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The splash fades and we're greeted by the "Motormouth of Malcontent" and host of the show, Angus Skaaland! The Executive Producer is once again walking and talking as he opens the show.

Angus Skaaland:

What it do, bitches?

Angus flashes a smile as he lets that question hang for a second.

Angus Skaaland:

We're a week away from DEFIANCE ROAD and it's a madhouse as we prepare to give you more of what you love... the best damn wrestling on the planet, but before all that, we got some more fun and games for yall here.

He turns a corner and continues down another hallway towards his office, aka the command center of DEFIANCE television production.

Angus Skaaland:

It's all about final hype tonight on UNCUT, so lets get to it!

He says before opening the door to his office and disappearing.

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AS GOOD AS IT'S GONNA GET

Backstage near the monitors, Lindsay Troy and Tyrone Walker are standing, watching the end of the DEFtv #64. They're in street clothes by now and Troy's doing her best to mask the nagging pain her ribs are causing her, thanks to their further aggravation by Jane Katze and Nicky Corozzo.

Tyrone Walker:

Yo, you don't have to stick around for this.

Lindsay Troy:

I do, actually.

Tyrone Walker:

For what?

Lindsay Troy: [smirking]

Scouting.

Tyrone Walker:

Oh right. Just in case, huh? Since you aren't familiar with big bruh's style.

Lindsay Troy:

His? Yeah...

She trails off, giving weight to recent events.

Lindsay Troy:

But there's another guy in that fight too. And I'm not about to break out into a Disney song or anything but, you know...should be prepared.

Dan Ryan plants Impulse with a Humility Bomb, covers, and Impulse surprisingly kicks out. Lindsay Troy's eyebrow shoots up. On the screen, Ryan aggressively pulls Impulse up and plants him again ... and then again.

Troy's face is now a thundercloud.

Lindsay Troy:

That's it.

Tyrone Walker:

Aw hell naw. Come on, El-Tee!

Troy leaves the monitors. Ty takes off after her, but hurt ribs or no she's quickly down the hall and he's playing catch up. A few minutes later we're at gorilla and the Queen is waiting by the curtain, the annoyance on her face growing as the seconds tick by. Ty jogs up a moment later.

Tyrone Walker:

I ain't thinkin' this is such a good idea. Ought'a leave it be, yanno?

Bless HERBOITAI's!! little heart, but Lindsay ignores him, clearly not going anywhere. Her irritation has already reached the line and then jumped over it. DEFsec and other crew have taken notice and are starting to gather around as well. This situation is an explosive ready to go off and everyone here knows it.

Before anyone has the chance to even begin to talk Lindsay Troy out of this, Dan Ryan's huge frame comes through the curtain. He's already pulling a wristband off his left wrist and has his head down when, about three steps in, he looks up and sees his sister-in-law, eyes throwing daggers in his direction. He stops, sighs, and waits for the inevitable

chewing out. But this time, something's different, and Lindsay Troy aggressively gets in his face with a hard two handed shove in his chest.

Lindsay Troy:

What the HELL was that?

Ryan takes the blow, head snapping back briefly, before steadying himself and looking her in the eyes, but saying nothing.

Lindsay Troy:

Was that necessary? What's with you, anyway? You want to toss Ty and I aside and leave us a man down against the Vikings? Fine. But you bring Knox and Cally in, give 'em a tour, the whole personal treatment, then try and break his neck? That's beyond "friendly competition" and you know it.

Dan thinks about this, trying to keep his cool. But ever since the shove, a redness has been growing in his face that betrays his feelings about this confrontation. He seethes, getting to the point that several people start inching forward in anticipation of a problem. Just when the explosion seems imminent, he shakes his head, walks past, and starts toward the gathered crowd.

But Lindsay Troy will not be brushed off, because when she's got something to say, she's going to say it. Period. End stop.

And that line she's been straddling lately? It's about to get crossed.

Lindsay Troy:

I saw that pause, Dan. You knew you had him and you opted for the final, dirty blow. But hey...why stop there? Why not go after Cally like you went after Virginia Quell? Or were you not ready to color in the "woman beater" square on your FIST of DEFIANCE bingo card?

The air is sucked out of the room. This stops Dan Ryan in his tracks. He turns his head only, his back still to her.

Dan Ryan:

I'm thinking of coloring it in right now.

From inside the arena we hear an audible "ooooooooohhh" from the crowd. No one here can hear it, but it doesn't matter. The hard stare between these two is speaking louder than thousands of fans ever could. Several crew members are on the move now, getting firmly in-between the in-laws. Ty is moving toward Dan now, putting a hand on his shoulder as the Ego Buster is purposefully turning and moving toward his sister-in-law.

Tyrone Walker:

Come on, let's go talk this over, big bruh. Let it be.

Dan Ryan:

Too late for that, Ty.

A member of DEFSec steps directly in Dan Ryan's path. Bad idea. Ryan swats him aside like a gnat and he goes careening into the wall. Another security member gets in the way, but Ryan is picking up steam now. Lindsay Troy is fully squared up and ready for this. There are no fucks left to give.

Lindsay Troy:

You really wanna do this? Because I'm not easy to run over like you think everyone else is.

Dan Ryan:

Maybe I'm not as easy to stop as you think I am. Shall we find out?

Nope. Pretty much the entire room crowds Ryan and holds him back as Lindsay Troy stays in her fighting stance. Even with six or seven (regularly sized) men trying, Dan moves the pile a bit. Still, the human wall holds in place and Tyrone Walker, having failed in his attempt to talk Dan down, returns to Lindsay instead.

Tyrone Walker:

Come on, let's go. Nothin' good going on here right now.

Lindsay Troy:

Seems like this as good as it's going to get, Ty.

Dan Ryan has regained his cool, assuring the men around him that he's alright. They back off a bit, giving him some room.

Dan Ryan: [having overheard]

She's right. This is....by far....as good as it's gonna get.

With this, Ryan holds his glare on Troy, then turns around and walks through the crowd and down the hall without another word. A couple members of DEFsec follow, just in case, leaving Tyrone Walker and Lindsay Troy behind to contemplate what just happened.

YOUR WEEKLY MOMENT OF HOSS

DEFIANCE EXCLUSIVE: FOLLOWING DEFtv #64

Standing at the interview backdrop is none other than Lance Warner, ready to bring the post-show goodness via your ear canal.

Lance Warner:

Hello, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to a special UNCUT Exclusive! With me at this time are four men who have plenty of business to handle at DEFIANCE ROAD when they take on the team of Dusty Griffith, Frank Dylan James, and Jason Natas. Please welc...

A massive hand grabs the microphone right from Warner's grip. The camera pans backwards and said arm belongs to a VERY intense Angel Trinidad.

Angel Trinidad:

Leave.

Warner is about to open his mouth to protest, but changes his tune quickly when Angel grabs his hand even tighter.

Angel Trinidad:

NOW.

Lance moves and gets the hell out of the proverbial blast zone of Team HOSS-MB as the rest of the crew come into the picture. The Super Muscle Bros look pretty proud of themselves after being on the winning end of a six-man tag while Thomas Keeling Sr. enters the room, looking like the proud papa of a star quarterback. Aleczander laughs in the direction that Lance Warner left in.

Aleczander The Great:

He done told your ass to move twice, you little wanker! There won't be a third!

Jonny Booya:

You betta run, BOAH! Run yo' dumb ass outta here! HAHA!

Booya and Aleczander both laugh like assholes and dap fists as Angel Trinidad hands the microphone over to Thomas Keeling Sr. The manager for Team HOSS-MB turns to the camera to address the fans.

Thomas Keeling, Sr:

Dusty, Frank, Jason... there's not much left to say. Angel's run through all three of you. Natas hasn't won a single match since he came back. And if security didn't finally separate you and Angel earlier tonight, Dusty, The Biggest AND The Best of DEFIANCE would've ended your career for giggles.

Angel pops the bones in his neck and The SMB members look pretty fucking smug as Thomas continues.

Thomas Keeling, Sr:

Since listening isn't any of your strong points, I'll make this short and sweet. With respect to Mr. Skaaland, this won't be one of what DEFIANCE has so eloquently labeled [makes air quotes] Hossfites. There will be no trip to DEFCON for any of you; DEFIANCE ROAD **IS** the end of the road for all of you. FDJ, what happened to you at ASCENSION should've been a learning experience, as did your match with my client, Mr. Natas. But I have with me the most powerful force in DEFIANCE today.

More Angel Trinidad mugging.

Thomas Keeling, Sr:

I also have the BEST new tag team in business today in The Super Muscle Bros.

Aleczander The Great:

I'm Tag Team Jesus, mates!

Jonny Booya:

And I'm like... Jesus' brother! Only I don't got no stupid hipster beard. THIS FACE IS DOLLA SIGNS, BOAH!

Jonny points to his ridiculously chiseled chin.

Thomas Keeling, Sr:

My clients won not one, but TWO six-man tag team matches on tonight's show. If that's not a spoiler alert for what's to come at DEFIANCE ROAD, I don't know what is. Dusty, you're finally getting your wish when you step into the ring with Angel Trinidad... but I'm afraid you won't like what you find.

The Biggest AND The Best in DEFIANCE growls at the camera before he reaches out a hand and knocks it back...

Fade.

WEEDKILLED

Bottom right corner of the screen: "DEFtv 64: Exclusive Footage!"

"I've got you now, you dumb little sonuvacactus! HAHAHA!"

That unhinged tone could only belong to one man.

Jack Hunter's coursing through the backstage area, and he's got his hands on one of those pesky flight cases again. He's not trying to DDT it this time: he's pushing it down a long corridor.

Angus:

This guy... again?!

The wheeled case is at least five feet long and clearly quite heavy, given the level of exertion that Jack's putting into pushing it. He's got his bottle of weedkiller sat on-top again (because weedkiller kills cactuses, and El Trebol Jr. is a cactus... obviously), and he appears to be talking to whoever (or whatever) is inside.

Jack Hunter:

You thought you could escape The Superbest, but you cannot, because I am The Superbest, AKA The Little Bruiser, AKA *HASH TAG NEW STREAK 66-0*, and I am very smart like Alan Einstein, but you are dumb like Alan Nothing, and also you are a fart. HAHAHAHA!

Beaming from ear-to-ear, Jack Hunter slaps his hand down hard on the top of the case.

DDK:

I don't understand. Has Jack Hunter captured ETJ?

Angus:

If El Trebol lives in a flight case... *WHICH HE OBVIOUSLY DOESN'T!*

Jack Hunter:

That's right, little Penis Fly Trap! Jack Hunter has you now okay, and I am going to cause you pain, and fear, and you will do a wee, because not only am I going to street fight you, but I am going to *WEEDKILL* you right in the penis.

Jack suddenly stops dead in his track. He cups a hand over his ear, then kneels down to listen.

Jack Hunter:

What's that, little cactus? You're scared of The Superbest?! HAHAHAHAHA! Of course you are!

The Little Bruiser hops to his feet, grabs the weedkiller, and glares at the locker-room door before him.

"El Trebol Jr.," the paper sign reads.

He's reached his destination.

Jack Hunter:

Okay you little Kermit, now I will *WEEDKILL* you, then bury your body in your locking room, because nobody likes you, na-na na-na poo-poo!

Jack blows a big fat raspberry before flipping the case open. He turns his eyes away as he opens the bottle and starts pouring...

Cut to the other side of the door. El Trébol's farting around inside his locker-room and very much *not* inside the flight case outside.

DDK:

So *there's* ETJ... what on Earth is going-on tonight, Angus?

Angus:

You just asked me to make sense of Jack Hunter and El Trébol Jr. You should know better than that, Keeps.

Startled by the commotion, the Little Green Bean hops down from his bench and approaches the door. On the outside, Jack Hunter tosses the now-empty bottle to the floor and slams the case shut. He bangs his fist down on it, before grabbing the case with both hands and putting all his weight behind it.

Jack Hunter:

Goodnight sweet Princess Fiona.

DDK:

No! Look-out, Trebol!

CRRRRRRASH!

The Street Fighter bursts forward and forces the hefty case straight through the wooden door. It barrels through the threshold and into the small room. Jack Hunter turns and walks away...

Jack Hunter:

Bye bye.

... completely missing the case coming to rest.

DDK:

OH MY GOD!

But the steel case doesn't crash against the wall when it reaches the room's outer limit, because El Trébol's tiny little body breaks the impact.

Angus:

What the fuck?!

ETJ is utterly motionless. His head and shoulders are draped over the case -- which may weigh up to twice his bodyweight -- but his torso and legs are completely sandwiched.

Angus:

Jack just flattened El Trebol Jr. like a pancake, but I don't think he knows anything about it!

DDK:

Jack, again, thought ETJ was *inside* that flight case, but never mind that! We need some medics back there! El Trebol Jr. might be seriously hurt!

Angus:

Yeah, I'm sure you bawling about it from way out here is going to do a world of good.

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THE STRUGGLE THAT DEFINES US

The shot opens on a clean, immaculate patch of off-white canvas.

A moment later, the space is filled with a human body. Kerry Kuroyama's eyes are shut tight and his teeth clench down hard onto his mouthpiece in an expression of pain as he hits the mat. From above him, an assertive voice beckons him back up to his feet.

Rocko Daymon:

Again.

The scene reveals itself: We're in the DEFIANCE training center, sometime after hours. With the facility to themselves, both members of the Rain City Ronin occupy the training ring, dressed in their wrestling attire in addition to padded gloves and headgear.

The rush of willpower and determination blankets the pain in his mind as Kerry pushes himself off the canvas and readies himself once more. His mentor and tag partner, Rocko Daymon, stands waiting a few steps away with his arms crossed over his chest.

Kuroyama shoots in low, arms reaching for the waist of the stone-faced Daymon--but "the Undying" suddenly snaps into action, side-stepping the takedown and seizing his pupil around the neck and waist to reverse it into a sharp rollover takedown across the knee. Kerry finds himself on the canvas once again.

Rocko Daymon:

Too slow. Again.

Daymon reassumes the position as Kuroyama, still firing on all cylinders, rolls back to his feet and again readies himself. He comes in a bit cautiously this time around... feints an inside takedown, but then crosses over into a quick side leg kick toward his trainer's mid-section. But "the Undying" legend of the ring almost telepathically sees it coming, catches the leg with ease, and kicks out Kerry's other leg to sweep him to the mat.

Rocko Daymon:

You blink every time you try to kick for the body. Do you realize that?

Kerry Kuroyama:

I didn't blink--!

The master whips the student onto his belly with a sudden twist of the ankle. Kerry immediately taps the mat as Rocko applies the lock, knowing full well what would be in store for him if he tried to fight it. Daymon lets him loose and reassumes the position with his arms folded over his chest.

Rocko Daymon:

AGAIN.

Kerry pushes himself off the mat a bit harder this time, growling deep from the back of his throat. The young athlete is beginning to lose his cool, and Rocko quickly recognizes.

Rocko Daymon:

Wait...

Kerry stops in his tracks.

Rocko Daymon:

Take a moment to rebalance your mind. Think hard about what you are doing wrong.

His student nods understandingly, using this brief break in his training to take a much-needed lean against the corner

and catch his breath. Daymon continues to study the body language of his student.

Rocko Daymon:

There has been something on your mind lately. Since the match.

Kerry Kuroyama:

There's nothing on my mind, I'm just...

The look on Daymon's face quickly suggests he's not going to pass that sort of bullshit by the veteran that easily, and Kerry knows it. He caves.

Kerry Kuroyama:

Look, I just don't want to come off like I'm complaining, is all. I mean, I know we won and everything, and I know I should be happy about that. But... it's a bittersweet win.

Rocko Daymon:

How so?

Kerry shrugs.

Kerry Kuroyama:

I dunno... I feel like I've spent the first few years of my career trying to prove I'm *better* than those other guys in the indie and developmental leagues. Like I'm ready to hang at the elite level of this industry. And despite how hard I wanted to prove it against those huge Nightmare Express dudes at DEF Sixty-Four... I still struggled.

Rocko Daymon:

Against opponents of the size and strength of the men we defeated, any competitor is certain to struggle.

Kerry Kuroyama:

Not you, though. I meant, you pretty much proved that size and strength aren't all that when you walked in there and mopped the floor with those guys!

Rocko Daymon:

Hmmm... let me show you something.

After a beat, Daymon removes his headgear so that Kerry can get a good look at his master's forehead, and additionally removes a glove so the student can clearly see the fingers pointing to the accumulated scar tissue built up over the years.

Rocko Daymon:

Do you see this? This is the struggle I was forced to overcome when I was your age. Back then, guys like Black Jack Savage and Alex Graves would grind me down and bust me open on a regular basis. Every time I stepped through the ropes, I knew I was going to spill blood that night.

He puts the gear back on, eyes briefly unfocusing as his mind takes an unpleasant trip down Memory Lane.

Rocko Daymon:

And I suffered through that, because that was the industry of that time and place... one that valued sheer violence over the spirit of competition... and one where your survival didn't depend on what you could do in that ring, but only what you could endure.

He waves his fingers toward him to get Kerry out of the corner. Break is over.

Rocko Daymon:

Again.

Kuroyama takes in the last deep breath he'll get over the next several minutes as he puts the mouthguard back and gets back into a ready position.

Rocko Daymon:

What I did in the ring against the Nightmare Express... that only came from years of struggle. Because after all that time and punishment, I eventually learned that the best way to survive struggle...

Kerry bursts forward, hoping to catch his mentor mid-sentence. But Rocko is once again a half-second ahead of him, countering the charge with a well-timed hip toss, and he continues without missing a beat.

Rocko Daymon:

...is to give your opponent a greater one.

The young athlete lingers a moment longer on the mat, before he sees Rocko offering a hand to help him up.

Rocko Daymon:

Struggle is nothing to be disappointed about. Our respective hardships define how we improve ourselves... how we become greater as competitors.

Kerry takes the hand and Rocko pulls him back to his feet.

Rocko Daymon:

But only if we learn from our mistakes.

They get into position again, Kuroyama keeping his head level as instructed.

Rocko Daymon:

If you want to prove to yourself that you are truly better than the talent we beat at DEF Sixty-Four, then simply *get better*.

Kerry Kuroyama:

That's easier said than done.

Rocko Daymon:

You can start by working on that blink reflex.

Kerry Kuroyama:

I told you, I *don't blink*--

Kerry moves in again--and he does indeed blink as the leg goes into motion, and Daymon's hands immediately go down into a position to counter. But the master is fed an unexpected surprise instead when Kerry feints and tags him on the side of the head with a quick backhanded strike to the headgear.

Rocko shakes it off and looks up to see the triumphant smirk on his student's face. Daymon dips his head to give him a respectful and approving nod, which is probably the closest we'll see him smile.

Rocko Daymon:

...well done. A solid improvement.

Master and student get into position once again. But it's Rocko who lingers this time around.

Rocko Daymon:

Let us give it one more attempt. Hold nothing back this time. We must be ready for whatever may come at DEFIANCE Road.

Kerry Kuroyama:

But... we aren't even booked for the Pay Per View.

Rocko Daymon:

This is true. But in this place that calls itself DEFIANCE, the best opportunities are perhaps not waited on, but actively sought after.

Kerry Kuroyama:

I think I see where you're going with this!

Rocko Daymon:

We will see all, come DEFIANCE Road.

"The Undying" again crosses his arms over his chest, and "the Pacific Blitzkrieg" puts himself back into his fighting stance.

Rocko Daymon:

Now... *AGAIN*.

Kerry Kuroyama bursts forward. Bodies collide as the shot abruptly cuts to black.

TEAM MEETINGS

It's a couple of mornings before DEFtv 64.

The elevator door opens with a thunk, Jane Katze has her eyes on her smartphone. She's obviously coming back up from the DEFplex gym as she's sporting a pair of grey yoga pants and a black tank-top, her long brown hair gathered up behind her head. She's so engrossed in what she's reading on her phone she doesn't even notice the large man standing against the opposite wall, obviously waiting for her specifically. As soon as Katze steps out into the hallway of the Wrestle-Plex's executive suites The Vanimal Van Carver stands up straight and clears his throat.

Van Carver:

Early bird catches the worm, eh Ms. Katze?

Jane looks up with a smile. She's obviously pleased to see Carver up and at them (almost) as early as her. She's always operated with very little sleep, ever since college, too much to do, too much on her plate. Even more so nowadays without Edward White's team supporting her. She has to make her own way, blaze her own trail... she's done that managing Boxer's career, no doubt. But it's time to expand...

Jane Katze:

Van, just the man I wanted to talk to.

Van Carver:

Same here.

He pulls Jane's business card from the pocket of his jeans and hands it back to her. She narrows her eyes, looking at it, then back up at Van... who's smiling confidently from ear to ear.

Van Carver:

I'm in.

DEF's financial wunderkind smiles back.

Jane Katze:

You keep that, a memento from right before your career was launched into the stratosphere.

She tucks her cell into the little gym bag slung over her shoulder and hooks one of Van's arms before the two head down the hallway towards Jane's office.

Jane Katze:

Tell me, are you here this early just to meet with me?

Van Carver:

Nah, figured with the six man booked for TV I'd get an early workout in before I head down and...

The former submission siren chuckles and pats him on the arm.

Jane Katze:

That's all I need to hear. I think you've noticed I'm very *selective* in growing my client base, Van. Knowing you're this hungry is a good sign Bronson and myself made a very smart decision snatching you up Mr. Carver.

Carver raises an inquisitive eyebrow.

Van Carver:

So he did have a say in all this, did he? Guess I made a pretty decent impression on The Wargod couple weeks ago then, eh?

They arrive at Jane's office door, she stops and pats The Vanimal on the arm reassuringly.

Jane Katze:

He's *hesitant*... and justifiably so, in taking on a protegee. On him not being my sole managerial responsibility, but...

Van Carver:

But...

Jane Katze:

But... yes, he was very impressed after your match. Especially with the way you went out there and gave that distracted nincompoop Keyes a wonderful view of the lights directly above the ring. Then standing toe to toe with Omega? In a period of unprecedented roster growth with legitimate stars walking through the door one after another... you, a complete unknown, unafraid, brazen, defiant to the core already. You're quite the specimen Mr. Carver. At TV I have something planned. A simple gesture that'll show the whole world where your allegiances lie.

Carver seems pleased with that, Jane motions towards the door.

Jane Katze:

I have a meeting. You go do your thing, Van. When you get here for TV, come to Boxer's dressing room and we'll go over the plan.

The Murder Machine shakes the hand of his new business manager.

Van Carver:

Lets kick some teeth in.

Jane smiles as the massive young rookie makes his way back towards the bank of elevators to head down to the gym to prepare for yet another once in a lifetime opportunity. Once he's out of sight Jane heads through the door of her office to find her black leather and chrome office chair occupied by a dapper besuited gentleman we're all very very familiar with. He sniffs and waggles his handlebar mustache as Jane playfully narrows her eyes at his leather spats kicked up on her expensive glass desktop.

Jane Katze:

Really, Bronson?

The Original DEFIANT no-sells the question.

Bronson Box:

I saw your lad pacin' the halls earlier, you two have a nice *chat*?

She tosses her gym bag and briefcase down into one of the two plush chairs perched in front of her desk, settling herself into the other with a smile.

Jane Katze:

We did. He's on board.

The lightheartedness of the moment is deflated just a tad as The Wargod lowers his feet off the desk, replacing them with his elbows... slowly leaning across the desk a just a little. The right side of Bronson's face, the side gnarled by Lindsay Troy's attack with his own metal Spike gimmick during the Ladder War back at ASCENSION, twitches slightly. Jane's smile has melted away, she's in business mode now.

Bronson Box:

If he stumbles. If he gets in my way. If he makes us look like fools... he won't be on board *nothin'*. I told you when we started this I'm done draggin' along deadweight... Frank Dylan James, Jeff Andrews, *Edward White*... I won't hesitate to take your little pet project's head clean off. We about clear, love?

Jane Katze: [with all the poise and confidence of a head of state]
Clear as glass, Bronson.

The Original DEFIANT leans back again in Jane's chair as the continue talking as we pull back and the scene cuts to black..

Bronson Box: V/O
Good.

NATURAL HABITAT

At the Maple Leaf bar, the Rebirth Brass Band is expertly playing their weekly set to an entertained group of onlookers. The place is packed, though the attention toward the stage does make it somewhat easier to navigate the way to the bar. Particularly when you've spent a good portion of your adult life navigating crowded bars.

Bartender:

What can I get you?

Impulse:

Two Abita, plus a round.

The bartender asks him to repeat himself, since he certainly didn't say that.

Impulse:

A round for everyone here.

The people standing close enough to hear him give up a cheer, and thank him with handshakes, pats on the back, etc. A few recognize him as Impulse, and ask both he and Calico Rose for pictures, autographs, etc. The bartender informs her co-workers of the intent, and they assume the logistics.

A good number of the people appear to have either been at DEFtv earlier, or had watched the show from somewhere, since a lot of them thanked Impulse or Cally by name.

Yes, he's a former World Champion, but he's not traditionally recognizable.

The bartender calls out to the masses during a lull in the music, that everyone's next drink is free, which causes a rush.

Voice:

We got our own, thanks.

Impulse turns to the left, and sees Tyrone Walker and Kelly Evans approach the bar, getting refills on their empty glasses.

Cally:

MAH BOY TY!

She hugs him.

Ty Walker:

I think you got that wrong.

Impulse:

Ms. Evans.

Kelly Evans:

Mr. Knox.

Ty and Cally look at each other.

Cally:

I think they shared a moment.

Ty laughs.

Ty Walker:

Aye, can we dial it back, yall? Whatever happened before, it's history.

Impulse looks at Kelly, and considers this.

Impulse:

He's got a point, y'know. If the Faithful ain't hyped for Defiance Road by now, nothing'll do it.

Kelly nods, and holds her glass up. Impulse hits his pint of Abita against it in friendship - or at least as a peace offering.

Ty Walker:

So, hows Defiance workin' out?

Impulse:

Competition is insane, sir. Lotta old faces, some really talented new ones. Gonna miss workin' at Defiance Road, but if we can contribute somehow otherwise, we'd like to.

Kelly Evans:

Appreciated. Might take you up on it.

People all around refill their drinks, and thank Impulse for the offer. The foursome sip in silence for a few seconds.

Ty Walker:

Now, Miss Cally, I've gotta bone to pick wit'chu.

Cally's eyes dart to her left, toward Ty, while she sips her beverage.

Cally:

I don't know what you mean, Mr. Walker.

Ty Walker:

See, I heard you were the purveyor of some *special* cupcakes. I had one of your cupcakes tonight, and I didn't feel very special.

She smiles, and looks at Impulse. He chuckles and sips his own drink.

Cally:

Yeah, I don't bring the special cupcakes to the Wrestlezone anymore. I did on our first night, but Bobby Dean ate 'em all, then he ate the rest of the food in the building. I don't wanna cause trouble for Miss Evans.

Kelly looks straight ahead while she enjoys her drink, but she does nod her appreciation for Cally following her wishes.

Cally:

Tell you what, we'll get together some night this week and I'll bake.

Ty Walker:

You like to karaoke?

Cally's eyes go wide.

Impulse:

Oh yeah, there it goes.

Cally:

I love karaoke.

Ty Walker:

We should karaoke.

Cally:

We should. We should talk about it right now.

Ty Walker:

Let's get some air and talk about it.

Cally:

Let's!

Cally and Ty leave the bar, and Impulse and Kelly Evans instinctively take a step towards each other.

Kelly Evans:

You know where this is going, don't you?

Impulse:

Yep. They're gonna make us socialize in real life.

Kelly Evans:

Just do me a favor, and don't tell Dane. He won't take it well.

Impulse looks at her with an arched eyebrow.

Impulse:

No?

Kelly Evans:

He'll be okay after a little while, but at first, it'll be like finding out there's no Santa Claus.

Impulse considers this for a few seconds, and he starts to laugh.

Impulse:

Far be it for me to put coal in his stocking.

They wait in silence for a few seconds.

Kelly Evans:

So, you wanna be involved at Defiance Road, even though you're not in the ring?

Impulse:

Absolutely. If we can contribute, we want to.

Kelly Evans:

Well, that's good to hear. Actually, I had some thoughts...

#REALWORLDCHAMPIONMATTERS

Somewhere backstage at the Wrestle-Plex, not that it really matters the exact location, because the only thing that matters is the real World Championship belt, and the man wearing it...

"The Lone Star of Texas" Sean Jackson.

Which the camera is now focused on.

Sporting that million dollar smirk, it was plain to see even by Stevie Wonder and Ray Charles that the real World Champion was now a thorn in the side of Eric Dane.

Sean Jackson:

How does it feel Eric? knowing that my world championship is so close you can touch it, but too gutless to try.

With the pixelated championship draped over his shoulder, the Dallas native proudly taps the faceplate bearing his name.

Sean Jackson:

Knowing that it is in my possession after whipping your butt all over Atlantic City. Exposing you as the pretender I've always known you to be...

The smirk turns into a smile.

Sean Jackson:

But that's par for the course, isn't it Eric? Always managing to manuever your way to the championship, but failing to hold it against superior talent like me.

Yeah, the word pretender probably wasn't a good idea. But at this stage, Sean doesn't seem to care. As evident by his continued verbal abuse.

Sean Jackson:

Yeah, I said it Eric. You are a pretender, an inferior nobody that simply doesn't matter anymore. I waltzed into this company because I could, I shoved MY championship in your face because I wanted to, and proved to the world I wasn't afraid of you, just like Atlantic City.

The Dallas native shoves his finger in the direction of the camera.

Sean Jackson:

But in typical Eric Dane fashion, you had the audacity to stand in that ring, trying to act like a bad-ass, thinking you could book me in whatever match you wanted. Well listen up saw-dust, I'm the real World Champion and you have to earn your way to this championship. I'm not some secondary FIST champion who can be disrespected from the likes of you. Instead of booking me in a match, how about treating me like the celebrity I am? My name on the marquee, my face on the ring, on the building, even a huge poster of me in your office, replacing the garbage already there.

The smile quickly disappears as his free thumb is thrust back in his own direction.

Sean Jackson:

I'm the man who put you down in Atlantic City, and it's time you treat me as such. I'm the man here now, not that FIST champion, not your SOHER champion, and definitely not some second rate hack owner who couldn't carry my jock. I step into the ring when I want, and against who I want. Besides, you have bigger problems in the Murray Brothers and had better get the ADD in check...

The smirk slowly returns.

Sean Jackson:

Because as I've already proven, you can't fight a war on two fronts Eric. So this is a fight you had better leave alone because if you don't, I WILL prove Atlantic City wasn't a fluke.

Tapping the championship, the Lone Star of Texas turns to walk away, but stops. Holding his index finger into the air, Sean turns back to face the camera.

Sean Jackson:

Oh, and just so you know. Kelly Evans signed me because I'm better than you Eric, and that's legit. You can bitch and moan about how I won, but what I did in Atlantic City was straight out of your playbook. It's not my fault you didn't prepare, it's not my fault you couldn't see the writing on the wall.

Sean gets animated with his arms, his hands stretching outward, the belt almost slipping from his shoulder.

Sean Jackson:

It was Eric Dane versus Will Haynes, on the Boardwalk, in Atlantic City. The bright lights, the hookers, your very ego. Hell Eric, the wrestling Gods set the stage for me to do it....

One final time the index finger points to the camera, the point being driven home.

Sean Jackson:

Because they knew I had been waiting for that particular moment ever since you sabotaged my career in ACW. You remember Atlanta, don't you?

With that, the real World Champion turns and walks away.

Sean Jackson:

Sure you do, and it just came back to bite you in the ass.

Fade.