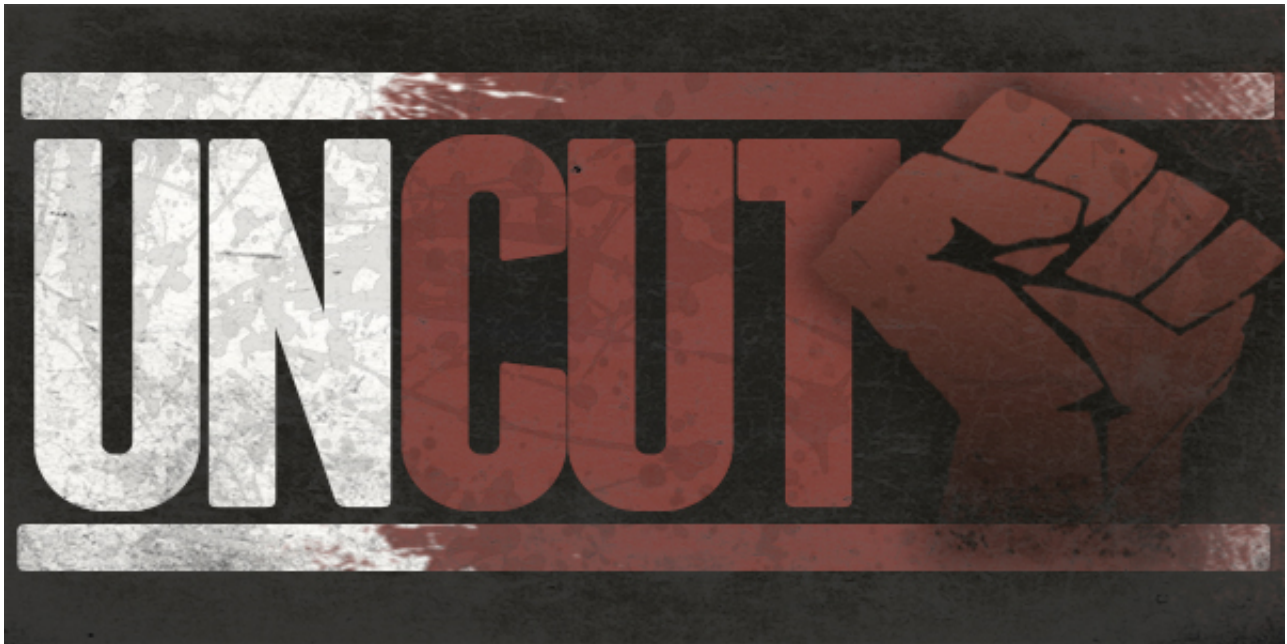


SHOW OPEN

YOU CAN RELATE

Immediately following DEFTv 156, Night 2

We're in the locker room area of the DEF arena. Conor Fuse sits by his lonesome on a bench, still glowing from the reformation of his FML.

Suddenly, Conor's eyes go wide as someone is approaching him. Pat Cassidy moves into frame, carrying a cooler and looking exhausted from his brawl with Brock Newbludd mere moments ago. He's beat up, he's tired, and a trickle of blood has dried to his bottom lip. With Conor saying nothing, Cassidy sits right down next to the Former Player Two. Cassidy leans forward and rests his head in his hands, seemingly utterly spent.

A few seconds of uncomfortable silence fills the air. Conor's eyes dart left and right, unsure of what's about to go down here. Cassidy sits with his head in his hands, saying nothing. Finally, Conor gets up to go...

Pat Cassidy:

Wait.

Conor sits back down, still confused. Cassidy removes his head from his hands. He opens his cooler. He takes out a can of Ballyhoo Brew "Can O' Whoop Cass" IPA for himself. And he reaches back in... and pulls out a small plastic bottle of orange juice.

Black Out hands the OJ to Conor. He offers his own beer up for a cheers.

Pat Cassidy:

...family, am I right?

Conor nods, understanding. He clinks the OJ against Cassidy's beer.

The two lean back against the lockers and sigh at the same time as we fade out.

THREE'S A PARTY

The crowd is filtering out of the DEFplex, a new FIST reign has begun, and a few remaining voices of wrestlers and staff-members alike filter through the hallways as another DEFIANCE pay-per-view comes to a close.

By this point, the Queen would have been on her way out. She most certainly would have at least showered and changed. Yet here she sits, silently, still in her ring gear, in the dimness of her locker room with only replays of Maximum DEFIANCE and her own turbulent thoughts to keep her company. On the floor at her feet is her knee brace, worn to stabilize her patella in combat but used tonight as a weapon against her by a man so far beneath her you'd have to go deeper than a cellar to find where he lives.

So lost is she in the turbulence of her mind that she doesn't hear the repeated knocks on the door, or looks to see who eventually walks through the threshold.

Henry Keyes:

Miss Troy? You in there?

The Airship Pirate pokes his head inside the room, searching. He locks his eyes on the back of Lindsay Troy's wild curly mane, scanning the seethe-levels as best he can. When he doesn't get an answer, he walks over and sits beside her. Her anger is extremely apparent to him now. Wordlessly, he clicks a couple buttons on his arm brace and retrieves the flask hidden within. Nanoseconds after he retrieves it and makes any hint of an angular direction Troy's way, she grabs it, pops the top, and takes a DEEP pull. Henry watches the contents disappear down Troy's throat and, after a few seconds, she tips the silver container upright and looks over at Henry, her expression still stony.

Lindsay Troy:

Thanks.

Henry Keyes:

Anytime.

They soak in the unspoken airs around them - the rage; the empathy he knows she doesn't want; the memories of years past, of weird comedy bullshit that wasn't actually bullshit at all. Keyes peers into the flask for a second, then shakes it next to his ear - he half-chuckles-half-sighs in response.

Lindsay Troy:

I'll buy you more.

Henry Keyes:

Nah, my treat this time.

He tucks the flask back away in his brace-compartment, reaches back near what must be something attached to his hip, and pulls out a second silver flask. He takes a swig first this time before insisting Troy take it. She holds onto it and ponders for a second before taking another solid pull (though not nearly as long as the first).

Henry Keyes:

You know, I still need to introduce you to Helen, Miss Troy.

Lindsay Troy:

You do.

She falls silent for a moment.

Lindsay Troy:

I've been....remiss...in taking you up on that offer. I should fix that.

Before the thought can have any more time to marinate, the door opens again and there stands a man that was technically victorious in some ways... but not where it counted the most when it came to the FIST of DEFIANCE... one "Twists and Turns" Oscar Burns. He mutters something to himself that neither Troy nor Keyes can hear immediately, but he doesn't seem to be aware of their presence.

Oscar Burns:

So close, and...

He looks up...

Oscar Burns:

Oh... Queenie. Sorry, GCs, didn't mean to ruin the party back here...

The Technical Spectacle takes notice of Henry Keyes for the first time.

Oscar Burns:

Oh... hey, GC. "Twists and Turns" Oscar Burns. Or as Queenie here already knows me as, "Twists and Turns Always Ready" Oscar "Always Ready" Burns.

Henry Keyes:

Pleasure.

With that, the two men exchange what can only be described as possibly the most convoluted handshake involving arms and fingers being... well, twisted and turned, given one of its participants. The two men bump fists several times in between oddly in-tune clapping before each man ends with a BIG bell clap to nothing but air. Keyes's eyes go WIDE before he breaks into a wide smile.

Oscar Burns:

Well... that was something. Not how I saw the rest of my night going, but thanks for that, GC. Been following your exploits when I can, so nice to finally meet you.

Henry Keyes:

Likewise! Cheers, Mr. Burns.

Burns turns to Troy.

Oscar Burns:

Been a bit, Queenie. Saw what happened between you and Scrow and sorry it ended that way after you went hard out tonight. Scrow's a muppet in a group full of Kabal puppets. He couldn't handle the jangle on his own, ya know?

Lindsay Troy nods.

Lindsay Troy:

I don't know half of what you said, but that might be because of this...

She gestures with the flask.

Lindsay Troy:

I saw how your night ended, too. Made it all the way to the end, and no FIST to show for it, thanks to the new "man of the moment."

The sentence is punctuated with some venom as she offers up the flask. Burns looks at Troy, then at Keyes who gives him a silent nod of approval.

Oscar Burns:

Eh...

He takes it, downs a swig himself, then hands the container back to the Airship Pirate.

Lindsay Troy:

Henry was just about to take me to finally meet Helen, and I can't think of a better reason to get the hell out of here.

Henry Keyes:

You're welcome to join, of course. I get the feeling she'll warm up to both of you pretty quick.

Oscar Burns:

Helen sounds lovely. That a girlfriend of yours?

Lindsay and Henry both look at each other and, for the first time all night, the Queen smirks.

Lindsay Troy:

Oh, no... you've got to see it to believe it...

THE RETURN OF WRESTLING

The shot opens up backstage, where we are treated to the simple sight of a reporter and a wrestler in front of a basic DEFIANCE interview backdrop. On the right stands seasoned reporter JAMIE SAWYERS, formally dressed in a suit and greeting the camera with a smile. On the left stands DEFIANCE Wrestling stalwart KERRY KUROYAMA, clad in a casual ensemble of jeans and a Seattle Seahawks t-shirt.

Jamie Sawyers:

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen! Jamie Sawyers here, and standing with me is one of the big winners from the second night of the monumental event that was MAXIMUM DEFIANCE... Kerry Kuroyama! Kerry, I know you value your time, so allow me thank you for taking a few minutes to share some of your thoughts here today.

Kerry Kuroyama:

Can't say I had much of a choice, Jamie. It was this, or wait for you to ambush me on my way out of the locker room.

Jamie Sawyers:

Well, let's just cut to it then. I'm sure that for you, MAXIMUM DEFIANCE felt like a bit of a reunion of names and faces from your formative years in Seattle. Your opponent, as we all know, was a prominent figure from your past: Jessica Reeves, the ex-Codename: Reaper Prime and daughter to Jason "Stalker" Reeves.

Kerry Kuroyama:

Yeah... Reeves and I cut our teeth back at the Dojo, under Rocko Daymon. Ancient history, by this point.

Jamie Sawyers:

Rocko himself was there watching the action from ringside, along with his son Zack and partner Leo Burnett in the new Rain City Ronin. It was a hard-fought victory among familiar faces. But the other story that has people talking isn't so much what happened inside the ring, but after the match. Upon the arrival of the Kabal, and their new presumed leader, Teresa Ames!

Kerry visibly rolls his eyes.

Jamie Sawyers:

Shortly after, we saw the unveiling of the new and improved "Crimson" Stalker, who unleashed his wrath upon these friends and associates from your past, but not before you quickly made your exit from the ring, leaving them to their fates.

Kuroyama sighs, and looks Jamie in the eye reproachfully.

Kerry Kuroyama:

...you said you knew that I value my time, and this is what you want to ask me about?

Jamie grimaces awkwardly, but Kerry cuts him off before he can defend this line of questioning.

Kerry Kuroyama:

Let me make this clear, Jaime: it hurt me on a personal level to see what happened to my friends out there. Especially Rocko. After all his life has put him through, he doesn't deserve that kind of assault from a roid-raging clown who is likely suffering from severe brain damage.

He winces pitably.

Kerry Kuroyama:

But at the risk of sounding callous, Jamie, I have to look at it how it is: My friends incurred all of that upon themselves. They willingly chose to stand their ground and "defend" this company from a "threat" that can be easily neutralized with one quick call to the police.

He holds an invisible phone to his ear.

Kerry Kuroyama:

“Yes, officer, some fucking assholes have overtaken the building’s light and sound operations and they are interfering in our officially sanctioned sporting event. They are trespassing, endangering the lives and well-being of our employees and our customers, and we would like them promptly removed from the premises. Thank you.”

He shrugs to Jamie as if to say, “how hard was that?” Sawyers shrugs also, for an entirely different reason.

Kerry Kuroyama:

If there's one point I feel I've been clear on lately, it's that I'm done wasting my efforts against cosplayers who aren't serious about this sport, like the Kabal. You look down the list of members within the Kabal, and what you'll see is an action figure line-up suited for the likes of G.I. Joe or Teen Titans.

He shakes his head, his agitation boiling over.

Kerry Kuroyama:

But last I checked, this company was still called DEFIANCE Wrestling. This isn't a game about heroes and villains; this is a sport between winners and losers. And if their sole ambition being here in DEFIANCE Wrestling is something as petty, juvenile, and small-minded as “taking over the company”, then to me, they're losers, and they need to stay the fuck out of the ring when I'm in it, and vice-versa. I'm not here to sell toys or play good guys versus bad guys; I'm here to win wrestling matches, until the big strap is finally around my waist.

He looks directly into the camera.

Kerry Kuroyama

So let's talk about wrestling. You know what the story of MAXIMUM DEFIANCE was to me? The death of sports entertainment, and the return of wrestling to DEFIANCE. Gage Blackwood took the FIST. Cassidy and Newbludd became the Unified Tag Team Champions. Even my old nemesis Matt LaCroix stepped up to the Southern Heritage Title. The true athletes of this company have reclaimed the prestige of this federation from the hands of the wannabe celebrities that tried to pass themselves off as elite. And the timing couldn't be better. This is a new movement... and I intend to be a part of it, Jamie.

He motions for the mic from Jamie. Sensing his role here is no longer needed, Sawyers hands it over.

Kerry Kuroyama:

But that also means some people in that locker room are going to need to step it up around here, and do their part to that movement. Being a part of this company's elite means they hold just as much responsibility to remind the world watching from abroad what sets the athletes apart from the actors. But what do we see at MAXIMUM DEFIANCE?

He takes a step toward the camera to fill up more of the frame.

Kerry Kuroyama:

A lot of former FISTs--names that would normally command respect in this company--being shadows of their former selves. So-called “true athletes” becoming doormats to edgelords and attention whores, tarnishing the prestige of that belt and everything it represents.

He shakes his head distastefully.

Kerry Kuroyama:

It's clear to me that some of you need to be reminded of your status in this company... and I'll be happy to be the one to give it to you. Let me make my message clear right here and now: If you can't be better than that trash, then you aren't any better. Be DEFIANT, or get the hell out.

His FitBit chimes and he checks the time, prompting an annoyed sigh.

Kerry Kuroyama:

I'm late for an appointment. Until next time, Jamie...

Kerry hands off the mic and leaves without a second to spare, leaving the reporter to quietly mull over everything he just listened to. The scene fades to black.

GULF COAST CONNECTION II (THEODORE CAIN, CCK AND ???) vs. BRUTAL ATTACK FORCE AND CRISTIANO CABALLERO

DDK:

We've got a great opening match coming at you for our post-DEFMAX edition of UNCUT! Featuring the return of the Gulf Coast Connection! Local favorites, Theodore Cain and The Crescent City Kid haven't had a great 2021 with the defecting Aaron King moving on to join The Scourge with Arthur Pleasant and Jack Harmen.

Lance:

And we can't forget all that AP put them through at the beginning of the year... but we've learned GCC are going to be moving on. Not only tonight are they set to debut a new member of the group in six-man tag team action against BRAZEN's Brutal Attack Force and Cristiano Caballero... that new member is a recent call-up from BRAZEN!

DDK:

This is a big opportunity as well as a chance to make something new happen for Gulf Coast Connection so let's get to it!

The camera goes to Darren Quimbey.

Darren Quimbey:

The following contest is a six-man tag set for one fall! Introducing first, already in the ring at a combined weight of 645 pounds... Cristiano Caballero... and the team of Solomon Grendel and Petey Garrett... **BRUTAL ATTACK FORCE!**

Caballero is more apt to try and urge a member of the audience to take his rose while Grendel and Garrett are more worried about themselves.

Darren Quimbey:

And their opponents... at a combined weight of 453 pounds... the team of Theodore Cain and Crescent City Kid...

GULF! COAST! CONNECTION!

♪ "Surf City" by Jan & Dean ♪

The trio make their way down in their playful, yet serious nature, making sure they slap some hands and have a good time, getting cheers as local favorites as they always do. Cain and CCK both stop on the top of the stage and Cain gets some cheers after a several month layoff following a gruesome PPV match against Arthur Pleasant. Looking a little more like his old self, Cain has a microphone as his music cuts out.

Theodore Cain:

DUUUUUUDEDES! Long time, no see!

He gets some cheers as one of the two local boys while the masked Crescent City Kid claps as well.

Theodore Cain:

A lot of bogus garbage has happened to us in this last year... we went from totally beating on people like the Fuse Bros when they were awful people to... well, Arthur Pleasant being trash and Aaron King trading his surfboard for being Pleasant's personal douche-canoe!

Some laughs come the crowd at that line.

Theodore Cain:

So me and Kid here decided that now that I'm back to full health... we are NOT going to let that get us down! The Gulf Coast Connection are BACK! And my dudes and dudettes, we aren't alone! This guy isn't coming up from BRAZEN to replace Aaron King. We've gotten to know this dude the last few months and we want the world to meet him, too. Cause when you want to get back out there in the world... sometimes, you need a good WINGMAN!

♪ "Earthquake" by Labrinth feat. Tinie Tempah ♪

The Faithful give a cheer as out comes not only the newest member of DEFIANCE's roster, but of the Gulf Coast Connection...

DDK:

"THE WINGMAN" TITUS CAMPBELL! THE CURRENT BRAZEN ONSLAUGHT CHAMPION!

Darren Quimbey gives him the formal introduction as fans respond kindly to the charismatic big man. He raises his BRAZEN Onslaught Championship over his head and then he bumps fists with both CCK and Theodore Cain.

Darren Quimbey:

From Miami, Florida, weighing in at 281 pounds... he is the current BRAZEN Onslaught Champion and he wants to remind you to fasten your seatbelts and remain in the upright position... **"THE WINGMAN" TITUS CAMPBELL!**

Lance:

And now he'll be a full time member of DEFIANCE and the Gulf Coast Connection! That's a good get! The crowds love him! 6'7" and 280 pounds!

The massive Campbell comes out with the BRAZEN Onslaught Title and then bumps fists with both CCK and King. Both the BAF and Caballero don't like the looks of this as the new trio hit the ring!

DDK:

Titus has been beloved by BRAZEN Faithful for a couple of years now. Let's see what he can do tonight!

Campbell starts first for his team and gives his Onslaught Title to referee Rex Knox. Standing across from him is Cristiano Caballero as the bell rings.

DING DING

A fired-up Caballero throws his rose at Campbell and the slight distraction is all Caballero needs to hit a dropkick that knocks him back to the corner! The vain Spaniard gets back up and then yells out in Spanish before charging at Titus in the corner... but doesn't expect Titus to come back with a HUGE big boot!

DDK:

Wow! That turned the tide real quick for GCC! Looking good so far!

Titus then grabs Caballero and then throws him into the middle ropes. He gets cheers from the the crowd and then hits a leapfrog body guillotine against the ropes! Caballero is left gasping for air as Titus runs over and gets high-fives from both Crescent City Kid and Theodore Cain.

Lance:

Not legal tags, they didn't have the rope, I think.

DDK:

Looks like Knox agrees with you!

Titus picks up Caballero and then has him in a fireman's carry... then spins... and spins... and spins some more! All to the delight of the crowd!

DDK:

And now he brings him back to the mat with the Airplane spin into the front slam! He calls that Turbulence!

The BRAZEN Onslaught Champion is all fired up right now by an energized crowd. He picks up Caballero and holds him in a delayed vertical before tagging Crescent City Kid. CCK heads to the top rope and the two men hit a tandem

suplex/springboard crossbody combination! Titus leaves the ring and the crowd pops as CCK covers!

ONE!

TWO... SAVED BY GARRETT!

DDK:

Petey Garrett with a well-placed kick to the ribs to break up that cover! Caballero gets over and tags out to Solomon Grendel!

Grendel hits the ring and then starts mocking CCK by making a "hang ten" motion, even though really Theodore Cain is more the surfer type anyway. Cain wants in, but Solomon picks up CCK and then levels the masked New Orleans native with big chops. He flinches from each shot and then a couple of uppercuts rattle him before sending him to the ropes. Grendel tries a dropkick, but CCK is able to hang onto the ropes, then follows up with a jumping calf kick! CCK then covers.

ONE!

TWO... NO!

DDK:

Great action so far! The GCC don't look like they've missed much of a step in the ring!

Crescent City Kid then tries to go to end things with the Gulf Coast Driver, but Solomon slips out the back and Petey Garrett tags in. CCK uses a twisting headscissors into an amazing monkey flip to dispose of Grendel, but when he gets up he gets LEVELED with an extra-stiff thrust kick from Petey Garrett!

Lance:

What a shot that was! CCK had no idea about the blind tag and it cost him!

Both Cain and Campbell both cheer on their partner as the Kid gets the business from Petey with a trio of stiff back kicks. Garrett then runs off the ropes to deliver a penalty kick to the kid from N'awlins. The tag goes to Cristiano Caballero now who jumps into the ring and then waits as CCK tries to stand, only to nail him with a jumping side kick he calls The Pretty Sight!

DDK:

That could be it! Big upset here!

ONE...

TWO... NO!

Caballero yells at Rex Knox for what he says is a slow count, then picks up CCK again. He tries to set him up for the Spanish Inquisition cloverleaf, but CCK again rolls his way out. When CCK tries to get to him in the corner, he charges, but CCK moves out of the way! He leaps up and hits the back of Caballero's head with a jumping enzuigiri in the corner and then nails him with a tornado DDT out of the corner!

DDK:

This could be CCK's chance! Can he make it to one of his partners?

Lance:

Caballero gets over and tags in Grendel... but CCK tags in big Theodore Cain!

The 6'5" and 265-pound Smash Surfer gets into the ring and runs right into him with a big clothesline, then hits a running corner elbow smash on Petey Garrett to clear him from the apron. He waits for Solomon to rise and then hits

him with a snake eyes! The blow rocks him then Cain hits the ropes to floor him with a big boot.

DDK:

Look at Cain go! He has about five-plus months worth of frustration ready to be unleashed in this ring!

Campbell and CCK cheers him on as he picks up Grendel and then pinballs him from one side of the ring to the other, smashing his face into each turnbuckle and then knocks him over with a big clothesline for his troubles! Cristiano Caballero enters the ring and attacks Cain, but CCK leaps in and wipes him out with a big springboard dropkick sending him back to the outside!

DDK:

The Crescent City Kid comes back into things and takes out Caballero! Tag from Cain back to Campbell!

Theodore Cain measures him up and then nails a discus forearm that rocks Grendel and then sends him staggering into Titus Campbell's grip. He picks him up with the double underhook...

DDK:

The secret to every good Wingman... he nails The Hook-up! The elevated underhook facebuster connects perfectly!

Titus then goes for a cover. Petey Garrett tries to break it up, but Cain picks him up and nails the Bottoms Up michinoku driver!

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING DING DING

The crowd cheers as Titus stands up in triumph, along with the rest of the Gulf Coast Connection! Crescent City Kid and Theodore Cain both join him inside the ring.

Darren Quimbey:

Here are your winners... **GULF COAST CONNECTION... III!**

DDK:

That was a very impressive showing by Titus Campbell! A new and improved Gulf Coast Connection takes the win tonight!

Lance:

Having a wingman pays off after all!

The three men all bump fists and then leave the ring to celebrate the win in this opening match for UNCUT as the show rolls on!

SEARCH PARTY CYRYUS MISSION 009

Cyrus, MEE6 and ALEX sit in a circle. The rest of their surroundings are a blur. They each look downtrodden in their own separate ways.

MEE6:

Blue Eagle, this is post command. I think we lost contact.

MEE6 plays with his laser pointer as he mutters some dribble.

Cyrus Bates:

Post command, this is Blue Eagle, over.

Cyrus responds but he too has a completely shelled look on his face.

ALEX:

Our search party failed. So did our title defense. Devastated.

ALEX thumbs away at his tablet, trying to crunch some critical numbers to make sense of what went wrong. Cyrus looks up.

Cyrus Bates:

Man. Just when we thought things were going so well. It all blows up in our faces.

The three exchange looks.

Cyrus Bates:

I think it might be time to shut things down. This is Blue Eagle, requesting all assets return to Swans Nest for further instructions.

MEE6 nods. ALEX nods.

Cyrus Bates:

If the mission truly is over, then let's just get some rest. Who knows what lays around the corner?

FALTER

He had gotten used to these visits since returning to DEFIANCE.

As Dr. Iris Davine did her usual concussion testing protocol on him, he had realized just how much he had gotten used to it. Five years ago, Troy Matthews had collapsed at death's door in her usual office, collapsing from exhaustion, rhabdomyolysis, and the after-effects of some dependencies that had ravaged his body.

When he returned to BRAZEN last year, the doctor was quite adamant on seeing him after every match, every training session, every time he came to the DEFplex and didn't even put his wrestling gear on. She was determined to not have anyone on the DEFIANCE roster die under her watch, and Troy had come the closest anyone ever had.

Compared to back then, it's been smooth sailing, and the doc would be the first to admit it. But still, her motherly manner of handling the DEFIANCE roster kept most everyone in line, and even the hard-hitting Matthews was no exception.

"Alright, then," the doc said as she patted him on the back, "nothing worse than usual. Maybe someday I'll go easier on you."

Troy shrugged and chuckled. He'd just been on the losing end of a valiant effort against George Stevens, a behemoth who also had his family at ringside for assistance. Troy went hard, but ultimately the numbers were his undoing. With a smile and a thank you, he got up and picked up the bag with his gear and headed on out.

It felt good, being back on proper pay-per-view again. Back in the ring.

He faltered in his first big step since returning to BRAZEN. But really, the journey was only beginning.

His wife Saori met him at the exit, having taken a job working behind the scenes in production, training, and as an interpreter for international talent not just from Japan, but Mexico and even Europe. As he nodded to her, she smiled and they walked out of the DEFplex together, as the next chapter starts to take form.

TRIMMING THE FAT

DDK:

Ladies and gentleman, up next we have Levi Cole set to square off with a man who found himself on the losing end of things at Maximum DEFIANCE: Ned Reform.

Lance:

You've got to wonder where Ned's head is at after taking a big loss in his DEFIANCE PPV debut...

♪ "Born In The U.S.A." by Bruce Springsteen ♪

As Levi Cole's theme kicks in, the man himself steps out onto the entrance way. As opposed to his usual good guy fire, Cole seems more reserved than usual. He begins to walk to the ring looking completely stone faced and serious.

Darren Quimbey:

The following contest is a singles match set for one fall! Introducing first, from Omaha, Nebraska, weighing in at 265 pounds... LEVI COLE!

Cole simply walks up the ring steps and enters the ring with little fanfare. He takes position in the corner and looks toward the entrance way.

♪ "Fur Elise" by Cole Rolland ♪

As the Good Doctor's theme echoes through the DEFarena, the boos begin to come down in droves. Before Ned comes through the curtain, his army of TAs: Holyoke, Amherst, Hampshire, and Smith precede him. Finally, Reform appears behind them... but he's not dressed to compete. He's wearing a tucked in button-up shirt and khakis. He's also holding a mic. He motions for the TAs to walk toward the ring, and they obey... but he remains on the ramp. The group climb into the ring as Reform's theme fades out.

Ned Reform:

Children...

BOOOOOOO!

Ned Reform:

Children, please. I'm trying to talk.

BOOOOOOO!

Reform looks pained at this insult. He lowers the mic and looks around at the booing fans as if he can't believe what he's hearing. He shakes his head - he's so disappointed. Finally, he brings the mic back to his mouth.

Ned Reform:

You all surely relish kicking a man when he's done, do you not?

POP! They do.

Ned Reform:

At Maximum DEFIANCE, a great injustice was perpetrated. I implore you all in this arena, and those you watching at home, to rewatch that match against young Mr. Eye. You'll see that the end of that contest came when my esteemed colleague TA Holyoke mistakenly hit me... which, as I understand it, should have resulted in an instant disqualification victory for Dr. Reform. But no.

Reform chuckles and shakes his head.

Ned Reform:

Rest assured, I'll have more to say on this matter next week, but for now.

Reform gestures toward the ring.

Ned Reform:

I have some... personal matters... to attend to. Ladies and gentleman: my faithful TAs!

BOOOOO!

In the ring, all four TAs break into smiles and wave to their fearless leader.

Ned Reform:

I told you all that building a movement requires surrounding yourself with the best people, did I not? And in the ring... is a collection of some of the most useless and incompetent fools you'll ever lay your eyes upon.

The crowd stops booing, taken aback by this shift. The TAs, from the ring, look very confused.

Ned Reform:

You all failed. I am only as good as my team, and clearly I have discovered my team wanting. It's important that we maintain a realistic assessment of our performance, and after Maximum DEFIANCE, it is not too harsh to label you all failures.

In the ring, TA Hampshire begins to plead with Reform. He can't be serious? Smith turns to Amherst, asking what this means.

Ned Reform:

Luckily, I have done the one thing I set out to do: I have found my first follower. Whereas Mr. Eye was too foolish to understand the opportunity right in front of him, I have found a young wrestler who understands the benefits of my leadership. A young man who wants my help to bring his career to previously unthinkingable heights. I have found... the only TA I'll ever need.

Reform smiles.

Ned Reform:

I wish you all the best in your future endeavors. Mr. Cole?

Without warning, Levi Cole barges out of the corner and BLASTS TA Hampshire across the back with a clothesline that nearly takes his head off! TA Smith barely has a second to react before she sails across with the ring courtesy of a Cole biel toss. The crowd begins to boo and Levi turns his attention to TA Amherst. Amherst attempts to fight back, but his shots have no effect on the youngster as Cole grabs Amherst and LAUNCHES him across the ring with a T-Bone suplex that plants Amherst DIRECTLY on his neck!

DDK:

I... I don't believe this! Folks, Levi Cole has been a DEFIANCE institution for every and has always been known as a standup guy of such moral character...

Lance:

He's taking out Reform's goons, and is HE the follower Reform was talking about?

DDK:

It looks that way... what could that man have said to provoke such a turn??

All that remains now is Levi Cole and TA Holyoke. Holyoke falls to his knees, begging for mercy. Levi remains expressionless as he stalks Holyoke. He grabs the man by his scruff, lifting him roughly to his feet. Cole and Holyoke are face-to-face... before lifting the man up...

DDK:

Red, White, and Blue Thunder!!

Lance:

Holyoke is not a trained wrestler... his neck just snapped off the mat... oh God - we're gonna need some help out here.

Levi Cole stands alone among the mass of destroyed humanity, sneering as the fans continue to boo. Reform slowly walks to the ring, smiling and applauding Cole's rampage. Reform climbs into the ring, looking around with satisfaction at the bodies laid out before him. He turns to the crowd.

Ned Reform:

Never be afraid to cut the fat, children. It's an important lesson in the climb to success.

BOOOOO!

Ned Reform:

As for Mr. Cole... excuse me, as for TA Cole...

Reform raises Cole's arm high. Levi's eyes continue to be emotionless and cold, betraying nothing.

Ned Reform:

TA Cole has just made... the Honor Roll.

♪ "Für Elise" by Cole Rolland ♪

Reform laughs again as the fans continue to boo. The last image we see is Reform holding TA Cole's arm high while Cole's face remains unreadable. DDK sends us home with one final sound bite.

DDK:

I don't know what that snake has said to get this young man to follow him, but this makes me sick...

If we want to know why Levi Cole is doing this, it looks like we're gonna have to wait. Fade elsewhere.

A RED DEATH SEQUEL

The dust has yet to settle from Maximum Defiance. Gold was lost but gained by new champions. One of those champions being the Escape Artist Rezin! The first to bring gold to The Kabal. Could he be the only one? The future has yet to be written, who knows. With the demise of 24k at the hands of this set of False Heroes known by the names of Oscar Burns, Jay Harvey, Deacon, and finally the one who ended the reign of a Hollywood Actor playing wrestler Gage Blackwood. Then of course there is the rise of Tyler Fuse's younger brother Conor Fuse with his Friendship Members League. Of course, The Kabal can not forget that dastardly pirate who bested Rezin; Henry Keyes. Though all of that is historical the one main story everyone has glossed over is that of the Rebirth of the Leader of The Kabal....Stalker or otherwise known now by Crimson Stalker!

Many wonder if this was what The Kabal had intended to come to pass? Was this Mr. Fear's master plan to control Jason Reeves with the use of Red Death? Now we are not even talking about Teresa Ames who now has dug her claws deep into the workings of The Kabal. She has become a puppet master of the leader of The Kabal. Was this all according to Fear's plan? Or was this nothing more than a slight deviation from the master plan? The Red Death in case you have been living in your own bubble is REAL! A serum upgraded by a man who shocked the world with his defeat of another enemy of The Kabal in "The Queen of The Ring" Lindsay Troy...Scrow! Who over the past few months has become the Dr. Frankenstein of The Kabal. Although Stalker is back in the thick of the war, The Cerberus is not satisfied with Red Death's finished product. Ladies and gentlemen sit back and watch as we continue this story of "A Red Death Sequel!"

28 Hours after MAXDEF 2021

Stalker's Den: Scrow's Lab

Scrow sits in his office, on his desk are pillars of paperwork inside their own respective manilla folders. Scrow is reading one particular file. The camera catches whose file it is as the name is clear as day SUBJECT: "Jason "Stalker" Reeves. After turning page after page, he drops the folder on his desk. He leans back in his chair putting his hands behind his head in deep thought. He closes his eyes, as we are taken back to the past.

Scrow's Dream

Days before MAXDEF 2021

Scrow walks into his lab, turning pages on his clipboard, and stops suddenly as he notices a shadow in front of Reeves capsule. It's a reaper from the looks of it just staring at his floating leader in his catatonic state. This reaper appears to be the smallest reaper Scrow has ever seen.

Scrow: *[Saying to himself]*

Since when did we start recruiting the tiny and frail?

Just from an observation, this reaper looked nothing like the ominous reapers Defiance has known of. This one looked to stand in the range of around five foot, and very slender almost like somehow The Kabal decided to dip their toe into the female pool. The reaper puts their hand on the capsule, while Scrow walks up to them.

Scrow:

Who are you? Scrow does not recall The Kabal recruiting someone of your stature.

The reaper just turns their head to Scrow gives him a glance and then walks away. Scrow watches them leave, he looks back at Jason in the capsule, notices the regeneration water has turned red from its once cloud mist green. Scrow eyes widened as he notices a vial laying next to the chamber. He picks it up and a red drop exits the vial. He quickly looks back to where this reaper walked off. Then returning his glance toward Reeves, whose eyes are twitching.

Scrow:

Red Death....REAPERS!

A few reapers rush to Scrow's bellow.

Scrow:

Who authorized this!

Reaper:

Mr. Fear sir.

Scrow:

FEAR! Fear is not the lead for this project....SCROW IS!

Reaper:

Sir, we were only doing what we were told to do.

Scrow clenches his teeth as he looks back at Reeves.

Scrow:

Wash the experiment!

Reaper:

But sir? If we remove the regeneration fluid Stalker may never wake up.

Scrow whips his head toward the reapers, forcing them to jump in terror.

Scrow:

Fear is not the authority here...Scrow is!... Wash it!

Present Time

Stalker's Den: Scrow's Lab

Scrow's eyes open. He looks back down at the file burying his face in the palm of his hand.

Scrow:

What went wrong? How did Teresa gain control of Jason?.... It does not make any fucking sense!

Steps heard....then the door opens. In walks Ravanna, and Reaper the Grey. Scrow peeks up at them through the space in between his fingers.

Scrow:

Wonderful, here to tell him he failed again?

Ravanna:

Quite the opposite, the experiment went according to plan. Mr. Reeves now serves The Kabal and not his own agenda.

Scrow:

...and Teresa? Do you really think she is not going to be a problem?

Ravanna:

Mr. Fear has assured me she is nothing more than a pawn in the master plan. Mr. Reeves never was truly loyal to The Cerberus....now he is.

Scrow stands up from his chair, in an explosive fashion. He slams his hands on the desk as a few folders fall from his

desk. RG stands in front of Ravanna, in case Scrow gets any ideas.

Scrow:

Red Death was only meant for giving us an advantage on the False Heroes! Not to make its subjects mindless drones!

Ravanna:

You are not lying there, this side effect has caused us to adjust our plans, but for the moment Mr. Reeves serves us. Now, your next objective is to perfect the formula.

Scrow:

Perfect it!? Sounds to him like you got what you want, a drug that induces hypnosis.

Ravanna waves RG to the side, she steps up to Scrow's desk and takes the same pose as he has.

Ravanna:

Jason Reeves was a special case. Now we require a variant to where all the power is not in the hands of one person, but The Cerberus only. You'll be given a variant supplied directly by Harvester... this is a special target for The Kabal. They do not want to risk a similar incident to the Ames situation happening again.

Interrupting the exchange, Victor Vacio enters the frame, his menacing glare is given to mostly everyone in the room except Scrow.

Victor Vacio:

Deja de distraerte mientras esa mujer Araña tiene sus garras en el jefe. Trabajemos juntos y elaboremos un plan, ¿sabemos a quién quiere el Sr. Fear que vayamos a continuación? Quiero decir ... asumiendo que algo de esto importa de todos modos. Nada lo hace.

Everyone glares at Victor who puts his hands up, and motions for them to continue. Ravanna, RG, and Scrow return their attention to the conversation once more.

Ravanna:

Only that he wants the strongest of everyone. The Perfect specimen - someone that will make our strength absolute with the recent changes to the battlefield.

Scrow:

Stalker was the perfect specimen... if Scrow had been given time...

Ravanna: *[interrupting]*

Yes... We know. He would be the Ultimate Kabal Weapon and he still is. We just need to 'manage' the damage caused by Teresa Ames.

Scrow:

Hmpf, how you let this psycho chick in The Kabal still blows my mind.

Ravanna:

She proved herself in the Proving Grounds, we do have a code.

Scrow:

A code...more like a recipe for disaster.

Ravanna:

Just do what you are told, or do I need Mr. Grey here to give you another round of discipline.

RG smirks toward Scrow who just stares at him.

Scrow:

Fine, Scrow will improve the formula.

Ravanna:

Good, now Mr. Vacio, we have something to discuss with you.

Vacio looks at Ravanna, then at Reaper the Grey, then back to Ravanna who points at the door. Vacio exits the room followed by Grey and Ravanna. Scrow watches them leave and then shakes his head in clear annoyance. He walks over to his whiteboard and starts working on the experiment.

Scene fades.

JACK MACE vs. SHO NAKAZAWA

DDK:

The action has been great tonight, and we've got another one coming right down the line... the young Japanese star, Sho Nakazawa, goes one on one with a man that came up short at DEFIANCE in an amazing ten-man tag between Better Future and FML... the man known as Jack Mace.

Lance:

Mace got pinned by Elise Ares in that hectic match that went forty minutes and The Killer Bear is feeling frustrated to say the least. But he wasn't going to sit on that loss. He DEMANDED competition tonight and Sho Nakazawa signed up.

DDK:

The young cruiserweight gives up size to Mace, but if he can find a way to take advantage of Mace's current mood... I dunno, anything's possible. Let's take it to ringside for the next match.

To Quimbey we go-go.

♪ "Pyrotechnics" by Cliff Lin ♪

Sho Nakazawa quickly appears in the entrance way to a decently sized positive reaction from The Faithful. He places both his hands together to give a quick bow before making his way to the ring.

Darren Quimbey:

The following contest is scheduled for ONE FALL... introducing first, from Tateyama, Japan and weighing in at 199 lbs... **SHO NAKAZAWA!**

Once he gets into the ring, he waits patiently for his opponent.

♪ "The House Jack Built (instrumental)" by Metallica ♪

The music plays and out comes a very well-built man wearing silver trunks, knee pads, wrestling boots... And a black overcoat with a hood over his face. The hood comes off and looking out to the crowd is the Killer Bear. No ADV. No Morrow. All by himself.

Darren Quimbey:

And his opponent... from Grewelthorpe, England... weighing in at 268 pounds... he is **"A DAMN FINE PRO WRESTL... AHHH!**

The intro gets cut off as a HEATED Mace speeds toward the ring and then almost shoves Darren Quimbey aside. Li'l Nak looks somewhat shellshocked by how angry Mace looks, but he doesn't try and show it as referee Mark Shields calls for the bell.

DING DING

And right at the bell, Nakazawa gets struck down with a huge push kick to the chest, knocking him to the mat with one shot!

DDK:

Oooohhh! I don't like Li'l Nak's chances right now!

The crowd gets all over the BFTA member as he paces around the ring.

Jack Mace:

Oi! Get up, you utter twat! Come on!

When he doesn't get up immediately, Mace palms the back of his head and rushes him to his feet. He ROCKS Nakazawa with a huge forearm smash to the face, knocking him back to the mat!

Lance:

You gotta wonder what's going through The Killer Bear's mind. That was a big loss for BFTA in that amazing match.

DDK:

Yeah... but he's not thinking about that right now, is he?

Mace picks up Nakazawa again and then fires off a pair of headbutts to the side of the head, rocking the masked DEFIANCE star. The Killer Bear picks him up and then MAULS him with a big clothesline to the back, then the chest, and keeps holding him up to take turns nailing him before a big final clotheslines knocks him over.

DDK:

We might have to wrap this one up soon! Mace isn't working by the hour tonight.

The Killer Bear picks him up again and then grabs him over the shoulder for a suplex... but before he can hit the move, Sho flips around into a sudden stunner-type move, rocking his jaw!

Lance:

What a counter by Nakazawa! That jawbreaker rocks Jack, but he's not off his feet!

The Burly Brit stumbles around, but Nakazawa gets back to his feet. He tries to shake off the pain he's in and then fires back a series of alternating kicks to the legs followed by a jumping spin kick to the head! The blow still doesn't knock the bigger Mace off his feet, but he does stumble! And the crowd cheers on Li'l Nak as he runs up the ropes and then dives off with a huge corkscrew moonsault to the standing Mace!

DDK:

Big move! Cover! Cover!

ONE...

TWO... NO!

Mace kicks out and shoves Sho off in the process! The Killer Bear starts to sit himself up and looks more pissed than he was at the start.

DDK:

Oh, no... Sho almost had him there and I think that set him off even more!

Sho tries to land a thrust kick, but Mace grabs the leg and spins him around. When he comes back, Mace ROCKS him with a big forearm! Nakazawa almost falls over, but Mace grabs the arm and then pulls him into a VICIOUS Jackdrop Suplex on the mat!

DDK:

There's the Jackdrop Suplex! That spinning release uranage suplex! And now... THE JACK OF ALL HOLDS!

Mace goes RIGHT into the choke! He pulls him into the grounded arm triangle choke and then cranks back further before...

TAP TAP TAP!

DING DING DING

Mace continues to hold the choke and then keeps on the pressure! Mark Shields doesn't want none of The Killer Bear,

but he doesn't want the decision reversed so he finally lets go... then puts a few boots to Nakazawa as a dubious reward for his resilience.

Darren Quimbey:

Here is your winner...

Quimbey doesn't even bother to finish because an angry Mace shoves his way past him and then heads right to the back. No fanfare, no flash, no nothing. He grabs his coat and then heads to the backstage area.

DDK:

Well... Mace is your winner... but he is on a tear. No doubt after how MAXDEF ended for them, BFTA is going to only be more dangerous.

TIME TO VORRY

Darkness.

The sound of rain. Thunder and lighting.

Through a flash of lighting, we see a medieval castle sitting on top of a cliff. In the distance, we hear the faint sound of an organ playing a haunting tune...

Suddenlt, voice with a vaguely Eastern European accent whispers:

“DEFIANCE.”

“It’s time. To Vorry. To be... afraid.”

A pause.

“Ah! Ha! Ha!”

A woman screams and we get one more flash of lighting as we abruptly cut out.

I LOVE YOU ALWAYS FOREVER, NEAR AND FAR CLOSER TOGETHER, EVERYWHERE I WILL BE WITH YOU, EVERYTHING I WILL DO FOR YOU

The scene fades warmly into Jonathan-Christopher Hall and wife Vickie wrapped in each other's arms while staring deeply into each other's eyes. Vickie takes a moment to lean her head back.

Vickie Hall:

Oh how I adore you, Jonathan-Christopher!

Jonathan-Christopher blushes.

Jonathan-Christopher Hall:

And I adore you.

Vickie trembles as she holds her husband closer.

Vickie Hall:

Maybe it's time we, you know, started wrestling more my honey bunch of oats?

Jonathan-Christopher brushes the left side of Vickie's hair behind her ear.

Jonathan-Christopher Hall:

I love it when you call me that.

Vickie Hall:

And I love you, always and forever.

The two of them slowly begin swaying left to right, as if they are in the middle of the dance floor, remembering their first dance as husband and wife.

Jonathan-Christopher Hall:

We *should* start wrestling more often. I can't wait to show the world how much I love you!

Vickie leans her head against her husband's chest.

Vickie Hall:

This is magical, isn't it?

Jonathan-Christopher agrees.

Jonathan-Christopher Hall:

Yes it is, baby.

Vickie takes a moment to lift her head off Jonathan-Christopher's chest and look into his ever-loving eyes once more.

Vickie Hall:

Never stop calling me baby, okay?

JC rubs her cheek.

Jonathan-Christopher Hall:

Never.

Vickie seems unsure.

Vickie Hall:

Promise?

JC nods.

Jonathan-Christopher Hall:

Always and forever.

Vickie frowns.

Vickie Hall:

But you didn't say *I promise*.

JC agrees, feeling bad.

Jonathan-Christopher Hall:

I promise.

She puts her head back on his chest and they start dancing slowly, hand-in-hand.

Vickie Hall:

Are we going to become the next UNIFIED Tag Team Champions?

Jonathan-Christopher Hall gives a surprising shake of his head "no". Vickie feels his head turning in the wrong direction so she looks back up.

Vickie Hall:

Baby?

JC winks.

Jonathan-Christopher Hall:

Sweetheart, baby, we are already *UNIFIED*...

And the two continue to hold each other tight.

THE GUARDIANS: ANGEL OF DEF

Location: Off The Grid

When: The Night After MAXIMUM DEFIANCE

"It's still too soon. Steeping to those measures would be reckless right now, Jessica. We have to play this smartly... and calmly. Bringing in a reckless third party like that would go against everything we are trying to accomplish here."

The agitated voice of Rocko Daymon was coming from the back room of an unknown dojo/training center in downtown New Orleans. Covered in shadow, the doorway to the back room was only partially open when "Skyfire" Zack Daymon and "The Iceman" Leo Burnett approached it. The younger of the tag team, Zack, stops dead in his tracks.

Zack Daymon:

Sounds like Mommy and Daddy are fighting again.

Leo Burnett:

It's so weird that you joke about them like that. Isn't she like your best friend?

Zack Daymon: *(scoffing)*

I don't know... it's hard to call someone a "best friend" when they disappear out of your life every few years. Man, I don't get it... our creed back in the Dojo was always "One Voice - Rejoice." At least it was, back when we started this whole Guardian shit.

Leo Burnett:

So... what's different now?

Zack Daymon:

Secrets, man... lots of them. My dad doesn't talk straight to me. He and Jessica are too busy whispering plans back and forth to pay attention to what the two of us got going on.

Leo Burnett:

Did you forget that you just got your ass whipped, or was that just me out there? Of course they got secrets. Look at who we are fighting against: the Kabal has a literal MONSTER on their side. My head STILL hurts, Zack... it's freaking throbbing right now. Cut them some slack, and focus on climbing that ladder.

Leo purposely picks his tone back up in hopes that the vocal change would deter the incoming appearance of both Jessica 'Reaper' Reeves and Rocko Daymon from thinking the up and coming tag team was eavesdropping. Zack caught the queue and greeted both his friend and father.

Zack Daymon:

So what's our next move?

Ever anxious Zack was ready for revenge, but the grim look on the face of the young daughter of Jason Reeves said that was not coming anytime soon. The 'pseudo' Kabal Hunters' leader was wearing her hair in a straight ponytail, her face featured a few bandages. Trying to hide the pain she was in she nodded back to her mentor Rocko who was standing behind her before addressing them both.

Jessica Reeves:

We have to come up with a good plan, The Kabal are going to be planning something big. We have a few... 'ideas'. But no exact moves quite yet.

The look of disappointment on Zack's face was as he has been looking forward to taking on The Kabal more directly for months now.

Zack Daymon:

You said we would go right for them as soon as you were healed up! That was YOUR PLAN, Jessica. So, what's

different now?

“The Iceman” shoves Zack in the shoulder for not remembering what he told him earlier.

Leo Burnett:

I see you rubbing your hand every fifteen minutes, man. You got your ass kicked just like I did, they have a freaking Michael Myers now.

Rocko Daymon:

While he is... much more dangerous than I knew him, Jason is not the one to be worried about right now. We should be focused on the one pulling his strings.

Jessica Reeves:

We know that The Kabal are going to keep recruiting. They are not looking to simply be a dominating force in DEFIANCE. They want to be the ONLY force. To do that they will look to add to their ranks.

Leo Burnett:

With the likes of Teresa Ames at the helm, they are likely to go after anyone. What should we do? The Angel of DEFIANCE is only one man... we can't keep sending the Guardian out there alone.

Zack Daymon:

He's not alone, now that we are here!

Showing some bravado as he paces around waiting to hear at least some piece of useful information.

Jessica Reeves:

We aren't certain but if I know how the Cerebus thinks - they'll want to go after the biggest fish in the sea to show just how powerful they can be. Someone who has proven themselves beyond measure. One of the few 'lone wolves' left in DEFIANCE.

The elder Daymon finally chimes in after shaking his head and placing a hand on his shoulder.

Rocko Daymon:

Cut the dramatics and save the details for dinner. I am hungry.

It was an abrupt stoppage to the conversation but nonetheless The Kabal Hunters took the old man's lead, following him as the hobbled Seattle Warrior headed towards the shadowy exit.

BUTCHER VICTORIOUS vs. KENNY YI

DDK:

Welcome back, folks, as we gear up for more action on our post-MAXDEF edition of UNCUT! Coming up next, we see Butcher Victorious return to action after a layoff of about two months touring Mexico for the promotion, Reyes del Anillo. Butcher has promised that he's gonna show some things we've never seen before in a DEFIANCE ring, so we'll see.

Lance:

I'm looking forward to it. We haven't seen much of Butcher since he got promoted to the main roster, but he's back. He takes on Kenny Yi, a young high-flyer from BRAZEN with a background in both gymnastics and kickboxing. We'll see how he fares against a veteran.

DDK:

Let's take it to ringside now with Darren Quimbey.

We do just that. The camera goes over to the ring where the camera fixes on Kenny Yi.

Darren Quimbey:

The following contest is set for one fall! Introducing first, from Surrey, BC, Canada... weighing in at 198 pounds...

KENNY YI!

He pops the crowd with a pair of back cartwheels and lands on his feet to pop the crowd. "Goosebumps" by Travis Scott cuts out before the music of his opponent plays.

Darren Quimbey:

And his opponent... from Austin, Texas, weighing in at 210 pounds... **BUTCHER VICTORIOUS!**

♪ "Junior Kickstart" by The Go! Team ♪

The fans right away do not like the song that sounds like a rock band playing over a marching band, but it plays Butcher Victorious heads out from the back... now wearing a purple sparkling sequined coat and a matching... yep, a top hat like a complete asshole. Taking in a mix of demure jeers and some apathy, he hasn't been seen since he turned on the fans by cheating to beat Sho Nakazawa during the DEFCON Pre-show. Sadly, he also has a microphone.

Butcher Victorious:

BUTCH VIC HAS GOT THE STICK! SHOW ME SOME LOVE!

And the crowd goes... mild. Ish. A few cheers, but not that many. It's mostly boos.

Lance:

Did he just call himself Butch Vig? Like Garbage, Butch Vig?

DDK:

His new attire looks like garbage, anyway.

Butcher looks irritated by the reaction or lack thereof... then continues.

Butcher Victorious:

When you last saw me in a DEFIANCE ring, I was VICTORIOUS! Like my name... I won at DEFCON... 's preshow. But fret not! After a two-month tour working throughout wrestling rings all across Mexico, I am back, I'm here to stay, and I'm here to show you things you've NEVER seen before! The first... all the great new moves that I added to my arsenal since I beat all these stupid lucha goofs night after night after night! And the second... the difference between a WINNER...

He then points at the ring.

Butcher Victorious:
AND A LOSER!

He points at himself.

Butcher Victorious:
WINNER!

Then back at an annoyed Kenny Yi.

Butcher Victorious:
LOSER!

Lance:
Lord... can we send him back for another tour, please? I hear wrestling is opening up on the moon.

With top hat and jacket, Butcher heads down to the ring and the Texan native heads inside. He puts his new entrance gear and hangs it on the buckles before referee The Referee (that's his name, not a redundant typo) calls for the bell.

DING DING

Butcher and Kenny lock up quickly, but the more experienced Butcher is the one to make the first move. Kenny tries to fight his way out, but when Victorious hangs on, he launches him off the ropes. But to Kenny surprise, Butcher comes right back with a big clothesline that knocks him right over!

DDK:
Nice move by Butcher there, just slugging Kenny Yi, but... uh, what?

After hitting the clothesline, Butcher does a moonwalk like a fool back towards Kenny only to drop an elbow... then celebrates.

Lance:
He went to Mexico... for a moonwalk and an elbow drop? Why?

DDK:
I feel like this is gonna be a repeated question involving Butcher.

Butcher gets jeers from the crowd as he holds his arms high to back in the jeers... but when he turns, he gets lit like a Discord chat with a huge chop to the chest! The former gymnast and kickboxer in Yi throws a few kicks to stun Butcher, then throws him to the ropes. He hits a big hip toss, then throws in a cartwheel of his own for some flash before nailing a low dropkick to the face of Victorious!

DDK:
That was something right there from Kenny Yi! Impressive combo! And a cover now!

ONE!

TW... NO!

Butcher kicks out before a full two-count, then bails from the ring. Butch Vic tries to separate himself from Kenny Yi, but the BRAZEN star knows to close the gap because he comes through the ropes with a high-speed tope through the ropes and crashes right into him!

DDK:

Kenny Yi picking things up here in a big, big way!

Lance:

If he doesn't start taking Yi more seriously, Butcher is gonna get beat!

Kenny feeds off the appreciative crowd and then throws him back inside the ring. Once inside, Kenny looks out to the crowd from the ring apron then slingshots himself over... but not before balancing himself on the cable before hitting a big slingshot splash!

ONE!

TWO... NO!

DDK:

He's really showing something right now! He calls the that Flagpole Sitter. I guess he loves the one-hit wonders?

It's Butcher wanting to show off so far, but it's been almost all Yi on the action. Butcher gets kicked in the back, but when Kenny tries to pick him up, he tries for a suplex. Much to his surprise, Butcher is able to slip out and behind him. When Kenny turns to greet him, he gets clipped upside the head by a well-paced pele kick from Butcher! The blow staggers him and knocks him against the middle rope. Butcher then looks over to the crowd and then runs the ropes before coming back with a cannonball right to the back of Yi!

DDK:

I'm told he calls that the Landslide Victory! We'll see if that gets the job done!

ONE!

TWO!

NO!

The cannonball attack is a little more impressive, but the fans jeer when Butcher stands up and puts the boots to Yi.

Lance:

An actual nice move by Butcher, but I don't know... maybe name it something else if the guy kicks out?

DDK:

Butcher on the attack now! He delivers elbows to the head of Kenny then puts him down for a body slam. What's he got planned now?

Butcher points to the corner and then yells out "BETTER THAN THE BEST!" and then starts to jump to the middle rope... then back to the mat... then back to the middle, the top and then...

DDK:

He's also worked out a moonsault called Better Than the Best Moonsault Ever... and missed!

Lance:

Yep, sure did... one too many jumps!

The move looks beautiful... but he doesn't stick the landing as Kenny Yi moves! The Faithful cheer him on as he starts to get up, then waits for Butcher to do the same. When he does, he gets nailed with a big dropkick sending him to the corner. When Yi is back up to his feet, he waits for Butcher and then nails a roaring elbow to the jaw! The blow rocks him to the mat, then Yi nails a standing corkscrew senton!

DDK:

This could be a big win for Yi if he can beat a main roster member of DEFIANCE! He's got Butcher on the ropes!

Kenny tries to pick him up and then drops him with a slam near the corner. The former gymnast leaps up and tries an Arabian press, but Butcher moves! Yi lands on his feet, but Butcher gets up and tries to shove Kenny into The Referee. Kenny stops himself short, but when he turns, Butcher nails a eye rake, then a stomp to the foot... then a quick and tight small package pin!

*ONE!**TWO!**THREE!****DING DING DING***

The bell rings and the crowd boos as Butcher keeps hold of the inside cradle, still holding Yi for a few extra seconds, then finally lets go and out of the ring with the quickness.

Darren Quimbey:

Here is your winner of the match... **BUTCHER VICTOR...**

He stops when Butcher gets up!

Butcher Victorious:

A WINNER IS ME! A WINNER IS ME! THAT'S NOT JUST MY NEW FINISHER... THAT'S WHAT JUST HAPPENED!

Butcher leaves the ring as a disappointed Kenny Yi looks on, shocked while holding his eye that he got scratched in.

DDK:

So... Butcher learned some cheating and roll-ups?

Lance:

That appears to be so, yes.

Butcher has the microphone.

Butcher Victorious:

BUTCH VIC HAS THE STICK! AND I'M USING IT TO TELL YOU I WON! WINNER! LOSER! WINNER! LOSER!

Then throws down the microphone and heads to the back... then comes back quickly cause he dropped his top hat on the stage.

DDK:

Oy... how about we just roll on, shall we?

HOUSE CASSIDY

Yarmouth, Massachusetts

July 19, 2021 (two days before MAX DEF)

It's a beach and a small lighthouse on Cape Cod. Not a public beach, but a small strip of land that juts out into the Atlantic Ocean. Instead of crowds of people, there's one man sitting on a beach chair in front of the lighthouse. He's dressed in swim shorts, flip flops, and an open Hawaiian-style button up shirt. To his left is a large open cooler. To his right, a big umbrella is stuck into the sand and saving his fair skin from the horrors of the sun. In his hand is an adult beverage: a Ballyhoo Brew original.

Obviously it's Pat Cassidy. He sips slowly, staring out into the surf thoughtfully.

From behind the lighthouse, his little sister appears carrying a beach chair of her own. She clears her throat, seeming to build up some courage, and begins to walk toward her brother. As she walks by the lighthouse, we can make out six names carved into it's old wood: Bobby. Colm. Cailin. Pat. Siobhan. Donnie. Underneath the list of names "Summer 2003" is carved.

Siobhan walks up to her brother, unfolding the chair and putting it down next to him. As she sits, Pat doesn't divert his gaze from the water; he simply continues to sip from his beer. Siobhan lets a moment of silence pass before speaking first.

Siobhan Cassidy:

...well?

Cassidy takes a sip and says nothing. Still staring at the water.

Siobhan Cassidy:

What do you want me to say? Sorry?

Pat Cassidy:

I've heard of worse places to start.

Siobahn Cassidy:

Fine. I'm sorry. I'm rEaLIY sorry I kept something from you because I knew when I told you, you'd act like an asshole. Which you totally did, so...

Pat finally turns to look at his younger sister.

Pat Cassidy:

An asshole? An asshole?? Yeah, you know, I tend be a fucking prick when I find out two people close to me have been...

Cassidy makes an exaggerated show of faking stabbing himself in the back.

Pat Cassidy:

...putting the knife right here for God knows how long. "Oh IOoK, hErE cOmEs Pat. hE's sO cLuEleSs. Derp derp derp." And then how do I find out? On fucking television?? From Malak fucking Garland?? That's how I find out?? Get the fuck outta here. I'll show you "asshole."

A moment of silence.

Siobhan Cassidy:

Well fucking hate me if you want... but it's not Brock's fault.

Pat barks out a laugh.

Pat Cassidy:

Oh, really? You don't say. No fucking shit. I know it's not his fault, because here's the thing about Brock fucking Newbludd: he's a stand up guy. The man wears his heart on his sleeve. He's a *shit* liar. So I figure if he kept a secret, it was probably tearing him up inside. And it was definitely SOMEONE ELSE's idea, wasn't it?

Siobhan has no response to that. Another tense moment goes by. Finally, Pat turns to her. He offers her a beer. A peace offering? She takes it. When Pat speaks, there's less anger in his voice.

Pat Cassidy:

You'd better fucking really like him.

Siobhan Cassidy:

And what if I do?

Pat Cassidy:

Great. Super. Just swell for you. Just don't let your business fuck up my career again.

Siobhan's brow furrows. She thinks about what he just said and almost dares to smile.

Siobhan Cassidy:

...what're you saying?

Pat Cassidy:

I'm saying that my baby sister is all grown up and as much as I fucking hate it, it's none of my business anymore who she decides to play hide the sausage with.

Siobhan Cassidy:

Okay. Gross. I guess sweet... but gross.

Pat Cassidy:

You and Newbludd are adults and it's fuck all of my business what you do with your free time. But that bar means a lot to me. DEFIANCE means a lot to me. Brock's a good business partner and even better tag team partner and we're a day away from winning these fucking tag belts, so all I'm asking is that you don't lie to me anymore and stay out of my professional life. Is that too much to ask?

Siobhan is grinning now. This is not how she expected this to go.

Siobhan Cassidy:

No! It's not.

Then it clicks in her head.

Siobhan Cassidy:

Wait... winning the belts? Does that mean you're going to wrestle?

Pat Cassidy:

Of fucking course I'm going to wrestle, idiot. You think I'd throw away the chance at the tag belts over some *Days of Our Lives* shit? I'm going to kick some snowflake ass.

Siobhan is beside herself. She reaches for her phone.

Siobhan Cassidy:

Brock is going to be so happy! He's really beating himself up...

Pat Cassidy:

No! I'll tell him. Besides... he did lie to me. Won't kill him to sweat a little.

With a smile, Cassidy leans back in his chair. Siobhan doesn't like that, but she can't really argue. She puts her phone away. Together, the two siblings sip their beer and look out into the ocean.

Siobhan Cassidy:

This is... surprisingly mature for the guy who used to leave my dolls in compromising positions.

Pat Cassidy:

All I'm saying is, you'd better fucking marry this dude. Cause if it comes down to you or him... I don't like your chances.

Siobhan laughs.

Siobahn Cassidy:

Asshole.

Family love at its finest. We fade out.

2 XTREME INDEED

We cut to a smiling Christie Zane standing backstage, just on the other side of the curtain.

Christie Zane:

Ladies and Gentlemen, I am joined by BRAZEN star, “2 Xtreme” Elijah Cross!

The camera pulls back just slightly as Elijah Cross steps into the shot. He aggressively massages the white tape around his wrists, staring somewhere off-screen as intensely as he possibly can.

Christie Zane:

Elijah, it's been quite a while since we have seen you on UNCUT... and now, in just a few moments, you'll step through that curtain and have your first singles match in 13 months... can you tell us what you've been up to?

Cross claps his hands together loudly before turning his pseudo-intimidating gaze to the camera.

“2 Xtreme” Elijah Cross:

You know something, Christie?!? I've been on the streets, living the most extreme lifestyle you could possibly imagine! I've been honing my craft in abandoned buildings, under bridges, and in back alleys all across the country! In the last year, I've been living life on the razor's edge! THAT is where *I* have been!

Christie tries hard to look impressed.

Christie Zane:

Tonight, you--

Cross awkwardly snatches the microphone out of Christie's hand.

“2 Xtreme” Elijah Cross:

Tonight, I make history! We've all seen the stories in the dirt sheets... DEFIANCE is looking at the BRAZEN roster, looking for diamonds in the rough, looking for fighters to put on the BIG stage! Well, look no further! There is no diamond brighter and no one rougher than “2 Xtreme” Elijah Cross! There is nobody stronger, harder, MORE EXTREME, than ME! And I'm going to prove it tonight in that ring! As a matter of fact...

We see an idea spread across the face of Elijah Cross. It seems to be a new experience for him.

“2 Xtreme” Elijah Cross:

As a matter of fact, how about we dial up the EXTREME right now! I don't want a "normal" match! I'm not "normal"! Elijah Cross doesn't “WRESTLE”, Elijah Cross doesn't “PERFORM”... Elijah Cross is a FIGHTER. Elijah Cross is EXTREME... I don't even remember the NAME of my opponent, but I'm throwing it out there right now... No straight wrestling match, How about... HARDCORE, EXTREME RULES match! Right now!

Some seriously “hardcore” music begins to pulse on just the other side of the curtain. Cross nearly drops the microphone in the process of handing it back to Christie Zane. He gives her a nod and charges through the curtain. We hear the faithful offer a fairly muted response.

Christie Zane:

Well, folks... the challenge has been laid out for this next contest... “2 Xtreme” Elijah Cross wants an “extreme”, hardcore match against-- Oh! Here they come now!

The camera sweeps to find two figures approaching. A small-framed, well-dressed, oddly-smiling gentleman glides to a rest before Christie's awaiting microphone. Another wider figure looms behind him; a shade of glaring fury, head hung low, long hair dripping wet.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

Well met, Mz. Zane! Well met!

The grin on his face is fixed and unmoving, even somehow as he speaks.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

There appears to be little time to expound upon the frail state of DEFIANCE, Christina. Instead, we press on to battle!

Lord Nigel moves to step through the curtain but Christie holds up a hand.

Christie Zane:

Lord Nigel! You heard Elijah Cross's challenge? Will you accept the terms for your... "client"? A hardcore match between "2 Xtreme" Elijah Cross and your charge, Corvo Alpha?

Lord Trickelbush says nothing. Instead, his head smoothly and mechanically turns to look over his left shoulder where a waiting, heaving, snorting Corvo Alpha raises his head just enough for his wide eyes to be seen through the mess of long, wet stringy hair and black face paint.

Corvo Alpha:

...

Lord Nigel swings his head back to Christie.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

All terms are acceptable.

They step out of frame as Christie composes herself.

CORVO ALPHA vs. ELIJAH CROSS

We cut to the ring where the super edgy and extreme entrance music of Elijah Cross continues to pulse through the Wrestle-Plex.

Darren Quimbey:

This next contest is scheduled for one fall and is a **HARDCORE MATCH**...

The fans in attendance perk up at that announcement as Cross finishes setting up a table at ringside then slides back in the ring.

Darren Quimbey:

Already in the ring... hailing from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania... weighing in tonight at two hundred and twenty five pounds... He is "2 XTREME"... ELLIIIIIIJAAAAAAAAAAAH CROOOOOOSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS!

Cross hops on the middle turnbuckle and raises a defiant fist over his head to lukewarm response just as the lights in the arena (and his music) cut and fade out.

Darren Quimbey:

And his opponent...

♪ "Electric Funeral (Instrumental)" by Black Sabbath ♪

Darren Quimbey:

Coming to the ring with his "handler", Lord Nigel Trickelbush... Hailing from Parts Untold...

Red spotlights sweep across the arena in all directions just as Lord Nigel Trickelbush appears through the curtain to a chorus of boo's from the arena faithful.

Darren Quimbey:

Weighing in tonight at two hundred and sixty eight pounds... Call him... COOOOORRVVOOOOOOO
ALLLLLLLLLLPHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!!!

Corvo emerges and follows six paces behind his Lord, shoulders heaving, muscles tense and rippling beneath his sweaty, hairy skin.

DDK:

Here comes the enigmatic Lord Nigel Trickelbush and the brutal, vicious brawler known only as "Corvo Alpha"!

Lance Warner:

We saw Corvo Alpha make his debut on UNCUT 97 with a dominant victory over "The Birdman" of DEFIANCE, Walter Levy, in a truly unorthodox contest. Tonight, the returning Elijah Cross is looking to stake his claim and rise up the ranks in a "hardcore" match! I've gotta say... I'm not convinced that this match type doesn't play into the style and attitude of Corvo Alpha just as much, if not more, than Elijah Cross!

DDK:

I tend to agree, Lance!

The camera zooms in on a crouching, waiting Corvo Alpha - half seated/half kneeling in the corner of the ring - face obscured by hair and black paint. The music rises and falls as the red spotlights slowly fade to normal arena lighting. The fans buzz with anticipation. Referee Benny Doyle signals for the bell and Elijah Cross immediately slides out of the ring.

DING DING

DDK:

Cross is searching under the ring, conceivably for something that can be used as a weapon!

Lance Warner:

He's already set up a table at ringside, Keebs! I have a feeling this is going to be ugly!

Before Cross is able to retrieve anything, Corvo Alpha is upon him, bludgeoning him from behind with a clubbing forearm.

DDK:

Elijah Cross didn't have a chance to find anything! Alpha is just stomping him into the ringside mat! Pulling Cross up by his hair -- OHH!! Cross came up with a kendo stick and **BLASTED** it across Corvo's face!

Lance Warner:

I'm pretty sure I just saw splinters fly!

DDK:

I have to assume that Cross planted that weapon there prior to fans being let in the building...

Lance Warner:

Elijah Cross has been largely on the **BRAZEN** sidelines for over a year, Keebler! He knows that this is a **PRIME** opportunity in the days following **MAXDEF** with the eyes of the wrestling world still lingering here on **DEFIANCE**! Elijah Cross **BLISTERS** Corvo Alpha across the back with that kendo stick! And **AGAIN!** "2 Xtreme" Elijah Cross knows he has to make the most of this opportunity and he is doing it!

Cross raises the kendo stick over his head once more... and **CRACKS** it again across the side of Corvo Alpha's face just as Corvo stands straight up. Alpha barely flinches.

DDK:

...my god...

Corvo snatches the stick from the Xtreme Fool's hands. Elijah backpedals and trips backwards over the steel ring steps as Alpha pursues him. Crawling, Cross scrambles around the ring again, reaching under the apron and the ring, frantically seeking another weapon.

Lance Warner:

Corvo Alpha is stalking Cross. Uh... Alpha just tosses the kendo stick aside...

DDK:

I don't think he needs it!!!

Lance Warner:

Corvo grabs Cross and **HURLS** him into the guardrail! Elijah Cross wanted a hardcore match, fans! There is no disqualification... no count out... no rules! There's nowhere to go! That's the match he wanted and that's the match he is getting!

DDK:

Alpha picks Cross up, what a display of power, and drops him throat first across the guardrail... this is just a mugging. He is **MAULING** Elijah Cross!

Cross finds his footing and charges at Alpha who catches him. A brief struggle ensues before Alpha powers Cross off of his feet and **DUMPS** him on his head on the ringside mat, just inches from exposed concrete.

Lance Warner:

That could have been a disastrous impact, Keebler!

Referee Benny Doyle attempts to move in and check on Cross but Corvo Alpha shoves him aside and pulls Cross back to his feet, his limbs limp and uncooperative.

DDK:

Alpha is DRAGGING Cross around the ring...

Lance Warner:

But Cross is alive! He is fighting! Throwing elbows into Alpha's midsection! But Corvo Alpha is unmoved! ANOTHER series of elbows! Cross frees himself, grabs Alpha by a handful of his hair and goes to SMASH his head across the banquet table that Cross set up before the match -- NO! Alpha won't have it! BLASTS Cross across the face!

DDK:

Corvo Alpha with another display of power... EFFORTLESS OVERHEAD SUPLEX puts Cross THROUGH the table! Did you SEE that?!?

Lance Warner:

He powered two hundred and twenty five pounds over his head like it was nothing! Staying on his own feet!

DDK:

That table got OBLITERATED on impact! This crowd has come alive!!!

Lance Warner:

Not what Elijah Cross had in mind when he set that table up I'm sure!

Again, Benny Doyle moves to check on the motionless Cross, lying in a bed of wooden and metal shards. There is a look of very real concern on the officials face. In the background, we see a smiling Lord Nigel Tricklebush adjust the bowler cap atop his head. Our shot cuts to Corvo Alpha who is half knelt at ringside, eyes flitting wildly between the fans at ringside and the unmoving body of his opponent.

Lance Warner:

Corvo Alpha is one of the most menacing performers we have seen here in DEFIANCE... and I'm thinking it might be ANOTHER year before we see Elijah Cross again!

DDK:

I think you might have spoken too soon! Elijah Cross is just "2 Xtreme" to go out like that! He is moving! Crawling towards the guardrail, looking for anything to help get himself to his feet!

The camera briefly cuts to a smiling Lord Nigel placing a hand on the kneeling Alpha's shoulder. We cut again -- Elijah Cross's hands find the kendo stick once more and he uses it to rediscover his footing once more. Turning, he frantically swings it--

DDK:

Corvo Alpha CAUGHT the kendo stick with his left hand!

The camera zooms to the wide, shocked expression locked on Elijah Cross's beaten face. Tearing the kendo stick from Cross's hand--

Lance Warner:

Alpha just THUNDERCLAPS the stick across Elijah Cross's face -- splitting it in half!!

DDK:

Splitting it into a MILLION pieces!!!

In the background, we see Lord Nigel politely clapping. Corvo pulls Elijah Cross to his knees by his hair and then slowly powers him onto the apron, under the rope, and into the ring. Alpha slinks into the ring after him.

Lance Warner:

I'm almost certain that "2 Xtreme" Elijah Cross is unconscious, Keebler! His body is absolutely lifeless!

Alpha maneuvers behind Cross's yielding and soft body, clamping on a variation of the katahajime lock.

Lance Warner:

I'm told that Lord Nigel calls this Alpha Lock! B-but, I don't think Cross is in any condition to even tap out!

DDK:

I think you're right and it looks like Official Benny Doyle recognizes that! He quickly drops elijah Cross's arm once... twice...

Three times!

Lance Warner:

It's OVER!

DING DING DING**Darren Quimbey:**

The winner of this bout--

Corvo doesn't acknowledge Doyle's attempts to get him off of Cross. Nor does he acknowledge the bell. If anything, his hold only tightens. The camera cuts to a tight shot of Corvo's unhinged, wild eyes, glaring through flecks of black paint and strands of dark, wet hair.

DDK:

He has to let him go!

The bell rings again! Again and again!

Lance Warner:

This isn't right! Let him go! Somebody get him off of Cross!

Doyle is close to putting Corvo in a headlock to pull him off of Elijah Cross. But it isn't helping. Trying to pry him off of him, Doyle finally signals for assistance from backstage.

The bell rings again! Non-stop now.

A mix of DEFsec and DEFmed stream down the aisle. DEFsec moves to confront Alpha and, finally, he relinquishes the hold and slides to his feet. Fists balled and flexed, Alpha swings and kicks to keep them all out of the ring.

DDK:

This monster is out of control!

Lance Warner:

He's like a PREDATOR keeping the vultures off of his KILL, Keebs! He hunted Cross! He wore him out! Wore him down! He FINISHED him! And now he aims to KEEP him to himself!

The bell continues to ring as DEFsec and DEFmed encircle the ring. Corvo squats over Cross, frothing at the mouth as he keeps a bestial eye on everything and every one all at once. He clubs Cross about the chest and head twice before lashing back at a member of DEFsec who momentarily reached under the rope in an effort to grab and pull Cross out of the ring.

DDK:

Someone has to do something?!?

As if almost on cue, Lord Nigel trickelbush wades through the waves of security and medical personnel and breezes up the ringsteps. On sight of his master, Corvo abandons his kill, kicking the lifeless body of Elijah Cross out of the ring and into the waiting arms of DEFmed.

The bell stops ringing and we hear ring announcer, Darren Quimbey, clear his throat.

Darren Quimbey:

Ladies and gentlemen, the winner of this bout.... By submission... CALL HIM... COOOOOORRRRRVOOOOO
ALLLLLLLLLLLPHAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!!

♪ *"Electric Funeral (Instrumental)" by Black Sabbath* ♪

Lord Nigel Trickelbush stands center ring, smile wide and bolted across his face. Corvo kneels, head hung low, at the feet of his Lord. One hand placed on the shoulder of Alpha, his other tips his bowler cap towards Elijah Cross, who lies ringside surrounded by DEF personnel. Red spotlights sweep the Wrestle-Plex.

DDK:

Just pure, simple brutality at the hands of Corvo Alpha...

One last lingering shot on the heaving, slumping shoulders of Corvo Alpha, head bowed. His head snaps up towards the ceiling, revealing the remaining flecks of black paint across his face, his expression a twisted mask of rage.

Lance Warner:

And, I fear, this is just the beginning...

THIS.

IS.

DEFIANCE.