is in the PRIME Hall of Fame, I can squint and pretend Towel is one of those dummy Rainbow Reapers you have over here.

DDK:

Nick told me your hatred and uncouth know no bounds.

Richard Parker:

He really said that? He's a better friend to me than I could ever think!

The referee barely gets the count of one off before the former High Flyer kicks out. He pops up to his feet, scowl on his face, shaking his head. The Luchador is in much better spirits as he does the same, and the crowd engages in a polite golf clap. One hooligan in the mezzanine shouts "WRESTLING!" to the amusement of people in his section.

DDK:

Fans here at Immortals appreciating the good wrestling exchanges.

Richard Parker:

My least favorite kind of fan. I like a fan with bloodlust in their eyes.

They lock up again, and this time, Harmen gets the advantage with an arm wringer that he segues into a hammerlock. The Luchador quickly leans back and breaks the hammerlock by wrestling Harmen into a side headlock with his free arm, wrenching a few times before Harmen shoves him into the ropes. The Luchador turns around to find Harmen charging at him, so he leapfrogs and charges to opposite side of the ring himself. He looks to land a shoulder block, but Harmen hits a leapfrog of his own. Both carom off the ropes on the opposite sides of the ring with the same thought, but as they meet in the center, each wrestler's dropkick finds air, and they're back to where they started with a slightly more enthusiastic golf clap in response.

DDK:

Both these guys showing off their years of experience here.

Richard Parker:

And what's most impressive is how Harmen's always wrestled like this, even from birth. I heard he gave the midwife a monkey flip as soon as they cut his umbilical cord.

They circle each other again, and The Luchador reaches in for a lock-up. Harmen is too quick, ducking and slamming him to the ground before going for a quick lateral press. The referee gets between one and two on his count before The Luchador slowly matrixes out of the press and to his feet. Harmen reacts by shooting to his feet, but The Luchador quickly arm-drags him back to the canvas. Harmen shoots up again with The Luchador trying another arm drag, but Harmen locks his arm, blocks it, and flings The Luchador over with an arm drag of his own. The Luchador pops up and falls back, holding the side of his head while shaking it.

Richard Parker:

They oughtta test that Luchador for performance enhancing drugs after that escape.

DDK:

Can you at least pretend to like him tonight?

Richard Parker:

I'm not asking them to disqualify him. I want to know where he gets his drugs so I can maybe get a few doses.

They circle each other once more, neither man wanting to make the first move. After several moments, The Luchador lunges in, stopping short, and in one motion, sliding between Harmen's legs. He pops up, and before Harmen can turn around, he leaps on his back to try a full victory roll. However, as he leans forward for the rolling leverage, Harmen blocks it and throws him to the canvas, landing a big stomp to the small of The Luchador's back.

Harmen continues with three stiff stomps to the back following up with a fourth to the back of the neck. He then places his boot on TAL's neck, stands on him and walks to the other side. He then breaks into a sprint, returning with a swift leg drop to the back of the head. Harmen climbs on top, digging his knee into the small of TAL's back and wrenching his chin back, in a modified looking camel clutch type submission.

Richard Parker:

Ah darn, I don't think Towel is close to submitting here, even if Harmen really is doing his best to make him.

DDK:

No but this certainly has to put additional wear and tear on TAL's body. As Harmen wrenches this hold in deeper, a person's spine isn't meant to bend that way.

Richard Parker: *[ignoring DDK]*

TAP! TAP YOU SON OF A...

With his knee still dug into the back, Harmen reaches forward and hooks in a Dragon sleeper cravate around the neck, yanking the Luchador's back into a deeper arch. There's a cry of pain but TAL shakes his head no to the official asking for his submission. Harmen then adjusts his position, pulling his knee out of the back. He front flips and face plants TAL from the cravate into the canvas, then rolls to his feet and panders to the jeering crowd.

Richard Parker:

Jack Harmen, PRIME Hall of Famer High Flyer, not feeling the love tonight at Immortals.

DDK:

You know Jack Harmen is telling everyone that he's a 29 year old superstar with 29 years of in ring experience?

Richard Parker:

Sounds like he's trying to tell and not show, although he doesn't need to convince me much. He convincing anyone else?

DDK:

Mostly through threats of violence alone.

Richard Parker:

My man.

Harmen hooks TAL up off the mat, and double underhooks him. He lifts him high in the air and drops him in a brainbuster, into a lackadaisical cover.

One.

Two.

TAL crucifixes Harmen in response!

One.

Two.

Harmen kicks out, gets to his feet faster than TAL and soccer punts him in the head to send him back down to the mat. He turns to the PRIME-ates and Faithful in attendance and motions he shut that down to jeers. He then smiles, leans down, and locks in a chin lock.

DDK:

Harmen slowing down the pace here, it may benefit the older veteran and it has the added benefit of making the crowd hate him even more.

Richard Parker:

Harmen's savvy, he's got years of experience and he knows how to control that ring and cut his opponent off.

DDK:

I understand The Anglo Luchador has some experience too.

Richard Parker:

Yeah, but he took a break in between, and, to be honest, I really don't like him.

DDK:

Really? I couldn't tell.

Harmen keeps the chin lock and tries to turn it into a sleeper, as TAL fights back. Harmen wrenches the chinlock further, solidifying his position. He shouts to the crowd to shut up as they boo him more. Then, TAL begins to fight to his feet. Harmen switches into a side headlock, as TAL then elbows him, once, twice, before trying to shoot off the ropes. Harmen reaches out and the threads of his mask to yank him back to the canvas. Harmen then climbs on top with a flurry of rights and lefts, before he starts biting at the forehead of the mask. He's immediately reprimanded, but doesn't stop, now switching to trying to yank TAL's mask completely off.

Richard Parker:

Isn't this supposed to be an exhibition! Why is he trying to remove the mask off Towel?

DDK:

Harmen knows how important that mask is to a lucha's identity. Attacking it is just another way to attack his opponent, and give him something else to think about as this match progresses.

Richard Parker:

I know all this, I just don't want a show like this that doesn't actually count in the record books to be how I have to see Towel's ugly ass mug for the first time.

Elvis Nixon finally intervenes, pushing Harmen away and reprimanding him in the corner for his actions. TAL crawls to a neutral corner, and readjusts his mask so he can still see out the eye holes. Harmen storms past Elvis, ignoring his cries. As he reaches TAL, TAL hooks Harmen's tights and sends him face first into the middle turnbuckle.

Richard Parker:

That was cheating!

DDK:

I know, but Harmen has been playing fast and loose all match too.

Richard Parker:

I wasn't complaining, Darren. This is the first time I've liked this dumbass since Great American Nightmare 2022!

The Luchador shakes out the cobwebs as Harmen staggers from the first real dizzying blow he's taken all match. As soon as Harmen faces the Luchador...

CRACK

CRACK

CRACK

Three stiff-ass, chest-reddening knife edge chops!

Harmen holds his pecs and histrionically staggers around the ring even more before The Luchador dunks him to the canvas with a bulldog. He appeals to the crowd, waiting for Harmen to get to his feet, and then he leaps from the canvas to the second turnbuckle, then uses that as a springboard to get to the top rope before completing the maneuver, a double-jump springboard missile dropkick that sends Harmen exaggeratedly back to the canvas.

Richard Parker:

I haven't seen Towel get that high off the ground since Ivan Stanislav threw him across the ring!

DDK:

Is that admiration I'm starting to sense in your voice, Rich?

Richard Parker:

Don't get used to it! I'll be back to despising him sometime after I see his worthless ass at the next PRIME telecast.

Harmen gets up onto all fours, but the Luchador relentlessly stalks him and rolls him up in La Magistrol...

ONE!

TWO!

But Harmen kicks out

The Luchador slams the mat and points towards the ceiling. He waits for Harmen to get up, and when he does, he leaps.

DDK:

Hurricanrana?

Nope. Harmen blocks it and slams The Luchador to the canvas with a powerbomb.

Richard Parker:

I could have told you that was going to happen. Every time he gets me to like him one iota, the universe proves to me why that's a futile endeavor.

Harmen goes back to stomping The Luchador before barking at Elvis and the crowd. He picks the shocked body of his opponent up and lays it across the middle rope before driving his knee into his back while holding the top. Elvis Nixon starts exhausting his five count, but Harmen breaks right before he would risk disqualification as the crowd starts to boo him.

DDK:

Harmen showing signs of frustration here.

Richard Parker:

Well, when you're a 29-year veteran at 29 years old, you'll feel the frustration if you can't put an inferior opponent like this away.

Harmen makes the devil horns at the crowd before grabbing a gassed Luchador from off the rope and grabbing him by the neck. He twirls and slams him down with a deliberate and brutal neckbreaker before floating over for a cover...

ONE!

TWO!

But the Luchador kicks out to the crowd's relief.

DDK:

I think that rana counter really took all the wind out of The Anglo Luchador's sails here, Rich.

Richard Parker:

Typical. Man can't land the big one in PRIME, what else can I expect from him here?

DDK:

You're all over the place tonight, Rich.

Richard Parker:

Of course. You can't be an award-winning journalist by being predictable.

Harmen drags the Luchador to his feet by the back of his mask, teasing removing it again. The Luchador feebly swings his arms at Harmen to no avail and only a laughing reaction from one Neighborhood Lunatic. He whips the Luchador off the ropes, sidestepping him on the first ricochet and leapfrogging him on the second. The Luchador gets his wits about him enough and starts picking up steam, putting his arm out for a lariat...

...which Harmen ducks as if he expected that reaction, swinging around and planting the first Intense Champion of the ReVival shoulders first with a German suplex and bridge.

ONE!

TWO!

But the Luchador still has gas in the tank.

DDK:

Jack Harmen really playing with his food here.

Richard Parker:

I advise against that. You shouldn't play with your food, you should eat it! Related, I'm hungry, and good places near the arena that deliver stone crab claws, or maybe a Cuban sandwich?

DDK:

I'd say you're unbelievable, Rich, but Nick did tell me you might do something like this.

Harmen laughs as he gets up, waiting for the Luchador to follow suit. As he staggers to his feet, Harmen grabs The Luchador's arm, whipping him into the ropes again. This time, The Luchador shocks to attention as his back hits the ropes, and he grabs them, holding on. Harmen is shocked, so he runs towards The Luchador, which plays right into the hands of the Veteran of The ReVival, who drops down, low-bridging the top rope, and causing Harmen to tumble recklessly to the floor.

DDK:

He's not dead yet, Rich!

Richard Parker:

And for the first time since I started calling his matches, I'm not annoyed at that fact!

The man known to Chandler Tsonda simply as "Luch" beckons the crowd to fire up before he drops back, bounces off the far ropes, charges leaping over the near ropes, and...

Richard Parker:

DO A BARREL ROLL!

The Luchador crashes into Harmen with his signature tornillo to the delight of the Miami crowd. He tosses Harmen back into the ring and goes to cover him, but Harmen rolls out of the way frantically trying to avoid the cover. Finally, he rolls under the ropes, and when the Luchador chases him, he deftly grabs him by the head and stun-guns him on the middle rope by rolling out of the ring. The Luchador flies back, and Harmen scurries back into the ring, catching him as he gets back to his feet...

DDK:

COLD SNOW! Could be the beginning of the end!

Harmen goes to cover, but with a seeming jolt of energy from nowhere, The Luchador springs from his back enough to grab Harmen into a small package...

ONE!

TWO!

Harmen kicks out with a few milliseconds to spare, taken by the adrenaline The Luchador has left to pull out that move. Both men stagger to their feet and Harmen takes the first shot...

CHOP

The Luchador answers in kind!

CHOP

CHOP

CHOP

CHOP

The two veterans go back and forth to the roaring approval of the crowd. Harmen takes one last chop to his chest before shouting primally and winding up his right hand for one final chop, only to deftly poke the Luchador through his eyeholes with his left.

Richard Parker:

Unbelievable!

DDK:

What, that Harmen would resort to such tactics?

Richard Parker:

No! That someone is rope-a-doping The Anglo Luchador and I'm not enjoying it! C'MON TOWEL, FIGHT BACK YOU

PHILLY TRASHBAG!!!!

Harmen lines up his shot, leaping towards the ropes and hitting a still half-blinded Luchador with a Thesz Press, raining punches on him like Frank Costanza on the first Festivus. Elvis Nixon furiously counts, and when that doesn't work, he starts physically intervening, grabbing Harmen off the Luchador. Harmen does not appreciate this and begins berating Nixon, who doesn't take it lightly. The two are in full-on argument in the middle of the ring.

DDK:

Harmen is furious!

Richard Parker:

Normally this is where I'd say let them fight, but for some reason, I have changed my mind on Towel in this match and am siding with Nixon here.

No one in the ring or at the announce desk notices The Luchador. Some fans at ringside see him stir, but they keep their excitement tamped down, like football crowd when the home team is on offense.

One minute, Jack Harmen is histrionically arguing with the match official.

And the next.

DDK:

OH MY GOD, DID YOU SEE THE LUCHADOR RECOVER?

Richard Parker:

NO! NO! GET HIM!

He sneaks up behind Harmen. Rolls him up in the school-boy.

Nixon drops to the canvas.

ONE!!

TWO!!

Richard Parker:

WHY AREN'T YOU PULLING THE TIGHTS?

...

.....

.....

THREE!

DDK:

Because he didn't need to!

DING DING DING

The Luchador pops to his feet and rolls out of the ring, deciding not to wait for Elvis Nixon to raise his hands in victory. He backs towards the entry ramp, now being his turn to tap his index finger to his temple like another dimension's Perfect wrestler.

DDK:

Didn't expect this outcome outta nowhere! The Luchador had the perfect angle and Harmen just couldn't get his shoulders up!

Richard Parker:

Anything can happen in this sport, even THAT!

Harmen in the ring stands up and runs his hands through his hair. He reaches out and grabs Elvis' referee jersey, before calming and letting him go. He stares up to watch the Luchador exit, swearing vengeance all the while. Harmen slips out of the ring as the music dies down. He walks over to the timekeeper's table, and just stares down Darren Quimbey. He then quickly swats his drink off the desk, causing it to fly and spill all over before exiting ringside.

THE MULTIVERSE IS OUR OYSTER, SO LET'S GET CRACKIN'

We leave the fallout of Jack Harmen facing The Anglo Luchador and head to a vignette with old-timey sepia, along with a title card that reads "THE MASTERS OF THE MOSCOWVERSE"... before we fade to the sight of the men of the hour themselves, waving with smiles on their faces before Kenny Freeman begins to speak.

Kenny Freeman: Hello, PRIME and DEFIANCE fans! I'm Kenny Freeman...

Randall Schwartz: ...and I'm Randall Schwartz, and together we are...

Both: The Masters of the Moscowverse!

We get a thumbs up from the pair, before Kenny continues.

Kenny Freeman: As we gear up for one hell of a match tonight, we wanted to answer the question burning in everyone's minds...

Randall Schwartz: Well, how did we get here?

We cut to footage from ReVival 78, where the Masters received quite the invitation from the lab of Dr. Ayumi Sato for a "one-of-a-kind Halloween party." All the while, some awfully familiar music from the advent of nu metal starts playing in the background as The Entertainer does his best to, well, entertain with a singing voiceover.

Randall Schwartz: (*singing*) You think you're special...

From there, we go to DEFtv 227, where the Masters meet with the good Doctor to issue the challenge "across the Multiverse" (but really, here in the Kaseya Center in Miami) for the match we're about to witness tonight.

Randall Schwartz: (*singing*) You think you're special, ya do. I can see it in your...

A literal record scratch, as we see the Masters once again. This time, Kenny can be seen whispering in Randall's ear, motioning to a sheet of paper. Eventually, Kenny turns his attention to us as he points to the paper.

Kenny Freeman: Sorry folks, this here is a cease and desist letter saying we do NOT get to continue this song and dance. Dr. Sato wanted the secrets to the Multiverse, but she's gonna have to get her boys to pry it from our cold, wet hands!

Randall Schwartz: The Multiverse is OUR oyster, Punks, so let's get crackin'!

Teamwork makes the dream work, and these fine lads are looking to do just that as they do their special Moscowverse handshake before a star wipe takes us back to ringside!

MASTERS OF THE MOSCOWVERSE (PRIME) vs. THE ATOMIC PUNKS (DEFIANCE)

Darren Quimbey:

The following tag team bout is scheduled for one fall!

The lights immediately cut out, as a soft, high-pitched droning begins to fill the arena, and an ominous glow of saffron and neon illuminates the arena entrance. A deep, authoritative voice begins to proselytize through the speakers. As the narration begins, an image of the planet Earth, spinning in space, lights up the big screen.

*Spinning complacently in the darkness,
Covered and blinded by a blanket of little lives,
False security has lulled the madness of this world
Into a slumber.*

As the narration begins, an image of the planet Earth, spinning in space, lights up the big screen. The view zooms in, closer and closer to an area that coincidentally resembles Miami, Florida, before bringing us into view of a coastal metropolis, glowing in the night, windows alight as people move about in their lives.

Suddenly, black.

A single, disembodied eye opens in the darkness, wandering in either direction for a moment, before staring right into the screen, right into us.

*Wake up! An eye is upon you!
Staring straight down and keenly through.
Seeing all that you are,
And everything that you can **never** be.*

The screen now pulls away, revealing the eye to shine in the depths of space, not unlike a moon or sun, before panning downward in the direction of its gaze, back down towards the earth, now into a wrestling ring in the middle of an arena. The picture takes on a purple hue, as a single gloved hand reaches down and grabs the ring, lifting it up like a tiny playset.

*Yes, an eye is upon you, an eye ready to blink.
So face forward, with arms wide open, and mind reeling.
Your future has arrived.*

The screen follows the hand, making its way back to that ominous eye... and then pulls back revealing a face familiar to DEFIANCE's Faithful... framed by black hair, and adorned by a set of large goggles, the face of Dr. Ayumi Sato actually appears as a somewhat crude, black-and-white drawing, save for her familiar purple gloves, inside a horizontal oval. And on either side of this oval are words that form a logo; SATO LABS. The drawn scientist upon the logo slowly forms a wide, predatory grin, as the narration ends with one simple question.

Are you ready to go?

The house lights go dark, but that logo continues to shine on the Big Screen, as the shredding introductory chords of Powerman 5000's "Supernova Goes Pop" fill the space between molecules of air. Out of nowhere, a sole spotlight shines down upon the arena entrance, as DEFIANCE's resident Mad Science Queen stands before what appears to be a console of buttons and levers, her grin shining beneath her protective mask. She snaps the purple gloves on her hands and begins to tinker away at her workstation as the vocals begin.

*Are you the future, or are you the past?
Have you been chosen, or are you the last?*

DDK:

DEFIANCE's enigmatic and eccentric Mad Scientist herself, Dr. Ayumi Sato, is here at Immortals despite being attacked with FIRE at DEFIANCE RISING in Paris, and to see it on her face, she is NOT letting potential disfigurement get in the way of her excitement to take on the Masters of the Moscowverse!

As Keebler speaks, the background of our view shows the big screen lighting up with diagrams and charts full of data, alongside two figures familiar to DEFIANCE Faithful. Meanwhile, two large pneumatic tubes slowly rise from the floor on either side of Dr. Sato, pulsing with a foreboding, violent light.

*The message was sent, and it seems to unreal
'Cause now I'm made of plastic, wire, and steel
(AND STEEL!)*

Dr. Ayumi Sato:

HAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHAHA!!!

She raises her hand up high, before dramatically slamming a large button in the middle of her console with a dainty palm, causing the tubes to SHATTER and fall into shards on the floor, as an irradiated monster emerges from each one.

*FOLLOW FOR NOW AND FOLLOW FOR THIS
'CAUSE EVERYBODY FOLLOWS FOR NOTHING AT ALL
FOLLOW FOR NOW AND FOLLOW FOR THIS
'CAUSE EVERYBODY FOLLOWS FOR NOTHING AT ALL*

On her left, a wiry, mohawked little gremlin of a grappler, his eyes shining violently and keenly beneath the dark paint on his face. He looks into the camera lens silently, nodding with gusto as he begins to step forward.

*Because
Supernova, yeah, supernova,
Supernova goes pop*

On her right, a big, beefy, bearded monster of a man sporting a dark tri-hawk, already roaring like a boisterous beast, stepping out from the tube with jets of smoke spewing from his nostrils.

*Supernova, you think it's over but
The supernova don't stop*

Both men step forward, flanked from behind by their creator, who continues cackling all the way.

Darren Quimbey:

Making their way to the ring, representing DEFIANCE and accompanied to the ring by Dr. Ayumi Sato! From Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania, at a combined weight of four-hundred ninety pounds... FISSION! GIGATON! THEEEE! ATOMiiiiiiiiiiiiic... PUNKS!

*Can you explain just what you are,
'Cause I've never been this close to a star!
The message was sent, you know what to do
'Cause everyone needs to be someone, don't you?
(DON'T YOU?!)*

The Punks saunter down the aisle, led along by Dr. Sato as her eyes gleam beneath her burn mask and she rambles about her team's impending success. They make it to the ring and roll on in just in time for the next chorus and the lights to really go wild.

*FOLLOW FOR NOW AND FOLLOW FOR THIS
'CAUSE EVERYBODY FOLLOWS FOR NOTHING AT ALL
FOLLOW FOR NOW AND FOLLOW FOR THIS
'CAUSE EVERYBODY FOLLOWS FOR NOTHING AT ALL*

Fission and Gigaton stand on opposite turnbuckles, raising fists and letting loose their battle-ready roars amid a sea of strobes and spotlights, as Dr. Sato stands dead-center in the ring, pointing in either direction towards her men and cackling maniacally as the music dies down.

Darren Quimbey:

And their opponents...

A trap remix of the Soviet Anthem begins to play, signaling the arrival of the Masters of the Moscowverse to a bunch of booing from the crowd...about as much for the simple fact they're aligned with Ivan Stanislav as anything else, but it doesn't help that Kenny Freeman and Randall Schwartz come to the ring holding giant Soviet Union flags, waving them around to raise the ire of the crowd even further.

Darren Quimbey:

Representing the Red Army of PRIME, at a combined weight of 336 pounds...

Darren stops as a stagehand at ringside hands him a notecard, forcing the announcer to give him a cold stare before reading the card with a sigh while the Masters make their way toward the ring with Alexei walking close behind, rooting them on.

Darren Quimbey:

...and at a combined height of 11 feet and 7 inches, they are the team of Kenny Freeman and Randall Schwartz... the MASTERS OF THE MOSCOWVERSE!

The crowd boo the fact that some poor intern had to do math to figure that number out (or watch the two or three times the bit was done on PRIME programming) , as Kenny and Randall wave their flags one more time before handing them off to Alexei. The duo step into the ring, taunting the crowd some more as Alexei safely carries the Soviet flags to the back.

Fission stands pat at his team's corner, his hands on his hips and a nonplussed expression on his painted face as Hector Navarro starts the pre-match preparations. He looks to his manager, and then to his partner, nodding towards each one before sauntering to the center of the ring. Kenny Freeman follows, stepping closer to Fission and taking on a look of swagger and confidence as Fission simply stares at him, unamused. Randall Schwartz inexplicably tries to start a fight with Gigaton, who pays him no mind as the bell sounds off to get the match started!

DING DING

After some discussion on the Masters' side we see Randall step into the ring, motioning toward Gigaton as if he wants to face him first. After some hesitation, the big man obliges... and Randall immediately slaps Kenny on the shoulder for the tag! The crowd boos and Kenny just stares at The Entertainer, who gives his old friend a round of applause shouting "You got this, Kenny!"

Kenny, for his part, shakes his head and tags Randall back in as Fission steps back into the ring, solidifying the starting competitors for this match. Randall stares at Kenny, and then at Fission, before begging the latter not to beat him up too badly.

DDK:

Now, what is Randall trying to do here, Richard?

Richard Parker:

He's throwing the Punks off their game at the very jump, Keebler! Bait and switch for days, that's the Randall

Schwartz way.

Fission just scoffs and rushes in to tie up with Randall, easily outmaneuvering the Entertainer and getting behind him with a hammerlock, letting it cinch in for a moment before transitioning into a side headlock... with a little mustard on it, as Randall is visibly writhing from. Schwartz gets back to his feet, waving off his opponent before making the tag to Kenny... who seems much more willing to tango with Fission, leading into a collar and elbow tie up. Fission sends Freeman to the ropes, with a leap frog over the Red Army's junior member followed by a dropkick that sends Kenny to the mat. Freeman rolls out of the ring, opting for a breather... causing the Gamma Grappler to look at Schwartz and tilt his head quickly to the side, as if to say "get in here."

The distraction allows Kenny to slide back into the ring behind Fission, cinching in a side headlock with a smile on his face... which disappears real damn quick, as Fission counters with a backdrop suplex! Kenny is struggling to get to his feet, ducking a right hand by Fission to land some kicks before hitting the ropes. He ducks a clothesline before rebounding for a cross body, sending the Gamma Grappler to the mat for a pin... but Fission rolls through, cradling Freeman instead! Navarro with the count!

ONE!

T--NO!

Kenny manages to kick out, taken aback as both men rise to their feet for a standoff and a subsequent respectful round of applause from the crowd.

DDK:

Fission is clearly dominating this exchange!

Richard Parker:

That's easy to say, because Duke Nukem over there is forcing Kenny Freeman to try!

Kenny, almost shocked at the response from the crowd, offers a handshake to Fission... but the hesitation from the Gamma Grappler allows Freeman an opening for a cheap shot, much to the chagrin of the fans. He sends Fission to the corner for some mounted punches until the ref intervenes. Kenny backs away from the corner, but only long enough to charge at his opponent once more... but Fission dodges at the last second, forcing Freeman to collide with the turnbuckle! Fission sees an opening, and locks up behind Freeman, taking him to the mat with a tight O'Connor roll! Hector Navarro drops in for the count...

ONE!

But Kenny manages to kick out at one! Fission takes a moment to nod at Freeman, before smiling and walking to his corner and tagging in Big Gig himself. The monstrous Gigaton, with noticeably taped ribs beneath his singlet, slowly but forcefully steps into the ring, and lets out a loud roar that gets the crowd buzzing!

Kenny takes a good, long look at the big man as he slowly backs toward his corner... and slaps Randall on the shoulder for the tag! Randall looks distraught as his friend pulls him into the ring to face his fears.

Kenny Freeman:

Entertainer, you got this!

With that, Kenny steps onto the apron as Randall just glares at Kenny before turning his attention to Gigaton...

WHAFF!

...who flattens him with a shoulder tackle! The larger of the Atomic Punks grins from ear to ear as he slaps his own shoulder and roars defiantly! He leans down towards Randall, wincing as he grabs him by the scruff and lifts him to his feet, before scooping him up and slamming him back down onto the mat! Big Gig looks Randall in the eye and taunts

the Entertainer with a hearty...

Gigaton:

ENTERTAINER. YOU. GOT THIS.

The big man then follows up with a hard elbowdrop to the chest that makes The Entertainer's body kick up on impact, as Gigaton leans in for the cover!

ONE!

TW-

Randall kicks out, and Gigaton looks into the camera with a smirk and a shrug as he turns back to his erstwhile opponent. Schwartz slowly rises to a standing position, looking more than a little wobbly as he turns his attention to the Masters corner. We see Kenny reaching out to The Entertainer, who gives a nod as he walks over to make the tag... but Kenny just shakes his hand.

Kenny Freeman:

Good job out there, bud. I'm proud of you. Go get 'em.

Randall is just gobsmacked by this, until the ref points to the tag rope that's in Kenny's hand! Kenny looks down, his eyes widening when he realizes that indeed, he's just tagged himself in.

DDK:

Did... Did Kenny forget how tag team matches work?

Richard Parker:

Keebler, that's just a part of the game plan from the Masters. The, uh... Master Plan, if you will.

DDK:

Oh, brother.

Randall steps onto the apron as Kenny trades places. He circles the mat, trying to size up Gigaton while Schwartz starts clapping his hands from the corner, either trying to start a very long chant or just to sing for his comrade.

Randall Schwartz:

Kenny Freeman, you're the best wrestler... you're the bestler... better than all the wrestlers!

Kenny pays his friend no mind as he hits the ropes, ducking a clothesline from the big man before leaping off for a cross body--but he gets caught in mid-air by Gigaton, who drops him down hard to the canvas! The crowd cheers in approval as Kenny slowly builds to a vertical base.

This doesn't last long as Gigaton lands a series of chops to wear Kenny down. Each one seems to rattle Freeman harder than the last, before a blistering FIFTH one manages to knock Freeman into the ropes. The big man manages to whip Freeman across the ring, and on the rebound he lunges forward with a diving shoulderblock, but as he rolls onto the mat, he clutches his side and grimaces in pain! He rolls over to cover Freeman, and referee Hector Navarro rushes in for the cover!

ONE!

TWO!

But Kenny manages to kick out! The camera zooms in on Gigaton, who grimaces in pain and shakes his head in frustration, something Kenny notices as he gets to his feet. With the big man still struggling to get back up, Freeman hits the ropes before landing a PK square in the back. He brings Gigaton back up to a standing position, whipping him

toward the corner before charging for a corner splash... but Gigaton dodges at the last second, forcing Freeman to collide with the turnbuckle instead!

Gigaton sends the Red Army's junior member to the opposite corner with a hammer throw, the impact forcing Freeman to drop to the mat as Fission tags in. Kenny, feeling a lot more confident than moments ago, charges at the Gamma Grappler... who catches him with a drop toe hold that makes Kenny fall face first onto the mat.

DDK:

Kenny Freeman really taking a beating out here from the technician of the Atomic Punks!

Richard Parker:

The thing about ol' Kenny is, he's really good at taking these beatings and getting back up.

Fission keeps his eye on the rising Freeman, cinching in a side headlock that Kenny wriggles free from before sending Fission to the ropes. Kenny leapfrogs over the Gamma Grappler, waiting for a hip toss as Fission comes back around... only to be met with a floatover into a swinging neckbreaker! Fission isn't finished, however, bringing Freeman back to his feet as he looks for another backdrop suplex.

He sends Kenny up and over... but Freeman lands on his feet! Fission turns around just in time to take a dropkick, forcing him to the canvas as Kenny taps his temple to boast about his smarts. In fact, he's feeling so confident that he hits the ropes for speed, taking a pause right at the head of Fission to do one of those dance moves the video games are doing these days.

Maybe the old Conor Fuse would know about it... but what matters here is that Kenny connects with a leg drop right across the chest of the Gamma Grappler!

Richard Parker:

Oh my god, he nailed Fission with the Freeman Follower! It could well be over, Keebler!

DDK:

Looks like Kenny heard you, Richard!

Kenny goes for the cover as Navarro drops to make the count official!

ONE!

TWO!

NO!

Kenny... lifts the head and shoulders of Gamma up from the mat!? He's shaking his head at the ref, clearly far from finishing the story here.

DDK:

Has Kenny lost his absolute mind here, Richard!?

Richard Parker:

No one really knows what is going on in the recesses of Kenny Freeman's mind except Kenny, maybe Randall, and maaaaybe Alexei Ruslan.

Kenny brings Fission to the Masters corner, tagging in Randall for a double-team until Navarro intervenes. Kenny steps back onto the apron as Schwartz gives out to the referee. Randall pulls Fission out of the corner for a snapmare, a rare sight to behold as Randall opts to show he DID actually attend a wrestling seminar or two in his day.

He decides not to show off too much of his technical prowess, however, quickly tagging Kenny back in to continue the

beatdown. It gets to be too much for Gigaton, who rushes into the ring to try and stop this... but that just brings the ref over to keep Big Gig in line, telling him to get back to the corner as the Masters take advantage of the distraction with some swift stomps. Randall returns to the apron as Kenny brings Fission back to his feet for a side headlock takeover, sending the Gamma Grappler down hard.

Richard Parker:

See that, Keebler? Everything's going according to plan, and nothing can go wrong.

Fission starts to rise to his feet as Kenny eggs him on. The two start throwing strikes back and forth, starting out with some hard lefts and rights before it heads into kick territory. Fission takes control with a boot to the midsection, followed by a snap DDT.

Richard Parker:

Ah man, it all went wrong.

DDK:

Fission is back in the swing of this!

He brings Freeman back up, but this time it's Kenny taking the Gamma Grappler on a one-way ticket to the Suplex Annex with a series of vertical suplexes... ending on the third with authority! Kenny rises to his feet, looking over to Randall with a nod of approval as he makes the tag.

The Entertainer sees an opening as he drops down behind the Gamma Grappler, showing off a rare move from his arsenal... the dreaded chinlock. Years from now, someone will see this move on the Internet and sing his praises when reviewing this match on some social media platform.

It will be a thing of beauty. T-shirts will be made celebrating it.

But nothing lasts forever, as Fission manages to fight back to his feet... hoisting Randall up for a backdrop suplex!

THUD!

Down goes Schwartz, as Fission crawls to his corner...and makes the tag to Gigaton!

RAAAAAAAAAAH!

Randall is terrified, backing toward his corner before turning his attention to Kenny with a scowl on his face.

Randall Schwartz:

What the hell is this? Is this your deal, Freeman? That's why this team is in the damn shape that it is, because of...

His voice trails off as he stops to think about it, shaking his head with a sigh before turning back around. He points to the big man standing across the ring from him, shouting for all to hear.

Randall Schwartz:

YOU! I'm gonna harpoon your ass!

Randall runs towards Gigaton, who is in position to send him up and over with a back body drop. Schwartz hops up and over, rolling beneath the big man and attempting to complete the sunset flip, but it is definitely a struggle, as Randall can only kick and flail his legs as Big Gig looks unimpressed.

...then, with a hop, the big man's weight comes crashing down on Randall's head, knees on either side of his skull and kneeling on his chest! Gigaton immediately rushes back up and bounces off the ropes, rebounding towards the prone Schwartz...

WHAM!

DDK:

ATOMIC SPLASH MISSES! GIGATON HAD RANDALL SCHWARTZ DEAD TO RIGHTS, BUT AT THE LAST SECOND, THE ENTERTAINER GOT OUT OF THE WAY OF THE 310-POUND BIG MAN!

And sure enough, Randall slowly rises to his feet as Gigaton's eyes squeeze shut in agony, blood starting to trickle from his mouth as he clutches his side! At ringside, Dr. Sato is apoplectic, screaming in concern for her team, as Randall takes advantage of the situation and rolls the big man up tight!

ONE!

TWO!

Fission tries to rush in and break up the fall but Kenny Freeman cuts him off and edges him back to the ropes!

THREE!!!

DING DING DING

Richard Parker:

By god, it's the most dangerous move in all of professional wrestling! Randall Schwartz just pinned a behemoth with the Schwartz Special, and The Entertainer is gonna be absolutely insufferable about it for the rest of the year!

DDK:

The Masters pick up a big win here over the Atomic Punks... but something's up with Gigaton in the ring, and it doesn't look good.

Randall slowly rises to a kneeling position as Hector Navarro raises his hand, and Freeman rushes in to embrace him in excitement. Meanwhile, Gigaton sits on the mat, growling in pain as Dr. Sato and Fission check in on him and try to get him to his feet. The big man is struggling and looks very hurt.

REVEREND ERIK BLACK (DEFIANCE) vs. BLAZE CLAYMORE (PRIME)

DDK:

And after that thrilling and thought-provoking segment, we're getting right back into the action, ladies and gentlemen! Next up on this historic event, DEFIANCE's own wolf in goat's clothing, Reverend Erik Black, takes on Blaze Claymore of PRIME!

Richard Parker:

Yeah, the dolt who just recently lost the Alias Championship to a moron who barely qualifies as a wrestler!

The face-off graphic flashes up over the screen. The image of Claymore flashes finger-guns and grins confidently from behind a set of red-tinted sunglasses. The image of Reverend Black clutches a "Holey Bibble" while oddly leering up to the heavens. The tale of the tape separates them.

DDK:

Well... while I've not seen him in action firsthand, I can't overlook Claymore's body of work both in PRIME and SHOOT. My question for you, Rich, is--

Richard Parker:

Rich-ARD, you sandwich cookie-making rube! You haven't earned the right to refer to me by my hypercalcemia!

DDK:

Do you mean 'hypocorism?'

Richard Parker:

Whatever!

DDK:

Hmph... in any case, let's send it over to PRIME's own Vince-nt Howard for the introductions!

The house lights come down, leaving the arena dark.

Vince Howard:

Ladies and gentlemen... the following singles competition is scheduled for one fall. Introducing first, representing DEFIANCE Wrestling... he hails from Indianapolis, Indiana, United States, and weighs in at two-hundred and five pounds. The First Church of His Heavenly Society asks that you please welcome... REVEREND... ERIK... BLACK...

A booming VOICE projects itself through the PA system.

"In the beginning... GAWD created the HEAVENS... and the WRESTLING RING!"

♪ "Ode to Joy" by Marcin Jakubek ♪

The opening notes to Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, as played from an electric guitar, begin to lilt through the arena.

"But the RING was EMPTY and VOID... and DOPE-NESS covered the CANVAS, while the SPIRIT of the LOARD hovered over the MAT! Like a HEAVENLY HELICOPTER!!"

A spotlight hits the stage. The Reverend Erik Black steps out of the darkness and into the LIGHT, looking resplendent in an ivory white clergy robe with a glittering golden cross embroidered across the front.

Rev. Erik Black:

YYYEEEEEEAAAAHHHHH!!!

Grinning ear to ear, the Sacred Lamb preaches through a headset mic.

Rev. Erik Black:

“So GAWD looked around, and you know what he said? He said... ‘LLLLLET THURRR BEEEE LAWW-IIIIGHT!’”

BOOM!!

A mix of white pyros and floodlights EXPLODE from behind Reverend Black, washing out the arena in blinding white light!

Rev. Erik Black:

“And BOY HOWDY, there was some LIGHT!!” YYYYYEEEEAAAAAHHHHH!!!

Richard Parker:

AARRGH, I’M BLIND, KEEBLER!

DDK:

SORRY, I PROBABLY SHOULD HAVE WARNED YOU!!

Rev. Erik Black:

YYYYEEEEAAAAAHHHHH!!!

The stage lights come up, revealing a vast white-robed GOSPEL CHOIR, dancing, clapping, and giving lyrics to Martin Jacubek’s rendition of ol’ Ludvig van’s “Ode to Joy”.

Rev. Erik Black:

“And GAWD saw that the LIGHT was GOOD!! And so he SEPARATED the LIGHT from the DOPE-NESS!!”

The choir members all wear forced smiles and eyes that scream “help me”, as though they were hostages trying to signal to the audience that there was an active bomb hiding beneath the risers they’re dancing on.

Rev. Erik Black:

YYYYEEEEAAAAAHHHHH!!!

“BOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!”

Black comes charging down the rampway to the ring, energetically pumping a fist over his head.

Rev. Erik Black:

“AND THEN the LOAD GAWD named the LIGHT, ‘REVEREND ERIK BLACK!’” YYYYYEEEEAAAAAHHHHH!!!

“BOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!”

He reaches ringside, and runs a full loop around the ring.

Rev. Erik Black:

“AND THEN HE NAMED THE DOPE-NESS, ‘BLAAAYZE CLAAAYMOORRE!’” YYYYYEEEEAAAAAHHHHH!!!

“BOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!”

He hops to the apron and turns to the crowd.

Rev. Erik Black:

“AND THERE WAS EVENING!! AND THERE WAS MORNING!! AND THERE WAS NIGHT AND NOON AND BEETLEJUICE PANTS DUSK AS WELL!!

DDK:

Did he just say "Beetlejuice pants"?

Richard Parker:

You had to have been there, Keebler.

The Reverend steps through the ropes and posts himself up on the turnbuckle, continuing to preach.

Rev. Erik Black:

"AND IT WAS THE FIRST DAY! THE FIRST DAY OF LOARD GAAWWD'S GLORY!" SEGAGENESIS BOOK ONE, VERSES ONE THROUGH FIVE!!

Black hops off the turnbuckles, runs to the opposite end of the ring, and does the same thing.

Rev. Erik Black:

PRAISE JAYZUS!! LOARD HALLELUJAH!! YYYEEEEEEAAAAAHHHHH!!!

"BOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!"

He runs to the third corner...

Rev. Erik Black:

YYYEEEEEEAAAAAHHHHH!!!

"BOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!"

...as well as the fourth and final.

Rev. Erik Black:

YYYEEEEEEAAAAAHHHHH!!!

"BOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!"

DDK:

One of DEFIANCE Wrestling most notorious manipulators and schemers! This past year, our company has watched him usurp Dr. Ned Reform's Honor Society, eventually reshaping it into his own "Heavenly Society" after "seeing the light", so to speak.

Richard Parker:

Oh, that ain't nothing! Earlier this year, he actually tried to blow up a PRIME event with a death ray!

DDK:

Oof, really?

Richard Parker:

But that was before the man found the light of JAYZUS. Once born again, anyone can be forgiven of the sins of their past!

DDK:

Right... all is forgiven. Easy as that, huh? Well in any case, Erik Black has proven himself to be as unpredictable as he is shameless. He has proven time and time again that there is no weakness he won't take advantage of, and no mistake he won't capitalize on, so long as he gets ahead.

Richard Parker:

That's what separates the winners from the losers, Keebler! Don't forget that Reverend Black was once a Universal Champion!

DDK:

Yes, so I've heard... but that was when he was someone who was far removed from the so-called man of the cloth standing the ring

The lights in the arena go pitch black.

Then the sound of waves. Deep, rumbling, almost threatening. The bass thrums through the arena like a heartbeat struggling to find its rhythm.

On the center scoreboard, a single pinpoint of white light appears. It's small at first, but then begins to grow until it fills the screen and begins to circle from screen to screen – one rotation, then two - the second slower, flickering - then it cuts out.

A pause. A heartbeat.

CHANGE YOUR HEART OR DIE!

♪ “Change Your Heart or Die” by The Midnight ♪

A singular explosion of white light and sound - every light in the arena flashing on simultaneously. It's blinding. Overwhelming.

A boss guitar riff begins to play as, stepping out from the light is Blaze Claymore dressed in, well, BLAZING white attire. A sleeveless white duster with dark red lining and trim, and a hem just inches from the floor. The jacket frames white silk pants and a white-laced boots with red laces and soles.

Vince Howard:

ANNNNNNND his opponent! Hailing from Montevideo, Minnesota, standing at 6'1 and weighing 180 pounds he is THE LIGHTHOUSE ... BLAAAAAAZE CLAYMORE.

FIRE! TICKING LIKE A TIMEBOMB!

A shot of red fireworks explodes behind Blaze as he locks eyes with his opponent, pausing and watching, steeling himself before making his way down toward the ring.

FIRE! BURNING LIKE NAPALM!

Another explosion, this time a set of white lights along the rampway, as Claymore begins his descent, a look of determination in his eyes as the camera follows from behind, revealing an embroidered “BLAZE” on the back of his jacket in the shape of a lighthouse with the “E” tipped on its side and looking like a crown with each point jutting outward like beams of light.

FIRE! STANDING AT THE CROSSROADS! HOW WILL YOU SURVIVE!?

The punctuated silence of the song finally allows the roar of the crowd to be heard as Blaze removes his jacket and steps into the ring, finding his corner.

He looks at Erik a final time, his opponent standing with crossed arms and a smug look on his face, before turning to the crowd and raising a fist into the air.

CHANGE YOUR HEART OR DIE....

Rev. Erik Black:

YYYYEEEEAAAAAHHHHH!!!

“BOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!”

A surprised Blaze turns back to find Black has grabbed a microphone and has a hand raised in prayer toward a now booing crowd.

Rev. Erik Black:

BROTHERS and SISTERS and FATHERS and MOTHERS and SONS and UNCLES and GRANDPAPPIES and THIRD COUSINS... allow me to ASK that we BOW OUR HEADS IN PRAYER for this FALSE PRO-FATE... BLASÉ CRY-MORRRE!!

“BOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!”

Black shuts his eyes and bows his head. Blaze looks at the official, confused, then back to his opponent with disgust.

Rev. Erik Black:

OOO LOARD! Please... FORGIVE ME, LOARD! FORGIVE ME for what I’m about to DO to this POOR, MISGOTTEN SOUL that stands before me!

Richard Parker:

Praise be!

DDK:

Don’t encourage him.

Referee Benny Doyle crosses his arms, unamused, as Black begins to walk the edge of the ring, circling Black.

Rev. Erik Black:

He dares CALL HIMSELF, o LOARD, the LIGHTHOUSE, but between YOU and ME, LOARD, he should be calling himself the outhouse, because his so-called LIGHT is only FOUL WASTE and OFFAL!

“BOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!”

Rev. Erik Black:

The FALSE LIGHT of this LIGHTHOUSE, LOARD, will only lead the SHIPS sailing YOUR GAWDLY OCEANS through WICKED DARKNESS to the ROCKS that SPELL THEIR DOOM! And AS YOU KNOW, in your INFINITE WISDOM, O LOARD, that this GAWDLY SPORT OF WRASSLIN’, O LOARD, needs FEWER purveyors of false hope and dreams!

“BOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!”

Rev. Erik Black:

So I ASK of you, O LOARD -- I BEG! -- I PLEAD!! -- as I INVOKED your HOLEY WILL upon this SACRED SQUARED CIRCLE... let his PAIN give him VISION! Let his TORMENT give him WISDOM! Let his FAILURE here tonight give him... YOUR SALVATION!!

“BOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!”

Rev. Erik Black:

YYYEEEEEEAAAAAHHHHH!!!

“BOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!”

Rev. Erik Black:

YYYEEEEEEAAAAAHHHHH!!!

"BOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!"

Rev. Erik Black:

JAAAYYYZZUSS BE PRAISED!! HALLELUJA, O LOARD!! GAWD IS GOOD!! GAWWD IS GREAT!! GAWWD LET'S ME OBLITERATE!! AMEN!! AAMEENN!! AAAAAAYYYY--*BLEHGKK!!*

THUMP!

Blaze Claymore makes his move, jumping on the back of the Reverend and causing him to flail about before dropping his microphone.

DING DING

We're finally underway and Blaze sets to work beating the life out of Erik Black!

The Reverend screams in tongues as he eventually manages to dislodge the gangly but surprisingly strong and stubborn Claymore!

DDK:

Blaze is off of Black for now, but I don't think Black is going to wait to catch his breath! He goes for the lockup!

The two competitors are now back-to-back as the man once known as "The Escape Artist" hooks his arms underneath Blaze's arms and drops him to the mat with a quick, desperate, pin!

Doyle drops and can't even get a hand down before Blaze rolls out of the attempt and begins to circle the Reverend.

Richard Parker:

Damn.

DDK:

Your boy may find that whether he's "The Reverend" or "Rezin" - Erik Black will do anything to survive - just like we saw a couple weeks ago in his fight with Ned Reform.

Richard Parker:

This jamoke ain't my "boy." I'd be more than happy to see Black put Blaze in his place. "Wahhh Max Kael tortured me. Wahhh my girlfriend gaslit me. Wahhh I have self respect now." Pitiful.

The Reverend holds up his hands, seemingly trying to apologize to Blaze, but only makes it easier for The Lighthouse to kick his opponent squarely in the gut!

Richard Parker:

Low blow!

DDK:

That was above the belt, Richard! Oooh! But that one wasn't!

The Reverend, falling to his knees, swings an arm upward and connects with Blaze's crotch, sending him down as well.

Richard Parker:

Blaze's ding dong and dingle berries have been smacked around so much lately it's gotta just be one big callus down there.

DDK:

Now Black has his arm on Blaze's shoulder, trying to push himself up.

Richard Parker:

He's just trying to save his soul, DDK!

DDK:

CLOTHESLINE from Claymore! The Lighthouse uses a free arm to swipe at the Reverend's neck and connects!

Black grabs at his throat, falling backwards, as Blaze gingerly gets up and gets to work stomping away at his prone opponent! After a few hits, Black rolls away but Blaze is quick to follow.

DDK:

The former Escape Artist is trying to get away, but he doesn't get far! Claymore gets him up... and a stiff DDT drops Reverend Black on his head!

Richard Parker:

LOARD have MERCY!

DDK:

Blaze hooks the leg for the pin!

One!

Two!

And Black gets the shoulder up!

Both competitors quickly push themselves to their feet. Reverend Black immediately throws a hand into the air and nods to Blaze.

DDK:

Looks like Reverend Black is looking for the test of strength here!

After a moment's deliberation, Claymore reaches up and accepts the hand...

...and immediately twists the hell out of it.

Rev. Erik Black:

AAHHH!!

DDK:

Not quite what he had in mind, as Blaze wrings the arm!

Richard Parker:

Absolute lack of gamesmanship from Claymore, if you ask me!

The Lighthouse twists the arm behind Black's back. The Sacred Lamb quickly backs himself into the ropes to make the breaks. Claymore quickly tries to take his head off with a sudden LARIAT, but the Reverend DUCKS at the last second and slips out under the bottom rope.

DDK:

And the Reverend takes a powder, as the offense of Blaze Claymore proves to be too much!

Richard Parker:

He had no choice, Keebler! Your stupid DEFIANCE ref was apparently never trained to look out for rope breaks!

Referee Benny Doyle begins the ten count while Reverend Black paces around on the ringside floor, rubbing his head

and looking vexed with the situation. Seeing the chance to press his advantage, Claymore decides to run himself into the ropes.

DDK:

Hold on... Blaze Claymore, going into motion! He's not in any mood to wait around here!

Black looks to the ring in time to see Blaze coming right at him and vaulting into the air.

Rev. Erik Black:

AAAHH!!

The Reverend hits the deck to avoid the oncoming dive...

...only instead of leaping out of the ring, Claymore smoothly rolls over the ropes to the apron and quietly hops to the floor, behind Black.

DDK:

Oh no, he PSYCHED HIM OUT!

The confused Reverend Black rises up to his knees and peeks cautiously back into the ring, not realizing his opponent is directly behind him.

Richard Parker:

Turn around, Rev!

DDK:

Claymore with the full nelson from behind... SNAP DRAGON SUPLEX on the floor!

"RRRRRAAAAAAAAAAHHHH!!!"

Black ragdolls around ringside like a human pinball, bouncing from floor, to apron, to barricade, to post, before finally bonking out onto the floor. Claymore pops to his feet and points to the crowd, feeding off their energy. He flashes a thumbs up, which draws another cheer.

"RRRRRAAAAAAAAAAHHHH!!!"

DDK:

Some smart thinking from "The Lighthouse" Blaze Claymore, who is in full control of this match!

Richard Parker:

That was a dirty tactic if I've ever seen one! Probably a sin, too! I've seen this guy flounder in PRIME for almost a year and he's never landed so much as a competent haymaker let alone a suplex like that. He's clearly possessed by the DEBBIL!

Blaze pulls the Reverend off the floor and rolls him in under the ropes. He slides in after him and quickly hooks the legs.

DDK:

Here's Blaze Claymore going for the pin!

One!

Two!

No! The Reverend Black kicks out!

Richard Parker:

Thank you, JAYZUS!

Reverend Black is still lost in a fog as he scrambles back to his feet, only to walk straight into a fireman's carry from Blaze that curls him to the mat. Claymore quickly slaps on a chinlock while Black is still seated, but the Reverend quickly works his way to his feet.

DDK:

Blaze trying to keep Black in his grasp... but the Reverend instead stamps down on a foot and pegs an elbow into the ribs to break free!

Richard Parker:

Now's his chance!

Black goes into motion, hitting the ropes and leapfrogging a back body drop attempt by Blaze on his way across the ring. Claymore quickly spins around as Black hits the opposite ropes, and puts him in the air as he returns for a pop-up--

DDK:

HURRICANRANA! Claymore's pop-up powerbomb was countered

Richard Parker:

Brilliant reversal!

DDK:

Reverend Black has Claymore's shoulders on the mat!

One!

Two!

NO! Blaze ROLLS FORWARD!

Richard Parker:

PLAGIARIST! MOVE THIEF!

DDK:

Double-leg cradle on Black!

One!

Two!

KICKOUT!

Both competitors scramble to their feet, clearly gassed but neither one wanting to be the one to lose the rhythm — but that is exactly what happens as Reverend Black catches Claymore off guard with a low kick!

Black doubles Blaze over and begins landing plenty of overhead punches to the back of his head and neck to keep him wobbling on rubber legs.

DDK:

It's Reverend Black trying to build on his momentum now, taking Blaze by the hair and tossing him into the corner!

Richard Parker:

Now why do you gotta put it like that? He was clearly grabbing him by the head, but the stupid hair got in the way!

Claymore's arms drape over the top set of ropes as he hangs in the corner, gathering his wits. Black crosses the ring to the opposite turnbuckle and raises a HAND up to the heavens!

Rev. Erik Black:

YYYYEEEEEEEEAAAAHHHHH!!!

"BOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!"

Richard Parker:

YYEEAAHH!!

DDK:

Oh please...

The Sacred Lamb streaks across the ring and LAUNCHES himself into a graceful Stinger splash.

Rev. Erik Black:

YYYYEEEEEEEEAAAAHHHHH!!!

...and Claymore DIVES OUT OF THE WAY!

Rev. Erik Black:

BLEHGK!!

DDK:

REVEREND BLACK EATS THE TURNBUCKLE!

Black clutches his face as he reels off the top turnbuckle, turning right into the waiting arms of Blaze Claymore, but manages to duck...

Richard Parker:

YES!

...but not in time...

Richard Parker:

NO!

The Lighthouse scoops Black up by his waist, spins and then drops to his knees, putting all of his weight on the Reverend's neck!

DDK:

WHEELBARROW TOMBSTONE PILEDRIVER by "The LIGHTHOUSE" BLAZE CLAYMORE!! That's a new addition to his moveset; I believe he calls it the Deep End Driver.

Richard Parker:

He's off the deep end, alright! Come on Reverend!

Reverend Black bounces off the impact like a pogo stick, finally falling over onto his back while still convulsing. Blaze sprawls across his chest.

DDK:

Claymore with the pin! Could that be it?

One!

TWO!

NO!! Black kicked out!

Richard Parker:

Did his best Lazarus impression there!

Claymore looks to the official in disbelief, who reaffirms his count by holding up two fingers.

Blaze doesn't waste time getting back to work, pulling Black to his feet and whipping him into the corner. The Reverend connects hard with the turnbuckles, immediately dropping him into a seated position.

DDK:

Blaze Claymore has Black in his sights!

Richard Parker:

He better not be thinking what I'm thinking!

DDK:

Are you thinking of the BLOCKBUSTER, Richard?

Richard Parker:

...I was thinking of tacos, actually, but that's just as bad!

Claymore runs to the opposite corner and points to the crowd, earning a supportive pop before he charges across the ring...

DDK:

NO!! Reverend Black slips to the outside to avoid the Blockbuster!

Richard Parker:

And Blaze just crotched himself on the bottom turnbuckle! Two balls, no strikes!

Instinctively, Claymore rolls to the outside, clutching his continually-abused nether regions. Then he spots Reverend Black around the other side of the post, attempting to crawl under the ring.

DDK:

Where is Reverend Black going?!

Richard Parker:

Answering the call, Keebler! The LOARD works in mysterious ways!

Still steaming from the pain in his loins, Blaze Claymore walks around to where Black's feet are about to disappear beneath the apron, grabs him by the ankle, and yanks him out.

DDK:

The former "Escape Artist" isn't getting away on Claymore's watch!

Blaze pulls the Reverend out the rest of the way and lifts him back to his feet. But as soon as he's up, Black spins around and empties a flash of mysterious liquid into the face of Claymore!

Rev. Erik Black:

HA HAAAA, TAKE my HOLY WATER, SINNER!

The “holy” water harmlessly splashes the Lighthouse’s face causing an “are you serious right now?” exaggerated blink as Claymore is now soaked and even more furious than he was before.

Rev. Erik Black:

Shucks... thought more would happen there... oh well--YAAHH!!

DDK:

Black GOUGES CLAYMORE’S EYES!!

A screaming Claymore staggers away, hands covering his face.

Richard Parker:

That holy water is burning his face!

DDK:

That’s not what happened, Richard!

The Reverend Black looks up to the heavens, gesturing to the vision-afflicted Blaze.

Rev. Erik Black:

O LOARD... this POOR SOUL has been stricken BLIND for his WICKED WAYS!!

Black grabs Claymore by the back of the head and runs his face into the post.

Rev. Erik Black:

Let’s HELP HIM to SEE the LIGHT, O LOARD!!

Black pulls Claymore off the floor, rolls him back into the ring, and slides in after him.

DDK:

Reverend Black looks to finally be in control of the action here!

Richard Parker:

The holy powerz of GAWD are finally coming through for him!

While Blaze pushes himself off the mat, Reverend Black stays in his blindspot, extending his arms and looking up to the heavens again.

Rev. Erik Black:

HELP ME to RAISE HIM to YOUR LOVE and GLORY, O LOARD...

As soon as Claymore is back on his feet, the Reverend pounces from behind and kicks out his legs to send him back to the mat!

Rev. Erik Black:

...by BRINGING HIM LOWWW!!

Black goes back around behind Claymore as the Lighthouse pushes himself on the mat again.

DDK:

The Reverend is measuring up Blaze Claymore!

Richard Parker:

Looks ready to send him to his maker!

The Reverend folds his hands as he looks skyward again.

Rev. Erik Black:

HELP ME to BLESS this BEGGAR'S FACE, O LOARD...

Blaze rises up the rest of the way. Black twirls into the motion of a spinning heel kick.

Rev. Erik Black:

...with the HEEL of ANGLES, O LOARD!!

DDK:

CLAYMORE DUCKS THE HEEL KICK!

Rev. Erik Black:

Ohhh SHUCKS!

Claymore catches Black flat-footed and begins lighting him with a flurry of forearms and fists!

DDK:

Blaze is landing a strike for every one of the 10,000 lakes in his home state of Minnesota right now, Richard! Reverend Black never expected the tables to turn so quickly, but it serves him right for calling out his moves!

Richard Parker:

You can't fault a man for giving a bit of love to the LOARD while he carries out his will!

Black blubbers and froths as Claymore impacts his face repeatedly, eventually backing him into the ropes and whipping him into motion. The Lighthouse hurries to the center of the ring for when the Sacred Lamb rebounds back to him.

Unfortunately, the last thing he expects is the Reverend hopping into the ropes and vaulting himself backward into a high-angle moonsault.

Rev. Erik Black:

JAAAYYZUSSS!!

DDK:

SPRINGBOARD MOONSAULT lays out Blaze Claymore flat on his back! And Reverend Black hooks the legs!

ONE!

TWO!

NO!

Rev. Erik Black:

WHAAT?!

Reverend Black bolts to his feet and stares at Benny Doyle as though the official just slapped him in the face. Doyle stands his ground, holding up two fingers.

DDK:

Close, but no cigar!

Richard Parker:

Are these DEFIANCE referees prescribed with valium, or what? That was the slowest count I've ever seen!

Black's fury begins to grow. He catches a recovering Blaze in the temple with a knee strike, tucks his head under the arm, and runs.

Rev. Erik Black:

THANK YOU, JAYZUS!

DDK:

BULLDOG by Reverend Black!

The Reverend pops up, parkours off the nearest set of turnbuckles, and sends himself into the air.

Rev. Erik Black:

THANK YOU, JAYZUS!!!

DDK:

GUILLOTINE LEGDROP across the neck!

Richard Parker:

Witness the power of the LOARD, Keebler!

Black stays on Claymore, trapping one arm in a legscissor and the other in his hands to stretch the Lighthouse into a standing crucifix hold.

Rev. Erik Black:

THANK YOOOOOOOUUUU, JAAAAYZUUUUUSSS!!

DDK:

CRUCIFIX DRIVER!! And he keeps Claymore's shoulders down! That may be it!

ONE!!

TWO!!

KIIIIICKOUT!!

Rev. Erik Black:

HHHWWWWHHHAAAATT?!?!

The Sacred Lamb bounces back to his feet, tearing at his hair and bodysuit with unhinged frustration. The glue holding his toupee in place, weakened by a build-up of perspiration, is noticeably failing.

DDK:

Reverend Black throwing an absolute TANTRUM right now! He may believe in a holy spirit, but he CANNOT believe Blaze Claymore kicked out of that one!

Richard Parker:

I can't believe it either! The referee is clearly biased!

DDK:

Why would a DEFIANCE ref be biased against a PRIME talent?

Richard Parker:

Because he's biased against GAWD, Keebler!

Reverend Black argues with the official. Then he pleads with him. But Doyle makes it clear that he only reached the

count of two. Enraged, Black rips off his toupee, throws it to the mat, and begins to stomp on it, until realizing he's left his baldness exposed, and quickly scoops it up to return it to his head.

DDK:

Where does Reverend Erik Black go from here?

Richard Parker:

Claymore can't have THAT much left in the tank... can he?!

Blaze slowly recovers on the mat. Black's eyes wander the arena in confusion. Then, in an instant, they grow frightfully WIDE, along with a cheshire grin that spreads across his face. Hearing the voice of the DIVINE, the Reverend suddenly knows what he must do.

DDK:

Uh oh... something tells me that Black has that HOLY SPIRIT in him again!

Reaching into his boot, Reverend Black suddenly procures a long purple RIBBON. At first, Doyle tells him to get rid of the foreign object, until Black unexpectedly TIES the ribbon around his head like a blindfold!

DDK:

What the... he just BLINDFOLDED HIMSELF! WHY would he DO THAT?!

Richard Parker:

Who needs EYES when you got the LOARD to show you the way, Keebler?

Still smiling ear to ear, Black tilts his head up.

Rev. Erik Black:

LEAD ME THE VICTORY, O LOARD!!

He blindly gropes at the air around him.

Rev. Erik Black:

OOOOH GAWD, GUIDE THESE HANDS toward your FINAL JUDGEMENT!!

Unbeknownst to him, Claymore is still slowly recovering, and now has himself propped up to a knee. Reverend Black's wandering eventually takes him to a corner, and hands find the ropes joined at the top turnbuckle.

Rev. Erik Black:

YEEEEEEEEAAAAHHHH!! YEEEEAAAAAAHHH, LOARD!! MY PATH IS CLEAR!! THANK YOU, JAYZUS, FOR SHOWING ME THE WAY!!

DDK:

The crazy preacher is climbing to the top rope! Going for a HUGE risk here with that blindfold on!

Richard Parker:

Oh ye of little faith! He's in divine hands right now!

With the ribbon still tied around his eyes, Reverend Black firmly plants his feet on the top rope, stands up to his full height, and extends his arms out to the sides in the classic Christ pose.

Rev. Erik Black:

THANK YOU, JAYZUS, FOR SHOWING ME THE LIGHT!! ACCEPT THIS LEAP OF FAITH AS PROOF OF MY DEVOTION TO GAWD!! IN YOUR NAME, O LOARD...

Blaze pulls himself back to his feet, turns, and looks...

As he does, Reverend Black VAULTS backward into another high-angle moonsault, arms still held out at his sides.

Rev. Erik Black:

AAAAAAAAAYYYYYYYYY-MMM--

Claymore sidesteps.

FLOP!

Rev. Erik Black:

BLEHGK!!

DDK:

NOBODY HOME!!

Richard Parker:

WHAT?! How did Claymore see that coming!?

DDK:

Well, for one, he wasn't wearing a FREAKING BLINDFOLD like a moron!

Black writhes on the mat, clutching his chest in agony. He struggles and eventually works his way back up to his feet, lifting the ribbon over one eye.

The first thing he sees is the sole of Blaze Claymore's boot coming at his face like a freight train.

Rev. Erik Black:

AAAHH!!

DDK:

YAAAKUUUUZZZAAA KICK BY BLAZE CLAYMORE!!

"RRRRRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHH!!!"

The Reverend flops to his back, gurgling and spitting as Blaze reaches down and snatches at Black's Ribbon, raising it up and tying it around his forehead.

Richard Parker:

Hey! That's a holy garment, you heathen!

A frustrated Black jams a heel into the knee of Blaze Claymore, dropping the Lighthouse to the mat!

Both competitors hobble themselves back up until they are eye-to-eye and then begin to exchange blows! Blaze leaps back on a hobbled leg and goes for a second Yakuza kick only to have Black catch his ankle and drive an elbow into the Lighthouse's injured kneecap and he falls to the floor in pain.

Richard Parker:

Now's your chance, Reverend!

DDK:

...wait...

Black points to the sky and presses his hands together in prayer as a grimacing Blaze Claymore gets back up,

hopping on one foot.

Rev. Erik Black:

DO YOU REPENT YOUR SINNNNS--AH!?

Blaze raises his arms, but not in prayer - instead he arches his shoulders and drops his hands at an angle.

Rev. Erik Black:

ARE YOU READY TO MEET THE LOOOOARD--AHH!?

Blaze nods, eyes locked on Erik Black.

DDK:

Wait a minute...

Richard Parker:

No, Reverend! It's a trap!

Rev. Erik Black:

THEN LET YOUR SOUL BE SAAAAAVED—AARGH!

The Reverend, clearly having never seen the original Karate Kid, leaps forward toward Blaze but gets a foot to his jaw for his trouble as Claymore perfectly replicates Daniel LaRusso's famous crane kick!

Black's head snaps back and his body crumples to the mat, but not before Blaze swoops in, catches the falling fighter in his arms, spins, and drives Black into the mat chin first!

"RRRRRAAAAAAAAAAHHHH!!!"

DDK:

WOAH! What a sequence! Black wanted Blaze to see the light tonight but instead it may be lights out for the Reverend! Claymore's got the cover!

Referee Benny Doyle begins the count.

ONE!

TWO!

Richard Parker:

It can't be!

THREE!

DING DING DING

♪ "Change Your Heart or Die" by The Midnight ♪

An exhausted Blaze rolls off of an unmoving Erik Black, and slowly hobbles to his feet as the crowd roars to life.

Vincent Howard:

YOUUUUURR WINNNNER! "THE LIGHTHOUSE" BLAAAAAAAAAZE CLAYMOOOREE

DDK:

A big win for PRIME in this one as Blaze does what so many in Defiance have tried to do and gotten Erik Black to shut

the hell up!

Richard Parker:

Hell is exactly where Blaze Claymore is going after tonight! You don't attack a man of GAWD and get away with it that easily!

Blaze crouches toward the middle of the mat and grabs a hold of the Reverend's toupee, holding it up to the crowd like a scalp he's just collected — getting a huge pop before tossing the hair piece out into the crowd, removing the purple ribbon from his forehead, and rolling through the ropes to begin making his way to the back.

THE REZURRECTION OF REVEREND ERIK BLACK

DDK:

This monumental event continues, ladies and gentlemen, and we've got a highly anticipated tag team contest coming up next! But before we get to the action, let's check in backstage, where I'm told a member of our media crew is standing by to speak with one of the participants in that last contest!

The live feed cuts to the area backstage between the curtained-off Argyle position and the hallway leading the locker rooms.

"NNNOOOOOOOO!!!!"

Pained moans of anguish and defeat echo off the walls as a crooked figure stiffly shuffles into view.

"NNNOOOOOOOO!!!!"

A disheveled and defeated Reverend Black limps away from the Argyle area.

Rev. Erik Black:

NNNNYYYYYOOOOOOO-OOOOOO-OOOOO-OOOOOOO!!

He slaps his exposed bald cranium.

Rev. Erik Black:

LOOAARRRD HELP ME THEY STOOOLE MY HAAIIIRRR!!

Slinking into the shot is DEFIANCE's junior reporter, Chris Trutt, looking dapper with his smoky gray suit, rebel red tie, and overly affable grin.

Chris Trutt:

Hey, Erik! How's it going?

Black stops in place and incredulously glares at Trutt, one eye bulging and the other twitching.

Rev. Erik Black:

"hAy, Urlk, HaW'z Id GoEeNg" -- HOW THE SHUCKS DOES IT LOOK LIKE IT'S GOING, TRUTT?!?

His gasket now fully blown, the infuriated Reverend becomes a living maelstrom of flailing arms and legs.

Rev. Erik Black:

APOCALYPTIC, TRUTT!! END TIMES, TRUTT!! REVELATIONS, TRUTT!! THAT'S HOW IT'S GOING, TRUTT!! GAWWWWD IS ANGRY AFTER THIS INSULT, TRUTT!! I KNOW HE'S ANGRY, BECAUSE EEEEEY-YEEE AM ANGRY, TRUTT!! AND NOW, TRUTT, NOW I'M GONNA HAVE TO BRING THE MERCILESS WRATH OF HIS HOOOLEY JUDGMENT DOWN UPON BOTH OF THESE INFERNAL COMPANIES DEFIANCE AND PRIME!! TRUTT!!

Trutt nods, and smiles pleasantly, completely unaffected by the grown man violently throwing a tantrum before him.

Chris Trutt:

Wow... that sounds like a real bummer, to be honest. Anywhoozles, would you care to share your thoughts on that match?

"Hang on... hang on... HANG! ON!"

A voice calls from out of view. The interviewer and interviewee both turn to look. Black's jaw drops open and eyes go wide with panic and surprise when he sees who's approaching.

Rev. Erik Black:

AAAHH!! SIMON!!

Simon Tillier, PRIME's patch-vest clad junior reporter and self-styled "punk rock wrestling journalist", walks into the shot. Pitching the last of a cigarette to the floor, he looks positively gobstruck at the sight of his DEFIANCE counterpart.

Simon Tillier:

"Anywhoozles??" Did I seriously hear that right? Who in their right mind says "anywhoozles" in normal conversation? Who the hell is this loser?

Chris Trutt:

Um... I'm sorry, have we met?

Reverend Black stands between them, anxiously chuckling like some two-timing philanderer who's been caught in the act.

Rev. Erik Black:

WOW... Trutt... Simon... heh-heh, hmm, well, uhh... THIS certainly is awkward!

Simon Tillier:

Is this square the guy you worked with over in DEFIANCE? Geez, Rezin, no wonder you sold out...

Rev. Erik Black:

Hey HEY!! For the last time, NEVER address me by that name! That name is DEAD to me!!

Chris Trutt:

If you don't mind, I'm trying to conduct an interview here...

Rev. Erik Black:

YEAH!! Wait, I mean... NO!! NO INTERVIEWS!! I am DONE! I have to PREPARE THE HOOOLEY JUDGE--

Simon Tillier:

Pfft... you call THIS an interview? There's no style! There's no message!

Chris Trutt:

What are you talking about??

Simon Tillier:

Watch and learn, weirdo...

Tillier turns to face the camera.

Simon Tillier:

Here we are, friends. IMMORTALS. While America continues to play world police and direct insecure stormtroopers against its own citizens, all of us are enjoying this "monumental cross-over event" that supposedly happens once in a generation. An event, I should point out, was partly put together by one company that is owned and managed by wrestling legends, and another company... that is owned by a bank.

Chris Trutt:

Hang on now--

Simon Tillier:

With me now is a really shitty knock-off of Baby Billy Freeman, and a conformist square that works for a federation ironically named "DEFIANCE." A perfect pair of examples of everything that's wrong in wrestling today... and the world

at large.

Chris Trutt:

Excuse me!

Suddenly forgetting Reverend Black, Trutt steps up to Tillier and points straight into his chest.

Chris Trutt:

I resent that statement! I only just met you, but I won't accept that kind of slander! Because I pride myself in my journalistic integrity! I've been interviewing this maniac for over five years!

Rev. Erik Black:

UM...

Simon Tillier:

Five years? You spent five years interviewing the most punk rock force in wrestling, and you still talk and dress like THAT?

Rev. Erik Black:

GUYS...

Chris Trutt:

What difference does it make!? Just because I maintain a sense of decorum doesn't mean I haven't seen my share of punk rock! This man crashed a SPACESHIP into my backyard during my Thanksgiving party! And then came bursting out of a giant EGG!

Rev. Erik Black:

I MEAN...

Simon Tillier:

Okay, okay, that tracks... but you know what he did to me? Once, he locked me in a room with a LIVE BEAR! You have any idea what that sort of experience DOES to the human psyche?!

Rev. Erik Black: WELL...

Chris Trutt:

Well just because I don't show and express it on the inside doesn't mean I FEEL IT every day of my life! I still wake up some nights in a cold sweat, thinking Rezin's in my bathroom, stealing my prescriptions, or in my kitchen, stealing my knives and grill lighter! But even so, I keep that trauma separate from my work! I keep it professional... because I'm a BACKSTAGE REPORTER, goshdarnit!

Rev. Erik Black:

SO...

Simon Tillier:

Professionalism is DEAD! You're catering to a false image of order and good conduct! You need to wake up and realize what this Goat Bastard showed me years ago: that you're already working in an industry full of violent, unhinged maniacs, so you might as well be one yourself! You shouldn't be burying that trauma! You should be embracing it!

Rev. Erik Black:

I'M UHHHH...

Chris Trutt:

You're incorrigible, you know that?!

Simon Tillier:

Yeah, and you're cringe! I can see why he gave up weed after putting up with your boring ass for five years!

Rev. Erik Black:

...I'm just gonna see myself outta here.

Reverend Black begins to slowly back out of the shot while the two junior reporters continue to bicker.

Chris Trutt:

OOOOOH don't you DARE try to put that on me! That was the handiwork of the Good Doctor himself!

Simon Tillier:

Wait... you mean Ned Reform?

EEE-OOP!!

The sharp, second-long burst of an AMBULANCE SIREN somewhere offscreen leaves everyone momentarily stunned. It's followed by a loud and demanding voice coming through a loudspeaker.

"THAT'S **DOCTOR NED REFORM!!**"

Reverend Black stops in his tracks. The color drains from his face until he's white as a sheet. An expression of cold dread fills his face.

Rev. Erik Black:

No...

Slowly, he turns around...

...and the camera pans over to discover a whole-ass EUROPEAN AMBULANCE backed up into the backstage corridor!

Rev. Erik Black:

NO...

Leaning out the driver's side window, Doctor Ned Reform smiles and waves back at the Sacred Lamb.

Rev. Erik Black:

NOOOOOOOO!!!

Arms outstretched ahead of him like he were in a Hanna-Barbera chase sequence, Reverend Black turns the other direction and RUNS--

SMACK!!

A thunderous shotei uppercut totally floors Reverend Black! Standing over him shaking her hand, is RIA Lockhart! She turns to look at Dr. Ned Reform as the loopy Black tries to stumble to his feet.

Ria Lockhart:

Hey, you bald prick. Help me out here.

Reform scowls, but he still honors her request.

Ned Reform:

This changes nothing, brute.

Both Reform and Lockhart grab Black, whose eyes bug out as he tries to fight them off and escape. Reform lifts him up by his shoulders while Ria takes the legs, and together they march him toward the ambulance like a pig headed to a roast.

Ria Lockhart:

Still hate you.

Ned Reform:

The feeling is mutual.

Reform is able to swing the ambulance door open while keeping a grip on the frantic man of the cloth. Both the PRIME and DEFIANCE wrestler work in tandem as they try to shove him into the back. Frantic, Black is able to stop himself by latching on to either side of the vehicles doors, and he does his best to resist as Lockhart and Reform struggle to push him inside.

Rev. Erik Black:

WAIT!! HANG ON!! RIA!! DOC!! DON'T PUT ME IN THERE!! IF I GET HIGH, IT WILL UNDO ALL THE PROGRESS I'VE MADE!! THIS IS BLASPHEMY, WHAT YOU'RE DOING!! I DON'T WANT TO BE A SMOKER OF DOPE AGAIN!! I'M A SOLDIER OF CHRIST NOW!!

Ria Lockhart:

Dude, can you shut the hell up?

Ned Reform: [to Black]

You'll thank me for this someday!

As the struggle ensues, the two confused junior reporters confer with each other.

Simon Tillier:

Is... that a purple ambulance I see over there?

Chris Trutt:

"La Ambulance", to be specific.

Simon Tillier:

Why?

Chris Trutt:

Um, because it's French?

Simon Tillier:

Ah... of course...

Chris Trutt:

Doctor Reform modified it for "intense aromatherapy treatment". The idea is that when Reverend Black goes into the back, he fills it up with a bunch of marijuana smoke to get him high again.

Simon Tillier:

I see.

Chris Trutt:

It's like a whole "undoing his creation" sort of thing, since he kinda brought sober Rezin upon the world.

Simon Tillier:

Yeah yeah, I saw Frankenstein. Anyway, should we help?

Chris Trutt:

Help??

Simon Tillier:

Yeah!

Chris Trutt:

Hmm... I don't know. Getting involved in these things goes against company policy.

Simon Tillier:

Oh, COME ON, dude! Do you seriously want to keep interviewing this "Reverend Black" dork for however many more years?

Chris Trutt:

...I suppose you have a point there. Alright, fudge it! Let's do this!

Chris and Simon charge, joining in on the shoving battle.

Rev. Erik Black:

AAAAHH!! E TU, TRUTTE?!

With the combined might of the backstage announcers, the foursome is finally able to apply enough for for Black to lose his grip and flail as he is pushed roughly inside the vehicle. Ria and Reform each take a door and slam them shut right in Black's terrified face. He appears in the window, his screaming fogging the glass like the Velociraptor in that one scene in Jurassic Park. You know the one.

Ned Reform:

It's imperative that you keep him contained!

Ria jumps up and holds the door closed with her body as Black kicks at it from the inside. While she does, Ned hurries around the corner... and emerges with a long, clear hose. He connects it to a conveniently placed spout on the side of the vehicle.

Ria Lockhart:

Can you hurry the hell up?? Dude's kicking like a mule!

Ned Reform:

One moment!

Reform walks over to the source of the hose: a complicated looking device with a switch.

Ned Reform:

One small step for a certain artiste de l'évasion, one giant leap for the DEFIANCE Faithful.

Rev. Erik Black: [muffled]

WAIT-WAIT-WAIT-WAIT-JUSTWAITASECONDHERE!!!

Reform's hand hesitates on the switch.

Ned Reform:

...yes?

Rev. Erik Black:

...have I got time for a quick prayer?

Ned Reform:

You do not.

Ned pulls the trigger.

With a roar of machinery, the windows of La Ambulance are soon obscured with thick SMOKE!

Rev. Erik Black:

AAAHH!!

Trapped within, the coughing and choking Reverend Black's hands weakly paw at the glass as he desperately tries to escape.

As his coughs intensify, the clawing grows weaker and weaker... until finally, the hands disappear.

Ria Lockhart:

Uhhh... Did we kill him?

Ned Reform:

Do you take me for a psychopath? No, the Cannibuszation 5000 simply injects high levels of... well, let's just say it's my own special concoction. It pays to have friends in the Yale chemistry department.

Ria Lockhart:

...wasn't it called the Cannitron or something like that?

Ned Reform:

Continuity is for the pedantic, Ms. Lockhart.

Ria Lockhart:

Uh huh. So what happens now?

Ned Reform:

The mists of transformation will envelop him, and like the ancient Pygmalion, Mr. Black will abandon his quest for perfection in order to accept his flaws. You see, the ideal is an illusion, it is the real world, not some hypothetical simulacrum, that is truly...

Ria Lockhart:

Dude whatever! Forget I asked.

Shaking her head in annoyance, Lockhart walks away.

Ned Reform: [muttering]

Philistine.

Trutt interjects.

Chris Trutt:

Uh... you sure it's okay to leave him in a vehicle? What if he tries to drive off?

Looking at Trutt like he's an idiot, Reform jingles a set of ambulance keys.

Ned Reform:

Do you think me daft, Christopher? I have the keys. How in the world could he possibly -

Ironically, as the Good Doctor says this...

vvvVROOMMmm...

...the engine of La Ambulance ROARS to life!

Everyone stares at the smoke-filled emergency vehicle in surprise.

Simon Tillier:

...well, that can't be goo--

SCRRRREEEEEEEEECCCHHHH!!!!

Without warning, La Ambulance PEELS OUT and tears down the corridor, leaving smoky trails of burnt rubber and burnt reefer in its wake!

EEE-ooo-EEE-ooo-EEE-ooo-EEE-ooo-EEE-ooo!!!

Chris Trutt:

HOLY CANNOLI!

Ned Reform:

After him!

As the Good Doctor and junior reporters pursue the fleeing emergency vehicle, Ria Lockhart lingers behind, shrugs her shoulders, and walks off.

Ria Lockhart:

Whelp, did my part. Time to grab tacos...

The hijacked La Ambulance weaves wildly on its out-of-control path, banging against walls and taking out racks of production equipment left and right!

Chris Trutt:

Ladies and gentlemen, stay with us as this story develops! Reverend Black has somehow hotwired and subsequently commandeered Dr. Reform's ambulance, and now he's driving it like a MADMAN through the backstage area!

Simon Tillier:

Stop yapping and get after that meat wagon, Taint!

Chris Trutt:

My name is TRUTT, you weirdo!

Simon Tillier:

Whatever! It's heading for the exit!

BANG! A set of double doors (conveniently large enough to fit an emergency vehicle through) leading outside violently slam open as La Ambulance barrels through them!

EEE-ooo-EEE-ooo-EEE-ooo-EEE-ooo-EEE-ooo!!!

The junior reporters of both companies exchange perplexed glances. Reform whacks them both across the head and points, and together the trio runs up to the doorway looking out into the parking lot.

EEE-ooo-EEE-ooo-EEE-ooo-EEE-ooo-EEE-ooo!!!

Thick smoke pours freely from the windows of La Ambulance, as it zig-zags through the lot at a dangerous speed and

comes precariously close to tipping over a few times.

But by the time it steadies itself, its path runs out of asphalt...

Chris Trutt:

Oh no... the EDGE!

Simon Tillier:

It leads right out into the BAY!

EEE-ooo-EEE-ooo-EEE--

Without slowing, the purple-painted emergency vehicle drives right off the embankment at the perimeter of the lot...

KEERRRR-SSSSPLAAAAAASSS-SSHHHH!!!

...and straight into Biscayne Bay!

Chris Trutt:

SWEET SQUASH AND SAURKRAUT!!

Simon Tillier:

STOP SAYING STUPID THINGS and HURRY!

With the view from handheld camera bobbing wildly as it chases after them, the unlikely trio of junior reporters and grappling academic urgently run through the lot toward the concrete lip where the ambulance was last seen before going into the water.

Simon Tillier:

Can you see him?!

Ned Reform:

...he's going under!

Chris Trutt:

Oh... my... STARS!!

When they get there, they both look over the edge and into the lingering ripples where the back end of La Ambulance can be seen slowly sinking into the bay. As it descends, jets of black smoke bubbles rise up to the surface.

Chris Trutt:

Is he... IS HE...??

Simon Tillier:

Only one way to find out...

Tillier begins removing his jacket.

Chris Trutt:

What are you doing?!

Simon Tillier:

What's it look like I'm doing!? I'm going down there to get him!

Chris Trutt:

Are you crazy?! At the rate it's sinking, there's no way you can make it to him in time!

Simon Tillier:

So we just sit here and leave him to a watery grave? Pfft! You've got a lot to learn about being punk rock in this line of work, Trutt!

Chris Trutt:

And you've got a lot to learn about common sense!

Simon Tillier:

Enough of this! In the time I've wasted talking to you, I could have rescued him by now!

Tillier tosses the jacket aside and walks to the edge, readying to dive in. Reform puts an arm out, arresting his progress.

Ned Reform:

Wait.

Simon Tillier:

Are you crazy!?

Ned Reform:

Don't you see? Water? Purification? Transformation? This might be a metaphor...

Simon Tillier:

Are you OUT of your MIND!? A man's life could be at stake!

Trutt suddenly blinks and double-takes as he notices something out of the camera's view.

Chris Trutt: [grabbing Simon]

Wait... WAIT... [points] ...LOOK!

The camera swivels over...

A few yards away, the concrete is stained with a viscous, pitch-like substance. Almost as though something BLACK and STICKY had pulled itself out of the water and slithered away.

Simon Tillier:

What is...?

The three men approach the sludge, as it streaks further out across the concrete, eventually becoming a trail of black footprints!

Chris Trutt:

Hey, what's this?

Trutt points, and Simon spots something glittering in one spot of muck.

Chris Trutt:

Is that...?

Simon Tillier:

His crucifix!

Reform begins to rub his hands together in joy.

Ned Reform:

Yes... symbolism...

Instinctively, Tillier reaches down and picks it up. A second later, he hisses in pain and drops it back to the asphalt.

Simon Tillier:

OUCH! It's HOT!

Ned Reform:

Hot with the EMBERS of TRANSFORMATION, you dolt.

Chris Trutt:

LOOK!

They stare in astonishment at the place where the crucifix fell, watching it quickly bubble and MELT into a small golden puddle.

Simon Tillier:

What the HELL is going on!?

Chris Trutt:

And where do these footprints lead...?

Ned Reform and the pair of junior reporters continue following the blackened tracks. They look ahead to see the trail leading into a dense wall of shrubbery.

A few branches waver as though someone had just pushed their way through... but there is no one visible.

Chris Trutt:

He's... gone?

Simon Tillier:

Yeah... and on the loose.

The two look to each other as it slowly dawns on them what has just transpired... and the implications of things to come. Then, acting on the same thought, the junior reporters turn to the camera and raise their mics.

Chris Trutt:

Ladies and gentlemen, as you have all seen for, the Reverend Erik Black appears to have just narrowly escaped a watery grave here this evening!

Simon Tillier:

Sure... although after Doc Reform's "treatment" in the back of that ambulance, I can't help but wonder if it was someone ELSE that escaped!

Behind the two men, a laugh. It starts low at first, but like a maniacal Saturday morning villain, it begins to grow in intensity. Trutt and Tillier both turn to the source... an eyebrow raised, fingers pulsing together, smiling Good Doctor.

Ned Reform:

Don't you see? Can neither of you see what is right in front of you?

Chris Trutt:

What do you...

Ned Reform:

He plunged into the water you fools! But he... he...

Reform makes a motion as if he's waiting for one (or both) of the two men to finish his sentence. When that doesn't happen, he slaps his palm against his other hand in annoyance.

Ned Reform:

...he ESCAPED, you nitwits. He was facing certain doom, and he **ESCAPED**.

Reform walks up, putting an arm around either man's shoulders. He looks up toward the night sky, thoughtfully.

Ned Reform:

Somewhere out there, a boisterous and confused tattooed homeless man is tripping down some stairs. And... it... is.

His voice cracks just a little.

Ned Reform:

...beautiful.

With a shake of his head, he roughly pats both men on the shoulders before walking away.

Chris Trutt:

Could it be true?? Could tonight mark the DEATH of the reviled Reverend Black and the RETURN of the Goat Bastard, REZIN?!

Simon Tillier:

Until we can confirm his exact whereabouts, I guess we'll all just have to keep our eyes peeled!

Chris Trutt:

I'm Chris Trutt--

Simon Tillier:

--no, I'M Simon Tillier...

The two briefly glare at each other before turning back to the camera.

Chrimon Truttier:

Back to you, Darren and Rich!

The shot fades back to the commentary table where "Downtown" Darren Keebler and Richard Parker are ready to call the next match.

FLYNN CUP CHAMPIONS SHOWCASE: RAIN CITY RONIN (DEFIANCE) (2025) vs. NEW WORLD TRASH (PRIME)

DDK:

What did we just witness, Richard Parker?!

Richard Parker:

I couldn't tell you, Keebler, but I'm assuming Reverend Black is sitting at the bottom of the ocean right now!

DDK:

I'm not sure... it almost looked like he got out at the last second...

Richard Parker:

Well if there's one thing I know, if anybody DIED from that, then you DEFIANCE dorks are taking all the blame!

DDK:

WHAT?!

Richard Parker:

I mean, technically, Reverend Black was one of your guys...

DDK:

Ugh... ladies and gentlemen, I can report at this time that emergency services and firefighters have arrived, and are currently dealing with the situation that just unfolded out in the parking lot. We'll have an update on the status--or the whereabouts--of Reverend Erik Black once we know more of what's going on.

Richard Parker:

Until then, the show must go on!

DDK:

I'm afraid you're right, Richard. We've still got many matches to get through, and coming up next... we have a much anticipated tag team showdown! New World Trash, the 2022 winners of the prestigious Flynn Cup, take on the victors of this years' tournament, the Rain City Ronin!

The face-off graphic flashes up over the screen. The triad of partners Angel Quinley and Bex Savage along with manager Ami Troy stand on the left while the tandem of Zack Daymon and Leo Burnett stare back from the right. The tale of the tape stands between them.

DDK:

New World Trash have been one of the most talked about young up-and-coming tag teams these past few years after winning the Flynn Cup in 2022!

Richard Parker:

One of them nearly DIED, you know!

DDK:

I have! And I have to say, I'm truly awestruck by Angel Quinley's comeback from a life-threatening injury back into the world of sports! Meanwhile, the Rain City Ronin are coming off a stellar 2025, winning their own Flynn Cup this year and serving as dominant tag team champions of DEFIANCE!

Richard Parker:

Until last month, from what I've heard...

DDK:

Yes... a somber end to what was an otherwise great championship run, following an absolutely BRUTAL "I Quit"

match, where Leo Burnett was forced to say the dreaded words to save his partner from what was a potentially deadly scenario!

Richard Parker:

Oh my God... so they DO talk!

♪ *"Nobody Speak" by DJ Shadow feat. Run the Jewels* ♪

An arpeggiated guitar walkdown heralds the intro to "Nobody Speak" by DJ Shadow and Run the Jewels. The beat hits the PA as the mixed set of fans give off a very mixed reaction.

After a few moments of nobody appearing, the camera feed cuts to the back...

In the Argyle position, Leo Burnett stands alone at the curtain, looking out and surveying the crowd while his team's music plays. His partner, Zack Daymon, is not there.

Naturally, this presents an issue when one is just moments away from walking out for a match. Working on the situation and pacing anxiously behind him is none other than fellow Dojo Cascadia founder Kerry Kuroyama, with a phone pressed up to his ear.

Kerry Kuroyama:

Come on, *come on...*

After a few more seconds with no answer, Kerry shakes his head in defeat and ends the call.

Kerry Kuroyama:

Damnit, Zack...

Burnett shuts his eyes and sighs in disappointment.

Kerry Kuroyama:

Okay, look... the situation may not exactly be ideal, but at least we have a back-up plan. Granted, it's not easy to find a substitute tag partner on short notice, but I've been assured that he can more than hold his own in the ring. Just... try to approach this with an open mind.

With that, he stands aside...

...and CHRIS CHICKENTENDERS, dressed in his best Cancer Jiles knock-off tights, walks into the shot.

Chris Chickentenders:

Oh hey, so, like, what's up Lemo Burnitt, I guess we're like tag partners for tonight or whatever, that's pretty cool, although probably weird, cuz I'm not like your usual partner, but hey man, don't worry, cuz like this is strange for me too since usually I partner up with Brodie Hellyeah, but I guess when he tried to get in the building they were like "hell no" or whatever, but like anyway, I'm gonna be like a great substitute teacher partner or whatever, cuz while everyone has thought of me as a joke, I've been like learning to be a real wrestling badass, and also I know how to do krav maga, but don't worry cuz I don't wear a red hat or anything, but like I know how to do armbars, and I can open up tables, and I can kick dudes in the nuts, so you're like in good hands or whatever, and I think with the combined powers of our badassery and intense masculine powerz, you and I can really turn a few heads, and maybe also pick up a few chicks huehuehuehuehuehue but no, seriously, I've like got your back and stuff out there, and if things go well, like, I'm pretty confident that I could totally be like the new member of the Rim City Runs or whatever, but hey, if it's not big deal to you, I'll do the pinning tonight, cuz my Insta could use a few more clicks and stuff, and also I'm--

Without warning, a hand from out-of-view reaches in, grabs Chickentenders by the scruff of the neck, and tosses him into a nearby trash can.

A glowering Zack Daymon, appearing out of the blue and fully dressed for action, takes his place.

Both members of the Rain City Ronin silently stare each other down. Kuroyama looks delighted by this turn of events.

Kerry Kuroyama:

Ah, perfect timing! Well then, boys, good luck out there! I'm getting the hell out of here before Ami sees me...

The Emerald Apex leaves to get ready for his match, leaving Burnett and Daymon to tensely stare each other down.

Leo Burnett:

Look, man--

Zack abruptly brushes by his partner and heads through a curtain. With a frustrated sigh, Burnett turns and follows after him.

The camera cuts back out to the arena as the Rain City Ronin step out onto the stage and immediately come down the aisle, sans lights, pyros, or fanfare.

Darren Quimbey:

Ladies and gentlemen, the following contest is a Flynn Cup Champions Showcase! Introducing first, representing Dojo Cascadia of Seattle, Washington, United States, and weighing in at a combined four-hundred and eighty pounds... they are the winners of the 2025 Flynn Cup... ZACK DAYMON... LEO BURNETT... the RAIN - CITY - ROOOOONIIIIIIINNN!!!

Daymon leads the way with an intense powerwalk while Burnett plays catch-up.

Both men still wear the bandages and braces from the injuries incurred at the recent DEFIANCE Rising event.

Richard Parker:

Well these guys have certainly seen better days!

DDK:

Still visibly bearing the scars from their ill-fated tag title defense at DEFIANCE Rising, but none the worse for wear, the Rain City Ronin are here tonight to bring their no-nonsense brand of wrestling to the ring!

Richard Parker:

There's definitely no nonsense to be had, but boy, the tension is THICK between these two!

Daymon slides into the ring and begins to pace impatiently as soon as he's on his feet. Burnett calmly ascends the steps to the apron. Taking a cue from his partner's irascible body language, he chooses to remain there in their corner.

GARBAGE DAY!!!

♪ "The Sense" by Hot Water Music ♪

And then, "The Sense" by Hot Water Music. Gorgeous, and they know it. Crazy, and they revel in it. Neon camouflage trap pants and tank tops and swagger. From the very jump of the frenetic punk chords, the team of Angel Quinley and Bex Savage explode onto stage in kind, accompanied by their manager, Ami Troy.

Darren Quimbey:

And the opponents, hailing from Seattle, Washington, United States, and accompanied to the ring by the Merry Mischief Maker, Ami Troy... BEX SAVAGE... ANGEL QUINLEY... the NEW WORLD TRASH!!

Angel strut dances down the ramp, her arms and shoulders swaying to the beat, her brilliant blue eyes sparkling in the light. Her smile is effervescent. Alongside her, Bex doesn't as much shadow box as shadow killshots, ready and

bouncing on the balls of her high topped feet. A snerk running through black lips. Ripped to an unbelievable degree. And as they get to the foot of the ramp, Ami leaps toward the two of them, wrapping an arm each around the back of their necks. Are her eyes a little bloodshot? Perhaps. She is, after all, studying at Weed College, for those in the DEFIANCE world who don't know.

She grabs at the tanks adorning Angel and Bex; limited run IMMORTALS: CLASH FOR THE FLYNN NWT prints. The cry from Ami is definitive.

Ami Troy:
BUY THE SHIRT!

Quinley and Savage give each other a look, then give a playful kiss to the cheeks of their ADORABLE brilliant weed gremlin. Squee! Bex throws out her gloved fist to her partner and sister.

Bex Savage: Done!

Angel smashes knuckles with her.

Angel Quinley: And dusted!

From there, the pair take off, diving into the ring, springing to their feet. Savage begins pacing, only stopping to beckon for Daymon and Burnett to come on. Her roars are feral. Angel, for her part, merely keeps jumping, higher and higher, drawing her knees to her chest, getting herself loose, all before taking off for the ropes, and sprinting into them, then back and forth, launching herself outward with a kung fu wheel kick. A flash of some stupid gang sign. A loud laugh. It's then that Bex and Angel huddle, and play a game of rock paper scissors.

Bex throws scissors.

Angel throws rock.

It's decided. Angel is starting this match. And as she turns around to face the Rain City Ronin, she draws her fingers up. Finger pistols. Bang. Bang.

Then.

Spooky wiggle.

Time to fucking dance.

DING DING

Daymon and Quinley come out of their corners and encircle each other. Zack advances for a lock-up, only to get a sharp waist-level kick that hits in the abdomen. He smarts off the impact, but quickly recuperates and shoots in once again. This time, Angel steps to the side and catches him with a cross elbow strike that tags him in the cheek.

DDK:
Lightning fast strikes by Angel Quinley, keeping Daymon at arm's length!

Zack rallies and attempts another tie-up, only for a high crescent kick to connect with his temple and send him stumbling back on his ass. Quinley, the Eternal Sunrise, presses the advantage, mounting Daymon with a series of ground-and-pound strikes.

DDK:
High roundhouse, and Zack goes down! Now Quinley is all over him!

Richard Parker:

He better grab those ropes!

Daymon reaches for the ropes to force the ref break and stop the assault. Angel pops to her feet and pumps a fist to the crowd to get a pop, cheered on by her partner in their corner and Ami on the floor.

DDK:

Trash looking confident after landing the opening blows! I'm not sure where Zack Daymon's head is at right now!

Still on the mat, Zack looks to his corner where his own partner wears a look of concern. Leo Burnett gestures in a way that offers a tag, but Daymon only shakes his head and holds up a finger, asking his partner to give him a minute.

DDK:

Daymon back to his feet, resolved to stay in the action.

Richard Parker:

Might be a risky move.

Daymon pulls himself to his feet, readjusts his hair, shakes his hands, and takes a deep breath as makes a metal reset. He meets Quinley back in the center of the ring for another exchange. Feeling confident off a hot start, Angel eagerly moves in and starts throwing shots.

DDK:

Angel Quinley with a striking exchange, and now she traps Daymon in the clinch...

Richard Parker:

Look out here for the Muay Thai knee!

DDK:

NO!! Caught by Zack, and he counters with a double-leg takedown! He may have an opportunity now!

On her back, Quinley attempts to reverse with a guillotine and legscissor, but Daymon rolls through and lands on his feet. Angel is back up in a flash, but turns around into a lethal backhanded chop as Daymon pivots to face her.

DDK:

PAINFUL back-handed strike by Zack Daymon meets his mark right on the side of Angel Quinley's face, and now he's moving!

Quinley has only a second to stumble before he launches into her, wraps his arms around her neck, and sends her bouncing across the mat with a head-and-arm suplex!

DDK:

Daymon with the OVERHEAD SUPLEX! With a few moves in just a short matter of seconds he's potentially shifted the momentum of the match!

Richard Parker:

Pretty slick moves...

Angel rolls toward her corner and onto her knees, clutching the back as she tags out to Bex Savage. Daymon waits in the center of the ring as Savage steps through the ropes and goes straight into the tie-up.

DDK:

In comes Bex Savage!

Richard Parker:

And finally, we get a traditional collar and elbow!

After a few seconds of both competitors attempting to overpower each other, Zack comes out on top with a side headlock. After a moment, Bex makes her move and slips free, putting Zack into a headlock of her own. A legsweep rolls Daymon to the mat with a headlock takedown. A quick headscissor on Savage breaks the hold.

DDK:

Both competitors are scrambling to their feet now! Forearm by Savage knocks Daymon into the ropes, and she sets him into motion!

Bex parks her feet in the center of the ring, waiting for Daymon to return. As he does, she catches him and pops him into the air for a--

DDK:

AIRBORNE DROPKICK!! Whatever Bex Savage had in mind, Zack Daymon threw a monkey wrench into the work with that well-timed counter!

Richard Parker:

Looks like a good opportunity to tag out.

DDK:

Seems that way, but for whatever reason, Zack Daymon is staying active in this match! He charges... and NAILS Bex in the forehead with a running knee strike! Cover is made!

One!

Two!

Kickout!

Before Savage can slip free, Daymon quickly rolls her over, shoots in, and traps the arm in head into a vice-like cravat to hold her to the mat. With her neck being worked over, Bex fights through the pain and powers her way back to her feet, holding Zack around the waist.

DDK:

Bex Savage looking to get out of this submission predicament... she's got Daymon in the waist lock! GERMAN SUPLEX to counter--NO!!

Richard Parker:

Landed right on his feet!

DDK:

Savage spins around... Daymon SCOOPS... PHOBOS BOMB!!

Bex impacts the mat HARD off the snap Michinoku Driver. Flashing Burnett a vindicated glare, Zack throws himself into the pin.

DDK:

Zack Daymon with the cover!

One!

Two!

...NO!

Richard Parker:

He spotted Quinley coming in to make the save!

Daymon pushes himself off of Bex Savage the minute he sees Angel Quinley hop the ropes to break it up, and launches himself forward. Angel's feet barely hit the mat when a human torpedo connects with her midsection and knocks her back through the ropes!

DDK:

SPEAR by Daymon onto Angel Quinley, knocking her through the ropes and to the floor!

Richard Parker:

He's not having ANY of that!

DDK:

Thus far, Zack Daymon has held his own against both members of the New World Trash... but I'm not sure he should push his luck on it! This would be a great opportunity to bring Leo Burnett into the action!

In the RCR corner, Burnett impatiently leans against the ropes. Daymon doesn't even look in his direction, going back to Bex Savage and pulling her up by the head.

DDK:

Daymon choosing to stay in for the Rain City Ronin, has Bex back on her feet and hooks an arm over the head.

Richard Parker:

I'm smelling a brainbuster!

DDK:

But Savage is fighting him off! She breaks free, and a forearm rocks Zack Daymon!

Daymon reels a full 360 degrees, coming back with his fist extended.

DDK:

Daymon with a DISCUS PUNCH to counter!

Savage staggers backward and falls into the ropes, clutching her jaw. A moment later, a scowl crosses her face as she glares back at Daymon and approaches.

DDK:

HEADBUTT by Bex Savage, giving Daymon a receipt off of that hard shot to the face!

Richard Parker:

Paid that receipt!

Like Savage before him, Daymon stumbles backwards off the impact and falls into the ropes. He's still clutching his forehead when Bex pounces ahead, boots him in the gut, and floats him over with an instant butterfly suplex.

DDK:

DECKER-PLEX by Savage! She hooks the leg!

One!

Two!

Daymon kicks out!

Richard Parker:

But the New World Trash ain't smiling anymore!

True to Richard's observation, Bex and Angel have assumed their game-faces. Savage gets Daymon to his feet and whips him to the Trash corner before quickly tagging Angel. Quinley springs to the top rope as Zack stumbles off the turnbuckles and lunges ahead...

DDK:

Tag to Angel Quinley, who comes into the ring with a 720 DDT onto Daymon! And there's a quick tag back to Bex Savage!

Richard Parker:

Bet he's really kicking himself right now for not tagging out!

In the Ronin corner, Leo Burnett shakes his head in dismay. Bex joins Angel in the ring as the two of them peel Zack off the mat and back onto his feet. After the Trash nod to one another, Quinley runs to the ropes while Savage takes Daymon by the arm and whips him after her.

DDK:

SPRINGBOARD SPINNING HEEL KICK by Angel Quinley after the assist from Bex Savage!

Richard Parker:

It's a two-on-one assault!

DDK:

And it doesn't look to be getting better for Zack Daymon any time soon! Quinley has him up and whips him to Bex Savage... BIIIIIG POWERSLAM!! She hooks the leg!

ONE!

TWO!

SHOULDER UP!

Quinley steps back out to the apron, but is almost immediately tagged back in by Savage. The tandem work continues as Bex hooks Daymon around the head and lifts him up for a suplex.

DDK:

Here's Bex Savage, lifting Zack Daymon up for the HIGH vertical suplex! Look at that power!

Richard Parker:

They don't call her "Muscle Mommy" for nothing.

DDK:

Angel Quinley off the ropes... CRANE KICK to the chest of Zack Daymon to complete the suplex! Now Quinley with the cover!

ONE!

TWO!

NO!! Daymon kicked out!

Richard Parker:

But man, the Trash are really turning up the heat in there!

DDK:

I agree with you on that, Richard. Zack Daymon desperately needs to make a tag! Leo Burnett looks eager to get in there and turn the tide back in the favor of the Rain City Ronin!

Daymon makes a crawl for the ropes, but a series of sharp targeted stomps from Quinley cuts him off at the pass. She quickly picks him up, but before she can pull off her next move, Zack suddenly lurches forward and traps her in the corner by ramming his shoulder into her midsection.

DDK:

Daymon trying to fight back! Shoulder block in the corner knocks the wind out of Angel Quinley... now he pulls out with her up on his shoulders! ALAMABAMA SLAM!!

Richard Parker:

Here's his chance to tag!

DDK:

But Daymon hangs onto the legs... and flips forward into a JACKKNIFE PIN!

ONE!

TWO!

KICKOUT!

Quinley and Daymon scramble to their feet. Zack goes high, while Angel dips her head and goes low, rolling forward and knocking Daymon on the top of his head that knocks him onto his ass.

DDK:

ROLLING KOPPU KICK! Angel tags back to Bex!

Richard Parker:

That window is quickly closing!

DDK:

Savage wrangling Daymon back to his feet and holding him in the half nelson... here comes Angel Quinley... CEMENT POISONING!! The New World Trash nailed it!

Richard Parker:

Is it over already?

DDK:

Bex Savage makes the pin!

ONE!

TWO!

BROKEN UP BY LEO BURNETT!! He's had enough!

Burnett pulls Savage off of his partner by the waist and deadlift German suplexes her hard off the back of her head and shoulders! Quinley charges and tries to stop him with an enzuigiri, which he ducks, then counters by scooping her

onto his shoulders.

DDK:

FIREMAN'S CARRY GUTBUSTER by Leo Burnett! And he sends Angel Quinley to the outside! Bex Savage back on her feet now... RUNNING CLOTHESLINE by Leo sends her over the ropes!

Richard Parker:

Talk about cleaning house!

Leo Burnett's energy is being sustained by a mix of anger and irritation. Alone in the ring with his partner, he grabs Zack by the arm and drags him over to their corner before going back to the apron.

DDK:

Leo Burnett just pulled Zack over to the corner!

Richard Parker:

Well, I suppose that's one way of getting your point across.

Daymon makes it to his feet, glaring furiously back at Burnett. Leo extends his hand, insisting he tag him in.

Richard Parker:

Why doesn't he just tag himself in? He's close enough he can reach out and slap his chest!

DDK:

It's more than just getting into the action, Richard! Leo wants him to deliberately make the tag and prove he's still a participating member of this team!

Nodding, Leo holds out the hand. Zack briefly looks at it... then back at his partner in disgust. Rather than slap the hand, he drops to the mat and rolls out under the ropes.

DDK:

Where is he going?!

Shaking his head, Daymon heads for the aisle and begins walking to the back. Burnett looks absolutely incensed by the decision. Quinley and Savage slide back into the ring, looking for a fighting but instead finding drama. Official Jimmy Turnbull steadily continues the ten count.

Four...

Five...

Six...

DDK:

I don't believe it! Zack Daymon is just walking out on this match!

Richard Parker:

I guess he's still too pissed off at his partner to make the tag, and too proud to take the fall!

DDK:

Just what the hell is going on between these two?!

The New World Trash look at each other, and shrug. Burnett stares after Daymon as he walks up the rampway and disappears into the back.

Seven...

Eight...

NINE...

TEN!!

DDK:

Unbelievable...

DING DING DING

♪ "The Sense" by Hot Water Music ♪

"The Sense" by Hot Water Music hits the PA. Bex and Angel high five. Ami joins them in the ring, and the three celebrate. Angry and beyond annoyed, Burnett drops off the apron and trudges up the rampway after his partner.

Darren Quimbey:

Ladies and gentlemen, the winners of the match, by count out... the NEEEEWWW WOOORRLD
TRRRRRRAAAAAAAAAASSSSSSH!!

DDK:

Not quite the way anyone expected this match to end, but nevertheless, even if it's by count out, the New World Trash are declared the winners of this Flynn Cup Showcase. But clearly, the Rain City Ronin are not on the same page.

Richard Parker:

Those guys are due for a very long, intense talk! I'd hate to be in the room when that goes down...

DDK:

I can say in all confidence, they were hardly the team that dominated the DEFIANCE tag scene for much of the previous year. And who knows... if the two were getting along and on their game here tonight, we could have witnessed an absolute banger of a tag team match!

Richard Parker:

But instead, they served this win to the New World Trash on a silver platter.

DDK:

A win for the 2022 Flynn Cup winners, and, by extension, another win for PRIME. As for right now, ladies and gentlemen, we've witnessed a TON of action, and we've got even more matches on the way! IMMORTALS will now take a very brief intermission before we continue with the second half of this event, so don't go anywhere!

KERRY KUROYAMA (PRIME) vs. DABNEY DOUBLEDAY (DEFIANCE)

DDK:

Welcome back, ladies and gentlemen! We've reached the halfway point through IMMORTALS, and what a monumental event it's been thus far!

Richard Parker:

Ugh, tell me about it! Why didn't anyone warn me this was gonna be an all day thing?

DDK:

It's a good thing you remembered to pack a lunch... although now your breath smells like garlic shrimp.

Richard Parker:

Can't be half as bad as sitting here and listening to you talk all day, Fudge Stripe!

DDK:

Anyway fans, let's get right back into the action with a match-up that has a lot of potential to be a show-stealer here tonight! "Fairplay" Dabney Doubleday squares off against "The Emerald Apex" Kerry Kuroyama!

The face-off graphic flashes up over the screen. The image of Doubleday stands astride his manager and younger brother, Dougie. The image of Kuroyama is accompanied by Ami Troy, who holds the PRIME Five Star Championship. The tale of the tape separates them.

Richard Parker:

The Battle of Alliteratives! Kay-Squared versus the Double Dee's!

DDK:

Two highly-accredited athletes who share the distinction of having spent a fair bit of time in both DEFIANCE and PRIME, but tonight marks the first time the two will have a good, honest competition without the threat of interference!

Richard Parker:

Well where's the fun in that?!

DDK:

Let's go to the ring where PRIME's Vince Howard is standing ready!

Vince Howard:

Ladies and gentlemen, the following contest is scheduled for one fall!

♪ "Southern Nights" by Glen Campbell ♪

"Southern Nights" by Glen Campbell begins playing over the PA

"RAAAAAAAAAAAAH!"

Vince Howard:

Making his way to the ring from Mayo, Florida...

The unmistakable PRIME ring announcer continues the introductions as the most polite pyrotechnics display of anyone on the DEFIANCE roster begins glittering down from the top of the tron. "Fair Play" arches across the screen in huge white letters on a pale blue background. Through the curtain of blue and gold sparkles emerges... well, Little Douglas Doubleday in his hideous little brown suit. The diminutive little brother and ringside manger extraordinaire bounds out to the edge of the stage, turning and extending his arms to present his client and big brother Dabney.

DDK:

These two have made quite the impression in DEFIANCE, Richard. I'm sure you guys over in PRIME were sad to lose

them.

Richard Parker:

They just couldn't take the heat of those big bright lights, Darren.

DDK:

Mmmhmm.

The man himself, Dabney Doubleday, back-steps out onto the stage. Sporting a pale blue silk souvenir style bomber jacket with "Fair Play" written politely across the back in white script. Dabney Doubleday turns and receives a pretty impressive pop from the enormous crowd. Douglas leads his big brother down the ramp, Dabs taking time to slap hands with the younger members of the crowd.

DDK:

After his big win over Edward White, recently, Dabney couldn't be on more of a roll.

Richard Parker:

This is that same big stage he walked away from, Keebler. Can he hack it?

DDK:

I think, like a lot of folks... like Ed White did... you're underestimating Dabney Doubleday.

Dabs quickly rolls under the bottom rope, popping to his feet and scaling the nearest turnbuckle. He raises his hands high with a huge smile as the crowd roars. Little Douglas Doubleday, less celebratory, takes his place in his brother's corner... his little mushroom shaped head on a clear swivel. His narrowed eyes watch the horizon for any and all trouble.

The house lights within the Kaseya Center slowly dim. An anxious quietness falls over the capacity crowd.

Richard Parker:

We'll see about that, Keebler... right now.

With the mood firmly set, two bold, massive words appear on the screen hanging over the stage.

V A E V I C T I S

The words disappear behind ominous storm clouds that quickly roll out and overtake the screen. The sounds of howling winds, rolling thunder, and heavy rainfall accompany scattered flickers of viridian-hued levin.

KRACKA-BOOOOOM!!!

♪ "Blouses Blue" by Konrad OldMoney feat. Sleep Steady ♪

Bolts of LIGHTNING suddenly strike the stage, heralding the opening beats to "Blouses Blue" by Konrad OldMoney and Sleep Steady.

BOOM! BLAP-BLAP! BAP-BOOM-BLAP!!
 BOOM! BLAP-BLAP! BAP-BOOM-BLAP!!
 BOOM! BLAP-BLAP! BAP-BOOM-BLAP!!
 BOOM! BLAP-BLAP! BAP-BOOM-BLAP!!

Green and purple spotlights streak across the arena in every direction. Two figures emerge through the storm of fire and smoke.

Vince Howard:

And the opponent, representing PRIME Wrestling...

The first to appear is Ami Troy, stepping out with her confident smirk and swagger while holding high the PRIME Five Star Championship for all to see. Close behind is the champion himself, Kerry Kuroyama, resplendent in his emerald and silver tights.

Vince Howard:

Accompanied to the ring by "The Merry Mischief Maker" AMI TROY, he hails from Seattle, Washington, United States, and weighs in at two-hundred and thirty-two pounds... representing VAE VICTIS, he is the reigning FIVE STAR CHAMPION of PRIME... the EMERALD APEX...

Ami hands over the belt. Kerry receives it and holds it high overhead as green and silver fountain pyros erupt behind them.

Vince Howard:

KEEERRRRRRYYYYY KUUROOYAAAAMAAAAA!!!

"RAAAAAAAAAAAAH!"

Kerry marches down the aisle to the ring bearing the title on his shoulder with Ami skips at his side with her hands innocently clasped behind her back.

DDK:

Ami Troy is all smiles after seeing the New World Trash pick up the win in that Flynn Cup Showcase! And no doubt, she's looking to Kerry to repeat that success!

Richard Parker:

I'm surprised she didn't bring the riding crop!

DDK:

For ten years, Kerry Kuroyama defined himself in DEFIANCE with his commitment to excellence, perfect execution, and pure wrestling spirit! And that has culminated into a stellar run as the Five Star Champion over in PRIME!

Richard Parker:

One of the few DEF dorks who can actually hack it in the big leagues! Of course, it also helps to be dating the boss's daughter...

DDK:

I don't quite know what you're implying by that, but given my years covering the matches of Kerry Kuroyama, I am confident that every bit of his success was earned through hard work and dedicated efforts!

Richard Parker:

Yeah, right... just remember, Elf Boy: there's a reason why he's representing PRIME tonight, and not DEFIANCE!

Kuroyama and Troy enter the ring. Kerry climbs a set of turnbuckles to hoist the belt overhead once more, earning another sizable pop, before dropping back to the mat and handing the belt back over to Ami.

DDK:

We are in for a good, clean technical contest, if nothing else!

Both competitors go to their respective corners. The managers dip out to the ringside floor. Official Ashley Barlow cues for the bell.

DING DING

DDK:

And this one is underway!

Kerry and Dabney slowly circle each other to start off. Instinctively, the first move to be made by either man is to extend the hand and shake. The show of sportsmanship gets a supportive pop from the crowd.

DDK:

Mutual respect being given before these off the bell!

Richard Parker:

Yech...

Both competitors go into the collar-and-elbow tie-up. After a brief struggle, Dabney drops and sends Kuroyama over and onto the mat with a quick arm drag take down. The face of PRIME's Five Star Champion registers brief surprise and bemusement before he pushes himself back to his feet.

DDK:

Quite the opening message made by Dabney Doubleday off the quick armdrag!

Richard Parker:

This kid has no idea that "the Emerald Apex" has bigger fish to fry!

Kuroyama and Doubleday circle up again, this time slowly coming in and interlocking their hands into a test of strength. After Dabney shows some curious legwork in the battle for leverage, Kerry briefly backs off, but goes back into it. After another brief shoving match, Kuroyama snags a wrist, steps in to go under the arm, and ends up behind Mrs. Doubleday's Perfect Gentlemen with a hammerlock.

DDK:

Kuroyama goes behind and works the arm... but there's a quick counter there by Dabney Doubleday, forcing Kerry to the mat with the wristlock!

Kuroyama rolls onto his back to reverse the torsion, and Dabney readjusts into a kneeling armbar. Kerry rolls backwards to get to his knees while Doubleday continues to work the arm at the shoulder.

DDK:

Dabney's got a good hold on that arm... but the Emerald Apex isn't about to stay down for long! Back on his feet now... turns... SCOOPS Doubleday up and drops with a quick body slam!

Richard Parker:

Look at that! That sort of counter requires precise timing and--

DDK:

DABNEY KIPS UP to his feet!

"RAAAAAAAAAAAAH!"

Kerry freezes as Dabney is suddenly back to his feet in the blink of an eye. The two stare each other down for a beat before circling once more, with Doubleday favoring the small of back.

DDK: There they go into the tie-up! Dougie is out here at ringside, working these fans up in support of "Fair Play" Dabney Doubleday!

Richard Parker:

That'll change...

DDK:

I imagine the cheers will be going back and forth quite a bit as this match wages on! Here's Dabney coming out with a side headlock! Transitions around into the hammerlock!

Doubleday is feeding off the crowd as he torques the hold. Thinking quickly, Kerry grabs him around the head as he backs into the ropes and uses the recoil to pluck him over his shoulder with a snapmare!

DDK:

Kerry with a snapmare... but Doubleday hangs on and ROLLS THROUGH!

Kuroyama ends up face down on the mat with Dabney now working the hammerlock with even greater leverage. On the floor, Ami pounds on the apron, urging Kerry to fight back.

DDK:

Doubleday has a hold of the arm, but nevertheless, the Emerald Apex is gradually working his way back up to a vertical base!

Richard Parker:

When Ami tells him to move, you better believe he MOVES!

Kerry fights against Dabney's wristlock. In the struggle, he pushes him off the ropes and sends him into motion. Doubleday hits the opposite ropes, but has almost no time to react as Kuroyama charges and strikes him with enough force to knock him to the canvas.

DDK:

STIFF back elbow by Kerry Kuroyama as Dabney was coming off the ropes!

Richard Parker:

There's the wake-up call that Doubleday kid needed! Now he knows what he's in for!

Kuroyama pulls the master of Fair Play back to his feet, snapmares him into a seated position, and wraps up the head in a smothering headlock. Barlow kneels by Dabney looking for the submission, but he waves it off. Urged on by the calls of support from Dougie, Doubleday instead works back to his feet and forces Kerry into side control.

Richard Parker:

Mama Doubleday raised herself a couple of real Little Engines Who Could!

DDK:

You'll never find a stronger bond than between brothers!

Kerry Kuroyama hangs onto the headlock as Dabney backs himself into the ropes. He breaks free by shoving Kerry ahead and putting him into motion. The Five Star Champion hits the other set of ropes.

DDK:

SHOULDER BLOCK drops Dabney onto his back! Kuroyama runs to the ropes once more...

Dabney flops over onto his belly, and Kerry runs over him on his way across the ring. He pops to his feet as Kuroyama hits the other set of ropes, and leapfrogs him on the rebound.

DDK:

Kuroyama going both ways, coming off the ropes again... BIG Flattop Flapjack!

Dabney quickly pulls Kerry back to his feet and sends him back into the ropes with another whip. Kuroyama returns, but puts on the brakes to catch Dabney's boot before he can kick him in the midsection. Doubleday reacts with an inside enzuigiri!

DDK:

ENZUIGIRI by Dabney Doubleday, taking it to the Five Star Champion of PRIME!

Richard Parker:

Since when did he learn THAT move?!

Kuroyama is back to his feet in a daze. Instinctively he finds the ropes. When he looks up, Dabney charges with a crooked arm lariat that sends him over the top rope to the floor!

“RAAAAAAAAAAAAH!”

DDK:

BLONDE BOMBER by Dabney Doubleday, sends the Emerald Apex to the floor!

Richard Parker:

Kerry's head in the game right now! Get this man some expensive Japanese whisky and hot wings!

Dabney pumps his fist to fire up the crowd. Barlow begins the ten count as Kuroyama takes a moment on the floor to shake out the cobwebs. A pensive-looking Ami Troy comes over and helps him to his feet.

DDK:

Dabney Doubleday stands tall in the ring, all fire up! Meanwhile, Ami Troy is there to assist Kerry! Now she's whispering in his ear...

Richard Parker:

UH OH.

Whatever it she whispers (strategy? support? a WARNING??), Kerry's eyes go wide, and he slides back into the ring. Dabney respectfully backs up to give him space so that he can proceed when ready.

DDK:

Kuroyama back into the ring... now he and Dabney Doubleday tie-up once more! Dabney quickly snags that arm and slips around into another hammerlock! He's really working that arm!

Richard Parker:

He's trying to cripple the power of the Emerald Apex, because of how comparably weak he is!

DDK:

Here's Kuroyama with the reversal, going around behind Dabney... has him by the waist and LIFTS--DERECHOPLEX!!

Doubleday bounces hard off the spin-out backdrop driver. The fans react to the sudden shift in momentum. Dougie anxiously grabs his head while Ami nods approvingly.

Richard Parker:

There it is! The beginning of the end!

DDK:

Big reversal by the Five Star Champion, now going for the cover!

One!

Two!

Dabney kicks out!

Kerry gets back to his feet and methodically works Dabney over one move at a time, beginning with a side Russian legsweep, peeling him up for another scoop slam, and dropping a knee across the forehead.

DDK:

Kerry Kuroyama is in complete control of the action now, opening up his arsenal of maneuvers to further punish Dabney! Now he puts him up in the corner... BIG lariat up against those turnbuckles!

Richard Parker:

Knocked out the last of his baby teeth!

DDK:

And a SECOND lariat!

Richard Parker:

If you're watching, Mama Doubleday, you might wanna turn off the TV!

DDK:

A THIRD!! Dabney Doubleday is absolutely PUMMELED right now!

Richard Parker:

On second thought, why would Mama Doubleday waste time watching this embarrassment of a son?

DDK:

Ugh... you know, I don't envy what your colleague Nick Stuart has to put up with.

Richard Parker:

The feeling is mutual, Keebler!

Kuroyama takes Doubleday by the arm and uses all of his strength to launch him across the ring. Dabney takes a HARD bump against the opposite turnbuckles, stumbling back and turning straight into a discus lariat that nearly takes his head off!

DDK:

SQUALL LINE LARIAT!! That absolutely rung Dabney's bell!

Richard Parker:

Check the kid's eyes! Are they crossed?!

DDK:

Kerry with the cover!

One!

Two!

And DABNEY gets the shoulder up!

Kerry quickly takes control of Dabney by the waist and follows through with a deadlift gutwrench powerbomb to drop him on his back and knock the wind from his sails. Taking ahold of the legs, Kuroyama wraps them up and twists Doubleday around into a cloverleaf.

DDK:

The Five Star Champion has certainly hit his stride here! Kerry Kuroyama has the cloverleaf applied, looking for a submission!

Richard Parker:

Kid should tap if he knows what's good for him!

DDK:

Dabney Doubleday is doing no such thing! Dougie is at ringside, where the ropes are only a few feet away! Now Dabney is trying to crawl to them!

Richard Parker:

He's just making it worse for himself!

DDK:

Inches now... and he's got the bottom rope! Barlow calls for the break!

Kuroyama releases the hold without hesitation and backs up to allow Dabney some time to recover. Doubleday uses the ropes to pull himself up, which is when Kerry moves in again and pushes him off to send him running.

DDK:

Here goes Dabney Doubleday into motion... Kerry waiting with a Yakuza kick--that MISSES!! Dabney off the opposite set of ropes... comes back with a FLYING CROSS-BODY THAT PUTS KERRY ON HIS BACK!

One!

Two!

NO! Kerry Kuroyama kicks out! But what a sudden turnaround!

Slowed from the earlier beating, Dabney isn't quick enough to get back up before Kerry, who puts him back to the canvas with a heavy double axe-handle smash. Kuroyama pulls him back up by the arm.

DDK:

Here goes Kerry with the Irish Whip, sending Doubleday to the corner again, and he follows... no, DOUBLEDAY LIFTS UP to avoid the shoulder block... legs hook the arms, and he counters with a SUNSET FLIP! SHOULDERS DOWN!

One!

TWO!

KICKOUT!

Richard Parker:

Dangit, Ker, COME ON! Get SURRIIOUS, or something!

Kerry scrambles to his feet. Getting his second wind, Dabney is up in a flash to meet him. The two slam into yet another collar and elbow, this time with full competitive aggression. This time, Doubleday steps inside, deftly scoops Kerry up onto his shoulder, and drives him down across the knee with a shoulderbreaker.

DDK:

Dabney with the DAYBREAK! Lateral press for the cover!

Barlow drops down to make the count. As she does, Dabney inexplicably glances over...

...and sees Kerry's leg resting on the bottom rope.

Richard Parker:

WAIT A SEC--

DDK:

Barlow with the count!

One!

TWO!

THR--NO!! Dabney pulls off at the last second!

Doubleday rises up at the last second, looking to the ref while pointing to the rope break she missed.

DDK:

Dabney is pointing out the foot on the rope that the official did not see!

Richard Parker:

What an idiot! WHY would anyone with half a brain sabotage themselves like that?

DDK:

If he's going to win, he wants this to be as clean and honest as possible!

Richard Parker:

UUUGGGHHH, I hate this guy! The goodie-two-shoes act is enough to make me want to puke!

Dabney continues making his case to Barlow, who looks back at him in confusion. Unaware of what has transpired, Kerry recovers, slips up behind Dabney, and puts him into the full nelson.

DDK:

DRAGON SUPLEX!!

Richard Parker:

See what happens when you take your eye off the ball?!

DDK:

Kerry BRIDGES into the pin!

ONE!

TWO!

NO!! Dabney just BARELY got the shoulder up!

Kuroyama promptly rolls Doubleday back into a seated position and slaps on a sleeperhold to squeeze the life out of him. Dabney's arms grasp at the air as he fights for oxygen.

DDK:

Dabney Doubleday has withstood a beating at the hands of PRIME's Five Star Champion, but continues to hang strong in this match!

Richard Parker:

But not for long! I have a feeling this kid is running on fumes by now!

DDK:

Sleeper applied by Kerry Kuroyama, and Dabney Doubleday looks to be fading!

Doubleday's movements begin to slow. Ashley Barlow raises the arm to check if he's still kicking...

...and it drops to the mat!

DDK:

There's one...

Barlow raises the arm again, drops it...

...and it hits the mat for the second time!

Richard Parker:

That's TWO!

Out on the ringside floor, Dougie is slapping the mat to rouse his brother awake. Ami anxiously bites her lip. Kerry's eyes are as intense as they are distant. The official raises the arm for the third and final time...

And let's it go...

...and it--

DDK:

HE GETS THE ARM UP!!

"RRRRRAAAAAAAAAAHHHH!!!"

Richard Parker:

You gotta be kidding me...

Dabney's arms shake vigorously as he fights to stay alive in the match. Slowly, he starts working back onto his feet. Dougie turns to the crowd and begins working them up into a chant.

"DAB-NEY!! DAB-NEY!! DAB-NEY!! DAB-NEY!!"

Not to be outdone, Ami turns to her half of the crowd and does the same.

"KER-RY!! KER-RY!! KER-RY!! KER-RY!!"

DDK:

This capacity crowd is split down the middle, cheering on both characters!

Richard Parker:

To be fair, most of the "Kerry" chants are probably for that dumb koala he has hanging around.

Once on his feet, Dabney tags Kerry's ribs with a pair of elbow shots before breaking free and running himself into the ropes.

DDK:

And Dabney breaks free from the hold! Here he goes into motion once more!

When he comes back, Kuroyama is waiting for an arm drag... but Doubleday blocks, locks up the arm, and goes back-to-back before completing the backslide!

DDK:

BACKSLIDE TO COUNTER! SHOULDERS ARE DOWN!

ONE!

TWO!

THR--NOO!! But he ALMOST had him!

Richard Parker:

Almost, shmalmost! That was nowhere near a three count!

Kuroyama storms back to his feet, quickly catching the rising Dabney with a stiff boot to the gut to double him over, grabs him by the waist, and forcefully slams him face-first into the mat with a textbook Dominator!

DDK:

Kuroyama with the JUDGMENT BOLT BOMB!! Dabney in a world of absolute hurt right now!

Richard Parker:

Which is exactly where we knew he'd be!

DDK:

Kerry rolling him over to make the--SMALL PACKAGE!! SMALL PACKAGE OUT OF NOWHERE!!

ONE!!

TWO!!

THR--GOOD GAWD, THAT WAS CLOSE!!

They scramble to their feet. Dabney swings. Kerry ducks. Doubleday turns around, and in a heartbeat, is back on the mat.

DDK:

YAAAAKUUUZZZAAA ZERO DIRECTOR'S CUT KICK!! Kerry nearly took his head off!

Richard Parker:

Too bad he didn't! It would have been an upgrade in intelligence!

DDK:

Kuroyama looking to capitalize now! He goes to the corner, and he's pushing up to the second rope! We don't see Kerry go for these high risk moves all that often!

Richard Parker:

Sometimes, you gotta go all out to put a punk in his place.

DDK:

The Emerald Apex diving off... NO!! DOUBLEDAY GOT THE LEG UP and the BOOT caught KERRY RIGHT IN THE MUSH!!

Kerry drops to the canvas, flailing in pain while clutching his jaw. Dabney rallies himself back to his feet, quickly pulling Kerry back up to his feet. Kuroyama swings an elbow to the head, but Dabney swiftly ducks, grabs him from behind, and lifts.

DDK:

HOT SEAT ATOMIC DROP BY DABNEY!!

Richard Parker:

You gotta be kidding me! How is he still even in this?!

The Emerald Apex staggers after the impact to his pelvic bone and falls into a corner. Doubleday traps him there, lighting him up with a combination of punches along with a little shucking and jiving.

DDK:

DABNEY WITH THE OL' HAM AND EGGS WITH KERRY TRAPPED IN THE CORNER! He is absolutely taking it to the Five Star Champion right now!

Richard Parker:

Dangit, Kerry, you're supposed to be a CHAMPION! Do NOT let this nerd embarrass all of PRIME!

Dabney takes the stunned Kuroyama by the arm and Irish whips him across the ring. Kerry connects hard against the turnbuckles, but the impact of Dabney Doubleday's boots hits him even harder.

DDK:

DROPKICK IN THE CORNER by Dabney Doubleday!

Richard Parker:

Where does he get the energy?!

DDK:

It's been a rather fast-paced match since the bell, but somehow, Mrs. Doubleday's Perfect Gentlemen is firing on all cylinders!

Kerry drops to the mat and stays there. Dabney quickly scrambles up the near set of turnbuckles.

DDK:

Now DABNEY is going for the high risk... OFF THE TOP...

Richard Parker:

NO!!

DDK:

YES!! RISE AND SHINE FIST DROP CONNECTS!! HE HOOKS THE LEG!

ONE!!

TWO!!

THR--KICKOUT!!

Doubleday quickly gets the Emerald Apex right back up and puts him into a headscissor before he can regain his bearings.

DDK:

Dabney has him back up... DRILLS HIM RIGHT BACK INTO THE MAT with a JUMPING PILEDRIVER!! ANOTHER COVER!! THIS MAY BE IT!!

ONE!!

TWO!!

THRE--KERRY POP'S THE SHOULDER!! SO CLOSE!! I almost thought that it was over!

Sucking wind but seeing his chance to finish things, Doubleday gets back to his feet and hurries over to the corner once again.

DDK:

HE'S GOING UP TOP AGAIN!! I DON'T BELIEVE IT!!

Richard Parker:

This idiot has more guts than brains!

DDK:

FLYING CROSS BODY OFF THE TOP ROPE!! KERRY GOES DOWN--

Not quite...

DDK:

No... HE ROLLS THROUGH!

In an amazing show of strength, Kerry rises back to his feet with Dabney held in his arms. Then, in a single, quick motion, he hoists him up higher.

DDK:

KERRY WITH THE KUROYAMA DRIVER--

But DABNEY SLIPS DOWN HIS BACK!

Richard Parker:

NO WAY! NO FREAKING WAY!

DDK:

DABNEY FROM BEHIND... O'CONNOR ROLL!! SHOULDERS DOWN!!

ONE!!

TWO!!

KICKOUT!!

Dabney pops to his feet and hits the ropes. Kerry rises up, looking for another Squall Line Lariat to stop him in his tracks, but Doubleday slips around and legscissors the arm.

DDK:

CRUCIFIX ROLL-UP!! SHOULDERS DOWN AGAIN!!

ONE!!

TWO!!

THR--NO!!

Kuroyama rolls back to escape the pin...

...but manages to keep Dabney secured to his shoulders as he rises up once more.

DDK:

Wait a minute...

Richard Parker:

That's it!

DDK:

KUROYAMA DRIVER!! THIS TIME HE GOT IT!! KERRY WITH THE PIN!!

ONE!!

TWO!!

THREE!!

DING DING DING

♪ “Blouses Blue” by Konrad OldMoney feat. Sleep Steady ♪

“Blouses Blue” bumps over the PA. Kuroyama sits up, exhausted but triumphant.

Vince Howard:

Ladies and gentlemen, the winner of the match, by pinfall... “THE EMERALD APEX”... KEERRRRRRYYYYYYYYYYY KUUUUURROOOYYAAAAAMMAAAAAA!!!!

Ashley Barlow raises Kerry’s arm in victory as Ami Troy joins him in the ring, handing over his Five Star Title. She pecks him on the cheek for the win, but subsequently slaps him for making her worry. Meanwhile, Dougie enters the ring to check on his brother, who is hurt, but not seriously.

DDK:

What a battle we just witnessed! We knew we were in for a great match with these two in the ring, and I feel they did not disappoint!

Richard Parker:

The right man won. That’s all that matters. If our Five Star Champion were to get embarrassed by that Doubleday twerp, then I’d say PRIME would be dealing with some serious issues.

DDK:

Dabney Doubleday put it all on the line out there, and he has nothing to be ashamed of here tonight. There at the end, there were a few moments where he was SO CLOSE! I feel this could have easily gone either way.

Richard Parker:

If you ask me, Kerry’s losing his touch! There’s no way dumbass Dabney should have given him this much trouble!

DDK:

Well, regardless of how you might feel, the fans certainly enjoyed this back and forth contest between two of modern wrestling’s most technically gifted athletes. What a way to kick off the second half of this event!

With both competitors back on their feet in the ring, they meet up in the center of the ring and respectfully shake hands once more. The PRIME Five Star Champion nods approvingly at Mrs. Doubleday’s perfect gentlemen. “Fair Play” Doubleday likewise slaps the face of his title and tells him to take care of it.

HAYES HANLON (PRIME) vs. BRONSON BOX (DEFIANCE)

A low, heavy riff, and a gigantic black hole on the screen, looming in the deep.

The screen shakes, pulling ever closer to the event horizon, past planets and moons and asteroid belts. Sirens sound, and the PA rattles.

Welcome to the fucking show, DEFIANTS.

"WHEN MY BACK'S TO THE WALLLLL!!!!!"

I!!!

WILL!!

CON!!

QUER!!!

And what a pummeling of the eardrums it is. "Daggers" by We Came as Romans beats the ever-loving-SHIT out of the arena. Planets and moons crack and break as the black hole tears them apart.

And on the ramp, the Event Horizon himself, saunters out in front of a wall of white flashbulbs, his silhouette in broad contrast.

*"I SEE THE MOUNTAIN AHEAD, I FEEL THE THUNDER ROAR!
I SEE THE FURY WITHIN, BUT LOUDER THAN BEFORE!!!"*

Darren Quimbey:

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! Our next match is scheduled for *one fall!* Introducing first, representing PRIME. A *Triple Crown Winner*, an Intense Champion! A *Five Star Champion!*

The combatant steps onto the ramp with slow, measured strides; a sneer on his face behind a gleaming dark mustache. Broad and in black trunks, black boots. Hair slicked back and absolutely *glowing*.

Darren Quimbey:

A TWO. TIME. **UNIVERSAL CHAMPION.**

He makes it to the ring, stepping inside. Climbing the ropes, he shoots his chest out toward the crowd, arms out wide.

And his T-shirt?

It reads: **DEF-INITELY NOT PRIME**

"DRAWWW! THE!! DAGGERR!!!!!"

Darren Quimbey:

And PRIME *Hall of FAMER...* HAAYYESS!!!

"WHEN MY BACK'S TO THE WALLLLL!!!"

I!!!

WILL!!

CON!!

QUER!!!

Darren Quimbey:
HANNNNLLONN!!!!!!

The Event Horizon hops down from the ropes, and tears that t-shirt off, tossing it into the stands. He makes the rounds from post to post. Jackin', jawin', throwing up grin to any PRIME faithful, and a lewd gesture to any signage supporting DEFIANCE.

That is...

...until the arena goes completely black.

["Cat People" \(Putting Out Fire\) by David Bowie](#)

The mysterious entrance music takes most by surprise.

But the true DEFIANCE Faithful, they know. Whether it's the man in black, a long dead rag time pianist or this, the starman... over the years he's come out to several tracks. Each and every song burned into the cerebellums of hardcore wrestling fans all across the globe. No matter which, no matter the match, big or small...

The Wargod Cometh.

As Bowie's voice melts all over the fans in attendance, flickering sepia images start across the big screen. Images of wrestling luminaries from over the last fifteen plus years that have graced a DEFIANCE Wrestling... all locked in bloody, violent battle. Dan Ryan, absolutely covered in blood with glass protruding from his forehead. Cancer Jiles locked in an Iron Claw with blood trickling down his face. Eric Dane's entire head shoved through the front grill of a car. Lindsay Troy grimacing, getting the skin of her forehead raked off via the wall of a steel cell.

Innumerable faces start flitting across the screen, all experiencing a different form of brutal torture at the hands of one unhinged madman... then, each image starts showing only ONE form of torture... a disgusting, rusty metal Spike jabbed recklessly into each of their foreheads.

***AND I'VE BEEN PUTTING OUT FIRES...
WITH GASOLIIIIIIIIIIINE!***

As David Bowie's voice hits that sustained high note four GIANT plums of fire erupt from the stage casting a sudden white hot brightness across the crowd

RAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!

Already standing out on the stage is the wide, bemuscled, brutal looking Original DEFIANT.

Darren Quimbey:

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN... now making his way to the ring. He is a two time FIST of DEFIANCE! He's a DAY ONE DEF superstar, competing in the first match on the first card the company ever held... he was the man who unified the DEFIANCE Heavyweight Crown and the WfWA World title! He is one of the most polarizing professional wrestlers to ever lace up a pair of boots! He is a DEFIANCE Hall of Famer! Fifteen YEARS of defining what it means to be DEFIANT! Ladies and gentlemen... the singular... *BRONSON. BOX.*

As the other Darren finishes his spiel another set of HUGE plumes of fire erupt from the stage.

Richard Parker:

Little more *hoots-pah* than Mr. Box's usual entrance, huh?

DDK:

Bronson said to me earlier, and I quote *"if this pointless bollocks of a show is all on PRIME's dime, why the expletive not, let's give 'em a show that'll break the expletive bank"* end quote. Clearly said with more colorful language.

Richard Parker:

Not as many bells and whistles a Henry Keyes. Bowe can't come cheap, though.

Bronson and referee "Buffalo" Brian Slater have intense words.

Brian Slater:

We're playing under PRIME's rulebook, Bronson... you're on a short leash, *remember that*.

Box pushes past Slater to just launch himself at Hanlon.

DING DING

And in a flash, Box is after Hanlon . A compact flurry of fists pushing the bigger man into the corner, and putting him on his heels. A knee to Hanlon's side drops him low, and an axe handle swing to the lower back, drops him lower. The Wargod hoists the Event Horizon up in an impressive display of strength, and drops him across his knee with a backbreaker.

DDK:

He's softening him up for the Boston Massacre, Richard! A maneuver, for those unaware, he SCALPED from the man he won his first World title from so many years ago now.

Richard Parker:

Can't say I blame him after Hanlon's actions and choice works about DEFIANCE, but Box better stay on his game. Hayes is a pretty, pretty man, but he's a bazooka in that ring.

Box guides Hayes to his feet, and whips him viciously into the corner. Hayes slams heavily into the turnbuckle, only to find Bronson following in close, hopping onto the bottom ropes..

...and CHOMPING into Hanlon's nose.

Richard Parker:

Jesus!

DDK:

Welcome to DEFIANCE, Hayes!

Slater warns Box while Hayes howls in pain, but the Event Horizon shoves Box hard in the chest, sending him to the mat on his back. Hayes crouches in the corner, hand on his nose, but Box is quick to his feet, booting Hayes once, twice, putting him on his ass, before scraping his boot across the PRIME Hall of Famer's face.

DDK:

And more pain from the Wargod!

Bronson moves to drive a knee forward into the Comeback Kid's face, but Hanlon makes the smart decision, rolling out of the ring, checking his nose for blood and strolling around the apron. The War God shouts and beckons the younger bastard to get back in. Reluctantly, Hayes rolls back in, quick to his feet.

Richard Parker:

Don't get rattled, kid!

They circle, and lock up. Hanlon drives Box into the corner, using his size. A chop to the chest, and another, but a European uppercut from below catches him in the chin. The Event Horizon reels, holding his jaw and turning back toward center-ring. Box advances, wrapping up Hayes in a cobra clutch, and joists all 271 pounds of PRIME beef into the air and cracking him across the knee.

OOOOOOOOOOOHHHH!

DDK:

Cobra clutch backbreaker! Box has Hanlon ALL out of sorts!

Indeed, Hammerin' Hayes escapes the ring again, holding his back. His eyes are wide at the strength this short, stout, angry man possesses, and he's in no rush to return.

But Box doesn't wanna play this game all night.

The Starmaker slides to the floor, and Hanlon backpedals. Box runs up on the younger man, and delivers a wicked chop across his chest. Hayes groans and holds his chest, but Box does not relent. Another chop. An overhand across the shoulder blades. Box is going to TOWN on PRIME's newest Hall of Fame inductee. The Wargod relents with a huff, taking a few steps back, then charges in, looking to fly a knee into the gut of Home Run Hayes.

But all finds are steel steps.

OOOOOOOOOOOOHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

Hayes manages to sidestep and propel Box with a shove, sending the dense Scotsman crashing into the diamond-plated steel. Bronson stirs, eye turning red, while Hayes clambers himself back into the ring. He waves his hand at the ref, demanding he start the count while he recovers against the ropes.

But it's no use. Box is already on his feet, and VERY unimpressed.

DDK:

Your boy better be careful, Richard!

Hayes, eyes darting, can only think of one thing to change the momentum. So he starts jogging in place.

Box steps to the apron. Hanlon shakes his big arms, and nods his head. Box steps through the ropes, and the Event Horizon barrels forward...

...and absolutely DECAPITATES the Wargod with a lariat, somersaulting out and crashing into the turnbuckle, upside down with his feet on the ropes, shoulders against the mat.

Richard Parker:

I can say the same for Box!!

The opponents stir. Box shakes his head, teeth grit. Hayes awkwardly rolls to pull his feet from the ropes, finding himself on all fours. The older man wins the race before Hanlon can find his footing, and it's a painful realization for the young two-time Universal Champion when Bronson's boot lands hard into his ribs.

OOOOOOOOOOOHHH!!

Hanlon howls, rolling back and finding the corner, seated against the post. Bronson chases him in, stomping away at his guts, then drives the sole of his boot into Hanlon's very pretty, very handsome face.

Richard Parker:

Watch his mustache! It's his secret weapon!!!

The boot drag leaves Hayes a little breathless after Box finally pulls his foot away. Box grips Hanlon under the armpits, draping his arms over the top ropes and in a half-squatted position.

The perfect height for a headbutt.

WHACK

Hanlon's head whips back.

WHACK

Another.

WHACK

And another.

And of course, it wouldn't be Bronson Box without the teeth.

The Wargod grabs Hayes about the head, and sinks his chompers into the Event Horizon's hairline. Hayes cries out, a trickle of blood descending down his temple. Box lets go, and yanks Hayes to his feet, pulling him to center-ring. A forearm to the back of the head keeps Hayes in place, bent over at the waist. Box runs into the ropes, rebounding hard.

DDK:

Box going for a lariat!

Richard Parker:

NOT TODAY!

Instead, Hayes stays low and catches Box on the run, standing upright swiftly and tilting, before crushing him to the mat with massive, giant, delayed Samoan drop that makes the ring fucking SHAKE.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOHHHHH!!!!

The crowd rises. Box stirs. Hanlon's big chest heaves from the mat. Energized, the Comeback Kid kips to his feet, blood still trickling from his forehead. Feeding off the roaring crowd, Hayes throws his arms out with a roar. Then takes hold of the Starmaker.

We have an order for a scoop slam?

BOOM

Make it a double.

BOOM

Wait wait, I have room for a *triple*.

BOOM

ONE MORE FOR GOOD MEASURE!

BOOOOOMMM

Hayes rears up, his jaw jacking, spitting through his mustache. Box is doozy, and Hayes steps away...

...to start his at-bat routine.

Richard Parker:

Take a good look! Hayes is going for the walk-off!!!

Home Run Hayes waggles his imaginary bat, and digs his "cleats" into the "dirt." Box gets to a knee. Hayes points his "bat" to center field. Box stands, and Hayes takes his batting position. Bronson turns with a stumble, and Hayes goes for the swing.

Richard Parker:

SWING!!!

DDK:

AND A MISS!!

Box manages to duck underneath the double-axe handle home-rung swing from Hanlon, who, after connecting with nothing but air, turns with a touch of confusion...

...just in time to meet the God's Fiery Right Hand.

Bronson's claws sink deep into Hanlon's scalp. More blood starts trickling down his face. Box is RELENTLESS, forcing Hanlon to a knee. He howls and roars, eyes wide until blood finds their way in.

Richard Parker:

I've seen Hayes in some ROUGH situations. Ivan, Jason Snow, but I don't know if he was prepared for someone like Bronson Box. C'MON, HAYES!

Eyes darting and desperate Hayes does the only thing he can possibly think to do...

...and starts untying Boxer's boot?

Richard Parker:

What in the...

Box keeps the claw hold intact, but looks down in confusion. He kicks away, keeping Hayes from tampering, and its enough to distract the Starmaker and relent on his grip. Hayes takes the moment and SLAMS an elbow into Box's knee, forcing him to stumble. In desperation, Hayes dives for Bronson's legs, and manages a single leg takedown, and turns him slowly into a Tequila Sunrise.

Richard Parker:

NORTHWEST NECKTIE!!! HAYES HAS IT!

Box writhes and squirms, and Hayes holds on for dear life. That said, knowing that a submission maneuver against an angry Scottish brick is NOT the play, he uses a free hand to keep untying his boot, and manages to peel it off his foot.

Oh, what have we here?

A spike, fallen to the mat.

DDK:

Bronson's spike! How did Hayes know!?

Richard Parker:

He's a student of the game, bay-bay!

Hayes releases the Wargod, and both men scramble to retrieve the spike. Youth, and reach, win the day, and Hammerin' Hanlon takes it in his grasp. In a, let's say, DEFIANT moment, Hayes makes sure that referee Slater sees him with the famed spike in hand...

...and then CLONKS the blunt-end over Bronson's head.

OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOHHHHHHHH!!!

Blood sprays. Box is loopy. And Slater doesn't hesitate.

DING DING DING... DING DING DING DING DING

Bell ringing, Hanlon lunges forward for more, and PLONKS the Spike into Boxer's forehead a couple more times for good measure as the bell dings on and on.

Hayes Hanlon:
DEF-INTELY NOT PRIME!!!

Slater pulls Hanlon back, but Hayes acquiesces quickly, tossing the Spike down at Boxer's feet while the Wargod's music picks up. The Event Horizon, beaten, bloody, and shaken, removes himself from the ring, eyes wide as he drags himself up the ramp. Boxer, a pile of piss, vinegar, and rage, sits in the corner with blood just POURING from his head.

Darren Quimbey:
Ladies and gentlemen, the winner of this exhibition match, by *disqualification*... THE BOMBASTIC...
BROOOOONSON BOOOOOX!

Slater doesn't even think about hoisting Boxer's arm, he knows the Wargod too well for that bullshit. He knows the mood Boxer will be in. This wasn't a "win" in the DEF Hall of Famers book.

DDK:
A reluctant win for our Wargod, and maybe a wake-up call for the PRIME Hall of Famer, wouldn't you say, Rich?

Richard Parker:
No comment there, but certainly a different kind of animal than our Hayes Hanlon has come across.

DDK:
Stick around! We'll be right back!

Richard Parker:
More to come from IMMORTALS!

BRANGE STEADFELLOWS

DDK: Up next, folks, we've got a contest that has gone through some last minute changes.

Richard Parker: Card subject to change and all that.

DDK: This was originally supposed to be The Honor Society – a combination of Ned Reform and his protegee TA Cole – against the combination of Ria Lockhart and Scott Hunter.

Richard Parker: I'm sure DEFIANCE and PRIME fans were equally upset to find out Ned lost his partner.

DDK: Actually, DEFIANCE fans have taken to Reform quite well recently...

Richard Parker: ...seriously?

DDK: Anyway, after Levi Cole was attacked and injured, Reform found himself partnerless. At the DEFy awards on December 31, he reached out for an unlikely ally and... well, let's head backstage.

Backstage in front of a banner, Lance Warner stands with mic in hand. To his right is Ned Reform. To his left is Pat Cassidy. Both are dressed for combat.

Lance Warner: That's right Darren. I'm here with two men who will team up to represent DEFIANCE tonight. Mr. Cassidy, Mr. Reform...

Ned Reform: ...DOCTOR Reform, Bachelor's Degree.

Warner ignores that.

Lance Warner: The two of you are, to be blunt, a very unlikely tag team. You're facing Ria and Scott Hutner, two people well known to be good friends. Are you both ready to combat that team synergy?

Ned Reform: Are we ready to.... My God, Warner, somehow you've managed to be even worse at this than you are at commentary. Quite the feat. OF COURSE we're prepared. You don't think I've spent weeks watching tapes? Learning my opponents every move! Frankly, I may indeed know Ria and Mr. Hunter better than they know themselves at this point. I will defeat them, Mr. Warner. Not only for DEFIANCE, but because I know it was those two who attacked and put Mr. Cole on the shelf. Vengeance, as they say, is a dish best served cold.

Lance Warner: And you, Mr. Cassidy...

Cassidy snatches the mic out of Warner's hand.

Pat Cassidy: I only talk to Christine Zane, Wah-nah.

In protest, the DEFIANCE announcer folds his arms.

Pat Cassidy: I don't care what shitbag ovah here's reasons ah. I'm here fah one reason only: to prove that I still belong in this company. DEFIANCE has given me so much ovah the yeahs, and tonight I fight for them. I got nothing against Ria or Scott, but a fight's a fight, and tonight they're both in fah one. That's for damn sure.

He hands the mic back to Warner.

Lance Warner: While I've got you, I wanted to ask about the incident at the DEFy awards...

Pat Cassidy: Fuck off, Wahnah.

And Cassidy walks out of frame. Reform smirks, putting a hand on Lance's shoulder.

Lance Warner: Well, about you, Ned... earlier we saw you finally get what you've promised when you cornered Reverend Black...

Ned Reform: It's not often Mr. Cassidy and I agree. He is not exactly one of the great philosophers of our time. But in this rare instance: yes. What he said.

And Reform goes to. Sighing, Warner turns to the camera.

Lance Warner: Back to you guys.

SCOTT HUNTER & RIA (PRIME) vs. DOCTOR NED REFORM & LEVI COLE (DEFIANCE)

DDK:

And there you have it. Representing DEFIANCE is an unlikely duo... facing off a pair of undeniably good friends.

Richard Parker:

Don't like your chances, Darren.

DDK:

I wouldn't count them out just yet...

"RATATATA" by BABYMETAL and Electric Callboy blasts over the arena speakers. Pink and blue lights pulsate throughout in exact time with the beat of the music. As the vocals kick in...

*EVERY NIGHT WHEN THE SKY TURNS RED UP ABOVE
I FEEL THE BEAT IN MY VEINS, AND I'M SEARCHING FOR LOVE
YOU KNOW THAT HIPS DON'T LIE, I LEAVE YOU HYPNOTIZED
JUST GIVE ME ONE MORE TRY TO MAKE YOU FEEL THAT VIBE*

*WHEN IT GOES
(RA-TA-TA-TA-TA-TA)
MY BODY IS A WEAPON*

*(RA-TA-TA-TA-TA-TA) WE'RE GONNA HIT THE FLOOR
(RA-TA-TA-TA-TA-TA) WE'RE GONNA MAKE IT HAPPEN
(RA-TA-TA-TA-TA-TA) NOW GIMME SOME MORE*

Ria Lockhart and Scott Hunter emerge through the curtain onto the stage. The Psychoberry has her trademark heart-shaped glasses on and an exaggerated cadet cap. Scott is resplendent in his typical yellow-and-blue, with a sparkly blue sequin jacket on.

Ria trots to one side of the stage, waving her arms and encouraging the crowd to get louder, which they do.

Scott jogs to the other side, pulls a small 'cannon' from his jacket, and fires blue and yellow streamers into the air over the crowd.

As the second verse begins, they meet in the middle of the stage, share a fist bump, and start heading down to the ring.

Vince Howard:

The following contest is a tag team match scheduled for one fall! Representing PRIME, at a combined weight of 405 pounds! RIAAAA LOOCKHAAART and SSSSCOOOOTTTT HUUNTER!!!!

DDK:

Interestingly, all four competitors in this match have a history in both companies. Scott Hunter and Ria Lockhart have both wrestled for DEFIANCE, just as Ned Reform and Pat Cassidy have wrestled on PRIME television.

Richard Parker:

We call that flip flopping. Wishy washy. Playing both sides of the fence.

DDK:

I have to say, I like how you challenge my ideas. The difference between us gives us our distinct voices and adds a

little something to the banter... I can't quite put my finger on it.

Richard Parker:

It's probably because I'm not that dork you usually commentate with.

As Ria and Hunter enter the ring and exchange one final round of fist bumps...

"Fur Elise" by Cole Roland

The house lights turn purple as the IMMORTALITES in attendance erupt in a... well, a rather mixed reaction. One might imagine that the PRIME-centered fans still consider this man, who has spent several weeks insulting them, a huge tool... while DEFIANCE has embraced him as "their dickhead." Either way, the fans aren't quiet as The Good Doctor... The Sage on the Stage... The Philosopher King... The Mad Gadfly... Ned Reform appears from the back. Dressed in usual wrestling gear – purple singlet, black kneepads and black boots – and wearing his "VERITAS" graduation sash and black "Mad Gadfly" t-shirt, Reform saunters out to pause at the top of the ramp. Slowly, and with purpose, his gaze scans the arena... his countenance giving no indication of his feelings on the reaction.

Vince Howard:

And their opponents... introducing first, from New Haven, Connecticut, and weighing in a 226 lbs... NED! REFORM!

While half the arena is jeering, the other half chimes in with a remarkably well organized chant...

THAT'S DOCTOR NED REFORM!

Reform allows himself a smirk at the show of support before slowly walking down the ramp and toward the ring.

Richard Parker:

Wow. They really do like this guy.

DDK:

It's taken some getting used to, I have to admit. But his mission to transform Reverend Erik Black back into Rezin is playing a big part in it... a mission he may have succeeded in...

Richard Parker:

Only rumor and innuendo at this point. We don't know that.

Reform stops at the end of the ramp. He points at Ria and Scott in the ring, running his mouth but not close enough to a mic for us to know what he's saying. He remains outside the ring as his music fades away to be replaced by...

"Blood" by The Dropkick Murphys

Now the house light dims slightly, accented by swirls of dark blue. As The Dropkick Murphys echo throughout the arena, Reform turns to look back at the entrance way... expecting the appearance of his tag team partner. But the music continues to play, and Cassidy doesn't appear.

Richard Parker:

Cold feet?

DDK:

"Black Out" Pat Cassidy is a man of the people. He likes to be among them...

On cue, the camera cuts to the stands, where Pat Cassidy has appeared through an elevated arena entrance. A spotlight shines on him, alerting the rest of the arena to his presence. As he receives a rowdy reaction, he taps his fist against his chest a few times before beginning a light sprint down the steps as the fans reach out and try to get them a handful.

Vince Howard:

...and his tag team partner. From Boston, Massachusetts... weighing in at 242 lbs... PAT! CAAAAASSSSIDY!

DDK:

It's good to see Cassidy in high spirits. That man has had a heck of a month.

Richard Parker:

Trouble in paradise?

DDK:

Something like that.

Cassidy leaps the barricade and unlike his partner, he rolls right into the ring. As Reform gets up on the apron and scowls, Cassidy offers fist bumps to both Ria and Hunter before jumping up to the top rope and raising his arms to the cheering fans.

DDK:

Good sportsmanship. As a man once said, you love to see it.

Both teams go to their respective corners to warm up as Hector Nevarro steps through the ropes.

DDK:

Hector Nevarro is DEFIANCE's most tenured tag team wrestling specialist official. Pat Cassidy is one half of the longest reigning DEFIANCE tag team champions of all time, so these two are no strangers to each other.

Richard Parker:

How's that team doing nowadays?

DDK:

Point.

Richard Parker:

There just better not be any favoritism...

DDK:

No way. Hector is a pro.

Nevarro checks with both teams. When he gets word they're a go, he signals...

DING DING

The crowd buzzes as Pat Cassidy and Scott Hunter step forward to start for their respective teams. The two begin to circle each other, giving each other space and also looking for an opening. Finally, they charge together in the center and lock up! The pair jockey for position and find themselves at a stalemate for some time, until the Boston native is able to get a little leverage and slowly force Scott back into a corner. However, Hunter doesn't stay there for very long, as he's quickly able to slip around Cassidy to sync in a hammerlock. As they move back toward the center, Cassidy swings momentum by reaching back and wrapping Hunter in a headlock. Cassidy tightens it, but Hunter uses his weight to drive Cassidy back into the ropes and then shoot him off in the opposite direction. On the rebound: Hunter ducks down to allow Pat to run over him. Again on the rebound: a leapfrog. As Cassidy hits the ropes for a third time, Hunter readies himself to drop the Saturday Night Special with something... but we'll never know what, because Pat uses the top rope to stop his momentum. Both men stare at each other. Cassidy offers a polite golf clap.

DDK:

I can promise you that young man knows how to have a good time in any situation.

Richard Parker:

His partner, on the other hand...

Reform is NOT happy with this light-hearted fun. He leans over the rope and barks at Cassidy while extending his arm. Cassidy shrugs and makes the tag.

DDK:

Don't forget, Reform believes that Scott Hunter and RIA were behind the attack on his partner, Levi Cole.

The Good Doctor also locks up with Hunter, but much more aggressively. This doesn't go his way, however, as he finds himself taken down to the mat with a drop toe-hold. Hunter floats over into a headlock, keeping Reform grounded.

DDK:

Hunter looking to keep Ned down... but Reform fights back to his feet... looks to counter with a back suplex...

Richard Parker:

Nope! Hunter lands on his feet!

Hunter hits the ropes... but runs right into a back elbow that sends him to the canvas! Reform brings Hunter into the corner where he stuns him with a few kicks. Ned tries to whip Hunter into the opposite corner, but the member of Vae Victis reverses and instead whips his opponent into the turnbuckle.

DDK:

Reform hits hard... he flips up and over!

Landing on the ring apron, Reform stumbles forward in a daze. Hunter reaches over the top rope and hooks him for a suplex that will bring back in the ring that hard way... but when he lifts The Mad Gadfly into the air, Reform counters and slips out, landing behind Hunter. Both arms hook Scott Hunter for an attempted German suplex, but Hunter is able to grab the ropes and prevent it. Instead, he throws all his weight backwards and sends Ned off him and tumbling to the mat.

DDK:

Scott Hunter charges with a clothesline... no, Reform ducks!

Richard Parker:

On the rebound... spinning heel kick!

DDK:

Reform with the first cover of this contest!

ONE!

Richard Parker:

Not even a one count. You'll need more than that.

Both men scramble to their feet and lock eyes. Sneering, Reform points to RIA and makes the "tag in" pantomime. Hunter looks to RIA, who eagerly reaches out her hand for a piece of The Sage on the Stage. Hunter obliges with the tag! RIA leaps over the top rope and meets Reform in the center. Mockingly, she points to her face with a smirk – tapping her finger against it.

DDK:

Is she challenging Ned to take a free shot?

Richard Parker:

NOW who's "defiant"?

Reform sneers, rearing back his right hand for a punch... but RIA ducks... and answers with a back elbow to the mush that ROCKS Ned! He stumbles right into a snap suplex! Lockhart with the cover!

ONE!

Reform gets the shoulder up.

RIA brings Reform into her team's corner and unloads on him with some stiff-as-hell kicks. Nevarro intervenes, reminding her that beating on someone in the corner is technically against the rules. RIA obliges, stepping backwards... and prompting The Good Doctor to stumble, punch-drunk, out of the corner. He swings his fist widely before face planting into the canvas.

DDK:

RIA has Reform in a compromised position... she's looking for a running knee drop... no! Reform moves and her knee meets the ring!

She grabs her knee in pain but she has enough ring awareness to know she has to get back up... only for Ned to charge with a chopblock right to said knee and knock her back down!

Richard Parker:

Reform is a shark who smells blood... he has a target now.

Reform positions RIA's knee on the middle rope before leaping up and bringing all his weight down on it, causing her to cry out in pain.

Richard Parker:

Smart strategy. Take out the knee of RIA, and you take out a good chunk of her more brutal offense.

Reform tosses RIA into his team's corner and tags in Pat Cassidy, who enters the ring and begins to rain down some big right hands. Before Nevarro can admonish him, Cassidy lays RIA over the top rope. Grabbing her legs, he walks backwards until he extends her whole body over the mat... and drops her with a sharp kick to the stomach! Bringing her back to a vertical base, Cassidy hooks her for a Pumphandle Slam... but she counters into a Russian Leg Sweep! As soon as they hit the mat, RIA floats over into the mounted position and begins to PUMMEL Cassidy with stiff shot after stiff shot!

Richard Parker:

Welcome back to PRIME!

DDK:

Isten, I can attest that Pat Cassidy can brawl with the best of them... but he's more of a bull in a China shop. RIA is clearly more surgical in those strikes. He MAY be in over his head here!

Finally, she lets off and rolls off Cassidy, drawing a round of applause from the fans in attendance for her intensity. Cassidy sits up and wipes his lip... he's by no means "busted open," but he does have a trickle of blood flowing down from his lip, and the noticeable beginnings of a black eye. He looks up at RIA... and smiles. He mouths something, and the camera is close enough for us to pick it up.

Pat Cassidy:

Game on.

And he's up! And he's in RIA's face! And the crowd explodes as the two EXPLODE into a flurry of traded shots! They keep this up for a good thirty seconds until it becomes clear that RIA is getting the better of the exchange.

Richard Parker:

Like you said, Darren... Cassidy's good at those big rights, but RIA's coming at him with forearms, kicks, elbows...

she's just a better striker.

Cassidy begins to make less shots and is noticeable swaying.

RAAAAAAAAAAAAAH!

Just when we think he's about to go down... Cassidy catches RIA off guard with a SNAP HEADBUTT! Down she goes!

DDK:

...she may be, but when it comes to being in a scrap, I wouldn't bet on anyone over Pat!

Cassidy, still shaken, stumbles back into his corner and tags in Ned. Reform rushes into the ring to grab RIA's leg and drag her backwards, preventing her from tagging out. One back suplex later, and Ned Reform is firmly in control. To really push his dominance, he plants RIA in the center and locks in the deadliest hold known to man: the chinlock.

As RIA's arm flail and she searches for escape, Scott Hunter leans over the top to cheer her on. He also stomps his foot on the apron, and it doesn't take long before the DEFPRIME Faithful are clapping in sync with his stomping. Reform looks around, annoyed at this... and he grows even more annoyed when he sees his own partner clapping!

Richard Parker:

Who's side IS he on, anyway?

DDK:

I think he's just excited.

With the clapping of the arena under her, RIA slowly powers up and fights her way out of Reform's chinlock. Trying to maintain control, Reform tries to whip her into the ropes, but she reverses! Reform hits the ropes, and on the rebound he runs right into the Berry Bomber! Reform is stunned and RIA lunges forward to tag in Scott Hunter!

Richard Parker:

Scott Hunter in and running wild!

Hunter chop blocks Reform to the mat and begins to target the knee with shots. He extends Reform's leg before dropping an elbow right into the joint!

DDK:

And now Scott Hunter appears to be readying Ned Reform for his premier maneuver: The Figure Four.

After working over the knee some more, Hunter takes Reform down with a delayed vertical suplex. Hunter stands over Reform, extending the leg. The fans buzz as they know what's coming – Hunter is about to lock in the Figure Four, but Reform quickly scurries away and grips the bottom rope for safety. Hunter measures Reform and he hits the ropes, looking to come back on the rebound with something big... but Cassidy pulls down the top rope as he hits them, and Hunter flips over and spills to the outside!

DDK:

Cassidy whips Hunter into the barricade! And then he rolls him back into the ring!

Hector Nevarro scolds Pat, but the damage has been done. Reform has had time to get his bearings, and he drops the stunned Hunter with a Fameasser. Reform pops up and grins toward the audience – half cheer, and half boo. Ned points to the top rope and the reaction intensifies.

DDK:

Ned Reform is likely looking for one of his signature maneuvers... a top rope elbow drop he calls the Scholar and Elbow!

Ned climbs to the top. He stands up straight, taking a second to look around the arena and take in the moment. With a grin, he taps a single finger against his head... before leaping off and driving an elbow into the heart of Scott Hunter! He covers!

ONE!

TWO!

THRR – NO! RIA breaks the count!

As Nevarro shuffles her out, Reform rolls over and tags in Cassidy. Pat enters the ring, grabbing Hunter by the head and whipping him into the corner. Cassidy takes position in the opposite corner and gets a running start, leaping up with his corner splash he calls the Splash of Jameson...

...but Hunter moves!

Richard Parker:

Cassidy eats turnbuckle!

DDK:

Hunter with a big flying forearm! He hooks the leg!

ONE!

TWO!

Close kick out!

Hunter brings Cassidy to his team's corner, and he nails him with some knees to the gut before tagging in RIA. RIA enters and picks up right where Hunter left off with stiff kicks to the body. RIA tags out – Hunter with kicks. Hunter tags out – RIA with kicks!

DDK:

That's some tandem offense you won't see out of Cassidy and Reform – this could be the difference maker!

Richard Parker:

Only one of these teams are friends!

Finally, RIA tags Hunter, who ends the onslaught and instead drops Cassidy with a delayed vertical suplex. He takes position over him, extends the leg... and locks in the Figure Four!

Richard Parker:

The move he invented, I'm told.

DDK:

What's that now?

Cassidy cries out in pain, reaching for the sky, but finding no reprieve from the pain on his knee. When he drops down flat a few times, Nevarro moves in to make the count but both times Cassidy gets his shoulders up. Eventually, Cassidy plants himself and fires up, trying to turn the move over and reverse the pressure. Hunter's eyes nearly bug as he shakes his head no and tries to stop the move... but slowly... slowly... ever so slowly... he does!

DDK:

And now the pressure is on Hunter!

...

DDK:

Aren't you going to say, "that's right Darren?"

Richard Parker:

Why the hell would I do that?

DDK:

Uh... you know, I'm not sure.

Now Hunter is the one reaching for the ropes as Navarro checks on whether or not he wants to give up. Hunter grabs his own hair in frustration as Cassidy shakes his head up and down as he increases the pressure. Finally, Hunter digs down deep...

Richard Parker:

And now HUNTER looking to reverse and put the pressure back on Pat Cassidy!

Again... slowly... slowly... Hunter gets it over! Now Cassidy cries out in pain, but he's close enough to the ropes to reach out and grab the bottom one. Navarro tells Hunter to break the hold, but he's still in control. At least, he was... until Cassidy rolls under the ropes and to the apron. Hunter reaches over the ropes to grab him, but Cassidy surprises him with a hotshot! When Hunter falls backwards, Cassidy reaches into the ring and grabs the legs of Hunter, pulling him forward and slamming his leg into the ringpost!

DDK:

Outside the ring is often where Pat Cassidy is most comfortable.

Cassidy pulls Hunter out of the ring and stuns him further by bouncing his head off the ringsteps. A boot to the gut later, and Cassidy sets Hunter up for a piledriver!

Richard Parker:

Is he trying to kill him??

DDK:

I have to agree – this seems extreme!

Never fear, dear reader: Pat Cassidy has never hit that piledriver on the outside and he likely never will. Hunter fights out and back body drops Cassidy onto the unforgiving floor! That move gives Hunter some time to recover as a hurting Cassidy tries to get back to his feet as quickly as he can. Finally, he does... but...

DDK:

OH MAN! RIA WITH A SUICIDE DIVE OUTTANOWHERE! Where did she come from??

Cassidy is wiped out! Reform runs around the ring in an attempt to help, but Hunter cuts him off. Meanwhile, RIA rolls Cassidy back in the ring. She measures him and as he slowly climbs back to his feet, RIA leaps off the ropes with a springboard Kneemotional Damage right to the face!!! Hunter slides back in the ring and hooks the leg in a cover!

Richard Parker:

This is it!!

ONE!

TWO!

THREE – REFORM BREAKS UP THE COUNT AT THE VERY LAST SECOND!

Richard Parker:

And it's breaking down!!

Indeed! With all four competitors in the ring, it's become a total donnybrook! Hunter and Reform pair off while RIA continues to kick away at a downed Cassidy. Eventually, RIA turns her attention and she and Hunter blindside Reform. They drop him with a double suplex!

DDK:

And Scott Hunter is telling RIA to head up top!

The fans are on their feet as RIA climbs the turnbuckle. She stands up straight, measuring the downed Cassidy... but out of nowhere, Ned Reform shoves her off the top to the outside!!

Richard Parker:

That was a HARD landing! Ned Reform may have just turned the tide of this match!

Hunter goes after Ned, lighting him up with chops to the chest. Reform is backed into the corner where he takes more chops. With Ned leaning against the turnbuckle, Hunter steps up onto the second rope and begins to unload on Ned with some big right hands! The fans know how to count!

ONE! TWO! THREE! FOUR! FIVE! SIX! SEVEN! EIGHT! NINE!

OOOOOHHHHH..

Just as the fans prepare for the big tenth punch...

DDK:

Reform counters. He charges forward and drops Hunter face-first onto the turnbuckle!

Hunter, holding his jaw in pain, turns around... right into a running flying headbutt by Ned Reform!!

DDK:

He calls that the Equivocator!

Hunter goes down, and Reform lands in a seated position. He looks outside to RIA – still stunned from the big tumble. He looks over to Hunter – laying on the mat and trying to shake the cobwebs out. He grins to himself as he slowly climbs to his feet. He leans forward, stalking Scott Hunter. As Hunter slowly gets back to a vertical base, Reform is there like a predator, poised and ready to strike. When Hunter is back up, he's greeted by a boot to the gut and Reform hooks him from his version of the brainbuster: The Syllabuster.

DDK:

If Ned Reform drops Scott Hunter on his head, all he has to do is put Cassidy on top and this one is going to be over!

Richard Parker:

Come on, Hunter!

Reform lifts Hunter into the air...

...and he DOES come down, but...

...not the way Ned wants! Hunter slips down the back...

...and neckbreaker puts The Good Doctor down!

Richard Parker:

That's it! End this, Hunter!

DDK:

PRIME is closing in on the victory!

With Reform down, Hunter turns his attention to the legal man: Pat Cassidy. He grabs him by the leg and drags him to the center. Holding Cassidy's leg out, he looks around the arena with eyes wide.

DDK:

Another Figure Four attempt incoming!

Hunter steps over, and reaches down to complete locking in the hold...

DDK:

Wait!! Cassidy with a surprise small package!!

ONE!

TWO!

Hunter struggles, but Cassidy has it locked in tight!

THREE!!

DING DING DING

DDK:

Out of nowhere! Cassidy steals one!

Richard Parker:

Gotta give it to him – that was smart wrestling.

Navarro raises Cassidy's hand as his theme begins to play. Reform stands up, hearing the music and breaking out into a smile. He walks over to Pat and extends his hand... and receives a double bird in response!

DDK:

And they may have won this contest, but there's still no love lost between these two men!

Cassidy rolls out of the ring... and he spots Scott Hunter, who is helping RIA up and speaking words of encouragement to her. Cassidy walks over to the timekeeper, reaching under the table and producing a cooler. He opens it and pulls out two cans of Ballyhoo Brew. He walks up to Hunter and RIA. Hunter tenses, but Cassidy simply offers them the beers! Hunter nods and takes them.

Richard Parker:

A show of respect? Huh.

DDK:

The man appreciates a good fight – and this was a heck of a contest. Both these teams gave it to each other as good as they got, and it really could have gone either way.

In the ring, Ned Reform is beside himself that RIA and Hunter got the respect he was denied. But he'll have to deal with that another time, because it's time for the show to go elsewhere.

SOHER OPEN CHALLENGE: URIEL CORTEZ (C) (DEFIANCE) vs. ??? (???)

DDK:

Ready for the next match, Rich?

Richard Parker:

I guess I kind of have to be, don't I? Kind of what we're being paid here to do, genius.

DDK:

Riiiiiiight... anywho, we've got a special addition to tonight's card! DEFIANCE's coveted Southern Heritage Championship aka The SOHER is on the line! One-half of the current SO-US Champions, "The Man of The House" Uriel Cortez defends the title against ANYONE from either PRIME or DEFIANCE's roster in an Open Challenge!

Richard Parker:

Sweet, we might end up with some hardware tonight!

DDK:

Don't get ahead of yourself there yet. The defending champions... and that's not a typo, champions PLURAL, are not only tough customers. The male defending champion's not just standing a 7'1" but he's coming off one of the biggest singles wins of his career by defending the title successfully against none other than someone I THINK a few folks in PRIME might know... aka, your very own CEO and future DEFIANCE Hall of Famer "Queen of the Ring" Lindsay Troy!

Richard Parker:

...All right, fair play, that's no small feat. Fans of both PRIME and DEFIANCE know how good Lindsay Troy is. Hall of Famer here in PRIME and soon to be a future DEFIANCE Hall of Famer, right? See, I know things, too!

DDK:

Very good. And there's little rest for the weary. The SOHER... currently, being called the SO-US... is the first time a DEFIANCE singles championship has been held jointly! Uriel Cortez and his wife, "The Motherly Saint" Titaness have taken turns defending this title with Cortez asking for this match tonight!

Richard Parker:

This card is friggin' MASSIVE but there's a lot of talented guys in PRIME who could take him up on this challenge! It was open to DEFIANCE, too, so for our sake, I hope it's one of ours!

DDK:

One of DEFIANCE's top championships is on the line! That match starts right now!

The camera goes to PRIME announcer Vince Howard.

Vince Howard:

The following contest is an open challenge! This match is set for one fall and as authorized by DEFIANCE's championship committee, this match has been approved for PRIME x DEFIANCE: Immortals for the Southern Heritage Championship!

Cheers ring out loudly from the DEFIANCE contingent in attendance tonight! Go, DEFIANTS!

Vince Howard:

Introducing first...

The entire arena goes dark...

Three gold spotlights shine.

To the left, "The Fury of The Familia" Siofra, wearing a black and gold dress!

To the right, “The Motherly Saint” Titaness, wearing black leather pants, gold heels and a stained-glass colored sleeveless muscle shirt! Wielding the SO-HERS Championship!

And in the center... The TOWERING Titan standing in the spotlight has his arms wide open! Wearing his signature sunglasses and gear covered by a black hoodie over his head, he unzips the hoodie slowly to reveal a black singlet with gold and blood-red trim, covered to show off the SOHER Title around his waist with “SO-HIS” shined extra polished on the name plate.

“Big Poppa” by Notorious B.I.G.

Vince Howard:

Introducing first... reading a special intro... representing DEFIANCE’s only TWO-TIME Award-Winning Familia... being accompanied to the ring by “The Fury of the Familia” Siofra and the Co... SO-US? SO-HER? CO-HER? I’m so confused... whatever... the better half of the SO-US, Titaness! Standing at 7’1”! Weighing in at 339 pounds... he is the reigning and defending... SO-US? Okay, I think I got this... “THE MAN OF THE HOUSE” URIEL CORTEZ!

With his wife at his left side and the Familia’s manager at the right, Titaness and the former Siobhan Cassidy-Garland a lifetime ago follow the giant who still has the giant hoodie over his body. The crowd is reading them the riot act as he makes his way towards the ring. Once the trio reach ringside, Cortez bumps fists with Siofra, then turns around to give Titaness a long, passionate, nausea-inducing kiss.

Richard Parker:

Man, you weren’t kidding! Those are some TALL people!

DDK:

I told you this wasn’t gonna be a walk in the park, Parker!

After the sickening PDA, Cortez latches onto the top rope from the floor and pulls himself up onto the apron. He climbs over the ropes and makes it into the ring. Once he’s there, he finally takes off the hoodie to reveal a message on the back of his singlet, as he likes to do for his big-match appearance...

DEFIANCE AND PRIME’S DADDY

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Richard Parker:

I don’t want to give anyone on the DEFIANCE team credit, but if I beat Lindsay Troy, I’d get it... and please don’t dock my pay. Not again.

DDK:

Who is gonna take up this challenge... oh, wait... Cortez has a microphone. Ooooh, boy...

Titaness and Siofra each take a spot on the apron near the corner occupied by The Man of the House. The mammoth monster taps his hand on the microphone.

Uriel Cortez:

Honey?

Titaness:

Yes, dear?

Uriel Cortez:

We’re home!

The DEFIANCE contingent loudly jeer one-half of the SO-US. He hands the microphone over to Siofra.

Siofra:

DEFIANCE, you already know who runs the place and who your rent checks go to, but for the PRIMEates, let me introduce the man who DEFEATED Lindsay Troy despite having a desperate run-in from her husband, Wade Elliott...

DDK:

Respectfully not at all how I remember that match going down...

Siofra:

"The Man of the House" Uriel Cortez!

Cortez raises the SO-HIS title up. His lovely wife here, my fellow sis and the other half of the SO-US... The Motherly Saint of our fine Familia... TITANESS!

She flexes and holds up her title marked SO-HERS. She hands the microphone.

Uriel Cortez:

Check the stats. Over in DEFIANCE, I am their Daddy and I have been for some time. After what I just did by defeating YOUR OWN Lindsay Troy... PRIME, the math is mathing and that makes me YOUR Daddy, too!

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Cortez tries to talk over the jeering.

Uriel Cortez:

No, no, no... you got it all wrong. I'm not here JUST to lord that victory over PRIME. My wife is a loving mother. I, too, am a loving father. Between us, there's more than enough love inside these giant hearts of ours for ALL OF YOU Smalls! Recently at DEFIANCE Rising, our big December show, I proved that OUR LOVE outshines any other husband and wife in professional wrestling. Lindsay Troy and Wade Elliott have achieved a lot in their careers. Their combined successes can't be taken away...

Titaness jumps in.

Titaness:

BUT STILLLLLLL YOUR SO-US! SUCK IT, DEFIANCE! AND SUCK IT HARDER, PRIME!

Uriel Cortez:

That's facts, as our kids say.

Titaness:

Tonight, my husband is gonna prove that not only are we the only champion in EITHER promotion confident enough to put OUR SO-US Title on the line, we're confident enough in our love and our combined strength to host this Open Challenge sanctioned by both promotions against anyone from either roster!

Uriel holds up the SO-HIS title belt with Titaness flexing the SO-HERS over her head to match. Cortez takes the microphone back.

Uriel Cortez:

You said it, T. Whoever steps foot through that curtain to try and take the SO-US from... Well, So-Us... that I hope you're somebody who needs a family. Because whoever signed on that dotted line earlier today... know that *I'M* about to be your new Daddy, too!

Cortez hands over the microphone to Siofra and The Man of the House waits.

Richard Parker:

This may be a lame Stuart thing to say, but this is a PRIME opportunity to bring some gold over to our side!

DDK:

I wouldn't count your chickens before they're hatched, Richard.

"The Best" by AWOLNATION

The fans EXPLODE because on the PRIME side of things, this isn't a theme they've heard in some time.

More than six months and counting.

Richard Parker:

Oh my god, no. I take everything back.

Jonathan-Christopher Hall emerges, sporting baby blue board shorts with tiny initials on the left side of them, but the camera can't quite make out what it is. Otherwise, JCH is freshly shaved, his body looks to be in great shape - perhaps the best it's ever been - as he stands at the top of the rampway smiling at the fans who gave him such a warm reaction.

There's something **significantly** different about Jonathan-Christopher. Typically meek and nervous, tonight he stands tall and proud. His shoulders are upright, he seems a few inches taller than before, which is likely just posture.

Richard Parker:

This guy is absolutely not going to get it done. I should take a pee break now.

DDK:

Jonathan-Christopher?

Richard Parker:

You know him?

DDK:

He started off in DEFIANCE's minor leagues, BRAZEN, if you believe it or not. A few of your former champions have, like FLAMBERGE. Is Jonathan-Christopher still with his wife, Vickie?

Richard Parker:

Ummmmm...

DDK:

I'm just kidding, I know they broke up. I gotta say, Hall looks completely refreshed!

Inside the ring, Uriel Cortez shakes his head with laughter. Like this simp bitch could do anything against him. Word gets around.

Hall marches down the rampway, his theme song still playing as the crowd chants him on. Halfway down the ramp, JC even stops to pump up the fans by swinging his arms up and down, asking for MORE support.

Richard Parker:

Hold on a second, that might not be Jonathan-Christopher.

DDK:

What do you mean?

Richard Parker:

It has to be an imposter. The JCH I know is the biggest wimp in the world!

Hall continues to astonish anyone who knew him beforehand. He's at the rampway, staring at Cortez. Titaness and

Siofra have exited the ring and are hovering near the former Universal Champion, perhaps trying to intimidate him.

It ain't working.

Hall pulls himself up and onto the apron. He slips between the top and middle rope and power walks RIGHT towards Uriel.

He meets Cortez chest-to-kind-of-chest/face.

DDK:

JCH is six-foot-two. Still looks small compared to the giant.

Vince Howard:

...And his opponent... from Folsom, Louisiana... weighing two-hundred-thirty pounds... representing PRIME... he is THE ALPHA MALE-

Jonathan-Christopher looks over at Vince as if to tell him to drop the monikers and get on with it.

Vince Howard:

JONATHAN. CHRISTOPHER. HALL!!

JCH's theme closes as the crowd cheers on. Referee Carla Ferrari takes the SOHER title and holds it in the air.

DDK:

If I have my notes right, Hall *used* to weigh two-hundred but he was just billed at two-THIRTY. That's ten extra pounds of muscle!

Richard Parker:

It means nothing against your GIANT Cortez. It's also pointless because he could be the sheer size *of* Cortez and in five minutes he's going to be quivering in the corner, sucking his thumb LITTERALLY, and crying about Vickie. It's really, really pathetic. I'm almost embarrassed for him.

Standing in front of the SOHER, Jonathan-Christopher doesn't blink. He hardly flinches. He looks over to the belt, which is still with the referee. Hall brings his attention right back to The Man of the House.

Jonathan-Christopher Hall:

You don't scare me.

Cortez is trying not to chuckle. He just beat Lindsay Troy for Christ sake.

Jonathan-Christopher glances over at Titaness and then back at Uriel.

Jonathan-Christopher Hall:

She'll break your heart one day, you know.

Again, Cortez isn't phased.

Uriel Cortez:

We're married.

JCH shrugs.

Jonathan-Christopher Hall:

Yeah, whatever.

Hall POPS Cortez in the MOUTH! Everyone is shocked!

DING DING

DDK:

We are off!

Hall CRANKS Uriel in the mouth AGAIN. AGAIN. ONE MORE TIME.

Before Cortez can even place his massive mitts on the challenger, Jonathan-Christopher is running into the ropes. He SHOOTs off super quickly, and ducks a big man lariat so he bounces across the next set of ropes. JCH ducks THAT lariat attempt as well and is back to the ropes he bounced off of the first time.

Hall avoids ANOTHER lariat, and for a second there it feels as though the champion has let some frustration get the better of him because JCH is onto his four set of ropes.

And he is at an all-time sprint speed.

WHAM!

Solid dropkick into the right knee of Uriel. Cortez' leg buckles a bit underneath him but he's still upright.

Jonathan-Christopher shoots off the ropes again, quickly looks over to where the female valets are situated and folds his body like a hockey puck, throwing his entire frame at that same right leg and knee of Cortez.

WHAM!

It buckles!

The giant falls over to the cheers of the crowd!

Richard Parker: *[Absolutely beside himself]*

I don't believe this shi-

Parker remains professional and catches himself before swearing, while Jonathan-Christopher shoots upright, pounds on his chest and quickly moves to the second rope. He measures the champion... he jumps...

BIG SPLASH!

DDK:

PIN! PIN! WE MIGHT HAVE A NEW CHAMPION!!

ONE!

TWO!

POWER KICKOUT!

Jonathan-Christopher goes flying in the air upon the kickout but it doesn't rattle the typically rattled guy. Maybe it's because he had all that time off, who the hell knows, but JCH is circling the ring, trying to make sure he stays out of Uriel's peripherals.

DDK:

This is a smart play; it's solid. At the end of the day, nobody is going to beat our big man with *force*. But you can stay out of his sight and attack what he can't see.

Once Uriel is on a knee, Jonathan-Christopher is right back at it. He throws his entire body at the back of the knee which buckled before.

It buckles AGAIN!

Jonathan-Christopher kips to his feet. He fires up the crowd, keeping Richard Parker (and no doubt some of JCH's most harshest critics) in disbelief. Hall bounces off the ropes, leaps in the air and delivers a solid elbow drop into that same knee.

Now here come the stomps. They are perfectly placed, while Uriel Cortez makes eyes with his wife as she watches from outside the ring. It's a look of "holy fuck I didn't see this pissant coming". Confidence remains on the champion's face, however. He just needs one opportunity to swat the prick good.

But it doesn't look like that time is now. Hall continues to put the boots on the knee.

DDK:

Listen, JCH has an opening and he is GOING FOR IT.

Richard Parker:

I swear to god, Keebler, I have never once seen this man take an opportunity and run with it. He's reluctant. He's a coward. He needs Vickie to tell him what to do!

DDK:

Not anymore!

Hall leans over and holds Cortez' knee. With EVERYTHING JCH has, he drags Cortez towards the ropes (thankfully they were close enough). Hall hangs the champ's leg on the bottom rope and then CRASHES his own body through it to an audible cry from The Man of the House.

Jonathan-Christopher does this two more times, before trying to wind Cortez' legs around, looking for a figure four.

NO! Uriel has enough power in his other leg to kick Jonathan-Christopher into the ropes...

...Where Titaness is able to trip JCH up in the process and he lands flat on his face.

The crowd boos. No one is happy because unfortunately Carla Ferrari didn't see it.

Richard Parker:

And now I can PROMISE you, this is where the match will switch. A 180. Jonathan-Christopher is done. He cannot recover from adversity. He can't do it.

Uriel slides towards the ropes and starts to pull himself up. He's slow as shit so there's technically still an opening for the challenger but Hall did land face-first on the trip-up.

Richard Parker:

At this point I'd ALMOST say Cancer Jiles would do better.

DDK:

Seriously?

Richard Parker:

No. I said ALMOST. I'm not an idiot, Keebler.

DDK:

Duly noted.

The champ is UP... and Jonathan-Christopher is UP. Cortez comes in with his hands forward and his head tilted back, perhaps aiming for a hard headbutt-

But Jonathan-Christopher slips away at the last second. He hits the ropes on the other end, where it's Siofra who tries to trip him up this time but JCH is ready for it and tugs his foot away.

CORTEZ COMES IN WITH A CLOTHESLINE FROM HELL!

Jonathan-Christopher twists into a cord so tangled it would take hours to unwind. The champ looks down at the fallen challenger with a shake of the head. Is it a shake disappointment in Hall, or one within himself for even letting it get this far?

Either way, JCH is DOA. Cortez drops to his knees, rolls Jonathan-Christopher over and hooks a leg for the hell of it.

Carla counts.

Richard Parker:

Goodnight. Thanks for coming out.

ONE.

TWO.

KICKOUT!

RRRRRRRRRAAAAHHHHH!!

DDK:

You were saying?

HERE WE GO, JC, HERE WE GO! CLAP. CLAP.

HERE WE GO, JC, HERE WE GO! CLAP. CLAP.

HERE WE GO, JC, HERE WE GO! CLAP. CLAP.

Cortez peels the challenger off the mat and hurls him into a corner. Without any mercy whatsoever, the big man comes lumbering in.

SPLAT.

Uriel's body crushes Hall's so harshly, spit flies out of the seemingly unconscious man before falling back into that deep sleep. Cortez with a headbutt, followed by a hip toss so hip tossy, Jonathan-Christopher flies like a ragdoll before crashing to the ground.

Cortez stomps back over. He drags JCH to a vertical base.

Spinebuster slam.

DDK:

Another cover!

ONE.TWO.KICKOUT!

RRRRRRRAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

Jonathan-Christopher Hall remains ALIVE!

Hall pounds the mat, insinuating that's all Cortez has!? The Man of the House is not having ANY of it. He storms over to Jonathan-Christopher.

There's just one problem.

Uriel may be a solid foot taller, one-hundred pounds heavier and a hell of a lot more able to string together wrestling moves than his counterpart. But he's...

Slow. As. Shit.

Jonathan-Christopher is upright. BOOM, pumps Uriel in the chest with a knee. CRACK, pops Cortez in the jaw with a forearm. WHAP, and swings his entire body around to throw it into that bad right knee once again.

Cortez leans over to hold his patella so he can remain upright. All while Jonathan-Christopher snatches the big man's head.

DDT!

The giant is down once again!

JCH!

JCH!

JCH!

Hall uses the ropes to stand, and then fires up the crowd in the process.

Richard Parker:

Seriously. This **has** to be an imposter.

Jonathan-Christopher stumbles into a corner. He looks over at Titaness and Siofra.

He blows them both a kiss!

Jonathan-Christopher sprints towards Cortez, leaps in the air and plants a curb stomp. But not a stomp to Uriel's head, rather to that same damaged knee!

Hall is on all fours, ripping and slamming the knee as much as possible while Uriel tries to swat the fly out of thin air but can't seem to do it because, oh, I dunno, HE'S HURTING LIKE A MOTHER FUCKER.

DDK:

For all they say about Jonathan-Christopher's wrestling abilities, he's found a target and attacked!

Richard Parker: *[Still can't get over what he's seeing]*

Has to be an imposter.

Finally, Jonathan-Christopher stands and fires up the crowd again. He makes his way to the second rope.

NO.

HE MAKES HIS WAY TO THE TOP ROPE!!

He measures Uriel. And even though SO-HIM is sliding across the canvas, it's at the worst speed possible. Jonathan-Christopher doesn't have to worry about missing.

Leaping flying forearm smash into the knee!

Uriel shouts “god dammit!” as he pounds the mat in frustration. He cannot seem to crush this annoying simp-ass insect. Needless to say, JCH is already on the top rope AGAIN.

MOONSAULT, where Jonathan-Christopher perfectly lands FEET FIRST on the KNEE!

DDK:

Unbelievable! This is a much different wrestler than the one we had in BRAZEN.

Richard Parker:

I am convinced it's Vickie in a wig.

DDK:

I don't know what JC was like in PRIME, I'm not even talking about the, uh, what do you call it... *simping*? I mean he was in developmental five years ago.

Jonathan-Christopher is back on his knees, hammering the knee while Cortez FINALLY delivers a full blown forearm into JCH's head.

Richard Parker:

Idiot got caught, I knew it was too good to be true!

JC Hall was getting a little carried away there and left himself exposed. Cortez clearly hits with the best of them, and Jonathan-Christopher fumbles backwards, into a corner.

DDK:

Hold on a second!

Titaness jumps onto the steel steps and starts choking the shit out of Hall while the ref isn't looking! Carla is attending to the “hurt” Uriel Cortez.

Richard Parker:

There we go, that's the Jonathan-Christopher Hall I know. He probably likes to be choked!

DDK:

Gross, Richard.

Richard Parker:

Listen, you have no idea the rumours and stories that spread backstage. I think it's Vickie's work but I haven't been able to trace the comments back to its origin. Yet.

DDK:

Either way, Richard. Too much detail.

Richard Parker:

I was just letting it fly. We're probably never doing a second show like this.

DDK:

That would be a shame.

Richard Parker:

Yeah, well, the Favored Saints, who own your company, are pricks.

DDK:

They're anonymous!

Richard Parker:

Exactly.

Throughout the banter, Titaness has choked JCH to the point he's purple in the face. She lets go and then suddenly Uriel is better. Funny how that works. The big man is on his feet but he walks with a limp. He's white hot pissed as he leans down and snatches JCH.

CHEERS! Hall shows some fight in him and pummels the champ in the side of the head!

...Barely does shit. Cortez just laughs it off.

Richard Parker:

This ain't his knee, Johnny-Boy. You're not going to hurt the man any other way. See, Keebler. He's still a weak-ass wimp.

Cortez throws Hall in the air and then CLUBS the guy in the head with a forearm upon landing. Jonathan-Christopher falls to the mat like he's SHOT.

Uriel has a grin on his face. He looks over to Titaness, blows her a kiss to a chorus of boos and then hurls Hall into the corner across the way.

Uriel goes charging in, head-first.

WHAM!

DDK:

What an outstanding headbutt!

Richard Parker:

The big man can move better than I thought. For a minute there, I was going to call him The Great Uriel.

DDK:

I don't get it.

Richard Parker:

Don't worry about it.

Cortez with another hip toss sending JCH out of the corner. Hall FLIES through the air, he gets about eight feet off the mat before slamming back down. Cortez moves forward, still with a minor limp but getting better each time...

Drops a wicked elbow to the chest!

DDK:

Cover!

ONE!

TWO!

SHOULDER UP!

Cortez peels Hall off the mat, standing the challenger upright so he can CHOP him in the chest with the Chop of Ages.

WHAM!

Hall's chest goes red immediately.

Another Chop of Ages.

WHAM!

DDK:

Jonathan-Christopher is still on his feet!

Richard Parker:

Not for long!

Chop of Ages MAX!

WWWWHHHAAAAMMMMM!!

JCH folds like an accordion. He's DOA.

Mr. SO-HIM drops to his knees and presses down on Jonathan-Christopher's chest for the cover!

ONE.

TWO.

BARELY A KICKOUT!

Cortez nods his head like "okay, you want **one** more..." as he brings JCH upright and throws his arms way, way, way back.

Chop of Ages MAX- NO! JCH collapses to the mat on purpose and rolls through Cortez' legs. Hall hits the ropes, fighting the pain in his head while his chest is on fire. He leaps forward.

Uriel catches him.

FALLAWAY SLAM!

Hall lands in a corner, semi-propped up by the second buckle so Cortez comes lumbering in with a running back elbow smash! JCH's lights go out, he collapses on the big man's chest. If Cortez moves, Hall would fall face-first on the mat.

The champ looks over at Titaness. Siofra claps him on, too.

Uriel hoists Hall into a fireman's carry.

He slams him!

RRRRAAAHHHHH!!!

DDK:

JCH IS ON HIS FEET!

Jonathan-Christopher with a leaping knee into Cortez' chest, then right back at the damaged Uriel knee with a dropkick!

Richard Parker:

Hall's finisher is an inverted double underhook facebuster (Killswitch), so that's definitely out of the picture here. But I

will say, his ENTIRE attack has been on that knee!

DDK:

Good. It should be.

Hall rolls into the ropes again but Titaness jumps on the apron to distract Carla Ferrari to a chorus of boos and Siofra gets in on the action this time, not only tripping JCH up when he hits the ropes but leaping onto the apron herself and letting the fists fly. She's much sloppier than Jonathan-Christopher, but the hits are connecting. Cortez collects his whereabouts and then tells Siobhan she can stop. She quietly lowers herself away as Cortez stares down at Hall, who's trying so hard to look up at the giant.

The champ **BOOTS** Jonathan-Christopher in the chest!

Uriel sets up for the fireman's carry again. He **TOSSES JCH OUT OF THE RING!**

HOLY SHIT!

HOLY SHIT!

HOLY SHIT!

Jonathan-Christopher Hall lands at Titaness' feet. She looks like it was a gift sent to her from the heavens. She blows another kiss back at her love. Then she leans down, grabs Jonathan-Christopher by the face and starts verbally ripping him a new one.

Titaness:

You think you can go *without* love!? Where's your SO-US? You pathetic, worthless, laughing stock of a man!

Titaness is about to punch Hall in-between the eyes but she looks up and notices Carla's watching. The Motherly Saint raises both her hands and backs away like she'd never intend to do anything more.

DDK:

I think Jonathan-Christopher might have broken a rib.

Hall is coughing up blood. A little. But he's trying hard to make it to the apron, as Carla has started her ten count.

On the other side of the ring, The Fury of the Familia, Siofra, is starting to wonder over to the fallen (former?) cuck. However, she keeps her eyes on Carla, making sure Ferrari doesn't see her coming. Then once at the correct side of the ring, Siofra hides behind the steel steps. Carla's count is at SIX before JCH shows signs of life. He fumbles towards the apron and lands on it. He's about to get into the ring at SEVEN when Siofra crawls beside the apron and snatches Hall's foot, preventing him from moving!

DDK:

HEY, C'MON! A big man is going to win *this way*!? What a joke!

Richard Parker:

You should be proud, he's part of YOUR company!

DDK:

I have integrity!

Richard Parker:

Well that's one place where you and I differ because I don't!

DDK:

Starting to get that impression!

EIGHT!

Hall is trying to rip his foot away from Siofra but she's like a leech and has her arms and legs on there pretty good.

Jonathan-Christopher's eyes plead with Uriel to not let the match end this way but The Man of the House seemingly could care less as he stands in the middle of the ring, arms crossed, still slightly pissed he allowed this moron to get the better of him for a while. Plus his knee hurts.

NINE!

Desperation fills JCH's face as he tries to shed the dead weight. He looks down at Siofra.

Siofra:

Wanna go out?

And suddenly, Hall KICKS her away to the ROAR of the crowd as he slides into the ring, breaking the TEN count right at 9.999999999999999

WHAM!

Clothesline from hell!

DDK:

DAMMIT! Cortez was waiting. He knew there was a backup plan.

Richard Parker:

Some backup plan!

Cortez sets Hall up for the end, the jackknife powerbomb, the 218.

Richard Parker:

Well, it was nice knowing you, JC. Did you know this moron actually won our Universal Title once and beat Cecilworth Farthington too!?

Cortez hoists Hall in the air but the former Universal Champion shows signs of life, hammering fists into Uriel's crown.

It's not working.

Cortez hoists Hall up even higher, as JCH's face is in pure shock and terror.

SLAM!

RRRRRAAAHHHHHH!!

DDK:

CORTEZ' LEG GAVE WAY! I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

The SLAM was not JCH's body hitting the mat but the right knee completely buckling from under Mr. SO-HIM.

For the first **real** time in the match, there is suddenly honest to god belief within the arena that Jonathan-Christopher Hall might be able to do this! His eyes are wide, he looks around from roof to rafters to floor to suite level. The crowd is standing and cheering him on.

Jonathan-Christopher Hall: *[To the fans]*

I love... **YOU**.

The apron camera zooms in to the tiny initials printed on the bottom left side of JCH's board shorts. It reads JCH+PRIMATES=HEART.

Richard Parker wants to cringe and vomit all over the place and no doubt if Cancer Jiles is watching he's laughing hysterically while commenting on Jonathan-Christopher's microscopic dick size.

Jonathan-Christopher leaps forward, tangling his hands around Uriel in what looks like a modified inverted double underhook facebuster (Killswitch) while Cortez is on both knees.

DDK:

What's the move called, Rich?

Richard Parker: *[Practically against his will]*

Stand By Me.

Jonathan-Christopher SCREAMS into the bleachers...

AND HITS THE MOVE!

Parker is going to have a bloody conniption on the microphone. It's like after seeing the finishing move connect, he actually believes in JCH, too!

Richard Parker:

No one has EVER kicked out of it before!

Hall is FIGHTING LIKE HELL to flip Cortez over... over... over...

OVER...

HE'S DONE IT!

DDK:

WELL WE'RE GONNA FIND OUT, PARTNER!ONE!TWO!KICKOUT!

Richard Parker:

NOOOOOOOO!!

Parker let himself believe, even just for a millisecond, but the giant love man kicked out of the simp love man's move. The air is knocked out of the arena but then hope is immediately brought back to life. He could've cried. He could've shook. He most certainly could have begged for Vickie. Instead, JCH is back on his feet, waiting in the corner, calling for the Man of the House to get what's coming to him.

A heartbreaking split between him and his title.

It's only fitting.

Hall charges forward but Cortez plucks him out of the air and drops him against his knee! JC, however, rolls to the ropes, pulls himself up and screams once again as the crowd is behind him. Jonathan-Christopher bounces off the ropes- but Titaness is there for another trip up that Carla doesn't see! The crowd boos profusely as the former Universal Champion slides out of the ring and gets right in front of her face.

Realizing more can be done to him on the outside than in the squared circle, Cortez starts questioning Carla's officiating, asking her if she's biased and interested in dating Jonathan-Christopher Hall now that he's single. Carla is completely disgusted by this accusation (she's a pro) and starts reaming Uriel out. He should know better. Carla and Uriel work together.

Titanness is going to pack a punch but Hall blocks it. Doesn't matter, though, because Siofra is lurking from behind-

JCH slips away, pulls back the apron and grabs a chair. He tosses it in-between the women and they both grab one side of it.

OOOOOOOHHHHHHHHHHHH!!

With so much commotion, it's too hard for Carla NOT to put her hand up on Uriel and see what's going on behind her.

Titanness and Siofra are caught red handed as Jonathan-Christopher lays on the ground, holding his head.

Richard Parker:

Hey, wait a second. The women didn't use the chair!

DDK:

That's... kinda the point, Rich.

Carla sees the chair in Titanness and Siofra's hands. They drop it. They plead with the ref that they've done nothing wrong but Carla's already pissed about what Cortez said to him earlier.

SHE EJECTS THEM FROM RINGSIDE!

RRRRAAAAHHH RAAAAHHHH RRRRRRRRRRAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH!

DDK:

The HEAD OF THE TABLE HAS TURNED!

Richard Parker:

That's MAN of the HOUSE, even I know that!

DDK:

Whatever.

Jonathan-Christopher slides into the ring and waves goodbye to the girls as they disgracefully take their walk of shame up the ramp.

Cortez is waiting.

Jonathan-Christopher spins around but ducks a forearm smash. He hits the ropes and comes back with another dropkick to Uriel's bad knee.

DDK:

You'd think Uriel would cover up by now. Or know it's coming.

Hall kicks and kicks at the knee again, but the giant is rising and pissed off. JCH throws his entire body once again at the knee, then he snatches Cortez' head and performs a DDT!

Jonathan-Christopher is on his feet. He points to the top rope and makes it. Hall measures the champion and leaps off with a frog splash, aimed at the leg-

WHAM!

DDK:

NO!

Cortez moves at the last second, so Jonathan-Christopher eats the canvas. Cortez quickly peels the challenger off the mat, whips him in-between his legs...

And hits the 218!

DDK:

Dammit.

Cortez falls down for the cover, absolutely spent.

ONE.

TWO.

THREE.

DING DING DING

The crowd is disappointed, as the big man rolls away from his now former challenger.

DDK:

hat an effort by Jonathan-Christopher.

Richard Parker: [*Trying not to give in*]

Yeah, I guess. He's a loser.

Vince Howard:

The winner of this match and STILL SOHER or SO-US Champion... the MAN of the HOUSE... URIEL CORTEZ!

Cortez' theme plays as a happy Titaness and Siofra clap their way back down to ringside. Meanwhile, JCH rolls himself to the side of the canvas. There isn't as much disappointment in his face as one would think.

DDK:

Hell of a battle I, for one, didn't see coming. In the end you have to give Cortez credit. He was blindsided there for a bit, but he's a hell of a man.

Richard Parker:

MAN of the HOUSE. Get it right. (*Quickly changing topics while mumbling under his breath*) Stupid Jonathan-Christopher Hall, what a loser...

IMMORTALS goes elsewhere.

THIS WAS PROBABLY INEVITABLE

IMMORTALS shifts backstage to one-half of PRIME's Hall of Fame Announcing Duo, Nick Stuart. Despite not being behind the desk tonight, Nick still looks as dapper as ever, and he gives the camera a nod and a million dollar smile.

Nick Stuart: What a night of action so far, folks, and we have many more matches still to come. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Nick Stuart, and normally you'd find me calling the PRIME action alongside Richard Parker. I gotta say, Darren Keebler, you're doing a great job keeping my partner in check so far.

He laughs warmly. Out at the broadcast booth, Richard Parker is surely sarcastically laughing.

Nick Stuart: I'm on interview duty tonight, though, and my guest at this time is one of a handful of competitors who represents both PRIME and DEFIANCE: a multi-time Universal Champion and FIST of DEFIANCE, Tag Team Champion in both promotions, an Intense Title holder, a Hall of Famer – newly named in DEFIANCE – and, probably most importantly, my boss. Please welcome one of the architects of tonight's event: Lindsay Troy!

RAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

The Queen walks into view, stops beside Nick, and gives the camera a wink. She's left her ring gear at home; instead, she wears a pink VAE VICTIS t-shirt underneath a black leather jacket, blue jeans, and black boots.

Lindsay Troy: Nick. Little weird seeing you backstage with a microphone.

Nick Stuart: I know. But better me than Richard, he might try and maim Jiles if we left him alone back here long enough.

Lindsay Troy: *(sarcastically)* Oh no, we wouldn't want that.

Nick Stuart: *(chuckling)* Anyway, you're not set to compete tonight for either PRIME or DEFIANCE; however, you *will* be in the corners of Dan Ryan, who's representing DEFIANCE, and Henry Keyes, who's signed to PRIME but will be representing DEFIANCE as its top title holder, the FIST. Can you talk a little bit about that decision?

Lindsay Troy: Sure, Nick. I would have loved to have competed tonight, but I wanted to make sure anyone on PRIME's roster who wanted a spot on the show had one. That meant stepping back as a competitor and instead, standing alongside my cohorts in Vae Victis to ensure their opponents and their managers don't pull any shit tonight. It was a decision I was happy to make.

Nick Stuart: Those opponents and managers being Ivan Stanislav, Alexei Ruslan, Cancer Jiles, and Vickie Hall. Can you tell us how Dan and Henry are feeling heading into their matches against them?

Lindsay Troy: They're locked in. That's all I'll say.

There's a commotion from off camera.

"OH, PISS OFF."

WHUD *fling*

A lone Enemy flies into frame, landing right at Troy and Stuart's feet. Several more mobilize but are promptly waved off by the PRIME shot-caller. Nick Stuart trucks himself as far behind his boss as he can whilst still holding the microphone aloft.

Lindsay Troy: Let him through, guys. This was probably inevitable.

After a moment, from stage left stomps none other than the still gear-clad and blood-soaked visage of the "victorious"

Bombastic Bronson Box. The damage from earlier in the night at the hands of Hayes Hanlon is still visible on his forehead. Sticky dried blood flakes from his face as his scowl deepens.

Lindsay Troy: (*grinning*) Damn, Bronson, you look like shit. You big mad?

The corner of the Original DEFIANT's mouth twitches as he glares within arms reach.

Bronson Box: Oh, no, lass. Quite the diversion, all this. Gettin' Hanlon all worked up helped get my mind off all the recent... *ugliness*.

The Queen pounces on the topic like a starving lioness.

Lindsay Troy: If you're talking about what you did to ol' money bags Eddie White that whole thing was HILARIOUS. You're such a messy bitch, Bronson.

The Wargod no-sells Troy's jovial, prodding attitude.

Bronson Box: I beat Dex Joy. I erased Edward White. I nearly drove yer' Temu-version of Bronson Box out there to commit murder. I'd say what I am is *focused*. I came back and said I aimed to clean up my home promotion, to *strengthen* it. I've been doin' just that. I aim to continue... *doin'* that. Which brings me to yer' little friend Henry. To the FIST.

He leans in a little, Nick Stuart leans back in kind, out of a sense of self preservation.

Lindsay Troy does no such thing. In fact, her grin just gets wider.

Bronson Box: To you. I hate you lot. You... *flippant pricks*. With yer' cliques and yer' little memes. And don't get me started on THIS PLACE.

Boxer motions generally around himself.

Bronson Box: The disgustin' umbilical cord you, now ol' blinky have become to this *wretched* place. Keyes... Keyes puts the FIST of DEFIANCE on the line, does he? HERE? Leave it to the SPONGEY bastards back in DEFIANCE like Garland and Fuse to allow the grandest prize in our company to walk halfway out the door to be potentially ABSCONDED WITH. You both think you're doin' DEFIANCE some sort of... *kindness*... with all this.

He again wags a finger generally at their surroundings.

Bronson Box: But you're *NOT*. I think you and yer' BESTIE are a couple of disrespectful pricks! I think you could give a rats *arse* about DEFIANCE and that *chaps mine*! I will not let DEFIANCE Wrestling become subsumed by the BLOODY... *Lindsay Troy-verse*! DO YOU HEAR ME?

He holds his hands out palms first, immediately deescalating.

Bronson Box: NOW... *now*. This ain't some declaration of war, lass. I heard all the accolades you piped out of this wee fellas mouth earlier. Yer' a busy woman. I've grown to find a degree of patience in my old age. I know I ain' t tellin' you anything you don't already know... just figured, considering the *illustrious* stage you folks offered up tonight I'd be remiss not to publicly remind you and Mr. Keyes I'm still... *lurkin' about*.

A sort of strange grin spreads across his craggy face as more dried blood flakes off his skin.

Lindsay Troy: You should really watch how you talk to a fellow Hall of Famer, you know. You *do* remember I'm a DEFIANCE Hall of Famer now, right?

The Wargod's strange grin curls back into a snarl at that reminder of this year's DEFIANCE Hall of Fame class. He

takes a few small steps towards Troy, who doesn't budge an inch.

Bronson Box: Keep jokin'. Keep makin' references to old movies. Keep laughin'. But when you're done laughin', Lindsay? I'd love to tangle with the evil bitch who nearly cost me my eye. Haven't seen her in a *long* while. Still owe you a *receipt* for that one, lass.

Boxer taps a finger at the corner of the short grizzly scar that runs down and across his left eye. He turns to start and leave when he feels a strange cold metal tap on his shoulder.

Lindsay Troy: Ahh... mmm, yeah. *Sorry*. Cool, spooky last line, Bronson...real comic book villain-tier stuff. But I'd just hate to see you go and leave your pretty new toy behind.

Bronson turns with a jerk to see Troy, one hand on her hip, the other with Bronson's dangerous metal spike in the other. The cruel instrument is still stained with Boxer's own blood from Hayes Hanlon earlier in the night. She tosses it up in the air a couple times, getting a feel of the weight of it.

Lindsay Troy: Of course, I could just *keep it*...

Box stomps back over and SNATCHES the weapon from Troy. The Queen smirks, pleased with herself.

Lindsay Troy: Y'know, I was pretty proud of Dabs and Dougie when they *melted* the old one. I was almost sad to see that rusty piece of garbage go... but at least now we all won't have to get tetanus shots after getting *stabbed* with this new one.

The Wargod matches off again but hesitates for a moment. Talking half to Troy now, half to himself.

Bronson Box: You trained the Doubleday boy, *that's right*... life's funny like that, aye?

He almost whispers that last bit before plodding off again.

That same strange, sick grin appears on his lips as he does so.

Nick Stuart steps around Lindsay and looks after the Wargod.

Nick Stuart: That's who you took the WARCHAMBER from?

Lindsay Troy: (*smirking again*) Yup. Insufferable little prick, isn't he?

And now, back to Darren and Richard...

CORAL AVALON (PRIME) vs. OSCAR BURNS (DEFIANCE)

The lights go out in the Kaseya Center.

Wisps of light appear on the giant screen as the haunting opening notes of Monster Siren's "Real Me" hits the PA system. It's, by now, a recognizable enough theme song for PRIME fans that everyone stands up to take notice. As the wisps of light start to coalesce, they display silhouettes of each of the eight known King's Armaments being executed on various unseen foes.

And the six words that get the crowd *pumped*.

THE KING OF CONQUERORS CORAL AVALON

A spotlight hits the stage as the guitars rev up, and there stands the King of Conquerors himself. It's a familiar sight to anyone who'd seen him during his 2024 Universal title campaign. A big fur cape, complete with a wolf's head on one shoulder. A championship belt wrapped around his waist, that being Bang! Pro Wrestling's World Openweight Championship, which Avalon won just five days ago in Tokyo. A look of utmost confidence. Black hair instead of blonde. A forehead made of pure 100% undiluted Avalontanium.

He takes one step forward, and the lights come back up.

Another step forward, and explosive fire blasts out in an X-pattern behind him.

BOOM.

Another step forward, and an archway built specifically for his entrance begins emitting sparks, as though he's walking through a hallway of fire.

Behind him is his second. Much as Sonny Silver will doubtlessly accompany OSCAR BURNS tonight, Coral Avalon has his shaggy-haired anger elemental of a nephew in Percival. Percival Avalon is nonplussed about this whole "grand entrance" thing, and is instead looking at his cell phone with all of the care of a bored teenager. 'Cause that's what he is.

Vince Howard, standing in the ring, proudly announces Avalon's arrival.

Vince Howard:

Currently residing in Seattle, Washington! He weighs in tonight at two hundred and twenty-four pounds! HE IS! A FORMER UNIVERSAL CHAMPION! HE IS! THE LONGEST REIGNING ALIAS CHAMPION! HE IS! A PRIME HALL OF FAMER! HE IS! THE BANG! PRO WRESTLING WORLD OPENWEIGHT CHAMPION! HE! IS! CORAAAAAALLLLLL AVALOOOOOOOOOONNNNN!!!

Avalon reaches the ring and hops up onto the apron. Percival hops up next to him, and holds the ropes open so that the King of Conquerors can enter the ring easier considering the ridiculous cloak he wears.

DDK:

He's five days removed from wrestling in Tokyo against maybe the very ace of Bang! Pro Wrestling, so what do you think his chances are against another ace in OSCAR BURNS?

Richard Parker:

The homer in me wants to believe in the PRIME guy. The guy-what-hates-the-Cancer-Jiles in me still hasn't forgiven this guy for becoming an eGG Bandits.

Avalon steps onto the second ropes and raises his arms into the air. In so doing, he pops the cloak off from his shoulders, where they land squarely into the waiting arms of Percival.

It's been nearly a year since Avalon's wrestled for PRIME. Tonight, for one night only, he'd represent them again.

Vince Howard:

And his opponent...

The lights go out again, save for a spotlight upon Vince Howard.

Vince Howard:

Ladies and gentlemen... He is DEFIANCE! He is FAVOURED SAINTS! He has also asked to be referred to for this evening, simply as... PRIME!

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Vince Howard: And most importantly, he stands at the VERY CENTER of the GC UNIVERSE... He weighs in at 245 of the most important pounds that have ever been measured in the history of his company...

Dramatic pause.

Still booing... and Some cheers!

Vince Howard:

OSCARRRRRRRRR.... BURRRRRRRNNNNNNNS!

Worlds flash all across the screen and all across the LED boards...

**TWO-TIME FIST OF DEFIANCE
FAVOURED SAINTS CHAMPION
HE IS DEFIANCE
HE IS FAVOURED SAINTS
HE IS PRIME
ALL GRAPS
ALL CAPS**

All of these words flash across the screen until they settle on just two...

OSCAR BURNS

"Presto" by Epica

The symphonic rock starts to play and alone on the aisle, being lowered from a platform just off to the stage. Wearing a green cape draping behind his back, brand new green and white tights with green boots and white wrist tape... and holding the Golden Shovel in hand to very LOUD applause in either direction. As the platform reaches the floor, OSCAR BURNS goes to meet his manager, Sonny Silver, on stage. OSCAR turns around...

One word on the back of the cape.

One arrow pointing upward.

PRIME.

DDK:

That pretty much says it all about this man, Richard! For almost eight years, a man who title or no title... loved or hated... he is universally respected as one of the best DEFIANCE has ever produced. So much so that the hype has gone to his head.

Richard Parker:

Too bad he's playing for that side of the fence! He'd be a fine addition here!

OSCAR BURNS slowly walks down the ramp. He looks out to a very raucous Kaseya Center crowd and continues his walk. Once he gets to the ring, he hands over the coveted Golden Shovel to Sonny Silver. OSCAR then takes off his cape and hands it off to his trusted manager as well, then walks up the steps. He wipes his feet on the ring apron and then heads into the PRIME x DEFIANCE ring.

Richard Parker:

What's the story with the Golden Shovel and is it as meta as I think it might be?

DDK:

It's something that's become synonymous with BURNS himself. Years ago when he started becoming disliked by our fans, he awarded himself with that shovel for "digging down deep" ...his words... to be the first wrestler in DEFIANCE history to have reached 50 career wins. And also, it's a handy signature weapon.

Richard Parker:

I see. So yeah. Meta.

After the music dies down, The Technical Spectacle stands across the ring from The King of Conquerors. Neither man makes a move, although Sonny stands outside the ring and wave at Coral Avalon, a rival from a time long ago!

DDK:

Two of the very best to ever do it in their respective organizations and we're lucky enough to call this first-time-ever match right now!

Mark Shields suddenly realizes that's his queue! He quickly looks over and calls for the bell...

DING DING

The King of Conquerors and the Technical Spectacle spend several moments simply staring at each other from opposite corners after the bell rang. The crowd is all about this one, and is already regaling the two of them with loud chants.

LET'S GO OS-CAR!

AV-A-LON!

LET'S GO OS-CAR!

AV-A-LON!

Neither wants to make the first move. When they do, it's to start circling one another, ready for the lockup. When they do lock up, OSCAR BURNS is able to push Avalon into the corner thanks in large part to his size and height advantage.

Referee Mark Shields (in a head bandage after his earlier altercation with Elise Ares) observes this, rolls his eyes, and lazily counts.

Richard Parker:

Hey, quick question, new best buddy?

DDK:

Yeah?

Richard Parker:

This referee...

DDK:

Yeah. I know.

At the count of four (which is other referees' eight-count), OSCAR BURNS breaks the lockup, with a smile of superiority plastered all over his face. Avalon is nonplussed, but eventually, the two circle around again.

This time, when they locked up, Avalon ducked under BURNS' arms and came up with a waistlock. There's some jockeying for positioning before BURNS is able to break the waistlock and grab a side headlock in its place. He doesn't have a good enough grip on it before Avalon drops down and takes BURNS' legs out from under him, dropping the former two-time FIST onto his stomach. Avalon slid in and snatched up a side headlock of his own.

This doesn't last. OSCAR BURNS is, after all, the Technical Spectacle. He slips out and applies a hammerlock, grinding Avalon down in the process.

Richard Parker:

Okay, I know he's stubborn and an idiot and I think he's still a Bandit which makes him a crumb as well, but...

DDK:

Yeah?

Richard Parker:

You know what? No. That's the end of my thought.

DDK:

...Okay. It doesn't seem like this is going well for him.

Richard Parker:

A comment that, I assure you, really emphasizes the "idiot" and "crumb" parts of my statement.

DDK:

How does Nick Stuart put up with you?

Richard Parker:

Stockholm syndrome, mostly.

Avalon doesn't stay ground down for long, even as OSCAR BURNS adjusts himself to be on top of him. Avalon might not be on the same level as BURNS when it comes to grounded technical acumen, but he's no invalid. He turns his body around and suddenly snaps off a fireman's carry on BURNS before grabbing a top wristlock. BURNS isn't having it, though, and he twists and stands until Avalon is holding him by the arm while both men are standing.

BURNS takes Avalon down with an arm drag, but loses his grip doing so. That means that Avalon's able to get to his feet, and he catches BURNS with one of his own before reapplying the top wristlock. BURNS slams the mat in frustration at this, though that's not a tap-out, you marks.

He eventually gets back up and backs Avalon into the ropes. Mark Shields *audibly* groans at this, because it means he has to do his job and it means he can't just stare at his phone.

Richard Parker:

This frickin' guy.

DDK:

I *know*, right?

At a lazy count of four, Avalon relinquishes the hold. After a brief moment of staring each other down, BURNS shoves Avalon back into the ropes. Avalon almost chuckles at this brazen attempt at getting in his head... before he shoves BURNS right back. BURNS takes a couple of steps back on that one, and then both men get right up in each others' face.

It would seem that the time for niceties is at an end. Avalon winds up and delivers a European uppercut. BURNS smiles and responds with a forearm smash hard enough to send Avalon staggering back into the ropes.

DDK:

Avalon is only a few days removed from winning Bang! Pro Wrestling's top prize in Japan, so do you think he's making a mistake in challenging OSCAR BURNS so soon after that?

Richard Parker:

That guy makes *a lot* of mistakes.

DDK:

Such as?

Not to be deterred by this, Avalon comes after BURNS with another European uppercut. BURNS, however, catches the arm and turns him around into a backslide. That backslide, though, is a Fool's Backslide. Avalon is overrotated and BURNS is quick to capitalize, pouncing on top of him and applying a Fujiwara armbar!

Richard Parker:

That.

DDK:

Oh!

Avalon is quick to realize the trouble he's in, and as BURNS goes right for the joint manipulation to try and force the submission, he's able to scramble away from the pressure and get his foot on the ropes. Mark Shields has a less-than-enthusiastic desire to break up the hold, but once he gets there, OSCAR BURNS sees the foot on the ropes and gives up the hold.

Avalon slides out of the ring, clutching his arm. In the ring, OSCAR BURNS is taunting him, daring him to get back in the ring against PRIME itself. He's practically inviting Avalon back into the ring, sitting on the second ropes and holding them open.

Avalon eventually hops back onto the apron. There's a lot of eye contact between the former Universal Champion and the former two-time FIST of DEFIANCE. Coral Avalon is a 24-year veteran and has seen this bit before. So instead of taking the invitation, Avalon simply slingshots himself over the top rope and lands on his feet, stepping back into the center of the ring.

BURNS is visibly annoyed, and he steps away from the ropes and gets up in Avalon's face again. A hard forearm is thrown, but Avalon catches him as he swings with a fast European uppercut that staggers BURNS back.

Avalon takes the opportunity to Irish whip BURNS into the ropes, BURNS reverses and Avalon's the one sent. Avalon comes roaring back with the one move BURNS does not want to see.

DDK:

RHONGOMYNIAD!

BURNS only narrowly avoids Avalon's vaunted yakuza kick, but it's not a graceful evasion. He falls backwards onto his ass, and Avalon only hits air. However, the King of Conquerors has enough control over his momentum that he stops himself before any sort of disaster happens. The end result is that he's looking down at BURNS. There's a small crack of a smile on his face, as if to say "Almost got you."

After all, that yakuza kick is no mere big boot. It's a goddamn jousting lance.

Richard Parker:

Oh, good, you know how to pronounce that nonsense name, too. You pass the Nick Stuart Nerd Test.

DDK:

Thanks?

BURNS gets mad about this near-miss, and he scrambles up to his feet to push Avalon again. Avalon pushes back, and BURNS comes back with a forearm smash hard enough that it probably would've put Avalon on his ass if he'd been hit with it. Instead, Avalon ducks underneath it and grabs the waistlock. BURNS, however, is quick to reverse it into his own. A German suplex seems imminent, but Avalon flips through it and lands on his feet behind BURNS.

The crowd oohs and ahhs at this, but BURNS is nonplussed by it. He simply gets to his feet in a hurry. Avalon ducks the clothesline from BURNS, and comes back with a big leap into a hurricanrana that sends BURNS sliding to the outside of the ring.

DDK:

These two men are one-upping each other at a rapid pace.

Richard Parker:

That's the part that infuriates me the most about Avalon.

DDK:

His insatiable need to be competitive in matches?

Richard Parker:

Yeah. And actually, I take it back. Second-most. The most being that he probably still hangs out with Cancer Jiles.

Avalon takes a running start into the ropes, bounces off of the opposite ones, and it looks like he's going to perform a dive upon a bewildered BURNS. Instead, Avalon flips over the top ropes and lands on his feet on the apron.

It turns out, though, that OSCAR BURNS is not nearly as bewildered as he appeared.

The moment Avalon lands on the apron, BURNS grabs him by the boot and yanks him off.

THUD.

Best way to describe the landing.

OOOOOOHHHHHH!!!

Best way for the crowd to respond to the landing.

Avalon does not take getting yanked to the floor all that well, but BURNS doesn't care. He has the advantage now. And as a man who prides himself on his technical ability, he isn't willing to win this match on the outside. He throws the King of Conquerors back into the ring and follows after him.

That suits Mark Shields just fine. If they'd stayed out there any longer, he might have actually had to start counting, and that would've sucked.

Richard Parker:

Was there even a one count?

DDK:

Yeah, he's just like that sometimes.

Richard Parker:

How does he even *have* a job?

It's the sort of question that DDK can only respond with a shrug.

BURNS starts kicking Avalon while he's down, surgically aiming for joints because he's a doctor in addition to a technician and graduated with honors from the International School of Pain. That's several years of graduate school on top of the standard four years of figuring out how to replicate what an iron maiden can do to a human body with your bare hands, baby.

He pulls Avalon to his feet, and a snap suplex leads into a floatover and a cover. It only gets one. It *should* be two, but "Mark Shields" and "has quality refereeing" are two statements that are utter nonsense when put together into one sentence. OSCAR BURNS glares at him with the wild eyes of a man who can't believe this man is still paid to do this.

OSCAR BURNS:

Damn it...

He looks out at Sonny Silver on the floor.

OSCAR BURNS:

Next time, GC, get me Benny Doyle!

Sonny gives him a thumbs up then OSCAR is back to business. He pulls Avalon back up and lands a gutwrench suplex. He holds on, rolls him over, and does a second one. Once again, he holds on and rolls him over for a third. With the third one completed, BURNS once again goes for the cover.

Oooooooooone.

Kickout.

Richard Parker:

...

DDK:

...

Richard Parker:

I'm going to do nothing but complain about this referee, aren't I?

DDK:

Probably. First time?

Richard Parker:

No, actually. He was there for Manhunt, now that I think about it.

To say that OSCAR BURNS is less than pleased would be an understatement. Neither is Sonny Silver. Even Coral Avalon, lying on the ground and in pain from all of the suplexes, has the look of a man who's very bewildered about when the two count was going to happen. Mark Shields reminds him that *he's* in charge, so BURNS just grumbles and goes back to work.

The thing is, Avalon's recovering. And when BURNS pulls him up to go for a powerbomb, Avalon makes sure his legs don't land on BURNS' shoulders. He lands on his feet in front of the Technical Spectacle, and blasts him with a European uppercut. This one stuns BURNS, and he falls backwards into the ropes. An enzuigiri hits him immediately

thereafter, knocking BURNS to the ground.

DDK:

Avalon is firing back!

The King of Conquerors is quick to snatch up BURNS. There's a sense that he wants to put this away early, and so he goes for the Excalibur. He gets the arms hooked in, but BURNS is quick to stand up, taking Avalon up into the air with him. If BURNS had simply sat out, he'd have spiked Avalon on his head and it might've been academic after that.

Instead, Avalon is able to push off and deliver a modified sunset flip, pulling BURNS down by the arms and down to the canvas. BURNS rolls to his feet faster than Avalon does, though, and BURNS comes up looking to kick Avalon's face off of his face.

DDK:

PENALTY KI-NO!

At the last minute, Avalon falls back and the kick flies just over him. This allows Avalon to shuffle back and roll BURNS up.

Shields doesn't even bother to count, not just because he's checked out, but because Avalon turns the rollup attempt into a standing headscissors when he overrolls BURNS to his feet. He once again catches the double underhook needed for Excalibur, but BURNS twists around and gets the wrist-clutch needed to go for Burnout.

DDK:

BURNS... GOING FOR BURNOUT!

Richard Parker:

He can't!

And he can't, because Coral Avalon knows that move all too well. After all, it's the move that he himself used to win his second Terminus Complex nearly ten years ago. He's able to shake loose the wrist-clutch before grabbing a side headlock. BURNS, out of reflex, picks up Avalon for a back suplex. Avalon, however, is able to flip over and land on his feet.

DDK:

Counter for counter, move for move, who's going to get the advantage?

Richard Parker:

Hopefully not the eGG Bandit.

BURNS knows what happened and he immediately launches the kind of superkick that's actually aiming for the person behind Coral and Coral just happens to be in the way. A bit of Footy, so to speak. Coral, however, has been on the wrong end of far too many superkicks in his time in PRIME, and he's able to avoid it.

He runs into the ropes behind BURNS and comes back with the great equalizer. BURNS, who expected to make contact with his superkick, is effectively in his recovery frames of animation. All he can do is take this yakuza kick on the chin.

DDK:

RHONGOMYNIAD!

It's the first time in the match that OSCAR BURNS has truly been rocked. The blow turns him completely around so that his back is to Avalon, and he staggers as though drunk. On the outside, Sonny Silver is shouting at OSCAR to snap out of it.

After all, the Armaments come in twos.

Avalon pulls BURNS in for the very double underhook piledriver that won him the Universal title. He lifts BURNS up. Or tries to. BURNS kicks his feet as he's being lifted, blocking the piledriver. Avalon has to let go of one of the arms and pound on the back of BURNS before he tries the hooks in again.

It's all BURNS needs.

He gets his arms free and pulls Avalon's legs out from under him.

DDK:

Double leg takedown! BURNS is not out of this yet!

He keeps hold of one of Avalon's ankles and turns him over. There's only one reason he'd do that...

DDK:

BURNS... TRYING TO LOCK IN NEK MINNET!

He's unable to. There's handfighting up front, with Avalon able to prevent BURNS from getting his arms around his neck. BURNS is forced to try and bash Avalon's head in with repeated forearms to get him to stop. However, when he renews his attempts to grab the hold, he doesn't notice that Avalon had managed to get loose from the toehold. Thus, when he goes for the rear naked choke, Avalon pulls BURNS down and tries to wrap him up in an omaplata – the prelude to Vortigern's Pillory.

BURNS doesn't let it happen.

He physically rolls Avalon over onto his shoulders. Shields lazily gets down to count.

ONE.

...

TWO.

...

KICKOUT.

Richard Parker:

That may have been the worst count I've ever seen. And I've seen Avalon himself referee.

Avalon is bewildered that he didn't get got. So was BURNS. Avalon is just a little bit faster in terms of reacting to such weird counting, and he barrels into BURNS.

DDK:

SECACE!

Avalon's Sixth Armament – a battering ram of a European uppercut to his kneeling opponent – slams into BURNS. It knocks BURNS over and Avalon lands on top of him, and he remains as such for the cover. Shields *audibly groans* and makes the count.

ONE.

...

TWO.

...

TH-KICKOUT!

Avalon is not the sort of person who gets angry at the referee, and prefers to keep up the pressure. But as he gets up to put some distance between him and BURNS, ready for another Rhongomyniad, he definitely gives Shields one hell of a stink eye.

BURNS is slow to get up, having been hit hard several times, but he's up in time to see Avalon coming.

DDK:

Avalon... going for another Rhongomynia- FOOTY!

The superkick launches Avalon backwards and down in the corner. BURNS falls to the ground as well. For several moments, both men are down. Mark Shields doesn't even bother counting. He just leans against the corner and looks like he's checking his watch. Impatiently. As he does, BURNS and Avalon both manage to crawl their way to opposite corners.

There's another long moment as both men shake off the cobwebs and stare daggers at one another. The crowd stands up in anticipation, chanting the entire time.

LET'S GO OS-CAR!

AV-A-LON!

LET'S GO OS-CAR!

AV-A-LON!

Avalon's Rhongomyniad has proven very effective, but BURNS has his vicious forearms. A charge could go either way, and they both knew it. Both men slowly stand up, ready to charge one another. BURNS slowly removes his elbow pad, a warning for what's to come. Avalon simply grabs the top rope and leans forward, as though this action is actually physically restraining him. His boot brushes against the mat like a bull readying a charge.

And then, moments before disaster...

DING DING DING

Confusion.

Then booing.

Mark Shields is between the ropes, talking to a visibly confused Vince Howard. Their conversation is very animated. Both Avalon and BURNS are bewildered, and the wind has been taken out of their sails. The charge never happens. Instead, Vince Howard reluctantly makes an announcement.

Vince Howard:

Ladies and gentlemen... the time limit has... expired? This match is therefore... A DRAW!

DDK:

WHAT!?

Richard Parker:

WHAT!?

This very question is echoed by three other men: Coral Avalon, OSCAR BURNS, and Sonny Silver themselves. They are barely heard over the booing. BURNS is already in Shields' face, but Shields argues back with him that *he's* the referee and his decision is final. He's doing this while tugging at his referee's shirt.

DDK:

This match has barely gone on for fifteen minutes! It's a thirty minute time limit!

Richard Parker:

Yeah, I know I'm supposed to be the devil's advocate and all that, but even *I* think that's nonsense.

At this point, Sonny Silver is up on the apron yelling at Shields as well. Shields reiterates how right he believes he is, even as the crowd is restlessly chanting a particular chant.

FUCK YOU SHIELDS!

FUCK YOU SHIELDS!

FUCK YOU SHIELDS!

One man who isn't engaged in yelling at Mark Shields is Coral Avalon. The King of Conquerors leans against the corner, elbows resting on the top rope, watching the proceedings like a hawk. It's clear from his expression that he's every bit as angry about this as his opponent, but for the moment, he's not moved a muscle.

The argument between BURNS and Shields is escalating. Sonny Silver is physically blocking Shields from even leaving the ring, and BURNS keeps stepping in Shields' way whenever he tries to walk past him to leave the ring.

So Shields decides to say fuck it. Literally. He tells BURNS he can go fuck himself and turns around to leave and...

RAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

DDK:

RHONGOMYNIAD!

The very instant Shields turns, Avalon comes surging out of the corner and lays waste to the most unpopular referee to have ever lived. It's a maneuver that no one saw coming. Avalon is not normally the sort to do anything like this, but people *do* forget that Avalon's had Shields as a referee in the distant past and he has a particular loathing for the man.

Shields flops like a fish out of water on the canvas.

Avalon doesn't even pay any attention to him. He's looking at OSCAR BURNS. Staring him down. The two had been engaged in a chess match all the way up until Shields stepped in, and they hadn't exactly set those feelings aside quite yet. On the apron, Sonny Silver's mouth is agape.

Richard Parker:

Oh, he dead *dead*.

He has no idea what's about to happen.

Avalon's the one who blinks and steps back first. It's not for any reason other than a desire to turn his attention to the fallen Shields. He yanks Shields up off of the canvas and underhooks the arms. He looks over at BURNS and Silver with a wry smile, the kind that has zero fucks to give and plenty of Armaments in him.

DDK:

EXCALIBUR!

The double underhook piledriver stands Shields on his head briefly before he falls to the canvas as though blown over by a stiff wind. Shields lies on his face, almost motionless.

Richard Parker:

This is *madness*! It's a good kind of madness because heck that guy, but *madness*!

Avalon rises to his feet, absorbing the cheers of the crowd. He might've gotten it all out of his system.

But OSCAR BURNS looks at him, and audibly yells something that changes the complexion of the post-match of their war.

OSCAR BURNS:

Is that ALL you've got!?

Bellowing that, BURNS rips Shields off of the canvas and hits him with a piledriver so fast that no one has any time to realize that a piledriver's even happened. Indeed, Mark Shields' head hits the canvas and he somehow manages to land on his feet afterwards. However, there is no Strong Style reaction to this piledriver, Mark Shields is not going to roar into the sky. He's instead going to fall on his ass and go limp.

DDK:

A PILEDRIVER FROM BURNS!

You may have noticed something curious going on on the outside of the ring. Three fans are out there holding up signs. Those signs have numbers. Also, those fans aren't really fans. They're Powerslam Anubis (you can tell because of the ceremonial jaguar mask), Lord Gavin Yum, Esq., (you can tell because he's wearing a napkin in place of a tie for his suit), and "the Venetian Assassin" Franco Marchesi (you can tell because he's big and Venetian). Bang! Pro Wrestling fans know them as Coral's allies and friends.

Standing next to them with a nonplussed expression is Coral's wife, Annabelle, who stands there with her arms crossed. No one knows that she's the one who handed them the numbered signs to begin with. As though she was expecting this.

Richard Parker:

I see the snooty Egyptian judge gave OSCAR BURNS a 2.

DDK:

He *is* the Judgement King.

Richard Parker:

I had no idea he was so discerning about the subject of piledrivers.

Coral nods at OSCAR BURNS, respecting the choice in piledriver.

He then reveals that, no... this is *not* out of his system yet. Because he pulls a limp Mark Shields off of the canvas. It's not the quick-fire death piledriver that BURNS did. Instead, he stalls it long enough for Mark Shields to *really* think about what he's done.

Nah, who are we kidding? Mark Shields is full-blown no thoughts head empty.

Well, empty except for the PAIN.

DDK:

ANOTHER piledriver!

The stalling piledriver lands after Avalon jumps into the air with it, and all Mark Shields can do afterwards is lie limply

on the ground regretting all of his life choices including the ones he's made today.

DDK:

It's 4's all day for Avalon.

Indeed, all of the piledriver judges are holding up 4's.

Richard Parker:

Eh, I thought it was 3.5 at best.

DDK:

I would've thought the rating system went up to 5 or 10 or something.

Richard Parker:

Listen, man, I know you're not used to the nonsense around here in PRIME, but as a piece of advice? Maybe don't question the seven foot tall man wearing a jackal mask.

Avalon stands up and while he goes up to BURNS to get in his face, his demeanor is different now. He's practically *inviting* BURNS to do it again. BURNS smirks confidently. He also sees the numbers being displayed by the spontaneous panel of judges on the outside and is absolutely *bewildered* by not only their presence, but by the numbers.

He outright questions Avalon about the scoring system, but Avalon just shrugs and double-takes at the judges like he didn't even know they'd be doing that until now.

BURNS pulls Shields up to his feet. By now, this man is more corpse than human man. Dead weight. BURNS muscles him up onto his shoulder. As he does, Avalon is outright leading a cheer among the crowd, pumping them all up for what's about to happen.

DDK:

This is surreal.

Richard Parker:

I feel like Avalon's done this sort of thing before.

He has, but we don't talk about Coral's "Twenty-One Excalibur Salute" during the pandemic. Poor Blackguard Wilkins.

BURNS jumps into the air, does a full pirouette, and drives Shields' skull into the mat with a tombstone piledriver. Shields bounces a full foot off of the canvas before landing hard on his back, motionless.

It's so impressive that there are four 4's among our panel of judges.

The fourth one is Jack Harmen, who is holding up his 4 while eating a sandwich. All the other judges – except Anubis – seem bewildered by his presence. As though they didn't know how he even got there.

Coral Avalon gives him a golf clap.

Richard Parker:

You know, *usually*, based on my experiences being out here over the last two decades, when wrestlers start assaulting the referees, there's a whole load of officials out here to stop them.

DDK:

Yeah, uh... I don't think anyone's coming out to help Mark Shields because Elise Ares might actually stab them to death for trying.

Avalon starts to gather together whatever remains of Mark Shields after that particular piledriver. By now, the fans are making their opinion clear of this situation.

ONE MORE TIME!

ONE MORE TIME!

ONE MORE TIME!

Lots of sympathy out there for our man.

Avalon is suddenly pushed away from Shields, however, to the boos of the crowd.

Because Sonny Silver has stopped him.

After all, if one knows their history, it's because of Mark Shields and his propensity for getting bribed even all the way back in the halcyon year of 2004 that Sonny Silver achieved his first world championship in the Squared Circle. Clearly, Sonny is feeling sorry for the man. He chides Avalon, and then he even says some disappointed words to his own charge, OSCAR BURNS.

Then he starts to help Mark up to his feet.

The boos are *loud* for Sonny's mercy. No one can believe what's happening as Sonny holds up a dazed, possibly concussed Mark Shields in dire need of medical attention. Sonny even shakes his hand.

And then Sonny smiles and asks Mark an important question.

Sonny Silver:

What have you done for me lately?

Mark is off in Neverneverland. He likely has no idea how to comprehend Sonny's question. He opens his mouth.

And then Sonny hauls off and headbutts him right in that mouth.

RAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!

The only reason Mark Shields doesn't immediately go down is because Sonny's still holding his hand. He uses this to reel Shields into a standing headscissors. He even gets fancy and gets the Gotch-style grip before lifting Shields up and giving him a piledriver for the ages.

OHHHHHHH!!!

Mark Shields might actually be dead. We're not sure.

Richard Parker:

Oh God.

DDK:

Sonny Silver just piledrove Mark Shields, and this place is coming unglued!

Silver, for his part, roars with a vigor he likely hasn't had in ages. He's shaking the ropes. Behind him, a hitherto before unseen scoring of **NEARLY ALL 5'S** could be seen across our panel of judges. Well, okay, Lord Gavin Yum's got him with a 3.5, but that's why he's going to find himself thrown into a locker by Clay Byrd later tonight when he's not expecting it. Sonny gives him a stink-eye in particular.

With Mark Shields legally dead in the state of Florida, Coral Avalon and OSCAR BURNS face each other. While both had been smiling with great amusement at all of the misfortune that's befallen their referee, the smiles slowly fade and

the two stare each other down. After all, nothing has really been settled between the two.

In the background, Percival Avalon gets in the ring and immediately picks Mark Shields up and delivers a piledriver of his own, one with a single leg hooked before he does it. Sonny Silver puts his hands on his head like Percy just dropped a sick diss on Mark, and the judges give him solid 3's all around.

Richard Parker:

Who the hell even was that?

DDK:

Someone wanted to get in on the fun, I guess.

Neither Coral Avalon nor OSCAR BURNS even care to glance that way as they're too focused on staring each other down. This is occurring even as Percival is now over the top of Mark Shields screaming almost incoherently into his face like some sort of rabid animal.

Then... Avalon extends a hand.

OSCAR looks down at it for a while, to the point where it's uncertain if he'd shake his hand. Ultimately, though, he does.

RAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!

Over the cheers of the crowd, Avalon makes a suggestion to BURNS.

Coral Avalon:

Another time?

OSCAR BURNS:

Yeah, you fuck.

The two, wordlessly, turn to look at the carnage they've all left in their wake. Percival is now marching around the ring, fired up. Sonny Silver is now leaning against the corner, bemused by this whole situation. Mark Shields has since extended the number of states he's legally dead in, and whatever parts of his body that were still intact were desperately trying to roll out of the ring.

BURNS points down at Shields.

Avalon nods.

And then both men swoop in.

Avalon puts himself up onto the second ropes. BURNS grabs Mark Shields, who is throwing the weakest baby flails possible in a vain attempt to not take the piledriver that's to come. It's all for naught, BURNS picks him up into a piledriver. Fans are going "OHHHHHHH" in an extended note, waiting for the other shoe to drop. Coral Avalon is a man of the people and is all about dropping shoes. So he stands up on the second ropes... then jumps up onto the top rope, leaps off, does a full pirouette, and SPIKES that piledriver like he's Vince Carter at a slam dunk contest.

OHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

Coral Avalon lands with a hop, and is running around the ring like he just scored the winning touchdown. We're in the home of the Hurricanes, so they know a thing or two about winning touchdowns lately. There's 5's across the board on that one.

DDK:

I have never seen anything like this before, Richard.

Richard Parker:

Neither have I! And I once watched Codemaster dedicate an entire beatdown to his homies.

OSCAR BURNS stands. He and Sonny nod to one another, and the two men decide to take their leave. Avalon goes to his nephew and has to drag him along as the two of them also leave the ring. However, Avalon lingers at the ring apron. All the while, the fans are chanting something at him.

ONE MORE TIME!

ONE MORE TIME!

ONE MORE TIME!

Avalon looks around the arena. He sees that OSCAR BURNS is also thinking what he's thinking, and is already marching back to the ring.

Coral visibly shrugs his shoulders as BURNS slides into the ring next to him and yanks Mark Shields back up to his feet once again.

DDK:

Oh no.

Richard Parker:

Oh yes!

Boom goes the piledriver.

Mark Shields crumples like the paper that you tried to Kobe into the trash can and missed.

Richard Parker:

Maybe more of these interfed dream shows should just have stuff like Piledriver Contests...

DDK:

Don't give them any ideas.

BURNS doesn't even wait around to see the very impressive perfect score of all 5's. He simply rolls out of the ring and rejoins Sonny.

Avalon has a wry, bemused smile on his face as he watches OSCAR go. All the while, the fans are still clamoring for more.

ONE MORE TIME!

ONE MORE TIME!

ONE MORE TIME!

Miami's got the taste for piledrivers.

Avalon listens to the chants, and after a long moment of hesitation, he enters the ring with a swagger. The fans are going crazy as Avalon pulls Mark Shields back up. By now, Shields can't even stand and it takes a lot for the King of Conquerors to even put him into a standing headscissors. Nevertheless, Avalon muscles him up into a piledriver position.

And then, without any semblance of mercy, he spikes him right on his head with a kneeling piledriver.

DDK:

MARMYADOSE!

RAHHHHHHHHHHH!!!

Mark Shields is now legally dead in thirty-six US states, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and American Samoa.

Avalon raises his arms into the air to absorb the cheers. Outside of the ring, OSCAR BURNS watches with an amused expression. The judges have all given that one 5's, too, because that right there is a piledriver you use for murder.

Richard Parker:

I have never seen a man so thoroughly murdered by piledrivers before in my life.

Avalon's theme music hits the PA system, and the Bang! World Openweight Champion makes his way out of the ring so that medical personnel can give Mark Shields some attention.

Richard Parker:

I think we're going to need one of those novelty oversized spatulas to get him out of there, so why don't we take a break before our next match?

Why don't we? Immortals moves on.

FAMILY MATTERS

We head backstage to find Matt Mills, PRIME's longtime interviewer, with mic in hand as he addresses the camera.

Matt Mills: We are just minutes away from our next match where Max Kael and his son will be taking on the Fuse Bros. in what is sure to be an eagerly watched matchup given how the Black Heart of PRIME left Coloss-

Voice: He shouldn't have left Colossus. Period.

The camera zooms out to reveal the sour expression of Blaze Claymore, dressed in a faded Minnesota North Stars shirt and equally worn pair of jeans.

Matt Mills: ...as I was about to say, we are just minutes away from our next match, but first I have with me one of tonight's big surprises in Blaze Claymore.

Blaze Claymore: Been a while, Matt.

Mills turns and faces Claymore.

Matt Mills: It has. I believe it was your first night in PRIME, in fact. Now here you are – not only a recent Alias Champion but the company's recently named "Rookie of the Year." It must feel pretty good to start your 2026 off with a signature win over a former Universal Champion in Erik Black.

Blaze runs a hand through his recently-washed hair.

Blaze Claymore: Truth is, Matt, I don't feel very good at all. Black goaded me and tricked me into this match promising new information that could help me save my hometown, but I should have figured it was all lies.

He gestures in the direction of the ring.

Blaze Claymore: He was a red herring. Chaffe to distract me from the person... no, the *thing* wearing a Max Kael suit. I know he's behind it all, a cancer – a disease — that has infected my life ever since he came into it.

Matt Mills: You're referring to your time in captivity — and So-

Blaze Claymore: Don't you dare say that name. Whoever she once was is gone — destroyed and replaced with some... nightmare conjured by Max Kael. She's pure evil.

Voice: Oh, Blazey, baby. You give me far too much credit.

The camera turns from the two shot of Matt Mills and Blaze Claymore to find a dark-skinned, ebony-haired woman in a pink power suit stepping out of the shadows. For those following PRIME these past few months, the crooked smile of Sonja Cuchilla sends a shiver up the spine and a rush of blood to the fingers as they form a tight fist.

Blaze Claymore: (*stuttering*) H-h-h- how.

Sonja calmly adjusts her matching Coach purse over her shoulder and smiles. Her voice as sweet as honey poured through a sieve of broken glass.

Sonja Cuchilla: The good reverend wasn't lying, Blaze. Here I am, in the flesh.

Blaze's eyes spark to life with fury as he steps forward – but as soon as he does, another figure emerges from the shadows that is also smiling, with what are supposed to be teeth, and letting out a choked whisper of a laugh, like rubbing two pieces of sandpaper together.

Snark Darkly: Oh. What a surprise. Congratulations are in order Nathan. You must be so proud of what you

accomplished tonight. I know we are.

Blaze narrows his gaze, watching as Snark's tar-like hand lands on Sonja's shoulder. Her eyes flicker to life at the touch.

Matt Mills: Oh! Mr. Darkly, if I may – any insight into the Kael family's approach for their match tonight? Any secrets you can let us in on before the match begins?

The things that are supposed to be eyes blink, but look only at Blaze.

Snark Darkly: Secrets... well, I am not sure if it qualifies, but what I can tell you, Mr. Mills, is that Mayor Kael has been entirely focused these past weeks on his family. As you can imagine, he was incredibly devastated with what happened with Kai and Nico.

Snark tries to make a *tsk tsk* sound, but it just sounds like the revving of a flooded engine.

Snark Darkly: But that's the difference between Mr. Kael and Mr. Claymore here. My client understands the importance of family. Everything else, including fame, is secondary.

Blaze's eyes go wide as his body begins to shake violently.

Snark Darkly: Speaking of, you had a very important message for Mr. Claymore here did you not?

Sonja smiles and reaches a claw-like hand into her purse and pulls out a sealed envelope.

Blaze Claymore: What trick are you trying to pull now, Sonja?

Sonja extends her arm outward, presenting the document to Blaze.

Sonja Cuchilla: Oh, this is no trick, Blaze. It's quite real, in fact. You see, after your little incident at the airport, you know the one after you lost your title match and failed at basically everything you promised your dear mother you would do? Well, she just couldn't handle having her heart broken again. Poor dear.

Blaze Claymore: *(voice shaking in anger)* What did you do to her?

Sonja Cuchilla: You mean what I did *for* her. She was so unstable, so wildly depressed well there was just no way she could be alone anymore. This, Blaze, is a letter approving my formal guardianship of Amy Lake.

Blaze Claymore: *(shocked whisper)* Your what...?

Sonja Cuchilla: Well, I only have her wellbeing in mind, Blaze. After all, what judge would approve of having a mentally unstable, violent criminal such as yourself looking after a very sick grown woman? But don't worry, she's in good hands under the care of the very best specialists at Arkham General Hospital. Mr. Darkly here helped me make the arrangements personally.

Snark Darkly: Now, if you would excuse us, Ms. Cuchilla is my guest for this evening's proceedings and we can't be late for the Mayor's match, now can we? After all, she's earned the right to see what it takes to be a real family.

The camera whip-pans to Mills.

Matt Mills: *(nervously)* No... I suppose not. Thank you for your time, Mr. Darkly... and Ms. Cuchilla.

The camera turns back in time to see the pair retreat into the darkness before returning to a tight shot of Mills.

Matt Mills: Blaze, how do you-

The camera zooms out to find our interviewer all alone.

Matt Mills: *(confused)* Huh. Well... uh. Let's go ringside. DDK? Richard? Take it away!

KAEL FAM. (PRIME) vs. FUSE BROS. (DEFIANCE)

The match graphic appears as anticipation is at an all-time high!

DDK:

For the first time in five years the Fuse Bros. will be in tag team action and if I'm not mistaken, for the first time EVER, Max Kael will tag with his adopted son, Sutler Reynolds-Kael, who makes his in-ring comeback in over five years, too!

Richard Parker:

A great show gets even better. As the wrestling purist I am, I don't think this match will hit the level of technicality all four men are *capable* of. It's going to be a brawl. Although, I shouldn't say that with certainty. I've obviously watched your program from time to time, Keebler, and that Tyler Fuse can wrestle any style.

DDK:

Max can wrestle well. He just *chooses* to take the cowardly way out more often than not. I wouldn't expect him to go toe-to-toe with Tyler frequently. I would also assume Max would want his son to do the majority of the *heavy lifting*.

Richard Parker:

I like you so much better than that other guy I worked with.

DDK:

Oh... thanks?

Richard Parker:

I mean, you're still too goody-two-shoes for me, but it's a start.

DDK:

Oh... thanks?

Instead of going to ringside, we flip backstage and see Tyler and Conor Fuse walking side-by-side, sporting their original tag team wrestling gear. Regardless of good or bad standing with The Faithful, the sight alone gains a pop inside the arena. Tyler loosens himself up as they march through the backstage, while Conor is chattering the entire time, no doubt talking about *strategy*.

Conor comes to a halt, so Tyler does the same.

The camera pans over.

...Cancer Jiles across from them. T-shades and all.

ADULT Conor Fuse: *[Looking at Jiles while talking to his brother]*

Oh shit, buddy. This was the *other* guy I was telling you about! He's cool, though. Well, he wasn't cool for the longest time but he calls himself *The Cool* but that's not even what I mean, I mean like him *and I* are cool, and not like COOLOSSUS cool because don't get me started on the lack of success the Egg Bandits have had there and ya, that reminds me...

Conor pats Jiles on the chest.

ADULT Conor Fuse:

Dude so right now in DEFIANCE, I got this whole "adult" thing going on, because I swore off video games and I'm a grown-up man now doing grown-up things like reading the newspaper in the morning and might even sleep with a woman- eerrr, whatever. Listen up.

He pauses for just a split second.

ADULT Conor Fuse:

I hope you beat the ever living mother piss outta the pirate. I hope you win the FIST and then maybe I'll see ya around my home thread a few more times.

Conor smirks.

ADULT Conor Fuse:

But if shit happens, because lord knows it does, maybe *I* will see *you* around *your* threads more often!

Conor sticks out a rock for a fist bump. Jiles is just about to return it until another figure comes into play. A dainty little flower. A tiny little woman.

All dressed in PRETTY PINK©.

Vickie Hall:

And what in the fresh hell is this!?

Vickie stares at Conor and then looks over towards his stoic and brooding brother.

Vickie Hall:

And *who* in the fresh hell is that!?

Conor rolls his eyes as he keeps focus on the duo in front of them but speaks to his brother.

ADULT Conor Fuse:

Ah. So yeah, *that's* Vickie.

Tyler Fuse:

I know.

Vickie seems rather pleased the good word about her has spread so far. She smiles from ear-to-ear, then looks up at her man and once again back at Conor.

Vickie Hall: *[Sincere? You decide]*

Cancy and I would just loooooove to stay and talk but we need to bounce pronto. The past few months haven't... (*amen*) gone the way we wanted. Has it now, **honey?**

Jiles continues to stand there, perhaps even more stoic than Tyler. Except he's got those t-shades on, so he looks way cooler.

Vickie Hall:

t was really nice meeting you, Tyler.

She grabs Cancer's hand but glances at Conor once more.

Vickie Hall:

Would love to see you help us out a little more these days, no? My man works so hard pulling the Bandits altogether. And last I checked, you're a Bandit, too.

Conor is minorly disgusted at the thought but trying to remain a professional. Or, by his new definition, trying to remain an ADULT.

ADULT Conor Fuse:

DEFinitely.

There's an awkward pause of silence across all parties until Vickie lights up with that adorable little smile.

Vickie Hall:

Good. 'Cause I'm sick as shit already watching LT walk around like she owns the place. It's time / owned the place.

Vickie lifts her chest forward, prim and proper.

Vickie Hall:

After all, 2026 is the year of Vickie Hall.

...

...

...

Vickie Hall:

And if it isn't, I might like literally kill somebody and Jonathan-Christopher, too. Did you see that sack of shit comeback tonight? The fucking nerve.

She tugs at Cancer's hand and starts walking away.

Vickie Hall:

Come now.

Jiles remains for a brief moment.

Cancer Jiles:

There there, my little Valkyrie. Be nice to Conor. Less you forget he helped us win Manhunt. Plus, it's not his fault JCH has a micro penis.

Conor nods like he agrees, he totally doesn't deserve hate that JCH's dick is smaller than a joycon. Needless to say, The King of COOL vanishes, as Conor looks back over to his brother. Tyler gives a shrug and the two of them continue down the hall.

Tyler Fuse:

She was...

He's at a loss for words.

ADULT Conor Fuse:

Oh dude, if you only knew.

And just like that we switch to ringside where DEFIANCE ring announcer Darren Quimbey stands in the middle of the ring, with a smile on his face.

Darren Quimbey:

This match... is NOT for seventeen falls. It is, in fact, for ONE FALL!

Richard Parker: *[disgusted]*

Great. He does this shit too? Our guy does this nonsense sometimes.

DDK:

He does it "sporadically".

Richard Parker: *[Still disgusted]*

Great. It's a pandemic of nonsense amongst all ring announcers.

DDK:

Quimbey's just having a little fun. Maybe he learned it from Vince?

Richard Parker:

So the pandemic spreads.

DDK:

The fans seem to enjoy it.

Richard Parker:

Ugh.

Darren Quimbey:

Introducing first... from Toronto, Ontario, Canada... teaming together for the first time in five years... they are former three-time world tag team champions across the wrestling landscape... Tyler and Conor Fuse... **THE FUSE BROS.!**

Lights dim and smoke fills the top of the rampway. This follows a group of teenage boys walking out, dressed in various cosplay inspirations. There's a Simon Belmont from Castlevania, a Link from the Legend of Zelda, Ash from Pokemon, Crash Bandicoot, Mega Man, Solid Snake, Mario, all the good shit. There are approximately twenty different cosplay teens, lining the rampway from the start of the stage to the ringside apron.

The lights dim further. Now grown men walk out of the foggy tunnel. One man carries a newspaper, another man smokes a cigar while holding a pack of them. Another man looks like he's in the middle of shaving, half-clean and half with lotion still on his face and a razor in hand. So forth and so forth, adults are walking out and doing adult-like things. Each one finds a spot in front of a teenage cosplayer's face.

WHAM!

And punches them the fuck out!

Lights off.

Conor Fuse's name blasts across the big screen. Other words follow.

LOVEABLE.

ADORABLE.

LOCKER.

ROOM.

LEADER.

ALL. GROWN. UP.

Conor's Fuse name appears once again but morphs into the addition of ADULT Conor Fuse.

"Who We Are" by the Imagine Dragons airs over the PA, the teenagers on the rampway have been cleared and the adults in the room are also gone. Historical video of Tyler and Conor's tag team history begins to play, winning various tag titles, destroying certain opponents.

Up in the morning, up in the evening

Picking out clocks, so the birds come back to eat

Oh, to eat

Tyler and Conor hold the UNIFIED DEFIANCE Tag Team Championships in the air for the first time inside a cell.

*Up on the mountain, down in the king's lair
Pushing these blocks in the heat of the afternoon
Oh, afternoon*

The Fuse Bros. defeat Cyrus Bates and Malak Garland for their second DEFIANCE reign.

*We were never welcome here
We were never welcome here at all
No*

Tyler wins the Favored Saints Championship.

*Oh, it's who we are
Doesn't matter if we've gone too far
Doesn't matter if it's all okay
Doesn't matter if it's not our day*

Conor wins a World Title from a poverty federation, drowning in gambling debt.

*Oh won't you save us from what we are?
Don't look clear, and it's all uphill from here
Oh-oh*

As the drum beat goes on, a lift from underneath the rampway rises. As previously noted, the brothers are sporting their original wrestling gear. Tyler wears dark brown tights with an orange stripe running down the left side of his leg, orange wrist tape and orange knee pads. On the other end, Conor sports lime green tights with a white stripe running down the left side of his leg and a lime green shooting sleeve on his left arm. His left elbow is also wrapped in lime green tensor bandages. Their tights are extra glossy, and they both are no longer sporting their original trademark bandanas. Otherwise, it's as throwback as possible.

*Up in the attic, down in the cellar
Lost in the static, coming back for more
Oh, for more*

*Out with the reason, in with the season
Taking down names in my book of jealousy
Jealousy*

*We were never welcome here
We were never welcome here at all
No*

DDK:

To our PRIMATES who may not be as familiar, that tensor wrap around Conor's left shoulder is not for show. He's only wrestled a couple of times since March of last year. Conor dislocated his left shoulder in the FIST of DEFIANCE match at DEFCON against Malak Garland. He dislocated that same shoulder in his very next match, a FIST of DEFIANCE battle against Henry Keyes. The match was in the summer. He has not wrestled since losing to Keyes. He took time off, he changed his attitude, but as you can see, for one night only he's calling back to the old days, at least with his presentation. No video game music to play them out, though.

*Oh, it's who we are
Doesn't matter if we've gone too far
Doesn't matter if it's all okay*

Doesn't matter if it's not our day

Because it's who we are

Doesn't matter if we've gone too far

Doesn't matter if it's all okay

Doesn't matter if it's not our day

Oh won't you save us from what we are?

Don't look clear, and it's all uphill from here

Oh

By now, the brothers have made their way to the bottom of the ramp. Tyler is stoic and brooding as always, the serious and intense brother of the two. While you can see Conor is *trying* to channel that inner methodicalness but deep inside his head he's bubbling with gleeful charisma.

Richard Parker:

I don't like this kid. Conor, I mean. However, I've been told he's changed his demeanor recently, so I'm willing to give it a shot.

DDK:

Yes. He's disbanded video games, comic books, and whatever else he was into. He says he's a "grown-up now" and has decided to tell everyone he's ADULT Conor Fuse.

Richard Parker: *[Is he serious?]*

I like it. Good for him.

DDK:

Yeah, well, it gets annoying REAL FAST when he literally says the word ADULT every other sentence.

Richard Parker:

Let the man learn. He's probably still a virgin.

They say we're crazy

They say we're crazy

They say we're crazy

They say we're crazy

They say we're crazy

They say we're crazy

They say we're crazy

THEY SAY WE'RE CRAZY

Tyler slides under the apron while Conor jumps onto it. Conor clears the ropes with another leap and lands almost smack-dab in the center of the ring. Conor stands there, arms out, soaking in the cheers and the boos, while Tyler broods in the corner and loosens up his wrists.

Oh, it's who we are

Doesn't matter if we've gone too far

Doesn't matter if it's all okay

Doesn't matter if it's not our day

Because it's who we are

Doesn't matter if we've gone too far

Doesn't matter if it's all okay

Doesn't matter if it's not our day

DDK:

Make no mistake, the Fuse's are NOT supported by our Faithful for what they've been doing, but I guess nostalgia kicks into play. These guys were a great tag team for four years and just as strong on the independents in singles competition.

*Oh won't you save us from what we are?
Don't look clear, and it's all uphill from here*

The Fuse's theme music comes to a close, while Conor looks over at DEFIANCE referee Benny Doyle with a scowl.

ADULT Conor Fuse:

Where's Mark?

Conor likely means DEFIANCE referee Mark Shields, who's rumoured to be more biased towards calling Fuse matches now since he is, indeed, inept.

Darren Quimbey retakes his position in the center of the ring, while Conor waits beside his brother, eyes locked on the entranceway. Quimbey takes a breath but before he can speak the lights shutter out with a loud electronic thudding noise. A few moments later they flicker back to life with Snark Darkly, Max's manager, standing next to Darren Quimbey in an all black tuxedo.

Taking the microphone from Darren's hand, the very distinctly, *especially human* manager of Max Kael offers his best apologetic smile.

Snark Darkly:

Apologies Mr. Quimbey but I have a very special introduction for my client, *Mayor* Max Kael.

A smile ripples across the old man's face that seems to run just a little too wide and a little *too* toothy. Darkness washes over the arena as the crowd fall into a mixture of cheers and boos. A bright red flame sparks to life in the center of the IMMORTALS stage, growing into a swirling pillar.

"Welcome to the Church of Rock and Roll" by Foxy Shazam blares out over the speakers. The pillar of fire contorts, shifts and disappears to reveal the Mayor of Arkham, the Lord of Kaelsalvania, the Prime Minister of Maxopotamia and a not *unsmall* googledoc of other titles.

It's Max Kael, y'all.

Snark Darkly:

Introducing the greatest Father/Son teamup since the Kims... approaching the ring FIRST.

Dressed in a pair of black and PRIME blue long boys, a pair of #D60000red kickpads and black boots. Across his chest is a large black and green sash that identifies him as the Mayor of Arkham, a very real and regularly cited city where Max is the very real and regularly cited mayor.

ADULT Conor Fuse: (*Shouting from the ring*) ARKHAM DOESN'T EXIST. **GOD!**

Max moves with the energy of the music, swaggering with exaggerated steps and a heavy bob of his head. Despite having been nearly killed a few weeks ago he looks to be in good spirits, a wide rigor smile the hallmark of his cherry disposition.

Snark Darkly:

Hailing from the Greatest City in the Miskatonic Valley, standing at six-foot-four-inches and weighing in at two-hundred-sixty-six pounds... he is the Mayor of Arkham... He is the **BLACK** Heart of PRIME... he is...

MAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAX KAAAAAAAAAAAAAEL!

Following behind Max, with a much, *much* more subdued energy lurks the adopted son of Max Kael. In gear similar to Max's but in black, purple and hot pink, the murklord himself, Sutler Reynolds-Kael... well. He murks I guess.

Snark Darkly:

And he is joined by his son, Sutler Reynolds-Kael! Together they are the Kael FAAAMILY!

Turning, Max tries his best to encourage Sutler to be more excited about the situation but the sullen son of Kael just keeps his eyes locked on "ADULT" Conor Fuse down in the ring.

ADULT Conor Fuse: *[Shouting to Sutler]*

Your dad's an idiot!

As the music continues to thunder down, the Mayor of Arkham clamours up the ringsteps, cleaning off both of his boots before slithering between the ropes. The Son of Scions reaches the ring and slips beneath the bottom rope, darting up to his feet as he flips two middle fingers at Conor, the most energy he's put into this entrance thus far.

Max laughs and joins him, always happy to flip someone off even if he's not entirely sure. He redirects his middle fingers at Tyler for symmetry before winking, or perhaps just blinking out of order toward the camera.

The music dies down as Sutler and Max move to their respective corner. As for Snark Darkly, he disappears when no one is looking and reappears seated on the barricade outside of the ring on the Kael family half.

The crowd is on their feet, there isn't a person sitting down, as the cheers are insurmountable.

Richard Parker:

Witnessing history, Keebler! This is what wrestling is all about. This is why IMMORTALS was booked in the first place!

Tyler and Conor remain on one end, while Max and a disassociated Sutler are on the other. Max is grinning, such a wide, toothy grin just plastered on his face, almost Snark Darkly-esq. Meanwhile, Tyler remains deadpan while Conor keeps his eyes on the Kael's but his mouth in the direction of his brother, likely going over strategy.

SRK is spaced out. Dead inside and emo.

DDK:

Who will emerge as the legal participants? Benny is calling for them to get to the center of the ring.

Tyler nods and exits to their corner. Conor walks out to the middle. The fans are going even MOAR ballistic now, because the ones who know, know. With all respect to Maximillian Wilhelm Kael, most of the hardcores are there to see Conor and Sutler square off.

On the Kael side, SRK shoots Conor double middle fingers again before his father slithers forward. Doyle agrees the match is ready to go, while the crowd has seemingly chosen a side. They are booing the hell out of Sutler's decision.

DDK:

Max Kael and Conor Fuse, going to start it off.

Conor doesn't look thrilled at the notion he's not getting Sutler, but then again he doesn't look surprised, either. Fuse meets Kael in the middle of the squared circle and Doyle calls for the bell!

DING DING

Conor is eyeing Max, Max is eyeing Conor... while licking his lips.

ADULT Conor Fuse: *[Pointing past Max, to Sutler]*

/ should be your son. I'd do a better job.

Max's eyes go wide, as if he would consider such a wonderful application! The reality is Conor's just saying that to piss Sutler off.

Doesn't work. Kid don't care.

Max fires a right hand into Fuse's jaw! Conor staggers back, spins around in a 360 and clubs Kael to the canvas with a hard left arm clothesline!

The crowd cheers as Max sits on his ass looking up at the former gamer. He's... pleased. He glances back at his own kid, a facial expression suggesting Sutler would never do a thing like that and honest to god maybe Max should adopt Conor instead. He's grown up, after all!

Richard Parker:

Conor Fuse-Kael, I can see it now.

DDK:

We've actually had a problem with that.

Richard Parker:

With what?

DDK:

...With characters changing or adding an extra last name. (*Sighing just thinking about it*) It's a long story, never mind.

Max cracks his body upright, like a dry bones koopa coming back to life and wanting more. Oh, Conor will give him MOAR alright. Fuse looks for a second hard clothesline attempt but Max ducks and takes his lanky body into the ropes. Fuse shoots around and aims for a shotgun dropkick but Kael wraps his arms around the top rope to stop all his momentum. Then he races over and drops an Arkham Hellbow into the side of Conor's head.

Kael peels Fuse off the mat and looks for a snap suplex but Conor lands on his feet in the process. Conor attempts a superkick but Kael's body moves sideways at the very last second. Max races at Conor with a knee in the air but Conor backtracks. Fuse replies with a slingblade attempt but crashes to the ground with no one in his arms. He kips right back up.

Stand off.

Cheers.

DDK:

This arena is losing their minds!

Max looks impressed. Sutler rolls his eyes and makes a pukey face. Get him out of there! Meanwhile, Tyler is deadpan.

Conor gives a quick head nod to MWK.

ADULT Conor Fuse:

Think about it... *pops*.

This **finally** riles up Sutler but Max is already focused on wanting MOAR. The two race towards each other, leaping in the air once they arrive in the center and start throwing wild haymakers!

Conor is keeping up with Max, pumping the former world champion's jaw with fist after fist. Meanwhile, Kael is trying to

make a mark on the top of Fuse's skull but he's being overwhelmed with punches.

Over-*Wilhelmed*.

Ha.

Conor has full momentum going-

DDK:

POKE TO THE EYES! Dammit!

Richard Parker:

Ya, that'll happen.

Benny Doyle didn't see it because Max is so damn smooth. Max shoots off the ropes, past his son who now wants to tag in after all this "cOnOr bE UR sOn?" bullshit. It doesn't matter. Kael flies across the canvas with a booming forearm shot, and Conor flips inside out TWICE before meeting the mat chest-first!

Kael drags Conor off the canvas and delivers another Arkham Hellbow into Fuse's neck. Conor is on roller skates as Max hits the ropes once again-

AND IS BLOODY DECAPITATED by an emerging Tyler Fuse who's sick of seeing this trash! Tyler nearly kills Max with a blindsided clothesline before Benny Doyle, the Irishman, loses his mind and tells Tyler to get back to his corner.

Like the elder Fuse cares.

With both men down, Conor slides towards his side of the ring while Max is moving to Sutler.

TAG, Conor to Tyler.

TAG, Max to Sutler.

DDK:

It's not the brother Sutler wanted, but welcome back to wrestling, kid. You've got company.

For a moment, the sullen boy looks like he might back down and pack it in. However, the crowd is hot, Tyler's right there... and what the fuck, he's here anyways, right?

Reynolds-Kael moves forward with a lariat but Tyler ducks. Fuse with a punch... once... twice... thrice. The left hands go straight into Sutler's jaw, spit flying out on the last shot. Tyler ducks another clothesline attempt, spins SRK around, kicks him in the stomach and lands a high impact DDT!

DDK:

Cover!

ONE.

TW-KICKOUT!

DDK:

Our first cover of the night but Tyler is RIGHT, and I mean RIGHT back to work.

Indeed. Fuse delivers knee after knee after knee. He's got Sutler bent over, holding onto the back of the boy's head with both hands while Tyler wildly lets his left knee fly. There's about ten solid shots before Fuse drops Sutler. Then the OG Player moves to an empty corner of the ring and waits for the exact right time.

Tyler sprints out with a flying knee to the top of Sutler's head. The Son of Scions spins, a complete 360 before landing on the mat in a heap.

Richard Parker:

Sutler needs to shake off those cobwebs. He looks rusty.

DDK:

Well, as we mentioned, he hasn't wrestled in FIVE years and if you caught that sitdown interview he had alongside Conor Fuse on our DEFIANCE award show, I certainly got the impression Sutler does **not** care about wrestling. At all.

Richard Parker:

He better change that tone soon.

Tyler lifts the fallen SRK to his feet. He delivers an atomic drop, followed by a very well balanced pendulum backbreaker. Fuse discards Sutler to the mat, rolls him onto his back and sets up for a figure four leglock.

NO! Sutler kicks Tyler away with a free boot, while frantically crawling to the ropes. Tyler is right back onto his prey when-

WHAM!

From the outside of the ring, standing on the floor, Maximilian Wilhelm Kael connects with the top of Tyler's skull, courtesy of a Roaring Hellbow!

Richard Parker:

See! He needed daddy's help!

SRK groans at the sheer thought of having his father *already* help. Sutler is forced to forget and keep going, though, as he slides forward and drags Tyler to a vertical base.

Snap suplex. Sutler holds on. Another snap suplex. Sutler holds on. Falcon arrow suplex with a bridge and a pin.

ONE.

TWO.

KICKOUT!

Fuse kicks out with power, but Sutler is the first on his feet. He snatches the elder brother and whips him into a gutwrench, sitdown powerbomb with another pin.

ONE.

TWO.

KICKOUT!

DDK:

If I didn't know any better, I'd say Sutler *wanted* to get this match over with as fast as possible!

Richard Parker:

You don't know any better.

DDK:

Fair.

SRK is back on the offensive. He's kneeing Tyler like Tyler kneed him earlier. There's about five shots, not ten like Tyler delivered. Sutler bounces off the ropes and dropkicks the left leg out from under Fuse, then grabs Tyler's head and lands a DDT to place him fully on the mat.

SRK goes to the second rope.

Measured knee drop.

Another pin.

ONE.

TWO.

KICKOUT!

Sutler glances over to DEFIANCE referee Benny Doyle, but the Irishman is in no mood for shit and tells him it's a straight-up two.

DDK:

I will say this, after help from Max, Sutler's held his own. Tyler is no easy customer, he went on a TWO year winning streak in DEFIANCE before being pinned.

Reynolds-Kael pulls Tyler off the mat and connects with another snap suplex. SRK holds on but this time Tyler blocks it, knees Sutler in the chest and hits the ropes.

Reynolds-Kael with a sidewalk slam!

SRK looks to pin again, but this time Max wanders into the ring, telling his son he wants the tag and that Max has been asking for the tag for sometime now. SRK rolls his eyes, while Benny Doyle tells Max to get back to their corner. Suttly walks both he and Tyler over, almost reluctantly making the tag and then mumbling something along the lines of "and he wonders why I don't care..."

With the emo kid gone, Max licks his chops most literally and goes back to work on Fuse. There's a jab. Jab. Jab. Numerous boxing-like jabs as Maximillian keeps his distance. Once he knows he's done enough damage, seeing Tyler all wobbly in the center of the ring, Kael slithers in for a closer look.

He applies a headlock but Tyler shoves Max back a couple steps, leaps up and pumps The Black Heart of PRIME™ in the chest with a full blown knee smash. The wind is completely knocked out of Kael, you can tell by his facial expression he was caught off-guard. Fuse hits the ropes-

And Max LEAPS forward, head-first. No, it's not a headbutt. It probably should've been...

DDK:

Is he... is Max *BITING* Tyler?

Richard Parker:

I do believe so, yes. He kinda does things like this. A lot.

Max Kael has his front teeth sunk right into Tyler's neck, but Max's arms are up as he's trying to cover what he's doing. He's a cheating master, after all. The announcers can see it because the cameras have zoomed in. But once Benny Doyle takes a closer look...

Kael removes his head entirely. Now he applies a couple of boots to Tyler before hoisting Fuse in the air and crashing him down in the center of the mat with a very clean looking blue thunder bomb.

DDK:

Another cover!

ONE!

TWO!

KICKOUT!

Tyler rolls to the side while Max recollects himself. For a brief moment, Max eyes Conor Fuse in the Bros. corner, before dragging Tyler to a vertical base.

WHAM!

Tyler connects with a ripcord forearm straight into Max's jaw. It ALMOST looks like Max dislocates his jaw in the process but he's all boney and shit, it's kinda his thing. Maybe Max is double jointed. Anyway, Tyler stumbles backwards, knocks himself in the side of the head a couple of times and charges in.

Powerslam by Max!

ONE!

TWO!

KICKOUT!

Fuse, however, is crafty. He's been overwhelmed for a while now, but he's most certainly *resilient*. Upon the kickout, he ensures he snatches Max's legs out from under him and flips him around... into a modified Texas cloverleaf!

Max screams. He uses his right arm to lift off the mat and point an index finger to Sutler, asking for his son to come in and break the hold. Sutler, however, really doesn't look like he wants to do anything. Not after he had the match at hand and *daddy* wanted back into it. Plus... daddy go gone and fucked it all up.

Tyler leans back harder and harder with the cloverleaf. It's really locked in.

DDK:

You can see the pain spread across Max's face!

Richard Parker:

What a terrible child that Reynolds-Kael is. Conor was right, he needs some manners!

Kael reaches for the ropes but he's a little too far away. Tyler has the move perfectly textbook and the fans are shouting at Maximillian his time might be up.

MWK places both hands underneath him. He pushes up off the mat as hard as possible and moves a tiny inch. He reaches for the ropes. He's almost there.

...

...

...

He's got them!

Tyler Fuse **immediately** breaks the hold, snatches Kael from around the waist and deadlifts him into a belly-to-back suplex and a bridge and pin in a VERY impressive display of balance, power and speed!

ONE!

TWO!

KICKOUT!

DDK:

Wow, Tyler landed the suplex almost the EXACT second Benny told him to break the hold.

Again, Tyler is on the attack. It's his ANGRY STOMPS of DOOM. Over and over they go, even though Max rolls into an empty corner of the ring. Perhaps making up for lost time, Tyler is a rabid animal, knocking the sole of his left boot into Max's face.

DDK:

Can't make Kael any uglier.

Benny Doyle starts the FIVE count. He gets to FOUR before Tyler stops, takes a few steps back but then charges at Kael once again. Max places both hands on the top ropes. He pulls himself up at the very second Tyler comes sprinting in.

BONK!

Both men crank their heads against one another. Both of them fall to the canvas!

DDK:

Anyone's game!

The crowd rallies their feet against the floor. As this takes place, Tyler crawls to his corner and Max fumbles over to his.

DDK:

Who will be the first to get there!?

Tyler is much closer to his corner than Max. Also, Conor has his hand extended far, far, farrrr into the ring, while holding onto the tag rope and still, somehow, having both feet placed down on the apron.

TAG, Tyler to Conor.

TAG, Max to...

Sutler.

Conor steps forward.

Sutler steps forward.

The crowd realizes it's finally happening.

LET'S GO CONOR, LET'S GO! CLAP, CLAP!

FUCK HIM UP SUTLER, FUCK HIM UP!

LET'S GO CONOR, LET'S GO! CLAP, CLAP!

FUCK HIM UP SUTLER, FUCK HIM UP!

LET'S GO CONOR, LET'S GO! CLAP, CLAP!
FUCK HIM UP SUTLER, FUCK HIM UP!

The two are just standing there.

DDK:

Jesus. Once Conor was tagged in, it's like something immediately awoke inside Sutler. I saw him just "come to life" and extend his hand like Fuse did. Or else I don't know if Max could've made it in time!

Richard Parker:

It's funny you say that, because I was watching the tag exchange between Tyler and Conor and I could've sworn Conor took his time to enter the ring. Perhaps he wanted Max to tag out...

Either way, there they are.

Finally standing face-to-face.

Conor looks at Sutler and then into the crowd. He tells them this is what Sutler has been missing for years. SRK simply rolls his eyes, looks at the former gamer and coldly states "I don't give a shit. I don't give a shit."

Conor shakes his head no.

ADULT Conor Fuse:

Oh buddy, you do.

Conor cranks his neck to the side. It pops.

ADULT Conor Fuse:

And your mother wears army boots.

RRRRRRRAAAAAHHHHHHHHH!!!

DDK:

WE ARE OFF! BOTH MEN ARE UNLOADING ON ONE ANOTHER! MY GOD!

The haymakers are flying so fast and furious, it would make Vin Diesel talk about family. Conor with left after left after left, and Sutler with right after right after right. The arena is shaking while the crowd cheers on the carnage before their very eyes!

We've gotten to the point where both men have opened each other up the *hard* way. Trickle of blood roll down Conor and Sutler's forehead... before they both stop, because they're getting a little wobbly.

Conor stumbles a few steps back and looks into the crowd. For a moment, he might not even be ADULT Conor Fuse and just his regular OG self.

Conor Fuse:

THIS IS WHY, YOU SON OF A BITCH-

Sutler spits at Conor's feet.

Sutler Reynold-Kael:

Holy fuck, do you ever **shut up**!?

AND BACK AT IT THEY GO! More haymakers. More. More. MOAR! It looks like Conor has gotten the better of it. He gives one stiff as shit forearm and bounces into the ropes, coming in full sprint when Sutler catches him and performs

a standing Spanish fly!

SRK pops to his feet. For a millisecond *he* now seemingly loses himself. For that ever-so-faint moment, the emo in him is gone (or beaten out) and he screams into the rafters, taking a couple steps back before measuring his nemesis.

Conor's on a knee. Sutler runs towards him.

POP!

Superkick by Fuse, catching Reynolds-Kael under the jaw. Conor leaps onto Sutler's shoulders, huricanrana-ing him into the ropes. Conor runs in and performs a sidewalk slam.

Then Fuse in on the top rope in a FLASH.

RRRRRRRAAAAAHHHHHHHHHH!!

But Sutler jumps up there with him! The Murk Lord headbutts Fuse and performs a SUPERPLEX into a crossbody landing where Sutler is on top of Conor and pins him!

ONE!

TWO!

KICKOUT!

Sutler stands, awkwardly backpedaling into a free corner of the ring. (For the record, Tyler and Max are still recovering outside of the ring and aren't in their respective corners yet.) He measures Conor and takes charge the moment the former gamer shows signs of life.

Sutler tries for a big boot but Conor rolls underneath the leg and shoots upright after SRK clears him. Conor aims for a clothesline but Sutler ducks that himself and repositions after Fuse fumbles forward. Sutler goes for an elbow smash but Conor blocks it. Conor tries for a superkick but Sutler gets his arms up. Sutler attempts a leg sweep but Conor jumps in the air. As Conor's IN the air, he can almost clear Sutler's head to give the HEAD STOMP a try. It's a no go because SRK slides away at the very last second. As Reynolds-Kael slides away he bounces into the ropes and delivers a Reality Bending Elbow into nobody. Conor would like to hit Malak's I Trigger knee smash but ends up meeting thin air. Weapon of Max Destruction? Blocked. CQC running bulldog? Avoided. Brow Beater headbutt? Nadda. Resolution DDT? Nope. Sutler digs into his pocket to deliver Max's pocket sand... into the stadium wind.

The two stand there, absolutely breathless after trying about ten different moves each and not being able to connect with a thing!

Meanwhile, the arena is giving a standing ovation!

ADULT Conor Fuse:

See dude, **SEE!**?

Sutler Reynolds-Kael:

I said... FUCK. OF-

But Sutler can barely finish because his non-emo daddy enters the scene and destroys Conor Fuse with a Roaring Hellbow to the side of his head, followed by a spinning tombstone piledriver!

Sutler remains in the same position, with a look on his face suggesting "WTF are you doing?" Max dusts himself off, takes a few steps back and is about to converse with his stepson before Tyler Fuse enters...

BAM!

DDK:

Dear lord WHAT a running knee by Tyler!

Kael not only goes down like he's shot, but out of the ring completely in the process! The fans are HOT, as Tyler cranks his head around and stoically looks at Sutler, who's back to the emo pouty look.

Richard Parker:

In a way, these two men are similar.

DDK:

Tyler isn't emo.

Richard Parker:

Pfft, you'd have *me* fooled!

Realizing he has to fight or he will end up with the same fate as his dad, Sutler puts up his dukes but there's a surprise waiting for him from behind.

Conor. He taps SRK on the shoulder... Reynolds-Kael spins around.

WHAM!

Superkick, sending SRK into Tyler's waiting arms.

Sidewalk slam.

Tyler knows Benny Doyle is giving him hell right now, and he also knows the referee's grace period is about to run out. Tyler shoots over to the Fuse Bros. corner as Conor comes in and tags his brother. Tyler sprints ahead, snatching SRK by the head and delivering his finisher, the CQC running bulldog.

But Tyler doesn't pin.

The arena remains in a continuous ruckus, as the elder brother tags his younger flesh back in.

Tyler's eyes shoot daggers into Conor... before pushing him. Before pushing him **hard** and pointing down to the fallen man below.

Tyler Fuse:

Finish him.

For the next few minutes, the recent direction of Conor and Tyler Fuse has seemingly been forgotten. Nostalgia kicks in, and everyone wants to see their OG finisher doomsday device rip Sutler Reynolds-Kael's emo head off.

In one swift motion, Conor goes from floor to top buckle and Tyler places Sutler on his shoulders.

Conor leaps, landing the dropkick SQUARE into Sutler's head while Tyler falls back and slams The Son of Scions onto the mat.

DDK:

PIN!

The crowd counts along as if it's academic.

ONE!

TWO!

“THREE!”

But it's not academic.

The crowd are the ones who counted the three, NOT Benny Doyle. Max Kael burst in and saved his son, dropping an elbow at the VERY VERY last second. Kael starts hammering away on Conor, completely forgetting there's another man standing above him. Once the Mayor of Arkham realizes there's a shadow hanging over him, he stops throwing wild punches at Conor and looks up with a cheeky, sneaky, almost manipulative kind of grin.

Max Kael:

You're nothing like (*Nodding down towards Conor*) him, huh?

Tyler slowly shakes his head no, while the wheels are in motion inside Max's head. How's he gonna get out of this?

Kael just goes for it, a low blow. Right in front of the ref. He doesn't care, it's not really his rivalry. Screw the DQ finish.

...

However, Fuse blocks it. Tyler reaches down and drags Max off the canvas... and into a piledriver.

Max's head bounces off the mat until he goes SPLAT. Tyler pulls his brother up, as the two of them enclose on the elder Kael, who's just coming to. The Mayor looks up. He sees both Fuse's marching towards him, so he starts sliding himself into a corner, arms out, pleading with the former tag champions to show him some mercy.

Max Kael: [*Connivingly*]

Whatever you want. (*Looks at Conor*) You're right, you can be my boy now. (*Looking past Conor and towards his fallen son*) I never liked my kid anyway. Too emotional. Too much hard work. (*Looking over at Tyler*) But you.

(***Really wide grin***) You could go places.

Max has completely backed into the corner, there's nowhere else to go.

Tyler and Conor are close. Their body language suggests they haven't been swayed.

Kael grins again, almost nervously.

...Until he suddenly throws POCKET SAND at them!

...

...

...

Unfortunately for Max, the sand goes right in-between both brothers, catching fuck all.

Richard Parker:

Benny Doyle's going to let this fly!?

DDK:

Well, the sand *technically* didn't hit anyone... and Benny's a pro. He realizes some control of this match has been thrown out the window, but I'm sure he'll step in when it matters.

Tyler and Conor look at each other, then back at Max. Another grin crosses Max's face, this one more cheesy than conniving, almost as if he's trying to say "can't blame a guy for trying".

Conor shakes his head.

ADULT Conor Fuse:

I don't need a dad, I'm an **adult** now...

Conor groans.

ADULT Conor Fuse:

Also stop with the Arkham shit, Batman blows.

Tyler reaches down, snatching Max by his hair and drags him upright. Tyler throws Max towards Conor, who lands a spinning heel kick, followed by Tyler holding onto Max and delivering a belly-to-side suplex.

Cue Sutler Reynolds Kael who suddenly comes in like a house on fire! He clubs Tyler in the head with a forearm and then goes straight to Conor Fuse with more!

DDK:

I believe these are the legal men, Richard. Conor and Sutler.

Sutler is pounding the hell outta Conor, before tossing Fuse into the ropes. Sut with a swift, hard knee to the gut, followed by chucking Conor's head into the mat and dropping a leg across his neck. Sutler stays down there, seemingly trying to work Conor into some kind of submission position... but Fuse is crafty himself. He's fighting through it, he's trying to wiggle into the ropes.

DDK:

Sutler has Conor's arm!

He does. Reynolds-Kael has Conor's left arm and starts wrapping his legs around it.

Richard Parker:

Some kind of modified omoplata! The move will put CRAZY pressure on your upper arm and shoulder!

SRK is tugging the ever living shit outta the arm and soon enough Conor starts screaming like a banshee.

Rll- RlllPPPPPPPP!!!

Fuse takes his free hand and pulls at his hair profusely before he uses absolutely everything he has and tries to make a play for the ropes. He rolls to his side, or at least as close to being on his side as the submission allows for. He places his right hand on the mat and sticks it firmly against the canvas. He pushes, he drags, he's trying to bring himself and his bitter enemy towards the ropes!

The crowd is screaming and yelling in ALL kinds of directions.

Conor's almost there!

Suddenly, Tyler appears on the apron, as he had previously fallen out of the ring beforehand. He takes Conor's right arm and drags him the extra mile... into the ropes!

Benny Doyle shouts at Tyler, telling him to go back to his corner but nonetheless, the ref has to demand a rope break!

Sutler doesn't want to. He's pissed off because he's in the zone. He's arguing with Doyle about the call, but Benny is a pro and won't *verbally* argue back. The real way to argue is to count to FIVE anyway.

He's at FOUR.

The Murk Lord begrudgingly breaks the hold.

Richard Parker:

I will say, the Fuse's have shown a lot of teamwork here tonight. For a group that hasn't been together in five years, they've shown minor rust.

DDK:

Well, they *are* brothers.

Richard Parker:

Sutler and Max *are* family.

DDK:

Yeah but how much does Max really care for his son?

Richard Parker:

Good point.

Conor continues to hug the ropes with his right arm, while that left arm dangles.

DDK:

I think Conor's dislocated his shoulder again. That'll be times in the last three matches.

Conor slips out of the ring and to the floor below. The sight confirms Keebler's theory. Conor's left arm is dangling by a thread.

Sutler also exits the ring, right past his recovering father. He grabs Fuse by the back of the head-

WHAM!

Sending him into the steel steps!

SRK shouts as he leans down towards Fuse.

Sutler Reynolds-Kael:

YOU wanted this, remember!?

The Son of Scions doesn't waste another second. He takes Conor and runs his left arm into the ring post on the other side, where the Kael corner stands.

PING!

Fuse goes down like he's shot, that arm still hanging by a thread. Sutler collects the former gamer and throws him back into the ring. Before Reynolds-Kael enters, he eyes his father with a serious fury burning in his soul. No words are exchanged between them as the sullen but now angry child enters the ring-

Conor pops up with a jumping double knee facebuster (codebreaker), shocking SRK as he flies in the air and then crashes to the mat!

DDK:

Conor's bought himself some time!

Richard Parker:

Indeed he has.

DDK:

Just *some*, though. Tyler is only now arriving in their corner.

With his right hand, Conor pounds on his forehead, perhaps knocking the pain out of it. He kips to his feet, his left arm remains dislocated. He points to Tyler with his good hand and tells him to wait a second before he repositions his left arm and runs straight into an empty corner of the ring.

CRRRACCCCKKKK! POP!

DDK:

I think- I think he popped it back in place!

Conor is ready to tag now BUT SRK IS RIGHT BACK IN THERE!

DDK:

Conor bought himself enough time for the shoulder relocation, but that was it!

Sutler comes in with arms firing all over the place. He Irish whips Conor into the ropes but Conor ducks a clothesline. Fuse goes into the second set of ropes and springboards off them with a spinning heel kick, catching SRK under the jaw.

And JUST LIKE THAT Fuse is on the top rope.

SUPER SPLASH 450-

DDK:

OH MY GOD!

Sutler was ready for Conor. He moves a tiny little bit and then practically catches Conor as he lands, wrapping his right leg around Conor's neck and for added insult to injury, he also uses both arms to apply that modified omoplata on

Fuse's previously dislocated shoulder.

DDK:

Sutler Method!

Richard Parker:

Sutler what!?

DDK:

Sutler Method! I did my homework, this used to be Sutler's finisher.

The combo choke (Sutler Method) and omoplata are ALMOST locked in... but Conor is trying to fight like his f'n life DEPENDS on it. Sutler, who was first grinning from ear-to-ear, now has complete attention towards his body positioning...

Conor pushes back with his legs, he's got Sutler in a pin!

ONE!

TWO!

NO!

DDK:

Sutler had no choice but to drop the submission or he was going to lose.

Reynolds-Kael is on his feet. Conor Fuse is barely on his. Sutler bursts forward but Conor avoids him, bounces off the ropes, leaps in the air...

DDK:

HEAD STOMP!!! IT'S OVER!

Richard Parker: *[Can't help but be mesmerized by the athleticism]*

How high of a jump was that!? The soles of the kid's feet literally hit the top of Sutler's crown!

DDK:

Conor with the cover!ONE!

TWO!

MAX WITH THE SAVE!

TYLER FUSE EJECTS MAX OUT OF THE RING!

DDK:

Tyler JUST missed blocking Max from breaking up the pin!

Richard Parker:

Isn't that how these things go? The inches you need are EVERYWHERE.

DDK:

Wrong sports movie quote but I don't mind.

Needless to say, Tyler is about to exit the ring and beat the piss outta Max further when suddenly there is sand in the air.

Max had some *extra* leftovers in his pocket. (Or Snark Darkly passed more over from the bleachers.)

The pocket sand FINALLY connects with a Fuse Bros.' eyes, as Tyler fumbles out of the ring.

CRASH!

Max throws Tyler into the barricade!

Inside the ring, Conor slowly props Sutler up on his knees. The ADULT in the Room smacks Reynolds-Kael across the chest and screams "WEAPON GET" into the bleachers. The Faithful and PRIMATES erupt, as Conor hits the ropes. It looks like he's going for a Reality Bending Elbow-

Except he stops.

Because his left shoulder pops out of its socket.

Sutler Reynolds-Kael SPRINGS to life like a vicious animal who's finally got his prey. He grabs Conor by that same shoulder and yanks on it, ripping the shoulder even further out in the process.

The sullen boy follows by hoisting Conor onto his back, looking into the stands and grinning.

Sutler Reynolds-Kael:

Weapon Get.

SRK delivers one of his father's reckless moves, a running burning hammer, driving Fuse straight down to the mat head-and-dislocated-shoulder first. Kaelsalvania lands perfectly.

Sutler falls to his knees for the cover.

...Until he's smacked on the back.

...And then bumped out of the ring.

BUT NOT BY THE MAN YOU MAY THINK.

DDK:

THAT'S MAX! MAX TAGGED IN AND HE'S... HE'S TAKING THE PIN!?!?

Doyle slides into position as Kael falls on top of Fuse!

ONE.

TWO.

THREE!

DING DING DING

DDK:

I don't believe it!

Max jumps up like he's won the lottery!!

Darren Quimbey:

The winners of this match... MAX Kael AND SUTLER REYNOLDS-Kael, THE Kael FAMILY!

Richard Parker:

That slimy little news reporter, ha!

Outside of the ring, Sutler is on his knees. His jaw is on the floor like the depressed and frustrated emo child he is.

DDK:

I can't believe Max took his own son's pin away. This wasn't even Max's blood feud!

Doyle raises Max's right arm, while Max has that typical mischievous grin on his face. He's waving his son in to celebrate with him but instead The Son of Scions starts walking up the rampway.

Max waves his hand up as if to say "forget it" and then wants Doyle to raise his arm again. Benny does, but upon seeing Tyler Fuse brushing the pocket sand out of his eyes, The Black Heart of PRIME™ bails and hustles after his son, asking him to wait up.

Inside the ring, Conor comes to. He rolls onto his right knee and pops his left shoulder back into place for a second time. He's figured out what happened, as Max's theme plays throughout the arena and he watches the Kael's vanish from sight - Sutler first, Max trailing behind.

Conor closes his eyes, takes in a deep breath and then stands. Strangely enough, a smirk crosses his face as he tells Benny Doyle it's "far from over" and that he "will end up seeing Sutler again."

Very soon.

Conor exits the ring to find Tyler and IMMORTALS goes to commercial.

IVAN STANISLAV (PRIME) vs. DAN RYAN (DEFIANCE)

The crowd erupts as the graphic for Dan Ryan vs. Ivan Stanislav splashes across the main screen.

DDK:

We're here live inside the Kaseya Center in Miami for IMMORTALS. Dan Ryan and Ivan Stanislav are up next, and I can feel the temperature in the building shifting, Richard.

Richard Parker:

Shifting? It dropped ten degrees because a Siberian Winter is about to cover Miami. PRIME's newly crowned Hall of Famer, Ivan Stanislav, is about to show everyone in the arena what's what!

DDK:

You're right, PRIME Hall of Famer, a former two-time Universal Champion, a man who had a career that's longer than most wrestlers' current lives, it can't be denied. But on the other side, another man who needs no introduction, the newly minted DEFIANCE Hall of Famer and three-time FIST of DEFIANCE, Dan Ryan.

Richard Parker:

You can talk about Dan Ryan all you want, Keebler, but Ivan Stanislav is the irresistible force **and** the immovable object. I expect him to dominate tonight, just like he always does.

The lights suddenly go out, getting a loud reaction from the crowd, and the opening notes of "Daddy's Home" by JT Music start to play.

A dual spotlight makes an encircling pattern on the entrance area. The music, with lightning strobe effects, paints a foreboding picture as a female voice sings the opening. The lights coalesce into a single spotlight as Dan Ryan steps out and pauses, looking into the audience, with the lightning flashes reflecting off his sunglasses. A moment later, in the shadows, Lindsay Troy walks out behind him.

Ryan pauses just a moment, then walks down the ramp slowly as another voice speaks.

*"Hold your noses cuz we're going for another long dive"
 "Some call me father, others call me Johnny Topside"
 "Long forgotten, I was swept up by the wrong tide"
 "Thought my bed was made but I just woke up on the wrong side"*

*"Jump startin' up my heart, I've hit my second wind"
 "Back from the dead, subject Delta checkin' in"
 "Revving up the engine that has blended our genetics"
 "Have you felt the natural selection that's already setting in?"*

*"Fire at my fingertips, I won't be told to chill"
 "Stacking plasmids, like an addict, total overkill"
 "I'm the one who's gonna call the shots, time to roll the film"
 "Oughtta have a splicer fill you in, because they know the drill"*

*"Step between me and my daughter and you'll get bounced"
 "Then any atom that you had is getting ripped out"*

*"Who's your daddy now?"
 "Who's your daddy now?"*

*"I'm the heavyweight champ, you won't even last a round"
 "Too long your brutes abuse the juice, now you get smacked around"*

*"Deltas held the belt, so many years in rapture now"
"Baddest motherfucker in the building, who's your daddy now?"*

Vince Howard:

The following contest is scheduled for one fall and is a Hall of Famer vs. Hall of Famer match!! Introducing first, from Houston, Texas, weighing in at 305 lbs! Accompanied to the ring by the "Queen of the Ring" Lindsay Troy! Representing VAE VICTIS and DEFIANCE: DAAAAANNNN RYYYYYAAAAANNNNN!!!!

Ryan uses the last ten feet to spring at the ring and slide in under the bottom rope. He runs with surprising agility to a corner, scurrying up to the second turnbuckle and letting out a roar, arms raised.

DDK:

Dan looks just as terrifying as ever.

Richard Parker:

I guess.

DDK:

Trust me.

Dan looks down to ringside and makes eye contact with Lindsay Troy, who offers up only the slightest of smirks. He turns back, then hops down into the ring.

Richard Parker:

He does look absolutely dialed in, I'll give him that much.

For a heartbeat, the crowd in Miami is nothing but silhouettes and restless noise as the lights drop. Then, the first notes hit, not of a song, but of a declaration. The Soviet National Anthem, the Russian Red Army Choir, heavy with brass and weight, the kind of song that doesn't need permission to exist in the modern era.

Crimson floods the entryway. Not a wash of red, but a deliberate bath, turning the ramp into a strip of blood-lit concrete. Some of the fans might not have ever seen Stanislav, but they've no doubt heard of him. His career spans just too long. Many take the opportunity to rush the barricade, to get a glimpse at a man whose career has spanned decades. Some aren't sure if they're supposed to boo or cheer him.

They learn quickly.

The Russian Bear steps through the curtain effortlessly. Over seven feet of veteran mass, red suspenders cutting hard lines over his chest, combat boots thudding against the stage in a rhythm like a column of soldiers. He locks eyes with the ring first. On Dan Ryan. Then, Lindsay Troy. His mouth twists into something bitter.

Behind him, a fraction of a second later, Alexei Ruslan emerges with practiced precision. He's smaller in height, but almost equal in presence. Clad in his brown overcoat, military cap, red tie and yellow shirt, he keeps to Ivan's shoulder and half-step, not needing to share a spotlight with his larger comrade. He sweeps his gaze across the crowd, picking out signs, taking inventory. Both Russians remain still for a moment, taking in the spectacle of the moment.

Vince Howard:

And his opponent! From Arkhangelsk, Russia! Standing 7'1" tall and weighing in at 400 lbs! Accompanied to the ring by Alexei Ruslan. He's the leader of The Red Army and representing PRIME: IVAAAANNNNN STAAAANNNISLAAAAVVV!!!

DDK:

You can feel the reaction changing in real time, Richard. There's curiosity. Awe. Recognition. And then something visceral. Dan Ryan vs. this man, Ivan Stanislav? I think the crowd is realizing they're not just seeing history, they're becoming a part of it.

Richard Parker:

History. Fear. Resentment. All of it. That's what a real Hall of Famer does. He was Heel of the Year twice in a row, which also means he was Face of the Year in Russia twice in a row, too. No one else can do something like that

A section of the audience boos late, like they're catching up to the script. Another section boos immediately, instinctively. Clearly, they're PRIME loyalists.

Ivan stands at the top of the ramp and doesn't move for a moment. The anthem swells behind him as he looks down the ramp. Alexei leans in, says something between just the two of them. Ivan doesn't answer, he flees his jaw, once.

DDK:

Dan Ryan isn't gonna back down from a fight, though. And neither is Lindsay Troy.

Richard Parker:

Lindsay Troy never flinches. That's why she's Lindsay Troy. But I'll tell you what, it's one thing to stand in a ring with Dan Ryan. It's another thing entirely to look up that ramp and see Ivan Stanislav coming at you like a Siberian freight train.

Ivan finally starts forward. Each step is slow and deliberate. Alexei follows at an angle, just behind and to the side, eyes flicking toward the ring, then back to the crowd, then back to the ring again. His grin appears for a moment when a fan leans over the barricade to yell an obscenity.

Ivan reaches the bottom of the ramp and pauses again, just long enough to turn his head toward the hard camera. He gazes into it, at his countrymen half a world away, and then turns his eyes back to the ring. He steps up onto the apron effortlessly and then over the top rope, while Alexei scampers up the ring steps and slides into the ring.

Ryan and Troy give him his space while he roars and raises his arms over his head. Ruslan screams loudly, and while no one can hear him over the roar, there's no question as to what he's saying.

Alexei Ruslan:

Unstoppable!! Unbeatable!! Indefatigable!!

As the lights lift and the dust settles, Ruslan winks once at Ivan before turning a disdainful glare at Lindsay Troy. The Russian Bear turns to referee Brian Slater and eyes him warily, backing him up into the corner. He points a huge finger in his face and jaws at him, while Ruslan echoes what he's saying at his side. The two appear to be trying to give him a lesson on "appropriate" officiating, with Ruslan slapping his palms together 1, 2, and 3.

Slater is big enough not to be fully intimidated by the two, but still, Stanislav looms large and finally, the referee nods that he understands what the two of them are saying. Alexei slaps Ivan on the shoulder and slides out of the ring to his own corner. Dan Ryan enters the ring opposite Stanislav.

DING DING
DDK:

No more waiting for this one. This is Hall of Famer versus Hall of Famer folks! This. Is. IMMORTALS!!

Ryan saunters in with the sunglasses still on, chin up, shoulders loose, like the center of the ring is a place he owns. He stops inches from Ivan's chest, looks up at the bigger man and smirks. He says something short, something private, and the smirk does not leave.

Ivan glowers down at him and answers back, the words lost to the roar, but the contempt is clear. His mouth pulls into a grin that isn't friendly.

Ivan Stanislav:

DYAAHAAHAA!!

The sound rolls out of him like thunder. He points a thick finger at Ryan's face, then jabs that same finger toward the mat like he's drawing a border. Ryan's posture changes, not bigger, not louder, just sharper. He slaps Ivan's hand away, barks something back, and the crowd starts to climb.

DDK:

You can feel it building. These two haven't known each other long, but the hostility is already baked in. They've invaded each other's worlds, and neither one backed down.

Richard Parker:

That's because neither one *can* back down, Darren. Not with this much ego, this much history, and this many people watching.

Ryan turns his head just enough for Miami to see him, then slowly removes his sunglasses. It's almost ceremonial, like flipping a switch. A chunk of the DEFIANCE crowd surges louder at the same time, because now it feels real, now it feels personal.

He hands the glasses to Brian Slater. Slater passes them to Lindsay Troy at ringside. Ryan never breaks eye contact with Stanislav.

Ivan's expression twitches with barely-veiled irritation.

They collide into a collar-and-elbow tie-up.

Stanislav leans his weight down, trying to fold Ryan by inches and gravity. Ryan's arms bulge and hold. His boots scrape, but he doesn't give ground. The two men dig in, legs braced, shoulders grinding, and the tie-up becomes a strength test with no theatrics.

Ryan shoves. Ivan takes a single step back, more surprise than retreat, and he barks in Russian, disgusted with the idea that physics applies to him.

Then, The Bear drives forward, and Ryan gives one step in return, jaw clenched, eyes still locked upward. Neither man yields the center. They break the tie-up at the same time, both wearing the same look, annoyed that the other exists.

Richard Parker:

Ivan is just getting warmed up, Darren!

DDK:

Maybe so, but perhaps he's realizing this isn't going to be as easy as he thought?

The two men circle again, the mat flexing beneath their mutual weight.

The second tie-up explodes.

Stanislav surges forward and this time he doesn't test. He drives. His boots churn, digging into the mat, his shoulders heave, and Ryan is forced back. Stanislav bellows as he shoves, sending Ryan stumbling halfway across the ring.

Immediately, The Russian Bear roars and raises his arms over his head. Ruslan is ecstatic, jumping up and down and laughing, while Lindsay Troy crosses her arms and scowls at the two of them.

A murmur rolls through the crowd. Not boos. Not cheers. Just recognition.

But Ryan shakes it off immediately, his flash of irritation fading from his face. As Stanislav turns to face his opponent again, Ryan is there, charging with a stiff clothesline that would knock a man into next week.

It lands. It sounds like it lands.

But Ivan doesn't move.

He rocks back half an inch, then straightens, a grin spreading across his face and bleeding through his black and gray beard, like a crack in concrete. He tilts his head, almost curious, as if to ask if that was it?

The crowd buzzes louder while Ryan stares up at him, allowing a smirk to creep in. Not disbelief. Not fear. Some sort of sick satisfaction. Perhaps what he heard about Stanislav was true.

DDK:

Neither of these men is here to find out if the other can be hurt. They're here to find out how much it takes.

Richard Parker:

And they're both about to learn they picked the worst possible opponent for that experiment.

Stanislav remains standing in the center of the ring, while Ryan rubs his chin and bounces back on the ropes and comes back hard, leaping and shoulder blocking Stanislav in the chest.

Nothing.

He rebounds again and throws a second shoulder block, harder this time, teeth grit with effort. Stanislav rocks back a fraction, boots squealing like tires on wet asphalt.

The crowd starts to rise.

Ryan hits the ropes a third time and slams into the Russian again, this one landing flush. Ivan finally gives ground, two steps back, and it looks like the momentum might finally be shifting.

Then it doesn't.

Stanislav swings with a brutal lariat, wide-armed and whooshing, catching Ryan across the neck and chest and turning him inside out. Dan hits the mat hard, the air blasting out of him as the impact echoes through the ring. Ivan doesn't go for a cover.

He steps forward instead, planting a heavy boot down on Ryan's hand. Ryan snarls while Ivan points at Lindsay Troy and then down at Ryan. Stanislav lifts the huge boot, aiming to obliterate Ryan's hand, but as he stomps down Ryan's already rolling away.

Stanislav stares down at his boot, as if something that defied the laws of physics just happened. He glares down at Ryan and stalks after him, bending to pick him up by the head and shoulder. He hauls Ryan up a few inches like he's lifting a bag, not a Hall of Famer.

But Ryan hits a forearm into Ivan's ribs. Short, powerful shots, making the big man loosen his grip. Ivan growls with irritation, absorbing it, and manages to drop Ryan to his feet. Stanislav uses his size to smother Ryan, scooping him up suddenly into a scoop slam. Ryan's boots leave the canvas and the crowd roars with hostility.

But Dan shifts in mid air. He snakes an arm over Ivan's shoulder, catches the wrist, and in one smooth, practiced motion drops his weight down and throws Stanislav's own weight against him. The Bear drags forward and falls hard on the mat, right into a Fujiwara armbar.

The crowd explodes. The moment there's a sign of trouble for Stanislav, Alexei Ruslan is up on the apron, hurling obscenities and frustrations towards Brian Slater. Lindsay Troy watches Ruslan but makes no move to interrupt his temper tantrum. Yet.

Ivan roars angrily while Ryan clamps down hard, legs braced, arms flexing, wrenching Ivan's arm back towards the shoulder, testing tendons that are far too old and far too aged to bend in that direction.

DDK:

Dan Ryan isn't going to be able to out-muscle Ivan, and who knows if he has the experience advantage, but he can take the pieces away!

Richard Parker:

Cute. Take pieces away from a mountain? We'll see how that turns out!

Ryan cinches tighter, jaw clenched, eyes up, pulling for everything he has. Stanislav bellows again, shooting one arm out towards the bottom rope, but it might as well be a mile away. Ruslan waves his hat at Slater, screaming something about a "hair pull." Lindsay Troy makes it halfway around the ring, towards Ruslan, and the smaller Russian decides to just let this play out, drops to the floor, and LT returns to her corner.

Inside, a loud thud hits the mat as Stanislav slams his free palm against the mat. If you can't reach the rope, just play to your strengths.

He rises.

Not quickly. Not explosively. But inevitably, like a crane lifting steel. He pushes up to one knee, then two feet, with Ryan still literally attached to his arm, still pulling for the joint, refusing to let go. Ivan Stanislav lifts the three hundred-pound Dan Ryan hanging from his limb like dead weight.

Ivan takes two heavy steps, hauling Ryan with him, and then whips his arm forward and to the side, slinging Ryan in the process. He releases at the last possible instant, but the momentum carries him hard into the corner. The wind is knocked out of him as well as the crowd.

Ivan doesn't give Ryan time to breathe.

He charges chest-first into Ryan and flattens him into the corner. Then he turns, digs his heels in, hooks his hands on the ropes, and drives his back into Ryan's chest like a vice, grinding him into the turnbuckles until the padding shudders. Ryan's boots scrape for traction. His hands push at Ivan's hips and ribs, desperate for a breath, but Ivan leans back harder, taking the air on purpose.

Ivan leans harder.

The Queen's expression doesn't change, but her jaw tightens. Ruslan, at ringside, is giddy with delight, clapping once and barking something in Russian. Ivan grins down at Lindsay and backs out, just enough to let Ryan sag forward, then he leans back again and flattens him in the corner once more. Ryan's head snaps back against the padding.

Brian Slater wedges himself in and starts to count, warning Ivan to break.

ONE...

TWO...

THREE...

Ivan grinds his teeth and shoves back one last time, before letting Dan stagger out of the corner, hands out with exaggerated innocence. Ryan coughs the air back into his lungs.

One huge hand clamps around Ryan's upper body, and with the other arm kept tight to his side, Ivan hauls him up anyway, as if he's proving he doesn't need the second limb. He pivots and plants Ryan in the center of the ring with a thunderous, one-armed scoop slam that makes the canvas jump.

Richard Parker:

Well, I didn't think this was going to be such a short match, but then again, nothing surprises me anymore.

Ryan rolls onto his back, while Ivan takes a moment to raise his arm over his head, measuring him with deliberate patience. He's slowed the cadence of the match to a crawl, and he's taking advantage of every moment. He stands there for a beat and then drops like a redwood. The massive elbow and arm lands across Ryan's chest with a blunt thud that shakes the canvas, and Ivan simply lies there.

Slater slides into position for the pin!

ONE!

TWO!

Ryan kicks out.

DDK:

I still think Ivan is being too cocky here. He didn't even hook a leg. You're not going to get away with a nonchalant pin against Dan Ryan!

Richard Parker:

Excuse me, Darren, we were specifically told to be unbiased in our commentary, and if you're going to be so pro-DEFIANCE, we might start having a problem.

DDK looks at Richard and says nothing for a moment.

Then he clears his throat and keeps his eyes on the ring.

DDK:

We're calling what we see, Mister Rah-Rah Ivan Stanislav. And what I see is that Dan Ryan is still in this.

Ivan is furious. He surges to his feet and roars at Brian Slater, slapping his palm in rapid succession, as if the DEFIANCE referee isn't aware how to count to three. Ruslan moans at ringside, echoing Ivan's sentiment, but the duo is giving Ryan a moment to catch his breath.

When Stanislav does turn, he sees Ryan on his feet and swings with a frustrated paw in his direction. But Ryan's hands find Ivan's wrist and forearm instead and he uses the momentum to drag Stanislav forward, headfirst into the top turnbuckle. Ivan rocks backwards and swings blindly, but Ryan is two steps ahead of him.

He catches the arm again, the same one he had the armbar in earlier, and twists it into an arm wringer, forcing the shoulder to rotate and Stanislav to double over. It's not flashy, but it's vicious. He repeats it, again and again, each time doubling over Ivan more and more, each time giving the crowd a chance to believe this can be solved.

Ivan snarls and tries to rip free on strength alone, but Ryan moves with him, unwilling to allow Ivan his freedom. He keeps torquing, keeps stretching, making the massive arm look, for the first time, like it can be manipulated.

DDK:

Ryan isn't trading power. He's trying to take Ivan's best weapons away, and it seems to be working.

Richard Parker:

I mean, of course, he can't trade power with Ivan, that'd be ludicrous!

Ryan snaps one more wringer, but doesn't let Ivan rest. He snaps in, catches his head, and drops him with a quick jumping DDT. Ivan's head spikes down, and the ring shakes. He remains in that position, almost as if his forehead were embedded in the mat, his huge body doubled over.

The crowd pops. Lindsay Troy smirks, pleased. There's a clean crack in the armor. Ryan pushes to his feet, breath sharp, and unlike Stanislav, he doesn't grouse or grin, he doesn't cheer or bellow, he gets right to work. He gets behind the bent Ivan, wraps both of his arms around his huge waist, and heaves.

Richard Parker:

What?!

For a fraction of a moment, the (allegedly only) four-hundred-pound Russian's eyes snap forward, looking straight at Alexei as he realizes that gravity is leaving him. With all his might and the ferocity that's made him a Hall of Famer, Dan Ryan surges backwards, hauling Ivan off his feet, into the air, and launches Ivan with a release German suplex.

For an instant, the giant is airborne, boots up, shoulders back, and the entire building reacts as one because seeing that much mass in flight is unnatural. Ivan crashes to the mat and reacts quickly.

Not sitting up. Not surging forward.

He rolls, squeezes his body under the bottom rope, and spills to the floor in a heap.

The crowd goes ballistic. Cheers erupt throughout the arena, while Ryan, himself, lies on the mat and heaves for air.

DDK:

You were saying something about matching power, Richard?

For once, Richard Parker is speechless.

Ivan lies there, stunned, while the crowd devours the moment. It's like a second new year as Ivan blinks and stares up at the lights, with a dumbfounded look plastered across his face. He finally pulls himself to his feet while Ruslan circles to look after him. He wobbles, once, and holds the back of his head, before both of them yell up at Brian Slater.

Ivan Stanislav:

He pulled my suspenders!!

Alexei Ruslan:

That was an illegal West German suplex!!!

DDK:

You're more used to this than me, being from PRIME. What exactly is a West German suplex, Richard?

Richard Parker:

Uh... well, it's illegal, I know that.

Brian Slater's count starts in the ring, but Ivan barely hears it. He's too busy barking at Alexei, both of them gesturing wildly like they're building a legal case. Lindsay Troy keeps an eye on them, an amused grin on her face, while she talks to her brother-in-law who's now getting to his feet.

Ryan pushes himself up inside the ring, one hand on his lower back, drawing breath. He watches the circus on the floor for half a second, eyes narrowing. Then, he moves.

DDK:

Dan Ryan is up. He's not going to let this turn into a timeout.

Ryan hits the ropes once and then dives low under the bottom rope with a baseball slide that comes out of nowhere for a man his size.

Richard Parker:

There's no sliding in wrestling!!

DDK:

Get a grip, Richard.

Dan's boot catches Ivan square in the side and sends Ivan staggering into the barricade with a heavy crash, metal rattling, and the front row recoiling away. Ivan grips the top rail, fury flashing across his face. Brian Slater begins his count on both men now.

ONE...

TWO...

Ryan doesn't posture. He grabs Ivan by the wrist and upper arm and sends him crashing into the apron with a loud thud. Ivan swings a short forearm at Ryan's head, but he ducks it and rabbit punches him in the breadbasket.

THREE...

FOUR...

Ivan answers with a clubbing shot to the back, then another. Ryan stays close, hands still on Ivan, refusing to let the bigger man create space.

Slater is still counting, his voice rising louder.

FIVE...

SIX...

Ryan shoves Ivan forward, aiming him towards the ring post, but Ivan plants a foot and stops it dead. The Ego Buster drives his shoulder into the Russian Bear's midsection, just to move him, and this time he shoves Ivan back into the steel post with a heavy thud. Ivan roars with pain.

SEVEN...

Ivan catches Ryan in the upper back with a forearm, but Ryan absorbs it, slamming his shoulder into Ivan's midsection again. Then, before Ivan can hit him again, Ryan rolls into the ring. The Russian Bear, his ego bruised and frustration growing, climbs up onto the apron and into the ring after him.

Stanislav throws a short, violent punch. Ryan blocks it and fires a forearm back, and the two get tangled in an ugly, haphazard clinch near the corner. Ivan tries to kick free space, but Ryan steps inside, catches the leg, and bumps him off balance, twisting his base.

Ryan shoves.

Ivan staggers into the ropes, thunders across the ring, and bounces back straight into Dan's grip.

Ryan hooks him and heaves.

The spinebuster is violent, clean, and loud, shaking the canvas as Ivan hits.

He covers fast, hooking the leg.

ONE!

TWO!

Ivan kicks out, violently and immediately, throwing a shoulder up and moving with enough force to knock Ryan off of him.

Dan is up first and he tries to capitalize immediately while Ivan rises. He surges forward, but Ivan meets him like a wall. He catches Ryan mid-charge, scoops him up with ease, turns, and plants him with a massive powerslam that causes Ryan to literally bounce in the center of the ring.

DDK:

Powerslam! Ivan just stopped all that momentum in one move!

Richard Parker:

It takes at least ten Dan Ryan moves to equal one Stanislav move. It's a fact!

Ryan rolls instinctively, trying to find air, to stop the shadow that looms over him from getting closer. But Ivan hauls him up by the arm and the back of the neck and lifts him. Higher.

Higher.

He holds him there, absurdly high, with Ryan's boots kicking for balance as the crowd rumbles with disbelief. He holds him in the atomic bomb position, delayed, parallel with the ring, and then drops him down with enough force to nearly obliterate Ryan's tailbone. The entire arena *OOHs* painfully as Ryan roars in anguish, face tightening, stumbling out while holding his lower back.

That Russian grin shows through the beard once more.

He steers Ryan into the corner, chest to chest, and Ivan grinds his forearm across Ryan's face once, then mauls him with a hard, wallop punch to the side of the head. Then another. Ryan tries to fight out with a shot to the ribs, but Ivan barks something loudly in Russian. Not looking at anyone but Ryan.

Ruslan is on the apron on the far side of the ring. He tries to climb inside, which causes Slater to turn and stop him.

That's all Ivan needs.

He reaches up, hooks a thick fist into one suspender strap, and yanks it outward hard enough that the red band snaps taut like a weapon. In the same motion, he drags it across Ryan's throat and pulls him in tight to the ropes, pinning him there with pure mass and leverage.

Ryan's eyes widen immediately. His hands fly up, fingers clawing at the strap, trying to wedge air back into his windpipe.

Ivan does not ease up.

He tugs again, sharper, the strap biting into skin, and then he shakes Ryan by it, a brutal jolt that makes Ryan's head and shoulders snap against the top rope. Ivan leans in close, beard brushing Ryan's cheek, and booms out that raucous laugh like the sound of a man enjoying himself.

Ivan Stanislav:

DYAAHAAHAA!!

He pulls the strap tighter, and then tighter again, rocking his weight back and forth, making the choke an ugly rhythm. Ryan's boots scrape, his knees buckle for a moment, and the crowd noise turns from heat to alarm.

DDK:

He's using his suspenders!

Richard Parker:

You don't yell at someone for using a boot to kick, do you?

LT jumps on the apron, screaming at Brian Slater to ignore Alexei and turn the fuck around. Ryan manages to get one forearm between the strap and his neck, trying to create a sliver of space, but Ivan answers by hauling back again, jerking him forward, then slamming him into the ropes one more time for emphasis. It's not efficient. It's not even about winning.

It's about making sure everyone sees it.

Slater finally turns back and immediately explodes, stepping in and shouting for the break, hands on Ivan's chest, trying to wedge himself between them. Ivan keeps the strap cinched for one extra beat, eyes locked on Slater with that same look of offended entitlement, then finally lets it snap free with a cruel little flick.

Ryan stumbles out of the corner, and Ivan blindsides him with a hard, brutal punch directly to the back of his neck that levels him. The crowd roars with disapproval, and Slater admonishes Ivan about the blind shot to the back of the neck.

DDK:

That is pure malice. He got his break and still took a cheap one.

Richard Parker:

He's not here to be polite, Darren. He's here to win.

Ivan doesn't argue. He wipes the sweat off his brow with theatrical disgust.

Then he flicks it down at Lindsay Troy.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

The reaction sharpens immediately, heat turning into real hatred, because that is not just disrespect, it is a message. Lindsay sneers, but makes no move to engage and give the Russians another opening, and Ivan smiles like he's proud of himself.

Ryan rolls onto his back, dazed, and Ivan raises his fist high, taking his time, letting the whole building see exactly what is coming. He holds it there for a beat longer than necessary.

Then he drops his weight into a fist drop, driving it down with a heavy thud that makes the canvas jump.

Ivan hooks the leg, grudgingly, like even the act of pinning is beneath him.

ONE!

TWO!

Ryan kicks out!

For the first time, Ivan doesn't argue. He just reaches down, hauls Ryan up, and drags him toward the center of the ring like luggage. He wraps both arms around him in a bearhug and squeezes, turning his head to the crowd as if to say, look at this, look at what I can do to your hero.

Ryan's arms tense inside the trap. His chest strains against Ivan's grip as he fights for breath, eyes darting, trying to reset while the air gets crushed out of him.

Ryan's hands find nothing to pry. There's no space to slip. He changes tactics.

He tucks his chin, draws back, and drives his head forward, smashing his forehead into Ivan's face.

Ivan barely reacts.

Ryan does it again, harder, a second headbutt cracking off Ivan's jawline.

Ivan still doesn't let go. He actually tightens the squeeze, grinning through the beard like pain is a joke.

Ryan sucks in a shallow breath and does it a third time, putting everything he has into it.

This one lands flush, a sharp impact that finally jolts Ivan's head back and forces his arms to loosen for a fraction of a second. Ivan staggers half a step.

Ryan doesn't waste the opening.

He slips out of the bearhug, pivots behind Ivan, and snaps both arms under, locking a tight double underhook from behind. Ivan tries to reach back and peel him off, but Dan drops his weight and loads him up.

DDK:

Double underhook, Dan Ryan is looking for something big!

Ryan clamps the double underhook in tight. Ivan's arms pinned and useless for a moment. Ivan bucks, trying to throw him off with raw power, but Ryan sinks his weight lower, teeth bared, and walks him back one step, then another, forcing the big man's posture to tilt.

Ryan breathes once, deep.

Then he drives.

He lifts with his legs, arches with his hips, and wrenches Ivan backward, committing fully to the throw. For an instant Ivan hangs in the air, boots up, shoulders back, and every person in the building understands they are watching something they should not be seeing.

Dan Ryan completes the dragon suplex and launches Ivan into the mat with a brutal snap. The ring shudders. The crowd and Lindsay Troy erupt.

Ivan rolls through on instinct and scrambles toward the ropes, not to retreat, but to anchor himself, blinking hard like he's trying to clear fog out of his skull.

Richard Parker:

No. No, no, no.

DDK:

Dan Ryan is finding ways to move him, and that's the story right now.

Ivan drags himself upright and shakes the cobwebs from his head, one hand clutching the top rope. Ryan smirks, prepared to make the match awfully simple. He surges in and swings for the Hammer of God, the rolling elbow whipping around towards Ivan's head. For a split second, it looks perfect.

Then, out of pure instinct, Ivan drops. Not elegantly. Not smoothly. But just enough to stave off disaster that makes the elbow slice air overhead instead of Russian bone. Ryan's momentum carries him past, and he turns to recenter, but Ivan is already up, faster than one might expect.

He lurches forward, catching Ryan with one massive hand, fingers clamping around his neck. He lifts him, one-handed.

Richard Parker:

Here it comes! The Iron Curtain!!

Ivan holds him there for a beat, snarling obscenities in Russian, letting Ryan's boots kick once, then drops him into a brutal lariat reminiscent of a collapsing wall. Ryan flips, crashes, and goes sailing toward the ropes.

On the far side, Alexei moves like he's rehearsed this a thousand times. He leaps, grabs the top rope, and uses his weight to pull down.

The rope dips.

Ryan's body clears it.

He tumbles out of the ring and lands hard on the floor with an echoing thud.

Ivan turns immediately, chest heaving, eyes wild, and he starts pointing at Brian Slater.

Ivan Stanislav:

Count him! Count!!

Slater moves toward the ropes to start the count, but Ivan steps with him, broad shoulders cutting off the view of the floor. He crowds the referee, one hand out, palm open, as if he's guiding Slater, as if he's being helpful.

He isn't.

He's blocking the sightline completely.

DDK:

Stanislav wants the count, but he's not giving Slater any room to actually do it.

Richard Parker:

Ivan is encouraging efficiency, Darren. It's a Russian thing.

Slater tries to shift left to see Ryan, and Ivan shifts with him, a half-step mirror, keeping his bulk between the referee and the outside. Ivan keeps talking, loud and constant, demanding the count while making the count impossible.

Outside the ring, Alexei moves immediately, sliding close to Dan and starting to put the boots to him, sharp stomps to the ribs and shoulder. He cackles with glee while Dan tries to get up, only to be stomped down again.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

By the time Slater gets around Ivan, the damage is done, and he begins counting.

ONE...

TWO...

Ivan roars and spreads his arms in the middle of the ring.

THREE...

FOUR...

Lindsay storms over and Alexei scurries away, moving to another corner. Ryan rolls toward the apron, coughing, one hand at his throat, the other dragging forward.

FIVE...

SIX...

Ivan begins using his own fingers, counting along to the hard cam.

SEVEN...

EIGHT...

Troy's clapping encouragement. Demanding Dan get himself up. Ryan hooks the apron, pulls himself vertical...

NINE...

...and slides himself under the bottom rope on pure will. Ivan's hand snaps up for his own, "personal" TEN.

He points at Slater like he expects the referee to confirm the obvious.

But he doesn't.

Slater waves it off, jaw set, refusing to give Ivan the countout he's demanding.

RAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH!

The building explodes, and Ivan is already turning to roar, ready to argue, when something catches his eye near the ropes.

Dan Ryan is on his side, battered, coughing, one hand clutching at his throat.

The other hand rises.

One middle finger, slow and deliberate, pointed straight at Ivan Stanislav.

Stubborn refusal.

DDK:

Dan Ryan won't stay down. No matter what!

Richard Parker:

He's gonna stay down eventually!

Ivan sees the finger, and something snaps. He lurches down, grabs Dan by the front of the gear and the wrist, and hauls him up like he's lifting a piece of timber. Ivan roars, and military presses him high, arms locked, displaying him to the building like a trophy. He walks forward and hurls him back over the top rope, falling the full height of Ivan and the ring down to the floor with a sick, hollow thud.

Ivan doesn't look satisfied. He steps over the ropes and drops to the floor, and snatches Ryan up again. He launches him straight into the ring post, steel clanging loud enough to make the front row flinch and an audible gasp to ripple through the crowd. Stanislav wrenches him away and doubles him over with a brutal knee to the midsection.

Ryan's breath comes out in sharp bark. Ivan hooks him and lifts, then drops him into a gutbuster right on the floor.

Ivan reaches down and lifts Dan again, stringing moves together. He loads up his arm and swings, but Ryan manages to duck just at the last moment. It's all instinct now as Ivan overcommits out of pure rage and turns on one foot.

Sheer force of will keeps Dan Ryan upright. His body lists for a second, and then sheer survival snaps his boot up and towards Ivan's face.

The superkick lands flush.

Heel cracks against Ivan's square jaw like the sound of a shotgun. Ivan's head whips back, spit flying, and he staggers backwards two full steps, eyes wide. He refuses to fall and turns towards the barricade for support. Ryan reaches out for something to pull himself closer to Ivan.

His fingers find Ivan's suspenders.

The red strap stretches in his grip. Ivan is too slow to react. Too dazed from the mind-numbing superkick to the face. Ryan yanks on the suspenders to drag himself forward, like a rope, positioning himself behind Ivan.

Richard Parker: He can't use suspenders like that! That's illegal!!

Darren nearly chokes.

Ryan locks his arms around Ivan's waist from behind, belly-to-back, and he drops his hips low, loading the lift like a man deadlifting a truck. Ivan tries to peel his hands off and widen his base, but his legs are still unsteady from the kick.

Ryan drives upward anyway.

He arches back and throws.

Ivan's body goes up and over, and his back crashes down across the edge of the apron with a brutal thud, the kind that makes the crowd recoil because it hits like a weapon. Ivan's mouth opens on a soundless roar as he folds and spills off the apron to the floor.

Ryan drops with him, collapsing to his knees and then to his side, spent, eyes squeezed shut for a second as he tries to find breath again.

DDK: Belly-to-back suplex onto the apron! He just spiked Ivan on the hardest edge out here.

Richard Parker: I hate that that worked.

Both men lie on the floor now, wrecked and motionless for a heartbeat, the adrenaline suddenly replaced by gravity.

Brian Slater starts the count.

ONE...

TWO...

Alexei moves to Ivan, all urgency now. He hooks an arm under Ivan's shoulder and tries to haul him up. Ivan doesn't budge. He grits his teeth and tries again, bracing his boots on the mat like he's deadlifting a broken machine. Ivan's body shifts an inch, then settles to the floor with immovable finality.

THREE...

FOUR...

Alexei abandons the attempt, frustrated, and turns just in time to see Dan Ryan start to stir. Ryan rolls to a knee, one hand on the apron, the other at his throat, trying to bring his body back online.

Alexei's expression changes. The frustration becomes calculation.

FIVE...

Ruslan mutters something under his breath, reaches into his coat, and produces his collapsible steel baton. He raises it, poised to strike Dan in his blind spot while Slater is busy.

There's a problem.

RAAAAAAHHHHHHH!

Lindsay Troy has had enough of Alexei Gregorovich Ruslan.

She moves with startling speed and total certainty, stepping between Alexei and Dan and catching Alexei's baton arm at the wrist. She twists, turns her hips, and strips the weapon away with clean leverage.

The baton clatters to the floor.

Alexei's free hand flies up to strike The Queen, who bats his arm away quickly. Then she snaps her hand up and knocks his cap clean off his head. It goes flying into the crowd, and multiple pairs of hands make a grab for it.

SIX...

The crowd erupts at the sheer disrespect of it, and Alexei's eyes flash, more offended by the humiliation than anything. He lunges forward in a wild, scrambling motion, reaching for her throat.

Lindsay ducks in tight and buries her forearm into his chest, a compact blow of pure authority that knocks him back a step. Before he can reset, she grabs a handful of his overcoat with both hands at the shoulder and yanks him in, nose to nose, her voice low, precise, and absolute.

Whatever she says, Alexei's expression changes to apoplexy.

Then Lindsay pivots, turns him with her, and drives him shoulder-first into the steel steps with a violent shove that looks less like anger and more like a lesson.

CLANG!!!

The steps explode apart.

Alexei tumbles ass-over-teakettle into the wreckage, dazed, arms flailing as he tries to sit up. The Queen decides to help him lie down for awhile by kicking him in the back of the head with a running single leg dropkick.

DDK:

Lindsay Troy just neutralized Alexei Ruslan, and she did it without even breaking her composure.

Richard Parker:

Wonderful. Great. Love it. Everyone's having a great time.

SEVEN...

Ryan drags himself to the apron. Ivan crawls too, slower, heavier, one hand gripping the edge as if it were the only stable thing left in the world. Neither man can stand, not yet. They do not need to.

EIGHT...

They slide under the bottom rope almost together, collapsing into the ring in parallel, two battered monuments refusing to lose on the floor.

Slater stops the count and immediately leans in, checking both men, keeping the match alive.

Outside, Alexei is getting himself to a seated position near the barricade, fuming and rubbing his wrist. Lindsay stands between him and the ring with her fists clenched, daring him to try something.

Both men are still shaking off the count when Ivan pushes up first, face hard. Dan is on a knee, one hand on the mat. Ivan doesn't give him a chance to catch his breath. He steps forward and raises a boot, aiming for Ryan like he's stamping an insect.

Ryan rolls.

Ivan's boot slams into the canvas, missing by inches.

Ivan tries again, harsher.

Ryan rolls again, barely avoiding it.

The third time Ivan lifts his boot, he's nearly frothing at the mouth. Ryan rolls away once more, and Ivan hits nothing but canvas, a thunderous miss that draws the roar of the crowd.

DDK:

Stanislav is trying to step on him. That's not even subtle.

Richard Parker:

Look, why do all these fancy technical moves when you can just wipe someone out with a stomp? Work smarter not harder!

Ivan grips Ryan and lifts him, but Dan grabs Ivan's head and drops into a jawbreaker, snapping the Bear's head back. He kicks Ivan hard in the side of the knee, then kicks him once in the stomach, doubling him over. He hooks both of Ivan's arms and stands on his toes to get Ivan's head between his legs. Ryan drops his weight, locks the grip deeper, and pulls up in a double underhook.

Ryan drives Ivan down and spikes him with a double underhook piledriver, snapping him to the mat with a violent jolt that makes the building roar. Hope surges through the audience (except Richard and Alexei) as Ryan covers immediately, hooking tight.

ONE!

Ivan kicks out at one with explosive force. He throws Ryan off, launching him halfway across the ring and laughs, loud and ugly. It steals the air from the arena as everyone is stunned, the wind knocked out of them (except Richard and Alexei).

DDK:

He kicked out at one. He just refused it.

Ryan's face tightens as he pushes back to his feet. It's not panic, it's calculation turning into frustration. He looks down at his sister-in-law, but the Queen just gives him a look. For better or worse, she doesn't seem surprised.

Ivan sees the look and smiles through his beard as he fixes a twisted suspender, and then reaches out, snatching Ryan by the wrist, and yanks him forward into a short-arm clothesline that's more reminiscent of a guillotine. The lariat

catches Ryan flush and nearly takes his head off, snapping him down and twisting through the air.

Richard Parker:

The moment you think you've solved Ivan Stanislav, he reminds you he's still Ivan Stanislav.

Ryan tries to rise on instinct, one knee under him, head down.

Ivan is already there.

He leaves Ryan on his knees and snatches his arms, driving his massive boot into the middle of his back, and wrenches back in a standing surfboard. Ryan's chest pushes forward, shoulders torqued back, and Ivan pulls back using his full weight and size.

DDK:

Standing surfboard. He's tearing at the shoulders, the arms, anything he can weaken.

Ivan holds him there, trapping Dan Ryan in the middle of the ring, huge hands enveloping his wrists, threatening to rip both of his arms off if he doesn't submit, and while Brian Slater asks Dan, over and over, if he gives up, the only other sound is Stanislav's triumphant laughter.

Ryan's face is turning a deep, furious red as Ivan pulls back on his arms, threatening to rip pectoral muscles right off the bone. The Russian Bear's arms flex like steel girders, his boots planted wide, his jaw set in a grin that borders on sadistic. The crowd noise swells, a mixture of panic, awe, and raw anticipation.

DDK:

Ryan is fading! Ivan's got his wrists clamped tight!

Richard Parker:

This is where the Russian Bear breaks people, Darren. This is where careers end.

Lindsay Troy slams her hand on the mat, trying to will Dan to stay in it. Both the PRIME and DEFIANCE Faithful begin to clap and stomp along with her. Ryan's hands open and close as he tries to summon whatever strength he has, pushing back on the big boot in between his shoulder blades, anything to find even a modicum of leverage to break free. Ivan pulls back hard, so hard he pulls Ryan up off the mat just a bit, accidentally causing him to roll forward, pulling Ivan off-balance. Ivan stumbles forward, and his grip comes free. He stops short, putting his hand down to stop his momentum.

Ivan stops, turns around, and sees Ryan face-first on the mat, trying to gain his composure. Another smile crosses Ivan's face when, suddenly, Ryan's head snaps up, eyes wide, staring daggers.

Ivan charges in, but Ryan is up, draws back what little space he has and drives his forehead into the bridge of Ivan's nose. Ivan staggers once more but is able to return a clubbing forearm across Dan Ryan's chest, sending him back a step. Ryan slumps, and Ivan clubs him again across the shoulder blades, and again... when suddenly... Ryan *explodes* upward, arms hooking around Ivan's waist.

DDK:

No way! No way!!

Ivan's eyes go wide as, with a roar pulled from somewhere deep in his chest, Dan Ryan plants his feet, arches back, and *launches* Ivan Stanislav in an overhead belly-to-belly suplex that defies physics, logic, and the entire nation of Russia.

The ring shakes, and the crowd goes ape shit.

Richard Parker:

That's illegal! That has to be illegal! You can't suplex a bear! Call the ASPCA! Call Animal Control! Call somebody!

Ryan rolls to his knees, sucking in air, sweat pouring down his face. Ivan is stunned, blinking up at the lights like someone unplugged him.

Ryan sees his moment.

He rises.

He runs.

He leaps onto the middle rope and *springboards* into a leg drop that crashes across Ivan's chest with a thunderous landing.

DDK:

Springboard leg drop! He hasn't done that in years!!

The crowd loses its collective mind. Even Lindsay Troy can't believe it.

DDK:

Ryan hooks the leg!!

ONE!

TWO!

Ivan once again throws him off with pure power.

Ryan doesn't hesitate. He grabs Ivan by the beard and suspenders, hauls him up, and signals to the crowd.

DDK:

Humility Bomb incoming! I can't believe what I'm seeing!

Richard Parker:

He can't! He won't! He shouldn't!

Ryan wedges Ivan's head between his knees, hooks the waist, plants his feet... and lifts... strains... shakes...

Ivan rises... halfway.

Ryan's legs tremble violently and then... they give out.

Ivan collapses on top of him like a falling glacier. The air blasts out of Ryan's lungs. Ivan rolls off, snarling, furious at the audacity of being lifted.

He rises, stomps once... twice... then he hits the ropes... and *leaps*...

DDK:

No!!

Four hundred pounds of Russian Bear come crashing down in a massive jumping leg drop that nearly caves in Ryan's sternum.

The ring threatens to buckle, and the crowd gasps.

Ivan covers, hooking both legs with one arm.

ONE!

TWO!

THR-NO!!!

Ryan barely... *barely*... rolls a shoulder toward the ropes, his fingertips brushing the bottom.

Ivan sits up, eyes wide with disbelief and rage.

DDK:

I thought for sure that was all she wrote. I think Ivan thought the same thing!

Richard Parker:

That should've been it! That *should* have been it!

Ivan snarls, grabs Ryan by the hair, and *bites* him right on the forehead.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

DDK:

He's biting him! Come on!

Slater shouts, counting loudly, but Ivan only releases at four, raising his hands innocently while Ryan clutches his bleeding forehead.

Ivan reaches down again, but Ryan fires back.

A stiff forearm.

Another.

Another.

A rapid-fire barrage of strikes, each one echoing like a gunshot. Ivan staggers, stunned, and Ryan seizes the moment, hooks the head, and somehow lifts Ivan in the air to the stunned *OOHs* and *AAHs* of the crowd. Flashbulbs light up the arena as Ryan holds it, then *drives* Ivan down with a brainbuster so violent the ring ropes shake.

The crowd explodes again.

Richard Parker:

How is he doing this?! What is he made of?!

Ivan somehow rolls backward and up to his feet, dazed, stumbling into the ropes... and gets tangled.

Arms caught.

One leg hooked, trapped.

DDK:

Ivan's stuck! He's stuck in the ropes!

Ryan sees it... and he unloads.

Elbow.

Elbow.

Elbow.

A dozen elbows.

Two dozen.

The crowd counts along, each strike louder than the last.

Ivan's head snaps back with each blow, his beard whipping with the impact, his eyes glazing.

Slater tries to intervene, but Ryan barrels past him, hits the ropes... and *blasts* him with a running clothesline that finally tears him free from the ropes.

Ivan stumbles forward, raises both fists, and an intense guttural sound comes from his throat, eyes glassy. He steps toward Ryan...

And collapses to one knee.

Gasps can be heard from all over the arena, including the commentary table.

DDK:

He's down! He's down to a knee!

Richard Parker:

I've never seen Ivan go down from strikes like that! Hell, I've never *seen* strikes like that!!

Ryan doesn't stop.

He grabs Ivan around the waist... and hits a release German suplex.

Ivan crashes.

Ryan rises, screaming.

He grabs Ivan again... dragon suplex.

The crowd is losing its mind.

Ryan, shaking with adrenaline, grabs Ivan one more time... *another German suplex*.

The ring shakes like an earthquake.

Richard Parker:

Stop the match! He's gonna break him in half!

DDK:

What happened to the immovable object?!

Richard Parker:

I was misquoted! Somebody do something!

Ryan staggers to his feet, chest heaving, and signals.

DDK:

He's calling for the Hammer of God!!

The crowd rises as one.

Ryan hits the ropes...

But Ivan surges up, grabs Ryan by the throat, and whips him around and across the top rope with Stalin's Sickle.

Ryan snaps backward, clutching his throat.

Ivan, enraged, scoops him up... and *drives* him into the corner with Kurchatov's Bomb.

Ryan's body folds like a hinge.

Ivan covers.

ONE!

TWO!

THRE... NOOOOO!!!

Ryan kicks out at 2.9.

The building shakes.

Richard Parker:

HOW?! HOW DID HE DO THAT?!

Ivan slams his fists on the mat, roaring in fury. He drags Ryan up, hooks him...

DDK:

Iron Curtain on the way!

But Ryan's legs give out. He collapses before Ivan can lift him.

Ivan stumbles forward, confused... and Ryan, from his knees, leaps up and hits a desperation jumping DDT that spikes Ivan straight down.

Both men fall.

Both men lie motionless.

Slater begins the count.

ONE...

TWO...

THREE...

Neither moves.

FOUR...

FIVE...

SIX...

Ryan twitches.

Ivan rolls a shoulder.

SEVEN...

EIGHT...

Both men push up to their knees.

NINE...

They rise... and they start swinging.

Slow.

And heavy.

Bone-rattling punches. Each one like a cannon blast.

Ivan hits a massive headbutt that staggers Ryan... but Ryan fires back with a superkick that drops *both* men again.

The crowd is in a frenzy.

DDK:

This is beyond a match. This is survival.

Richard Parker:

This is insanity.

Ivan crawls forward, grabs Ryan, and locks in another bear hug, crushing him again, squeezing the life out of him.

Ryan's eyes flutter. He's fading. His hands rise. They claw at Ivan's face. They rake across the eyes.

And then...

He grabs the suspenders.

He yanks... **HARD.**

Ivan's grip breaks.

Ryan drops, lifts Ivan up...

SPINEBUSTER!!

He covers!

ONE!

TWO!

Ivan kicks out.

Ryan rolls away, trembling, exhausted, but he signals again...

DDK:

He wants the Humility Bomb! He wants it again!!

The crowd rises.

Ryan hooks Ivan.

He lifts... struggles... gets him halfway up...

But Ivan collapses on top of him again, crushing him into the mat.

ONE!

TWO!

Ryan kicks out!!

Ivan rises, furious, dragging Ryan up for a final Iron Curtain...

BUT RYAN DUCKS UNDER IT...

HITS THE **HAMMER OF GOD...**

Ivan staggers.

But doesn't fall.

Ryan screams, hits the ropes...

SECOND HAMMER OF GOD.

Ivan drops to one knee.

The crowd is losing its mind.

Ryan, shaking violently, somehow... **SOMEHOW...** hooks Ivan's waist.

He lifts...

Lifts...

Lifts...

HALF-HEIGHT **HUMILITY BOMB.**

Both men crash down.

Ryan collapses into the cover.

ONE!

TWO!

IVAN KICKS OUT AT 2.99...

...but Ryan's weight keeps his shoulders down just long enough.

THREE!

DING DING DING

RAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

Vince Howard:

HERE IS YOUR WINNER... DAAAAAANNNNNN RYYYYYYYAAAAANNNNN!!!!

Both men lie motionless for a full minute as the crowd roars around them. Some are chanting, some are simply in disbelief, some in awe, all of them knowing they've just witnessed something that shouldn't have been possible.

DDK:

I... I don't even know what to say. I don't know what we just saw.

Richard Parker:

I do. We saw two men try to kill each other. And somehow, *somehow*, Dan Ryan survived it.

Brian Slater is on his knees between the two men, checking pulses, checking breathing, checking if either man is even conscious. He raises Ryan's arm weakly, but Ryan doesn't move. His arm just falls back to the mat like a sandbag.

Lindsay Troy is the first to move. She slides into the ring, her expression a mix of pride, concern, and something like grim satisfaction. She kneels beside her brother-in-law. He's alive. Barely.

On the opposite side of the ring, Alexei Ruslan is up and pounding the apron with both fists, screaming in Russian, his face red, his hat long since lost over the barricade into the crowd. He's furious. Outraged. Insulted. Betrayed by physics and fate.

Richard Parker:

Alexei looks like he's about to file a complaint with the United Nations.

DDK:

He might! I don't think he's accepted the result yet!

Ivan rolls onto his back, staring up at the lights. His chest rises and falls in slow, heavy waves. His eyes blink open, and something reflects in them. Not rage, only exhaustion, and something else.

Recognition.

He pushes himself up, slowly, painfully, using the ropes for leverage. Alexei rushes to help him, but Ivan waves him off with a grunt. He wants to stand on his own.

The crowd watches him rise, and the reaction shifts, still loud, still emotional, but different now. Less hatred. More awe.

DDK:

Listen to this crowd. They're not cheering him, but... they're acknowledging him.

Richard Parker:

You don't have to like Ivan Stanislav to respect what he just survived.

Ivan stands tall and turns toward Ryan. Lindsay is helping Dan sit up, one arm around his back, the other steadying his shoulder. Ryan's eyes lift, blurry but focused enough to see the giant across from him.

Ivan stares at him.

Ryan stares back.

Two Hall of Famers.

Two monsters.

Two men who just pushed each other past the limits of what a human body should endure.

Ivan takes one step forward. Alexei reaches out, grabbing his arm.

Alexei Ruslan:

Ivan!

Ivan doesn't shake him off. He simply keeps walking, slow and deliberate, until he stands over Dan Ryan. Lindsay rises to her feet, ready to fight if she has to.

Ivan raises a hand. Not in threat. In command.

A silent command... *Let me speak.*

Lindsay hesitates, eyes narrowing... then steps aside.

Ivan looks down at Ryan, breathing hard, sweat dripping from his beard. His face is bruised, his eye swelling, his ribs aching with every breath.

He extends a hand.

The crowd gasps.

DDK:

Wait.. what...?

Richard Parker:

Is he... is he actually... Does Ivan have a head injury!? Alexei, get over there! Do something!

Ryan stares at the hand for a long moment, unsure if this is a trick, a trap, or something even stranger.

Then he reaches up.

Ivan grips his forearm and pulls him to his feet with surprising support for a man who just tried to crush him like a beer can.

Ryan stands, wobbling, leaning heavily on Lindsay Troy. Ivan steadies him with one hand on his shoulder.

The two men lock eyes.

Ivan nods. Just once.

A small nod.

A heavy nod.

A nod that says...

You earned it.

Ryan nods back.

Ivan turns and makes eye contact with Lindsay Troy and whispers something.

Only for tonight.

Ivan releases him, steps back, and raises a massive fist.

The crowd reacts with a strange, powerful mixture of boos, cheers, and stunned silence.

Richard Parker:

I don't believe it. I don't think I've ever seen Ivan Stanislav show respect to anyone. Ever.

DDK:

That wasn't respect for a man. That was respect for a war.

Ivan turns, stepping through the ropes with slow, deliberate movements. Ruslan follows, still sputtering, still confused by the result, still trying to understand what just happened.

At the top of the ramp, Ivan stops and turns back toward the ring one last time. He turns to Alexei and mutters...

Khoroshiy boyets... good fighter...

Alexei peeks back at the ring, frowning, and nods, and the two men disappear behind the curtain.

Dan, leaning on Lindsay, manages the faintest of smiles, more of a grimace really, but the intent is there. He finally collapses to one knee, the adrenaline fading, the pain rushing in. Lindsay supports him, guiding him to the ropes.

DDK:

Dan Ryan can barely stand. But he stood tall enough to earn the respect of a man who respects almost no one.

Richard Parker:

That might be the biggest victory of his career.

Ryan pushes himself upright, raising one arm weakly to the crowd. They roar back, chanting his name, chanting the moment into history.

He doesn't celebrate. He just breathes. Surviving is celebration enough.

Lindsay supports him as he slowly heads up the ramp, each step a battle.

DDK:

Folks... I don't know how you follow that. I don't know if anyone *can* follow that.

Richard Parker:

And I don't know if we'll ever see anything like it again.

IMMORTALS heads backstage.

FIST of DEFIANCE: HENRY KEYES (C) (DEFIANCE) vs. CANCER JILES (PRIME)

The show picks back up ringside with the commentary team.

DDK:

Buckle up, buttercups! Up next, THE FIST OF DEFIANCE is on the line! DEFIANCE's own, Henry Keyes, will look to defend his championship against PRIME's...

Richard Parker:

...cockroach.

DDK:

Against PRIME's cockroach, Cancer Jiles!

Richard Parker:

Full disclosure, no one in PRIME is rooting for Cancer Jiles. Personally, I can't stand the man, and used to wish a meteor would suddenly crash through the roof of whatever arena PRIME was in and land right on top of him while he walked down to the ring.

True story.

DDK:

Used to?

Richard Parker:

Yeah, because it happened, Darren. Well, it kind of did. He was gone. RETIRED. DONE. Finished. Beaten. COOKED. Forgotten. That's right. FOR. GOT. TEN. Perfect Chef's Kiss, too. Completely covered in shame. Then, Henry Keyes, that bozo, flapped his gums and woke the dead.

DDK:

Pretty sure that's a loose interpretation of what happened, Richard.

Richard Parker:

Regardless, now Jiles is back, and somehow he finds himself a three count away from picking up right where he left off.

DDK:

Trust me when I say that Henry Keyes will have something to say about that. He is no coward. He is a champion. DEFIANCE's CHAMPION. Respected and often feared amongst his peers. And even if he may be nearly as hated by DEFIANCE's Faithful as Cancer Jiles is in PRIME, The Kraken knows what is at stake and he's one of the most aggressive competitors in the sport today.

Richard Parker:

I hope so, Darren. I really do. The last thing any of us want is for King Crumb to show up at ReVival with the FIST of DEFIANCE strapped around Vickie Hall's waist.

DDK:

Noted.

Richard Parker:

Hey, is it true Jiles wrestled for DEFIANCE back in the day when the promotion was just getting started?

DDK:

Indeed he did. He came in after a supershow much like this one, and won the DEFIANCE RUMBLE in his debut. He

did the whole thing with a target on his back, too. Never seen anything like it before if I'm being honest. He was also a tag team champion with Edward White, knocked Bronson Box's eyeball out of its socket with 450 top rope Mongolian Chop, and even won the Defiance World Heavyweight Championship.

Richard Parker:

Oh, so you guys must be familiar with the Banditry then?

DDK:

Yes, but not for any of those reasons. I could explain, but we have a tape to play detailing some of the key events that have transpired during the lead up to this epic showdown, and I think it will also answer your inquiry.

Richard Parker:

Oh...

Cut to a montage set to the tune of "My Way" by Limp Bizkit.

-Henry Keyes takes to the news to issue his challenge.

-Cancer Jiles appears on DEF TV to accept; gets talked down to by Lindsay Troy.

-Three way MEGA contract signing between Henry Keyes/Dan Ryan and Henry Keyes/Cancer Jiles, culminating with Cancer Jiles superkicking Lindsay Troy. For some odd reason multiple angles of the kick are shown.

-Cancer Jiles, in his return to in-ring action and with a handful of trunks, defeats Dan Ryan after Henry Keyes botches the save.

-Henry Keyes defends the FIST of DEFIANCE against Dan Ryan so he can lose it to Cancer Jiles at the COOLYMPIANS.

-Stay tuned.

Richard Parker:

Yup, you guys are definitely familiar with Banditry.

DDK:

Indeed. Say, save for Vickie Hall, do you think there is anyone here tonight to cheer for Jiles?

Richard Parker:

There's always one or two derelicts lurking in the crowd or hiding under the ring. Outside of that though, no. It's him against the world and my guess is, for him, for Cancer Jiles, that's eggsactly how he wants it.

DDK:

Seriously?

Richard Parker:

No.

The lights slowly draw to a dim.

Then, **black.**

A chill moves through the crowd. Up on the Crumbotron a montage of who's who, getting superkicked in the face by Cancer Jiles begins to play. It is long and extensive. No one is spared.

You know who you are.

During the montage a most recognizable guitar riff tears through the airwaves, almost causing a rift in both space and time. Soon thereafter, the always melodic Screamin' Jay Hawkins takes over...

"I'm the one your mama warned you about"

"When you see me I will leave you no doubt"

"I'm the coolest man that ever walked this earth"

"I've been the coolest since the day of my birth..."

Richard Parker:

I forgot how much I hate this song.

DDK:

There's always the meteor.

Richard Parker:

My fingers are crossed--

[illegible]

"...I am the COOL"

At the top of the ramp, amongst the lingering smoke from the hellfire pyrotechnics, looking like it's just another Tuesday at the office, illuminated by a spotlight and joined by his vicious Valkyrie, Vickie Hall, stands the challenger.

King COOL.

Cancer Jiles.

BOO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The PRIME HALL OF FAMER has on salt-white wrestling boots to go along with his electric-blue wrestling tights that have the FIST of DEFIANCE plastered over the crotch area. His alfredo colored hair is slicked back and on full simmer. His jet-black, mirror-tinted, patently famous T-shades, always and forever obnoxious, cover his eyes along with half of his clean shaven face.

Richard Parker:

I hate him, sure, but I hate myself even more for thinking that I would never have to call another Cancer Jiles match. I can't believe this vermin, this cockroach, this lowlife is actually back and representing PRIME. Not only that, there's a chance an hour from now he can be even more unbearable than he was before. 2027 can't come fast enough.

King COOL and his Valkyrie slowly and confidently make their way down to the ring. Along the way the two stop to antagonize anyone who dares to look their way; which is pretty much everyone. Upon having their fill and reaching the ring, Jiles doesn't enter. Instead, he makes his way over to where Richard Parker is sitting and the two exchange some spirited words that are better left off air.

DDK:

So...

Richard Parker:

That's the type of classless bullshit I have to put up with each and every time I see that cockroach! That is why I can't stand him! Just the sight of his stupid hair, and the sound of his stupid voice!

Jiles slides under the bottom rope. Vickie joins him in the center of the ring. More posing, more pyros, neither of which need to be as gratuitous as they are, but this Cancer Jiles we're talking about here.

BOO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

The smoke once again clears. Vickie, after a long, sloppy, good luck kiss, helps Jiles find his corner. Then, the two of them turn their attention to the referee.

DDK:

There's the challenger.

Richard Parker:

Hate him. So much. So... so... much.

Pink and blue lights flood the arena, twisting and swirling around the live crowd, stage, and ring, as a 70's guitar riff strums through the speakers.

On the big screen, we see a majestic white tiger galloping towards what may be the largest pile of pancakes ever assembled - pallets and pallets of them - as drums kick in.

And as a sick little guitar lick kicks off, we see a knee coming straight through the screen towards the viewers' faces.

"I wanna riiiiiiide, ride the tiger

I wanna riiiiiiide, ride the tiger"

A massive shower of pink, blue, gold, and white sparks falls in a stream onto the stage as the Co-Consults of Vae Victis, Henry Keyes and Lindsay Troy, step through. Keyes is wearing bright white long trunks with pink and black tiger stripes running up the sides, with bright blue boots and the Big Blue version of the FIST of DEFIANCE strapped tightly around his waist. His beard is darker than his salting/peppering undercut, like he may have used the whole box of Just For Men; he's tanner than a man should be in January, too. He's got an unbuttoned pink Hawaiian shirt covered in silver gears and white tiger faces. It's giving big "Miami Beach Zaddy" energy. Troy is also geared up in her Besties In The World-branded pinks and blues (Hawaiian shirt to boot), complete with her special Elise Ares-inspired electric sunglasses that can display messages. This time, they read "ZZZ..."

"It will be black and white in the dead of night

Eyes flashing in the clear moonlight

I want to riiiiiiide, ride the tiger."

Richard Parker:

First off - impressive time on that wardrobe change for LT, eh?

DDK:

...indeed. Anyway, an interesting dynamic in play for this one...all night long, we've seen PRIME versus DEFIANCE. Lindsay Troy, famously the President and CEO of PRIME, stands in the corner of the FIST of DEFIANCE tonight over a member of her own roster!

Richard Parker:

It's like I told you - NOBODY IN PRIME is rooting for that jackass. Not to mention, Keyes and Troy are practically joined at the hip from everything I know about them.

DDK:

Indeed, they call themselves the Besties, though in DEFIANCE they more often resemble the Mean Girls. As co-Consults of Vae Victis, they've been on top of the red and black brand for what feels like an eternity at this point, and in the past year we've seen the Queen of the Ring act as the Kraken's manager a number of times.

Richard Parker:

Keyes was the one who first announced this joint show back in October on an episode of ReVival - he said he wanted to fight the best. I don't know why he would choose this piece of garbage.

Keyes and Troy powerfully stride to the ring and step through the ropes.

The music cuts, and the house lights go down. Spotlights fill the stage, and we see Darren Quimbey on the mic.

Darren Quimbey:

Ladies and gentlemen, the following contest is scheduled for ONE FALL, and it is for THE FIST of DEFIAAAAAANCE!

RAAAHHHH!

Darren Quimbey:

Introducing first, the challenger...

BOOOOOOOOOO!!!

Richard Parker:

BOOOO!

Darren Quimbey:

Hailing from Coolympus by way of Philadelphia...weighing in at 218 pounds...THE MANHUNTER. KING CRUMB. THE COOOOOOLYMPIAAAAN...CANCERRRRRRR JIIIIIIIIILES!

Boos continue raining down as Vickie and Cancer swap spit.

Darren Quimbey:

Aaand the-

Lindsay Troy:

SHUT IT, QUIMBEY!

AHHHHHHH!

Lindsay Troy steps into Quimbey's spotlight, holding a purple-bedazzled Old Skool Mic; he steps out and gives her space.

Lindsay Troy:

MIAMI!

AHHHH SHE SAID OUR HOME TOWN YEAHHH

Lindsay Troy:

WHO'S READY FOR A BLOOD BATH??

YEAHHHHHH

Lindsay Troy:

WHO'S READY TO SEE THE KRAKEN CRACK AN EGG??

YEAHHHHHH

Lindsay Troy:

IMMORTALS is here to BRING YOU WHAT YOU WANT! Introducing THE CHAMPION, the FIST of DEFIANCE!

From San Francisco, California, and weighing in at the most jacked-as-shit 249 pounds I've ever seen...MY BESTIE! HENRYYYYYYYY KEEEEEEEEEEEEYES!

Keyes unstraps Big Blue and holds it high in the air and we see Vickie Hall getting in the face of Lindsay Troy. LT smiles, more than happy to throw down again with Vickie as she's done recently in DEFIANCE. Senior PRIME official Ashley Barlow forces space between the pair, though it looks like we're in the beginnings of a shouting match. Keyes goes over to a ringside attendant to hand off his title belt. Jiles sees that Barlow's occupied and blindsides him with a Picture Perfect Knee Clip! He starts stomping away at Keyes's legs, throwing in a back rake as Henry tries to scramble back to his feet. Barlow finally gets Troy and Hall to exit the ring and begin making their ways to their respective corners.

Jiles throws a final few clubbing shots to Keyes's back for good measure and tosses his T-shades Vickie's way; she catches them and places them delicately on the apron near the corner of the ring. Keyes is on his feet and has begun throwing wild haymakers to mixed effect - some connecting flush with Cancer's torso, others glancing off. Barlow sees that the action has begun and signals the timekeeper!

DING DING

DDK:

Jiles has gotten the jump on Keyes!

Richard Parker:

He's ALWAYS doing stuff like this!

Jiles ducks a big right hook and slaps Keyes in the face.

SMACK

This flips something in Keyes's face, because he goes BUG-eyed in fury! He stops for a beat and then charges towards Jiles! Before he can get a hold of King Crumb, Jiles makes it to the ropes and sticks his body part way through. As Keyes is about to swing, Barlow begins a five count, threatening the DQ. Keyes reluctantly complies, his eyes still fixated on the irksome smirk of Cancer Jiles.

Keyes begins to jaw jack at Jiles, who responds by doing the Invisible Championship Belt Hand Gesture over the FIST painted on his crotch. Keyes charges forward and throws a lariat - Jiles ducks and runs towards the ropes. He rebounds and leaps over an attempted shoulder tackle from Keyes. Both men turn, and Jiles slaps Keyes in the face again.

SMACK

DDK:

Oh my.

Richard Parker:

Look at Keyes, he is PISSED.

Jiles hops lightly on his feet, fists raised, beckoning Keyes to "come at him bro" with his fingers. Keyes doesn't have to be asked twice, but when he charges, Jiles once again uses his speed to reach the ropes, placing his body out of bounds once again.

Vickie Hall cackles at this game of cat and mouse, and Jiles smirks to himself. Keyes continues pressing towards Jiles. Barlow tries to intervene again, but this time Keyes changes course. Jiles turns towards Hall and gives a little pucker - which turns into panic as he finds himself being pulled away from the ropes! He clings onto the middle rope with all his might, as Henry Keyes has his waist locked, pulling with everything he has! Jiles's grips begin to slip, soon he's down to just his finger tips, and then...

BOOM

DDK:

Biel Throw from Henry Keyes!

Richard Parker:

DO IT AGAIN!

It's unclear whether Keyes heard Richard or not, but regardless, Keyes peels Jiles off the mat and shoves him into a corner. He connects with a series of whole forearm Propellor Edge Chops to the Coollympian's chest...

SMACK

SMACK

SMACK

...then he grabs Jiles, pivots his hips, and HOISTS him across the ring with another Biel Throw!

BOOM

LT yells across the ring at Vickie, who's becoming distraught at her man's plight. Keyes cracks his neck and checks his jaw a couple times where he got slapped. Jiles looks to use the ropes to get vertical again, but as he gets to his knees, Keyes has him in another waistlock. He takes a step back, lifts, and plants Jiles with a Release German Suplex!

Richard Parker:

THROW HIM LIKE A RAG DOLL FOREVER!

The momentum from the suplex sends Jiles rolling beneath the bottom ropes, flopping to the floor near Jiles's corner. Vickie quickly goes to tend to her man as Keyes steps through the ropes to the apron. He looks to be measuring Jiles, but Vickie won't get out of the way - and when Keyes shouts at her, she turns and actively begins blocking his path towards hurting her sweet alfredo-haired boy any more.

Referee Barlow begins admonishing Hall and tries to get her off the ring apron. LT is annoyed at this bullshit and is hustling around the outside of the ring towards the commotion as Vickie, Henry, and the ref all bicker. LT just about makes it there, when out of nowhere, Jiles springs to his feet and clotheslines her. Keyes seems to be the only one to see this and he begins shouting in anger at Jiles. Barlow turns to see what Keyes is shouting at, and as she does, Vickie snaps up a kick square into Keyes's little Krakens.

DDK:

Low blow! Low blow! I don't think the referee saw!

Richard Parker:

There's always Banditry afoot, I told you I hate calling these things!

Vickie scurries away as Keyes drops to his knees in agony. Jiles for his part acts incredibly innocent, having no idea how Lindsay Troy might have gone from the VV corner to face down on the ground over here, as he's just an honest hard working man. He hops up to the apron, smirking as he sees Keyes's position. He charges forward and connects with a huge dropkick that sends Keyes toppling off the apron and sprawling on the floor.

Jiles takes a look at his work and sees that there's a big opportunity here. He looks at Keyes on the floor, then the top rope, then Keyes again, nodding to himself. He springs to his feet and climbs the ropes in the corner. Everyone in the arena is on their feet as they see him turn, slowly giving the double-deuce to all assembled, before FLYING...

...

AND CONNECTING WITH A TOP ROPE ELBOW DROP TO THE FLOOR!!

Keyes clutches at his ribcage, and it looks like Jiles definitely took damage as well. He clutches at his hip and back, and as the crowd roars out at the high-risk high-reward offense, Barlow begins her ten count.

Vickie goes in to check on Jiles, who assures her that he's going to live. She begins to help lift Jiles to his feet, until

WHAM

LINDSAY TROY SMASHES A STEEL CHAIR IN HER BACK!

She slams the chair to the floor and roars out - Jiles backs away from her and towards Keyes, who is still rolling around on the ground. Jiles peels him off the mat, and it looks for a moment like Troy might intervene with the chair, but knowing she doesn't want to disqualify her Bestie, she tosses it aside.

Lindsay Troy:

I'M WATCHING BOTH OF YOUR ASSES, CRUMB.

Cancer Jiles:

I guess Wade's just not doin' it for you?

She looks ready to kill, and the fact that she isn't actively pursuing that goal is kind of remarkable; maybe she has to recharge after all the other killing she's done today. Barlow's count is up to six, and Jiles forcibly rolls Keyes into the ring under the bottom rope. Jiles slides in behind him and pushes him to his back, placing a lazy palm over Keyes's chest. Barlow goes for the count!

ONE!

TWO!

Keyes gets the shoulder up! Jiles immediately rakes him in the eyes! Keyes slams the mat in frustration as Troy yells at Jiles from the outside!

Instead of responding to yelling with more yelling, Jiles drops down and throws several mounted closed fists. Keyes covers up as best as he can, blocking some and catching some squarely in the mush. Finally, Jiles winds up his shoulder raises his closed fist high in the air melodramatically...

Cancer Jiles:

Behold, the fist, of defiance!

(you can really hear the all-lowercase of it)

...and he brings it down!

Keyes catches it with his palm! His fingers are wrapped tightly around Jiles's knuckles as their arms shake with struggle! Jiles goes wide-eyed as Keyes sits up, still holding onto his closed fist; then to his feet! Keyes rears back, and CLOCKS Jiles with a headbutt, dropping him to a knee!

KLOK

He maintains control of Jiles's fist and lifts him up in a Fireman's Carry! He begins spinning in place, faster, and faster - then he lets go of Jiles's hand, maintaining the Airship Spin as he puts his hands on his hips! He gives it a couple more spins before shoving his shoulders up and sending Jiles splatting to the mat!

Keyes is a little dizzy from this - he staggers for a moment, then spins himself around the opposite direction, stumbling, and finally landing on top of the prone Jiles!

ONE!

TWO!

KICKOUT! A trickle of blood appears on Jiles's hairline, presumably from the headbutt. Keyes, head wobbling a bit, now takes position for mounted elbow strikes directly aimed at the red bullseye on the Coolympian's forehead. The trickle opens up, and now it's a proper cut.

DDK:

Big offense from both men in this match, Richard, and Cancer Jiles is busted open!

Richard Parker:

We're cracking eggs out here, baby!

Keyes uses his arm to protect his left side as he gets up from the mounted position, and he winces for a moment.

DDK:

I will say, though - I've called so many Henry Keyes matches. He's one of the physically strongest wrestlers pound-for-pound that I've ever seen, but he's always had a tough time hiding his weak points, whether it was his arm back in his early days, or his injured eye a few years ago. I think that big elbow drop to the outside did something to his ribs - you can see that he's definitely favoring one side right now.

Richard Parker:

Ah hell, I hadn't noticed - but look, you're right, look at that bruise forming.

When the camera is able to get a clear shot, we can see that there's some purple forming on Keyes's left ribcage. Jiles's hair looks like linguini with marinara as he rolls to his stomach, breathing heavily - but though he's down, he's not out. A cockroach never is.

Keyes grabs Jiles by one wrist, and then the other, as Jiles is pulled up to his knees. Keyes rears back and throws a knee - Jiles slips out and avoids the Coin! Keyes stumbles from the momentum, and Jiles springs to his feet! Back rake! Eye poke! Fish hook! Every annoying dirty trick in the book to cause Keyes pain and discomfort!

Referee Barlow keeps starting five counts as Jiles smothers Keyes's nose, or pulls at his cheek with another fish hook, but each time Jiles breaks at 3 before moving to the next miniature aggression. Keyes throws back elbows and kicks when he can, but he can't seem to catch Jiles flush with anything, until he's finally so twisted and turned around that Jiles is able to hoist him by the shoulder and waist through the middle ropes! Keyes catches himself on the apron before he falls outside!

Jiles looks to measure him, then launches forward - **TERMINAL CANCER!** NO! Keyes dodges! He grabs Jiles's ankle

and pulls it over the top rope, before slamming his hamstring down hard on the high cable! Jiles goes down clutching at his leg!

Keyes takes a look at the top turnbuckle and scrambles up.

DDK:

While brawling is Henry Keyes's bread and butter, he's been known to break out the occasional top rope knee drop, and I think that's what he may be going for here!

Richard Parker:

He better hurry - HEY, KEYES! LOOK OUT! AH, DAMN IT!

It turns out that Jiles, ever the expert at this, was playing possum. Before Keyes can squarely get his feet beneath him, Jiles darts over and shoves Keyes's feet, causing him to crotch himself facing away from the ring. Jiles plants his feet up to the middle ropes and reaches up, grabbing the back of Keyes's head, before slamming it HARD into the top of the ring post!

TUNK

Keyes nearly crumples at this, and he's now bleeding too! Jiles rakes him in the back once more, nice and slow, for good measure, and we can see painful red lines running all down Keyes's spine.

Jiles begins throwing stiff jabs to Keyes, who responds with bludgeoning elbows, BOOs and YEAHs echoing through the arena at each strike. It looks like Jiles is able to get the slight edge, and he positions himself to throw Keyes some kind of way - but Keyes blocks it! Jiles goes for a suplex again, and is blocked again! Keyes breaks Jiles's hold and delivers a THUNDEROUS

BELL CLAP~~~

to both sides of Jiles's head! He's completely stunned on the top rope! Keyes wraps his arms around Jiles, lifts, turns, and flies - TOP ROPE BELLY TO BELLY SUPLEX!

DDK:

CLOCKWORK! Is it enough here??

ONE!

TWO!

THREENOO! Jiles kicks out at the last moment! Both men are down and bleeding!

Richard Parker:

DAMN IT, KEYES, FOLLOW UP ON HIM!

DDK:

I think he would if he could!

LT pounds the apron and tries to will her Bestie back up to his feet. Vickie is fully up on the apron, making like she's going to enter the ring. Barlow's not having any of it, and she gets in Vickie's face, threatening to toss her from the

match completely. They argue back and forth, when suddenly, commotion!

Something's happening beneath the ring apron...

Someone's hurrying up on the ring steps!

Someone not very nimble and not very quick!

Someone who's praying to the ghost of Cardboard Dan Ryan that the ref doesn't turn around!

Richard Parker:

OH MY GOD, IT'S BOBBY DEAN!

DDK:

BOBBY DEAN WAS HIDING UNDER THE RING? HOW DID HE FIT??

Jiles's longtime Bandit ally squeezes his enormous gut through the ropes and into the ring! He scurries over, hops a solid few inches in the air, and FLATTENS Keyes with a Splash!

DDK:

RIGHT TO THE INJURED RIBS!

The impact of the splash shakes the entire ring, and thankfully for Dean, he's close enough to the ropes that he can just roll and roll until he splats a 300+ pound splat to the floor before Barlow can return her attention to the middle of the ring! Keyes is coughing badly and clutching at his ribs. Jiles has the wherewithal to make his way over to Keyes and drop an arm across his chest!

Richard Parker:

DAMN IT! THE BANDITS ARE GOING TO STEAL THE FIST!

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

NOOOOOO! Keyes gets a foot on the bottom rope! Ashley Barlow signals that the foot is on the rope and there is no pinfall!

Then she sees who's now on the outside of the ring and asks Bobby Dean what the hell he's doing there?? Dean says something about slipping and falling but that he heard there would be pancakes because Henry Keyes was here (which, plausible.) Barlow isn't buying it, even as Bobby puts on his most beautiful innocent baby boy face. Barlow points at Bobby, winds up, and dramatically points to the back!

Ashley Barlow:

YOU'RE OUT OF HERE, BOBBY!

Bobby Dean:

I'm not even HERE! I'm looking for PANCAKES!

Vickie rushes up to Bobby's side and takes to his defense against Barlow, who says she's about this close to being tossed, too. They jaw back and forth some more...

When Lindsay Troy slides under the ropes! She's got a steel chair in hand!

WHAM

And she absolutely CRACKS Jiles across the chest! He's in absolute agony! She tries to jostle Keyes to his feet quickly before darting back out!

Keyes is up, and he's got double wrist locks! He pulls Jiles in and throws forward a knee!

COIN!

Jiles looks like he's fading out! Keyes maintains wrist control and throws his knee forward again!

SECOND COIN!

Jiles collapses to his back! Keyes hooks both legs!

ONE!

TWO!

...

...BOOOOOOOOO!

Richard Parker:

WHERE'S THE THREE?

DDK:

THE REFEREE WAS PULLED OUT OF THE RING!

Vickie Hall, that damned Jezebel, is absolutely guilty of pulling Ashley Barlow out of the ring by her feet, despite her holding up her hands as innocently as possible.

Ashley Barlow:

What are you doing?!

Vickie Hall:

I'm...looking for pancakes, too!

Barlow dramatically winds up once again and ejects Vickie from ringside. She's absolutely livid at this and threatens like she might not leave peacefully.

Lindsay Troy decides to intervene on behalf of her senior official, absolutely leveling Vickie with a roundhouse kick to the face. She drags her outside the ring towards the ramp, throwing punches and kicks as she kicks her ass all the way to the back.

Inside the ring, Henry Keyes is confused - he hit two counts, he pinned the shoulders down, Jiles didn't kick out, but there was no bell...and then he sees that there's no referee in the ring with them.

He winces as he once again checks his aching ribcage, and then his forehead - still bleeding, if a little less than before. He looks over at Jiles, who, somehow, is smiling. The human cockroach knows exactly what happened, and he knew he didn't even need to try to kick out, so why bother?

A lot of red in his hair, though. A lot of red. He decides he's just fine laying down on the mat for as long as he needs, recovering, resting, knowing that Keyes can't beat him if there's no one to count the pin.

Barlow's gaze follows Troy, Dean, and Hall as they all chaotically brawl their way to the back. Satisfied that the distractions are done for the day, she makes her way back towards the ring. Keyes makes his way over to Jiles, preparing to peel him off the mat, when he's met with the blinding yellow mist of Coolympian Yolk! Keyes staggers back, clutching at his face! Jiles is able to slowly get to one unsteady foot, then another. He staggers behind Keyes, bends, and reaches with an uppercutting forearm to the five-hole, pivoting to a schoolboy roll-up!

ONE!

TWO!

NO! But Keyes isn't looking good!

Richard Parker:

I SWEAR that was a low blow, damn it!

DDK:

Hard to tell for sure but I think you're right!

Eyes still fighting off the poison mist, ribs injured, and testicles possibly assaulted twice in this match, Keyes has to work hard to get up to his hands and knees. Jiles has a burst of energy as he gets to his feet again, measuring, and launching his patented superkick...

POW

TERMINAL CANCER CONNECTS!

That kick seems to have taken almost every ounce of energy left in Jiles's tank after two Coins and the cumulative blood loss he has experienced in this match, because he can't capitalize right away. Keyes is flat on the mat, but Jiles is only barely able to stay up on one knee, blood continuing to drop to the mat. He runs his palm back through his hair, smearing the linguini even further, and begins the arduous task of getting up, when something blasts through the arena...

"BLOOD FOR THE BLOOD GOD"

SKULLS FOR THE SKULL THRONE

LET THE GALAXY BURN"

Richard Parker:

Ohhhhhhhh my god!

DDK:

What's happening??

Richard Parker:

I think it's him!

Jiles freezes in his tracks, and big flames shoot up around the stage as lights swirl throughout the arena. He's heard this music plenty of times before.

The Tower of Babel.

Brandon Youngblood.

Richard Parker:

Suplex Daddy is coming for Cancer Jiles's ASS! YES!

The imposing figure of the former PRIME Wrestler of the Year and two-time Universal Champion appears on the stage, and the two rivals lock eyes with each other from across the ring. Jiles takes the smallest glance back at Keyes, but his attention snaps back to Youngblood as he can sense that BY is storming to the ring and ready to throw down. The music cuts as Youngblood reaches the ring steps. He takes one, then another, then another. Jiles is DISPLEASED, Youngblood is the definition of intensity, and the tension of the space between them is growing more and more unbearable as the distance slowly closes.

Youngblood teases as if he's going to step through, and Jiles looks like he wants to intercept - but before he can make it two steps, he's flung to his shoulders!

KEYES WITH THE ROLL UP!

ONE!

TWO! HE'S GOT A HANDFUL OF TIGHTS!

...

THREE!

DING DING DING

DDK: Unbelievable! Henry Keyes has done it!

Richard Parker:

YES! DOWN GOES CRUMBO! DOWN GOES CRUMBO!

DDK:

Cancer Jiles used every cheap trick in the book to get the edge on Henry Keyes, but The Kraken is no stranger to fighting dirty himself! A handful of tights, just like Jiles used a handful of tights to score a shocking win over Dan Ryan on DEFtv, and what goes around comes back around!

Richard Parker:

Look at Youngblood - short of Keyes, Troy, and myself, nobody in the world is happier to see Cancer Jiles lose a match than that man right there!

"Ride the Tiger" blasts throughout the arena. Youngblood hops off the apron, maintaining eye contact with the furious and raging Jiles. He backs his way slowly towards the ramp, waving at his mortal enemy. Keyes has made his way out of the ring, snatching Big Blue and clutching it closely to his chest.

DDK:

This marks the sixth successful defense of the FIST by Henry Keyes, and you have to figure Jiles is going to lay a lot of the blame for this one at the feet of Brandon Youngblood.

Richard Parker:

Sure sure, but don't forget - Keyes might have had this thing wrapped up sooner if it weren't for Bobby Dean or Vickie Hall! This one really could have gone either way. I'm just thrilled it went THIS way.

DDK:

Stay tuned, folks, because we still have our main event coming up!

Keyes has made his way to the barricade to a pocket of very vocal fans. Haters from DEFIANCE are mixed with PRIMEates and other general wrestling sickos, so there's a wild mix of cheering and thumbs downs, but everyone is drawn to Keyes, who seems to finally be able to see again. He points to the FIST vigorously and goes off on how he's completely unbeatable. Jiles may not have blinked yet as he watches Youngblood finish his exit.

UNIVERSAL CHAMPIONSHIP: CECILWORTH FARTHINGTON (C) (PRIME) vs. MALAK GARLAND (DEFIANCE)

The Kaseya Center crowd has sat through an epic night of pro wrestling and everyone knows it's getting to the end of a historic night as the match graphic for the championship main event displays the final two competitors. On the left is a still image of the ever confident looking PRIME Universal Champion, Cecilworth Farthington, with his title belt draped neatly over his shoulder. On the right, is a picture of the self absorbed challenger, Malak Garland, with a smug grin across his face and his beloved phone in his clutches.

DDK:

PRIME fans, DEFIANCE Faithful, it has all come down to this. One final match, for all the marbles. We're about to witness history as Malak Garland challenges Cecilworth Farthington for the highly coveted PRIME Universal Championship. Let's take a look at how we got here.

"Higher" by Creed

A video package with early 2000s vibes plays, recapping Malak's antics which included an invasion of a pair of PRIME ReVival shows, infecting the promotion with 'MALWARE' before outing himself as the culprit and challenging for the title at the DEFIANCE RISING pay-per-view. Cut to DEFIANCE's year end HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS show where Malak is seen laying face down in a pool of his own blood after his grueling match against Tyler Fuse, only to be shown up by the arrival of Cecilworth Farthington, who enters the frame to a raucous environment.

A montage showing Hank rip the door off the SAFE SPACE cage and eventually laying out Malak, interlaced with Cecilworth getting attacked on his turf jives along to the beat of the song until the apex hits and the promotional video package ends with a lasting shot of Malak and Cecilworth staring each other down. Back inside the hot Miami arena, the lights begin to dim.

"Big Dawgs" by Humankind

Electricity can be felt throughout the building as smoke emanates from the stage. Slowly but surely, Malak Garland emerges from the back, decked out in red FISTED DEFIANCE gear including trunks, kneepads, boots, and event exclusive energy chakra bracelets. He gazes from the top of the ramp to the sea of people in front of him. He receives a mixed reaction at best as it's safe to say the DEFIANCE fans support him but the PRIME contingency does not want to see a man from a rival promotion leave with their title belt this night.

Vince Howard:

Wrestling fans, this match is your IMMORTALS MAIN EVENT! It is for the PRIME Universal Championship! Introducing first, from Cheyenne, Wyoming, weighing in at one more pound than whatever the champion is listed at, he is the SNOWFLAKE SUPERSTAR, he is the POLAR PULVERIZER, he is MALAK GAAAAAAAAAARLAND!

As Howard's voice holds the long 'A' in Garland, glittery pyro snaps off in the background. Malak stops and closes his eyes as he soaks in the iconic moment from halfway down the ramp. He raises his arms up high as if he's already won. Heck, in his mind he has because he's simply shown up to work. Malak eventually completes his walk of grandeur down to the ring where he waits for his opponent.

"Choke" by I Don't Know How But They Found Me

The arena slowly begins to darken, as the opening moments of "Choke" by I Don't Know How But They Found Me begin to slowly reverberate. As the riff reaches its peak, the whole crowd is awakened with bright lights shining down upon them as out from backstage steps Lord Cecilworth Farthington.

The camera quickly zooms into the self-assured smile that's cracked upon the face of The Financier as he swaggers down to the right, both arms inserted into the pockets of a plain black hoodie. The jovial face of Farthington doesn't entirely match his purposeful march to the ring, his shoulders swaying to the tune of "Choke."

His hands never leave the pockets, as he slowly rolls under the bottom rope and leaps up into the ring. He slowly raises his left arm up into the sky and gives the crowd a cheeky little wave as he takes his place resting against the ring corner.

Vince Howard:

Introducing the REIGNING and DEFENDING PRIME UNIVERSAL CHAMPION, THE CONGA CRUSHERRRRRRRRR, CECILWORTH FAAAAAAAAAARTHINGTON!

RAHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

Referee Elvis Nixon does a quick check of both competitors before signaling for the opening bell of the contest but before he can, Malak stops him.

Malak Garland:

Hold on, hold on! I'm not ready yet!

The challenger painfully takes his time, crouching in the corner, closing his eyes and rubbing his cheeks up against his chakra energy bracelets, presumably conducting one last prayer for enough power to face the oncoming odds. Cecilworth waits impatiently from across the way, intently watching his challenger conduct shenanigans.

Malak Garland:

OKAY! I am all set! I give you the time and space to call for the bell!

Elvis Nixon does just that as the fans settle into their seats.

DING DING

There is a buzz in the air as both men size each other up. They circle each other like sharks dancing in the depths of the sea before locking horns like a pair of wild hellacious bucks. Malak pushes his body weight forward, gaining some traction before Farthington is able to overpower the challenger.

DDK:

Both men are about the same size here, Richard! Not something we usually see, at least on the DEFIANCE side of things. In fact, if my stats sheet here are correct, Garland has a slight weight advantage for once.

Richard Parker:

While that might be the case, what Cecilworth might lack in frame, he more than makes up for in savvy. Watch and learn, Darren.

Garland finds his back up against the ropes and soon enough he's cornered where Cecilworth begins to land body blows. Garland covers up and lunges forward like a rhino requiring space but the champion remains relentless, colliding with the challenger via a clothesline!

DDK:

Garland drops to his rear! Cecilworth is laying in the boots to him!

Elvis reaches the count of four before Farthington backs off briefly. The champion pulls the challenger back up to his feet only to greet him with a knife edge chop! The crowd 'woos' along with the shots before Garland finally manages to block one. Malak hops up to the second turnbuckle and leaps off, only to be met with a vicious, swinging European uppercut!

Richard Parker:

Malak better check his teeth! That was quite the counter from our Universal Champion!

Clutching his jaw, Malak mopes around the mat as Cecilworth scans and assesses for next steps. The champion

moves in, grabs a flailing leg of his opponent and cinches in an ankle lock! Malak tears at his hair but is quick to notice his surroundings and lurches to the nearest rope. With the hold broken, Malak rises and rushes the champion, nailing a lariat of his own but Farthington barely budes. Malak bounces off the ropes and swings again but the champion ducks this time! Both men shoot off the ropes and collide in midair with a double cross body!

DDK:

The air was taken right out of both men! Stunningly similar offense by these two great wrestlers in the early going!

They aren't down long before they're back at it. Cecilworth slugs Malak across the lat with a downward forearm strike. Malak retaliates with a chop and leg sweep combination. Malak jumps on Cecilworth for the quick pin.

ONE!

NO!

Richard Parker:

I think Malak knew full well a tiny combo like that wouldn't get the job done but he is trying to test Cecilworth early.

DDK:

As much as he has been despised for MOST of his wrestling career, you have to give credit where credit is due and Malak Garland is one of the craftier wrestlers in the business today.

As if Cecilworth could hear the commentary, which he obviously couldn't, he breaks free from Garland's grasp to deliver another European uppercut, followed up by a side slam and pin of his own!

ONE!

KICKOUT!

Richard Parker:

And then there is the inevitable. Cecilworth Farthington has held onto the PRIME Universal Championship since last March, downing formidable challengers left and right. If anyone knows how to pace themselves for a daunting title match AND come out the other side successful, it's that man right there.

Cecilworth grabs Malak by the hair, pulling him up and into a vertical suplex. The champ pulls Malak up once more, dodges a flagrant fist and delivers a sound release German suplex! Malak slaps himself in the face to get in the game as he rushes the champion once more, only to be met with a belly to belly suplex!

DDK:

COVER!

ONE!

TWO!

KICKOUT!

Richard Parker:

Cecilworth almost had him there!

Malak rolls himself under the nearest bottom rope and onto the apron. Cecilworth follows but notices how Garland has latched onto the leg he stepped between the ropes with!

DDK:

Dragon screw within the ropes! And Cecilworth spills to the outside! Give Malak an inch of breathing room and he

takes a mile!

The champion collects himself beside the ring before hobbling back up to the apron. Both men exchange fists fit for a great first row photo op until the champ kicks the challenger in the midsection and plants his foe head first into the hardest part of the ring with a DDT!

Richard Parker:

Malak might be concussed!

Garland's body goes flying to the floor mat as Cecilworth "dusts" his hands clean. He knows the job isn't done but that shot landed flush on Garland's skull.

DDK:

I watched a few of Farthington's matches in preparation to call this main event and let me tell you, from what I saw, he's one hell of a champion. It's unsurprising he can find an opening in literally any scenario.

Farthington whips Malak into the diamond plated steel ring steps. Upon collision, the steps give little resistance. Malak rives in pain as Cecilworth tosses him the other way, into the ring post! Malak's limp body wraps around the pole as the champion seizes momentum and control.

Richard Parker:

He's got him twisted up in a ring post figure four now!

It didn't take much effort to bend Malak's legs around the ring pole and slap on a devastating figure four leg lock. However, Cecilworth obliged to the referee's count and relinquished the hold after a solid four count. Still, some considerable damage was done.

DDK:

Malak is clutching his legs rather tight! This might be a spot where Cecilworth might want to target throughout the rest of this match!

The action continues back inside the ring as Cecilworth drops elbows on Malak's softened legs.

Richard Parker:

Single leg crab! Will Malak tap?

Garland once again crawls to the ropes to get the break. Once Cecilworth moves close enough, Malak sweeps the leg once more, introducing the champion's neck into the middle rope! Garland follows that up with an area code shot and now he finds himself on the offensive!

DDK:

TAP IN! Malak has his camel clutch submission locked in!

Cecilworth wrenches and claws at the challenger's hands but it takes a little bit of time before he can break free. Malak spins to Farthington's lower body and applies a figure four of his own, just without the aid of a ringpost. Cecilworth slowly pulls both himself and Malak towards the ropes. Elvis almost counts to five until Malak breaks the hold.

Richard Parker:

It looked like Malak was more willing to roll the dice with Elvis Nixon's count there.

DDK:

Either way, both men are targeting EVERYWHERE on each other. This seems to be the ultimate cat and mouse game! You can't defend everything!

Both men are up to their knees as they exchange open hand slaps to the chests. Finally, Cecilworth's shots gain more

vigor, out-voluming Malak's until the challenger has no choice but to toss a thumb to the eye in there! Elvis is all over it, holding Malak accountable.

Richard Parker:

Hey hey hey, that was uncalled for!

Malak Garland:

I'm sorry, I'm sorry! You're right! I won't do that again. I'm sorry. That was so "the old me"!

All it seemed to do was enrage Cecilworth as the champ bull rushes the challenger! Malak somehow rolled out of the way and caught Farthington with a chop block!

DDK:

Brainbuster!

From a kneeling position to seemingly throwing Cecilworth to the moon, Malak nails a brainbuster. He's quick to climb the nearest turnbuckle and land a big fly elbow drop on his opponent!

Richard Parker:

COVER!

ONE!

TWO!

NO!

Farthington DEFIANTLY shoots a shoulder up but it's clear he's feeling the effects of Malak's PRIME elbow drop.

DDK:

It's not often Malak ascends to the top rope but I think he caught Cecilworth off guard that time!

Malak lingers over Cecilworth for just a second too long, trying to shake the feeling back into his arm until he notices the champion latch onto him like an octopus!

Richard Parker:

Crossface locked in! Cecilworth trapped him!

Malak flails like a fish out of water as Cecilworth wrenches back for all its worth. Garland is as far away from the ropes as possible but refuses to give up! It takes a few tries before he finally scrapes the rope with his pinky finger!

DDK:

ROPE BREAK! These two are relentless. Tearing each other apart.

Malak shoves Cecilworth off of himself as both men get to their feet.

Richard Parker:

Seemingly back to square one now.

They lock horns but this time they are much sweatier than the first. Malak understeps his opponents and nails an STO but the champ catches a second wind, gets right back up and hits a standing dropkick which sends the challenger into the ropes!

Richard Parker:

Farthington tries to kick Malak again but he catches the boot!

DDK:

ENZIGURI! You could hear Cecilworth's shin connect to Garland's head up in the nosebleeds!

Garland crumples to the mat like a shattered mirror. Breathing heavily, Cecilworth plots his next move.

Richard Parker:

Front headlock applied by the champ. This is where Cecilworth can really make things count!

Both men stumble over and through the ropes once more. They find themselves on the apron where Cecilworth delivers a pulling piledriver!

Richard Parker:

He nailed him! That's the second high impact move Cecilworth has been able to land on the apron! Those must add up quickly!

DDK:

Malak must be out cold! His body fell right from the apron to the floor!

Elvis jumps out of the ring to check on Malak as Cecilworth catches his breath on the apron. The PRIME Universal Champion takes a moment to look at the capacity crowd in front of him. They react with a raucous cheer. Nixon throws up a sign only the performers would know before climbing back into the ring and beginning to count Malak out.

ONE!

Cecilworth gazes down at Malak who appears to be bleeding from the forehead.

TWO!

Richard Parker:

Elvis Nixon went out to check on Malak Garland and it would appear he's okay to continue this match! But will he get back into the ring in time?

THREE!

DDK:

While true, he's about to be counted out if he doesn't find the strength to get back in there, to your point!

FOUR!

Malak begins to stir.

FIVE!

Cecilworth re-enters the ring and watches.

SIX!

Malak gets to his knees.

SEVEN!

Garland pulls on the apron, struggling to get up.

EIGHT!

Cecilworth walks back over to the edge of the ring.

NINE!

Cecilworth breaks the count by sliding out of the ring just as Malak gets to his feet. The two viciously begin trading blows as the fans get fired up!

Richard Parker:

THERE'S NO WAY CECILWORTH WAS WILLING TO TAKE A COUNT OUT VICTORY! But it did also look like Malak was JUST about ready to dive back into the ring before the count of ten! Regardless, these two dudes are DISHING it out to each other!

The men spill over the barricade and into the first row. They don't care though, they are too focused on mangling each other that everything else becomes a blur to them. The front row fans are having the time of their lives, cheering and booing accordingly as both men rip and tear at each other while trying to gain their balance amongst chairs and concession items strewn about.

DDK:

This match has become unhinged! Farthington and Garland are looking to dismantle each other and the crowd wants it all!

Farthington finally gets steady on his feet before hip tossing a raging Malak Garland into the side of a nearby garbage bin! Trash goes flying everywhere as Malak grabs some vagrant vinegar packs, places them on his palms and power punches his opponent in the face, sending stinging vinegar into the air!

Richard Parker:

That's being resourceful, I guess! Still, it's a waste of vinegar.

Elvis Nixon is quick with handing a water bottle to the champion who douses it all of his face. Redness immediately appears around his eyes but more importantly, so does rage. Noticing this, Malak begins to scurry up the aisleway with the champion not lagging too far behind.

DDK:

Malak running for the hills but Cecilworth is right there!

Cecilworth grabs Malak's ankle when both competitors are about halfway up the lower bowl steps. Malak sells a look of pure fear as the immediate sections of seats to his left and right creatively chant about how Malak 'MESSED UP!' but with some more colorful language thrown in there.

Richard Parker:

Garland tries to kick free but to no avail!

Cecilworth climbs Malak's body like an amoeba, eventually putting him into a violent sleeper hold. Farthington twitches back and forth, viciously shaking Malak's body until it goes limp. The champion peers beyond the underpass to the concourse which is about a ten foot drop from where they are. He readies the challenger into a German suplex position and attempts to throw Malak overboard but his attempts are blocked until Malak delivers a low blow with his shin!

BOOOOOOOO!!!!!!!

DDK:

Low blow by Malak!

Elvis Nixon gets RIGHT into Malak's face, pointing at his PRIME embroidered zebra stripes, reminding him who is the ultimate authority in this match. Malak looks left and then right before gently pushing Nixon aside. Not having any of it, Nixon persists.

Elvis Nixon:

I'm the referee here, Malak! You better watch it, or I will disqualify you for that low blow! That was uncalled for just like the thumb to the eye!

Malak puts his arms up like he's innocent despite sweating heavily and blood trickling down his forehead at a slow rate.

Malak Garland:

Shit guy, shit. Unpack this with me. You aren't nothing. You couldn't referee your way out of a wet paper bag! You-you-you-!!!

Each time Malak says the word 'you' he plunges his finger right into the PRIME patch stitched on Elvis' shirt. Then suddenly, he stops. It's as if his face was just wiped completely clean. He looks around at every fan reacting to his antics and he gathers himself. He takes ONE big deep breath and calms down. With Cecilworth watching on, collecting himself just a few stairs away, he watches as Malak puts two soft hands on each shoulder of Elvis.

Malak Garland:

You know what? That was my bad, ump. I lost control and I let the narrative drive me when I should have been driving the narrative. PLUS, I saw this little logo on your shirt and it stirred me up inside and that's totally unfair. It doesn't matter that you're a PRIME official. I still need to respect that. I can do better than low blow my opponent. I know better. After all, I am STILL WORKING ON MYSELF!

Naturally a 'WORK ON YOURSELF' chant breaks out.

WORK ON YOURSELF!

WORK ON YOURSELF!

WORK ON YOURSELF!

WORK ON YOURSELF!

WORK ON YOURSELF!

As Malak's monologue about character continues, Elvis nods along agreeingly and accepting of what he's hearing. He won't throw out the match after all because the stakes are way too high to be determined by a kneejerk move like that. Regardless, Cecilworth fully recovers and pulls Malak around to face him. Surprised and shocked, Malak's agape mouth gets slammed shut as Farthington punches up a storm the crowd gets rabid about.

DDK:

Farthington back at it!

Richard Parker:

All that talk cost Malak! He might've gotten away with a low blow but he most certainly is paying for it now! Cecilworth is fully recovered!

The two reach the top of the section and have more space to size each other up. Malak swings wildly and misses with a right hook. Cecilworth back body drops Malak on the cold, unforgiving pavement!

Richard Parker:

What a move by the champion! Malak's back slapped the concrete so hard there!

DDK:

He's picking him up for a little more punishment!

Cecilworth goes for a scissors kick across the back of Malak's neck but the challenger moves at the last minute, sending the champion down to the ground, leg first!

DDK:

Cecilworth's hips and hamstrings took the brunt of that one!

Richard Parker:

Look out!

Malak kicks Cecilworth across the chest so hard that Farthington falls backwards down the stairs they just climbed! Garland takes a moment before running down the stairs where Cecilworth counters by throwing Malak over the barricade!

DDK:

These two are nuts! First Malak kicks Cecilworth DOWN the stairs, then the champ throws the challenger over the barricade!

Richard Parker:

It's a game of inches and each time one man gets an advantage, the other seems to come up with a counter!

Farthington jumps the rail and the two men filter back into the ring.

DDK:

I also have to credit Elvis Nixon here. He's been keeping a cool head, letting the men wrestle. He didn't disqualify anyone but he also didn't count anyone out while they were not in the ring for a significant period of time. He, just like everyone else here, wants to see a clear cut winner in the ring!

Richard Parker:

LOOK OUT AGAIN!

BAM!

I TRIGGER!

From out of nowhere, Malak jumps and slams his knee into the side of Cecilworth's head!

DDK:

Speaking of which, we might have a winner RIGHT NOW!

Both men ricochet off each other, landing at opposite ends of the canvas. Cecilworth is down with his chest expanding and contracting rapidly. Elvis looks at the carnage in awe. Malak crawls towards his downed opponent but the only problem is, he's moving slower than a snail on a Saturday morning.

DDK:

Can Malak make it there for the pin!? He's got to cover him! We have a new champion!

Every second that ticks away is precious and valuable as Malak inches his way towards victory. He finally drapes his limp arm across Cecilworth's chest. Elvis crumples to his knees to count!

ONE!

TWO!!

THRE-NO!!!

RAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

The crowd erupts as Cecilworth manages to kick out.

DDK:

THIS MATCH IS NOT OVER!

Richard Parker:

Thank God. It wasn't much of a pin, just an arm across the chest, but also the time it took Malak to cover really came back to bite him!

DDK:

Agreed! Malak unfortunately took too long to get there.

Malak looks up at the referee and holds up three fingers. He notices that Elvis is only holding up two in response. Discouraged, Malak hangs his head but not for long because Cecilworth rolls him up!

ONE!

TWO!

NO!

*RAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!***DDK:**

The crowd thought he had it!

Richard Parker:

A surprise pin by Farthington there!

Both men roll around to their feet where Malak sidesteps a dropkick but misses with a stomp. The pace magically quickens as Farthington lunges upwards, spearing Garland into oblivion!

Richard Parker:

He knocked his block off!

The Snowflake Superstar flounders to the corner where he is met with unrelenting boots. Farthington pulls him out of the corner and lifts him up high with a gorilla press!

DDK:

HE'S GOING TO LAUNCH HIM!

The champ throws the challenger like a lawn dart towards the top turnbuckle. Malak's head bounces off of it like a spring shot into the air!

Richard Parker:

These two are kicking the hell out of each other!

Malak groggily stumbles around the ring and right into a ripcord lariat that nearly takes his head off! Farthington holds the arm, wailing away on it with kicks before sticking it between his legs for a short arm scissor!

Richard Parker:

Cecilworth is working the arm now! You know what that means! He's setting him up for Article 51!

Garland slips out of the hold and he clutches his precious arm tight. He's on extra high alert when it comes to being exposed to Farthington's finisher, that's for sure.

DDK:

I'm not sure Malak wants to get close for fear of losing an arm!

Cecilworth brings the fight but misses with a clothesline. Malak dips under it and nails a jumping neckbreaker in return! Garland is quick to stay on the attack as he climbs the ropes once more and goes for another elbow drop but this time it does not connect!

Richard Parker:

Cross armbreaker! NO! Cecilworth almost had it locked in but Malak squirmed away!

Garland retreats to the corner as Cecilworth stands in the center of the ring like he owns the place and in all fairness, it wouldn't be a stretch to argue that point. There the two men stand, eyeing each other. One in the corner clutching his arm for preventative measures while the other is one who defines the very meaning of being a champion as he stands tall and ready for the next move.

DDK:

Who is going to budge? Who is going to blink? It all comes down to this!

Farthington leaps at Malak but the challenger perches his feet on the second rope and his rear on the top turnbuckle.

Richard Parker:

TORNADO DDT TO FARTHINGTON!

Malak pulls Cecilworth up by the arms and nails one final I TRIGGER for good measure! This time he's able to pin right away!

DDK:

I TRIGGER! HE HIT IT! THIS MATCH IS OVER!

ONE!

TWO!

NO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Richard Parker:

SO CLOSE! MALAK GARLAND ALMOST BECAME THE PRIME UNIVERSAL CHAMPION BUT CECILWORTH TOOK THE CHALLENGER'S BEST SHOT AND STILL MANAGED TO KICK OUT!

Confused and frustrated, Malak wipes the effort from his brow. Now he doesn't know what it's going to take to down Cecilworth. He looks around and motions that he's going to hit him with the Brinicle, his deadliest jumping spiked piledriver but as Garland picks the champ up, he's shoved back into the corner! Cecilworth shakes off the knee strike he just endured and splashes Malak in the corner! Both men begin to climb!

DDK:

Superplex time!?

Richard Parker:

It looks like it!

Cecilworth Farthington hoists Malak Garland up high and holds him there for as long as he can.

DDK:

THEY'RE ON THE TOP TURNBUCKLE!

But as Cecilworth leans backwards, sending both men to their fated doom, Malak somehow slithers free and strikes

the champ with a knee in midair! Both men crash to the canvas in brutal fashion! Hitting the knee strike did not prevent Malak from taking the brunt of the superplex.

THUD!

DDK:

UNREAL! CECILWORTH HIT THE SUPERPLEX BUT MALAK HIT THE MIDAIR KNEE STRIKE!

Richard Parker:

GET UP! GET UP!

Malak can barely move and when he does, his arms shake. Cecilworth tries to shake the cobwebs from his head before noticing the challenger crawling his way like something out of a horror movie scene. Malak wails on Cecilworth except his shots are extremely weak and pitiful. He's out of gas.

DDK:

I think Malak might be out of it! He nearly landed on his head from that superplex!

Cecilworth shrugs the challenger off of himself. He gazes at him. Malak puts his dukes up even though he can't really defend himself anymore, either.

Richard Parker:

IT MIGHT BE TIME TO FINISH HIM!

Cecilworth nods to Malak respectfully before locking in the cross armbreaker!

ARTICLE 51!

DDK:

HE'S GOT IT! CECILWORTH HAS THE ARTICLE 51 LOCKED IN!

Richard Parker:

IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME NOW!

Life is almost immediately drained from Malak's body. His whole being goes limp.

Elvis Nixon jumps in to check on the challenger.

Garland can't even tap out.

DING DING DING

DDK:

NIXON CALLS FOR THE BELL! THAT'S IT! IT'S OVER!

Richard Parker:

FARTHINGTON RETAINS! THANK YOU SWEET BABY JESUS IN THE MANGER WITH THE GIFTS!

Vince Howard:

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, HERE IS YOUR WINNER AND STILL PRIME UNIVERSAL CHAMPION, CECILWORTH FARTHINGTON!

The fans react with genuine applause as Cecilworth drops the hold, catches his breath and rises to his feet where the referee raises his arm in victory.

DDK:

Well that does it! Cecilworth Farthington downs Malak Garland capping off an INCREDIBLE night of interfed wrestling, Richard! If tonight was any indication, this rivalry might have to become an annual thing. It was great working with you.

Richard Parker:

Yeah, you're alright, Darren. Don't ever let me sit with that Warner guy, though.

Parker cuts his sentence short as everyone notices Malak Garland up and standing between Elvis Nixon and Cecilworth Farthington. The referee holds the PRIME Universal belt as the challenger holds his ribs and can barely breathe or move.

DDK:

Wh-what's going on here? Malak is back up!

Everyone watches intently as Malak viciously swipes the belt away from Nixon. Elvis puts his arms up and leaves the ring. His job is done, after all.

Richard Parker:

What's Malak going to do? I heard he was a locker room cancer! This guy can't take a loss, can he? He's going to ruin this moment for Cecilworth, isn't he?

Malak lingers, maybe a beat too long, with the belt in hand but Cecilworth stands there the entire time, not budging or reacting. Garland looks out to the crowd. He receives a polarizing response. Then he looks at Cecilworth. Malak bites his lower lip in bad luck before walking over and placing the belt on the champion's shoulder. They exchange a few inaudible words before Malak bows to Farthington and then raises the winners hand. The fans ignite in cheers and rejoice.

DDK:

MALAK HANDS CECILWORTH HIS BELT AND THE CROWD GOES WILD!

Richard Parker:

Okay, okay, that's acceptable, I guess. But only because it's Farthington!

Garland goes to leave the ring to the champion but Cecilworth prevents him going anywhere. The champion wraps his arms around the challenger as Garland does the same. The two share a thoughtful, poetic hug squarely in the middle of the ring they just left everything in as the fans chant 'THIS IS AWESOME' repeatedly.

DDK:

Folks, I don't know the last time I've seen a finish like this! BOTH men deserve huge praise for their performance tonight. It wasn't easy but the record books will show Cecilworth Farthington retained his title over Malak Garland via submission. What a match. What a show. What a moment!

Farthington raises Malak's hand one last time before Garland truly gives up the ring to the winner. Pyro explodes and confetti flies as Cecilworth Farthington is left alone to bask in his historic win.

DDK:

Wrestling fans, that's all the time we have tonight! For my partner, Richard Parker, I am "Downtown" Darren Keebler wishing you all a goodnight! Farewell!

THIS

WAS

IMMORTALS