

SHOW OPEN

[*♪ "DEFY" by Of Mice & Men ♪*](#)

LOUISVILLE welcomes DEFIANCE as the KFC Yum! Center is hyped for DEFTv 189 NIGHT ONE! Pyro explodes from the top of the rampway as the camera reveals there's a giant FIST logo to walk out from and the DEFlatron above the entrance.

Signs and excitement, as always, are everywhere!

***I LIKED DAVID FOX'S ATTEMPT TO WIN THE FAVORED SAINTS CHAMPIONSHIP AND I WOULD LIKE TO
SEE HIM TRY AGAIN SOME DAY
MY WIFE THINKS I'M AT BIBLE STUDY
TEARS OF THE WILD > SUPER SONIC BROS OR WTVR (IDK, I DON'T PLAY VIDEO GAMES)
NO ONE IS READY FOR RIA
MOAR RICH LATHER
HMM WHAT TO PUT HERE?
#CORVOSTINYHEAD
I ALSO ENJOY A NICE RICH LATHER
MORE RELEVANT THAN A TRAFFIC SIGN
TAKE THIS SIGN AS AN OPEN CHALLENGE TO OSCAR BURNS
OSCAR FEARS THE CAGE
CORVOS GONNA KILL YOU
MY FAVORITE BEER IS BUTCH LIGHT
I HAPPEN TO LIKE MICHELOB
TERI TELLS ME EVERYTHING
DESPITE ALL HIS RAGE, BURNS IS STILL GONNA BE TRAPPED IN A CAGE***

We go to ringside with Darren Keebler and Lance Warner.

FAVORED SAINTS: REZIN (C) vs. KERRY KUROYAMA

DDK:

Welcome, ladies and gentlemen! Coming to you live from the KFC Yum! Center right along the banks of the Ohio river in beautiful Louisville, Kentucky... THIS is DEFTv! I'm "Downtown" Darren Keebler, and with me as always, is my longtime friend and partner, Lance Warner! Tonight, fans, we enter the home stretch on our way to MAXIMUM DEFIANCE!

Lance:

I can hardly wait, Keebs. Troy versus Dex for the FIST. A Triangle Tag contest for the Unified Tag Team Titles. Blackwood and Box against the Lucky Sevens. Any way you put it, MAXDEF is shaping up to be an amazing event with a killer line-up of matches. And yet, there's much more to come.

DDK:

Indeed, Lance. Tonight, I'm sure the final few pieces will fall into place, giving us a clear view of what to expect for the DEFIANCE megaevent of the summer. Which brings us right into our first match for this evening!

A graphic of the DEFIANCE Favoured Saints Championship breezes by the screen before floating into a spot in the top center of a chyron that reads "Favoured Saints Championship Contest". Above the banner, the two contenders appear, staring each other down with heated animosity.

DDK:

The Favoured Saints Champion, "The Escape Artist" Rezin, puts his title on the line tonight in what he hopes will be the fourth successful defense in a series of four that he will need to earn a shot at the Southern Heritage Championship! The same championship currently held by his former friend and longtime rival... "The Kraken" Henry Keyes of Vae Victis!

Lance:

The Goat Bastard has fought his way through hell AND high water just to get to this point, fending off a string of challengers like High Flyer IV, Victor Vacio, and David Fox. He's survived every encounter by the skin of his teeth, but this may be his toughest challenge yet.

DDK:

I'm inclined to agree with you on that, partner. The challenger tonight, "The Pacific Blitzkrieg" Kerry Kuroyama, is as dangerous and relentless in the ring as they come! And he has boldly declared that he will bring the Favoured Saints Championship back to Vae Victis!

Lance:

These two are hardly strangers. They've met in as many as three one-on-one encounters here in DEFIANCE. And, I should point out, Kerry holds the record in two to one. He himself walked the walk of four consecutive title defenses during his own reign as Favoured Saints Championship, but fell short of his own chance at the SOHER thanks to interference.

DDK:

Tonight is not only a chance at a second reign, but also an opportunity to prove his value to the inner circle of the DEFIANCE elite. However, Rezin has been a formidable and resilient champion as of late! And one match short of his goal, I hardly expect he's going to allow himself to be walked over!

The house lights cut to black.

♪ "Stranger Fruit" by Zeal & Ardor ♪

"BOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!"

When they come on again, the backlit silhouette of a *WRESTLER* stands amid knee-high mist pouring out across the stage. Once the riff hits, spotlights reveal KERRY KUROYAMA before a display of rockets firing into twin "V" shapes.

He poses by interlocking his arms over his head at the top of the ramp, completely stone-faced to the reaching of the Faithful.

When he's finished savoring the moment, Kuroyama heads down the ramp at a powerwalk. Like a man there on business, he wastes no time entering the ring and finding his corner.

The music fades out. To fill the silence, the Faithful strike up a chant, anticipating the arrival of the champion.

"FIRE-IT-UP!! FIRE-IT-UP!! FIRE-IT-UP!!

"FIRE-IT-UP!! FIRE-IT-UP!! FIRE-IT-UP!!

"FIRE-IT-UP!! FIRE-IT-UP!! FIRE-IT-UP!!"

♪ *"I Have Prepared a Statement" by Whores.* ♪

"RRRAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHH!!!"

To raucous cheers from the thousands of fans in attendance, the Favoured Saints Champion REZIN emerges through a wall of smoke and strobe lights. He lingers a few moments on the stage to soak in the reaction and let the song play out. Then, readjusting the FS Title to his shoulder, he descends down the rampway.

Rezin paces a lap around the ring to keep the fires of the Faithful burning, then finally scales the steps and poses once more by wrapping his arms into the ropes and suspending himself upside down in an inverted Jesus Christ pose. When the music cuts, Darren Quimbey begins the announcements.

Darren Quimbey:

Ladies and gentlemen, tonight's opening contest is for the DEFIANCE Favoured Saints Championship! Introducing first, the challenger! Hailing from Seattle, Washington, and weighing in at two-hundred and forty-six pounds... he is the PACIFIC BLITZKRIEG... KERRYYYYYYYY KUUUROOOYAAAMAAAAAAA!!

"BOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!"

Kuroyama ignores the crowd, coldly staring down Rezin across the ring.

Darren Quimbey:

And the opponent... fighting out of Indianapolis, Indiana, and weighing in at two-hundred and five pounds...

"FIRE-IT-UP!! FIRE-IT-UP!! FIRE-IT-UP!! FIRE-IT-UP!!"

Darren Quimbey:

He is the reigning FAVOURED SAINTS CHAMPION of DEFIANCE... the GOAT BASTARD... the ESCAPE ARTIST... RRRREEEEEEZZZZZZIIIIIIIIINNNNN!!

"RRRAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHH!!!"

Rezin holds up the inverted Favoured Saints Championship to a massive pop. When the reaction dies down, presiding official Brian Slater stands by to retrieve the title belt. Rezin holds it for a few extra seconds in silent reflection, knowing it will be the last time holding it.

Win or lose, after tonight, he will no longer be the Favoured Saints Championship.

DING DING

DDK:

And so it begins! Both men out of their corners--and right away, Rezin comes in throwing rights and lefts like a house on fire!

Lance:

Bringing the fight right to Kerry in these opening seconds. Even with everything at stake tonight, the Escape Artist is showing no fear!

Kuroyama is forced back, but keeps his guard up to weather the storm of chops and kicks. Rezin attempts to push him off the ropes, but Kerry immediately halts his momentum and instead pulls the Favoured Saints Champion into a hard and heavy double-chop of his own almost knock the Goat Bastard out of his pants.

DDK:

Reversal to put Rezin to the mat, and Kerry stays right on him!

Brian Slater gives Kerry a warning when he spies him pulling the champ up by the hair, but his words fall on deaf ears. Kuroyama snags Rezin by the arm and pushes him off the ropes for more running. Rezin regains his wits in time to attempt a hurricanrana, but it turns into a leap frog when Kerry ducks under him.

DDK:

Rezin in motion, off the ropes... runs into a STIFF shoulder block by Kuroyama!

Rezin:

HMBRHFF!!

Lance:

But somehow stays on his feet!

Rezin is thoroughly rocked as he balks wildly off of Kuroyama's posted shoulder, but his legs continue rolling, sending him stumbling back into the ropes whence he came. He rallies and comes charging back, but Kerry is waiting for him.

DDK:

Kuroyama looking for the lariat--DUCKED by Rezin!

Rezin hooks the arm on the pass-by and throws his body onto Kuroyama's back to scissor the other with his legs. Before Kerry can react, he's rolled to the mat.

DDK:

And he goes for the CRUCIFIX!

One!

Tw--NO!

Lance:

That was a quick knockout by the Pacific Blitzkrieg.

Kuroyama quickly hustles to his feet. When he gets there, he immediately eats a standing dropkick from the champ to put him right back where he started. The Escape Artist pounces on him, looking to wrap up his head into a sleeper. Unphased, Kuroyama works back to his feet and reverses with a snapmare.

DDK:

Snapmare puts the Favoured Saints Champion back on his back, but he doesn't stay there for long as Kerry snags him around the waist and DEADLIFTS him off the mat!

Lance:

Incredible power on display by Seattle's BEAST!

Rezin's face is awash with panic as his feet leave the mat and he senses the German Suplex to come.

Rezin:

OPE!

Instinctively, he curls forward and rolls Kuroyama with him until he's flat on his back.

DDK:

No, Rezin with a WHEELBARROW ROLL-UP! Shoulders are down!

One!

Two!

Kerry kicks out!

Both competitors scramble back to their feet. The increasingly addled Kerry is the aggressor this time, lighting up the Goat Bastard with stiff punches that get repeated (if ineffectual) repudiations from the official Slater. Rezin dances like a drunkard off the force of every shot, until he's eventually corralled into the corner.

Lance:

Kuroyama isn't messing around anymore,

DDK:

Indeed he isn't, as the challenger has the champ cornered! Slater called for the break, but Kerry instead takes him by the arm and goes for the Irish whip... no! He instead pivots around...

Rezin:*WHOOOF!!***DDK:**

...and sends him CHEST-FIRST right back into the corner!

The Escape Artist gasps for the air that escaped his lungs as he backpedals on rubber legs straight into the Pacific Blitzkrieg's waiting full-nelson.

DDK:

SNAP DRAGON SUPLEX by Kerry Kuroyama!

Lance:

Brilliant and effective sequence of moves by the Pacific Blitzkrieg, that could have opened up a real window of opportunity to take control here.

Rezin is sent sprawling across the ring like a crash test dummy that wasn't buckled in during the impact test. Proud of his handiwork, Kerry spends a beat to take a knee and flash the Faithful double "V" hand gestures, getting a sizable jeer for his efforts. His arrogant smile quickly fades when he goes to retrieve the champ off the mat, only to find the process to be more difficult than anticipated.

DDK:

Wait a sec... Rezin, on his knees, putting shots right to the abdomen of Kuroyama!

Lance:

He might still have some fire in him!

Seeing the Goat Bastard attempt to rally, the Faithful ramp up the noise in support. But Kerry is only momentarily stunned by the strikes, and responds in kind with one of his own.

SLAP!

“OOOOOOOOHHHH!!!”

The hit leaves Rezin frozen, eyes suddenly widening with unfettered rage. Kuroyama sneers down at him and puts his heel into the back of the champ's neck to push him even lower.

Kerry Kuroyama

FILTH.

Because the first kick doesn't quite do the job, he goes for another, but doesn't anticipate the champion's hand grasping him by the ankle. In a flash, Rezin whips his leg over to clip the legs out from under him.

DDK:

LEGSWEEP takes Kerry down! Rezin still has the arm, and now he's transitioning into the CABRON CLUTCH!

Lance:

Rare submission attempt being made by the Escape Artist, who is usually the one trying to find his way out of such holds!

But Kerry will have no trouble escaping this one as he's easily within reach of the ropes, and snags one before the champion can fully extend the bridging cobra clutch. Slater calls for the break, but the Goat Bastard

One...

Two...

Three...

Four--

Rezin:

BAAHH FINE!

DDK:

Rezin makes the break!

Lance:

He was milking that count for every second. He knows Kerry would gladly do the same.

DDK:

No punches are being pulled tonight! These two know each other's limits well, and it's all or nothing with the Favoured Saints Championship on the line!

Rezin rolls his way to the center of the ring, clutching the back of his head as he works his way up and awaits the challenger's next move. When he's back to his feet, Kerry gripes to Slater for his perceived lack of urgency in calling for the break. Brian shrugs him off and tells him to get back to the action.

DDK:

This battle continues as both men go right back into the lock-up! Knee the gut by Kerry doubles Rezin over! Kuroyama goes to the side... and a RUSSIAN LEGSWEEP puts the champ on his back! The Pacific Blitzkrieg rolls him over and makes his first pin attempt in this match!

One!

Two!

No! Rezin gets the shoulder up!

The champion rolls onto his knees. As he gets up, Kuroyama tries to catch him with another knee to the ribs, but the Escape Artist catches the leg...

Rezin:

Heh heh...

DDK:

DRAGON SCREW takes Kuroyama down, and Rezin still has the leg... and he's going for the FIGURE FOUR--

Kerry quickly plants his boot into the Goat Bastard's ass to push him off. Rezin comically flails head-first into the top and middle turnbuckles of the near corner and momentum flips him to the top rope. He lingers there dazed and agape for a moment before listlessly flopping back to the mat inside. Across the ring, Kerry has completely ghosted from the ring.

DDK:

Kerry kicks him off, and immediately takes a powder!

Lance:

Perhaps wise on his part. He's all too familiar with the figure four leglock, and all the pain it's caused him these past few years.

Kuroyama takes a moment to catch his breath and recalibrate, ignoring the heckling fans on the other side of the barricade.

DDK:

The match has hardly gone according to plan for Kerry Kuroyama, who has yet to find the opportunity to dominate and wear down the ever-elusive champion.

Lance:

Well, if there was ever a "plan" in place, you can always count on Rezin to throw a monkey wrench into it.

DDK:

Slater now at three on the ten-count. Kuroyama, looking a bit more cautious, now returns to--OOHHHWAITASEC REZIN WITH THE SENTON OVER THE ROPES!!

"RRRAAAAHHHH--"

Rezin:

BLEGHK!!

But Kerry catches him across his shoulder!

"D'OH!!"

DDK:

NOOO!! Kuroyama with the DOMINATOR RIGHT ACROSS THE RING APRON!! GOOD GOD, he could've SHATTERED Rezin's SPINE with that!

Lance:

The champ went for the high-risk maneuver out of nowhere, hoping to catch Kerry sleeping. But it would not be so.

DDK:

And with that, Kerry may have finally wrested this match into his control!

Rezin spasms and flops on the ringside floor like a fish out of water. Kuroyama promptly pulls him up and rolls him into

the ring before following.

DDK:

Kerry is wasting no time after that one! Hooking the leg for the TITLE!

ONE!

TWO!

NO!! KICKOUT by Rezin!

Lance:

Seconds made all the difference in that one. But Kuroyama doesn't look deterred.

Rezin continues to clutch at his wounded back, helpless as Kerry scoops him up again and traps his arm from behind into a crossface.

Rezin:

AAAAAAAHHHH!!

DDK:

GARGOYLE SUPLEX!!

Kerry methodically picks him up again and traps the nearly lifeless and dazed Rezin into a low waistlock.

Rezin:

AAAAAAAHHHH!!

DDK:

NORTHERN LIGHTS SUPLEX!!

Rezin again ragdolls across the ring. He gets tangled in the ropes, but Kuroyama is clearly in his groove as he pries him loose and sets his leg between his legs.

Rezin:

AAAAAAAHHHH!!

DDK:

SNAP POWERBOMB!!

Lance:

Absolutely devastating! Kuroyama has gone full BEAST mode by now!

DDK:

He wants that title back, and he may get it, as Kuroyama quickly pushes down on the legs to follow up with a pin attempt!

ONE!

TWO!!

THR--NO!! Rezin just BARELY kicked out, keeping his hopes alive!

"RRRRRAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHH!!!"

Even Kerry is surprised, taking a moment to glare at Slater. Fuming, he flips the champion to a prone position and sets him up to finish things once and for all.

DDK:

Kuroyama going for the pumphandle! He may be looking to finish this NOW with the Kuroyama Driver!

Lance:

You can tell he's getting impatient! He's been chipping away at Rezin since the bell rang, and yet, the champion has continued to hang in there!

DDK:

His shot at the SOHER is at stake here tonight, but it may come to a dream-shattering END right now, as Kerry--WAIT!! Rezin FIGHTS the pumphandle!

In Kerry's haste to go for the kill, Rezin manages to squirm his arm free, which he promptly uses to put a series of elbows into Kerry's defenseless face. While Kuroyama is left staggered, the Goat Bastard flips forward to free the other arm held between his legs, and wrenches the Pacific Blitzkrieg's arm into a hold of his own: the three-quarter facelock.

DDK:

INTO!! THE!! VOOOOIIIIID!!!

"RRRRRAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHH!!!"

Lance:

That was a true "blink and you'll miss it" moment! Not only did Rezin fight his way out of the Kuroyama Driver, he fluidly found a way to reverse it into the Somersault Reverse DDT!

DDK:

Rezin hooks the leg! This one is OVER!!

ONE!!

TWO!!

THREE--

KICKOUT!!

"BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!"

DDK:

KERRY KUROYAMA KICKED OUT OF THE INTO THE VOID!!

Lance:

Unbelievable! There's no doubt he had to dig down deep for that one!

DDK:

Rezin is beside himself in disbelief! That may have been his one and only chance at victory! That move was out of pure desperation, and took nearly all of his strength!

Rezin is gassed, and nigh delirious at this point, but nevertheless fumbles his way back to his feet and plots his next move. With Kuroyama still on his back, struggling to move, he looks to the turnbuckle...

...and realizes it's time to get HIGH!

DDK:

It could be time for the Goat Bastard to go all out to put this one away for good!

Lance:

This is risky business here, but you're right! He may feel he has no other recourse!

The Goat Bastard climbs. Kuroyama stirs. His head rises up... and drops. Rezin perches his legs on the top rope, stands to his full height in a Christ pose, and gracefully somersaults back...

DDK:

REZINSAAAAULT!!

...and he eats the canvas.

"OOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOHHHHH!!!"

DDK:

KERRY WAS PLAYING POSSUM! He rolled out of the way just in the nick of time!

Kuroyama sees his chance to make a move and powers up to his feet with the help of the ropes. Rezin, having just belly-flopped off the open canvas, rears up on his knees in a completely stunned, slack-jawed state. Seattle's BEAST suddenly finds his opening.

DDK:

Rezin on his knees! Kerry has him in his crosshairs, and he runs off the ropes... going for the GREEN RIVER REVOLT--

DUCKED!!

"RRRRRAAAAAAAHHHHHHHH!!!"

DDK:

Kuroyama keeps running... coming back off the ropes with a DISCUS LARIAT--REZIN THERE TO MEET HIM WITH THE CLOVEN HOOF KICK--

CRASH!!

"OOOOOOOOOOOOOOHHHHH!!"

The double impact sends both men crumbling into heaps.

DDK:

This match is INSANE!

Lance:

Completely agree, Keebs. This has been an absolutely great start to the evening!

DDK:

The physical toll it's taken on the bodies of these competitors is beyond words! How much more can they take!?

Brian Slater begins the ten count.

One...

Both men begin to stir on the mat.

Two...

Kerry's eyes flutter as he slowly regains his sense of awareness.

Three...

Rezin rolls onto his side, giving in to a fit of coughing.

Four...

Kuroyama has pushed his way to all fours, and is making for the ropes.

Five...

Rezin also gets to his knees... but his arms haven't quite gotten there yet, leaving him in the unflattering position of head down and ass up.

Six...

"THIS-IS-STRAW-SOME!"

CLAP, CLAP, CLAP-CLAP-CLAP

"THIS-IS-STRAW-SOME!"

CLAP, CLAP, CLAP-CLAP-CLAP

SEVEN...

Kuroyama has found the ropes and pulled himself up to a knee, taking a moment to catch his breath and rebuild his strength.

EIGHT...

The Goat Bastard's head suddenly shoots up, eyes wide and bulging. He is suddenly infused with the powers of super secret stoner energy.

"RRRRRRAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!!!"

NINE...

Kerry shoots up.

Rezin shoots up.

DDK:

BOOT to the GUT by KUROYAMA!!

Rezin doubles over and Kerry reels him in, hooking the arms...

...but the Escape Artist slips through the back door. He takes an arm with him for good measure.

Before Kerry can react, he's tripped to his knees and finds himself in a very familiar transitional hold:

THE PUMPHANDLE.

Kerry Kuroyama:

...N--

Rezin:

Yup. He taught me this too.

Kuroyama feels the wrath of his own namesake.

DDK:

WHAT!? WHAT?!? WHAAAT!?! REZIN JUST HIT KERRY KUROYAMA WITH A KUROYAMA DRIVER!! HE HIT HIM WITH HIS OWN MOVE!!

"RRRRRRAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!!!"

Kerry's head bounces off the mat. The impact sends him briefly into a seated position, giving the fans a good look at the vacant and empty look in his eyes. Nobody in the arena is more surprised than he. Finally, he drops back down onto his back.

DDK:

Unbelievable! Rezin caught Kerry completely off guard with his own finishing maneuver! How did he even learn that move?!

Lance:

I don't know, but word is, Rezin's spent time training under Kuroyama's own former teacher, Rocko Daymon.

DDK:

THAT'S TOO SELF-REFERENTIAL FOR ME TO CARE, LANCE!!

Rezin is moving only on muscle memory as he crawls his way over to Kerry.

But he doesn't go for a pin.

Instead, he goes through the slow and painstaking process of picking his ass up off the mat again.

"RRRRRRAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHH!!!"

DDK:

HE JUST HIT HIM WITH ANOTHER KUROYAMA DRIVER!!

Lance:

WOW! Talk about insult to injury!

Kerry hits the mat again like a ton of bricks, while suddenly next to him, Rezin kips straight up to his feet. The champ's wild eyes bulge with ferocity as he unleashes a primal scream that can be heard over the thunderously cheering crowd.

Rezin:

AAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHH!!!

"RRRRRAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHH!"

DDK:

REZIN IS FIRED UP!!

Lance:

If this isn't punk rock, I don't know WHAT is, Keebs!

Floundering aimlessly on the canvas, Kerry barely has a chance to move before the Escape Artist pounces upon him again, and scoops him up.

DDK:

THREE!! THREE!! THREEEEE KUROYAMA DRIVERS!! REZIN IS GIVING KERRY A TASTE OF HIS OWN MEDICINE!!

Kuroyama crumbles to the mat and goes completely motionless onto his back. Rezin barely has enough strength to roll over and drape an arm across his chest.

DDK:

REZIN COVERS!

ONE!!

TWO!!

THREEEE!!!

DING DING DING

"RRRRRRRAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!!

♪ "I Have Prepared a Statement" by Whores. ♪

Darren Quimbey:

Ladies and gentlemen, the winner of the match... RRRRREEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEZZZZZZZZZIIIIIIIIINNNNNNN!!!!

COMMERCIAL: MAXIMUM DEFIANCE 2023



FIST of DEFIANCE
Lindsay Troy (C) vs. Dex Joy

UNIFIED TAG TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS
Triangle Match
SNS (C) vs. Flex in a Box vs. Heavy Artillery

SOHER
Henry Keyes (C) vs. Rezin

Steel Cage
Oscar Burns vs. Corvo Alpha

Bronson Box & Gage Blackwood vs. The Lucky Sevens

Titanes Familia vs. M4NTRA

NDR vs. The Company Men

OUTFOXED YET AGAIN

Backstage.

Kerry Kuroyama through the curtain and storms through guerilla, fast as a tsunami and hot as a volcano.

A tsunamo, if you will.

Or a volcami?

Anyway... Jamie Saywers is standing by with a microphone in hand, looking for words after Kerry's recent failed attempt at retaking the Favoured Saints Champion.

Jamie Sawyers:

Kerry, do you have a moment to--

Kerry's palm plants itself in the center of the interviewer's chest, and he sternly shoves back into the wall. Fuck no, he does not.

But in his haste to get back to the Vae Victis private quarters and reflect on this failure and humiliation, he fails to notice someone else standing off to the side.

David Fox:

For someone on a higher tier than me you sure handled that loss worse than I did, Ker.

Kerry tensely takes in a deep breath, mustering up every last bit of his willpower not to go off.

Kerry Kuroyama:

Fox, I am NOT in the damn mood right now. If you got something to say to me, then hit up Butch and schedule a time. Otherwise, piss off.

He turns to leave, but Fox won't let him off that easily.

David Fox:

No. Not this time. You don't get to brush me off, not after all that game you spat these past few weeks. And especially not after you fell apart when it mattered most.

Kerry is visibly tensing up, trying incredibly hard not to deck The Soul Survivor then and there.

David Fox:

I'm not even here to gloat, Ker. That's a Kerry Kuroyama thing, right? You were gonna take that Favored Saints title and stop Rezin in his tracks, right? Bring the belt back to Vae Victis and stand with Lindz and Keyes with your own shiny, right?

Kuroyama glowers. Fox shakes his head.

David Fox:

Didn't expect you'd walk out there just to shit the bed with the lights on, did you? Now you gotta walk into that suite and hope that the gaze of a murderous owl isn't the first thing you see the second you walk through that door!

Kuroyama fumes. Fox chuckles a bit as he cracks a prodding smirk at KK, before scrunching his face to imitate, as best as he can, the gaze of said murderous owl.

David Fox:

Ah, well. I guess we'll just have to live with this little turn of events.

A pause. David absentmindedly looks around at the various Louisville Cardinals memorabilia on the walls.

David Fox:

Unless... you were looking for a little... redemption? Say, around Maximum DEFIANCE?

You can hear the crowd pop at the mention of two of DEFIANCE's hardest hitters locking up in a few short weeks in Nashville.

David Fox:

You can make the Queen smile a little by shutting me up at long last... or I can just end up showing you what kind of tier I'm in after all. How 'bout it, Ker?

Kerry's breathing is quick and intense. His jaw is tensing. His fists are noticeably balled up at his sides. The sweat on his skin, still fresh from the match that took place minutes ago, almost gives him the appearance of boiling.

After a beat, he finally responds.

Kerry Kuroyama:

...been sitting on this awhile, have you? Just holding it in, waiting for the right moment to swoop in and rub my face in it? Pathetic, Fox. Sorry if you feel I pissed in your Cheerio's, but I don't have time to deal with every curtain jerker that takes offense to some off-handed comment I said.

He nods to the same memorabilia on the wall.

Kerry Kuroyama:

I would gladly put that blank, uninspiring face of yours through that display case right now. I'd do it to you just for having the audacity to walk up to me now, when I just went twenty minutes in the ring, to waste my time with this catty dick-measuring nonsense. Be as it may, I'm done fighting tonight.

He pops his eyebrows.

Kerry Kuroyama:

But you want to go at Maximum DEFIANCE? Fine. Seeing as how my plans are now open, I supposed I could savor the opportunity to send a message to the rest of that playground of a locker room. To remind this company what happens when some over-the-hill ingrate decides to push my buttons.

David Fox:

It's a date! I'll bring my mom's world-famous lemon squares.

David suddenly drops the jovial needling and stares at his MAXDEF opponent with the intensity of an exploding sun.

David Fox:

And the fight of your life.

The New Jersey native smirks once again, before confidently striding out of the scene, leaving Kerry Kuroyama to his own devices and frustrations. The Pacific Blitzkrieg growls with unbridled annoyance. Jamie Sawyers slips back into the frame momentarily, but before he can even get his mouth open, Kerry shoves him into the wall again on his way back to the Vae Victis private room.

THE ENGAGEMENT

DDK:

Now, we understand that JJ Dixon and his girlfriend, struggling DEFIANCE newcomer, Caitlyn Kinsey has asked for some time to address The Faithful, along with Caitlyn's mother Aurora Kaye and JJ's mentor and de facto mom Teri Melton.

Lance:

JJ and Teri have had their issues these past few months but their relationship was dramatically repaired when the two of them met at a diner before the last UNCUT.

DDK:

And their meeting left with Teri asking JJ to rejoin Your Uncut Gems -- and for Caitlyn to join him!

Lance:

Of course, Teri and Uncut Gem members NDR have been in a brutal, violent rivalry with The Company Men, managed by Caitlyn's grandmother, Tabitha -- a bloodfeud that has already resulted in hospital trips and surgeries.

DDK:

And Caitlyn has her own worries tonight, as she's facing Nicky Synz, and if she loses, she said she's going to retire from DEFIANCE!

JJ Dixon stands in the ring, a microphone in his hand, nervously pacing. His hair is very neatly combed. He's shockingly wearing a pressed dress shirt with a cardinal red dress jacket and matching bowtie (matching the University of Louisville color scheme.) Caitlyn's next to him, with her black hair in a manic pixie dream girl fashion, her candy necklace and a retro-style baby doll dress, but with a new pair of Tiffany earrings. Her mother stands behind her, with her hair now dyed a deep shade of green, with Tina Fey glasses, a T-Shirt with David Bowie's face and a bohemian-style thrift store dress that matches nothing else she's wearing.

JJ Dixon:

Okay, now, there's something that I want to share with The Faithful, with you, Aurora, and of course with you, Caitlyn. But there's one other person I want to join me tonight, and she's prone to dramatic introductions.

Aurora rolls her eyes, ever annoyed by Teri Melton.

JJ snaps his fingers, and the lights in the arena go out. The crowd buzzes, but then a spotlight comes on in the middle of the ring with, who else, Teri Melton standing in the middle of it. Teri's hair is fully silver, with silver flecks, a silver necklace with a cardinal red gemstone, a silver dress with a cardinal red shawl over it.

JJ stands behind her. He smiles and whispers something to her with a laugh on his face. She bats her eyes once to cue Her Adoring Public.

Teri Melton & Her Adoring Public:

TERI MELTON! IS READY! FOR HER CLOSEUP!

The crowd erupts after her cheers as the ring lights come back on. Teri stands behind JJ as Aurora stands behind her daughter.

JJ Dixon:

Now, Teri... last week, you asked me and Caitlyn to become a part of Your Uncut Gems.

The crowd cheers, with a lot of people making The DiamondHands hand gesture, and a chant breaks out -

Uncut Gems! Uncut Gems! Uncut Gems!

JJ smiles before taking a massive gulp.

JJ Dixon:

So.. like I told you... you know I love you like my mother. But you also know... I love this girl Caitlyn beyond all belief. We're caught in the middle of all of this between you and Tabitha. And we thought about it, and we've made our decision...

JJ gulps.

JJ Dixon:

I... I chose us. I'm sorry, Teri.

He looks at Caitlyn as the crowd starts to boo. Teri shakes her head in disappointment.

JJ Dixon:

Oh, no, nobody be upset! We came to this decision, because me and Caitlyn want to grow together as a couple. We want to grow together as people. We want to continue on this journey, together... and, because of that, we can't get in the middle of you and Tabitha.

Teri nods and says she understands.

JJ Dixon:

Now, it took me years to get to this place where any of you people would cheer and boo me. You're all such a part of this journey I've been on. And I want to share the next part of this journey with all of you... which is why I asked you here tonight, Aurora, so you could be a part of what I want to say next.

JJ again gulps in nervousness. He takes Caitlyn by the hands.

JJ Dixon:

Caitlyn Kinsey, I believe in you so much. And even though like we talked about, giving yourself a retirement match stipulation this early is a bit much... I believe that one day you'll be as successful a wrestler as you've ever dreamed of. And I believe that you have made me a better person, a better man, every single day since we have met. Because, ever since we first laid eyes on each other... I have been so completely in love with you. You helped get through these past few months of my brooding teenage alternative emo pretentious indie phase... and, yes, I promise one day I will read all of the books you want me to read... Because...

Now JJ takes the deepest breath of his life. He then pulls out a box and gets on one knee. Caitlyn starts crying, and hopping up and down. Aurora covers her mouth in shock as JJ pops open the box to reveal a diamond! Teri is beaming with pride!

JJ Dixon:

Caitlyn Kinsey, will you do me the honor and make me the happiest man alive? Would you be my wife?

Caitlyn stops hopping up and down and grabs the microphone, crying and smiling.

Yes!

Yes!

Yes!

Caitlyn Kinsey:

Yes! Yes! Yes! Of course!

JJ gets up as the crowd cheers. He and Caitlyn share a deep, wet and passionate kiss as the crowd hoots and hollers.

JJ breaks the kiss and smiles.

JJ Dixon:

Look, Caitlyn. I also know that I'm not doing anything at Maximum DEFIANCE. And these fans, The Faithful —

Yeahhhh!!!

JJ Dixon:

Like I said -- they have been a part of this ride with me these past few months. And I'd like them to join them for this part, too. So, Caitlyn... how about you and I get married in Nashville? It makes sense, I'd assume you'd have your bachelorette party there like everyone else in America.

Caitlyn is profusely nodding in agreement, tears still flowing down her cheeks. They kiss one more time. And again. Finally, JJ breaks free of the kiss to give Aurora, his future mother-in-law, a kiss on the cheek and a giant hug.

Teri stares at Caitlyn, who looks at her a bit warily. But then Teri slowly smiles, and opens her arms wide!

Hug!

Hug!

Hug!

Teri then gives Caitlyn, whom she had been dismissive of for months, a big hug. JJ joins them for a second. JJ now gives Teri a giant hug and kiss on the cheek, and Caitlyn does the same for her daughter. Teri and Aurora just share a brief smile between themselves. JJ, ever the gentleman, holds the middle and top rope apart so Caitlyn can pass, followed by Teri and Aurora!

DDK:

There is hardly a dry eye in the house! We are going to have a wedding at Maximum DEFIANCE!

Lance:

I hope you have your dancing shoes ready, Keebs!

DDK:

And maybe this will change the luck of Caitlyn Kinsey, who still has to wrestle later tonight and is putting her career on the line against Nicky Synz!

Lance:

I also think that Tabitha Kinsey might have some thoughts about all of this, too. And I doubt positive ones.

TRIPP WISE vs. SHO NAKAZAWA

DDK:

Up next, we have Tripp Wise in action against Sho Nakazawa... but what we don't know yet is why Tripp was out scouting the debut of Ria Lockhart two weeks ago.

Lance:

I tried asking him, but all he did was make crass jokes about both my appearance and my last appearance on DEF Radio... and that whole unpleasantness.

DDK:

...Moving on. Tripp Wise gave Mil Vueltas a fight a few weeks ago, only to come up short, but rebounded with a recent win on UNCUT against Caitlyn Kinsey. We'll see if he can score a win tonight against the masked Sho Nakazawa here momentarily.

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 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's inside, he runs and leaps off the middle rope before landing on his feet. He waits for his opponent in the ring as his music goes quiet.

♪ "In One Ear" by Cage The Elephant ♪

Out from the back comes a man now wearing black trunks, knee pads and boots... oh, along with a sparkling silver bow-tie and collar, not to mention a sparkling silver with tux tails on the back! He carefully poses to the side on the ramp and has a microphone in hand as Quimbey announces him.

Darren Quimbey:

And his opponent... from Tacoma, Washington, weighing in at 231 pounds... **"THE WISE ASS" TRIPP WISE!**

Tripp Wise looks out to the Kentucky Faithful and motions for his music to be cut.

Tripp Wise:

FRANKFORT, HOW Y'ALL DOING TONIGHT?! YOU'RE A GREAT AUDIENCE!

Booooooooooooo!

Tripp Wise:

I heard that the toothbrush was invented in Kentucky... yeah, that's true. Don't bother looking that one up, kids. Cause if it were invented anywhere else in the US, we would have called it by its proper name.... A teeth-brush!

Some slightly less booing, but some annoyed booing.

Tripp Wise:

Don't like that one? Well, I'm sorry. Sorry that I'm killing it with this material tonight.... And speaking of, know why murders are so hard to solve here in Louisville? Because all the DNA and dental records match!

Now more grating reactions from the crowd as Tripp Wise gets into the ring.

Tripp Wise:

Okay, okay, okay, last one before I make Sho Nakazawa check the ceiling lights. What do Sho Nakazawa and a losing

horse at the Kentucky Derby have in common?

Referee Rex Knox calls for the bell as he's had enough, but Tripp tries to get him to hold on.

Tripp Wise:

Wait, wait, wait, you're gonna love this! Both work out for months only to be put down after two minutes! Thank you! You're a wonder audi... AH!

He finally gets caught by an impatient Sho Nakazawa with a quick running dropkick! That gets a cheer out of the Louisville Faithful as Sho snaps up quickly to his feet!

Lance:

Sweet relief for the ears! That's what that was! Sho Nakazawa not going to take disrespect from Tripp Wise any longer! And still no answers about Ria Lockhart?

Sho quickly leaps over the ropes, lands on the apron and then makes a big leap to wipe out Tripp Wise with an asai moonsault on the floor!

DDK:

Big moonsault press by Sho Nakazawa! Tripp Wise should've spent more time scouting instead of this horrible material he tries to pass off as comedy.

Li'l Nak is the first to his feet on the floor as Tripp Wise tries to scramble up, still wearing his vest with the tux tails. Nakazawa rips off the coat and kicks him as he tries to get back into the ring. When Tripp tries to put up the "time out" symbol, he gets kicked in the head by Nakazawa! Wise gets up to his feet, only to get kicked once in the leg! Then the other! He fires off two more pairs of alternating kicks at the legs before he jumps up and hits a jumping spin kick that knocks Tripp on his backside!

DDK:

Sho Nakazawa takes Wise down with the kicks! Sho is fired up tonight.

Lance:

His other material was tacky, but the shot about putting Sho Nakazawa down like a racehorse? Nah, I don't blame Sho at all.

Tripp Wise gets kicked around some more and ends up in the corner. When Sho makes another mad dash, Tripp tries to take him over with a back body drop, but Sho lands on the apron. He turns to hit Tripp with a quick forearm. The PUN-isher is stunned, but when Nakazawa tries to go low with a shoulder through the ropes, he gets a knee instead!

DDK:

Quick knee by Tripp Wise to counter Sho... OHH! Running hip attack through the ropes sends him out to the floor!

The Wise Ass sits in between the ropes, smiling for the camera at ringside while Sho's bell has been rung with a hip attack of all things. Tripp goes out to the apron and then waits for Sho to try and stand before he gets a running start. He leaps off the apron and hits another flying hip attack this time and knocks Sho down a second time! Tripp lands on his feet from the impact and get jeers from The Faithful!

DDK:

Look... we can make jokes all we want about hip attacks, but that's a 231-pound man throwing his literal weight around on a smaller competitor!

Lance:

And what's more, he's in control!

Sho is seeing stars when Tripp Wise picks him up by the side and then rams him back first into the ring apron. He

turns him around and then chucks him back inside. As The Faithful continue jeering the wanna-be comedian, he goes up top and takes flight once again, using a flying hip attack off the top rope to knock Sho down a third time!

DDK:

The Wise Ass using a part of him that brought him to the dance! Cover!

ONE!

TWO!

Nakazawa kicks out! He tries to sit up, but Wise kicks him in the small of the back twice to stun the cruiserweight.

DDK:

Sho kicks out, but Tripp Wise still controlling things. What's he going for now?

He starts stomping his feet and tries to get the crowd to clap with him. They start doing so and he runs off the ropes, then the other direction to set up something big... nope, he stops and applies a chinlock to troll the crowd.

DDK:

Tripp Wise messing with our fans here tonight. He's got that chinlock slapped in tight though... nope, now it's a noogie.

Sure enough, he annoys the crap out of Sho with a good middle-school noogie, then back to the chinlock. He shakes him around and then tries to wear him down before switching to grabbing the arm!

Lance:

And now is he trying an armbar or... nope, that's a snake bite, I think.

Like a giant manchild, he grabs the arm of Sho while he's grounded and twists the skin in different directions to cause a burning sensation many people felt in middle school. Sho cries out in pain and it gets worse when Tripp applies an actual armbar!

DDK:

If he'd stop trying to entertain himself or troll our fans, Tripp has the skill. It's clearly there. He just doesn't want to use it except when he wants to, but Sho needs to fight up.

Sho fights to the ropes while Tripp tries to keep him grounded. Tripp starts telling him a joke about someone he knew from Nantucket when Sho finally gets a hand under the ropes and Hector Navarro intervenes.

Lance:

Poor Sho subjected to bad comedy up close like that, but he makes the ropes!

Wise lets go, but tries to pick Sho up. He tries to set him up, but Sho kicks him in the leg and fights back with a pair of sharp knife-edge chops! Tripp clutches his chest then leaves himself wide open for a thrust kick! Tripp falls to a knee and then Sho charges off the ropes to hit a sliding reverse STO variation!

DDK:

Sho fights back and hits the thrust kick followed by the sliding reverse STO! Cover by Sho!

ONE!

TWO!

NO!

Lance:

Sho almost got him there! He's feeling it, too!

Sho gets back up to his feet and then waits on Tripp. He goes low with a rolling kick and doubles him over before trying to go for the Dragon's Fire... but Tripp blocks by ducking low before he can hit the rolling sunset flip bomb and shakes Li'l Nak off of him.

DDK:

Great counter by Tripp Wise! Maybe he's been doing more scouting than I thought!

Lance:

Sho turns... no! Stun gun into the ropes!

Sho Nakazawa hits the ropes by the throat and gets hobbled right into a big side three-quarter russian legsweep!

DDK:

Have a Nice Tripp! And we've called his matches on UNCUT so we know what's coming next!

Tripp Wise climbs through the ropes and heads up top. He poses for the fans and then jumps off the top rope with a big diving senton right across the chest of Sho!

Lance:

I do, unfortunately. See You Next Fall! He hits those moves in tandem and these fans are cringing from the impact like they did from his jokes earlier.

Tripp Wise smiles as he casually lays across Sho's chest.

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING DING DING

♪ "In One Ear" by Cage The Elephant ♪

Darren Quimbey:

Here is your winner... **TRIPP WISE!**

Tripp gets up and he wants a microphone immediately from the fans.

Lance:

No, you already won... for the love of all. Please stop.

Wise gets handed a microphone and then raises the microphone to the sky.

Tripp Wise:

RIA LOCKHART!

The wrestler/comedian turns to the stage.

Tripp Wise:

No jokes here for a second! I came out to scout your match two weeks ago because I had to make sure somebody wasn't just trying to play a joke on me, your Friendly Neighborhood Jokester. But sure enough... there you were, just

fresh on the scene whooping on Thomas Slaine!

Now Wise has some anger in his voice.

Tripp Wise:

I worked my ass off in BRAZEN for three years to get to where I'm now on DEFtv... but they just open the damn door for you cause you were in pRiMe for a cup of coffee? You just get to be on DEFtv? Just like that? Poof. Here you are out of thin air?

He looks up to the stage.

Tripp Wise:

Okay then... then if you're so confident, Ria, meet me in the ring at Maximum DEFIANCE! One of us is going to have our debut win on a major show... and then I'll show DEFIANCE who the real joke is!

Tripp doesn't have to wait long for an answer. Dressed in tight fitting jeans, a tank top, a leather jacket and Doc Martin boots is one Ria Lockhart!... And she has a mic in hand.

Ria Lockhart:

Really, dude? Crying about opportunities handed out to people? Sounds like your problem is with the office, not me.

Ria paces on the top of the stage, twirling the mic in her hand before continuing.

Ria Lockhart:

Yeah, I gained some visibility in PRIME. I was also in SHOOT Project, had a match at the second PWA show, a match I won, by the way... I've wrestled in Bang! Pro Wrestling, participated in the Madhouse and all of this is without discussing being in the business for 12 damn years! So you can go ahead and act like I have earned anything. I'll be more than happy to tell your whining ass how wrong you are!

YAAAAAAAY!

Ria Lockhart:

Oh, by the way, in case it wasn't obvious... I accept your challenge. See ya at Maximum DEFIANCE!

Lockhart nonchalantly flips the mic out of her hand before turning to leave. Tripp Wise watches the newest star of DEFIANCE take her leave and then looks smugly, knowing he's got what he wants.

DDK:

And another match official for Maximum DEFIANCE! Ria Lockhart takes on "The Wise Ass" Tripp Wise!

Lance:

That should be a good one! We'll be right back, but still to come! We have a No Disqualification match between the monster called Corvo Alpha and Oscar Burns' protege, Butcher Victorious! And The Saturday Night Specials team up with Elise Ares to take on the VERY unlikely team of Malak Garland and Flex In A Box!

DDK:

We'll be right back!

COMMERCIAL: THIS IS DEFIANCE!

WE [HEART] DEFIANCE

DEFtv is back from commercial. The camera sweeps across The Faithful, and those in its path raise their signs in an attempt to get on TV. But the rest of the fans?

They're booing.

On the interview stage, dressed in a purple polo and khakis, is one Ned Reform. Next to him stands Darren Keebler, who has left the announce desk and has mic in hand, ready to conduct the interview. Reform's face appears bored, as if this display is simply going through the motions. He eventually points to his watch and twirls his fingers in a "hurry up" motion - but this only serves to make the jeers louder.

DDK:

Welcome back to DEFtv, ladies and gentlemen. My guest at this time is Ned Reform.

Reform sneers, but for once, he doesn't interject with the correction.

DDK:

Mr. Reform, we haven't seen you since the unfortunate incident at DEFCON, and many of us have been speculating for weeks what you might make of the burgeoning MV1/Levi Cole friendship that has formed in your absence. I have to say, your actions last week spoke louder than words ever could. Now that you've returned, I have to ask: what possessed you to attack MV1?

Finally, as all crowds eventually do, the people expressing their displeasure begin to run out of steam. The Sage on the Stage takes advantage of the lull in the action to fire a small smirk into the camera as Keebler raises the mic to his face.

Ned Reform:

I've missed you too, children.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Ned Reform:

Before we commence with the usual mindless banter as one does on this program and I answer that frivolous question... I must first say... thank you.

A momentary crowd pause. Not sure what to make of that, maybe? Keebler also looks puzzled, but he continues to hold the mic for Ned.

Ned Reform:

There is one man to whom I owe a great debt. Toward whom I must focus my boundless gratitude. In fact, children, it would not be hyperbolic to say I might be more in debt to this individual than ever could I repay. And I want to proclaim this publicly.

Reform points into the camera.

Ned Reform:

So thank you... Gage Blackwood.

Keebler pulls the mic back in surprise.

DDK:

What? Gage Blackwood? He embarrassed you at DEFCON.

Reform smiles, shaking his head in amusement. How he loves confusing the simple minded Faithful. He waits for

Keebler to bring the mic back his way.

Ned Reform:

Well. That's one perspective. However, unbeknownst to you Mr. Keebler, Mr. Blackwood has done me a great service. Now, it's true that at DEFCON, he did maliciously blindside me in a cowardly manner. It's true that his poor sportsmanship allowed him to cheat his way to an upset victory. And it's also very much true that someday soon Mr. Blackwood will face swift retribution and the cold anger of justice. But despite all that, I still say "thank you."

Reform's smile fades. Serious face.

Ned Reform:

You see, children... I have been in DEFIANCE for over two years. In all that time, one singular question has continuously vexed me: why? Why do the fans of DEFIANCE show me such unending scorn? Why do my attempts at bettering this product breed nothing but contempt? Is this truly the price of selfless service? This may shock you to hear, children...

Reform stops speaking. Purses his lips. Then his lip quivers slightly before he continues.

Ned Reform:

But I love DEFIANCE.

BOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

DDK:

You can't possibly expect us to believe that, Ned.

Ned Reform:

Of course I can. You boo because you don't know any better. You believe that because I criticize, I must hate this promotion. But you must understand: I come from the world of academics. OF SCHOLARS! In my line of work, we poke holes and we tear down that which we hope to build up better. Criticism is an act of love, children. I know that you don't understand this: you view even the slightest negative comment as a personal attack. But that's because you are simple minded, you lack perspective, and you are morally frail. No, it is false to claim that Dr. Ned Reform hates DEFIANCE. Dr. Ned Reform loves DEFIANCE. Dr. Ned Reform has never wanted anything but to help DEFIANCE. And despite all this, I have become a pariah to both the fanbase and the locker room. I could never understand why. Until DEFCON.

Reform points to his forehead.

Ned Reform:

This is the exact spot in which that Scottish scoundrel's knee collided with my cranium. You see this, Mr. Keebler? Despite the immense pain, something miraculous occurred at DEFCON. The blow to my head sent waves of electromagnetic pulse directly into my frontal lobe... and suddenly, it all became clear. Time stood still, as it were. Thanks to Mr. Blackwood's senseless act of violence, I now understand. I know why you hate me. I've figured out why you can't handle my perspective on DEFIANCE.

Ned pauses, milking the moment.

Ned Reform:

You resent me. This promotion... DEFIANCE... this is your safe space, isn't it? The "Faithful." In your everyday lives, you completely lack agency. You work long hours for meager compensation. You watch as corrupt politicians gamble your lives without a shred of accountability. You lack the means to obtain your ideal sexual partners, so you drown in a sea of pornography.

Keebler pulls the mic back, disgusted.

DDK:

Please, Mr. Reform. Is there a point to this?

Ned Reform:

There certainly is, Keebler, and you'd do well to stop interrupting me. The people resent me because when this show goes off the air... when we all return to our regular lives... I actually matter. I am a man of importance. Of status. You return to your soul-sucking existence, and I return to my spacious office on the campus of the most prestigious ivy league university in the country. Hundreds of people depend on me. I am far from a mindless cog in the machine. I help build the machine. Unlike the fans of this company, unlike the wrestlers in the locker room, and unlike YOU, Mr. Keebler... DEFIANCE is not all that I have. This is not my world. In fact, I could walk out of this place tomorrow, and I would forget it ever existed within minutes. And knowing that eats away at you all. I have succeeded where you have all failed, so you relish the chance to boo me in the only arena in which someone like you is on equal footing with one such as myself. Quite pathetic, yes? In fact...

♪ "The Fixer" by Pearl Jam ♪

Reform's head snaps towards the entrance with seething annoyance. The Faithful's tone changes as MV1 steps through the curtain dressed to compete.

Lance:

Masked Violator #1 is in the building and he, like many of us I imagine, has heard ENOUGH!

No smile detected under his mask, MV1 is all business as he trots onto the interview stage. Reform rolls his eyes as Keebler moves to warily stand between them. #1 puts a hand up to assure Keebler that he has no intention of things getting physical before Keebs finally raises the microphone towards him.

MV1:

You know I'm sitting back there.... And I'm listening to everything you're saying... and all I'm hearing is a whole load of NOTHIN'.

RAAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!

MV1:

You love DEFIANCE so much that you opened the company up to liability with one of the richest men in the world! You love DEF so much that you talk down to every single person you see, including these amazing fans.

MV1 sweeps a pointing index finger around the raucous arena.

Ned Reform:

If by "talk down to," you mean "tell the truth" - I am guilty as charged, Mr. "Masked Violator Number One." Tell me, is that German? You know what - don't answer. I fully expected your interruption. And thank you - you are the example that proves the point.

Reform motions up and down MV1's form.

Ned Reform:

A man SO unable to exist outside the comforting blanket that is DEFIANCE, you're forced to adopt a pseudonym and wear a mask. Exactly my point. Look at us. Truly, look at us.

Reform gestures to himself.

Ned Reform:

A respected and tenured academic.

And now he points to MV1.

Ned Reform:

And a man dressed like a rejected fast food mascot. Tell me - which of us deserves more respect?

If this bothers MV1, he doesn't show it as Keebler moves the mic back for his retort.

MV1:

Yeah, when this show ends, you go back to your fancy ivy league job and, I imagine, talk down to - oh, excuse me, "tell the truth to" every person unlucky enough to cross your path there. But the athletes here who TRULY love DEFIANCE? Guys like me? I'm straight to the gym. I'm training. I'm BACK in the ring and honing my skills, improving my craft, mastering my art! Yeah. DEFIANCE is all I have, I'm not ashamed to say it. I don't just love DEF, I live this place. It's why I get up in the morning and it's why I work so hard through the night. It's the competition, the camaraderie, the RESPECT and tradition of this sport that I love. You know who else loves DEFIANCE like me? Levi Cole.

OHHHHHHHHH!!!

Ned bristles at the statement, fists clenched. It's hard to see, but his right eye twitches slightly.

MV1:

Before you got your mitts on that kid and started filling his head with garbage and getting his priorities all twisted, he was on his way to the top. If you REALLY loved DEFIANCE... you'd have let that boy become the man he was meant to. Not some sick, stuck-up reflection of you.

Ned goes to snatch the mic from Keebs hand, but MV1 stops him - the three of them momentarily struggling for the mic until Reform relents.

MV1:

How about you and me... MAXIMUM DEFIANCE. In the ring. Between bells. We find out who loves DEFIANCE more.

Now MV1 relinquishes the microphone in order for Reform to respond. Ned doesn't take it - instead allowing Keebler to function as his human mic stand.

Ned Reform:

I *enthusiastically* accept.

RAAAAAAAAAA!

Lance:

That's uncharacteristic!

Ned Reform:

You see, I am at a crossroads... from my point of view, I have two choices. Accept that a man of accomplishment has no business in a realm of ineffective and impotent rejects and pack it up and leave DEFIANCE completely in the rear view.

RAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

Lance:

I think that's the appealing choice to The Faithful.

Reform smiles.

Ned Reform:

OR... I play by your rules. If you won't respect me for my accomplishments in the real world, then it is simply time to reign supreme here. In short: my other option is to become the greatest professional wrestler who ever lived.

Ned gets in close... now he and MV1 are face-to-face and nearly touching.

Ned Reform:

I will face you at Maximum DEFIANCE. And I will utterly humiliate you inside that ring. We'll see who is truly a... what did you say? "Master of the art" of wrestling in that ring. We'll see how far your training has gotten you. I will show you what a functional, successful human being can do when he is committed. And then, after I have left you a beaten and broken man...

Reform's eyes narrow.

Ned Reform:

Perhaps I *will* leave. Perhaps I will stay and continue to dominate in the ring until it becomes impossible to ignore me. Either option sounds appealing to me. But I won't make that decision. *You* won't make that decision. I certainly won't do something as cliché as "if you defeat me I will leave DEFIANCE." Win, lose, or draw at the PPV... I will leave the decision around Dr. Ned Reform's future up to one person...

Reform turns away from MV1 and looks into the camera.

Ned Reform:

Mr. Cole. I place my fate directly in your hands. It appears to me you have a choice. You align yourself with this man and continue to play pretend with the Mighty Morphin Power Ranger. If that's your choice, DEFIANCE has seen the last of Dr. Ned Reform. OR... you return to your mentor. The one who saved you from the unemployment line. To prestige, glory, and triumph. To The Honor Society. And with you by my side once again, I will crush all of DEFIANCE under my foot en route to becoming the greatest this industry will ever see.

Ned smirks.

Ned Reform:

Your choice.

He turns back to MV1.

Ned Reform:

See you at Maximum DEFIANCE, "friend."

Without waiting for a response, Reform brushes by MV1 and marches toward the entrance. MV1 folds his hands as he watches him go.

DDK:

Ladies and gentlemen, you heard it here first... MV1 and Ned Reform one-on-one has been signed for Maximum DEFIANCE! And Ned Reform is putting his future DEFIANCE career in Levi Cole's hands! If I'm Levi, I've got a lot of thinking to do.

NICKY SYNZ vs. CAITLYN KINSEY

DDK:

Earlier tonight, we saw Caitlyn Kinsey have one life-altering moment, when JJ Dixon proposed to her in the middle of the ring! Now, we could see another -- for better or for worse.

♪ "Prime Mover" by Synister Sledge ♪

Nicky Synz comes out holding his Flying V guitar, banging his head up and down, before he starts playing some hot licks on his guitar in tune with the music. He walks halfway down the ring, points to the crowd, and then whips the guitar around his neck (via the strap once) before he catches it without even looking and starts playing his guitar once again. He then places the guitar on the ring apron before heading into the ring, banging his head once again.

Lance:

Caitlyn, at the suggestion of her grandmother Tabitha, has issued a special challenge to Nicky Synz where she will retire from DEFIANCE forever if she loses!

DDK:

And there are shades from the earliest days of the partnership of Teri Melton and JJ Dixon. We go all the way back to DEF 174 where —

We see the end of the JJ/Nicky Synz match, where first we see Teri Melton screaming at JJ to go after Nicky's right knee, he does. Then we see later in the match that, without JJ's knowledge, Teri jabbed a lit cigarette in the eye of DEFIANCE's hard rocker, leading to JJ dropping Nicky on his face with what would later become known as Sunset Boulevard for the victory, followed by afterwards JJ walking out of the ring with Teri clutching his arm and Zoltan walking in the background.

Lance:

So much has happened with Teri and JJ since then, with both becoming superstars here with a devoted cult following that has embraced their panache and unorthodox approach to wrestling and life itself.

♪ "Girl, You'll Be A Woman Soon" by Urge Overkill ♪

The up-tempo Neil Diamond cover comes out and Caitlyn Kinsey comes out first, wearing a pink halter top that says "The Prodigy" in bright yellow, with matching trunks and white boots with alternating pink/yellow fringe. She comes out first and takes a deep breath. But then following her wearing an old-school black Ramones T-Shirt (and thankfully not in his get-up from before) is JJ Dixon! He's whispering some advice in her ear that she's trying to take in as nervous as she looks.

DDK:

Caitlyn Kinsey, at the suggestion for her grandmother, has put so much pressure on herself tonight.

JJ Dixon:

Come on, Caitlyn! You got this! Remember what we talked about!

Lance:

Caitlyn has struggled here so far in DEFIANCE, and you can really see it have gotten to her lately. Wrestling isn't just tough on the body, but it is also tough on the soul. Going from "gifted prodigy in the Greater Philadelphia Region" to DEFIANCE is a major step up in weight class. And then some.

Referee Carla Ferrari calls for the bell.

DING DING

The two lock-up. Nicky gets the advantage, outweighing Caitlyn by 30 pounds, but pushes her into the ropes, forcing the break. Before they go for the next lockup, Caitlyn looks to go with a spinning high kick towards his head. But as

Nicky puts his hands up to block, Caitlyn instead spins and sweeps him in the right knee, taking him off of his feet.

DDK:

Now Caitlyn up, holds the right leg, and drops an elbow right on the knee.

Caitlyn then grips his right ankles and clinches a leg vice around the right knee.

JJ pumps his fist and then applauds.

Lance:

Caitlyn has a very strong background in martial arts striking and MMA-influenced submission wrestling, and you can see both of those right there.

Nicky grimaces but grabs the bottom rope. Caitlyn breaks and charges, but Nicky immediately meets her with a clothesline.

Lance:

This is where Caitlyn has struggled. We've seen her have some good initial bursts of offense, especially to start a match, but they've always been met by someone more experienced.

DDK:

Nicky now picks Caitlyn up -- snap suplex!

Lance:

At the last UNCUT, Nathan Eye managed to successfully target Caitlyn's midsection. You have to think Nicky watched that match and is doing the same.

Nicky now whips Caitlyn into the ropes and meets her with a boot to the stomach, followed by a jumping facebuster!

One!

Two!

No!

DDK:

Caitlyn just got the shoulder up -- and we almost just saw the end of her DEFIANCE career!

Caitlyn rolls to the floor. She immediately kicks the steps in anger. But JJ runs over to her.

JJ Dixon:

Deep breaths, Caitlyn. Deep breaths. Remember what we talked about. Second wave offense. Second wave offense.

Caitlyn nods her head and she rolls back into the ring. Caitlyn then feints like she's going to try and grab Nicky's right knee. But as he goes down to block, Caitlyn instead meets him with a rolling axe kick to his head.

Lance:

That's what JJ meant by second wave offense and where Caitlyn has struggled -- how to put together a second and third string of moves after your opponent has gained control.

Caitlyn then picks Nicky up by the side and pops the hips with a judo toss/suplex hybrid. JJ applauds.

DDK:

And wow, you can really see some great core strength from Caitlyn there.

Lance:

That technique was also really impressive, too.

Nicky rolls out of the ring to gather himself. But --

DDK:

Caitlyn meets Nicky with a sliding dropkick that sends him crashing into the railing!

Now Caitlyn quickly gets on the apron and measures Nicky up --

DDK:

CAITLYN WITH A FORWARD FLIP INTO A HURUCANRANA! WHERE DID THAT COME FROM!

JJ is besides himself and literally jumps for joy! The crowd also cheers.

Lance:

You can just sense Caitlyn's confidence has grown a lot having her fiance right by her side, especially since he was in this same exact situation a few months ago.

JJ starts pounding on the mat and the crowd chants with him --

Cait-lyn! Caitl-lyn! Cait-lyn!

She smiles at her fiance and rolls back into the ring.

DDK:

Wait... we're getting word that there's some kind of altercation going on in the back!

There is a camera running in the hallway near the locker room area. As the cameraman rounds the corner, we hear the sound of a metal baseball bat dropping and hitting the concrete floor, along with a lot of yelling.

Then, we see Cristiano Caballero starting to viciously punt NDR's JP Reeves in the ribs, with Raiden already knocked out cold. And next to him is Tabitha Kinsey, dressed to the nines in her St. James Knit tweed outfit, holding the wrist and fingers of a hunched over and screaming Teri Melton at a really sharp angle, even as Teri is trying to claw at her enemy's eyes with her fingernails.. Aurora Kaye is next to them, pleading with her mother to stop.

Tabitha then starts to grip Teri's ring finger, with an unsettling lack of change to her high-society WASP countenance. Cristiano now has the bat again and is jabbing the handle of it repeatedly into JP's ribs.

The shot goes into a split-screen of the altercation in the back and the match on the right. And on the right, JJ looks up at the footage on the DEFiatron and gets a panicked look on his face.

DDK:

Caitlyn now throws Nicky back into the ring! She now propels herself over with a slingshot legdrop!

One!

Two!

No!

Caitlyn then immediately turns Nicky over into a crossface and wrenches back. But on the right side of the screen, we see Tabitha grabbing Teri's left ring finger as Cristiano now continues his assault on the fallen NDR members with stomps. Teri's ring finger is bent at an unnatural right angle as Tabitha continues to pull on it with a frightening nonchalance.

Tabitha Kinsey:

Want to steal my wedding ring? Why, I'll just snap your finger right off, you thieving trollop!

Teri is screaming in pain, while trying to claw at Tabitha's eyes with her free hand. Aurora Kaye is yelling for security.

JJ looks back at the ring and then pointing at the screen.

DDK:

JJ is telling Caitlyn about what's happening in the back! He's going off to help with the situation unfolding in the locker room area.

Caitlyn breaks the hold as JJ starts to run to the back.

Caitlyn Kinsey:

Where are you going, JJ? I need you!

Caitlyn is standing next to the ropes, watching JJ run to the back --

DDK:

Nicky with the roll-up!

One!

Two!

Thre--no!

Lance:

And that was almost the end of Caitlyn Kinsey's young career!

The screen shows more continued mayhem in the back, as DEFSec appears trying to get Tabitha off of Teri, but Kinsey continues to hold and manipulate Teri's ring finger at disturbing angles, with Kinsey's face nonplussed and making her actions even more horrifying. We then see JJ enter the fray, trying to get in the middle of the two women as Cristiano now punches away on the downed Reeves.

DDK:

Nicky now has Caitlyn -- running bulldog! He quickly picks her up with an Exploder suplex right into the corner! Nicky is on the top rope! He is setting her up for the Flying V!

Lance:

If he hits this, we are going to see the end of Caitlyn Kinsey's career before it even got started!

Now there's a commotion in the crowd as someone is hopping the railing.

DDK:

That's Brayden "Dubya" Leverington from The Company Men!

Lance:

He's expressed an interest in Caitlyn over the past few weeks.

Dubya hops onto the ring apron, drawing the attention of both Carla Ferrari and Nicky Synz, who drops on the apron. This also lets Caitlyn roll out to the opposite side of the ring.

The camera still shows the commotion in the back as DEFSec finally pulls apart all the parties. JJ is checking in on Teri who shoos him away as she holds her now crooked ring finger.

Teri Melton:

Just go worry about Caitlyn.

JJ nods and turns back to the ringside area.

DDK:

Nicky decides to stop jawjacking with Dubya, who for some reason is still standing on the ring apron and yelling at Carla Ferrari.

Caitlyn is on all fours outside of the ring when something catches her eye right next to the ring steps -- a Faberge Egg, her grandmother's weapon of choice. Caitlyn grabs it and looks at it with eyes open and almost hypnotized. Nicky reaches between the middle and top rope to drag her back into the ring but --

DDK:

OH NO! CAITLYN JUST SMASHED THAT FABERGE EGG RIGHT INTO THE FACE OF NICKY SYNZ!

Lance:

Directly into the same eye that Teri Melton jabbed her lit cigarette into at DEF 174!

Nicky falls flat on the mat as Caitlyn quickly hurries in, hooks the leg and covers! Dubya backs off and hops the railing back into the crowd, a smirk on his face as he watches Carla count.

One!

Two!

Three!

DING DING DING

Darren Quimbey:

The winner of the match... "The Prodigy" Caitlyn Kinseyyyyy!!!!

DDK:

What... what did we just witness?

Lance:

This reeks of some kind of set-up from The Estate of Tabitha Kinsey! I have no idea if Caitlyn knew about any of this in advance!

JJ is now halfway down the ring ramp, ecstatic beyond all belief, his eyes bulging.

JJ Dixon:

You did it! You did it!

Lance:

And I can guarantee you from this reaction that JJ absolutely did not know about any of this!

JJ rolls under the ropes and gives Caitlyn a giant hug. But as he does, Caitlyn nervously looks around before shoving the weapon with her foot to the floor without JJ's knowledge. JJ then grabs his fiancée, hoists her up and spins her around before giving her another passionate- kiss. Dubya stands in the middle of the aisle looking at the ring with a sneer of jealous on his face before he turns and leaves.

COMMERCIAL: HALL OF FAME

HENRY KEYES SOHER SPECTAPALOOZA, SPONSORED BY IHOP

Lance:

Coming up next, Keebs...well, how would you describe this?

DDK:

All I know is, I assume Henry Keyes has lost the plot by now, partner. And I love it! Anything can happen on DEFtv when The Bluevocateur is involved!

Lance:

Henry Keyes has scheduled time tonight to celebrate his quote-unquote "historic SOHER title reign", despite the fact that his reign is still shorter than the run belonging to Elise Ares! And lest we forget, many his recent title defenses are FULL of shenanigans lately! For every Elise Ares or Matt LaCroix, there's a Jet Engine or a Justin Sane!

DDK:

I agree that he's gone off the deep end, but I will not stand by any slander directed towards Justin Sane or the competitors of the Short Stack Battlepalooza! Those matches were unforgettable!

Lance:

Time to face the music, I suppose!

The lights go out in the arena. And then - a spotlight. A pink spotlight. Stepping into it is a man in full marching band regalia, from bright pink coat to bright pink hat to the electric blue plume of feathers sticking out the top, complete with Plague Doctor mask over his face. He carries a large marching baton and high steps forward, and the currently-in-the-dark drumline kicks off a raucous beat. Slowly, the pink spotlight grows and expands, revealing a full Plague Doctor Marching Band behind Drum Major Plague Doctor (with the primary difference in uniform being that band's feather plumes are pink, not blue)...drums, horns, tubas, flutes, trumpets, clarinets, the whole deal - about 40 or so marchers in total. They march in high stepping formation as the beat from the drumline progresses, evolves, and lends itself to an opening horn riff...

♪ "God Is a DJ" by Pink - arranged for marching band ♪

As we hit the first chorus, the high stepping marchers move in sync to create a path up the entrance ramp. We first see the happy and celebratory faces of Lindsay Troy and Oscar Burns...then a stoic Clay Byrd, beer in hand and content with that. Sonny Silver is smarmy as hell and so happy about what's happening as he claps his way down the ramp. Butch Vic is WAY too hyped about what's coming up and looks like he's ready to burst with excitement, then Kerry Kuroyama emerges, looking pretty frustrated and favoring his side as he joins his Vae Victis compatriots. Eventually, they all make it inside the ring.

And then, as the horns reach a climactic moment in the seminal classic from the Mean Girls soundtrack, The Kraken emerges. He's wearing a lavender cravat that would make Miles Edgeworth blush beneath a crushed velvet pink suit, complete with elaborate black stitching. His arms extend wide as he basks in just a cascade of sound, boos mixed with cheers mixed with horns mixed with chaos.

Behind him are three additional Plague Doctors. Based on their various accessories, we can make some guesses as to their identities; we rightfully assume the man holding Lindsay Troy's owl Athena, clad in pink armor and a pink shield, is probably Falconer Plague Doctor on the left (look him up, cowards); we can also assume by his cartoonishly large head mirror and arcane-looking stethoscope that the person on the right might be Doctor Plague Doctor. The man in the middle, while also wearing a Plague Doctor mask, seems somehow more...litigious. And in his arms, he holds a wooden treasure chest. The three Plague Doctors follow Keyes to the ring.

By now, the arena is flooded in pink light beacons. The ring apron has been completely covered by a gigantic pale pink fluffy rug, and surrounding the ring, we see the cold corporate reason this made air:

Pancakes. Stacks and stacks of pancakes, waffles, hash browns, bacon, and more on many many paper plates. Men and women in IHOP-branded white polos do their best to distribute breakfast food to Vae Victis in the ring as well as

Lance Warner and Darren Keebler and the fans who spent extra on their tickets this evening to be sitting in the first few rows. Keyes grabs a pancake and gives it a hearty chomp, too big a chomp in fact as half a pancake falls to the floor from his shit-eating grin.

This is the happiest day of Henry Keyes's life.

Lance:

Do you have any notes on this?

DDK:

They don't tell me NOTHIN', Lance. All I can say is buckle up for your own good!

Keyes retrieves a microphone from a ringside staffer as Drum Major Plague Doctor signals for his band to complete their tune - their movements from the last beat of music into final position are precise and well-coordinated.

Henry Keyes:

WELCOMMMMMMMME, DEFIANCE, TO THE GREATEST PARTY YOU'RE EVER GOING TO SEE!

BOOOOOOOOOOOORAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH

The third, legal-minded Plague Doctor places the treasure chest he carried to the ring atop a small black table in the ring and gives it a light pat.

Henry Keyes:

WELCOME! TO THE HENRY KEYES, SOHER, SPECTAPALOOOOOOOOOOOZAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!
SPONSOREDBYIHOP!

RAHHHHHHHHHHBBOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO

Henry Keyes:

And that's not all! We're in the KFC Yum! Center, right?! Who wants some fried chicken? I know you do! I know YOU, DEFINITELY do, big fella!

Keyes points to the crowd at a man with a full salt-and-pepper beard, already holding up a bottle of hot sauce he intends to pour onto the hypothetical fried chicken he hopes comes his way. A grumpy looking oaf with the nametag "Julian" chucks a drumstick at the man's face. We cut away before what is sure to be an uncomfortable confrontation.

Henry Keyes:

Let's take a moment to remember why we're all here...once we get to MAXIMUM DEFIANCE, I will be the LONGEST REIGNING SOHER IN THE HISTORY OF THIS COMPANY! YEEEEEEEEES!

Keyes holds up his free fist as Troy, Burns, Silver, Byrd, and Butch applaud. Kuroyama seems nonplussed.

Henry Keyes:

All your heroes, all your so-called favorites, DESTROYED BRICK BY BRICK! Vae Victis has CLAIMED this company! And to that end...boy oh boy, Louisville, I don't know if I should reveal this first! Should I? I should, I really should! I can't hold it in any longer! FEAST YOUR EYES, DEFIANCE, ON THE GREATEST REPRESENTATION OF CHAMPIONSHIP GLORY IN OUR COMPANY!

With a swift motion, Keyes unlatches the treasure chest and flips the lid open. Inside, the Treasure is revealed...a championship belt, complete with modern SOHER CHAMPION gold plating featuring DEFIANCE branding and silver-and-bronze gear side plates, and most egregiously, an electric pink leather strap. A new belt for a new era.

Henry Keyes:

YOU! CAN'T! SIT! WITH! USSSSSSSSS, DEFIANCE! HAAAAAAAAAAAAHAHAHAHA!!!

Keyes reaches into the treasure box and holds the new gaudy and egregious SOHER title belt high. The sounds erupting from the crowd...it's hard to say what they represent anymore. It's just a lot. A lot of loud and opinionated Faithful with clear and rational views about the professional wrestling product appearing before them.

Lance:

I can't believe it's come to this, Keebs.

DDK:

He's made his mark on the history of the SOHER in many ways, Lance, and now he's made a permanent mark as well!

Henry Keyes:

I know there's more entertainment lined up! Who else do we have? Who else we got? Get 'em out here, I desire CHUCKLES, DEFIANCE!

From the back, a few more performers in Plague Doctor masks emerge. One juggles a set of flaming bowling pins, another does a jump rope in a real cool way if you were into jump rope, which you're not, because it's dumb, and he's dumb, and this whole experience is dumber and dumber all the time.

Henry Keyes:

EXCELLENT! EXCELLENT! And now, before I continue much further, I want to bring my comrades in for a second. Vae Victis, let's huddle up, let's huddle up.

The emotional spectrum of VV is anywhere from Giddy At The Prospect Of Being Fired to Pissed That They Have To Stand Before The World Right Now, Henry, but they all huddle in. Keyes pulls out a black leather flask from inside his jacket pocket and another Plague Doctor appears out of nowhere carrying a tray with a bunch of empty shot glasses. Keyes pours green liquid into all of them, and soon, everyone in VV has one in hand.

Henry Keyes:

Now repeat after me..."As sure as Suleiman wore a turban, absinthe is always better than bourbon!" Cheers, friends!

Everyone in Vae Victis throws up an eyebrow at this bizarre-ass rhyme, but shrugs because It's Henry. They all clink their glasses and down the green liquid as Louisville natives shout in anger at the one thing they do better than baseball bats gets disparaged. The effects are wild to witness - Byrd we're pretty sure has stopped functioning. Butch Vic looks ready to rob someone. Kerry looks like he threw the shot over his shoulder and remains pissed. Oscar coughs a few times. The Queen of the Ring is full on letting loose and is just so happy for her friend. Keyes looks unchanged.

Henry Keyes:

Three hundred sixty-six days...that's the record, right? A year and a day? Well, guess what, DEFIANCE...July 14, 2022 - that's the day I ripped this championship away from that serum-sniffing emo kid, Scrow, and every single day since then, I have PROVEN to every wrestler in the back that I am an UNSTOPPABLE JUGGERNAUT. July 16, 2023, I claim the record for myself, in the final days before MAXDEF! And it doesn't matter if you're a relic from ancient history looking to reclaim your former glory, it doesn't matter if you're some punk-ass piece of shit former friend who thinks defending the Favoured Saints Championship four times means you can step to this - THIS TITLE LEAVES MY HANDS WHEN I DIE, DEFIANCE! COME AND BLOODY TAKE IT!!

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Lance:

Worth mentioning to fans new to DEFIANCE...Henry Keyes only earned his opportunity at the SOHER by successfully defending the Favoured Saints Championship four times himself! By virtue of successfully defending his title against Kerry Kuroyama earlier in the evening, Rezin has earned a shot at the SOHER just like Keyes did a year ago!

DDK:

Never let truth get in the way of a good story, Lance!

ROOOOOOOARRRRRRARRRRRAWWWWWWOWWWWWWWWWWW!!

The Faithful scramble to look left, right, up, and down, hoping to figure out where this damn tiger roar is coming from. Keyes, for his part, locks eyes at the top of the ramp, which causes DEFtv cameras to lock their lenses up top as well - only for there to be a full-on cackle from the Queen of the Ring.

She's holding out her phone again. She's pressed the "Helen Roar Recording" play button again.

Damn it. No tiger tonight.

Henry Keyes:

Aww, that's so sad for you, DEFIANCE, you don't get to see Helen tonight! Well LEST WE FREAKING FORGET, DEFIANCE, THERE'S A TRACK RECORD OF PEOPLE HERE MESSING WITH MY DAMN TIGER WHEN I BRING HER AROUND, SO BLAME ADV FOR THIS! Or even more, BLAME REZIN FOR THIS! HE STOLE HER AWAY FROM ME ONCE, AND I LEARNED MY LESSON! REZIN IS THE REASON YOU DON'T GET TO SEE HELEN TONIGHT!

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Henry Keyes:

And you know what, that leads me to my next point of order tonight - you people don't RESPECT-

Oh no. The marching band didn't get the memo.

They're playing music again.

♪ "Live To Win" by Paul Stanley - arranged for marching band ♪

Butcher Victorious frantically waves his arms in the direction of the top of the ramp, as if that would stop the slow-moving train wreck currently unfolding before him.

Henry Keyes:

What's this? More for me?

Butch groans out a "noooo" as two In Another Universe They'd Be Helpful, Drill Team Plague Doctors in full Southern marching band poofy skirts unveil a banner with the following words in bright pink text:

KERRY KUROYAMA
NEW FAVOURED SAINTS CHAMPION
WE'RE SO PROUD OF YOU

As the words get revealed, Keyes and Troy frantically wave up the ramp and motion for this section to be cut. Kerry, of course, sees everything, and this just sucks a lot for him. He was already pissed at the outcome of tonight's opener, and now there's a fresh hell laid out before him at a time when he already would prefer to be done for the night.

Henry Keyes:

BUTCH! I SWEAR TO GOD! WHY DIDN'T YOU FIX THIS??

Butcher Victorious:

By the time I could call, they were already here, and they wouldn't hear me out! I swear, I tried to stop it-

Henry Keyes:

BUTCH!!!!

As if Keyes's voice was a shotgun blast, Butch Vic takes a bump and rolls out of the ring. The Faithful laugh as Keyes rages, until out of nowhere...

♪ "I Have Prepared a Statement" by Whores. ♪

RRRAAAAAAAAAAHHHHH!!!

A thunderous ovation from the Faithful greets "The Escape Artist" Rezin, who steps out onto the stage without delay.

Sans Favoured Saints Championship, as he no longer has a need for it.

His eyes dart to the production team.

Rezin:

Yo, cut it. Cut the music.

They abide. Rezin turns his attention to those in the ring.

Rezin:

Real talk here, chuckleheads... what the HELL *IS* THIS??

He gestures toward the ring with incredulity.

Rezin:

Seriously... WHAT THE HELL?!

He gives his face a good open-handed slap, as if to confirm he's not in a dream. But no, he's awake. Even though there's still a good chance he may be hallucinating. This one time, how

Rezin:

Are ya tellin' me that *THIS* is what the great and mighty pantheon of professional wrestlin' try-hards that is Vae Victis has been workin' for this entire time? Goddamb... I dunno, pancakes and tigers, or whatever the hell is? I mean, bein' the elitist scum is one thing... but *THIS*?

He tsk-tsks.

Rezin:

My dudes, that ain't what I call PUNK ROCK!

He points accusingly to the ring again. Specifically, at the one man wearing the Southern Heritage Title.

Rezin:

I guess it's clear now that ya were never really in it to rid DEFIANCE of the "circus" that's apparently been holdin' it down all these years! Turns out, ya just wanted to be clowns in your own three-ring circle jerk! I mean, Jesus Christ, you even have a friggin' TIGER! All that's missing are... I dunno, TWINS and MAGICIANS, or whatever!

At that exact moment, dual plumes of purple smoke explode in the ring. When the smoke clears, two literal twin magicians have materialized within the squared circle.

Carlo Amaretto:

AVANTI, D'FIANCE!! Did someone say MAGIC?!

Gomez Amaretto:

Because the AMAZING AMARETTOS have FINALLY ARRIVED!

Rezin:

GODDAMBIT, GUYS!! Would ya BEAT IT?! I'm trynna make a serious point here, and you're undercuttin' the message!

The bedazzling brothers grumble indignantly.

Carlo Amaretto:

Freaking amateurs...

Gomez Amaretto:

We're still waiting on that last check to clear! Don't make us come for your teeth, asshole!

POOF!! In two more plumes of purple smoke, the magicians disappear.

Rezin:

By Saint Kaczynski's whiskers...

Rezin runs a hand down his face, doing everything to keep it together right now.

Rezin:

Look... I fully realize I'm one to talk here, what with alla my riverboats and golf carts and movie trivia and giant metal spiders. But at the same time, I ain't pretendin' I'm somehow "elite". I ain't turnin' my nose up to the rest of the locker room, like I'm at a completely different standard. I ain't actin' like *MY* sideshow is any way better. And I ain't so up my own ass that I've become drunk on power lost my grip on reality.

He pulls out a spliff and casually lights it up.

Rezin:

Ya do this garbage to make yourself laugh, but to errybuddy else, y'all are the KABAL levels of embarrassing right now...

OOOOOOOOOOHHHH...

DDK:

CALL AN AMBULANCE!

Rezin:

Erry two weeks, I watch ya jagoffs come out here and take up a chunk of time... to what? Indulge yourselves? Force us to watch ya pat yourselves on the back in the most elaborate and contrived means necessary? Seriously, for how much ya force us to watch ya wank off, ya might as well change your initials to "CK".

Rezin has slowly descended the ramp through his speech. His wild, bulging eyes burrow holes into the Kraken.

Rezin:

Ya turned your back on ME, Hank... *ME*... so ya can eat PANCAKES with the PLASTICS?!

He shakes his head.

Rezin:

Naww, dawg... that ain't the unstoppable, unrelentin', PUNK ROCK muthafugga ya were back at DEFCON two years ago when we last met in the ring! Even though I can see he's long gone by now, *THAT* guy I can buy callin' himself "elite". But *THIS*?

He takes a hit and indignantly blows smoke back into the ring.

Rezin:

THIS is seriously makin' me reconsider if gettin' my revenge is even worth it at this point! Ya clearly have no trouble embarrassin' yourselves!

Keyes is FURIOUS at the barrage of insults levied his way, and the knowledge that the Faithful are completely on Rezin's side. He storms around the ring with the huffiest of huffs. Clay Byrd has some bacon, it seems pretty tasty.

Henry Keyes:

You know what? YOU KNOW WHAT?? We'll have it YOUR way, Rezin! Barbed wire, cages on cages, chairs, pipes! Bring in a damned CHAINSAW for all I care - years ago, you called it Hardcore Hellpocalypse, right? Well how about it? HENRY KEYES VERSUS REZIN, FOR THE SOHER, HARDCORE HELLPOCALYPSE!!

Keyes leaves the ring and storms up the ramp towards his one-time frenemy turned full nemesis.

Rezin:

You said it yourself, Henry - THAT AIN'T PUNK ROCK! I'll see ya at MAXIMUM DEFIANCE, and I'm gonna beat ya in the most embarrassing way possible for a big ol' cycloptic circus act like you - in a normal match... HEENNNRRYYYYY KKEEEEEYYYYYYYEEEESSSS!

Keyes's eye bulges wide as it hits him - well, two things hit him, to be clear. The first is the realization of just how far things have reversed in each of their lives over the last few years. The second thing that hits him is Rezin's goat foot.

DDK:

CLOVEN HOOF KICK!

Lance:

Keyes didn't see that coming!

Rezin shakes his head dismissively at the crumpled Kraken before throwing up the horns, departing to a raucous ovation.

And then.

♪ "Bloodletting (The Vampire Song)" by Concrete Blonds ♪

Of all fucking people, Count Novick emerges.

Lance:

What in the world??

Lindsay Troy has made her way up the ramp to join her bestie. As she helps him up, she rolls her eyes and whispers something in Keyes's ear, causing him to sneer.

Count Novick:

I will make it QVICK! To prove my love to Lindsay Troy, I will take the Southern Heritage Championship away from Henry Keyes BEFORE MAXDEF!

RAHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

Henry Keyes, already disheveled, now looks flabbergasted.

Count Novick:

I will see you on UNCUT! BLEHHHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

Novick poses in the general direction of Keyes as his music echoes throughout Yum!ville. Keyes has grabbed a plate

of pancakes, and in his full crushed velvet and cravat attire, saunters over to the vampire, wide-eyed and looking like hell in the process.

Henry Keyes:

I'll make you wish you were dead.

He dumps the plate of pancakes atop Count Novick's head and syrup drizzles down the vampire's cheeks. The two stare down as Rezin makes his way back up the ramp.

Lance:

We need to end this as soon as possible, let's take a brief moment before returning for more in-ring action... because coming up next... Corvo Alpha! Butcher Victorious! No Disqualification!

DDK:

And... wait? Is Vae Victis LEAVING?

As tech guys come in to start clearing the ring, Butcher Victorious is looking to Oscar Burns for advice.

Oscar Burns:

Nah... you got this, GC. You show Corvo what for! Good luck!

Burns leaves Butcher high and dry as the show cuts to a very brief advert!

COMMERCIAL: BRAZEN



BRAZEN - Where the next generation CLASH!

NO DISQUALIFICATION: CORVO ALPHA vs. BUTCHER VICTORIOUS

After the quick break, Butcher Victorious is now left in the ring and looks up to the sky. He's about to face the music after weeks of his mentor, Oscar Burns taunting, antagonizing and faking out matches with Corvo Alpha...

Darren Quimbey:

Our following contest will have NO DISQUALIFICATIONS and is scheduled for ONE FALL! Introducing first... already in the ring.

Butcher looks over.

Darren Quimbey:

To be clear, he does NOT represent Vae Victis... from Austin, Texas and weighing in tonight at two hundred and twelve pounds...

Vic runs a nervous hand through his thinning hair and anxiously looks up to the heavens.

Darren Quimbey:

He is... **BUTCHER! VICTORIOUS!!!**

DDK:

Oscar Burns had been flat-out *running away* from Corvo Alpha for months before the Favoured Saints signed a CAGE MATCH for MAXDEF between the two. It was in reaction to the signing of that cage match that Burns offered up his "lackey", for lack of a better term, to compete against Alpha in a No Disqualification match tonight.

Lance:

What a guy.

We spy Vic apparently pleading with Referee Jonny Fastcountini as his music, and his hope, slowly fades. As the last note drifts off, anticipation builds.

Lance:

A No DQ match certainly appears to favor the skill set of Corvo Alpha over Butcher Victorious... which is why I think we are seeing that trepidation creep across the face of Vic.

Somewhere one or two tiers up in the absolutely horrendously named "KFC Yum! Center" an ember catches light and slowly a blaze of fan reaction sweeps through the arena. A searching spotlight finds Corvo Alpha stomping down the ring steps, surrounded by screaming DEFheads. Some slap his back on the way down, others fall over themselves working to get and stay out of his path – Alpha regards none of them. Eyes fixed tight on the squirming tryhard in the ring.

Lance:

We've speculated since DEFCON that the yellow paint that now adorns his face is some type of homage or throwback to the yellow mask he once wore as a Violator with MV1. The red paint smeared across his chest perhaps signifying where his human heart had been torn out by the twisted Lord Nigel Tricklebush. Whatever that paint represents... it's hard not to feel that Corvo Alpha is painted up for WAR tonight!

Darren Quimbey:

And his opponent... making his way to the ring... from Parts Untold... weighing in near two hundred and sixty pounds... Call him... **CORVO! ALLLPHAAAA!**

DDK:

No music, no fanfare – just pure primal drive and focus.

Alpha reaches the guard rail and leaps over it, landing with a snarl. He slides into the ring and Butch Vic "nopes" out of

it. The referee is the one pleading now as he orders Butcher Victorious into the ring.

Lance:

You can see the unwillingness of Butcher Victorious to get this match started and... I can't say I blame him!

Splitting time yelling back at the fans in the front few rows and barking back at Referee Fastcountini, Butcher Victorious slowly makes his way up the ring steps. And even more slowly into the ring.

DING DING**DDK:**

There's the bell and – there goes Vic! He slips out of the ring as quick as he can and – CORVO IS GIVING CHASE!

Butch Vic maniacally sprints around the ring, screaming in fear as he goes, with Alpha close on his heels. Alpha ends up sliding back in the ring, cutting across it before sliding back OUT – directly in front of Vic!

DDK:

Alpha just cut off Butcher's escape!

Lance:

He has Butcher Victorious cornered outside the ring, where Alpha might be even MORE dangerous!

Leveling Vic with a clothesline, Alpha puts Warner's words into action. Corvo uses Vic's hair to pull him back to his feet before hurling him into a set of heavy steel ringsteps.

CLANG!**DDK:**

This is a no disqualification match, there is no count out, there are no holds barred and... for Butcher Victorious... there may be NO CHANCE tonight on DEFtv!

Vic tries crawling away up the aisle but Corvo is quick to snatch him by his tights and slings Butch Vic careening ass-over-tea-kettle into a different set of steel ring steps.

CLANG!

Smashing Vic's head into the steps with abandon, Corvo swipes his long hair away from his flaxon-plastered face and wrenches Butch Vic upright once more.

Lance:

As we see Butch Vic vainly attempt to crawl away from his train wreck, I am reminded that in just a few weeks, at MAXIMUM DEFIANCE 2023, there will be nowhere for Oscar Burns to crawl, nowhere to run when he is locked inside of a steel cage for the first time in his long, storied career!

DDK:

On the flipside... That man, Corvo Alpha, was seemingly born inside of a steel cage, Lance! And just as we are seeing him dominate Butch Vic in this No DQ contest... I think we are going to see similar results inside the cage at MAXDEF with Oscar Burns!

Still ringside, Alpha illustrates his power advantage by pressing Butch Vic over his head.... And DROPPING him throat-first across the top of the guard rail. Hopping through the ropes and outside the ring, Referee Fastcountini catches Alpha's attention momentarily, allowing Butch Vic to start frantically scrambling and crawling up the aisle once more.

Lance:

Vic is trying to make a break for it!

But Alpha is on him. Stalking his prey as he slithers back up the ramp. Jerking Vic to his feet, Alpha takes a surprise elbow to the face. Then another from Vic. Butch Vic lands a few kicks, then CHARGES at Alpha!

DDK:

BACK BODY DROP ONTO THE RAMPWAY! Vic ATE that one!

A slow-motion replay shows Vic flat-backing on the steel ramp. Standing over him, Alpha slowly scans the cheering fans before reaching down to pull Butch Vic back.

Lance:

Full control being asserted by Corvo Alpha as- OHH!! LOW BLOW BY BUTCH VIC!! Corvo falls to a knee!

Squirming back down the aisle and towards the ring, Butch Vic is clearly overwrought with pain and desperate for a reprieve. Back on the ramp, Alpha slowly rights himself, enraged and boiling-over. He charges after Vic with hatred in his eyes.

Butcher Victorious:

BUTCH VIC... SAYS ENOUGH OF THIS SHIT!

Butcher continues his escape but the gap between he and Alpha narrows!

DDK:

Butcher Victorious inches back into the ring and HERE COMES CORVO!

Lance:

Vic has no idea Alpha is right behind him! ALPHA CLUTCH! THERE IT IS! That standing single-wing choke! Center of the ring!

A buzz floats through the arena as Alpha flails the increasingly lifeless body of Butch Vic around in his arms.

DDK:

This has gotta be over!

Lance:

WAIT ONE MOMENT!

A hazy blur rushes past the floor camera and into the ring. A glint of... something?

DDK:

NO! IT'S OSCAR BURNS!

SMACK!!!

The prized and now rarely-seen Platinum Shovel finds its mark across the shoulders of Corvo Alpha with a whack! And another, that one striking the back of Alpha's head. And just like that, Alpha is down and Butch Vic is free!

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!!

Lance:

It's no disqualification, Keebler!

DDK:

...Burns planned this! This was a trap! No wonder he wanted this as no disqualification!

Referee Fastcountini chides Burns, who shrugs him off. With his free hand, Burns leans down and slaps the mostly-

unconscious Butch Vic across his face before dragging him over.... To COVER Corvo Alpha!

DDK:

OH NO!

Our official is frustrated, waving Burns off.... Before grudgingly hitting the canvas, checking the shoulders and making the count. Oscar stares him down the entire time the count occurs.

ONE!!!

TWO!!!!

THREEEEEEE!!!!

DDK:

Not like this!

DING DING DING

♪ "Popsong Singalong" by Flyscreen ♪

Darren Quimbey:

The winner of this contest, by pinfall... **BUTCHER! VICTORIOUS!!!**

Lance:

You have got to be kidding me! This is disgraceful!

Burns shoves Vic off of Alpha before mounting him and laying in BRUTAL fists to his face, mixing the monster's yellow paint with the red of his own blood.

DING DING DING DING DING

DDK:

Get off of him!

♪ "Stranger Fruit" by Zeal & Ardor ♪

Smarmy and self-assured, Oscar Burns finally relents. He stands over Alpha, retrieving his Golden Shovel and mimes that he is "burying" the beast as, in the background, Fastcountini is explaining to Butcher Victorious what happened.

Lance:

This was all a part of Oscar Burns plan! This is what he had in mind when he put Vic in this No DQ match! The masterful mind games of Oscar Burns at play and on full display here in Louisville!

Alpha is unmoving as Burns pulls a shocked/exhausted/smiling Butch Vic out of the ring and up the aisle.

Butcher Victorious:

I... did it?? I DID IT! BUTCH VIC... SCORED THE PIN!

Burns cackles as he backpedals.

DDK:

Oscar Burns won't have Butcher Victorious at MAXDEF! He's not going to be able to just run away! He's going to be locked inside–

In the ring, Alpha lifts his head from a pooling puddle of blood, the whites of his eyes glaring at the retreating Burns/Victorious. Oscar is not paying attention to the hate-filled stare of the silent monster as he wraps an arm around Butcher's shoulders and helps his favorite/only lackey

DDK:

–at MAXDEF, Oscar Burns will have nowhere to hide from Corvo Alpha!

Lance:

We'll be back with six-person tag action after this!

COMMERCIAL: BALLYHOO BREW



SNS & ELISE ARES vs. FLEX IN A BOX & MALAK GARLAND

A match graphic of Malak Garland, Flex In A Box versus Elise Ares and SNS melts away as entrances begin. None other than fabled referee Mark Shields is perched in the ring.

DDK:

Welcome back to DEFtv everyone, as we get set for a rather intriguing tag match that's about to take place!

♪ "Tap In" by Saweetie ♪

Darren Quimbey:

This bout is a trios tag team contest! Introducing first, being accompanied to the ring by Siobhan Cassidy, hailing from Cheyenne, Wyoming, MALAK GARLAND!

Garland is sporting his usual smug look on his face as he slowly saunters down to the ring. Siobhan carries the coveted Paper Title over her shoulder.

Lance:

This is a rather intriguing matchup indeed, Darren. For weeks now, Malak Garland has had this weird pseudo relationship between him and Elise Ares. It's been hot and cold for a while whether it has been petitioning the backstage locker room to change the venue of MAXDEF away from the heart of country music, which Elise signed, to just last week where we saw Malak proclaim he wrote a screenplay for himself and all of PCP *except* Elise. Which you know, entertainment is what Elise Ares is all about.

Malak wipes the bottoms of his wrestling boots on the apron before climbing into the ring to soak in the crowd's jeers.

The camera rests on the entrance rampway, and rests for an extra moment. It's a pause that's extended too long, before...

♪ "Tap In" by Saweetie ♪

Loops back around. A confused and perplexed Klein steps out from the backstage area, scratching the side of his box. Flex however, walks out and just puts on a pair of shades. The D is next, wearing a midnight blue tuxedo and holding a half drunk martini. Klein wildly points to his own ears and the sound system, and then motions to both Flex & the D. The D shrugs, as Flex just smiles. When Saweetie says "Tap In," Flex flexes his pecs in tune in response. Kruger takes off toward ringside as Klein turns to give the D one last "Really?" look. The D points to the ring.

The D:

Chorus is money Klein. Go on. Tap tap tap in.

Klein throws his hands up in frustration and chases down to meet Flex halfway down the ramp.

DDK:

Unconventional entrance music from Flex in a Box tonight.

Lance:

This wasn't their choice Darren, you can tell by how Klein's acting!

Indeed, Malak's smug look tells the story, but even he didn't expect Flex to play along. Flex stays on the apron continuing to flex his pecs as Klein steps into the ring to have a chat with Malak, box to box.

The D stays at the top of the entrance rampway with a microphone, awaiting the Leading Lady of DEFIANCE. A spotlight falls onto the D.

The D:

It's me, the D, and you all paid the fee so gee willikers, come and see, THEEE, longest reigning Southern Heritage Champion of ALLLLL TIME! A THREE TIME, THREE TIME Tag Team Champion. An icon of ring, stage and screen, the star of the Lake Placid series, the truest movie star of DEFIANCE's ENTIRE History, yes, even bigger than the UNLIKELIEST of foes, bigger than the GEM of UNCUTS, or Mr. Major of Complainsville, Malory Garnish. See, she's so much better than all of those, and ten times better than Frank Holliday who was so ugly they had to hide his face from the camera. But no, she, she is the most beautiful FACE of DEFIANCE, the QUEEN of Sports Entertainment Style, She is my, your, OUR, the FAITHFUL'S leading lady. EEEELLLLLIISSSEEE!! AREESS!

The D Vanna White's the entrance stage and steps away...

♪ "Tap In" by Saweetie ♪

A wave of boos crash down towards the ring as the Saweetie serenade booms from the speakers for a third time. The D throws his arms up in frustration but no one comes out from the curtain. Malak Garland grins from ear to ear. The smile nearly grows to the entire diameter of his face before suddenly the music stops mid-lyric.

DDK:

Surely our production team is too talented to let something like this happen by accident. There is certainly something nefarious going on here and we're doing our best to fix the situ-

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

Malak's face drops with the beat as Elise Ares swaggers out into the arena bathed in lights of gold and violet. Her trademark LED glasses flash the phrase "YOU CAN'T TAP THIS" one word at a time as she smirks back at the Snowflake Superstar. She spins around to model herself before tossing her glasses into the crowd and motions for The D to follow her down to the ring. He appeases the FACE of DEFIANCE as she struts forward.

Lance:

Annnnd we're back, Darren. That was... annoying.

DDK:

I don't know if this was some kind of prank from Malak Garland, a disgruntled member of the production team, or both but here comes Elise Ares for the first time since losing to Henry Keyes at DEFCON.

Lance:

It wasn't initially reported but that match ended up taking quite the toll of the one who calls herself the "Queen of Sports Entertainment Style" and the few weeks off from wrestling might be beneficial. Also, it could be harmful. Is Elise Ares at 100%?

DDK:

The scary thing here might be the people who know the best might be the ones standing across from her. Flex In A Box has to know her current condition and if they really want to win this match, they know how to exploit it. The question is, Lance, are they willing to do so?

Elise Ares does her trademark suggestive entrance between the ropes, but it's quickly interrupted by the hiss of a beer bottle being swiftly opened.

♪ "Drink" by Alestorm ♪

RAAAAAAAAAAAAAA!

The people rise to their feet as the Unified Tag Team Champions, The Saturday Night Specials, appear from the back. A provocatively dressed Ophelia Sykes stands dead center with Brock Newbludd and Pat Cassidy on either side. Sykes has two of the championships draped over his shoulders with a third around her waist. Pat and Brock both have a title draped over their shoulders. The trio pause at the entrance way, looking around the screaming Ballyhooligans.

Pat nods and speaks (although we can't hear what he's saying) as he looks around, while Brock cups his hands...

Brock Newbludd:

BALLLLLLLLLLLYYYYY!

HOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Cassidy, Brock, and Sykes all share a three-way fist bump before marching their way toward the ring with purpose.

Darren Quimbey:

And her tag team partners... they are YOUR UNIFIED TAG TEAM CHAMPIONS! THE! SATURDAY! NIGHT! SPECIALS!

Lance:

The dynamics in this contest are all over the place. You've got Elise opposite her fellow Pop Culture Phenoms. Malak Garland has Pat's younger sister and Brock's ex-girlfriend in his corner. And The Saturday Night Specials manager, Ophelia Sykes, used to date The D!

DDK:

We weave a tangled web here in DEFIANCE. How all this impacts the contest is yet to be seen.

Cassidy and Brock hop up to opposite turnbuckles with their hands raised high. Ophelia very intentionally avoids any eye contact with The D, who also stands at ringside. As their theme fades out, The Specials hop down to talk to Ares. Brock hits her with a fist bump while Cassidy kisses her on the hand. He immediately realizes his mistake as he looks apologetically to Ophelia, who appears ready to remove his head from his shoulders. On the outside, Siobhan shakes her head as if she is very disappointed. Cassidy shakes his head back at her and adds the additional measure of sticking a single and very specific finger in her direction.

DDK:

Already trouble!

Malak plunges his index fingers into the chests of Klein and Flex, dictating to them that he is to start the match for his team, which certainly seems out of character for such a tender spirit. On the other side, seeing this, Elise suggests she starts things as SNS seems content with relocating to the apron.

DING DING

DDK:

Well here we go right out of the gate! Elise Ares is set to tangle with Malak Garland! Maybe we'll get some answers as to why Malak has been buzzing hard around The Queen of Sports Entertainment Style?

Malak rolls his shoulder around as if he's still trying to warm up. The crowd looks on with eager anticipation to see these two clash. Elise approaches her foe but Malak is ultra quick to lean back into his corner. The crowd doesn't treat the movement kindly but they watch on as Siobhan runs up onto the apron and whispers something into Malak's ear. Siobhan has her phone out, indicating she's received some type of message. The Snowflake Superstar immediately freaks out and tags in Flex Kruger who looks just as confused as anyone.

Malak Garland:

LISTEN, EVERYONE! I will be right back! I promise! I HAVE A PERSONAL EMERGENCY I NEED TO TAKE CARE OF! MARK SHIELDS, MAINTAIN CONTROL OF EVERYTHING WHILE I'M GONE, OKAY!?

Mark nods nonchalantly as it's assumed he can't be trusted. Malak rolls out of the ring with a massive amount of concern on his face. Elise puts her palms to the sky in frustration as everyone watches Siobhan and Malak head to the back.

DDK:

And... he's gone.

With his "team leader" gone, Klein steps up and enters the ring. Elise and Klein lock eyes, but Pat Cassidy calls out from the corner, leaning forward and extending his arm for the tag. Rather than wrestle her comrade, Ares obliges Pat's request and tags him in. Cassidy steps through the ropes and steps up to the man in a box. Black Out extends two fists, and Klein accepts with a fist double bump... but then they immediately go into offensive mode and begin circling each other, looking for openings.

DDK:

If I'm Flex in a Box OR The Saturday Night Specials, I'm putting any personal drama involved in this contest aside. They are two of three teams that will meet in two weeks at Maximum DEFIANCE with the titles on the line. Triple threat rules are so tricky and you have to be on your game at all times.

Lance:

One has to imagine the third team in that match, Heavy Artillery, is paying close attention to this bout.

Pat and Klein finally meet in the center with the lock up. They jockey for position for a few seconds with each Defiant planting their feet. Finally, Klein lets go and allows Pat's own momentum to carry him forward and right into a headlock. Klein locks it on tight, squeezing the tag champ's head in his bicep. Cassidy's hands flail a bit before he finds his footing and begins to fire elbows into Klein's midsection. The box man shrugs it off, however, simply clinching down harder and shutting Pat down. Klein muscles Cassidy over to the Flex in a Box corner. Flex Kruger tags himself in, and Klein holds Pat in place long enough for Flex to fire a kick into Cassidy's midsection. Cassidy doubles over before being sent off the ropes and running right into a Flex Kruger clothesline on the rebound. Stunned, Pat regroups in a neutral corner while Flex makes his pecs do a little dance.

DDK:

Early show of dominance from the challengers for the tag titles! Sending a message perhaps?

Cassidy uses the ropes to pull himself up as he looks toward Flex's... flexing. Pat nods appreciatively before stepping up... and curling a bicep of his own! The crowd cheers as Flex's eyes go wide at this apparent challenge. Flex responds in kind, hitting the famous Arnold pose. Cassidy goes full Hulk Hogan.

Lance:

He doesn't seriously think he can out flex Flex... does he?

He does not. As Flex leans his head forward, Cassidy springs into action with rights, catching him off guard and stunning his muscular opponent. This time it's Flex who gets sent into the ropes, eating a Pat Cassidy back elbow on the rebound that sends him to the mat. Cassidy uses more right hand to send Flex into the Saturday Night Special corner. Cassidy fires away with some shots to the gut before tagging in Brock Newbludd. Cassidy extends Flex's arm while Brock flies into the ring with an axe handle.

DDK:

Trademark tag team offense from our champions!

Brock measures the stunned Flex... and he runs at him..

Lance:

FACE MELTER!

Brock covers.

ONE! TWO! NOPE!

Flex powers out, and Brock immediately resumes the offensive by locking on a chinlock. Flex cheers on his partner

from the apron - as does Elise Ares! Cassidy looks at Ares with a "hey, you're on OUR side" look, but she pays him no mind. Brock locks in the chinlock, trying to keep the powerful PCP member grounded. Kruger begins to power his way out, so Brock wisely keeps the hold maintained as he backpedals toward the SNS corner. Cassidy slaps his partner on the shoulder, bringing himself into the match. Both of the Unified Tag Team Champions fire Flex into the rope, and on the rebound he gets a double back body drop! While Brock exits the ring, Pat covers.

ONE! TWO! NOPE!

DDK:

Despite this three on two disadvantage, Flex in a Box is still alive!

Cassidy brings Flex into the corner. He stands on the second rope with Flex's head below him. He signals to the crowd before clenching his fist and beginning to unload as The Faithful count along...

ONE! TWO! THREE! FOUR! FIVE! SIX! SEVEN! EIGHT! NINE!

Cassidy pauses, miming holding a beer up to the people closest to ringside.

The Faithful:

CHEERS!

...but before Cassidy finishes the ten count punches, Flex charges out of the corner! Cassidy falls forward, snapping his head on the top turnbuckle! Flex takes advantage of this but leaping forward and tagging in Klein!

DDK:

The people are on their feet!

Klein is a house of fire! He lights Pat up with right hands before setting him up in the corner for a series of blistering chops. Cassidy off the ropes - Klein with a powerslam! Klein with a cover!

ONE! TWO! KICKOUT!

The people are into the match that is pitting some of the promotion's most popular wrestlers against each other... but while everyone's focus is on the action, only a select few see Brock Newbludd yanked off the apron!

DDK:

Wait... what's that!?

Brock has been blindsided by Heavy Artillery's Bobby Horrigan! Before Brock can react, Horrigan sends him into the turnbuckle... and follows up with a splash! Horrigan's large frame squashes Brock against the steel!

Lance:

Bobby Horrigan! And look at Rosie Owens! Where did they come from!?

Owens does the exact same thing to Flex, as Kruger finds out his muscles don't help much when a mammoth of a man runs into you.

DDK:

Heavy Artillery has pounced on this tag team main event!

With Newbludd and Flex down and out, The D and Elise Ares both spring into action! Ares gets a running start and leaps off the apron, taking down Bobby Horrigan was a hurricanrana! Likewise, The D flies at Owens like a spider monkey, overwhelming the big man with a flurry of punches.

DDK:

Elise Ares and The D aren't going to allow Heavy Artillery to... ahem... throw their weight around.

With chaos unfolding on the outside, inside the ring the match continues! Flex has Pat Cassidy hooked for what appears to be a suplex. He lifts The Saturday Night Special into the air, holding him in place in a vertical position... when he suddenly notices the commotion on the outside! At this point the four way brawl between The D/Elise Ares/Heavy Artillery has been invaded by swarms of DEFsec looking to restore order. Flex taking his attention off the match for just a second is all Pat Cassidy needs... he slips out of the suplex, and hooks and drops Flex with the IRISH GOODBYE!

DDK:

IRISH GOODBYE! FLEX IS DOWN!

Suddenly, the crowd roars with annoyance as none other than Malak Garland RUNS down to the ring. He wastes no time by sliding under the ropes and downing Pat Cassidy, who is just rising back to his feet, with a reverse DDT! Garland hooks a leg and yells at Mark Shields to count as fast as he can!

ONE!

TWO!

THREE!

DING DING DING

DDK:

Unbelievable! Where did Malak come from!? He didn't even tag in! He wasn't even the legal man yet Mark Shields still counted the three for him!?

Darren Quimbey:

Here are your winners, FLEX IN A BOX AND MALAK GARLAND!

Lance:

I guess that "personal emergency" of his got taken care of? He's acting like he's the hero of the match when in reality, he swooped in, grabbed Cassidy from behind and caught him off guard with the Snowflake Flutter Drop!

Expecting to be celebrated for his heroism after the match, Malak raises both his arms in epic victory. He shouts at Flex and Klein to prop him up on their shoulders but they refuse considering the amount of hell they just went through. All they want to do is just call it a day.

Elise, Brock and Pat reconvene outside the ring, trying to figure out how and where Malak was able to pull off the blindsiding.

MURDERS AND ACQUISITIONS

Malak stands there, arms extended, expecting, nay DEMANDING Flex and Klein celebrate HIM.

Malak Garland:

We won. I won. I disappeared to the back, handled my personal emergency business and I even had enough time to come back and save the day! CELEBRATE WITH ME! CELEBRATE ME!

The fans ire is aimed towards Malak as he stands there with his hand lingering in time and space. Flex and Klein look around. Even Elise is sticking around to see what happens as SNS heads up the ramp. They pass The D, who wonders if they're sticking around, but both members of SNS decisively say no and continue to show their complete and utter unapproval of one Malak Garland and each and every possible thing he stands for. Not getting his way, Malak walks over to the ropes and demands a microphone.

Malak Garland:

LISTEN UP, EVERYONE BECAUSE I HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY!

BOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Malak Garland:

Looks like my tag partners here don't want to even shake my hand, let alone celebrate the fact that I JUST PINNED PAT CASSIDY WITHOUT ANY HELP WHATSOEVER!

DDK:

For the folks keeping score at home, please note Mark Shields was the referee of this match.

Malak Garland:

Therefore, I am the greatest and hottest wrestler in this promotion right now. I have a budding movie career on the way and let's face it, I can do whatever I want, whenever I want. I can BECOME anything I want.

Malak paces. Flex and Klein stand defiantly away from Garland. The D climbs onto the apron and whisper's into Flex's ear.

Malak Garland:

That said, seeing you won't celebrate MY victory, Flex and Klein, I've got some breaking news for you to unpack with me.

Klein tilts his head to the side like a confused puppy. Malak stops pacing and looks directly over to Elise Ares.

Malak Garland:

Honey, could you please get your two dollar Hollywood hips into this ring? I've got a HUGE announcement and it directly involves you.

His voice is condescending and the lack of trust towards Malak within the arena is more than apparent. Yet, he beckons for Elise to enter the ring.

Malak Garland:

Please come into the ring. It has to do with you AND these people you associate with.

Elise scans the crowd before giving a confused yet annoyed look back at Garland. Looking for the approval of the Faithful, she SLOWLY walks up the ring steps and enters the ring. By now, SNS stops atop the ramp and watches on with interest of their own. Ares climbs into the ring but she's rather unimpressed. Malak is giddy.

Malak Garland:

First of all, thank you for participating in my little match experiment. It turned out BETTER than expected. Flex, Klein and I make a great team.

DDK:

Malak was gone for nearly the entire match and he got extremely lucky picking up the win.

Malak Garland:

All tonight did was affirm my innermost DEEP thoughts about what's been going on the past few weeks. You see Elise, you and I are more alike than anyone I've ever met before.

Lance:

Is he going to dump Siobhan for Elise? I wouldn't put it past him.

Ares cringes, almost as if she could hear the commentary as Malak walks up and puts a hand on her shoulder. She immediately shrugs him off. Grossed out.

Malak Garland:

We are so alike that I think something needs to be done about it. It's been bugging me. Kept me up all night thinking about it and then it hit me. Elise, YOU are replaceable.

DDK:

WHAT?

Malak gets right into her face, which she obviously pushes back from.

Elise Ares:

Excuse the beep out of you?

Malak Garland:

I AM DECLARING THAT I'M GUNNING TO TAKE YOU OUT, GIRL! NAY, I'M GUNNING TO STRAIGHT UP **BECOME** ELISE ARES, AS IN LIKE REPLACE YOU AS AN ENTITY.

Flex and Klein begin pushing Malak away as Elise looks ready to punch his lights out. The D dramatically faints on the apron, and slips off to the outside.

Malak Garland:

We're virtually the same! Why not become you!? I won't even stop there! My plan is to take over and rebrand PCP into the Cancel Culture Phenoms! **THINK ABOUT IT!** Think about how easy of a transition that would be for me! I am **CHOOSING** to become you and I'll do it better too!

Now it's Elise that's the one that needs to be held back by Flex and Klein as she can't believe the sheer blind audacity of Malak to say such ridiculous things.

DDK:

Replace her!? **BECOME** her? His **CHOICE**? Malak has always pushed the envelope but that idea is simply ludicrous.

Lance:

All because they share so many similarities and he felt chemistry teaming with Flex In A Box!? The Cancel Culture Phenoms? I am at a loss for words, Darren!

Garland antagonizes Elise from afar but Flex and Klein are holding her back, not because they don't want to see Malak's teeth get kicked down his throat but out of worry for what Elise might do to the professional shit stirrer. The crowd pops as The D, no longer playing along with these games, slides into the ring and moves past Elise, Flex and Klein. He and his drama themed face protective covering get directly into Malak's face.

The D:

You stupid sonofa--

It doesn't take long for Cyrus Bates to rush the ring and tackle The D from behind, tossing the B-Lister through the ropes to the outside.. Seizing the opening, Malak quickly rushes and clotheslines Flex and Klein up and out of the ring. As Elise shouts at Cyrus to stop, she doesn't notice Malak spin her around as he begins attacking her! Both Ares and The D start getting fed a ton of cheap shots. SNS sees the shameful attack and begins heading down the ramp until...

RAHHHHHHHHH!

DDK:

WHO IS THAT!?

A slender figure BURSTS out from the back. She sprints right past Pat Cassidy and Brock Newbludd before somersaulting into the ring where she shoves Malak to his ass as hard as she can. Stunned, Malak looks up in disbelief at **Teresa Ames**. The arena comes UNGLUED. SNS stops in their tracks. The D pummels Bates off of him. Garland looks like he's about to cry.

DDK:

It's TERESA AMES! WHAT IS SHE DOING HERE!?

Lance:

She just shoved Malak into next week!

Then.

Elise Ares RISES to her feet, which makes the crowd pop the loudest.

Ames steps back, allowing Elise to walk forward.

Garland QUIVERS in fear while looking up at The Queen of Sports Entertainment Style while fans chant along.

MESS HIM UP!

MESS HIM UP!

MESS HIM UP!

MESS HIM UP!

Ares raises her arm as she's about to UNLOAD on Malak but right before she can, Siobhan Cassidy appears and pulls her arm away. Bad move. Cassidy eats an Amethystation for her trouble, which rocks her right of the ring. Ames exits the ring and concerns herself with Cassidy as Elise turns back to concentrate on the Snowflake Superstar. Except he's gone.

DDK:

Ducking out of dodge! How very typical!

Malak, Cyrus and eventually Siobhan retreat and regroup together, far away from SNS, Flex In A Box and PCP. They point at the group of good guys as Malak raises a microphone to his lips for the final time.

Malak Garland:

Elise! Elise! You will not stop my burning desire to become you, own PCP and reshape it in my image! At MAXDEF, it will be Elise Ares versus Malak Garland with the right to BECOME you on the line. It's not a merger. It's a murder. Deal with it!

The Social Media Savant dumps the microphone as the staredown continues.

DDK:

Malak Garland faces off against Elise Ares with, dare I say, her very IDENTITY on the line at MAXDEF!? Malak wants the power, he wants to own PCP, he wants to literally become and replace Elise Ares. He clearly wants it all and why?

Just because he has so much in common with her? That's some deeply disturbing and egotistical ambition!

The broadcast chyron appears on the bottom of the screen as Garland and Ares point at each other, exchanging off-mic barbs from a distance. Malak and Cyrus take the easy exit through the crowd while Elise and the rest of PCP try to piece together the biggest threat to their very existence.

THIS.

IS.

DEFIANCE.