

SHOW OPEN

The graphic gives way to the studio and we cranes down to desk. The 'Motormouth of Malcontent' Angus Skaaland is seated firmly behind it and shuffles through his notes, pretending to read them.

Angus:

Don't call it a comeback!

He smirks

Angus:

Because NO ONE wants Keebs to come back!

He chuckles.

Angus:

Ladies and fuckwads ... Welcome to ANOTHER unfettered, uninterrupted version of DEFIANCE UNCUT! Exclusive spine tingling content that someone decided was worth airing and here I am to pretend like I give a shit!

He shuffles.

Angus:

Whatt'a we got tonight!?

Pause. Papers. He looks up.

Angus:

Who is GORRAM hell is this Jessica broad AND why is she constantly taking up the bulk of my show?!

He flips through the papers and after two he lands on something he likes.

Angus:

Alright, here we go ... some none teenage lady content! We've got Lance "The Ehhhh" Warner interviewing Gage Blackwood.

He looks off camera.

Angus:

I hope he slaps the shit at Sawyer. That little son of a bitch really irks my nerves ... What? Speak Up ...

The camera pans hard right and off the the set. A frazzled producers is urging Angus with hand signals and strong mouthed words to get turn back toward the camera.

Angus:

Calm your tits.

The camera swings back quickly.

Angus:

What else ... oh, this should be worth a shit! Kelly Evans lets Wildside's Children and ol' side dish know who runs things around here! I'm might hang around for that one.

New page.

Angus:

Really? Lance *again*? Alright, the drinks are only getting warmer ... lets move this along! This aussie fellow keeps getting outsmarted by Danny Diggs ...

Skimming the text.

Angus:

Ah, and has some bondage fetish or something.

He slings the papers toward the camera and the float down below the eyeline.

Angus:

Alright! That's it, folks! I'm out of here another stellar candidate of a late night emmy! ... what?

Angus turns his head to present his ear toward whatever he thinks he has heard.

Angus:

That's ... not a thing? Well, what the hell am I doing this for? Son of a -

And we cut to tape.

A REPLY

The DEFIANCE backdrop is seen and standing in front of it is Lance Warner and Gage Blackwood.

Warner:

Gage, last week you were called out on DEFtv by Jamie Sawyers. He demanded a rematch against David Hightower at DEFCON. However, since you were still recovering from the beating you took at the hands of Hightower and Sawyers during DEFtv 87, you were not in the arena. So I'm wondering... will you accept the challenge?

Blackwood stares into the camera and then into the microphone. It's clear he isn't comfortable, but he takes a deep breath and then speaks.

Blackwood:

I will accept the challenge.

Warner:

Sawyers didn't stop there, however. He said you took the loss poorly, He said you let your anger get the better of you. He said--

Blackwood cuts Warner off.

Blackwood:

Look, I know... I know my debut in DEFIANCE was nothing to remember. I know my follow-up was nothing to remember, either. And then... then there was my match with David Hightower which... was a disaster.

Blackwood points to the remaining bandages on his body. His heavily wrapped shoulder, the light purple and slowly healing bruises on his left arm. Then he points to his face, where the black eye he received, while healed significantly since two weeks ago, could still be seen.

Blackwood:

I'm down and out and I got beat. But I didn't come here to get pushed around...

Blackwood, slowly but surely, begins to talk with more conviction and less stiffness. His monotone and almost emotionless voice shows cracks of passion, even if it's not for long.

Blackwood:

Everyone knows who the real bullies are.

Warner nods and brings the microphone back to himself.

Warner:

How are you going to do it, though? You said you've struggled. You're 0-3 in DEFIANCE so far. What are you going to do to-

Showing some confidence, Blackwood cuts Lance off again.

Blackwood:

I am 0-3 and another loss will bury me. But I've faced many challenges before. Some I've gotten through and others I haven't. I guess we'll have to wait and see...

It seems like Blackwood wanted to say more but couldn't find the words.

Warner:

Well there it is, everyone. Blackwood vs. Hightower at DEFCON. Will Gage get his revenge or will the anti-bullies have their way once more?

The scene fades to black.

DEATH IN THE FAMILY (PART I)

Date: January 30th, 2013

Location: The Dojo Wrestling and Fitness Academy, Seattle, WA

Time: 2:17pm

The side door of Rocko Daymons esteemed dojo swings open letting the outside light beam through its opening. From the light, enters Jessica. Rocko spots her from across the gym and he instantly looks concerned, if not a bit confused.

Jessica drops her bag by the door and heads toward the approaching Rocko.

Jessica: *[pleading]*

Sorry, Sorry, Sorry! I know I'm late.

Rocko Daymon:

...

Jessica:

Terry was my ride and well... he is Terry.

Rocko:

Uh...

Jessica:

I know, I know, I swear: it won't happen again.

Rocko rubs his eye with his palm before dragging his hand down his face. He thinks for a moment and responds apprehensively. He is well aware of what broaching this topic could cause.

Rocko:

You know what today is, right?

Jessica is either oblivious or purposefully no sells it.

Jessica:

Uh, leg day ... I know but I told you; I'm no quitter. I'm all in, Rock!

Rocko ushers Jessica back a few steps and they take a seat on the ring apron.

Rocko:

You feel alright today, Jess?

Jessica:

I'm a little sore and I didn't sleep that well but ...

Jessica trails off as she picks up the subtle clues in Rocko's face and tone. It annoys her.

Jessica:

... and that isn't what you mean.

And with the exaggerated sigh, that only a teenage girl could muster, she answers what he is really asking

Jessica:

I'm fine. Like I told you before that's all under control now.

Rocko:

It doesn't seem like it, Jess. Why aren't you at the funeral?

She doesn't respond.

She fades and her eyes glass over. Staring through Rocko rather than looking at him.

Rocko:

Courtney's funeral.

She snaps back to reality.

Jessica:

I don't think I'd be too welcome there.

Fade.

STRIPPED BARE

DEFtv 88.

Fresh off rearranging Elise Ares' face The Bastard Sons of Wrestling and their sparkling DEFIANCE Tag Team Titles are led by security through the corridors of the DEFplex. Finally they reach their destination.

Standing in a door frame is the nearly three hundred pound frame of Wyatt Bronson. And The Longhorne Lariat looks less than pleased.

Will Haynes:

Help you friend?

Skidd Row:

Yeah, we got some celebrating to attend to. So, I don't know - maybe we can hurry this up?

Wyatt scoffs. He isn't amused.

Wyatt Bronson:

The next time y'all wanna flex some muscle and take out one of our Superstars, send them to the hospital after spiking their head off the mat MAYBE - just maybe - make sure it ISN'T a woman.

The Bastards look to one another.

Coleslaw Jenkins:

Hey, we equal opportunity up in this bitch, mane.

Wyatt has half a mind to take two steps forward and rearrange Coleslaw's teeth for him. But in the room behind him, there's a throat clear.

Wyatt Bronson:

She's ready for you.

The group steps into the office of Kelly Evans. Ms. Evans sits behind her nice desk, blonde hair styled nicely. She also looks less than pleased. She points a finger to Jonathan Wildside, manager of the group.

Kelly Evans:

Sit.

Wildside takes the one seat, Coleslaw going to sit down next to him. Evans takes exception.

Kelly Evans:

Those chairs cost more than your hose, Slaw. I don't want to spend hard earned money cleaning Cheetos dust off of them. You can stand.

Slaw looks at her funny, but decides to remain standing.

Kelly Evans:

I'm going to be brief. What you all did out there tonight was sickening. It made my stomach turn. Whatever you think of Elise, whatever I think of her - she didn't deserve this. Not even a little bit.

The Bastards don't say anything - a good decision on their end.

Kelly Evans:

I'm hearby stripping your little ragtag group of losers of these Tag Team Titles.

The Bastards begin to voice their displeasure but Wyatt Bronson and some DEFsec quickly walk into the room, ready to take the Titles by hook or crook.

Wildside looks over the scene, everyone tense and ready to throw down. He motions to Stevenson and Will Haynes, current holders of the two belts. Their absense from Skidd Row's shoulder duly noted.

Joanthan Wildside:

It's fine boys. Give them up.

Kelly is sort of surprised.

Jonathan Wildside:

Look - we can cooprate. We can play nice. We can jump through whatever hoops your pretty little head can come up with Kelly, but you can't deny that this group right here. We ARE your Tag Team Division. So we'll be at DEFCON with bells on ready to work.

Stevenson and Haynes drop the titles on Kelly's desk.

J Stevenson:

Keep these safe for us, okay?

And with that the Bastards file out. Each one exchanging a look with Wyatt Bronson. Once they've left, Bronson turns to Kelly.

Wyatt Bronson:

Want me to follow them, boss?

Kelly Evans:

Leave them. I think they got the message.

And she's back to doing some paperwork.

DEATH IN THE FAMILY (PART II)

Date: January 30th, 2013

Location: Freedom Hall Civic Center, Johnson City, TN

Time: 4:45pm

Standard dressing room. Scott Douglas sits on a folding chair with his duffle bag at his feet. Shorts that once were jeans, shirtless and applying tape to his forearm and hand.

Voice:

I'll be ... Scott Douglas in the flesh.

Scott looks up from his task to see Kerry Kuroyama as he enters the frame. Scott stands up and reaches out with a half taped hand.

Scott Douglas:

Kerry. Long time, bud.

The pair shake.

Kerry Kuroyama:

Yeah, couple of years. I was really sorry to hear about Courtney. That whole situation was just ...

Scott interrupts, in hopes, to cut the topic short.

Scott:

Thanks. What brings you out here?

Kerry:

Rocko. Scouting some talent. He has a line on a few guys spread across the Southeast, so I'm hitting a few shows checking them out. You out here now?

Scott:

Tonight, at least. I needed a break from Seattle.

Kerry:

Understandable. I need to go touch base with this promoter but I'll catch you after.

Scott:

Sure thing.

Kerry turns to leave but stops. He turns back as Scott takes his seat.

Kerry:

... I gotta ask, Scott. Why take a booking clear across the country, of all days? Why aren't you back home - for the funeral?

Scott:

Kerry ...

Scott looks up from his hands.

Scott:

I don't think I'd be too welcome there.

Fade

THE CUFFS ARE OFF

The Cuffs Are Off

UNCUT EXCLUSIVE: DEFTV #88 FOLLOWING THE DIGGS/BURNS MATCH

The camera cuts to the Guerilla Position where following the frankly embarrassing loss to “Master Thief” Danny Diggs, Oscar Burns is seen pacing around near the entrance, muttering furiously which is something that hadn’t been seen out of the happy-go-lucky New Zealander since his arrival in DEFIANCE.

Oscar Burns:

You fell for it again, Oscar... Diggs has been takin’ the piss outta ya for weeks, mate... you gotta control yourself...

Burns kicks at a production crate. It doesn’t budge, nor does it really do much to make him feel better as he paces.

“Excuse me? Hey, Oscar?”

The familiar voice of Lance Warner is heard as Oscar Burns holds his wrist, still holding onto the now-loose handcuffs that had led to his surprise defeat at the hands of The Master Thief. He stops when he sees Lance approach him.

Oscar Burns:

Hey, GC... come to catch a word after what happened, yeah?

Lance Warner:

If I may.

Oscar silently nods, allowing the interviewer to do his job.

Lance Warner:

Thus far, since this spat with Danny Diggs began, he’s played mind games with you and evaded you at every turn.

Burns interjects.

Oscar Burns:

Wow, mate, you’re the worst pep talker ever.

Lance Warner:

Certainly not what I’m trying to do, but he’s poked fun at your morals and now he’s set up a match at DEFCON where he has free reign to use whatever weapons he can find while you’re confined to wrestling under traditional rules. How do you plan to prepare for a guy like Danny Diggs in this unique stipulation.

Burns sighed.

Oscar Burns:

Let me tell you a story, Lance... I’ve been wrestlin’ for a little over a decade now and along the way, I’ve built a reputation for keeping my business inside the ring. That means doin’ the right thing, workin’ and clawin’ for every little thing I’ve got without compromisin’ who I am outside the ring. Before I found discipline in this sport, I was nothing more than an angry young fella who liked to blame the world for his problems. I can blame a dodgy upbringing or put my problems on others, but I was not a good person back in my youth, gettin’ pissed at all hours of the day.

Lance nodded as Oscar continued.

Oscar Burns:

About a year after I got into this business, there was another young man in my trainin’ class – Michael Hartley – and we were the top two students of our school at the time. He didn’t like me and I didn’t like him because we both wanted to be the absolute best to come out of New Zealand. Well, one night, a heated argument at a pub turned to a hard-

out strop and ended up with me usin' a submission I learned in class to break Hartley's arm. [stopping to take a breath] I took what I learned and abused it and because of it, the injury never healed right and Hartley was never able to wrestle again. He was an arse, but he didn't deserve what happened to him.

Lance Warner:

Wow, I had no idea...

Oscar Burns:

Truthfully, it's not somethin' I like to talk about, but there it is. Since then, I made a promise to myself to stay on the straight and narrow. I'm not here to preach good sportsmanship and I'd never force that on others... it's just somethin' I've followed. It taught me discipline. Danny seems to think takin' the piss out of somethin' I believe in and that's fine, but I bring this story up because Diggs is gonna find out somethin' the hard way at DEFCON...

He turns directly to the camera to give the message to Danny Diggs.

Oscar Burns:

I still have a temper, Danny, and you'll be the first bloke to see it. You've been a little stirrer since I met you and it's gonna come back to bite you. At DEFCON, you may have no DQ goin' for you, but trust me that the rules don't confine me. If you make mistake or give me an openin', I'm takin' it! In fact, since you've seen fit to get me brassed off, I've got news for ya, Danny...

He holds up the cuffs from earlier drops them to the ground.

Oscar Burns:

The cuffs are OFF!

Burns starts to walk away after making his point with Lance nodding quietly... then Burns comes back.

Oscar Burns:

Wow... that was bad, mate. Can we edit this and I just say like I'm gonna make his arse tap out when I break his arm? I think that'd be sweet as.

Lance Warner:

[shaking his head] Nope, still rolling, Oscar.

Oscar Burns:

Bugger!

Burns still hops off in a bit of an eccentric, but still angry huff as the scene fades out.

DAYS GONE BYE - FIN

So, that's what happened, I said. She walked outta here, and three years later showed up in DEFIANCE with a mask, an entourage, and a massive chip on her shoulder.

I looked to my left at Cally. She was busily typing away on her phone, but once she felt eyes on her, she looked up, looked across the table, then back at me again. "What? No, I'm on your side, sweetie. Miss Two Day Shipping is totally hexed."

Well, that's good. I wasn't asking Cally, though - I knew she had my back.

Thanks dere, I said, but I meant them.

I looked across the table into the faces of the two people whose opinions matter to me more than anyone.

"Uhm..."

"Well, y'know...?"

That was unexpected.

What, I asked.

The fifteen time World Champion, the King of Extreme Eli Flair drained his double shot glass of Jamison. Seriously, he's not really a talker but I've never seen him at a loss for words before.

"You were... kinda... a dick," continued Miss Ivy, sitting next to him. She's the talker of the group - and she's never at a loss.

I wasn't a dick, I insisted. I was dealing with some stuff and just... I didn't have it in me at the time.

"Doesn't matter," replied Miss Ivy, "the second you enter the arena, the second you accept those fans' cheers, you're accepting a certain responsibility. You're accepting that if a fan asks you for something... within reason, of course... you'll do your best."

Like you did, I asked Eli. He shook his head.

"Don't drag me into this," said Eli, "My size kept a lotta people away but I was civil to everyone I ever talked to on the street. Long as I wasn't with Angel or MJ, that is. Boundaries 'n all. 'Sides, man... if I ever shut someone down who told me they wanted to be a wrestler, *'just like me,'* then you wouldn't be sittin' here, huh?"

"He's got you there," said Cally.

Okay, fine, I said, turning my attention to Miss Ivy. What about you?

"What?" she asked, sipping her martini.

Wait. When did she start drinking martinis?

You told me about the shrink they made you talk to after the fire at the Garden, and every other time anyone ever asked you anything, ever, about Silver Fox. Were you taking responsibility?

Immediately, I knew that was a mistake. Miss Ivy's eyes narrowed behind her glasses as she stared at me. I wonder if this is how everyone she ever verbally demolished on national TV felt before she moved in for the kill.

"Nobody who ever asked me about Fox was a fan," she replied, coldly.

This is a sensitive subject for her, and yeah, like I said, I regretted saying something immediately.

Fair enough, I said. So... what happens now?

"You feel like a hero?" asked Eli.

No, I admitted. Never have, actually. Just been me.

"Doesn't matter, man," he replied. "You are anyways," he said. "Sorry. Y'life ain't cha own, anymore."

I shrugged in mock-defeat. So what do I do, then, I said.

"You take it," said Miss Ivy, "you take it and you learn from it and you move on. You go to Con-DEF or whatever it is and make sure the good guys win."

DEFCon, I said.

"Don't fuckin' care," said Eli.

You wanna come, I asked.

"What, to Eric Fuck Dane's house? Fuck that shit," said Eli.

I laughed.

"He's not actually evil," said Cally, taking up my cause, "he's actually just like you in that he's passionate and opinionated towards what matters to him."

"Sure," said Miss Ivy.

She's serious, I confirmed.

"We'll take your word for it," continued Miss Ivy, "but the fact remains this is just karma comin' back t'bite you in the ass for what went down. Maybe you can get past it, maybe not. But even if you don't consider yourself a hero..."

"...which is incorrect," added Eli.

"Thank you," said Miss Ivy, "Even if you don't consider yourself a hero you need t'look at the stuff you do, and realize that karma's undefeated. You screwed the pooch when you ignored someone in need, and that debt needs t'be paid."

The Southern Heritage Championship.

Fortunately, I said, it already was.

"When?"

When Reaper pinned me for the SoHER title, it was the start of a long downward spiral, I said. Got into a fight with my only real friend in the company, got an arm injury, and really had to fight back up from the bottom.

"...and won the DEFIANCE World Title in the process," reminded Miss Ivy.

"The FIST of DEFIANCE," corrected Cally.

"Right," replied Miss Ivy, "While that was goin' down, you lost a title, won a title, lost a title, and won a title and made up with your hetero lifemate. That ain't karma, kiddo."

Sure, I said, unconvinced. So what are you saying?

There was a pause.

"When the time comes," said Eli, "it's gonna be a matter of appropriate retribution."

I took a breath.

DEFCon, I said.

"DEFCon," repeated Eli. "You've got a flawed hero - you. A scrappy underdog. A woman with a cause who thinks she's been wronged, and Bronson Box, who just wants to watch the world... *'fookin'* burn. You're gonna win, or you're gonna lose. Which do you deserve?"

Which do I deserve? That's a good question.

I don't know, I said. I think I deserve to win as much as anyone else in the match - it depends on who works the hardest and where the breaks fall.

Eli laughed. It's never good when he laughs.

"That's not how it works, kid," he said. "When push comes t'shove, y'can't put it on talent. What matters is who deserves it."

He smirks.

"Maybe that's the ticket, kiddo," said Eli. "Maybe that's how you balance the karma sheets."

You're talking in riddles again. It was a little annoying when you were cutting promos, it's even moreso now that you're claiming to be giving me advice.

He laughed again, and finished his drink. "Not bad, Knox... not bad. What I mean izzat, as a professional wrestler with a penchant for doing the right thing, you've gotta do the right thing and make sure the fans're happy with the outcome'a the match."

And he leaned in. "No matter what."

Cally poked me in the ribs - we needed to go.

I'll do my best, I said. Reaper needs to take responsibility for her actions, and Bronson Box needs to be taken down a peg. I'll try to win it for the fans.

We stood up and stepped away from the booth.

"Knox."

I stopped and turned around, to see both of them looking at me.

"Do better than your best," said Miss Ivy, "just in case you fail."

I don't follow.

"Doing the right thing," explained Eli, "doesn't necessarily mean you should **win** the match."

Interesting. I started to respond, but he cut me off.

"Think about it," he said.

I would.

As we walked away, I looked over my shoulder to see the two of them watch us go.

"Ivy?" asked Eli.

"Mmmhmmmm?" she responded.

"When the **fuck** did we turn into the adults?"