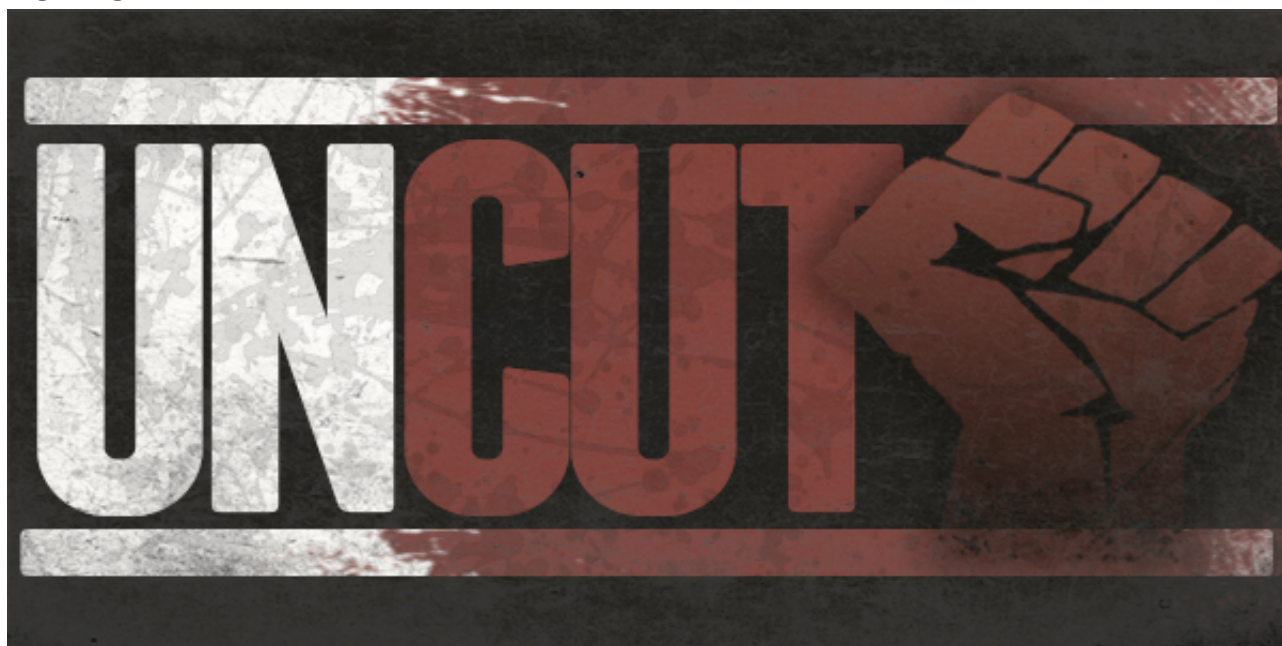


SHOW OPEN

PALMS SWEATY AND MOM'S SPAGHETTI

Backstage, palms sweaty, Mom's spaghetti and all that...

The blue chipper Dan Leo James has a big chance to impress tonight, even though the last time he competed at the Wrestleplex... was when he busted his face on the ring apron while running towards the ring after Butcher Victorious talked some crap.

But right now, the big rookie forgets about all that. Instead...

Dan Leo James:

AAHHHHHHHHH!

He hurls a water bottle on the floor... like he's practicing a chokeslam.

Dan Leo James:

AAHHHHHHHHH!

Then he grabs a box from off a nearby production crate.

Dan Leo James:

AAHHHHHHHHH!

And that shatters to pieces on the ground.

He holds a hand up in the hall... ready to fire off a chokeslam.

Dan Leo James:

AAHHHHHHHHH...

He spins right around into all three members of Los Tres Titanes... mid-chokeslam taunt.

Dan Leo James:

Uh... I mean... AAAAAAAA-LO!

Minute:

Hola, Dan.

He nervously stops what he's doing to shake Minute's hand. Minute shakes it... then wipes the excess sweat off on his pant leg when Dan isn't looking. Titaness flashes him a smile.

Titaness:

Hey, Dan, what's good?

Dan Leo James:

Pretty good... ugh, dang it! I always mess that up. Eh... not bad...

She tries to stifle back a laugh, but hides it not-so-well while big Uriel Cortez rounds out the crew and then offers up a fist bump. Dan bumps it back and Uriel pats him on the shoulder.

Uriel Cortez:

I was gonna ask how you're doing, too, but... uh... I don't know why all this shit is on the floor. I'm choosing to chalk this up to first time jitters?

Dan looks at his hands.

Dan Leo James:

...Is it that obvious? I've been standing here the last ten minutes trying to be chill about this, trying to workshop my new finisher, but...

Titaness:

You have about as much chill right now as Death Valley. And what do you mean "workshopping"?

The first-ever BRAZEN Ascension winner sighs while Uriel talks to him.

Uriel Cortez:

Look, kid...

Uriel clasps his hands on his shoulders to get him to calm down.

Uriel Cortez:

Remember how it felt when you went out in front of that crowd last week at the CLASH? How you won? You outlasted twenty other men and women, You had them in the palm of your hand by the time that match was over when you picked up Killjoy and tossed his ass over the top rope.

Minute:

Si, amigo. Run with that. People like you and want to see you succeed.

Titaness:

Yeah, don't get into your own head. And stop breaking things.

Uriel nods.

Uriel Cortez:

All of that's true. We've all watched you progress since Tag Party 3 last year and you've improved by leaps and bounds. The two left feet thing doesn't seem to be much of a problem anymore... but you need the confidence. It'll come with time, but it's gonna start by you going out to that ring and kicking the shit out of Thomas Slaine. Now...

He slaps him on the arm.

Uriel Cortez:

What are you going to do when you go out there, Danny?

Dan looks in the direction of the entrance.

Dan Leo James:

Yeah... yeah... I'm gonna kick the sh... I'm gonna kick the stuffing out of Thomas Slaine. I... I don't curse, all right?

Quietly fuming, Uriel rubs his temple with his free hand.

Uriel Cortez:

That's... that's fine. Just answer this.. what do Titans do, Danny?

He looks at Minute and Titaness for an answer.

Titaness:

They stand...?

Dan Leo James:

They... stand tall?

She gets more stern.

Titaness:

No... what do Titans do, Dan?

Minute:

Louder, amigo.

He looks again to the entrance. Then gets some bass in his voice.

Dan Leo James:

TITANS ALWAYS STAND TALL! YEAH, STAND TALL! I GOT THIS... LET'S GOOOO!

Uriel Cortez:

You're gonna make a great Titan, Danny. Get out there and show Slaine that ring is YOUR ring now.

James let out a loud yell that echoes through the hall, raises a hand like he's ready to grab a fool by the throat, then charges down the hall until he's out of sight. Uriel, Titaness and Minute all share a look.

Titaness:

You... you want me to go get him? Tell him he went the other way?

They don't have to because moments later, his screaming has resumed and he's realized he's going to the ring now. He holds a hand out and gets high-fives from Los Tres Titanes.

Dan Leo James:

Thanks, guys! And just you watch... I've been working on a new move for tonight! I'm gonna be a great big man in this business!

After he's all the way through guerilla, Uriel looks down at his fiance and lucha bestie.

Uriel Cortez:

Mother of God.

DAN LEO JAMES vs. THOMAS SLAINE

To the commentary station for the first match on tonight's edition of UNCUT!

DDK:

Welcome one and all to UNCUT 123! I am "Downtown" Darren Keebler and I'm alongside my partner running color commentary, Lance Warner!

Lance:

We have a big show tonight! Fresh off making his return and defeating the returning former Southern Heritage Champion David Noble, Arthur Pleasant makes his first defense of the Favoured Saints Title!

DDK:

But as you saw moments ago, we have the young blue chip prospect from BRAZEN making his debut... I'm talking about Dan Leo James! James punched his ticket to the main roster last week at CLASH of the BRAZEN by winning the first-ever ASECENSION Battle Royal! Tonight, the anxious native of Hurricane, Utah goes up against experienced DEFIANCE veteran Thomas Slaine.

Lance:

We'll kick it to ringside for intros now with Darren Quimbey!

Darren Quimbey:

The following singles match is set for one fall! Introducing first, from Nachitoches, Louisiana, weighing in at 221 pounds... **THOMAS SLAINE!**

♪ "I Feel Love (Every Million Miles)" by The Dead Weather ♪

The music hits and Thomas Slaine steps out from the back, ready to fight. The brawler then starts running to the ring and when he gets there, he points an imaginary gun up in the air, blows imaginary smoke from pulling the imaginary trigger, then steps inside. He looks ready to fight as the camera then turns to the entrance.

The lights go dark and one white light pulses through the entrance with the opening riffs... then another...

Dan Leo James makes his way out, then JUMPS when a third one plays.

DDK:

Whoops... think he missed his cue there.

♪ "My Name Is Thunder" by The Bloody Beetroots feat. JET ♪

The drum beats blast loudly and the big protege of Los Tres Titanes regains his composure. He holds his massive hand out and despite his best efforts, gets some polite applause from the DEFIANCE Faithful.

Darren Quimbey:

And his opponent... from Hurricane, Utah, weighing in at 260 pounds... he is BRAZEN's Ascension Battle Royal winner, now making his main roster debut... **DAN! LEO! JAMES!**

Dan stomps a foot to the theme and continues to enjoy the music... until a few moments pass and he realizes he should probably be heading to the ring instead! Upon said realization, Dan charges towards the ring and gets some more cheers as he holds his hand out. He starts to climb in...

But Thomas Slaine has seen enough and goes on the attack!

DING DING

DDK:

Rookie mistake right there! Thomas Slaine making him pay for it right away!

He maneuvers the big Utah native to the corner and then stomps away on him, trying to get him closer to his size. James remains standing, but the repeated kicks to the chest are taking their toll on him.

DDK:

What have your scouting reports told you about Dan Leo James, Lance?

Lance:

Six-foot seven and two-hundred sixty pounds! Only twenty-two years of age, but a three-sport athlete! Excelled at baseball, track and field and in amateur wrestling in high school and dabbled further in wrestling in college. Folks in BRAZEN called him "Danny Three Sports." He's powerful, but he's quicker than his size might let on.

Thomas hits Dan again with a few punches to bring him closer to the ropes then tries to launch him off... but to his surprise, Dan reverses! The big man does a LEAP FROG right over Slaine! The crowd pops when he does it coming off the other side again! And when Slaine comes back off the ropes, James runs him over with a big double arm sledge to the chest to cheers from the crowd!

DDK:

Wow! Impressive footwork there! When he's not in his own head, this kid might be on to something here!

Slaine doesn't know this way from that way when he gets picked up by James and then shoved to the corner. He holds a hand out like he's going to throw a fastball... then throws an extra-STIFF chop right into the chest of Slaine, knocking him off his feet!

DDK:

OOOH! He calls that the Fastball Chop! No doubt Uriel Cortez taught him that one!

The crowd seem to be impressed by Dan Leo James thus far after a few moves in. He claps his hands and gets the crowd clapping along with him before he pulls Slaine back up to his feet with a rear waistlock, then slams him down with a big amateur takedown. He spins around quickly to the front and then paintbrushes the back of his head!

DDK:

Wow! Quick footwork by the big man! He's got speed and a little athleticism to him.

Dan then raises a hand and goozles him by the throat!

Lance:

He's gotta be thinking about a chokeslam here, maybe?

He does... but he keeps on thinking and thinking like he's unsure what to do next... then Slaine has time to free himself with a pair of elbows to the arm.

DDK:

Dan took a little too long there! Now Slaine raking his eyes!

The crowd boos Slaine for the illegal tactics, then runs over and slams Dan's head face-first into the turnbuckle. The big man is stunned when Slaine lets him have it with a pair of his own chops, then rakes the eyes again! He starts to pummel on the bigger James in the corner until referee Rex Knox tells him to back off. He does... and then makes room for a big running forearm upside the head of the Utah native! The blow rattles the brains of Dan as he stumbles around in the corner.

DDK:

He really rocked him with that leaping forearm... but Dan still isn't going down!

Lance:

And look... Thomas Slaine is irate about it!

Thomas unleashes another chop into the chest of the DEFIANCE rookie. He rears back and fires a second one. The big blue chipper gets rocked by an extra shot, then pushes out of the corner for Slaine to climb to the top rope and finally knock Dan off his feet with a flying revers elbow to the face!

DDK:

Slaine down! Does he spoil the debut of James?

ONE... TW-NO!

Dan kicks out, but Thomas isn't happy! He yells at Rex Knox, then SLAPS Dan across the face. The blow only seems to incense James, who makes it clear he won't take any more guff.

DDK:

I think that might have been the wake-up call that Dan Leo James needed! He's not going to let a veteran treat him like dirt!

Dan starts to get to his feet when Thomas tries laying into him with a pair of chops... but they don't seem to faze Dan, so much as make him angry. He YELLS out and the crowd gets behind him! Slaine runs off the ropes, but Dan catches him in his arms! He walks him around the ring and then throws him halfway across the ring with a HUGE Fallaway Slam to the cheers of the DEFIANCE Faithful!

Lance:

Here we go! Let's see what he can do with some fire under him!

Danny Three Sports corners Slaine and then BLISTERS him with a big chop of his own, as receipt from earlier. Dan whips him across the ring and gets ready to run... then charges in and buries a hard corner shoulder tackle! He isn't done, though as he keeps Slaine on his shoulders...

Dan Leo James:

YEET!

...then THROWS him up and over with a huge back body drop that has the fans cheering!

Lance:

And now what's Dan doing?

Dan doesn't wait for Thomas to stand just yet when he runs off one set of ropes. Slaine does start to get up when Dan comes off the other side... then RAMS right into him with a powerful shoulder tackle that makes him spin!

DDK:

OOH! He calls that the Dash and Bash! He makes use of his track and field background to great effect there!

Dan is looking good and feeding off the fans as he looks toward Thomas Slaine... then raises his hand in the air!

Lance:

Does he know what he's going for this time?

DDK:

He better hope so! I asked him if he had a finisher when I spoke with him earlier... he said, quote, "still workshopping that."

Lance:

Oh dear.

Dan goozles him by the throat... he starts to lift Slaine up... then puts him back down. Like he's worried about how he wants to do whatever he wants to do next.

DDK:

Come on! You have half a foot and over forty pounds! Chokeslam him!

But as he wastes precious seconds, Thomas fires a couple of headbutts into the face of Dan Leo James and staggers him back! Thomas Slaine then grabs him by the arm and it looks like he's going to go for the Manic Effect... but Dan shakes him off and plants him on the mat! He looks out to the crowd like he has an idea! He grabs the arm of Slaine and then uses a pinning combination oddly for a large man!

Lance:

Is that a... la majistral?! From a man that big?

DDK:

He did tell me he had this in his back pocket... the Minute-Approved La Majistral!

With the massive James keeping him pinned down using a lucha roll, the crowd counts along with the pinfall, odd as it may be!

ONE... TWO... THREE!

DING DING DING

Dan rolls out of the ring and then heads outside to cheers from the crowd! He holds up his right hand like he did a chokeslam... but really didn't. Rex Knox raises his hand.

Darren Quimbey:

Here is your winner... **DAN LEO JAMES!**

James heads out of the ring and then raises a hand for the crowd while Thomas Slaine complains to the referee that he kicked out of the hold... but really, didn't.

DDK:

Any way you slice it, a win is a win for young Dan Leo James. That said, I hope he goes forward knowing how to go for the kill. Any veteran can catch you hesitating if you aren't careful.

Lance:

Indeed. I saw a couple flashes of greatness in that ring. Let's hope that Los Tres Titanes can help bring something more out of him.

Dan Leo James heads up the ramp and then almost trips heading to the back. He barely catches himself, then takes a breath and heads to the back hoping that Los Tres Titanes will be proud of his performance tonight.

JUST A PEEK

Offices of Favoured Saints - Earlier Today

Footsteps ...

Those footsteps belong to a pair of dark brown Oxford dress shoes.

An upward shot shows the person in question wearing a black Burberry classic foot wool suit.

And the person that is poured into that suit?

Approximately one pile of human garbage named Tom Morrow.

He taps a button on his Better Future Talent Agency head set. He's waiting for someone to answer. When it does, he speaks up.

Tom Morrow:

It's me.

He waits on the other end for the person ... or persons ... to respond.

Tom Morrow:

Done deal.

He taps his headset to hang up on the call and taps his suitcase. The evil smile on his face can't be wiped off with a belt sander.

GET BACK UP

The shot opens up in the training and performance center of the WrestlePlex. Seasoned interviewer Jamie Sawyers stands between “Skyfire” Zack Daymon and “The Iceman” Leo Burnett, who are mid-workout.

Jamie Sawyers:

Welcome back to Uncut, ladies and gentlemen. Jamie Sawyers here, back in New Orleans at the WrestlePlex, checking in with the new former BRAZEN Tag Team Champions, Zack Daymon and Leo Burnett, the Rain City Ronin!

Daymon, impatiently chewing gum, nods. Burnett politely waves.

Jamie Sawyers:

Gentlemen, you’ve been one of the most successful and popular tag teams in BRAZEN this past year, which culminated into a long and dominant reign as the Tag Team Champions. Unfortunately, as we all know by now, that reign came to an end at the recent Clash of the BRAZEN in Charlotte, North Carolina. What are your thoughts on that?

Zack grinds his teeth. Leo looks dejected, but leans in to answer.

Leo Burnett:

We’re disappointed, obviously. Had a good run... but like they say, all good things come to an end.

Zack Daymon:

...or, you know, get absolutely pissed on by some bitch-ass lesser team! No matter how you slice it, Jamie, those belts were STOLEN from us!

Jamie Sawyers:

You do make an interesting point, considering neither one of you were pinned to lose those titles to the new BRAZEN Tag Team Champions, BIG Trouble.

Leo is nodding in agreement.

Leo Burnett:

It was an unforeseen turn of events, Jamie. I think if we had a choice, we would have rather lost those belts to The House. Legitimately. But there was no way we could’ve seen this coming. It is what it is.

Zack Daymon:

But what goes around, comes around...

Jamie Sawyers:

I see. Well then, gentlemen, where do the two of you go from here?

Zack and Leo exchange a look to confirm they’re on the same page.

Leo Burnett:

We’ve talked a bit about it. Could we try to settle the score with Batts and Ali’i? Sure... but we also think this could be the beginning of a new chapter for this team. We think this could be an opportunity to broaden our horizons and focus on something different.

Zack Daymon:

Or something better. It’s time we left the kiddie pool of BRAZEN behind for the big boys league. It’s time we earned our place on the DEFIANCE main roster.

Jamie Sawyers:

Moving up to the DEFIANCE tag team roster? That would definitely be a major step up for the both of you, but now I

have to ask, given how abundant and competitive the current DEFIANCE tag team scene is, do you think you have what it takes to hold your own among the other teams?

Zack scoffs.

Zack Daymon:

Does our championship run not speak for itself, Jamie? We know exactly what it means to be competitive. Not gonna know if we have it or not unless we throw ourselves to the wolves. Shoot for the moon, I always say. So we're gonna blow that motherfucker right out of the sky, and become legends!

Leo Burnett:

Time will tell if we have what it takes. What we know now, is that we are willing. We proved that when we stepped up to the Kabal. Again to Vae Victis. No matter how many times we get beat down, we get back up, more determined than before.

He raises his fist to Burnett for a bump. Smiling, Leo returns it.

Jamie Sawyers:

Determination is always key, but in that case, gentlemen, I wish you good luck to you in your effort to move onto greener pastures. And I'm sure the DEFIANCE tag teams will soon be on the lookout for the Rain City Ronin.

Daymon and Burnett nod before turning back to the workout equipment. The shot fades to black.

LOOKING FOR SOME DAMN RESPECT

Backstage in the DEFplex in New Orleans, where Christie Zane stands (with mic in hand) in front of a DEFIANCE banner. On either side of her are the hulking beasts Bobby Horrigan and Roosevelt Owens - collectively known as the powerhouse tag team of the BRAZEN scene, Heavy Artillery. Christie appears to have a difficult time standing comfortably between all that girth.

Christie Zane:

Ladies and gentlemen, I'm here with Heavy Artillery who are set to square off with the Gulf Coast Connection later tonight. Gentlemen, you requested this interview time. So what's on your mind?

Horrigan roughly snatches the mic out of Christie's hand and he sneers into the camera.

Bobby Horrigan:

Yeah, you're damn right we asked for this. Cause we weren't gonna get it otherwise, were we? Hell, Owens, when's the last time you remember Heavy Artillery getting any promo time?

The portly Owens doesn't respond, but he does shake his head in disgust.

Bobby Horrigan:

Yeah. Never. We've been wrecking fools for damn near four years, but we still have to watch tag teams that couldn't lace our boots make it to the big show year after year. Well, that stops now... you understand, Christie?

He points a large finger in her direction. Looking to avoid conflict, she shakes her head in agreement.

Bobby Horrigan:

Tonight, the Gulf Coast Connection is gonna get squashed like bugs, and the DEFIANCE brass and the fans are going to have no damn choice but to pay attention to Heavy Artillery. And when we...

Horrigan stops... as oddly enough, the lights over the interview station begin to flicker. Horrigan and Roosevelt both look up in confusion. Owens looks at Christie in explanation but she appears to be just as clueless.

Bobby Horrigan:

Anyway... like I was saying, we're gonna...

The lights flicker again. This time, a red mist begins to slowly creep into the interview station. It begins to click in Zane's head, as she's been in this situation before. She looks up and rolls her eyes. Heavy Artillery are scanning around, looking for the source of the mysterious fog. Rising from the mist, right next to Christie and in between both members of Heavy Artillery... a figure begins to rise. Roosevelt and Horrigan both recoil backwards a bit, surprised by the sudden appearance of this person... a person who sweeps his cape back, to reveal (of course) the dastardly Count Novick! Novick bares his fangs and poses dramatically. He reaches a hand out toward Horrigan, asking for the mic. Bobby, seemingly bewildered by this, hands it over.

Count Novick:

BLAAAAHHHH!!! It is I, THE EVIL COUNT NOVICK!! AH!

In the arena, we hear the live audience laugh along with him.

Novick & The Faithful:

HA! HA!

A cheer. Novick grins, before pointing a very evil finger into Bobby Horrigan's face.

Count Novick:

You claim to be big! You claim to be... BAAAAAD! But COUNT NOVICK sees what dwells in the souls of men. And while it is clear that you have never passed on...

Novick looks the rather rotund Roosevelt Owens up and down.

Count Novick:

American cheeseburgers... THE GREAT AND POWERFUL NOVICK can see right through your bravado. When I look into your eyes... I see....

Dramatic pose.

Count Novick:

FEAR!

Horrigan looks the Count (who is still frozen in his vampire pose) up and down. Bobby turns to his partner... they lock eyes. Owens shrugs... and nails Novick from behind with a big sledge across the neck! The Count goes down in a heap and Christie Zane shrieks and gets out of dodge as both members of Heavy Artillery begin to put the boots to Novick's downed form. After they've kicked the crap out of them, they both reach down and grab Novick's limp form into the air.

Bobby Horrigan:

Hey, Rosie... vampires can fly, right?

Owens grins, and Heavy Artillery launch Novick, like a lawn dart, into the interview curtain. He flies right through and lands right into a pile of metal crates. The Count collides with a thud as the boxes topple over and Novick lands in a heap. Horrigan and Owens turn away from the scene to look into the lens.

Bobby Horrigan:

Gulf Coast Connection... you're about to end up just like this joker here. Bank on that.

With a smile, Heavy Artillery move out of frame as DEFstaff move in to check on Novick.

GULF COAST CONNECTION vs. HEAVY ARTILLERY

DDK:

Uncut rolls on! We're back home in the DEFIANCE WrestlePlex, and we're set for tag team action!

♪ "Mamma Said Knock You Out" by Five Finger Death Punch feat. Tech N9ne ♪

The thundering theme starts to play and the lights flicker on repeat every three seconds between the colors of green and orange as two men stand on the stage. On one side, the 6'1" and 330-pound brawler from Boston, Bobby Horrigan. On the other, the 6'6", 468-pound big man from Georgia, Roosevelt Owens. Both big men bump fists and snarl as they march toward the ring.

Darren Quimbey:

The following contest is a tag team match that is scheduled for one fall! Introducing first, at a combined weight of 798 pounds... HEAVY ARTILLERY!

The heavy duty tag team enters the ring and taunt the fans as their theme dies down. While they don't get a thunderous reaction, they are subject to a small smattering of jeers. The reaction ramps up, however, when the next theme hits...

♪ "The Saints" by Andy Mineo w/KB and Trip Lee ♪

And the people come alive for the hometown heroes - The Gulf Coast Connection!

Darren Quimbey:

And their opponents... from NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA... being accompanied to the ring by Theodore Cain... the Crescent City Kid and Titus Campbell... THE GULF! COAST! CONNECTION!

The trio make their way out from the back to a nice pop from the crowd. Theodore Cain has on his Gulf Coast Connection Mardi Gras-themed jester hat, along with Crescent City Kid, getting the crowd fired up with a collection of beads. Titus Campbell brings up the rear and the powerhouse throws a few jester hats out of the bag into the crowd. Once they approach the ring, Theodore Cain gives his own jester hat to a young girl in the audience with her parents as the Crescent City Kid and Titus Campbell enter the ring to start the match.

Lance:

The Gulf Coast Connection have been on quite the role here on Uncut.

DDK:

Heavy Artillery, by contrast, have made very few appearances and always never been on the winning end. As their earlier promo alluded to, they're looking to turn their fortunes around starting tonight.

Lance:

Speaking of... what was up with Count Novick?

DDK:

What's ever up with Count Novick, Lance?

Lance:

Fair point.

DING DING

We've got the Crescent City Kid and Bobby Horrigan to start. The two men begin to circle, looking for an opening, with CCK leaping and bounding while the much, much larger Horrigan walks at a much more... methodical pace. The big Horrigan moves in for the lock up, but CCK ducks out of the way and handstands to the other side of the ring, causing Horrigan to whiff on the attempt. The Boston brawler is none too pleased as CCK smirks and acknowledges the

laughing crowd. He again lunges for the high flier, but CCK is again able to dodge to safety, this time doing a roll and popping up to his feet... into a handstand! Another round of applause from the partisan New Orleans crowd until...

DDK:

Horrigan with a big clothesline from behind! The Kid with a little too much showboating!

Bobby sends CCK off the ropes and on the rebound, hits with him a shoulder block that causes the cruiserweight to do an entire spin in mid air before hitting the mat. Now it's Horrigan's turn to showboat as he laughs and taunts the booing crowd. CCK rolls over to his corner and quickly makes the tag to Titus Campbell! The crowd cheers as the bigger man enters the ring and squares up to Horrigan as payback for his little buddy. Horrigan turns to see why the crowd is cheering and he's met with a flurry of right hands from Titus Campbell.

Lance:

Horrigan reeling! Off the ropes... Campbell with a big flying clothesline!

DDK:

That's a lot of weight hitting the mat! Campbell with the cover!

ONE!

TWO!

Bobby Horrigan powers out. Titus peppers him with some kicks before bringing Horrigan to his feet. Titus goes for a bodyslam, but he can't quite get him up, as Horrigan is just too damn fat. Titus grunts and tries again, and while he is able to get Horrigan off the ground... his strength gives way half way through and Horrigan instead simply falls on top of Campbell, pinning him to the mat!

ONE!

TWO!

NO! Titus gets the shoulder up. Horrigan stuns Titus with some kicks before bringing him to the Heavy Artillery corner. Horrigan tags in big Roosevelt Owens, who drops Titus with a bodyslam and follows up with a big, fat legdrop. He covers.

ONE!

TWO!

Titus again is able to power out. Owens gets back to his feet and comes off the ropes... big splash!! He comes down on Titus like a ton of bricks and immediately hooks the leg.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE - NO!

At the very last second, Titus somehow summons the will to kick out. The fans breathe a sigh of relief as Theodore Cain shouts encouragement from the outside. Owens grabs Campbell and tosses him roughly in the corner before taking position in the opposite corner. Owens taunts the fans a bit before getting a head of steam across the ring, looking to crush the utter life out of Titus Campbell...

DDK:

NO! Campbell moves! Owens hits the turnbuckle sternum first!

With Owens huffing and puffing, Titus is able to stumble forward and reach an outstretched hand to tag in the Crescent City Kid! The people are on their feet as The Kid springboards off the top, flying into the ring with a big missile dropkick! The impact hits Owens square in the face, and the big man stumbles backwards... and through the middle rope and to the outside! Horrigan screams at his partner to get up as CCK measures Owens... bounces off the rounds to build momentum...

Lance:

CCK gets caught!!

Indeed... while CCK did leap over the top rope to the outside... he was caught in mid-air by an angry Roosevelt Owens! The Heavy Artillery member grins, thinking he's got the smaller wrestler right where he wants him. He adjusts CCK on his shoulder's so that the cruiserweight's head is facing forward, and then runs toward the nearby turnbuckle... but CCK is able to slip off and slide down Owen's back at the last second, sending his bigger opponent into the steel instead!

DDK:

Owens is stunned... CCK with a running start off the ring apron... hurricanrana!

The people are roaring their support for the Gulf Coast Connection as the Crescent Kid City gets back into the ring having left Roosevelt Owens stunned on the ringside floor. Bobby Horrigan is seething as he yells at his partner to get up while on the outside, Theodore Cain continues to rile up the fans. Referee Hector Nevarro begins the ten count...

ONE! TWO! THREE! FOUR! FIVE!

The girthy grapplers begins to stir.

SIX! SEVEN!

He's up to a knee.

EIGHT! NINE!

Somehow, the big man is able to get his hands on the bottom rope and pull himself up and under... just making it back into the ring before he's counted out.

DDK:

I've got to say... true to their word, we are seeing more of what Heavy Artillery can do here tonight.

With Owens back in, CCK gets a running start and LEAPS up to the top rope. He turns to face his opponent... but the crowd erupts into boos as Bobby Horrigan comes into the picture, pushing The Kid off the rop!! CCK collides with the top rope neck first and falls to the mat - writhing in pain. Owens tags out to Horrigan, and the Boston man enters the ring eyeing CCK with bad intentions. He sends CCK off the ropes... big powerslam! Instead of going for a cover, he lifts CCK up to his feet. He sends him off the ropes again... second powerslam! A third! Laughing at the booing fans, Horrigan arrogantly makes the cover.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE - Titus Campbell breaks the count!

While Nevarro escorts Titus out of the ring, Horrigan brings CCK to Heavy Artillery's corner and tags in Rosey Owens. Horrigan holds CCK in place, allowing Owens to score with a big kick to the stomach. Horrigan exits the ring as Owens drops CCK with a belly-to-back suplex. Cover...

ONE!

TWO!

NO!

DDK:

The Crescent City Kid has got heart, partner... nobody can take that away from him.

Roosevelt Owens sends CCK off the ropes... and as the Kid hits them, he springboards off with an attempt at a moonsault. Owens is able to catch him over his shoulder. Owens instead drops CCK with a running powerslam. But as Owens turned him, CCK's leg caught Hector Nevarro square in the head! The ref is down and Bobby Horrigan, being a vet of the game, smells blood in the water and enters the ring. Both Heavy Artillery members hit The Crescent City Kid with a double suplex.

Lance:

Here comes Titus Campbell!

Titus is in the ring, taking it to Horrigan with right hands. He falls to a lowblow by Roosevelt Owens, though. Now Theodore Cain is in, and he has better luck, holding off both HA members with punches... until the numbers game catches up with him and he is laid out by a double headbutt.

Lance:

Heavy Artillery are firmly in control, and Hector Nevarro is beginning to stir. They've got a real shot at taking this home.

Roosevelt Owens has The Crescent City Kid in position for a big match-ending powerbomb. With Bobby Horrigan cheering him on, he wraps his meaty paws around The Kid's midsection when...

...the lights go out!

The arena is in total darkness, until we hear...

♪ [Bach, Toccata and Fugue in D minor, organ](#) ♪

It's that creepy organ song. You know the one. When the lights turn back on, Roosevelt has let go of CCK, and both members of Heavy Artillery are scanning the arena, confused. Also... Count Novick is perched on the top rope!!

DDK:

Count Novick is here!!

The people are going ballistic as Novick stalks his prey. Neither of Heavy Artillery have spotted him yet, although they are noticing the response from the fans. Finally, Bobby Horrigan turns into Novick's line of sight... and the Count flies off with a missile dropkick that puts the big man down! Owens tries to grab Novick, but the Count ducks and rebounds off the ropes with a big cross body. Owens is able to catch him... but suddenly, a double dropkick from Theodore Cain and Titus Campbell help Novick complete the move and put Owens on his ass! Both members of The Gulf Coast Connection take Bobby Horrigan out of the equation with a double clothesline out of the ring, leaving Owens, Novick, and CCK in the ring.

DDK:

Hector Nevarro is back up... and The Crescent City Kid is out on the apron...

Lance:

Hurricane Press!

The Kid covers Owens, and Nevarro is alert enough to make the count... but not only does the ref hit the match, but

Count Novick enthusiastically counts along!

ONE! ("Vwon!")

TWO! ("Two!")

THREE!!! ("THREE! AH! HA! HA!")

DING DING DING

DDK:

And Gulf City Connection pick up the win!

Lance:

With an assist from everyone's favorite vampire.

The Gulf Coast Connection celebrate in the ring while Heavy Artillery re-group on the outside. Count Novick is on the ramp. He turns to look back at both members of HA, and he draws his cape over his face before darting backstage in a flash.

DDK:

I just hope Novick hasn't started something that he can't finish...

SIT DOWN W/SIOBHAN

The scene shifts to a television studio; a professional set trimmed with the iconic blacks and reds of DEFIANCE Wrestling. We're back in the same UpClose studio where Lance Warner spent weeks exploring the history behind the MV1/Corvo Alpha saga. Seated at a matching table in the very center is our host himself. The shot moves in tight on him as the UNCUT: UpClose logo hits the lower third of the screen. The left side of the screen holds a box slowly showing clips of highlights from Maximum DEFIANCE '22.

Sitting in the chair next to Warner, however, is not MV1 or Nigel Tricklebrush... but Siobhan Cassidy, sister to Pat Cassidy and (we can assume) ex-girlfriend of Brock Newbludd. Siobhan is dressed professionally and wears what can only be described as an annoyed look on her face.

Lance Warner:

Ms. Cassidy, on behalf of DEFIANCE and all the Faithful, I want to thank you for agreeing to sit down with me today.

Siobhan barks out a sarcastic laugh.

Siobhan Cassidy:

Yeah, I'm sure the "Faithful" are really thankful. You should see the messages I've received in the past few weeks. It's a [BLEEP]ing joke, Lance.

Lance Warner:

Well, why I do not condone harassment of any kind... you must admit, your actions at Maximum DEFIANCE struck a nerve with many of our viewers. Let's cut right to the chase: at the conclusion of a bloody brawl for the Unified Tag Team Championship, you turned your back on The Saturday Night Specials and many argue cost them what appeared to be an impending victory. In fact, they lost the championship that night, bringing an end to a year-long reign. Because of your actions, The Lucky Sevens walked out with the championship, and now the promotion doesn't have control of one of its most prestigious...

Siobhan Cassidy:

Let me stop you right there, Warner. I'm here to answer your questions about what I did, but I don't give two [BLEEP]s about DEFIANCE or their belts. Why would I? I don't care if The Lucky Sevens wipe their asses with the titles and throw them in the river. Okay?

Warner clears his throat and shifts.

Lance Warner:

Fair enough. So let's talk about what you do care about. I guess the only real question is: why? Why turn your back on your longtime boyfriend?

Siobhan barks out another sarcastic laugh.

Siobhan Cassidy:

Oh yeah, my "loving" boyfriend. Some of our relationship was on screen, Warner, but most of it took place when the cameras were not rolling. The fact is, Brock never appreciated me. He dismissed me, he diminished me, and he didn't treat me the way someone like me deserved to be treated. I told him that Ophelia Sykes was a snake. But what does he do? He sides with my dumbass [BLEEP] whipped brother. You saw it. And that's just one of many examples. Brock Newbludd cared about his bar, cared about his career, cared about his tag team... but he never gave two [BLEEP]s about me. You wanna fault me for standing up for myself? Go right ahead. But I did what I needed to do to regain my dignity.

Lance Warner:

I... well, I am not privy to the inner workings of your relationship I will admit. But from what we saw, it sure appeared that he cared a great deal about you.

Siobhan rolls her eyes.

Lance Warner:

But it still begs the question... even if you had these problems with him, why do what you did? Plenty of couples break up, but you embarrassed him on national television.

Siobhan Cassidy:

Because, Warner, when you [BLEEP] with me, I [BLEEP] you right back. Brock wants to care about those belts more than me? Then I'll be the one responsible for him losing them. I wanted him to know it was me - I wanted THE WORLD to know. I took those away from him and I took his stupid ass bar away from him.

A beat. Lance needs a moment to process that last statement.

Lance Warner:

Wait. You "took" the bar?

Siobhan Cassidy:

Hey. Keys go missing all the time, don't they? If mine had found its way into the hands of some disgruntled individual... or individuals... who may or may not have engaged in a little arson... that's hardly my fault, isn't it?

Warner is nearly at a loss for words.

Lance Warner:

I can't believe... Ms. Cassidy, mere months ago, DEFCON ended with you and SNS celebrating their title victory in the center of the ring. You all seemed so happy. People associated you with Ballyhoo Brew perhaps more than anyone. I can't believe you'd...

Siobhan Cassidy [interrupting]:

Believe it. This is what happens to people who cross me.

Lance Warner:

What about your brother!? You took so much away from him, too.

Siobhan settles down a bit.

Siobhan Cassidy:

I don't discuss family business. If he has something to say to me, he knows where to find me. But he can leave the little [LBLEEP] following him around with puppy dog eyes at home. And that's all I'll say on the matter.

Lance shakes his head and rustles his papers. This is not how he expected this interview to go.

Lance Warner:

I think we can understand the implication here. So... are you working with The Lucky Sevens?

Siobhan Cassidy:

I've spoken maybe six words to The Lucky Sevens in my entire life. I can have affiliation with them and I could give two [BLEEP]s what they do, say, or what happens to them. It just so happens... well, the enemy of my enemy is my friend, right?

Lance Warner:

Well... I supposed you've answered my questions and more. Shocking stuff here. I'll admit I'm a bit taken aback. I guess my final question: what's next for Siobhan Cassidy?

Siobhan smirks.

Siobhan Cassidy:

A girl like me isn't single for long, Warner. I've found a new man. A man who knows my value. One who, unlike Brock Newbludd, worships me for the princess that I am.

Lance Warner:

Do we... do we know this person?

Her smile grows wider and more devilish.

Siobhan Cassidy:

Who can say, Lance? I don't feel like revealing who he is at this time. I've learned that it's best to keep my love life... private. But let's just say he's closer than you know. And maybe someday soon the world can learn who it is. But... not yet. I suppose I can say, though...

She leans back.

Siobhan Cassidy:

DEFIANCE has not seen the last of me.

Lance Warner:

Well. There you have it. I want to thank you again for...

Siobhan stands up and rips off her mic. We can hear her say faintly...

Siobhan Cassidy:

Yeah, bye.

And she storms off. Warner watches her go, shaking his head. He looks into the camera.

Lance Warner:

I'm Lance Warner, and this has been UNCUT: UpClose.

CLOSING TIME

With that, the UpClose studio slowly fades to black. A second later the picture fades back into a full moon shining bright in a clear night sky. The camera then slowly pans down to reveal the charred husk of a building once known as Ballyhoo Brew. Lined off with yellow caution tape, the once prominent establishment had become nothing more than a pile of burnt rubble. To say that the arsonist responsible for the tavern's demise did a thorough job would be more than a massive understatement.

And to say Brock Newbludd's life has gone to complete shit ever since Ballyhoo burnt down would also be a massive understatement. Helplessly watching his lifelong dream business (along with almost all his personal belongings) burn to the ground wasn't even the worst part of it all, it was just the first part. The kickoff to a month-long nightmare that climaxed with Brock getting punched in the nuts so hard it literally broke his heart and cost him the only thing he had left to fight for, the Unified Tag Team Titles.

Now, sitting alone at the one section of the bar left standing, on the only barstool that somehow managed to keep all four of its legs, Brock stares at his phone in disbelief.

Did he hear that right? Did Siobhan just say that *she* might have "lost" her keys? That whatever happened isn't *her* fault?

Brock Newbludd:

Not your fault...not...

Staring into space, Brock blindly reaches over and grabs the soot covered bottle of cheap tequila he had been working on. Throwing his head back, he takes a more than generous pull from the bottle before looking back down at his phone. As he does so, the camera zooms over his shoulder to reveal that he had just watched Siobhan's interview with Lance Warner and he just so happened to pause it right when she flashed that evil little grin of hers.

Brock Newbludd:

...YOUR FAULT!!?? What the fuck!?

Rage consumes Brock as he jolts up out of the barstool, grabs it with one hand, and hurls it. The stool smashes against a wall and knocks down a partially burned framed picture. Staring at the picture, Brock takes another swig of tequila and walks over to it. Squatting down, Newbludd grabs a corner of the frame and picks it up. He flips the frame around and broken glass falls to the ground as he stands back up. Turning the picture back around, Brock lets out a pathetic chuckle and sighs. Up until a week ago the image of himself, Pat, and Siobhan on Ballyhoo's opening night was his favorite picture to look at.

Now, not so much. Eyes still burning with rage, Brock pulls the picture out of the frame and tears a chunk of it off. The torn section drops to the ground to show the smiling Siobhan. Now staring at a picture of himself and his best friend, Newbludd's eyes start to well up.

Brock Newbludd:

It was a helluva run, buddy.

Brock looks up and scans over the burnt remnants of his life.

Brock Newbludd:

Fuckin' A...I'm gonna miss this place.

Wiping the tears from his eyes, Brock shakes his head in disgust at the waterworks and walks back over to the bar. He takes one last pull from the bottle of tequila to finish it off and then picks his phone up. Taking a deep breath, he opens his text messages and begins to type as the camera zooms in on his screen.

"Being your partner, and your friend was the highlight of my career. It was an honor to share the ring with you, brother. I've been around long enough to know greatness when I see it, and I see it in you, Cass. Take care of yourself, and tell your sister that she can go fuck herself. I don't know what's next for me, but it can't be in DEFIANCE."

Newbludd's thumb hovers over the 'send' button for a brief second. Letting out an a sigh, he pushes it.

Brock Newbludd:

Whoever said it was better to burn out than to fade away is full of shit.

Setting his phone back down on the bar, Brock bends down and finds a solid chunk of rubble. Lifting it above his head, Newbludd brings the chunk of wood down directly on his phone to smash the screen. Catching another glimpse of Siobhan through the spiderweb of cracks he just created, Newbludd screams in frustration and repeatedly smashes his phone, causing the piece of wood to eventually snap in half from the hammering. Brock growls angrily and chucks the half still clutched in his hand over his shoulder. Defeated and disgusted, Newbludd takes a deep breath as he gives Ballyhoo Brew one last final look.

Brock Newbludd:

Ballyhoo, man. Bally-fuckin'-hoo...

Head hung low, 'The Innovator' Brock Newbludd walks away from Ballyhoo Brew for the last time, leaving his shattered phone and his shattered life behind him.

ACCEPT NO SUBSTITUTES

Backstage interview area.

And one man who claims to represent DEFIANCE itself.

Fuming.

Pissed off.

But ready to speak on some things. He has the microphone in hand.

Oscar Burns:

I'm not wasting another damn breath answering any questions about Maximum DEFIANCE, GCs. That match was everything to Dex Joy... EVERYTHING. But does that match mean the same to me? The man who's won SIXTY matches on DEFIANCE... SIXTY! More matches wrestled and more matches WON than anyone else in this place? The match that was everything to the career of Dex Joy... but was just ONE match to me. Yeah nah, I'm done wasting my time on frivolous things. It's time to get back to what's most important... being on top.

He points at the DEFIANCE logo behind him on the backdrop.

Oscar Burns:

GCs... take a look at that word. DEFIANCE. And who's the first person you think of when you see those colors? That logo? This promotion? It isn't Dex Joy. It isn't Conor Fuse. It isn't Malak Garland. I respect what they're doing, but it isn't any member of Vae Victis. It isn't even the man holding the FIST of DEFIANCE right now. It's not even you, Deacon.

That finger pointing at the DEFIANCE logo slowly moves until it stops under his chin.

Oscar Burns:

That's me. And that brings me to (finger pointing to the camera) YOU... Arthur Pleasant.

The mention of the name almost makes him wince.

Oscar Burns:

Months ago... you had the GALL to say to Rezin and Scrow with a straight face that you... YOU were DEFIANCE? Maybe you thought that was a cute little line, but when I heard those words come out of YOUR mouth? Yeah nah. You're a bit of a dag. You're scrappy, but you aren't DEFIANCE. You're impressive, sure. You showed the world at MAXDEF you could, in fact, wrestle. Not as good as me... but nobody does, so don't feel bad. You have the Favoured Saints Championship, the most hotly contested title in our promotion right now. You're destined for great things at the rate you're going... but not against me and not in MY tournament. You're absolutely MUNTED if you think you're getting past me.

Back to the logo.

Oscar Burns:

This isn't some comeback story or some grand return to the top because that would be implying that DEFIANCE has somehow fallen from grace. DEFIANCE hasn't. I haven't. I'm as good as I've ever been, GCs, and my resume in that ring and in this company make me the odds-on favorite to win this whole thing. The FIST will finally go back to the most relevant man in the promotion and I will set everything right again. Arthur, against anyone else in this tournament, you might have been on a big run. But against me?

He points at the screen.

Oscar Burns:

I. Am. DEFIANCE. Accept no substitutes.

Black.

AARON KING vs. WILD LOGAN BARRY

DDK:

Folks, welcome back to UNCUT and we're about to see a return to action for a former member of the Gulf Coast Connection as well as most recently, The Scourge. We're seeing the return of Aaron King up next

Lance:

Last time we saw King, he TECHNICALLY had a victory over Dex Joy... after the original decision was reversed when an outraged Dex Joy took him to task. He had to rehab a back injury from then and from what I understand, he's back to his old ways.... Sort of.

DDK:

We have action as he takes on a young prospect from BRAZEN, former boxer, Wild Logan Barry! Let's go to ringside for the next match!

To Darren Quimbey... we go!

Darren Quimbey:

The following contest is set for one fall! Introducing first... from Conway, Kansas, weighing in at 231 pounds... **WILD LOGAN BARRY!**

♪ "It's A Fight" by Three 6 Mafia ♪

The theme plays and out comes the former boxer, throwing shadow punches on the stage to modest applause. He raises a taped fist with the word "LEFT!" written in blue sharpie as he heads to the ring.

DDK:

Barry looks ready. Powerful frame and a powerful left which can be difficult for some wrestlers to defend against.

Lance:

He's still less than a year into his wrestling career, but a big opportunity against a main roster star in Aaron King.

Barry raises another fist and then throws one last big left in the air as he awaits his opponents.

♪ "Godzilla" by Eminem feat. Juice WRLD ♪

The new theme plays as lights swirl in shades of red and blue hues. Out comes Aaron King, looking drastically different from when he was last seen in early January of this year. Wearing a blue leather jacket and blue-tinted sunglasses, the man called King has his back to the audience. He runs a hand through longer blonde hair before he spins to face the ring. He takes his shades down, winks at the camera, then heads to the ring with a power strut.

Darren Quimbey:

And his opponent... from Pensacola, Florida, weighing in at 234 pounds... he is "**THE PENSACOLA PLAYBOY**" **AARON KING!**

DDK:

He's showing a different attitude, that's for sure. He served under Arthur Pleasant and Jack Harman for a number of months. I wonder if he picked anything up from them.

King sheds the jacket and sunglasses, then yells at referee Rex Knox not to ruin the jacket or he's gonna get it. Wild Logan Barry doesn't look intimidated by the pretty boy, but neither does King. The two take their stances in the ring.

DING DING

Both men lock up, but it's Aaron King with quick dropstep and a go-behind. He quickly goes to a single leg and then trips up Barry, but instead of going for anything resembling the pretty wrestling he just did... he trips him up and then

raises a hand, blowing a kiss to a young lady fan in the front row nearby.

DDK:

I guess he's learned to play around like a fool while he was out?

Lance:

I don't know. His in-ring work has always been solid since his days as a member of the original Gulf Coast Connection trio, but we're seeing a new attitude.

King lets Barry get up and taps on his chin, offering a free swing to the former boxer. That might be a mistake, but Barry takes it... only for him to miss wildly when King sidesteps and then takes him down with a quick Russian leg sweep! He sits up, but instead of following up or going for a cover, he rolls out to the floor and then heads over to the same lady fan he was talking to earlier. He rolls over to his blue leather jacket and pulls out a cell phone before handing it over for a phone number.

Lance:

You're... you're seeing this, too, right? He's asking for a phone number from a girl... mid-match.

DDK:

That is what I'm seeing, too, yes... and look, I think Barry is annoyed.

Barry gets up after being embarrassed early on, then chases Aaron King outside the ring. King sees him coming, then rolls into the ring first. Wild Logan Barry runs in, but King drops a big knee drop to the back!

DDK:

And there he goes again! King has a few years more experience than his opponent and he's taking advantage of that.

King pulls Barry up by the side and then DRIVES him down over his knee with a backbreaker. Barry hits the mat, but The Pensacola Playboy picks him up again and then nails a snap suplex. He sits up again after a few moves and then finally makes a cover.

ONE... TWO...

Barry kicks out!

DDK:

Good kickout by Barry!

Aaron King continues to stand up and then boots the former boxer a few more times. He measures him up, then leaps forward and CRACKS him on the jaw with a nasty jumping calf kick!

Lance:

Oooh! Nice move there!

DDK:

But he's... ugh, not covering! What's he doing now?

King goes over to his sunglasses and mid-match decides that he's going to play around some more by putting the shades on. Now that he's ready, he has them on... but when he tries to get Barry back up... he takes a jab to the chest! Then another body blow! And another!

DDK:

Those sunglasses staying on! Impressive! But moreso... Logan Barry fighting back!

The crowd cheers on the former boxer when he calls out to the crowd. He rams King into the corner and then strikes

him with several more body blows. He throws an elbow into the side of his head and knocks the sunglasses off! King is about to freak out when Wild Logan Barry grabs the arm and then SNAPS him out of the corner with a huge faceplant into the turnbuckle, followed by charging off the ropes for a big clothesline!

Lance:

Oooh! Nicely done there by Barry! Big lariat from the left side!

DDK:

And... what is King doing?

King starts to freak out that his face has been touched and looks like he's been shot in the face. Barry can't help but look at the man rolling around like he's on fire, then goes in for the kill...

But King lays a trap! He grabs the tights of Barry and then pulls him throat-first against the nearby ropes! Logan rolls back clutching his throat in pain and collapsing to a knee. King then takes advantage next by dropping him with a big double knee backbreaker!

Lance:

Ooh! Faked him out with the attacks on the face!

DDK:

Yeah... faked...

King regains his composure and then grabs his sunglasses again. He puts them back on his face for some reason like a jackass, then grabs Barry by the side... then DRIVES him down with a vicious uranage backbreaker!

DDK:

Oooh! He hit the double knee backbreaker earlier and then follows up with the Uranage Backbreaker! He calls that Party Down... and what's next?

He grabs both legs of Barry and then pulls him up with an Elevated Boston Crab! He wrenches back on the hold while trying to look as handsome as he can, almost posing. After all the back attacks, Barry has no choice...

TAP TAP TAP!

DING DING DING

♪ "Godzilla" by Eminem feat. Juice WRLD ♪

His theme plays when King finally lets go of the hold, letting Barry collapse back to the mat. After the win, Hehe asks for his blue leather jacket back and when he gets it, he puts it back on so he can dance like a dick to his theme.

Darren Quimbey:

Here is your winner... **AARON KING!**

DDK:

Aaron King played Wild Logan Barry like a fiddle and then left him with a possible back injury to boot. Impressive return to action for the former Gulf Coast Connection mem... oh.

Lance:

Looks like he wants a microphone.

The Pensacola Playboy is given a microphone...

Aaron King:

Don't you dare cut my damn theme! This...is the good part. Godzilla, fire spitter, monster! Blood on the dance floor, and on the Louis V carpet! Fire, Godzilla, fire, monster! Blood on the dance floor, and on the Louis V carpet! All right... cut!

The music finally fades after he finishes the verse and then continues on.

Aaron King:

All right, enough of that crap... Screw The Gulf Coast Connection for getting me NOWHERE... screw The Scourge for making me their meat shield... and screw ALL OF YOU for not showing me the love I deserve!

The jeering crowd does indeed not show him love.

Aaron King:

Let me reintroduce myself... my name is Aaron King! I am The Pensacola Playboy! And I'm not just pretty... I'm dangerous.

With a mic drop, he resumes dancing and swaggering like a jackass before leaving the ring.

DDK:

Enough said, I guess. A successful return for Aaron King and I'm sure we'll be hearing more from him in the future.

Lance:

If he doesn't stop dancing to the tune in his head.

King continues on up the ramp as the show moves on.

RUMBLINGS AND MUSINGS OF A WOMAN SCORNED

DEFIANCE Wrestleplex, VIP Skybox 3.

The plex sits half empty as extras, ring crew and BRAZEN talent run through rehearsals down around the ring area. Way up high in a skybox toils none other than Teresa Ames. She holds her Molang themed bedazzled phone close as her screen is the only source of light in the vicinity.

Teresa Ames:

I need to check out the next road schedule. I have no idea where we're heading and that is kind of important to an ASMRtist like me.

She pulls up the PDF file sent out to all staff. Her eyes overly examine the information presented to her.

Teresa Ames:

First up is Phoenix, Arizona. The GCU Arena. Hmmmmm. Interesting.

Well versed with her phone's user interface, she's already googling images of the arena.

Teresa Ames:

Oh I like the palm trees out front. Shit guy, shit. I'm always a fool for some shrubbery.

The Tasty Gurl flicks through numerous outside shots of the GCU Arena, each more tantalizing than the last.

Teresa Ames:

What architecture. What symmetry. I simply love the bold angles and sharp edges. The white roof reminds me of a marshmallow. I know it's hot in Phoenix but things are about to get a whole lot hotter once I'm over there. I can't wait to go.

Ames puts her phone into sleep mode before stowing it away somewhere in her bountiful bosom. She waltzes to the skybox guardrail and peers down at the sparring taking place below. A smile breaks across her face as she takes in the atmosphere.

Teresa Ames:

I haven't felt this feeling in a long time. It's good to finally be free.

CRIPPLED INSIDE

In the beginning, [there is only music](#).

A black screen greets us along with the tender, pensive finger-picking of a close-mic'd acoustic guitar. Images flow across the screen, black & white, of the former Masked Violators united in simpler, happier times. Celebratory.

The guitar suddenly gives way to jangly, bouncing, olde-timey piano and slapping, clattering drums... and the images burst into brutal color. John Lennon's voice reaches out from the past to reassure us:

♪*"You can shine your shoes and wear a suit."*♪

A barefoot Corvo Alpha kicks the head off of MV1, a microphone soaring through the air. We cut to an image of Lord Nigel Trickelbush doffing his bowler cap towards the camera.

♪*"You can comb your hair and look quite cute."*♪

Corvo's wide eyes peer through his wet, long, stringy dark hair.

♪*"You can hide your face behind a smile."*♪

We cut. Frothing at the mouth, Alpha tears at the mask of MV1.

♪*"The one thing you can't hide... is when you're crippled inside."*♪

Eyes welled with tears, Alpha cinches on the Alpha Clutch and sinks deeper.

♪*"You can wear a mask and paint your face."*♪

We cut. Alpha ceremoniously smears black ink across his forehead and eyes, red paint spread across his chest like an open wound. A yellow mask burns in a barrel.

♪*"You can call yourself the human race."*♪

Another cut. Lord Nigel Trickelbush performs a sweeping, melodramatic bow.

♪*"You can wear a collar and a tie."*♪

The last cut is a still shot of Corvo Alpha squeezing the last breathe from the lungs of MV1 at MAXDEF.

♪*"The one thing you can't hide... is when you're crippled inside."*♪

The camera zooms slowly, Ken Burns style, on the wild, wide, wet eyes of Corvo Alpha. Empty. And dangerous. The song is smoothly edited to bring us to the classic, bluesy "big finish".

♪*"The one thing you can't hide..."*

Images pulse along to the beat. Each one more violent than the one before it. Each one displaying Alpha's savagery.

"...is when you're crippled inside."♪

The last image is that of Corvo Alpha on his knees as a sneering Lord Nigel looms behind and over him. We fade to black.

WHAT IS THIS?

Black.

Then a voice echoes through the void.

"This is not an ending."

[*♪ "Danse Macabre" by Camille Saint-Saëns ♪*](#)

"Merely the beginning of something new.

*"Something different. Stronger. Better. More **fearsome** than ever before.*

"This is not an invitation.

"You've been warned. The time for bargaining has come to pass. Now, DEFIANCE... you must accept your fate.

"This is not a rebirth.

"Simply a continuation. The next stage of death, moving from putrefaction to skeletonisation. A ridding of waste to leave behind what is pure and eternal.

"This, DEFIANCE..."

The glow of GREEN EYES pierce the darkness.

"This... is a MESSAGE."

The skull-faced mask of El Muerte Verde himself leans into the light.

Green Reaper:

DEATH cannot truly die. And so long as I remain... neither will the Kabal!

Greenie leans back into the darkness. His LED-light eyeholes flip off. The screen is black once again.

Green Reaper:

You have been warned, DEFIANCE. The Spectrum of Cessation shall return...

FAVORED SAINTS CHAMPIONSHIP: ARTHUR PLEASANT Â© vs. GEORGE OTHELLO

♪ "The Black Flame of Calamity" by FalkKonE ♪

The Wrestleplex fills with boos as the lights go out.

Biblical-esque vocalizing interrupts the booing and is soon facilitated by pulsating drums and guitars. A plague-esque green spotlight shines down on the Favored Saints Champion as he is seen on stage.

Lance:

Ew.

DDK:

Welp, it's that time I guess.

Looking down at the ground with both hands clasped together and the Favored Saints Championship draped across his shoulder, Arthur Pleasant simply takes it all in as the green spotlight slowly begins to spread throughout the capacity crowd in a "plague-like" effect..

Lance:

Nothing against the Favored Saints Championship or anything but... yeah.

DDK:

It's one of those, "if you know, you know" things.

Darren Quimbey:

The following match is scheduled for one fall and it is for the Favored Saints Championship! Making his way down to the ring first, from Under the Midnight Sun, weighing in at 225lbs, he is the Favored Saints Champion... the PLAGUEBEAST... ARTHUUUUUURRR PLLLEEEAAASAAANT!

As he walks down the ramp, Pleasant extends his arms out to his sides as if to "absorb" the hatred of everyone in the Wrestleplex. A sickening grin hugs his mug as he embraces the Faithful's vitriol with every fiber of his gilded being. Walking up the steps, Pleasant lowers his arms and looks out into the sea of Faithful yearning for his demise. Soon, the green effect fades away to natural lighting and Pleasant makes his way halfway across the ring apron and stares out into the crowd, raising his championship high into the air at the hard cam side of the Wrestleplex.

Lance:

I'm still in shock from MAXIMUM DEFIANCE. Not only did I *not* see Arthur Pleasant being one of the mystery competitors getting a shot at the Favored Saints Championship, but I didn't think for *one second* I'd be living in a reality where Arthur Pleasant wore an officially recognized DEFIANCE Wrestling Championship. It just... makes no sense to me.

DDK:

I know, Lance. I know. But the fact of the matter is we are living in that reality, and much to everyone's chagrin, Pleasant put on one helluva spectacle against David Noble.

Lance:

Ohhh I'm chagrinin' alright. I'm chagrinin' HARD.

Pleasant makes it to the center of the ring, handing his Favored Saints Championship to the Buffalo himself, Brian Slater.

♪ "Mellow Yellow" by Donovan ♪

The crowd pops instantly for The Mellow & Yellow One as he bursts out from Guerilla right onto the Wrestleplex's stage.

Darren Quimbey:

And the challenger... from Swansea, Wales, weighing in at 215lbs... Mellow... Yellow... GEORGE...
OOOOOOTHHELLOOOOOO!

DDK:

I don't recall a bigger reaction for George Othello. Ever.

Lance:

I don't either, Keebs. Just another example of how hated Arthur Pleasant is with the Faithful. And humankind, in all honesty.

Othello just charges down the ramp and slides under the bottom rope. Before Arthur can even do anything... George tackles him in the middle of the ring!

DDK:

Whoa! Looks like George wants to get things going in a hurry!

Lance:

Yeah! YEAH! Let's go, Mellow Yellow!

Forgoing any sort of break-up, Brian Slater roars to the timekeeper, to which he is immediately obliged!

DING DING

Othello lays in the forearms directly into the underside of Pleasant's chin, rattling his brain against the canvas with each shot. Pleasant finally manages to shove Othello off of him, giving him a moment of reprieve. It doesn't last long, though, as Othello shotguns himself off of the ropes and nails a perfectly placed dropkick to Pleasant's shoulder area. The force of which nearly causes him to go over the top rope. As Arthur catches himself from going over, he doesn't have enough time to turn around and see Othello coming after him with a clothesline. This time, the Plaguebeast goes up and over, spilling to the outside mat in a heap.

DDK:

I can't believe this! What a start by The Mellow & Yellow One.

Lance:

Don't sleep on this guy. He's a student of the Harold Ketch Grapple Academy! He's a black belt in Judo and very aggressive in the grapple arts!

DDK:

He's obviously done his homework on the Favored Saints Champion, too.

Lance:

Perhaps the fact that Arthur is facing a Harold Ketch alumni in the first round of the FIST Tournament lit a fire under Mellow Yellow! What a feather in the cap for the Academy this would be to see one student take his title and an alumni eliminate him from FIST contention!

Pleasant gets to his feet but trips up and falls back against the guardrail. Holding himself up by his arm, Pleasant stands up fully, a look of pure indignation having strewn about his face. Pursing his lips with a quivering disgust, Arthur walks around the perimeter of the ring for a moment. Othello yells at his opponent to come back into the ring, clearly not wanting to mix it up on the outside with the Deathmatch Despot.

DDK:

Smart move on George's part for not trying to go toe-to-toe with Arthur on the outside. There's no one more dangerous out on the perimeter of the ring, in my humble opinion.

Lance:

100% with you there, partner.

Showing even more confidence than tackling him at the open, Othello actually sits on the middle rope and pushes up on the top rope, inviting Pleasant back into the ring.

DDK:

Wow. Othello has a big set on him.

Lance:

I'll say. Not sure if this isn't a mistake on his part, though.

Pleasant nods, accepting Othello's invite. Just before he steps through, though...

SMAAAACK!

...he runs across the apron and nails a high impact single-leg dropkick right into Othello's face from just inside the second rope!

DDK:

And just like that, this one's probably over. Holy hell what a Provocation that was!

Lance:

My disdain for Arthur Pleasant aside, that was a brilliant move. I don't think I've ever seen him hit that Provocation from on the apron to someone on the inside before.

Slater admonishes Pleasant's legal, if only *vile*, Provocation to Othello, but the Favored Saints Champion ignores the giant-sized referee before stepping between the ropes. Holding his hands up and shouting, "I did nothing wrong!" Pleasant steps away from Othello, whose right leg is hung up on the middle rope while the rest of him is laid out on the canvas.

Arthur Pleasant:

WAKE HIS FUCKING ASS UP!!

DDK:

Not sure why Pleasant doesn't just pull him from the ropes and go for the cover here. Clearly he has this thing in the bag.

Lance:

Yerah, well, we all know Arthur loves his games. This is a perfect example of that.

As Pleasant turns his back to Slater checking on Othello, Pleasant climbs the corner turnbuckles to antagonize the Faithful.

Calling for a microphone, Pleasant looks over towards the timekeeper's table.

DDK:

Oh God.

Lance:

Yep. This is why I can't stand him.

Tapping on the microphone after he's handed it by one of the ringside technicians, Pleasant speaks.

Arthur Pleasant:

Is this *[breathing heavily]* some kind of JOKE?! The PURE Wrestler of DEFIANCE *[catching his breath]* deserves better than to be fed a grisly, overcooked piece of peasant-fed chuck steak trash like THIS phony ass fuck wagon!

Pointing over his shoulder, the Faithful notices Othello starting to rise to his feet. Their boos soon turn to cheers, which takes Pleasant completely by surprise.

Arthur Pleasant:

What's that?! You ACTUALLY agree with me?! Well it's about fucking time you hillbilly, inbreeding bayou bastards understood me!

Ignoring his insults, Othello is back to his feet and eyes Pleasant on the middle rope. Slater asks if he's good to go, and Othello nods while respectfully shoving him away from him. Making the motion that the match will continue, Pleasant continues to spout off at the crookedness of his mouth.

Arthur Pleasant:

What's that?! I'm going to win the whole FIST Tournament?! Again, we couldn't be more on the same page. See, when I beat Oscar B-

From the middle rope, Othello school boy roll-ups Pleasant, with the distance to the mat from the middle rope creating more of a school boy slam than an actual school-boy. Nevertheless, Pleasant's shoulders are down, Othello is digging in deep, and Pleasant still has the microphone!

Lance:

He has him!! Oh my God!!

One!

Arthur Pleasant:

WHAT THE FUCK?!

Two!!

DDK:

Upset of the century!!

Arthur Pleasant:

STOP TOUCHING ME THERE YOU SON OF A-

THR- Pleasant kicks out, dropping the microphone. Slater kicks it out of the ring, creating a loud **THUMP** for the entire Wrestleplex facility.

Grabbing Pleasant by the underside of his chin, he brings him the rest of the way to his feet.

SMACK!

"WOOOOOO!"

Pleasant reels into the ropes, clutching his chest as he's met with another brutal knife-edge chop.

SMACK!

"WOOOOOO!"

Pleasant cries out as he reels back again, and Othello goes for the trifecta.

SMACK!

“WOOOOOOO!”

Pleasant goes down, kicking his feet in agony from the rough chest slaps from Mellow Yellow.

DDK:

I'll never understand why the crowd always accompanies a chest chop with a loud “WOOOOOOO!” but I guess it's not something that really needs to be explained.

Lance:

Again. If you know? You know.

Feeling a sense of renewed vigor, Othello bring Pleasant up to his feet. Instead of going for another chop, he whips Pleasant into the ropes. On the rebound, the challenger catches the champ with a boot to the mid-section. Pleasant goes down to one knee. Othello looks for a step-up knee strike, but Pleasant catches him with both arms into a military press and rises to one knee.

DDK:

Pleasant's strength has become kinda scary lately. Clearly, he's in the best shape of his life.

Lance:

I wonder why the sudden turn-around? Is the internet getting to him?

Just before he can bring Othello down Pleasant down into a slam, Mellow Yellow uses great agility and balance to turn it into a hurricanrana pin!

One!!

Two!!

Pleasant kicks out and Othello pounds his fist into the mat with frustration.

DDK:

He absolutely CANNOT get frustrated here. This is arguably the biggest match of his young and burgeoning career and to make a rookie mistake like taking your eyes off of Pleasant-

Lance:

-too late.

As soon as he starts bringing Pleasant to his feet, Othello is greeted with a boot to the gut, Pleasant then begins setting him up for what looks like a piledriver... and connects!

DDK:

Ooof.

Lance:

Yeah. Game. Set. Match.

Making a cocky cover with one pinky, Slater slides into position as the crowd has the wind sucked from them.

One.

...

Two.

...

Three.

...

NO!

DDK:

What?!

Lance:

Othello kicked out! Othello kicked out of a damn piledriver! WOW! This kid's still in it after all!

Pleasant kicks George Othello in the ribs, who is still down on the mat. Gasping for air, Othello has nowhere to go but to curl up in a fetal position. But Pleasant has other plans as he brings him to his feet. Hooking him up for a fisherman's buster, he snaps him up and drives him down with incredible force. Twisting his hips as one might do for the Three Amigos, Pleasant snaps Othello up for a second and drives him down hard on his head. Swinging his hips for a second time, he starts to go for the third fisherman's buster... and just stops.

Releasing Othello from his clutches, Pleasant shakes his head in disgust.

DDK:

Okay, three fisherman's busters is what typically concludes his devastating triple rolling fisherman's buster "Land of Make Believe" trademark maneuver, but he didn't complete it. Why?!

Lance:

Because like a hungry lion, he wants to toy with his gazelle before he rips its intestines out and digests their entrails.

DDK: *[gagging]*

Jeez, Lance!

Lance:

Sorry. After shark week ended, the wife and I've been hooked on Discovery+ as of late.

Lifting the barely conscious Othello to his feet with Arthur's own right foot, he leaps toward Othello with absolute bloodlust, snarling as he cinches in a jumping guillotine. Once he grapevines the legs, Othello collapses to his knees.

WHACK!

WHACK!

WHACK!

Smashing Othello across his spine with his left forearm over and over, the stiff shots echo across the Wrestleplex. Gagging, choking, and sputtering as he tries to find a way out, Othello simply taps on his own shoulder, allowing Slater to call for the inevitable bell.

DING DING DING

♪ "The Black Flame of Calamity" by FalkKonE ♪

Darren Quimbey:

The winner of this match by submission... and STILL Favored Saints Champion... the PLAGUEBEAST...
ARTHUUUUUURRR PLLLEEEAAASAAANT!

DDK:

And with the Plague of Mankind, the same move he used to secure the title from the hotly contested match with David Noble at MAXIMUM DEFIANCE, Pleasant picks up the victory here tonight on UNCUT. Can't say I'm surprised, but at least George Othello tried.

Lance:

Yeah. He really did. His stock's definitely on the r- oh what the hell is THIS now?!

Pleasant is once again motioning for the microphone.

Lance:

Does this piece of steaming crap EVER shut up?!

DDK:

Easy, Lance. Remember what your therapist told you.

Another ringside technician grabs the microphone that Slater kicked out of the ring earlier mid-match and tosses it back inside to the Retaining Favored Saints Champion.

Arthur Pleasant: *[trying to catch his breath]*

Cut my music.

His theme fades as quickly as it started.

Arthur Pleasant:

You know, I expect better. I really shouldn't given the quality of talent in that pathetic fucking locker room, but... I did. I expected better. And what I got was not better. What I got was a fucking disgrace. Carla Ferrari could put up a better fight than someone like George Othello.

A small "Carla" chant breaks out but it dies out rather quickly.

Arthur Pleasant:

I don't care where this kid graduated wrestling school. I don't care that he knows judo. I'm a black belt in Muay-Thai, which is almost the same but not for pussies too scared to give or receive kicks, elbows, headbutts, and punches. As you can all see, in the end, none of it matters when you're up against the Plaguebeast. The fucking PURE Wrestler of DEFIANCE deserves the tenderest, juiciest, most wallet busting cut of the cow there is. The filet. The most succulent piece of beef in existence.

Pleasant rests his elbows on the top rope with the Favored Saints Championship glistening on his shoulder.

Arthur Pleasant:

Things are changing around here. This championship is *not* going to be a gatekeeper's title anymore. If you want to find a road to the Southern Heritage Championship? Add "Avoid Uncle Arthur" when you're clicking on "avoid tolls" on your smart phones. 'Cause this shit is on fucking LOCK until I, and only I, decide to turn the goddamn key.

Pleasant raises his title in the air and walks toward the center of the ring.

Arthur Pleasant:

And WHEN I become the first person in the history of professional wrestling to hold the FIST ANNNNNND the Favored Saints Championships at the same time? You'll know that I speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing BUT the truth... so help your false Gods, your dead Kings, and your fake ass Queens.

"SHUT THE FUCK UP!"

Clap, clap, clap-clap-clap.

"SHUT THE FUCK UP!"

Clap, clap, clap-clap-clap.

DDK:

And there is it. Hahaha.

Lance:

I'm with you, Nawlins!

Arthur Pleasant: *[talking directly into the camera]*

When I beat the 2-Time FIST at DEFtv?! You will ALL get down on your hands and knees and worship the one true PURE Wrestler of DEFIANCE!

Pleasant drops the microphone as his harrowing theme song blasts over the Wrestleplex arena speakers.

♪ *"The Black Flame of Calamity" by FalkKonE* ♪

DDK:

Well, that was about as awful as I've come to expect. Sweet mercy.

Lance stays silent and throws the headset off.

DDK:

Dude, again? Is this becoming a thing?

Lance sits there with his arms folded, obviously annoyed with Pleasant's words as UNCUT comes to a close.

THIS.

IS.

DEFIANCE.