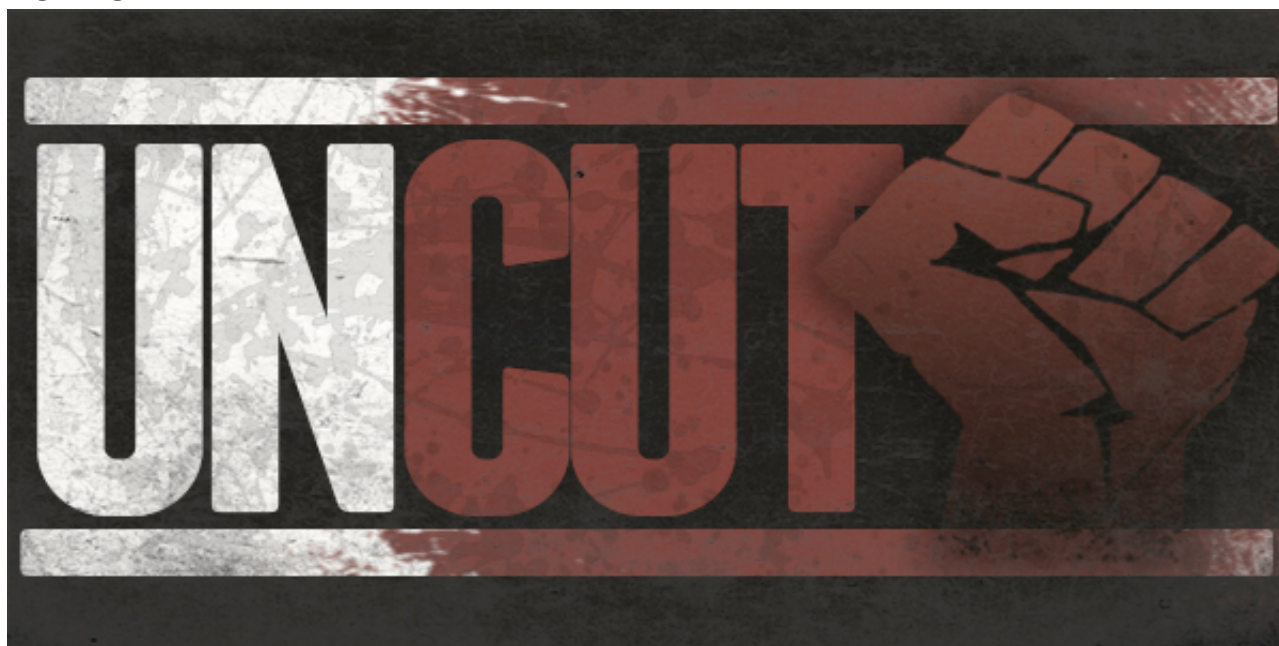


SHOW OPEN

MAXIMUM DEFIANCE PRESS CONFERENCE: NIGHT ONE

Night one of MAXIMUM DEFIANCE has just concluded. While fans file out of the Watsco Center, a collection of wrestling press and VIPs have gathered in the conference room backstage.

A snowflake white backdrop with a checkered pattern of DEFIANCE and MAXDEF logos obscures the doorway leading to the locker room area. A long table has been set up with as many as three seats and corresponding microphones.

Quiet chatter spreads through the press pool until the first wrestler emerges from behind the backdrop.

Arthur Pleasant

Arthur Pleasant takes a seat, setting the Favoured Saints Championship on the table.

Ryan Scott:

...

Arthur Pleasant:

Is that a... a question?

Ryan Scott:

Grrr...

Arthur Pleasant:

Seriously, now? Are you having a medical emergency or something?!

Ryan Scott:

Why didn't you wrestle like this from the start!?

Arthur Pleasant:

Like what? Like some pretentious asshole who just cares about stars or K's or whatever the fuck? Get off your high horse, Ryan. Stop armchair quarterbacking my matches and sit back and fucking shut up. I'll wrestle however I wanted to, whenever I want to, against whoever the fuck has the balls to try and "teach me what real wrestling is". Fuck outta here.

Hudson Hammerlock:

Hudson Hammerlock, the Boston Crab Globe... it's been months since the Faithful have seen you in a ring after rumors circulated your career may have been over due to a series of several and very serious concussions. Does this newfound physique and conspicuous absence of hardcore wrestling have anything to do with your return and, more importantly, your performance against David Noble?

Arthur Pleasant:

Hey, an actual intelligent question being asked by a seemingly intelligent reporter! My concussions were not as bad as the DEFmed team led on.

Pleasant grits his teeth and continues.

Arthur Pleasant:

Personally, I'm of the belief that this was done on purpose; with malice, to get me off DEFIANCE Television. My lawyer, Arliss Peters, is currently looking into the matter with a team of investigators to find out if it's grounds for a malpractice suit or something else entirely.

Pleasant pauses and looks out at the sea of reporters, collecting his thoughts.

Arthur Pleasant:

Digressing though, this has nothing to do with wrestling the style all the pure-bloods would have everyone else in the entire wrestling world wrestle if they had the power to force them to. It has everything to do with the fact I wrestled that way because I fucking knew I could. I'm not known as DEFIANCE's PURE Wrestler for no reason, after all. The fact that I didn't bash Noble's stupid face in with a frying pan or peel his flesh with something dull and rusty has nothing to do with anything you people are trying make up. Period.

SuperDEFFan64:

Hello, SuperDEFFan64, screw you, SuperDEFFAN23, cause I'm here and not you! My question is this... can I buy that mask off of you that you wore to the ring? I got \$5,000 in Bitcoin right now if you say YES!

Pleasant reaches under the table and grabs the very mask this Super Fan speaks of.

Arthur Pleasant:

We'll speak after this stupid goddamn presser bullshit. Just so happens that I'm currently getting into the bitcoin market myself. Love the Dark Web.

"Detective" Chris Chickentenders:

Uhh hey yeah, it's Chris Chris Chickentenders. Actually, that's *Detective* Chickentenders for tonight. Mister Pleasant, sir, I just wanted to say that I'm totally stoked to see someone so BADASS return to DEFIANCE. But I have to ask... were YOU the one that ran over Stalker with a car?

Arthur Pleasant:

Yes.

There's a loud gasp within the crowd.

Arthur Pleasant:

Or... did I? Dun, dun, duuuuunnnn.

Deb Warenstein:

DEFIANCE was so much better when you were gone. When are you leaving again? And also why do you always do the most despite being the epitome of the least?

Arthur Pleasant:

Hahaha. Maybe when my contract is up? Maybe when I win the FIST and plant my flag in this bitch? Maybe then I'll go somewhere else, with the FIST – shout out to the Lucky Sevens for the idea – and have you ask me the same idiotic question after I beat whatever kind of old and haggard fuck wagons that make up 99% of whatever shitty fucking roster I land on and dominate next. But, you know, I do have a question for YOU though, Debbie Does DEFIANCE.

Deb looks a bit confused. And annoyed.

Arthur Pleasant:

Did you save the "OH EM GEE HE'S AN UGGO!" act for everyone else but me because you lust for my juicy loins and don't want any sexual tension arising between us in a public manner? Or, are you just really this fucking inconsistent in your shoddy reporting? Seriously. At least Tim Tillingfat is a consistent aberration to pro-wrestling and isn't some phony fucking mark who spends her life on DikSuk trying to get enough upvotes on her deepthroating skills. By the way, Deb, you're not the PRIME piece of ass you think you are.

Deb Warenstein:

And you have just proven my point...

Craig Hamburgers:

Hello my name is craig hamburgers and my question is what is your favorite snake and do you like Harry Potter, you are a slytherin I think, also are you a venomous snake?

Arthur Pleasant:

The black adder. It's a highly venomous snake indigenous to Alaska. I actually don't condone Harry Potter whatsoever. It should be #canceled because Harry Potter is Pagan and it encourages the youth of today to oppose authority. The way he DEFIES the Dursleys is incorrigible. Just kidding. Fuck religion and authority. Slytherin #4Life, Craig.

Pleasant holds up his newly won Favoured Saints Championship before slinging it across his shoulder. Patting it a few times, Pleasant stands up from his assigned press table and looks down at all the press, looking up at him like the starry-eyed morons they are.

Arthur Pleasant:

If there's no other questions, I'd very much like to leave this shit show and go back to training what was once a natural, awesome-looking, slender body into the cookie-cutter, muscled-up, masculine frame you superficial cockflaps saw beat the shit out of that walking void of charisma, David Noble. Until next time, friends. This is Arthur Pleasant signing off and saying...

He stops short and simply flips off everyone from the press and beyond.

Arthur Pleasant:

There's your front page picture, right there.

Taking a fifty-cent, cheap-plastic bottle of Superkicks© purified water, Pleasant makes off with the Favoured Saints Championship.

David Noble

David Noble takes a seat at the table.

Ryan Scott:

First off Mr. Noble, that was one hell of a match you had out there.

David Noble:

Thank you. It felt good to get out there and put out a banger. It felt like it was 2016 all over again.

Ryan Scott:

Do you have a dream match? Why "INSERT NAME" do you want to wrestle 'INSERT NAME'?

David Noble:

Dream match? I would definitely say that getting back in the ring with Henry Keyes is on my agenda. Not just because of the title he won tonight, but because it's been a minute since we stepped in the ring together. There's some people from the past that I would obviously like to square off against, like Eugene Dewey and Bronson Box, settle a few grudges. Would love to step back in the ring with Lindsay Troy if the opportunity presents itself again. Definitely want to get my hands on Crimson Stalker. Thanks.

Tim Tillinghast:

Mr. Noble, it's wonderful to have you back in DEFIANCE. Tough loss tonight to be sure, but as someone who watches a lot of DEFIANCE, I have to say you have tons of potential to be a major star in the promotion. Sometimes rebounding off a loss can be tough, so I've got to ask: what's your plan to work your way back up the card now that you've returned?

David Noble:

Appreciate it, Tim. It's tough knowing I was on the cusp of something here years ago and having to basically start over from scratch. It is what it is and I look forward to making good on that potential. In terms of working my way back up the card on my return, it's all about taking it one step at a time, one day at a time. Losing to Pleasant isn't ever fun, but I need to keep getting out there and getting one match in, letting that lead into a victory, and building from there. It's about picking your spots and knowing how to move forward at this point. Thanks.

Hudson Hammerlock:

Hudson Hammerlock, The Plancha Pioneer... David, after Arthur locked in that Guillotine Submission, did it re-injure the throat injury you suffered from Crimson Stalker? If so, how long do you expect to be out? If not, are you feeling okay right now? If maybe, when do you think you'll feel okay?

David Noble:

Heya Hudson. Doctors checked me out and they tell me nothing is re-injured or any kind of damage. I think, more so, it was me being in my head. After what Stalker did to me, that thought has to be lingering in the back of your head. The last thing I want to do is be laid out again, especially not at the hands of Pleasant. I'll take it easy for a week or two, but right now, it's all about getting over the mental hurdle.

SuperDEFFan64:

David Noble... question ... will you sign six of my t-shirts and make them all out to "Brian"? I promise they won't be sold on the internet for a LOT OF MONEY. And also, beat up Arthur next time you can cause he wouldn't sell me his MASK!

David Noble:

Sure, Brian. Leave them up here with me and I'll get them back to you. In terms of Arthur, I plan on doing a lot more than beat him up the next time we step foot in the ring again.

"Detective" Chris Chickentenders:

Mister David Nobody... is it true that Crimson Stalker, the most BADASS FIST in DEFIANCE history, broke your neck, and was that your motive for running him over with a car?

David Noble:

For someone with the last name of Chickentenders, I don't think I would be calling anyone a nobody. Stalker didn't break my neck. He decided to get dirty and fracture my trachea. As for running him over with a car, that wasn't me, but if you're not careful, you'll see a car heading your way in the parking lot when we're said and done here.

Deb Warenstein:

Yes, hi, how does it feel knowing you gave that uggo, Arthur Pleasant, a title instead of sending him back to his cave where he belongs?

David Noble:

It's definitely disappointing, Deb. Not my intention in the least bit, but I'll keep moving forward. Pleasant should make sure he's got his head on a swivel, because he and I are far from done.

Craig Hamburgers:

hello yes my dad says you like to drink a lot of daddy juice, is that why you lost to a slytherin? also does this mean you're a dad and can I be friends with your kid thank you.

David Noble:

Craig, good to see you still around. I probably drink more 'daddy juice' than I should. I lost to Pleasant though because of everything up here [taps the side of his forehead]. That's all. I am a Dad though and I do have an awesome kid. I'll bring her next time and you two can hang out.

Tyler Fuse

Tyler Fuse walks onto the stage alongside Princess Desire. They both nonchalantly take a seat beside one another. Tyler's still wearing his wrestling gear, black trunks with black boots and holds a blue G2 in his hand before placing it in front of him. Princess Desire remains in her black hoodie and black tights. Tyler's deadpan look across the interviewers conveys a sense of disinterest but he will entertain questions regardless. Desire's eyes wander in different directions than the "action" in front of her.

Tim Tillinghast:

Tyler, the story of your singles career seems to be wasted potential. You have all the tools to be much more of a player in this promotion than you currently are. If you ask me, separating yourself from The Kabal was the best career move you possibly could have made. If you're being honest with yourself, where do you think you could have done things differently in the past?

Tyler leans back in his chair and runs an easy left hand through his messy brown hair. He continues to eye Tillinghast before formulating a reply.

Tyler Fuse:

Ya, um, you can say "wasted potential" but it's really only wasted if my career is over, isn't it? That's a genuine question but you can answer it at another time, Tim. As for The Kabal...

Fuse pauses and a minor smirk crosses his face.

Tyler Fuse:

Next question.

Ryan Scott:

Your career has been in limbo, since you separated from your brother Conor Fuse. What are your honest thoughts on how both your careers have gone thus far?

Tyler grins sarcastically.

Tyler Fuse:

Limbo, eh? I mean you can say *wasted potential* or *limbo*, say whatever the hell you want. Did everyone forget I beat Kerry Kuroyama at DEFCON? He's **never** beaten me. Apparently you all raved about my "promo" to Kerry after I laid him out flat in the center of the ring leading up to DEFCON. You forget quicker, I see. And Mushigihara? Yeah, he's a step down. But I can promise you... there are no more step downs for me moving forward.

Fuse turns to someone else.

SuperDEFFan64:

Hello, Tyler! SuperDEFFan64! Question! Can you show me how to do the crowbar trick? I have some... business... I have to settle with SuperDEFFan46. He outbid me on an Oscar Burns elbow pad he left in the ring at DEFCON 2020 that should have been MINE!

Tyler shrugs.

Tyler Fuse:

I don't know what you're talking about.

And turns to another person.

Hudson Hammerlock:

Hudson Hammerlock, The Piledriver Post... do you regret the missed opportunity of saying "Crowbars up!" to yourself right before you brained Mush-Mush with a crowbar? That was a Home Alone reference in case you never had a VHS player or TV in the coffin you grew up in.

Another deadpan look from Tyler. This time it suggests he's not going to answer.

"Detective" Chris Chickentenders:

Uhh, hey, so tonight we saw you beat up a vampire dude, but I gotta know, were YOU the one who ran over Stalker with a car?

Tyler runs a hand over his face and rolls his eyes.

Tyler Fuse:

I think you're confusing me with someone else. On both accounts.

Deb Warenstein:

Hi my question is for Princess Desire: will you please give Ophelia Sykes and Elise Ares some fashion advice because they very clearly need help.

Desire's gaze wander in the direction of where the question came from.

Princess Desire:

Sure thing.

Back to fielding questions.

Craig Hamburgers:

Hello, yes, are you scared mushimushi is gonna beat you up sometime since you're a big fat cheatie cheater, or maybe david fox, thank you.

Tyler gives the look another sweep with his eyes.

Tyler Fuse:

We done here?

No one answers so he and Desire rise from their chairs. However, Tyler leans into the microphone once more.

Tyler Fuse:

It's actually called a *scrowbar*.

He winks into the field of reporters and then exits stage right with the Princess.

Lord Nigel Tricklebush

Sweeping into the conference space, splattered red paint dried in place all about his normally-black bowler cap and matching black suit, is a creepily smiling Lord Nigel Tricklebush. He dramatically pulls out his chair before taking a seat, gingerly. Adjusting the microphone in it's stand, his eerie gaze sweeps the room – taking a moment to lock eyes with each individual interviewer in attendance.

Lord Nigel Tricklebush:

Good evening, friends. A GRAND evening, indeed. Ask what you will.

SuperDEFFan64 is the first to step up.

SuperDEFFan64:

Hey, Nigel! SuperDEFFan64! I will ask this question in a professional manner, but... hehehehe, Tricklebush! Hilarious! Anyway... do you see Corvo Alpha going for gold and if so? How soon?

Lord Nigel purses his lips tightly, adjusting himself closer to the microphone.

Lord Nigel Tricklebush:

If you were the "super fan" you purport to be perhaps you'd recall that my charge captured DEFIANCE gold in his DEFtv debut! I suppose this speaks to how dense you *all* are... how bored you must all be. While you giggle at my venerable and well-bred surname and forget recent history, you are shockingly rewarded for it by being allowed to play at "journalist". Truly fascinating. Enough of you. You are a fool.

SuperDEFFan64 seems to not mind being called a fool as Hammerlock raises a hand to be recognized.

Hudson Hammerlock:

Hudson Hammerlock, The Cutter Chronicle... who was that little lass out in the crowd? Why was she crying exactly? Is she Corvo's daughter? Do you think he's fit to be a Father? Has anyone ever called social services on him before?

Lord Nigel finds himself at his most condescending.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

A flurry of questions, to be sure! Would you like me to answer all of them all at once? Or in a sequence as dizzying as how you asked? While it's painfully clear to me that your publication is doomed to failure and my answers aren't likely to see print... I will humor you. "Who was the child? Why was she crying? Who is her father? Etcetera, etcetera?" Those sound like questions for the girl you reference, not for me. Be gone.

Deb eyes Trickelbush with clear disgust as she raises an annoyed hand.

Deb Warenstein:

Why are you aiding Corvo Alpha in being a deadbeat dad? Also, your hat is dumb.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

As presumptuous a question as you are precocious, young one. I'm done answering questions from small, insolent, insipid children. Off with you.

With perhaps the most melodramatic eyeroll of all time, Deb throws herself back in her chair. Tillinghast surveys the notes in his hand before taking his shot.

Tim Tillinghast:

Is there any part of you that regrets what you've done to this family, or are you just completely soul-less?

For this, Nigel allows the question to hang in the air. His eyes, again, meet everyone else's slowly and individually as he answers – by the end, he finds Tillinghast once more.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

Do you think that Masked Violator #1 feels any guilt in trying to destroy what *I* have built? Do you think HE "regrets" not heeding my words and warnings? Do *you think*, at all, Timothy? I understand that you are well respected in your... circle... but perhaps you should do your homework. What HAVE I done to "this family", I wonder? Do you even know? Can you say for a certainty? You do not and you can not. Ask MV1 those questions, if he can make it to this table tonight, and see what he has to say. You disappoint me, Timothy. You disappoint me. Next.

Ryan Scott was poised and ready to pounce.

Ryan Scott:

Trickelbush, is this thing between Corvo and MV1 finally over?

Nigel doesn't waste time pondering this one.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

Finally, a question worth answering. Mr. Scott, I'll have you know that it was "over" long ago. Long before MAXDEF... long before even DEFIANCE Road...it was "over" many, many years ago. If Masked Violator #1 is a man of his word... as a result of his loss earlier tonight, he has no choice but to move on, to forget that I and my boy even exist. If he is a man whose word has any value, any worth at all, then "this thing", as you so eloquently positioned it, is as "over" as it has ever been. Thank you, Mr. Scott.

Chris Chickentenders sweeps an emo-lock of hair from his eyes – signaling his intent to engage with society once more.

"Detective" Chris Chickentenders:

Dude, I don't really have a question, but I just wanted to say, Corvo Alpha is BADASS, and deep down, I wish he and Crimson Stalker were a tag team! It's just too bad Stalker got ran over with that car, but dude, do YOU have any idea who might be behind that?

Did Trickelbush giggle? With his unchanging expression, it was hard to say.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

Constable Tenders, despite your feeble attempt at facial hair, it's clear to me you've proven yourself to be a young man of class and vision. A confused vision, perhaps. But vision nonetheless. What happened to *Jessica Fear* in that parking lot in Houston was a horrific tragedy. No, I don't know — for sure — who was behind the wheel that night... but I have an inkling. And I'm confident the truth will out.

His demeanor turns even more wistful.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

As for Crimson Stalker... What happened to him in Houston at the hands of my Corvo Alpha that night was an unfortunate mishap. A mishap that could have been avoided if Masked Violator #1 hadn't "muddied the waters", so to speak. Corvo Alpha can't be held responsible for that. Nor, I think you'll find, will he be. My limited understanding is that the Kabal has moved on from the Reeves family. And... perhaps... that's what you saw that night. Perhaps.

Eyes sweeping the room again, Nigel adjust the microphone placement.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

If there are no further questions...

Nigel finds young Craig Hamburgers in the room, who is clearly far too petrified and scared to ask anything. He winks, leading little Craig to almost melt into his fathers side.

Lord Nigel Trickelbush:

...then I will take my leave of you.

When he stands, Trickelbush performs an absurd cartoonish bow (made even more ridiculous from the splattered red paint all over his suit) and glides out of the room.

Count Novick

The lights flicker for a moment in the press room, causing a mumr to rise up amongst the pool. Suddenly, a red smoke bomb goes off at the front table... although it's not much of a smoke bomb, as we can clearly see Count Novick scurry from behind the MAXDEF backdrop and strike a pose. The smoke "clears" and we unfurls his cape dramatically.

Count Novick:

I AM HERE!!!

Not much of a reaction. Instead of taking a seat like a normal person, Novick leaps up onto the table, striking a predatory pose and baring his fangs. He remains in that position for a moment, scanning the press who are unsure of how to proceed. Finally, when the silence has gotten too awkward, SuperDEFFan64 stands up.

SuperDEFFan64:

No, no, no, no, no! They told me there'd be no vampires! I can't do this! I'm too handsome to die....

AAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHH!

And everyone watches the portly wrestling fan flee in terror.

SuperDEFFan64: *[echoing down the hall]*

He can't get me outside! I... no! Not again! NATURAL LIIIIIGHT!

Novick grins.

Count Novick:

That is RIGHT! RUN, FOOLISH MORTAL! COWER IN TERROR AT THE DASTARDLY COUNT NOVICK!! AH! HA! HAAAA!

His smile fades. Suddenly, all business.

Count Novick:

Next question, please.

Hudson Hammerlock's hand shoots into the air.

Hudson Hammerlock:

Hudson Hammerlock, The Iron Claw Independent... since you can't eat garlic, what do you put on your pizza? If it's pineapple, do you feel like less of a man for it? Because you should.

Novick raises a single eyebrow. He sighs. Slumps his shoulders and breaks his "scary" pose. He sits on the edge of the table. He shakes his head.

Count Novick:

Creatures of the night don't eat, you fool. Please - at least do a little bit of homework. There are so many books and movies!! BLLLAAHHHH! Next question!

Deb is up.

Deb Warenstein:

Do you regret not biting Conor Fuse's neck before your match with him?

The life comes back into Novick's downtrodden eyes.

Count Novick:

TONIGHT!! Conor Fuse proved himself... a worthy adversary. I chose not to give him the honor of being one of Count Novick's victims... he has earned the right to walk amongst the living. But only...

"Scary" pose.

Count Novick:

FOR NOW!!!! AH! HA! HA!

Craig Hamburgers, please his soul, is next.

Craig Hamburgers:

hi, do you know count chocula? my parents won't get it for me because it has too much sugar thank you.

For just a split second, Novick seems annoyed. Then he remembers he is talking to a child. His face softens.

Count Novick:

I'll tell you what, my little batling... if Count Novick ever comes out with a cereal, your mother will allow you to eat it, okay?

Eyebrows raise.

Count Novick:

Cause if she doesn't...

He leaps off the table, striking a pose that makes the press lean backwards - not in fright, but in surprise.

Count Novick:

I VILL SUCK HER... BLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAADD DDDDD!!!

As Novick poses, a voice cries out from the back...

"Detective" Chris Chickentenders:

Uuhhhhh do vampires know how to drive cars?

Novick looks to Mr. Chickentenders. A quick flash of concern. Then...

Count Novick:

NO MORE QUESTIONS!!

Novick throws down a red smoke "bomb" that barely produces anything as he rushes out of the room.

Dex Joy

Dex Joy is hunched over a table after a quick shower and a brief trip to the doctor's office to tape up his left arm following one of the most grueling and physical matches of his career. He is wearing a special black and gold "MAXDEX" shirt made for tonight's show. Get them now while supplies last!

Ryan Scott:

Dex I have to say young man, you have been on a tear since appearing in DEFIANCE. You have conquered some pretty tough opponents in your two years. Is this finally over between you and Burns? Do we see yourself in the Main Event next time DEFIANCE hits pay per view again?

Dex Joy:

Rye Bread, Dexy Baby here is going to level with you ... I am a patient man. As happy as I was with my run with the Southern Heritage title and the Favoured Saints titles, I've been busting my ass off in the last 365 to rise above that! I shed some of these old el-bees to get into better fighting shape so I can keep climbing to the top of old Mt. DEFIANCE and not suck in wind. Mr. Holier Than Thou Oscar Burns can tell me that I'm a special attraction and use it derisively, but I *am* a special attraction cause there ain't *nobody* like Dexy Baby! I showed tonight I can go the distance and if the rumors of an upcoming tournament are true ... you are looking smack dab at the odds on favorite to be on the PPV main event!

Hudson Hammerlock:

Hudson Hammerlock, The Tilt-A-Whirl Times... after beating one of the greatest professional wrestlers in DEFIANCE, past or present, in such a prolific contest, do you think you should get the next shot at the FIST?

Dex Joy:

Pally, I gotta say my name has to now always be in that conversation! You saw what Dexy Baby can do two out of three falls! And last I checked my records, that Holy Roller, Deacon and I are one and one! We owe the DEFIANCE Wrestling Faithful a tiebreaker sometime soon! If the bigwigs at Favoured Saints are hearing this ... hook some fans up and let's make it happen!

Tim Tillinghast:

Can you just share what it felt like to hear that bell and realize that you shut all the doubters up?

Dex grins ear to ear.

Dex Joy:

Timmay, Timmay, TIMMAY! Great question! It felt ... AH-mazing! Shutting up Oscar Burns not once but *twice* that there's a *brand spanking new* top dog walking the block! I literally made my debut in DEFIANCE Wrestling walking

into this locker room with a pair of pecker heads named Shooter Landell and Gunther Adler. Landell's now in a gutter and Adler's back in BRAZEN cause his in-ring work don't cut the mustard I guess. Cream rises to the top, Tillinghast, and I'm proof there's nobody in DEFIANCE that's sweeter than old Dexy Baby right now! Thank you! Who's up next?

"Detective" Chris Chickentenders

Uh, yeah, I didn't have a question, but just wanted to let you know that I'm removing you from my list of suspects, cause dude, I think you're too fat to fit behind the wheel.

He squints at the young man in the audience.

Dex Joy:

Wow ... uh they still letting minors in here? That last meeting wasn't a one-off? Gotta watch the old language, I don't want the FCC up DEFIANCE's fourth best keister.

Deb Warenstein:

I don't have a question either but you should prove this idiot [*points to Chickentenders*] wrong and maybe hit him with your car for being annoying. Nobody would blame you tbh.

Dex Joy:

Nope I'm not touching comments about harming underage children in any way. I can fit in a car just fine these days ... long as I can move those seats all the way way way back!

SuperDEFFan64:

Hello, Dex! SuperDEFFan64! Big fan of a fellow husky type! First, reports of me running away from a vampire... (shudders) have been greatly exaggerated! Second, when you eventually become the FIST, remember a fellow husky and can you autograph my Dex Joy Wrecking Ball hoodie so that way I can shove it in SuperDEFFan5's scrawny-ass twelve-year-old FACE?!

Dex Joy:

Seriously, boys, is this a rib? Are Chance the Rapper or Ashton Kutcher gonna come out of a side door at any second? I'm in a good mood Super DEF Fan 64 so I will autograph your hoodie, but for the love of pete, please don't be shoving anything anywhere with my name on it in someone's orifices and you got yourself a deal, Big Pally. Any more questions?

Craig Hamburgers:

hi dex what is your secret to being SO BIG AND AWESOME I WANT TO BE BIG LIKE YOU AND BEAT UP OSCARBURNS!! ...thank you.

Dex Joy:

Ahh, Craig! You're always one of the good ones!

Dex waves for a pen and a staff member provides him one. He starts signing a piece of blank paper and then smiles. He walks off the stage and then hands the autograph to Craig Hamburgers.

Dex Joy:

That's cause you're a good kid who deserves this and you were also happy with me opening a tall, frosty can of whoop ... uh whoop tooshie on Oscar Burns. Anyway my secret is this, young pally. Start full! End empty! Run that gas tank all you can! Pedal to the medal! Don't let anyone or anything get in the way of your dreams. You want something? You put in that work and you'll get what you want!

Craig Hamburgers:

Thanks Dex!

Dex throws up his right fist in the air and fist bumps Craig.

Dex Joy:

Thank you for the questions everyone! Now Dexy Baby's gonna put this arm on ice so can I throw it up in the air with righty here. Good night!

Ophelia Sykes

With very little fanfare, Ophelia Sykes (still dressed in her ring attire and sweating from her role in the main event moments ago), enters the room. She walks by the press without looking at any of them and takes a seat in front of one of the microphones.

Ophelia Sykes:

Hello. I'm here to answer questions on behalf of The Saturday Night Specials. As you can imagine, it's been a rough night, so I'd like to make this quick if possible.

The press all stand, but Sykes points to everyone's favorite internet wrestling pundit.

Tim Tillinghast:

I know it's only been minutes since it happened, but how are The Saturday Night Specials taking the shocking betrayal of Siobhan Cassidy? Or rather - how do you think they're going to respond to it?

Sykes snarls and her eyes turn dark.

Ophelia Sykes:

That little bitch is... can I say that? You know what, I don't care. That little bitch is going to pay for what she did tonight. I don't know why she did it and I don't care. Tonight, not only did The Saturday Night Specials lose their tag team championship, but they got a knife in the back from their girlfriend and sister. I can't speak to how they're going to respond, Tim. I just know it isn't going to be pretty.

Another flurry. Sykes points to Hammerlock.

Hudson Hammerlock:

Hudson Hammerlock, the Tombstone Tribune... where do the Saturday Night Specials go from here? They're the longest reigning tag team champions in DEFIANCE history by holding them for almost a whole bloody year— do they regroup and chase after The Lucky Sevens or do you start from the bottom? Or, perhaps, is it time for Brock and Pat to go their separate ways? Which brings up *another* question: which one of you is destined to fade into obscurity and which one will eventually become the FIST (and FACE) of DEFIANCE?

Ophelia Sykes:

The Saturday Night Specials aren't going anywhere, Hudson. If I know those guys, one setback is not going to be enough for them to throw in the towel. Fact is, they appeared to have The Lucky Sevens dead-to-rights when Siobhan got involved, and they won't rest until they're in the ring with The Sevens again and can get their belts back. Bank on it, bitch. And your final question? I'm not taking that. That's bait.

She calls on Hamburgers with a smile.

Craig Hamburgers:

.....do you guys want a hug?

Ophelia's smile widens.

Ophelia Sykes:

I can't speak for the guys, Craig, but I'm game for a hug.

Sykes gets up and walks over to Hamburgers, putting her arms out for a hug. They have a tender moment that he'll likely remember fondly in a few years. Back to the table.

SuperDEFFan64:

Hello, Ophelia! SuperDEFFan64! Tough loss by The Saturday Night Specials tonight! My question... if you know where The Lucky Sevens have gone with the titles... ask them how much crypto they are willing to part with their titles? I got Bitcoin, Ethereum, Dogecoin and this one thing... Mikey Money? Tell them name their PRICE?

Ophelia Sykes:

You think I have any contact with those useless sacks of... okay I'm told I need to stop swearing. You want to talk to them, find them yourself. Hopefully they'll be in the bottom of a ditch somewhere soon. Next.

Deb Warenstein:

Hello uggo. *[looks at Ophelia with disgust]* How does it feel knowing that everything that happened with the Tall Uggos and my Baes is still all your fault since you were at the heart of the conflict in the first place? Also, did you get that outfit from the dumpster because it stinks.

Ophelia Sykes stands. Fury in her face.

Ophelia Sykes:

Listen, you little piece of desperate trash... you stay away from me and you stay away from Pat. Go back to filling out surveys in teen magazines or whatever you dumb kids do these days before I...

Warnstein rolls her eyes as a DEF stagehand approaches Sykes and says something to her about threatening the press. She throws her hands up.

Ophelia Sykes:

FINE! I'm out of here. Screw you and your stupid rules.

The press begin to fire off closing questions as she stomps by them and out the door. Right before she goes, Chris Chickentenders stands in her path...

"Detective" Chris Chickentenders:

Yeah, uhh, is it possible that either Pat Newbludd or Brock Cassidy were intoxicated when they left the arena on the night of May 18th, and is it possible that one of them got behind the wheel of a Dodge Charger?

...and Ophelia shoves him rudely aside, exiting the room.

NO APOLOGY TOUR

Forrest County Multipurpose Center

Hattiesburg, Mississippi

After DEFTv 171

The show is over, the fans have filed out of the building, and the last of the DEFIANTS walk through the halls on their way to find either late-night fun in the college town or head to their beds to sleep off the fatigue from competition.

The two members of Vae Victis walk side-by-side in silence toward the exit. They may have won their matches tonight - two, in Henry's case - and had an unexpected encounter with Rezin, but there's an air of solemnity between them.

"You did what you had to do," Lindsay says, looking over at Henry, "even though I know it brought you no joy."

Henry looks tired - physically, but especially emotionally. He didn't expect he would ever fight Leyenda de Ocho, especially with such personal stakes. In the end, Keyes made a choice - one he knows he can never take back.

"I've had a lot of joy for a lot of years, Miss Troy. It nearly broke me. This isn't about joy, not anymore."

They stop when they see someone standing in the way to the door leading out of the building.

Kerry Kuroyama is there, waiting on the two of them. "You guys got a minute to rap?"

Lindsay adjusts the bag on her shoulder and throws the Pacific Blitzkrieg a small, intrigued smile. "What's on your mind, Ker-Bear?"

Kerry rubs his palms, making his pitch with the kind of care and deferential tone that would suggest he's been preparing for this moment for some time.

"You guys have a message that's put off in the locker room," he begins. "But not me. I relate to that message. I respect it."

"Well thank GOODNESS," Henry begins. "I know I for one have been on the edge of my seat, waiting to hear what Kerry Kuroyama thinks about Vae Victis. Uncle Timmy's going to FLIP. Now, if you'll excuse us..."

Troy and Keyes mosey on by, but when Henry's hand reaches the door, they find that the Pacific Blitzkrieg isn't quite finished.

"I want to know what I have to do to be a part of it," says the Pacific Blitzkrieg. "You can move forward without Dan, but you can't deny that he left behind a void. So let me fill it."

Both Vae Victis members turn back to Kuroyama. Henry scrutinizes Kerry, the gears in his head turning. The smile on Lindsay's face grows larger and more wicked.

"You ready to shed your good guy armor and start taking no prisoners, Kerry?" she asks. "We're on a No Apology Tour here. Either people get good with what we're doing or they get run over."

The Pacific Blitzkrieg shakes his head. "I don't believe in the 'good guy/bad guy' shtick. People are either here to wrestle, or they're here to fuck around. I feel I've been pretty clear on that outlook ever since I came back."

A smirk now. "No hard feelings over the broken fingers?"

Kerry holds up his hands, wiggling his fingers around. The damage done to them by Troy personally in their last in-ring encounter is a distant memory by this point.

"Fingers heal," he says. "So do feelings."

Kuroyama looks up from his hand into the two remaining members of Vae Victis. There's an intensity in his eyes as his gaze switches between the Queen and the Kraken. One that suggests he's not fucking around.

"But this company's broken image?" he says, and shakes his head. "That doesn't heal on its own. DEFIANCE needs life-saving surgery, and whether it's with you or against you, nothing will stop me from fixing that image. So, what's it going to be?"

The Queen looks over to the Kraken. "I'm sold. What about you?"

The gears in Henry's mind seem to click together in a manner that pleases him. He looks hard into Kerry's eyes, and his gaze is met with an equal conviction. Keyes flashes a grin nearly as malevolent as Troy's.

"Get in, loser," Keyes says at last. "We're going headhunting."

BUTCHER VICTORIOUS vs. SHO NAKAZAWA

DDK:

Welcome to our special post-MAXDEF edition of UNCUT! We have action between the Japanese high flyer Sho Nakazawa against none other than... oh, boy... Butcher Victorious!

Lance:

Sho Nakazawa looking for another singles win after he defeated BRAZEN's Tripp Wise. Butcher looking to start anew! We'll head to the action right now!

The camera fixes on Darren Quimbey.

Darren Quimbey:

The following singles match is set for one fall! Introducing first, from Tateyama, Japan, weighing in at 185 pounds...

SHO NAKAZAWA!

♪ "Pyrotechnics" by Cliff Lin ♪

Sho Nakazawa, the masked man from the land of the rising sun, walks through the curtain to a subdued but audible round of cheers from the DEFIANCE Faithful who, despite his less than win/loss record, still knows what he can do in the squared circle. Nakazawa pauses to give the fans a quick bow of respect before sprinting toward the ring! Once he slides into the ring, he pushes up to his feet and jumps to a nearby turnbuckle. He waits for his opponent to arrive.

♪ "Popsong Singalong" by Flyscreen ♪

Lance:

Like it or not, this man is one of them!

Much of the crowd groans as Butcher Victorious comes bounding through the curtain, with a smattering of vocal support sprinkled throughout the Watsco Center. Huge shit eating grin spread across his face, Vic is pointlessly jawing and gesticulating at the camera the whole way down the aisle... and sadly...

Yes.

Mic in hand.

Butcher Victorious:

Say it with me, boners! BUTCH VIC...

He holds the mic out and gets maybe a few people to say "HAS THE STICK" but it's so quiet, he finishes anyway.

Butcher Victorious:

...HAS THE STICK!

Butcher starts a slow walk to the ring.

Butcher Victorious:

And if it isn't DEFIANCE's favorite try-hard, Sho Nakazawa. You been here, like, what? A few years now? How many matches have YOU won, boner?

Lance:

Pot. Kettle. Black. I mean, Butcher has scored some wins, but lately?

Butcher Victorious:

I've been here a couple years, too, and I'm dedicating this match to a special someone that I'm going to take a lesson from and make sure you put some respect on my name! CAUSE I AM BUTCH VIC...

But when BUTCH VIC approaches the ring, he gets KNOCKED out by a suicide dive from young Sho! The crowd pops when he knocks the mic out of Butcher's hand and then tosses him back inside. When Sho gets in, Carla Ferrari checks on Butcher to ask if he wants to continue. He punches the air and then flops over.

Butcher Victorious:

Just ring the bell. You're not a very good official.

Carla rolls her eyes, then calls for the bell.

DING DING

Butcher gets up and swings as Li'l Nak comes running by, only to miss a wild clothesline. Sho is quicker on the draw and then flies around The Liberal City Landlord's head before taking him down with a flying headscissors that sends him spilling out of the ring. The crowd cheers when Sho Nakazawa starts to play to them and before Butcher knows it, he leaps over the ropes to land on the apron...

DDK:

Hot start to this match! Sho Nakazawa wipes him out with a big asai moonsault out to the floor!

Lance:

Sho Nakazawa is always so full of heart and some good aerial moves if the situation calls for it!

When Li'l Nak gets back up after the asai moonsault, he tosses Butcher back into the ring a second time and then goes for a quick cover.

ONE... TWO...

But Butcher kicks out!

DDK:

Kickout by Sho! We rag on Butcher, but this would be a nice win for Sho. Butcher has admittedly seen more success and exposure in the last year than he.

Lance:

That is true. He has some fans, which I can't quite figure why... but still.

Butcher gets back up from the move, but Li'l Nak stays on him with a series of alternating kicks to his legs, followed by a big leaping back kick! Victorious gets knocked back into the corner and allows Sho to gesture out to the crowd that business is about to pick up.

DDK:

Sho now taking the fight to Butcher here, but he's gonna have to start focusing solely on him and not the crowd.

Nakazawa measures up Butcher, then charges at the corner for perhaps another kick... but before he can do anything, Butcher surprises him by catching him with a big spin kick of his own first! The blow rocks Li'l Nak back and sends him scrambling out of the corner.

Lance:

Like you said, just for reasons like that!

With Nakazawa effectively out on his feet, Victorious charges off the ropes and then CLOBBERS him with a big running clothesline! He keeps running into the ropes, then Butcher looks out like an idiot... he grins and does a moonwalk backwards before leaping up and hitting a jumping elbow drop into Sho's chest! He convulses after the impact, then Butch Vic.... starts to kip! He kips up to his feet and then does a shimmy for the jeering crowd.

DDK:

We talked about focus from Sho... but if only Butcher were focused more, he could probably do something. He has talent. He's been through a few tours of Mexico and has a rather... unique... take on lucha libre.

Lance:

Direction is what he needs, truly.

Butcher has Sho down, but when he tries to get up, Sho throws a kick. Butch Vic... blocks the kick! He grabs the leg and then throws said leg! Carla catches the leg out of instinct and that allows Butcher to hit a jumping neckbreaker to take him down to the mat!

DDK:

That was unique on Butcher's part! Cover!

After the jumping neckbreaker, Butcher hooks the leg.

ONE... TWO... NO!

He kicks out, but Butcher kneels over Nakazawa and pounds away with right hands. Carla Ferrari warns him to stop and he breaks off after a four-count.

Butcher Victorious:

I won't do it again!

Then he goes right back to punching Sho across the head multiple times! Li'l Nak gets done blocking the punches with his face, allowing Butcher to pick him up and then choke him in the corner while standing on his boot and throat!

DDK:

Butcher showing some aggression tonight! Maybe he does want to get noticed!

He rolls off the ropes, then comes back with a cannonball to Sho's back!

Lance:

Landslide Victory! Butcher makes the cover!

ONE... TWO... NO!

Sho kicks out again, much to Butcher's dismay. The Texan native gets up then takes Sho with him. He grabs him by the neck for another neckbreaker...

DDK:

No! Sho escapes!

He spins around and then pushes Butcher into the ropes before rolling backwards with an O'Connor roll!

ONE... TWO...

But Butcher shifts his weight forward so he's into a cover!

ONE... TWO...

No! The crowd watches as Sho kicks out and takes the momentum back his way!

ONE... TWO...

DDK:

Back and forth! Butcher has his arms! Feet on his shoulders!

Lance:

Wait a minute...

Then Butcher applies a European Clutch pin!

Lance:

I know that move!

ONE... TWO... THREE!

DING DING DING

♪ "Popsong Singalong" by Flyscreen ♪

Butcher pulls off the move and rolls out of the ring before he heads to the outside!

Darren Quimbey:

Here is your winner... **BUTCHER VICTORIOUS!**

DDK:

That's a European Clutch! We know who uses that move... **OSCAR BURNS!**

Lance:

He calls it the Fruit Roll-up! He's beaten other FISTs with that move. Lindsay Troy and Mikey Unlikely... and Butcher just used it?

Butcher rolls out of the ring and then talks to the camera.

Butcher Victorious:

You see that? You see that? Butcher wins! Butcher wins! **BUTCH VIC... IS THE MEASURING STICK!**

Lance:

You won one match, buddy, slow your roll.

Butcher heads up the ramp to the jeering of the fans as he disappears up the ramp!

DDK:

I don't know if Butcher should be using moves that don't belong to him, considering the mood we have seen Oscar Burns in these days. Moving on, however, we'll take a look at some more exclusive footage including some footage received earlier this week by... ugh, the new Unified Tag Team Champions, The Lucky Sevens.

MV1 & ONLY

Miami, Florida

MAXDEF 2022 - Night 1

Backstage, late show

The camera finds a man who perhaps wasn't looking to be found. Tucked between two large, bulky equipment cases, seated on an overturned milk crate, rests an exhausted, beaten, defeated & deflated masked man.

Red mask stretched from his match and loose on his head, he absently tugs it into place, eyes cast down at the ground deep in thought. Body still glazed in a sweaty sheen, his red singlet-top pulled down around his waist, the camera comes to a rest down at his boots, looking back up at him. Midsection wrapped in bandages, he leans back against the concrete wall with a slow sigh before clearing his throat.

MV1:

A promise can be a fragile thing. You've gotta hold on tight.

He clenches his right fist.

MV1:

Made with the best of intentions... you put all you have into it. But I guess... it's not always up to *just* you, is it?

His sad blue eyes are caught by something beyond the camera; someone walking past, perhaps. He trails them for a moment before returning his eyes to his boots.

MV1:

I let a lot of people down tonight and I have a long list of regrets I can't put a name to. Few years back, I made a promise to a little girl... that I'd someday bring her old man home. I even brought her here tonight, like a darn fool, thinking I could make the impossible possible. Thinking, hoping, praying tonight would be the night I could set things right. I... probably broke her heart *again* tonight.

His eyes find the camera now.

MV1:

I made a promise. But... some things aren't meant to be. That's a lesson I guess she and I *both* learned tonight.

With a wince, he rolls his right shoulder, bracing it and massaging it with his free left hand as he does so.

MV1:

Learned it the hardest of ways. Time has to be on your side. And this, clearly, was not the time.

A strange realization strikes him and, unfiltered, out it comes.

MV1:

Sometimes... you can hold on *too* tight.

Adjusting the mask once more, he leans forward, resting his left elbow on a knee but careful to protect his right.

MV1:

I made *another* promise going into tonight. I promised that if I couldn't do what I set out to do on this night... if I couldn't set it all right, couldn't bring that little girl's daddy home... that I'd walk away, that I'd forget I'd ever heard the name "Lord Trickelbush", that I'd let my best friend go for good, to be... whatever it is that he's been twisted into. I *promised* that.

Sitting with those words a moment, he is momentarily elsewhere... permanently crestfallen.

MV1:

A promise can be a fragile thing. You've got to hold on tight. Both hands. And not let go. Time... has to be on your side.

With a grunt, he rises to his feet. The camera clumsily rises with him, seemingly taken off guard by his abrupt movement.

MV1:

So. I'm going to hold on. For as long as I can. Not too tight... but for dear life.

Another pensive moment.

MV1:

I'm a man of my word. And... the right time will come.

Fade out.

WHAT'S NEXT?

MAXDEF Night One Exclusive Moments after Dex Joy/Oscar Burns Match

Limping backstage, disappointed and angry... is one Oscar Burns. The Unified Tag Team Titles main event is well underway and can be heard in the back, but right now, his only focus is trying to get back to his tapes.

He had a gameplan.

He executed it flawlessly.

He even had a tapout win over Dex Joy, one that very few people can say they have in DEFIANCE... but he lost?

How?

A million questions race through his head as he limps quietly, as far away from anyone as he wants to possibly be.

He IS this promotion. He IS everything it stands for. That red fist might as well be his. He carried this company on his fucking back. Before that fucker Mikey Unlikely and his stupid friends came in and ruined everything. Before Lindsay Troy came back for the FIST. Before newer stars like Dex Joy, Conor Fuse, The Saturday Night Specials, Ned Reform, Deacon, Rezin, countless others came in... that was all wanting a piece of his success. Guys like Dan Ryan came and went and paid the bills to keep the place open, but he was a deadbeat dad, far as Oscar was concerned. Oscar took care of EVERYTHING and kept the lights on and kept business moving. None of what DEFIANCE has in the last five years... it's all his work on top.

At least... that's all he's thinking.

Now? People are going to question him. If he has "what it takes". Can he still be the man? No, because he doesn't need to be the man. He was... no, no. He IS DEFI...

"HEY! HEY! YO! OSCAR!"

Burns stops in his tracks and swivels his head behind him.

There standing with a bad haircut, toothy grin and tattoos.

Butcher Victorious.

Butcher Victorious:

BUTCH VIC... THINKS YOUR MATCH WAS SICK! And that you should have won, Dex totally cheated cause he's on the gas or something.

Oscar doesn't say anything other than looking at Butcher like he has a turd hanging out of his mouth.

Butcher Victorious:

You see my match earlier on the pre-show? I beat Sho SUCKazawa with the Fruit Roll-up, bro! Been studying your work since that assbat, Masked Violator 1, totally took my small package pin here.

Burns couldn't possibly spare a shit, let alone give one, but he lets Butcher drone on.

Butcher Victorious:

...Dude, did you know backstage, these guys call me Mr. Small Package? That's cause I mastered it! I even called it A Winner Is ME! Isn't that dope?

He sighs... and continues limping right past Butcher... and doesn't notice that Oscar has left.

Butcher Victorious:

So, Burnsie, I guess that's me trying to say that I want to be like you. You've been like... THE GUY BROTHER for a long time and that's where like, Butch Vic wants to be! BUTCH VIC... STILL ON TOP! Wait, that sounds like shit, that don't even rhyme... anyway, I...

Butcher continues droning on as the show moves on.

RED FILE

The mood is solemn. You could cut the tension with a knife. ALEX P. rigorously shuffles through papers attached to his clipboard in an effort to find out where his calculations went wrong. MEE6 cries in the corner because he cannot control his emotions. Game Boy is stoic, like he just witnessed the most devastating loss in pro sports history. Percy Collins is, well, Percy tries to console the one and only Snowflake Superstar with a gentle hand to his back.

Percy Collins:

There there, Mal. You tried your absolute best out there and you came up short, which I know it sucks, I know it stings but guess what? You have to get right back on that horse and ride, ride again!

All Malak can do is sob. He can't show his face right now because he's ugly crying. Percy darts his head up and locks eyes with Thurston Hunter who sits there, sharpening a wooden stick with a switchblade.

Thurston Hunter:

I tell ya, I am going to street fight that Deacon loser into bruise town oblivion!

Percy wags a finger as Thurston comes dangerously close to cutting himself with the blade in his hands.

Percy Collins:

Now now, Thurston, there's no need to threaten violence. It's not the place or time for that. Now is the time for rest, relaxation, recovery and most importantly, hEaLiNg. So, before you cut your thumb off, kindly put that switchblade away and fetch Mal a pail of water, will ya?

Thurston doesn't enjoy being talked down to, so he hesitates for a moment before stowing the weapon, tossing the piece of wood aside and rising from his seat.

Thurston Hunter:

Who died and made you boss all of a sudden, anyways? Technically you're the newest member of the Comments Section so why do you get to sit there and rub Mal's back why I do all the bitchy grunt work? I want a turn on those scapulas.

It was as if Thurston spoke properly and strongly for the first time in his life. It didn't last long, though, because he decides to keep talking.

Thurston Hunter:

Ah heck, let me get the King some water. Maybe there's a soul or two out in that hallway that needs to get street fought. Who knows.

The Bruiser Cruiser slides out into the hall. He notices plenty of busy DEFIANCE personnel bustling about, tearing sets down and moving heavy equipment crates. The show is over, after all. Thurston eyes a watercooler not too far from his location. As he makes his way there, his fingers get restless so he naturally whips out his blade and begins playing with it while walking.

Thurston Hunter:

Stupid Percy telling everyone what to do. I wish I flunked out of the sports psychology program at community college so I could give Mal sound life advice too. Whoops, s'cuse me.

Hunter passes by a few people, narrowly slashing them with his serrated edge. He notices just how close he came to accidentally stabbing some folks.

Thurston Hunter:

Well, it's really their fault if they walk into my blade. I am just a dangerous badass on a mission to fetch some water for my master. People should notice this.

Finally at the watercooler, Thurston notices the solitary option of paper cups from the dispenser.

Thurston Hunter:

Hmmmm, that won't do. No one likes to drink soggy water from a paper cup. Especially my environmentally conscious master in Malak. Heck, he's kept the same paper title belt for a long time now and has no plans on recycling it anytime soon. That man is a saint. He deserves the best, freshest water this country can offer and it is my duty to provide that to him.

From that thought, Hunter puts his head on a swivel for a more conducive mechanism to pour water into. Luckily, there is still one last concession stand open on the concourse, not too far from him. It is quite populated though, with the likes of Gunther Adler, Kyle Shields, and Shawn Steele congregating nearby amongst fans.

Thurston Hunter:

I will go get a cup from the food artist working at that station.

His feet can't move fast enough as he blazes by Adler, accidentally scraping his huge bicep with the knife. Hunter doesn't notice what he's done as he cuts the line and bellies up to the concession stand. A nasally teenager behind the counter turns to aid Thurston.

Concession Worker:

Hi there, how may I be of assistance to you this fine evening?

For some reason, Thurston eyes the menu like an entranced monkey.

Thurston Hunter:

Water. I am looking to fetch some water from the watercooler for my captain and life guide. I arrived at the watercooler, yet all they had were silly paper cups and let's face it, no one wants to use those. Unacceptable in my mind. I am looking for a cup. Do you have any?

The teenager's eyes lazily shift over to the stack of commemorative cups sitting beside the fountain drink station.

Concession Worker:

Well, unfortunately due to how late it is, the only cups we have are these huge MAXDEF collector edition cups. Turns out they didn't sell as well as we thought cuz it has that Malak guy on them and no one likes him.

Thurston looks at the cup. It's quite a nicely decorated cup, all things considered. It has artwork of Deacon versus Malak for the FIST of DEFIANCE on it but it still doesn't click with Thurston that maybe getting THAT cup is kind of a bad idea.

Thurston Hunter:

You have no other smaller cups? I don't think my master needs THAT much water. Although he doesn't have to drink it all, I really want to knock this out of the park, you know? I need to provide him with the right amount of fluids for proper hydration. I need to hit it bang on.

The teenager just slouches there, listening to Thurston debate while the crowd around the counter slowly gets larger because it's late and people are hungry.

Concession Worker:

Look, do you want this cup or not? I have other customers here that demand service.

That strikes a chord with Thurston. Dare you say, Thurston is triggered.

Thurston Hunter:

Service? SERVICE? sEvRiCe!? I DEMAND YOU PROVIDE HAND CRAFTED CARE AND SERVICE TO ME, YOU SHRIMP DINK PUNK! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE!

SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE!
SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE!
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SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE! SERVICE!
SERVICE! SERVICE! I WANT IT! I NEED IT! I REQUIRE IT!

Thurston begins slamming his fists on the counter, completely losing his mind. By this time, he doesn't notice Gunther Adler towering over him. Adler, naturally pissed off, rubs the red mark on his arm left from Thurston's switchblade which continues to flail about.

Gunther Adler:

Stop.

The deep, monotone sound of Adler's German accent immediately puts a halt to everything. Hunter stops smashing and the teenager stares up in fright. The crowd around the stand slightly disperses in fear of a fight breaking out. Some stay because they thirst to see Hunter's teeth get knocked down his throat. Some people shout about how Thurston cut in line, while others ready the video function on their phones. The Bruiser Cruiser doesn't even bother turning until Gunther reaches over and plucks the blade from Hunter's tiny palm. Adler holds it high.

Gunther Adler:

Is this yours? It braised my arm when you carelessly walked by back there.

Hunter turns and stares his maker in the eyes. He swallows hard.

Thurston Hunter:

That's not my blade. I found it on the ground when I got to the counter. You know, we're in Miami after all. We can't trust any of these gangster thugs around here. Bringing weapons into pro wrestling events? Haha, for shame. Besides, I don't need to carry a weapon. I got these.

Thurston unwisely holds up his fists like he's ready for one of his patented street fights. This entire mess started simply because Thurston was to fetch some water and wow, okay, now look at the predicament he is in. He's going to need more than a sports psychologist on speed dial if this keeps up. All Adler does is glare down at pasty little Thurston.

Gunther Adler:

Zu einfach.

Hunter has no clue what the big man said.

Thurston Hunter:

I got my world famous arm cannons right here. Go on, make a move and make my day. I will cover you in tiny bruises!

However, before Adler can throw a punch, Kyle Shields puts a hand on Adler's shoulder, stopping him in his tracks.

Kyle Shields:

Easy big guy. Don't want to hurt anyone now, do we? Especially MUCH smaller people. Bad look, bro.

It's clear Kyle is flipping high as a kite as his eyes have yellowing to them. Adler oddly settles before clenching his jaw and cracking his knuckles. Thurston turns back to the teenager.

Thurston Hunter:

After long deliberation, I will take one commemorative cup please.

The teenager's hands shake as he grabs a cup and gives it to Thurston who speeds off back to the watercooler.

Concession Worker:

Hey! That's not free! The cup is five dollars! Come back here and pay!

Shawn Steele steps up to the counter and throws down a five dollar bill.

Gunther Adler:

Why did you do that?

Steele smirks just like Kyle is.

Shawn Steele:

Vested interest. You'll see.

Shields ends up uncontrollably laughing, partially because he's so high but also because he too might have a hidden agenda at play. It all doesn't sit well with Adler, who angrily wanders off. Meanwhile, Thurston arrives back at the watercooler. He is quick to fill the cup up with cold water before sprinting back to the locker room.

Thurston Hunter:

Hey y'all, sorry I was gone for so long! It's a jungle out there and I came back as fast as possible! Almost had to street fight someone and cover them in tiny bruises but you know, I survived.

The mood in the room has certainly changed despite everyone being in the exact same places when Thurston left. Hunter stands there, dead in his tracks. He looks towards Malak who is sitting on his own, without hand support but with a devilishly evil grin broken across his face. There's redness from under his eyes too.

Malak Garland:

Where were you? I need everyone to be here right now because I need all the moral support in the world. No one is allowed to just get up and leave of their own volition, understand? You will be reprimanded for this by Game Boy in the torture corner later and this time it won't be enjoyable. Now, sit down and shut up!

Thurston doesn't budge an inch. Instead, he extends his arm forward and offers his master the cup of water in his trembling hand.

Thurston Hunter:

Sir, sire, master, with all due respect, I never left of my own volition. Percy, he-

Malak raises his arm and at that very moment, Thurston's lips finally come to a close. He knows he is not permitted to speak for the rest of the day or else he risks receiving even more tiny bruises on his backside that have been promised. Malak isn't even looking at Hunter. No, instead, his gaze is burning a hole through the commemorative cup. Wow okay, seeing that cuts deep. He moves in closer for a better look.

Malak Garland:

Deacon versus Malak Garland, MAXDEF 2022. A collectors cup? Are you EXPLETIVE kidding me!? ARE YOU!?

Thurston is even more scared of Malak than he is Gunther, as his master lunges forward, knocks the cup out of his hand, sending water everywhere. Hunter watches as Garland grabs him by the collar, shaking him wildly.

Malak Garland:

HOW DARE YOU BRING THAT PIECE OF VAGRANCY INTO MY SAFE SPACE!? HOW DARE YOU! I DON'T NEED THAT AROUND HERE AS A REMINDER OF MY FAILURE! YOU'RE LUCKY I DON'T CUT YOUR HEAD OFF AND FEED YOU TO THE SWAMPS!

It gets to the point where Thurston Hunter is on the verge of suffering shaken baby syndrome even though he's technically a fully grown man by virtue of his age but Malak does not stop. Only once Garland sees Thurston's eyes sickly roll back in his head, does The Mega Troll violently shove his followers limp body to the floor.

Malak Garland:

That's it. I've had enough. Initiate protocol Red File. I'm done fooling around.

Trembling in his own right, Percy Collins retrieves a stack of red matte finished file folders from his belongings. He graciously hands them over to a heavy breathing Source of Envy.

Malak Garland:

I shall address the loss to Deacon with these.

He holds them up.

Malak Garland:

These are RED FILES. From now on, anything I deem unacceptable or repressible will be cataloged and categorized within this intricate file folder system which is all set up to make me feel better about myself.

Garland picks up the commemorative cup and rips off the portion of the label with Deacon on it. He proceeds to place the remnants into a red file folder.

Malak Garland:

Deacon is the first inductee into a RED FILE for needlessly dashing my hopes and dreams at becoming the most woke FIST this side of Curtis Penn.

It takes a second but the entirety of the room, save for an unconscious Thurston Hunter, begins to clap at Malak's coronation.

Malak Garland:

That's not all, either. While we are on the topic of RED FILES, let me do this.

Garland rips off a tiny corner from his Paper belt. He writes the name Tyler Fuse on it before putting it in its own red file folder.

Malak Garland:

Tyler Fuse will also be inducted into a RED FILE. Why? Because I standby what I said on the last UNCUT. Tyler is an animal. He is simply too violent and, therefore, his paper title shot is revoked. Not happening. His name being written on the piece of paper title I just ripped off is as close someone like that lunatic will ever get to actually holding it.

With that, Malak closes the two red files and stows them away in Percy's travel cabinet.

Malak Garland:

I am done now. I feel so much better after compartmentalizing all these traumatic, immersive experiences. When given the time and space to process, I really feel like I am afforded a non-iterative environment to flourish. Now pick up my bags and let's head home, people.

His lackeys do as they are told to do.

Malak Garland:

Someone pick up Thurston too. He still has value to me.

The Keyboard King approaches the door and scratches at his throat.

Malak Garland:

Heck, I sure am parched. How useful would some water be now? Would have been nice to have a drink to quench my thirst, that's for sure.

End scene.

PRIME OPPORTUNITIES

The following video was given prior approval to air on UNCUT

Las Vegas, NV

3993 Howard Hughes Parkway

Monday, 7/18, 12:45pm

Two giant men.

Five giant belts.

This can only mean one thing after Maximum DEFIANCE.

The Lucky Sevens. Max and Mason Luck. Despite not working for DEFIANCE Wrestling, whether you like them or not they are *YOUR* Unified Tag Team Champions! And they march down the street proudly wearing the five belts (three for Mason, two for Max) and they are dressed in gray armani suits. They are dressed to impress someone. Max Luck wears green tinted sunglasses and Mason wearing light blue as they walk down the strip in broad daylight under the hot sun. Mason is filming from his cell phone.

Mason Luck:

DEFIANCE Wrestling! How the hell are you? Let me tell you ... after Max and I got cleared after our match to travel ... we took the first red eye to come back to *our town!*

Max Luck:

VEGAS, BAY BAY!!!

Mason Luck:

We hit up a private penthouse that Tom Morrow rented out for us ... and the last weekend here has been an *endless* stream of champagne, banging food ... and some showgirls!

Max Luck:

And that one girl dude? The one with the cute little mole on her left ... yeah. Best one.

They walk juat a little furthet and then stand right outside an unknown building.

Mason Luck:

All right let's cut the shit. We gotta act professional.

Max Luck:

Yeah you're right.

Max uses his own cell phone next to Mason to check his teeth, hair, fingers, all the usual suspects.

Max Luck:

But hey ... let's talk to the people for a second. Let's thank the guys who made this success all possible.

Mason Luck:

Oh yeah. Good idea.

He takes off his shades to address these oh-so-lucky people.

Mason Luck:

We wanted to send a special message to you ... the Saturday Night Specials. Max and I ... Brock and Pat ... we went through a *war*. We took each other to the brink and back. We destroyed each other with anything we could find and we took the other's best shots ... but at the end of the day in a proper two on two match, no rules ... your best wasn't *good*

enough just like you always knew. You little shits always knew this day would come. You tried to delay it ... run from it ... try and make sure it never happened, but in the end because karma bit you on your asses, it happened because *YOU WANTED IT*. In that fight, you showed your true colors. You hit us with titles, you had Ophelia Sykes try and help you again. Then you had to go and had to try roll-ups too.

Max Luck:

Hate the roll-ups! Fucking *hate* them!

Mason Luck:

You did everything you could to keep us down and keep us away from DEFIANCE Wrestling. It wasn't good enough. Not this time. Not when our last shot at these titles could have meant we were sent out the door for good without our birthright. But now it's ours, the titles are where they belong ...

Max flashes three of the five belts.

Max Luck:

With *US!!!* All because you both failed! Pat, Brock, you failed DEFIANCE Wrestling, you failed the Faithful, you failed your bar ... hell one or both of you *failed* your own sister and your fuck-buddy. Someone pissed her off. We don't give a shit. We have what we want. So thank you, Brock and thank you, Pat. Thank you both for being the gigantic fucking failures we knew you were all along. Everything that happens now is all your fault. Remember that! Cheers, boys!

A small time lapse shows the brothers getting off at the top floor of an elevator roughly five minutes later

Mason Luck smiles back to show the rest of the Unified Tag Titles resting over his own shoulders.

Mason Luck:

DEFIANCE Wrestling ... since you were responsible for fucking us over so bad when we wanted these belts, you're going to suffer just as bad as the Specials did. *We* call the shots. When this airs on UNCUT, we know that Tom Morrow's new list of demands will arrive at Favoured Saints HQ. If you *ever* want to see these titles again ... you'll pony up. Every single thing. Every last dollar and every last provision! There's no wiggle room or negotiation. If there isn't a comma or a zero in the right place or you try and back out of anything we want ... you'll never see these again. You just fired a big wig named Dan Ryan so don't tell us you can't pull that money from somewhere.

Max Luck:

PONY UP!!! MAIN EVENT MONSTERS MAKE MAIN EVENT MONEY!!!

Mason Luck:

And don't forget the other demands we asked for ... but in the meantime we're gonna entertain a few offers and start a bidding war. Let's go, Max.

The two start to walk into an office on the top floor of a building in the strip. Mason pauses the camera to show one word on the door.

PRIME.

GULF COAST CONNECTION vs. THE DUNSON CLAN

DDK:

Welcome back to more action up on UNCUT! Coming up next, wherever they go, the party goes with them! The Gulf Coast Connection takes on BRAZEN stars Richie and Todd Dunson up next!

And to Darren Quimbey we go as the crowd in Miami, Florida at the Watsco Center, pans out from this match filmed for UNCUT during the MAXDEF Pre-show!

Darren Quimbey:

The following tag team match is set for one fall! Up first,.. Being accompanied by The Crescent City Kid! At a combined weight of 529 pounds and hailing from "Everywhere Because They Are Where The Party Is..." Theodore Cain and "Wingman Titus Campbell... **THE GULF! COAST! CONNECTION!**

♪ "The Saints" by Andy Mineo ♪

The trio make their way out from the back to a nice pop from the crowd! Theodore Cain has on a new Gulf Coast Connection Mardi Gras-themed jester hat, along with Crescent City Kid, getting the crowd fired up... however, tonight in Georgia, they are wearing the black and red of the Miami Heat!

DDK:

The Gulf Coast Connection bringing the party to Miami tonight, paying tribute to the Miami Heat with their ring colors!

Titus Campbell brings up the rear and the powerhouse throws a few red and white-themed jester hats out of the bag into the crowd. Once they approach the ring, Theodore Cain gives his own jester hat to a young boy in the front row with her parents before they get to the ring. Campbell and Cain bump fists and get ready for their opponents while the masked CCK continues to wave a bag in the air.

Darren Quimbey:

The following tag team match is set for one fall! Introducing first, already in the ring at a combined weight of 420 pounds... accompanied by Paul Dunson, they are Todd and Richie Dunson... **THE DUNSON CLAN!**

♪ "Turn the Page" by Metallica ♪

After the opening riffs hit, the trio make their way down to the ring and are almost taken aback by the number of people there... regardless, Paul Dunson yells at his two sons not to embarrass him as the West Virginia natives march to the ring. Once they get there, they pose on the ring apron and then head inside. Paul Dunson yells at CCK while the Miami Faithful start to cheer for the action before the big show. Referee Hector Navarro calls for the bell.

DDK:

Here we go!

DING DING

Todd circles up first with the larger Theodore Cain. They continue to do so until he hits a kick to the gut of Cain and then holds in a headlock. The smaller Todd laughs that he has control, but finds himself in a state of shock when Cain picks him up with ease and then THROWS him back into his corner! The Smash Surfer flexes for the crowd and throws up the shaka sign! Todd scurries up and kicks the ropes before he comes back to attack Cain again.

He slugs away at the chest of Cain and then doubles him over before he runs to the ropes. He comes back... but ends up shocked with Theo scoops him on his shoulder with ease and then dumps him down with a quick body slam. He poses and then runs the ropes before throwing up the shaka sign again and then following with an elbow drop!

DDK:

Todd Dunson being taken to task right now! But wait... here comes big Titus Campbell!

The 6'6" and 276 of the Wingman of GCC climbs into the ring. He and Theo whip Todd Dunson into the ropes before they both knock him down with a shoulder takedown. Richie Dunson has seen enough and tries to intervene to help his brother... but before he can, Titus hits a MASSIVE back body drop on Richie!

Lance:

Whoa! Big power on display there by Titus Campbell! The Gulf Coast Connection have looked good as a team in recent outings! I'd say they could possibly make a play for the Unified Tag Team Titles... but...

DDK:

Yeah, we don't even know what's going on there right now. Two men who don't work here hold our titles!

Titus picks up Todd and then deposits him in the middle of the canvas. He poses and then starts to run the ropes. He comes back...

Titus Campbell:

Like a G6!

Then dives and hits the G6 Elbow Drop! Todd gets the wind knocked out of him and flops around the canvas like a fish out of water! On the outside of the ring, Paul Dunson is having a complete conniption!

DDK:

Look at them go! I think Paul Dunson might collapse any second now!

He yells at Richie Dunson to get back in there and save his son, but he's not having any of it. Back inside the ring, Titus makes the tag over to Theodore Cain. Titus drops him Todd near their corner and he starts to stand on his back and pretend to surf!

Lance:

Theodore Cain doing a little riding of the waves here! The Gulf Coast Connection in complete control tonight!

Theodore Cain is a totally not gnarly person so he gets off his back while Todd is in the ropes before the count of five. He grabs Todd Dunson and then measures him up for a shoulder tackle, but when he runs to the ropes, Richie yells at Hector Navarro, allowing Paul Dunson to trip him up without seeing it! Theo collapses to a knee and then when he gets back up, Todd gets his opening.

DDK:

Ouch! Battering ram to Theodore Cain's chest after Paul Dunson tripped him up!

The crowd jeers the interference Paul Dunson! Titus yells over at him, but Hector doesn't see the interference. Todd holds his head after knocking him over, then tags in to Richie Dunson. Dunson climbs into the ring and starts circling around Cain and when he gets up, Richie hits the ropes and knocks him down with a springboard moonsault body block!

Lance:

Nice springboard moonsault to wipe out The Smash Surfer... but he's not done!

Richie Dunson leaps to the middle rope and then comes off with a second springboard moonsault, landing right across Cain's chest! He hooks the leg and yells at Hector Navarro to hurry and make the count.

ONE... TWO... NO!

Cain gets the shoulder up!

DDK:

Great series of moonsaults by Richie Dunson! He's a brawler, but he can take to the skies as well!

When the pinfall fails, Cain tries to get up, but Richie Dunson hits a kick to the gut and then runs him back to the corner of The Dunson Clan. He makes a tag to a ready Todd Dunson and then slingshots out of the corner with a dropkick! Todd runs into the ring and follows that up with a cannonball in the corner!

Lance:

Richie and Todd looking good! Cover by Todd!

ONE... TWO... NO!

Cain kicks out again! Todd tries to apply a rear chinlock quickly after the cover while he still can and keeps the Smash Surfer grounded.

DDK:

Cain kicks out again, but The Dunson Clan staying on him!

Lance:

Todd is like a pitbull in that ring! Can he keep up the pressure?

He continues to shake him around by the neck in an attempt to wear him down, but Cain gets up and is able to shake him off. Still, Todd is a little faster and is able to roll upward and dropkick the knee of Cain! He doubles over and then he climbs the ropes... then goes for the flying DDT off the middle rope..

DDK:

No! Caught! Gourdbuster!

Theodore Cain throws him down with a big gourdbuster out of catching him, then points to the corner where Titus Campbell is ready to make the tag! Todd rolls over and tags Richie...

BUT NOW TITUS IS TAGGED IN!

DDK:

Here comes The Wingman! Paul Dunson is once again having fits outside the ring!

Titus runs right into Richie Dunson with a big clothesline! Todd Dunson is against the ropes, but The Wingman grabs him by the arm and then HURLS him back inside the ring with a big hip toss. Todd and Richie both try and get back to their feet only for Titus to take them both down with big stereo clotheslines! He stands over both men and then gets cheers from the crowd when Richie Dunson gets picked up on his shoulders.

Lance:

I think that Richie Dunson's flight is about to hit a little Turbulence!

And indeed it does! He starts to swing him around and the crowd starts cheering as Richie is taken for a ride in the airplane swing! He continues spinning... spinning... spinning some more... then wobbles back to the corner for Theodore Cain to make the tag!

DDK:

We saw this a few weeks ago! The Turbulence by Wingman usually sets up for Theodore Cain to hit his own fireman's carry finisher!

Titus hands Richie over to Theodore Cain... then he drops Richie jaw-first across the knee with the High Tide!

DDK:

High Tide!

Paul Dunson starts to angrily growl then head to the ring, but CCK cuts him off at the pass by running off the apron to

wipe him out with a flying headscissor across the floor just as Cain makes the cover on Richie Dunson in-ring!

ONE... TWO... THREE!

DING DING DING

♪ "The Saints" by Andy Mineo ♪

Darren Quimbey:

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

DDK:

Paul Dunson had bad ideas in minds, but Crescent City Kid saw enough and took him out with that diving headscissors off the apron! Another win for Gulf Coast Connection tonight!

Titus Campbell and Theodore Cain have their arms raised. CCK rolls back inside the ring to join his friends as they celebrate the big win in front of the populated Watsco Center!

Lance:

Like we said... we'll find out more about possibly the most volatile Unified Tag Team Title situation sooner than later, but right now, Gulf Coast Connection rack up another victory in tag action!

The three men take their leave of the ring and party on up the ramp to cheers from the Miami crowd as the show moves on.

OH WHAT THE HELL! YOU'RE MULTIPLYING!

New Orleans, LA

A few days after MAXDEF...

It's another hot, swampy summer day in a long string of them, and although he's lived in New Orleans for a few years now, Sonny Silver still isn't used to the weather. Nor does he particularly care for it.

It's nearing sunset when the Silver Lining heads out to the parking lot of BRAZEN's training center, grumbling about not only the humidity at this time of day but some of the more inept members of the training class. Cristiano Caballero and Butcher Victorious might be the death of him, and if it wasn't for standouts like Ryan Batts, Declan Alexander, and LET, Sonny might have Silver Bullet kicked the idiots to the moon a long time ago.

Sonny presses the keyfob in his hand and yanks his car door open. He slides into the driver's seat, drops his keys in the cupholder, and slams the door shut.

"Tough day at the office?"

"GODDAMMIT!" Silver lets out a Sweet Dee-esque yell as he jumps a mile. He looks over his shoulder to the owner of that familiar voice in the backseat. "How the fuck did you get in here?! The door was locked!"

"Was it?" Lindsay Troy tilts her head and beams a devilish smile at Sonny.

"Yes!"

"You sure about that?" the Queen asks sweetly before flicking her eyes away from him. "Henry, was the car locked?"

"No, Miss Troy. It was not."

Silver cranes his head further to find the Kraken sitting behind him. "Oh what the hell! You're multiplying!"

Sonny looks at the Vae Victis members sitting in his car.

"So... y'all could have just knocked on my office door. I'm usually in there banging my head on the wall... mainly cause of Caballero. if I hear that dumbass talk about his man-bun one more time, I'm going to rip it right out of his roots in front of everybody in class as a message."

Lindsay and Henry look at each other, then look back at Sonny with blank expressions.

"All right..." Silver says, changing the subject. "Now that we're done scaring the bejeezus out of me, what do you want with little old me?"

Lindsay leans forward and rests her arms on the driver's seat, putting her face to face with Sonny. "Aren't you tired of yelling at the kids all day, Sonshine? I know you enjoy crushing their spirits but doesn't it get...I dunno...repetitive?"

He runs a hand through his beard.

"The training thing, I got that down... good days and bad. I can handle it."

He eyes the Southern Heritage champ quickly, then back to Troy.

"But if I know you and I do... sounds like you guys have something in mind, so I'm all ears."

Henry follows suit and leans in, and now all three heads are hilariously close together near the driver's seat. "We think it's about time DEFIANCE remembers the name Sonny Silver...unless of course you'd rather stay here and babysit FAFNIR in rookie catering."

Sonny shudders in his seat.

"Oh, how I loathe FAFNIR..."

He turns to Keyes.

"All right, Steam Punky Brewster, I like the cut of Vae Victis' jib from what I've seen, what did you have in mind?"

Lindsay reaches for a gift bag that was on the floor at her feet and hands it to her one-time tag partner with a grin. "Got you a present."

Sonny raises an eyebrow, looking skeptical, but does take the bag from the Queen's hands. After throwing aside the tissue paper, he peers inside and his eyes light up.

It's a microphone.

And not just *any* microphone...it's his OLD SKOOL MIC~!.

"Holy shit... after all these years, huh?"

LT nods. Sonny gives the OLD SKOOL MIC~! a nice once over.

"Ahh... memories. Like bashing someone's face and then yelling into it. Good times."

He looks back up at LT and Keyes.

"...I'm in."

MAXIMUM DEFIANCE PRESS CONFERENCE: NIGHT TWO

Night Two is in the books. Again, the conference room is bustling with activity as the press and superfans with VIP passes take up their seats.

Elise Ares

Elise Ares finds a seat at the interview table.

Tim Tillinghast:

Elise, you were a bonafide star out there tonight. What're your plans to get back to a position where you're a legit FIST contender any day of the week?

Elise Ares:

And by tonight you mean... every night, right?

There's a long pause as Elise waits for an answer before finally giving up, it's been too long since she's heard the sound of her own voice.

Elise Ares:

I think there has been this misconception out there that since I'm hanging with the coolest dude in the entire world doing tag stuff that I'm not ready for a shot at the FIST any day of the week. I'm ready. I've been ready. I've ALWAYS been ready. When DEFIANCE is ready for Elise Ares to go FISTing I'm here. I don't think they can handle it. That's the problem.

Hudson Hammerlock:

Hudson Hammerlock, the Grappler's Gazette... how satisfying was it to beat an insufferable human being like Ned Reform? Do you think TA Cole will ever see Reform for the self-serving perennial nuisance that he is and break off and become a singles star? Also, are TA Cole's fans called TA-TA's? Because that should be a thing.

Elise Ares:

Oh I'm satisfied. I always make sure I'm satisfied, BBY. As the DEFIANCE authority on TA-TAs I speak for all of them when I say I want TA Cole nowhere near TA-TAs. Ever. But I understand the kid wanting to get a big break and make it to the big show, sometimes when you have a complete lack of anything compelling or charismatic about you drastic measures have to be taken. Not sure I'd ever connect myself to someone as sleazy as Ned Reform, but I've done some stuff I'm not exactly proud of either so I'm not here to judge. I'm here to teach. To teach Ned Reform about how to win. How to be smart. How to entertain the fans. My only regret is not enough DA-DICK-PUNCHAS. Who knows, someday we might get another chance.

Ryan Scott:

Elise how did it feel to wrestle in your hometown?

Elise Ares:

You know... I haven't been here in a long time. I came here as a girl and spent most of my teenage life here before hitting the road for modeling and then PRIME. I came back here for not TOO long before going to Hollywood. It felt good. Especially for the Aresites, I'm sure, making their hometown proud and all. I don't know if Havana would feel like home more than Miami, but since I'll never get that opportunity it was a nice recharge knowing there is a group of people out there almost as proud of me as I am of myself. I've earned it and so have they, I'd guess.

Chris "Columbo" Chickentenders:

Ummm, hi, Miss Elise, just wanted to say real quick that you look, like, super super HOT tonight, no cap, but uhhh, do you drive a Dodge Charger?

Elise Ares:

You think I drive? What do you think I am? A poor? No BBY I don't drive, people drive me. What's a cap? Some kind

of car part?

Deb Warenstein:

Yes hello how does it feel knowing that Chris Chickentenders has no sense of style and that outfit actually makes you look fat?

Elise Ares:

Hear that? That square just called you fat! Wait, did that bitch just call me fat? Is this why I never do these things? What is wrong with these people? I'm fucking gorgeous. Maybe that's why men don't like you, BBY.

SuperDEFFan64:

Hello! SuperDEFFan64! GREAT performance by the PCP! You guys make tag team wrestling so good! PUT IT IN MY VEINS! LET'S GOOOOOOO! My question is will you go out with me? I've got lots of CRYPTO! It's the future and I can buy all the things!

Elise Ares:

BBY people like you buy crypto and people like me MAKE crypto, thanks for recognizing talent but we're not the same. Thank you for your support. We'll get you a shirt or something. Someone have Flex get this kid a shirt.

Craig Hamburgers:

hello yes I REALLY REALLY want to beat my cousin Chris at chess and you're really good and tougher and smarter than Ned Reform so will you teach me how to be smart and good at chess like you, thank you.

Elise Ares:

Yes, yes, all those things about being better than Ned Reform are true but unfortunately I am far too busy being a literal FUCKING legend to give chess lessons. I don't study. I just know because I'm totes a super genius menstra superstar bad bitch. No more questions please, I'm late to the afterparty and a date with a bottle of goose. Bye bye, Aresites. Mwah. Love ya!

Los Tres Titanes

Cut to Los Tres Titanes - Minute, Uriel Cortez and Titaness - the latter two, holding hands just above the press table, looking out to the press panel in the room. The camera lands on Tim Tillinghast.

Tim Tillinghast:

It's great to see all three of you back together. From an in-ring perspective, why do you feel you three gel so well, and why do things feel a bit off when you're not together?

Uriel Cortez:

Thanks, Tim! To be honest... Minute and I have always had great chemistry in the ring. Can't even explain it. Thomas and Junior Keeling wanted me to be this blank-staring giant monkey in a suit until he came along and helped me be something more. He helped me find who I was away from all that crap. A giant person that cares about his friends and family.

Minute:

Si... crazy how time flies. We met when he slammed me into vending machine. Now? Good amigos. Even though he bully me.

Uriel Cortez:

No, I don't, it's not nice to bully children.

Minute:

PUTA... anyway, si. Things been off... but I think what you see here? This group right here is the best of us. Familia.

Uriel Cortez:

That's right... This isn't just some tag team or a stable that's going to break up in a year and fade quietly into the night. This right here... Vin Diesel ran this shit into the ground, so like Minute said... It's familia.

Titaness looks up and smiles.

Titaness:

You heard him... familia.

Over to Ryan Scott next.

Ryan Scott:

Great matches all around from you three. I have to say a special Thank You to you Titaness for not losing to that psycho. I am not sure how much more I can handle of Malak Garland's entourage getting any larger than it already is. So I take it the wedding is back on?

Titaness and Uriel each share a look... and a smile.

Titaness:

Well... Press conferences are for making news, right?

Uriel Cortez:

I guess? So...? Lucha ring bearer?

Titaness:

Oh, lord... don't do this here.

He shrugs, then looks at Minute. The TJ Tornado reaches into his pocket and then hands the engagement ring back to Uriel. Uriel pushes his chair out and then takes a knee to the gasps of the interview pool.

Uriel Cortez:

So, let's hope this sticks this time and we do this right... so... Titaness... Holly... will you marry me... again, I guess?

Titaness looks annoyed.

Titaness:

If I say yes, will you get up so we can finish this? We're in the middle of a work thing.

Uriel Cortez:

You drive a hard bargain... I accept those terms.

Titaness:

Then yes!

Uriel puts the ring back on Titaness' finger and the two embrace close to a slight round of applause from the pool. After taking a few seconds to collect themselves, they realize they still got a job to do. They all take a seat.

Uriel Cortez:

All right... you all say words now.

Over to Deb.

Deb Warenstein:

Hi Titaness I am upset that you beat Teresa because she is still my bae however I guess I'll live with it because you and Uriel are back together. Do you need a wedding stylist because I am available if so. Thank you.

Titaness:

Thank you... I guess! Um... maybe. Aren't you like 15, though?

And over to Hudson Hammerlock.

Hudson Hammerlock:

Hudson Hammerlock, the Jackhammer Journal... my question is for Cortez and Minute: with a big win on PPV against Cerberus, where do you see yourselves rank in the tag team division? Or, with a seemingly new team coming in, do find yourselves getting lost in an ever-growing division?

Minute:

Cerberus were tough. Eran duros. Very tough... but tonight, we won cause we earned that victory. SNS had the explosive personalities and the toughness, PCP have the big personalities and the skills. But Uriel and I? We have consistency. We can beat any team at any time. Two time former Unified Tag Team Champions!

Uriel Cortez:

What he said. WE'RE standard-bearers in this division. We're never lost because we know our worth; it's up for other teams to step up to OUR level. no matter who they are. Tonight won't be the last we see of Cerberus, but they better think twice before thinking they make a name at our expense.

Chris "Columbo" Chickentenders:

Uhh, my question is just for Minute: Can you see over the dashboard when you get behind the wheel?

Minute:

Puedo ver muy bien detrás de tu madre. Siguiente pregunta.

Craig Hamburgers:

NEVER GET MAD AT EACH OTHER AGAIN, thank you.

Titaness looks over at her twice-appointed fiance and best friend.

Titaness:

Long as nobody here does anything stupid, we'll be good. Thanks, Craig.

SuperDEFFan64:

Hello! SuperDEFFan64! Great wins by all of you tonight, though I'm sad we didn't get that Ames/Titaness ship.

Uriel Cortez:

...the fuck? Boy, you better ask a question that won't make me chop your soul out of your body.

SuperDEFFan64:

Okay, okay! My bad, my bad! My question is for all of you! Will you be going after the Unified Tag Team titles if those badass Lucky Sevens bring the titles back to DEFIANCE?

And with that subject, the mood is about to change. Uriel Cortez has been so wrapped up in his own recent happiness...

Uriel Cortez:

Look... we've been playful up here, but... what went down last night with the Saturday Night Specials... Brock, Pat, friends of ours. I got something to say.

Fun and games are over. Uriel stands up from his chair and motions for one of the cameras to get closer. When one of them is focused on him, he leans forward to address the two men in possession of the Unified Tag Team Titles.

Uriel Cortez:

I'm putting this out there right now for Mason and Max... you two fuckers managed to pull off the crime of the century. You were granted a title match cause you burned down a bar, everyone knows it and they could give you the ass-whompings you deserve... but thanks to Siobhan Cassidy, YOU'RE the ones running around with stolen property. Now, rumors are already flying through the locker room that you're already planning something. We're putting you two on blast right here, right fucking now.

Cortez inches closer.

Uriel Cortez:

I don't care what our past history with you has been and it has been extensive. You took our original name, you injured Minute and myself. None of that matters. Whatever bullshit the two of you are thinking of doing... if you come back around here with those titles... you aren't champions. You aren't king shit of a division you didn't help build. You aren't the best tag team in this division.

He grabs the camera and palms it close...

Uriel Cortez:

YOU'RE... FUCKING... DONE.

Vae Victis (Lindsay Troy, Henry Keyes, & Kerry Kuroyama)

The three undisputed greatest professional wrestlers in DEFIANCE sit at the interview table.

Tim Tillinghast:

I love this. I love this so much. All of you. This is the stable of my dreams. No question, just me telling you to go kick everyone's ass. I love you.

Henry looks over at Kerry and chuckles.

Henry Keyes:

I told you Uncle Timmy was going to flip!

Lindsay Troy:

We do aim to please, after all.

SuperDEFFan64:

Hello! SuperDEFFan64! Congrats on your big wins tonight! Vae Victis is the Vae Shit-tis! My question is for all of you! You had the Favoured Saints and then quickly the SoHer! What's next? Are any of you looking at the FIST and any Unified Tag Team Titles? And Lindsay... where did we land on Teresa Ames and the reclaimed wood situation I asked at the last press conference! Autographed reclaimed wood goes for BANK these days!

Lindsay Troy:

Take that second part up with Teresa, I've been done with her for two months now. As for the first part, as an entity Vae Victis has designs on holding every single title in DEFIANCE. And if you had been paying any kind of attention for the last year, you'd know my sights have been set on the FIST. That goal has never changed.

Ryan Scott:

So Mr. Kuroyama, what made you agree to join Vae Victis?

Kerry waits a beat to collect his thoughts before clearing his throat and leaning into the mic.

Kerry Kuroyama:

I want to say this first: for many years, Dan Ryan was my hero. He was the athlete I modeled my entire career off of. Which is why I couldn't help but feel betrayed when he did what he did. His betrayal to me, one of his biggest fans, to

the other people sitting at this table, who trusted him with their lives, and to the sport of professional wrestling as a whole... won't soon be forgiven. But the fact remains that he left a vacancy in this group. One that I am committed to fill...

He presses a finger into the table, looking intently into Scott's eyes.

Kerry Kuroyama

Because I believe in this group's mission. I am sick and tired of watching this once prestigious company being dragged down into a toilet of clowns, comedians, and whores for attention. I've lost real opportunities and wasted years of my career dealing with "talent" that seem to have a hard time understanding that this is a *sport*, and now as a part of Vae Victis, we have the power to do something about it.

Ryan Scott:

For you Henry how is the chest, and do you have any thoughts on our new Favoured Saints Champion?

Henry Keyes:

My chest is fine, thank you, and I hope everyone in the locker room now understands what happens when you decide to go strike for strike with the Kraken. Make sure you ask Scrow about his skull. Speaking of skulls, my evaluation of Arthur Pleasant is that he is roughly 95% bark and should have *really* reconsidered returning to DEFIANCE with Vae Victis taking over...it's clear by his demeanor that he hasn't completely recovered from his brain injury. *Injuries*, plural? Injuries.

Hudson Hammerlock:

Hudson Hammerlock, the Small Package Sun... my question is for the new Southern Heritage Champion, Henry Keyes. Now that you've successfully completed the journey from Favoured Saint to SoHer, who do you see yourself defending that championship against? Also, now that Arthur Pleasant is Favoured Saints Champion, just *how* frightened at the possibility of facing him for your title are you?

Henry Keyes:

I would say I'm definitely looking to expand my Rogues Gallery of opponents. There's a significant number of wrestlers here that I've yet to face, and many of their faces are in need of rearranging. To answer your second question - "none". None frightened.

Henry turns to Lindsay.

Henry Keyes:

Is he joking or something?

Lindsay Troy:

He's talking about a joke, that's for sure. A joke that weirdly sexually harassed a sixteen year old yesterday.

Deb Warenstein:

I don't have a question, I'm just super pumped that you beat that uggo Rezin and also that three of my Dimes are in a group together. Especially Kerry. *[waves]*

Lindsay Troy:

Beating Raisin was rather delightful, wasn't it, Kerry?

Kerry grins. It's a semi-rare sight.

Kerry Kuroyama:

Never gets old.

Chris "Columbo" Chickentenders:

Yeah, uhh, would any of the three of you have any reason to run Stalker over with a car? Or like, uh, a steam-powered

train or something?

Kerry Kuroyama:

No, but I wish I had.

Henry Keyes:

Let it be known that I completely understand why someone would attempt vehicular manslaughter to anyone ever associated with the Kabal in any form or fashion - but if it was me, I would've dropped the ship on him instead.

Lindsay Troy:

I would have buried him in the Nevada Ditch Fields, myself.

Craig Hamburgers:

hello yes, how is anyone ever going to beat you guys you're like the best wrestlers especially fight kick fight punch fighter Lindsay Troy, thank you.

The Ace of DEFIANCE smiles at Craig before responding.

Lindsay Troy:

They aren't.

Scrow

Scrow walks into the press room, the redness from his beat chest can be seen from the collar in his shirt. He takes a seat and glances at the title holder on the table...empty of course before looking out into the press core.

Scrow:

First of all, Scrow just underestimated Henry. Scrow went in a little too overconfident, but of course Scrow was overconfident. Have any of you ever met Scrow? He is a big deal, but you want to know who really is at fault here? Ravanna! If it wasn't for her sticking her nose in Scrow's business, he would have his championship right now! Having said that Scrow now will take questions from you people.

Ryan Scott:

Well having said that as your opening statement I guess the one question I have is...Do you live in your own little world?

Scrow:

Why yes, but unfortunately Scrow has to share it with all of you.

Hudson Hammerlock:

Hudson Hammerlock, the Swanton Sentinel... what's next for Scrow? Do you try to get a rematch with Henry Keyes or do you start at the bottom and work your way back up to the Southern Heritage by way of the Favoured Saints Title? If it's the latter, does it concern you that the person who holds possession of that championship is none other than one of your DEFCO 2022 opponents, Arthur Pleasant?

Scrow:

Scrow has some unfinished business to attend to first and then he will be right there back on top. Looking down on all the people that are beneath his greatness! As for Arthur, who cares Scrow has beaten him already and if he ever did decide to challenge him for that championship, he would take it without breaking a sweat!

SuperDEFFan64:

Hello! SuperDEFFan64! Scrow, questions... your in-ring persona and your wrestling persona are both GREAT! Where do you go from here? Do you go after the FIST? And if so, can you sell me your monocle? I could flip a profit on that! SuperDEFFan2 would shit his pants!

Scrow:

Like Scrow said to {looks over at Hudson Hammerlock, unsure in his response} Ernie Hudson was it?

Hudson says off audio his real name

Scrow:

Ah, it doesn't matter. The FIST will be Scrow's THAT you can bet on that! Seriously who else is even worthy enough to not put it on a wrestling GOD like Scrow. Who....Dex Joy? HA! Don't make him laugh!

Deb Warenstein:

Are you ready to admit that the Kabal is dead because tbh nobody cares about those uggos.

Scrow:

Scrow does not care what The Kabal does from now on. He is his own man. He is STILL the greatest Southern Heritage Champion in DEFIANCE! Henry is just borrowing his championship for now.

Tim Tillinghast:

Scrow, you're on a tear right now despite the loss - I feel like your in-ring work is reaching its peak. Also, now that you've left The Kabal, is it possible that we can never ever ever hear about them ever again? Asking for a friend.

Scrow:

Jimmy, when it comes to Scrow you have nothing to worry about. What those what did you call them sweetheart? *{looking over at Deb, who is not very found of being called "sweetheart"}* Shocker she is offended, who gives a shit! No, Tillinghast Scrow and The Kabal in the same sentence is over with.

Chris "Columbo" Chickentenders:

Uhh, yeah, do we have an update on the condition of Crimson Stalker, and do you know when he's coming back to take over the Kabal? And can the House of the Chickentenders join? Cause I got my own Reaper outfit that I made at home and everything.

Scrow:

That entire statement was not about Scrow and how great he is, so he refuses to answer your dumb questions.

Craig Hamburgers:

hahahaha it was soooooo funny when you thought Henry Keyes wasn't Henry Keyes and you got all scared, when did you get so funny, thank you.

Scrow: *{unamused}*

Yea...funny.

Scrow looks around, noticing no more questions.

Scrow:

Now if you will excuse Scrow, he has a nasty phone call to make to a woman who has some questions to answer for.

Scrow gets up and leaves.

Deacon

Though the Deacon's seated next to Magdalena, only one microphone is present, and it's not in front of him. Weary, the Deacon's eyes are more focused on the table than the crowd of reporters and others who ask questions, or something.

Ryan Scott:

First of all congratulations on a successful title defense Deacon. Has your opinion changed on Conor Fuse after all has

been said and done?

Magdalena:

I don't think Conor will care what we think, but he did his job tonight. I wasn't certain, and Deacon had a job to do regardless. Fortunately for DEFIANCE, Deacon did his job tonight as well.

Hudson Hammerlock:

Hudson Hammerlock, The Modern Slam... *[performs sign language for Deacon for three straight minutes.]*

Magdalena: *[shakes head]*

Now, ask the question again in Arabic.

SuperDEFFan64:

Hello! SuperDEFFan64! Deacon and Magdalena... congrats on a successful defense of the FIST cause Malak SUUUUUUUUCKS bong water! My question is for Deacon... who's next defending for the FIST?

Magdalena:

DEFIANCE has some exciting things planned. We have 16 people who are lined up for an opportunity to challenge for the FIST over the next few months. I'll leave it to management to tell you more about that.

Tim Tillinghast:

Hell of a match, Deacon. What are your thoughts on Dex Joy? Based on everything we've seen, he seems poised as the next breakout star and in my opinion he is a serious threat to your championship.

Magdalena:

No argument there. Dex already took Deacon to his limits a few weeks ago. Fortunately for Deacon, he was able to hang on, but I'd be a fool to tell you I'd anticipate a rematch going the exact same way - Dex Joy is legit. And though Deacon has never wrestled Oscar Burns, we've both seen enough to know that beating Burns once during the biggest DEFIANCE show of the year earned Joy a title shot. Beating Burns twice in one night just drives that point home. Dex Joy is certainly a favorite to challenge, and eventually be, the FIST of DEFIANCE.

Chris "Columbo" Chickentenders:

Yeah, I just wanted to say... I'm ONTO you, Dokken! I know that you know something about the night of May 18th! You can stay silent if you like, but "Detective" Chickentenders WILL find all the clues to crack this case! I totally beat Craig last week playing Clue, and he threw a little bitch-fit over it!

Craig Hamburgers:

...but you said it was Mustard in the Study with the Revolver and it was actually SCARLET with the Revolver in-

Chris "Columbo" Chickentenders:

NUH-UH!! SHUT UP, TURD!! IT'S ALWAYS COLONEL MUSTARD WITH THE REVOLVER!! He's a COLONEL!! And how's a CHICK gonna figure out how a gun works?!

Deb Warenstein:

[to Chris Chickentenders] Ew, you know that women are in the military and are also police and they know how to fire guns right? *[to Deacon]* Do you actually believe you deserve to represent DEFIANCE given that the whole Stalker thing is basically your fault?

Magdalena:

I think I'd rather answer Chris' first question, which wasn't a question but made about as much sense, Deb. Maybe you don't remember the story, but the "Old North Bridge" moment happened when Stalker brought a special person into this crazy business. Deacon tried to work with some of DEFIANCE'S best to put an end to the Kabal, and when that didn't work, he did the job himself. That job DID lead to the Crimson Stalker, and so, sure - you can say that Deacon made that monster, but monsters are meant to be redeemed, and at least for a moment, Deacon helped with that too. What Jason does with that is up to him. But Deacon never asked to represent DEFIANCE. That, Deb, was thrust upon

him, and he'll do that job until that job is over.

Craig Hamburgers:

hello we just learned about Mary Magdalene in Sunday school and my question is are you the same lady and does that mean Deacon wrestled in Jesus times, thank you.

Magdalena:

Mary's a sweetheart, but no, that's not me. She's Jewish, likely born in Palestine over two thousand years ago. I'm Egyptian, born in Pennsylvania a bit more than 20 years ago. And I know people ask about Deacon's age, but you can actually see his date of birth if you do a tiny bit of research. Here's another tip, that's not true for EVERY wrestler on the roster.

Thurston Hunter

Thurston Hunter takes a seat at the podium table and proceeds to fiddle unnecessarily with the microphone.

Thurston Hunter:

Okay, I am ready. To quote the greatest song ever written and performed, hit me with your best things.

Tim Tillinghast is up first.

Tim Tillinghast:

Who are you?

Thurston looks quizzically at Tim as if he's actually giving that salty question some real, deep, genuine thought.

Thurston Hunter:

Who am I? Who am I? wHo aM I? WHO AM I? Gee, come to think of it, I don't actually know. Good question. My license says I am Thurston Theodore Jack Kristy Hunter but I'm not sure anymore. I might be someone different. Good question. I will have to look into that.

Next up is Hudson Hammerlock.

Hudson Hammerlock:

Hudson Hammerlock, the Daily Dropkick... Malak Garland. Where do I even start? Is he suicidal right now? I certainly hope not. But if he is, he shouldn't try to hang himself— because without a good strong, sturdy *belt*, he'll fail at that just like he did after by losing the most important match of his career to the Mute Freak. So, the real question is... is his contract up any time soon? Because I think he should "unpack" somewhere else.

Thurston Hunter:

Hi Hudson, thanks for the introduction. I used to think I was Thurston Hunter, the Weekly Wrestler. Don't know why I need to know that you do daily dropkicks but that's cool. You keep doing you. As for Mal, there's only one place to start because there is only one narrative, his narrative you nimwit. Is he suicidal right now? I can confirm in intricate detail that he is and everyone should be extremely worried for him. I have made a mental note to tell him not to hang himself and I will tell him that when I see him next if he's still breathing by then because he is devastated by this loss. What was the other question? His contract? It's not due anytime soon and I hope the Favored Saints don't mind me spilling the beans on this but Mal just signed a huge extension. Quite lucrative. I was going to go into negotiations and street fought them but to no one's surprise, the saints are in love with Mal. Who wouldn't be? He's brought in revenues previous top guys never even touched so of course they signed him to a long term deal. He's unique. He's our Mal and he's going to have a very long, prosperous wrestling career because he's going to live a long time.

Hudson looks confused and goes to ask for a follow up because Thurston clearly contradicts himself by first saying Malak was going to off himself but things end up moving along to good old Chris Chickentenders. Chris gets the next crack as Thurston takes a swig of sports drink from the bottle beside the microphone.

Chris "Columbo" Chickentenders:

Yeah, uhh, would you say Milky Garlic gets, like, super-angry when he loses, and does that give him road rage when he drives?

Thurston furrows his brow as he listens to Chickentenders talk.

Thurston Hunter:

First off bud, I think you need some lessons in speaking language cuz you are bad and I could street fight you so hard and cover you in tiny little bruises. I am called the Bruiser Cruiser, after all. Anywho, yes okay, Mal gets SUPER angry when he loses. Who wouldn't? We don't let him drive though. He sits in the back and doom scrolls while the rest of us take turns.

Lovely Deb Warenstein has the next question.

Deb Warenstein:

Do you believe that Malak Garland lost because his chakras weren't aligned or because Conor Fuse has it out for him?

Thurston puts an index finger to his pursed lips as he looks skyward in contemplation.

Thurston Hunter:

I'd have to double check that on my chakra balancer. His energy is usually pretty well balanced and maintained. cOnOr definitely has it out for Mal though. What a mean, malicious piece of work that homeboy is. Daddy don't play those games and I'd be glad to street fight him into oblivion just like I did his brother a few weeks ago.

The next question comes from the Super DEF Fan.

SuperDEFFan64:

Hello! SuperDEFFan64 and I... wait, who is this cheap JACK HUNTER KNOCKOFF! You need to be STREET FIGHTED!

Hunter's eyes shoot back and forth around the room like he's been caught! The jig is up!

Thurston Hunter:

Knockoff? I'll have you know, I am much tougher than my brother. Cousin? I actually forget how I am related to him. Cousin. I'm like almost certain. Let's go with that one and sir, YOU BETTER WATCH IT BECAUSE YOU NEED TO BE STREET FIGHTED.

DEFsec almost need to step in as Thurston stands to beat his chest in an attempt to intimidate the superfan. Craig Hamburgers moves things along before anything can come from the empty threats.

Craig Hamburgers:

Yes hello, does this mean Deacon is the paper champion now too, and also where is Malak? I wanted to laugh at him, thank you.

Deadpan, Thurston takes a seat and wraps a hand around the microphone.

Thurston Hunter:

Sub-Zero is not the paper champ. Mal still is. He will always be! I heard he even has his own special Discord channel to muck around in with all his adoring fans so you better watch what you say, Mr. Double Cheeseburger. As for where he is, that shall remain a secret so you can't laugh at him. Wow okay, wow. All you reporters are vultures. I just came out here on my own time to talk a little street fighting and you all pounce on me. You attacked me personally and professionally, you slandered my master and Keyboard King in Mal and you're all very nasty individuals. Plain and simple. I'm done. My mental health is covered in tiny little bruises from everyone. Congratulations. Hope you feel like you accomplished something.

Hunter rises and looks to exit but not before swiping the bottle of sports drink in front of him.

Thurston Hunter:

Can I take this? I am going to take this. It's mine now.

Conor Fuse

Conor Fuse enters the picture. Fresh off the main event he's still wearing his lime green track pants and off-green "I GOT THE CHEAT CODES" enforcer shirt. He looks content and yet clearly coming off a very trying period. Fuse takes a seat and nods that he's ready to field questions.

Chris "Columbo" Chickentenders:

Uhh, yeah, when you play Grand Theft Auto, approximately how many people do you drive over, and are any of them BADASS hardcore legends? Thank you.

What was once a stoic look has changed into a genuine smile. Conor tilts his head, as if putting real thought into his response.

Conor Fuse:

Great question. So, I usually just run over everyone. Then flee from the cops, see how long I can go for. As for how many badass hardcore legends I run over?

An evil smile crosses Conor's face, along with a wink.

Conor Fuse:

I said I run over *everyone*.

Deb Warenstein:

Yes hi I am no great fan of Malak Garland even though he made my Dimes list once and quickly proved he didn't belong there however is it safe to say that a Malak Garland world title reign would have at least been more interesting than Deacon's has been?

Fuse does his best "Justin Timberlake unimpressed gif" face.

Conor Fuse:

We know you privately love Deacon, Debbie. He's just a little scary when you get up close.

Next question.

SuperDEFFan64:

Hello! SuperDEFFan64! I would also like to sign Mr. Hammerlock's petition! CONOR 4 FIST! No questions here, just thank you and the DEFIANCE gods for doing the right thing and not letting that candy-ass Malak Garland taint our BELT!

Conor rolls his shoulders.

Conor Fuse:

Look, you're welcome? I just wanted to do what's right. Glad it worked out for a change.

Ryan Scott:

I think a lot of the fans out there knew you would do the right thing out there tonight. I am sure a lot are thankful you did. No one wanted to see Malak Garland as The FIST for even a second. What I would like to know was there any doubt in your mind about your decision?

Conor continues to rub the side of his messy blonde hair while answering.

Conor Fuse:

Uhhhh, I didn't know WTF to do when I accidentally hit Deacon with the chair, ya know? That was on me, not Malak. People will likely say he shouldn't have spit on me. True. But I gotta remain cool under pressure and I wasn't. I almost cost Deacon. I'm glad that didn't happen.

Fuse turns to the next reporter.

Hudson Hammerlock:

Hudson Hammerlock, Lungblower Media... by going against Malak Garland's direction, what repercussions are you expecting from that wanker? Also, I am starting a petition to have you awarded the FIST for counting Malak's shoulders down to the mat. Just thought you should know that!

The Ultimate Gamer takes a moment to consider the question.

Conor Fuse:

First, I expect and also accept any repercussions coming my way. I'm still a part of The Comments Section. I'll deal with it, though. This isn't my first pitfall, if you will. As for the FIST stuff... I'll build my way up to that. I'm not there yet.

Fuse leans into the mic with a clever look across his face.

Conor Fuse:

DEFCON? Deacon vs. Conor Fuse? FIST of DEFIANCE? Too soon?

He stops to consider his own question...

And then nods.

Conor Fuse:

Too soon. LOL.

Next question.

Tim Tillinghast:

No question, more of a comment: you need to figure out a way out of this Comments Section situation ASAP. I know, I know - easier said than done, but you need to get back to becoming the fastest rising star in the promotion and leave Malak Garland in the rearview.

Fuse seems thankful for the remarks but remains grounded in his response.

Conor Fuse:

Can't I do both? Be part of the Comments Section *and* the fastest rising star in the promotion? Do NOT get me wrong, Imma leave this trashbag group the moment I can figure out how. Comments Section is worse than the Red Ribbon Army, lol.

Craig Hamburgers:

Hello yes you did the right thing and I love you but also everything sucks but also Malak isn't FIST so that's good but also you're still stuck with him and that sucks and my question is how do you handle so many emotions all at once because I am STRUGGLING, thank you.

It's almost as if Conor is telepathically linked to Craig and knows what he's going through.

Conor Fuse:

Have you met... Rezin yet?

Realizing Craig's probably a little too young to indulge in the *other* Power-Up King's special items, The OG Power-Up

King thanks everyone in the room and leaves the interview table. The press conference ends.

FIST TOURNAMENT 2022

The scene opens to an ACTS of DEFIANCE 2022 backdrop and Lance Warner.

Lance Warner:

Hello everyone. I'll get right to it, the rumors are true! Starting Wednesday, August 10th on DEFTv 173, we will begin a FIST of DEFIANCE tournament where the winner will challenge for the FIST come ACTS of DEFIANCE on Thursday, October 6th. In a moment we will release the bracket and let you know where DEFIANCE is on tour for the next three months. But first, some additional context with the tournament. While the winner of the bracket will go on to challenge for the FIST in a one-on-one match, we also have to keep our champion honest so there are some additional twists and turns -not named Oscar Burns- in the bracket.

A schedule appears as Lance keeps talking.

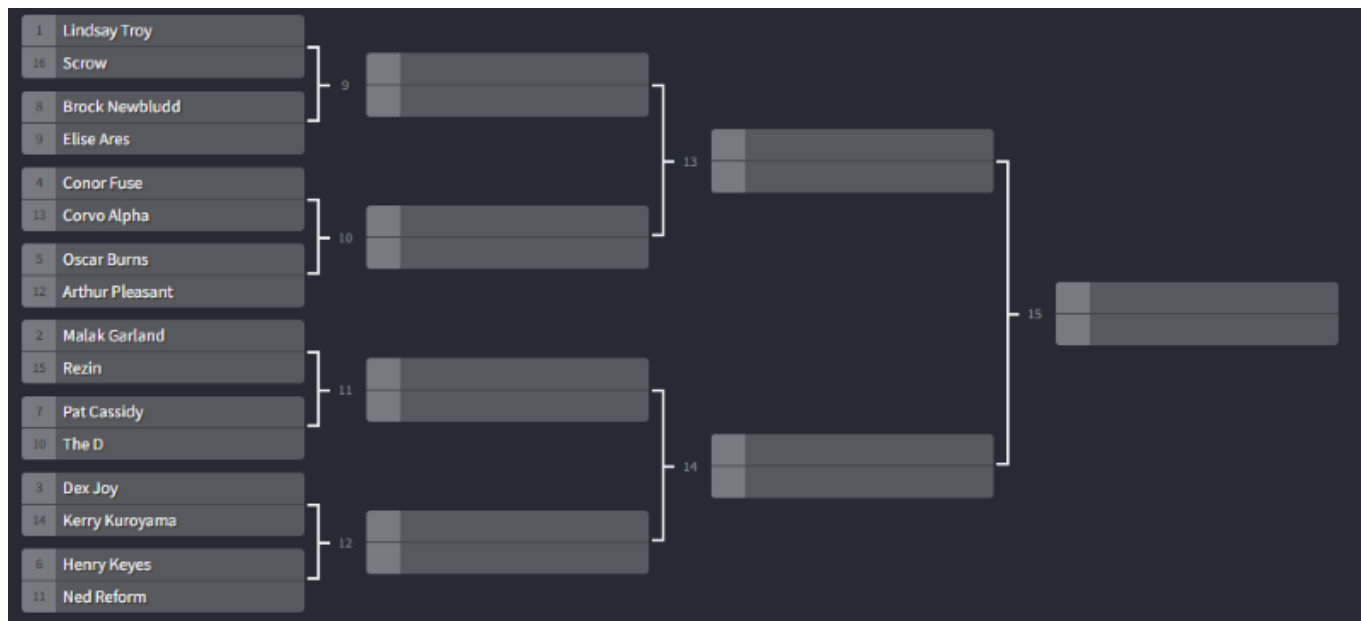
Lance Warner:

I have been told none other than Thurston Hunter has DEMANDED a match against Deacon to make up for what Malak Garland has apparently "lost". Obviously not one to back down from a challenge, The Mute Freak has accepted and this title match will happen on Wednesday, August 17th on UNCUT 124. As for the tournament, everyone who advances to round two will at least have one additional opportunity at the FIST of DEFIANCE if they aren't the successful winner. The four who lose their round two matches will face each other in a four-way match on an UNCUT special which will be Wednesday, August 31st. The winner of this match will get a FIST of DEFIANCE title shot come DEFTv 175 the following week. The wrestlers who make it to the semi finals and lose, as well as the wrestler who makes it to the finals and lose may also earn a FIST shot at a later date. More information on this after ACTS of DEFIANCE is over.

Warner pauses and smiles into the camera.

Lance Warner:

And now... the bracket. Please note the seeding is meaningless and to make things as fair as possible we used a random generator for the matches. DEFIANCE has taken its top sixteen stars outside of the FIST of DEFIANCE and we can't wait to see what happens.



Lance Warner:

Here is the schedule!

DEFTv 173 Nights 1 & 2 on August 10 & 11 FROM Phoenix, AZ (GCU Arena)

DEFTv 173 Night 1 ROUND ONE MATCHES:

Lindsay Troy vs. Scrow

Pat Cassidy vs. The D

Malak Garland vs. Rezin

Dex Joy vs. Kerry Kuroyama

DEFTv 173 Night 2 ROUND ONE MATCHES:

Henry Keyes, SOHER Champion vs. Ned Reform

Brock Newbludd vs. Elise Ares

Conor Fuse vs. Corvo Alpha

Oscar Burns vs. Arthur Pleasant, FS Champion

UNCUT 124 on August 17 FROM Phoenix, AZ (GCU Arena)

UNCUT 124

FIST of DEFIANCE: Deacon © vs. Thurston Hunter

DEFTv 174 Nights 1 & 2 on August 24 & 25 FROM Salt Lake City, UT (Maverik Center)

DEFTv 174 Nights 1 & 2

Quarter Final Matches

LIVE UNCUT 125 SPECIAL on August 31 FROM Denver, CO (Denver Coliseum)

UNCUT 125 - SPECIAL

Four-Way Match for FIST of DEFIANCE Opportunity

BOTH Tournament Semi Final Matches

DEFTv 175 Nights 1 & 2 on September 7 & 8 FROM Las Vegas, NV (Orleans Arena)

DEFTv 175 Night 1 & 2

FIST of DEFIANCE vs. Winner of Four-Way UNCUT Match

TOURNAMENT FINALS MATCH

DEFTv 176 Nights 1 & 2 on September 21 & 22 FROM San Francisco, CA (Bill Graham Civic Auditorium)

DEFTv 176 Night 1 & 2

FACE-to-FACE, FIST and challenger

ACTS of DEFIANCE Nights 1 & 2 on October 5 & 6 FROM Los Angeles, CA (Pauley Pavilion)

ACTS of DEFIANCE Night 1 and 2

FIST of DEFIANCE match

The scene goes back to Lance Warner.

Lance Warner:

If you're interested in taking part in bracket predictions, fill out your march madness bracket [HERE](#)! Simply go to the prediction page and click MAKE A PREDICTION.

Warner cleans up the papers in front of him and smiles into the camera.

Lance Warner:

Can't wait for this to start! Until then, we will see you all in two weeks on UNCUT 123! Goodnight everybody!

THIS.

IS.

DEFIANCE.