

SHOW OPEN

Energetic music begins to fade up ...

A glitch effect, accompanied by a digital glitch sound effect ushers in the UNCUT logo with a slow dissolve.



The logo fades and on a black screen, words in white appear one at a time.

THIS.

IS.

UNCUT.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE TOYBOX KIND

The sound of hospital machines beeping and scanning is a constant buzz in the background. Malak Garland, weak and barely conscious, lays peacefully in the middle of a medical bed with his cohorts, Cyrus and Teresa by his side.

Malak Garland:

W-w-w-water... p-p-p-phone...

He reaches outward with a flimsy arm. His face looks like it has endured a car crash. Teresa is quick to tend to him with both requests. Malak's thumb shakes as he scrolls through a ton of notifications on his phone. One in particular catches his eye.

Malak Garland:

What is this? Top 100?

Cyrus leans over the bedside to glance at Malak's phone. They both see some sort of power rankings for 2020.

Cyrus Bates:

It's the wrestling podcast top 100 rankings for this year. Actually, I came in at number 87 and Teresa came in at 83. There's still 70 spots to be revealed though.

As if his physical condition isn't bad enough, now Malak has this on his mind to deal with. A cold panic overcomes the Keyboard King. He omits hearing the last part about how 70 participants are still to be announced and focuses on the fact his name hasn't been ranked yet.

Malak Garland:

You both got rankings? I'm unranked? Unreal.

The pressure is just too much. Malak passes out from the anxiety.

Cyrus Bates:

He is banged up pretty bad.

Bates rubs his chin. Ames looks on with concern. The hospital room is rather sterile. Various tubes and patches are affixed to the Keyboard King, continually monitoring his status. He incurred plenty of damage from the cage match just the night before.

Teresa Ames:

He will recover though.

KNOCK! KNOCK! KNOCK!

A knock at the door stirs its occupants. Cyrus and Teresa watch as Jestal and Dandelion of Toybox enter the room. Cyrus makes sure to move his body in front of the five Tag Team belts that are resting nicely on a chair nearby, as if protecting them.

Cyrus Bates:

What are you clowns doing here?

Jestal:

Whoa... whoa, relax there fella. You guys visited us in our Funhouse, we are just returning the favor.

Dandelion has a wrapped flat gift under her arm. Jestal stares at Malak in bed, with a slight smirk on his face. He then looks at Cyrus with a quick glance at the championships. He then looks over to Teresa. He walks over to her, grabbing her hand.

Jestal:

Sugar Baby, just so you know those nasty Sevens and the gull of Jay Harvey to treat you the way they did. I would NEVER treat you like that!

Ames loves the *attention* from Jestal. She curls her hair with her free hand and looks adoringly at the man with face paint in front of her.

Teresa Ames: *[Between chuckles]*

You're cute. Maybe we could do an ASMR session with things from your toy chests some day...

Jestal winks at her with a smile.

Teresa's voice trails off as her eyes can't help but drift back to Malak. While she's happy to have the *attention* of Jestal, she's also conflicted because her leader is hurting. She then notices the gift under Dandelion's arm as Cyrus leans forward and snatches it.

Cyrus Bates:

What is this?

He tears the wrapping paper open to reveal a decadent mahogany framed picture of the joyful Toybox hoisting the DEFIANCE Tag Team Titles from sometime in 2019. Cyrus nearly drops the portrait in pure disgust.

Cyrus Bates:

Why would you give us a picture of yourselves with the belts Malak has now?

Jestal's whispers are clearly heard by Cyrus.

Jestal: *[whispers]*

Psst... Dani... This guy needs to lay off the roids, so angry.

Dani glances at Cyrus, terrified. Cyrus' eyes widen even more.

Jestal:

You should be grateful we are the only Defiants that actually took time to come visit you guys. We even brought gifts for you, so take it down a notch, okay buddy?

Dani waves at the champs as she begins to leave. Jestal soon follows, letting go of Teresa's hand. The Cute N Qwerty Gurl waves goodbye to her new boo and blows an imaginary kiss his way.

Cyrus Bates:

Those two bother me. I guess I could strip this picture and sell the frame on eBay.

Teresa takes the picture for herself, clutching it to her chest.

Teresa Ames:

I don't know. I kind of like Jestal. I wonder how big his feet are.

Teresa caresses the photo fondly as Cyrus relaxes his hulking self. Malak still lays out cold on the bed, completely overwhelmed.

GATEKEEPERS OF DEFIANCE: AN ASCENSION 2020 REVIEW

The scene is on DDK and Lance Warner at ringside.

DDK:

Folks, up next we have something very... uh... interesting? Sure, *interesting*.

Lance:

Please know the upcoming segment does not reflect the thoughts or opinions of anyone other than the four men in front of you. Enjoy?

The feed cuts to a black backdrop where the newcomers and UNCUT talent, Screen 7 appear. Gilbert Rogers is sprawled out across two chairs, chest-up, seemingly incoherent from his own mumblings. The skinny Alan Goldstein is to the left hand side, shaking in fear and Berry Chernobyl, really the only legitimately looking wrestler of the trio is in the middle, standing imposingly, looking dead into the camera.

In walks a man to the center of the stage, behind the three of them. He is middle-aged, standing around 5'7" and 200 pounds. He is somewhat muscular but most of his physique is hidden under a "SCREEN 7 REVIEW" DEFIANCE branded t-shirt.

???:

Greetings. My name is "Horror" Hector Harris and these are MY BOYS, "Extra Butter" Gilbert Rogers, "Sticky Floors" Alan Goldstein and the biggest bad-ass MOFO on the planet, "Free Refills" Berry Chernobyl. Together we are SCREEN 7 and tonight is our review of Ascension!

"Horror" Hector Harris:

You see, my boys are big horror movie fans. They LOVE the horror movies! And we... collectively, also LOVE DEFIANCE. However, we are not blinded, our eyes are OPEN and we see how terrible this company is right now. My BOYS are ELITE level talent and they are ready, willing and able to step up to the big stage and get it done. MY BOYS are super talented athletes, not like many of the ones on your television these past few years. Before 2017, DEFIANCE was a sanctuary. We are here to bring it back and I am here to give my critical eye, along with MY BOYS, on in-depth reviews such as a show like this one. So let's get started...

Harris looks behind him and gives a nod to his trio.

HHH:

Look at this SHIT show! What an embarrassment to DEFIANCE Wrestling! Match number one, Dex Joy vs. Gage Blackwood. OH MY GOD GAGE, did you forget your "â€big boy" pants? Why show up if you were going to get crushed? What a waste of my time! Gage acts all tough and backs it up like this? Hang 'em up, pack it in, LET IT BEGIN!! You're USELESS to DEFIANCE. People said I need to watch this company for a guy like Gage Blackwood and THAT'S WHAT HE DOES? Bwahahaha!! Shit wrestler, overrated, can't get it done on the BIG stage! As for you, Dex, jury's still out. I need to see you in a match that lasts more than ten minutes. WHO'S NEXT.

Harris looks down on his sheet of paper in front of him.

HHH:

Stalker vs. Douglas... we get a bald-headed maniac and some "favorite son" doing battle? ERR ERRRRR! Shit! Douglas did nothing but cement himself as a boring OVER THE HILL guy who's best days were talking to his MOMMY! Stalker, next time you better make him cry for MOMMY! BE THE FATHER FIGURE YOU SAY YOU ARE! WHO'S NEXT!

Harris gives a laugh before starting up.

HHH:

Clowns vs. Stevens. Wish the outcome was different... I HATE clowns!! Go back to the gutters, boys! WHO'S NEXT!

Hector takes a breather, realizing this one will be tough to review.

HHH:

ADV vs. Uriel Cortez. Immobile big men are SHIT!

Somehow, the camera pans over to the 5'5", 350+ pounds of Gilbert Rogers just sitting there before the feed switches back to the main view, showing Hector in front of all three men.

HHH:

Thank GOD ADV won. We need badasses like him! WHO'S NEXT!

Chernobyl cracks his knuckles.

HHH:

Scott Stevens vs. Perfection. How UNperfect was this one, huh? Stevens is a SSSOOOO finished in this company. RETIRE, Scott, RETIRE! WHO'S NEXT!

Pause.

HHH:

Deacon vs. Victor Vacio. *[Laughs]* WE HATE BIG MEN! WHO'S NEXT!

Harris looks like he's going to vomit.

HHH:

Teresa Ames vs. Jay Harvey. First off, IF YOU DIDN'T HIT THAT, JAY, I WANNA HIT YOU. Second, if I could piss all over this, I would. The Comments Section are crybaby little bitches WHO CAN'T DO JACK SHIT if all the likes in the world depended on it and Jay Harvey is as vanilla as the ice cream I let melt and drank last night. Boys, are you with me!? WHO'S NEXT!

Harris shivers.

HHH:

Favored Saints? Yuck! I wanted BLACK PANDA for the victory but he couldn't get it done. This is becoming no surprise. He's been slipping for a while. MATT LaCROIX is more lame than Jay! Ex-Reaper? Maybe you should go back to them or GO TO HELL! WHO'S NEXT!

"Horror" Hector Harris, red faced and all, clearly needs to calm the hell down.

HHH:

Oh, you want night two? Our night two thoughts will come on the NEXT UNCUT! I'm "Horror" Hector Harris representing MY BOYS, Gilbert Rogers, Alan Goldstein and Berry Chernobyl... also known as SCREEN 7. We are the GATEKEEPERS of DEFIANCE, taking a much needed critical look at this company and its downfall. This organization is NOTHING BUT TRASH... and I'm the outspoken critic YOU need in order to SHAPE UP or SHIP the fuck OUT. Am I right boys!?

Chernobyl is all business, giving a serious looking headnod while clenching his fists together. Rogers is chill, still laying across those chairs with his massive stomach wobbling about while mouthing the words "yeah, yeah" and Goldstein, on the other hand, is trembling, white faced and shaking in fear from the inflammatory words their "manager" has put out there. Goldstein wishes he was somewhere else right now.

HHH:

Oh, I'm right. SHOVEL you next time. This has been an Ascension Night One review! You're welcome!

Cut.

The scene goes back to DDK and Lance, shaking their heads.

DDK:

DEFIANCE is in a downfall? We have some of the most compelling television out there right now and a blooming roster! This was stupidity. The man, Hector was his name? What has he done in DEFIANCE? This was his first appearance! Those kids behind him leave a lot to be desired, too.

Lance:

This Hector's a blow-hard, Keebs. Nothing more, nothing less. He's entitled to his opinion... but that's not to say he's right.

GUNNAR VAN PATTON vs. THOMAS SLAINE

After a short commercial interruption, focus turns to a hallway of the Wrestle-Plex. With a dazzling white smile on full display, Christie Zane brings a microphone up to her lips.

Christie:

Good evening DEF fans! In an exclusive, I have been granted permission to conduct the first interview with the Lycan himself, Gunnar Van Patton. After hearing his words on the last Uncut, I will attempt to dig deeper and see what we can learn about the undefeated newcomer.

Zane opens the door to the locker room and steps in, bringing the subject of the prospective interview into the picture.

Christie:

Gunnar! Thank you for this opportunity!

Barely a step into the room, Zane finds her path blocked by a sharply-dressed brunette. The young woman crosses her arms behind her back and makes sure to keep herself positioned between the interviewer and her wanted target. In the background, Van Patton is taping his fists while looking at a monitor and completely ignoring the visitor's presence.

Woman:

That will be far enough, Ms. Zane.

Christie:

Can you please step aside? I have a scheduled interview with GVP.

Woman:

You may address my client as Sergeant Van Patton.

Christie:

Your client? May I ask who you are, miss?

Woman:

My name is Avril Selene Kinkade... attorney-at-law.

A surprised Zane leans back, not attempting to bypass the ice cold female. ASK extends a contract towards Christie.

Avril:

Per a written agreement with one Mary Lynn Mayweather, head of the DEFIANCE legal department, in agreement for my client wearing equipment to protect the other wrestlers from injury, all questions, comments, and concerns for Sergeant Van Patton must go through me.

Christie sighs, a little let down by the lost opportunity to get the scoop on the Lycan. Being the professional she is, Zane doesn't let it get to her. She brings the microphone up, so she can friendly interrogate Van Patton's advocate. Though, she had to hold off on talking for just a second to duck, to avoid having an empty can of Ghost energy drink hit her in the head, courtesy of an annoyed Van Patton. The nearly robotic Avril didn't budge even with the can nearly taking off her ear.

Christie:

Um.. so he doesn't seem like the type to hire such a woman as yourself. How did this happen?

Avril:

Sergeant Van Patton has allies and supporters in his quest to reclaim his glory and halt the gross incompetence of the DEFIANCE booking committee. Backers with the assets to keep me on retainer for a very, VERY long time.

Zane went to speak, but was instantly cut off.

Avril:

Before that question can even escape those meretricious lips, the identities of the benefactors are classified at the highest level.

Christie:

Hmph...

Behind ASK, the Texan is slowly losing his temper. What he sees and hears on the monitor is getting under his skin. Zane notices it, as she peers over Kinkade's shoulder.

Christie:

Why is he so aggravated? Or should I say who?

Kinkade looks back and a downright evil smirk engulfs the ice queen's face at the sight of Van Patton violently grabbing the monitor and launching it across the room. He makes a beeline to the locker room door and stomps down the hallway.

Avril:

Who? Who is but the form following the function of what and what enraged him shall soon be deceased.

Things abruptly turn to the ringside area. In the middle of the ring stands Thomas Slaine with a microphone in one hand and several sheets of paper in the other. Slaine is pacing back and forth and voicing his opinion of a certain newcomer to anyone and everyone who will listen.

DDK:

Welcome back, fans. During the break, we were joined by BRAZEN star Thomas Slaine, who has some choice words for one Gunnar Van Patton.

Lance:

And based on what we just saw with Christie, the Lycan didn't care for them.

Thomas Slaine:

Sure, you beat Levi Cole. Yet, you haven't proved a damn thing to me, Van Patton. Sure, I fucked up by letting down my guard. You caught me napping and suckerpunched me. That bullshit has been eating at me for weeks now. Don't think you're going to just get away with it without a receipt.

Slaine launches the stack of paper across the ring, as referee Benny Doyle slides into the ring behind him.

Slaine:

Let's fuckin' go! I signed your damn open contract, so bring your cowardly ass down here and catch the ass-kicking I owe you! Let's see how you do when I am ready.

Slaine didn't have to wait for long.

♪ ***"Boots and Blood" by Five Finger Death Punch*** ♪

DDK:

Ask and ye shall receive.

Lance:

I have this sinking feeling he is going to regret asking.

It didn't take much to light the fire inside the Texan, but Slaine had surely gotten his attention. Van Patton ferociously

tears his black, Grunt Style shirt off and fires the remnants into the crowd. His hat tumbles to the floor due to his stampeding to the ring and he dives into the ring.

Lance:

As if Van Patton's fuse wasn't already miniscule, Slaine's mouth made it even shorter.

DDK:

He is either going to back up those words or he is going to eat them in the most painful way possible.

Lance:

That is for sure!

Just as Van Patton gets to his feet, Benny Doyle calls for the bell, knowing this situation is going to explode at any moment.

DING DING

Slaine's mouth is running on all cylinders upon meeting his opponent in the middle of the ring and the two go nose to nose.

Slaine:

You think you're a bad motherfucker, huh? All I see is a punk bitch. Glare at me all you want, cyclops, I'm going to shove my f-UGH!

The Lycan had enough of his enemy's shit-talking and buried two fingers into Slaine's mouth with a thumb underneath, gripping him by the mandible with his left hand.

DDK:

He's got him by the lower jaw!

Lance:

That's one way to shut him up.

A merciless barrage of right-handed, Muay Thai elbows batter the jaw of the Alabaman, buckling his knees. Van Patton doesn't let up for one second, delivering elbow after elbow until Slaine is flat on his back on the canvas.

DDK:

Machine gun elbows square to the temporomandibular joint.

Lance:

Five seconds in and this has already turned ugly.

An insatiable bloodlust overcomes the Lycan. He grips his adversary by the wrists and pulls him up from the mat, just to stomp him back down into it. He isn't satisfied with just one, as he unleashes a flurry, looking as if he is trying to put out a fire on Slaine's face.

Lance:

Van Patton is looking to make sure Slaine doesn't talk ever again.

DDK:

I wouldn't be surprised if he was picking Slaine's teeth out of the bottom of his boot.

Van Patton's growling is audible, while he yanks his target up from the mat by the wrist and immediately sends Slaine into the nearby corner. The Texan instantly follows him in, leaping up to the middle rope and cracking his jaw with a murderous knee strike.

DDK:

Step-Up Knee Strike!

The Lycan uses the recoil of the attack to leap back and a handful of hair to pull his opponent along with him. In a flash, he hoists Slaine up onto his shoulders and tosses him up into the air, only to deliver another vile knee strike to the Alabaman's mouth.

DDK:

Go 2 Sleep!!!

Lance:

He has to have a fractured jaw after that.

Keeping a half Nelson locked on after the attack, Van Patton pounces on his foe, hooking in a crossface, as the pair spiral to the mat. With Slaine face down, the Lycan tightens the Kata-Ha-Jime and plants both feet. He pulls back with all of his might, bending Slaine's back the wrong way with the submission applied.

DDK:

Tazmission applied in the dead center of the ring!!!

Lance:

The onslaught aimed at his jaw makes this worse, as his own body is pushing it against the crossface.

The official slides into position and finds Slaine completely unconscious. Benny Doyle didn't need a second look to confirm that Slaine was unable to submit verbally or via tap out. He calls for the bell as fast as he can.

DING DING DING**Darren Quimby:**The winner of this contest via submission... **GUNNAR VAN PATTON!!!***♪ "Boots and Blood" by Five Finger Death Punch ♪*

Van Patton spikes his decimated victim into the mat, breaking the submission.

DDK:

This one is mercifully over.

Lance:

Slaine history of making good decisions isn't long, but this may have just secured the single worst.

Still in a foul mood, he leans down to snarl into Slaine's ear.

Gunnar Van Patton:

Talk shit. Get hit.

Lance:

That says it all right there.

DDK:

He has sent a message to those who prefer words to combat here in DEFIANCE.

The Texan reaches a vertical base and angrily pulls his arm away from Doyle, who tries to announce he is the winner of the match-up. Van Patton rolls out to the floor and snatches the copy of the contract Slaine signed. He marches up

to the top of the ramp, where he hands it to a waiting Avril. She nods with a smile in thanks, rolling the contract up and slipping it under her arm. She motions for him to take the lead, which he does, as the pair make their way to the back.

SOL

The folowing footage takes place backstage moments after the Lucky Sevens/Comments Section cage match from the PPV

The camera is fixed to the backstage area just outside the gorilla position. Coming through the back is a very disappointed Max Luck followed by a very angry Mason Luck. Max is trying to keep Mason as cool as he possibly can but right now ...

Mason Luck:

I ... I can't fucking believe this! How did they beat us, bro? HOW!?

Mason's massive boot kicks over a nearby shelf full of some surplus production equipment and makes Max jump.

Max Luck:

Bro! Calm down! I'm sorry I let those pricks pin me ...

Mason growls.

Mason Luck:

No ... no, this isn't your fault Max. We kicked them around fron one side of that cage to the other and back again. We had them, Max. We. Had. Them!!!

When he continues shouting they are approached by one of the DEFIANCE Wrestling interviewers, Jamie Sawyers.

Jamie Sawyers:

Max and Mason ... hey. Tough loss out there. Can I ask you guys what you're thinking about right now?

Without thinking Mason turns to Jamie.

Mason Luck:

We got cheated by those dick-heads plain and simple! We played their stupid games! We should have said no to the stupid little time limit last week. Then they need their little nympho to come out there and help to beat us. Look ...

Mason turns to Max.

Mason Luck:

i don't care what a bunch of little keyboard warriors think ... Max and I are the best team in DEFIANCE Wrestling! We beat Team Hoss! We beat the PCPs on the last pay per view and yet, Elise Ares is getting a title shot tonight! We beat the Sky High Titans! Teams of the past, present and future! They're lucky they had somebody watching their back tonight. Look ...I need to go!

Mason storms off in angle now. Max Luck looks down at Jamie with an apologeticlook on her face.

Max Luck:

Your timing blows Jamie. Excuse me.

He brushes right past Jamie to follow his brother as the tense scene ends.

THE GAME BOY vs. "NO FUN" DEAN NENONEN

DDK:

This contest took place in a dark match before Ascension Night One.

Lance:

Not much of a match but have a look!

The scene cuts to ringside, where "No Fun" Dean Nenonen stands in the middle of the ring. The last time The Faithful saw him, he was hospitalized at the hands of Tyler Fuse more than three months ago. Dean stands around 6'0", 250 pounds but hides it well. The Game Boy is already making his way down when referee Mark Shields walks over to The Mini Boss and asks if he's ready.

The Game Boy provides no response.

With no Conor Fuse in sight, the bell rings and Dean takes a deep breath.

DING DING

DDK:

Nenonen charges at Game Boy with a shoulder block... but Game Boy doesn't budge!

Lance:

Not one bit, Keebs!

DDK:

Nenonen nods to himself, bounces off the ropes and tries it again... nothing! Now a third time... INTO A CHOKESLAM by The Game Boy!

Game Boy pulls Nenonen up by his hair and Irish whips him hard into the turnbuckle. The ring shakes on impact as "No Fun" Dean bounces out of the corner so TGB takes the independent talent by the arm and Irish whips him into the next buckle across the way.

Dean meets it haaaard. This allows Game Boy to show off surprising speed, as he races towards Nenonen and puts a boot to his face!

"No Fun" Dean collapses in a heap.

DDK:

Well, Nenonen gave it a valiant effort... but this Game Boy is something else.

Another chokeslam.

The Mini Boss looks into the crowd and adjusts his Nintendo-themed mask slightly. With ease, he takes Dean Nenonen and hoists him into the air... holding Dean up above his with ease. The Game Boy strolls around the ring, still with his opponent perfectly balanced on his arms.

And performs a sit-down gorilla press slam, hooking the leg.

ONE.

TWO.

THREE.

DING DING DING

DDK:

Wow. Impressive.

Conor Fuse strolls out from behind the curtain, skipping down the rampway like a kid running through a field of dandelions. The Best Pout Machine rolls into the ring while The Game Boy stands in the center of the canvas floor. Mark Shields tries to raise his arm but Game Boy isn't moving.

Instead, Conor tussles TGB's head like a puppy dog and then starts skipping in circles around him, as if Fuse was playing ring-around-the-rosie.

DDK:

If we're seeing more of this Game Boy in action during the coming months... we may be in trouble.

Lance:

You can say that again, Keebs. It also allows Conor to be even more annoying than normal.

The scene fades as Conor and his Game Boy exit the ring.

Conor Fuse:

Great job my little buddy. Let's get some popsicles to celebrate!

DARKNESS LIES DEEP PART I

The Deacon limped down the tiled hallway, briefcase in hand. Since clutching the expensive case at the end of the ladder match, he'd not let it go. He couldn't. It had contained the last vestiges of peace for his wracked family.

Family, he thought. Could he even call what this was a family?

"I will," he mouthed, the glue holding his skin together pulling slightly. "Must have faith."

At the end of the hallway, the woman he'd chosen to be his wife kept vigil. When they'd met, she crossed him as a bit goofy, with a silly sense of humor and a laugh that exploded out of her like she'd lost all control of her body.

He missed that laugh.

He stood in the doorway and held his breath. Leah didn't look up, her eyes in a novel, but the flushing of her face let Deacon know that she knew he was there. He waited what seemed like minutes for her to acknowledge him; she didn't. He took another step into the room.

"It over," Deacon said.

Leah's face grew hotter but she didn't speak.

"Is he here?" Deacon asked, not peaking around the curtain to disturb him.

"If you were here," Leah said, "you'd know."

Deacon nodded. A pain shot down his neck. "I have t'e papers."

"The ones your insane friends stole?" She shook her head & then did a soft clap. "Good job."

He knew Leah was right - it had been his decision to join DEFIANCE, and though with the bills piling up, he didn't see much of a choice, there always was a choice. Maybe he'd lacked the faith his God would see him through? Maybe he'd used this, not as a way to pay bills, but to relive his glory days?

"I sorry," Deacon muttered then stepped back out of the room, briefcase still in hand. He wasn't sure what to do with the original documents, but somehow, after the war, it felt better in his hands. It was the best he could do to protect his family.

Entering the waiting lounge area, he went to his chair. It's padding had seemingly grown accustomed to his broad frame, comforting him as much as anything you'd find in this hospital. He flipped on the television and leaned back in the chair. "I Defy" by Machine Head played, causing Deacon to startle. DEFIANCE's theme playing was confusing, but what he found on the screen was totally bewildering.

Darren Keebler & Lance Warner had their position for... DEFtv?

Deacon blinked hard, questioning if he was dreaming. He looked to the case on his lap, felt it to make sure it was real. He looked back at the television.

DDK:

And we've gotten word that --

It cut to static for a brief moment. It was just a dream! DEFIANCE television is a subscription service - no hospital would waste money on such a thing. *How'd-*

In a tight shot, the television shows Victor Vacio, dressed in the now standard black suitjacket & black mask. Vacio

gestures to his chin.

Victor:

¿Cómo está tu boca, diácono?

The Deacon's eyes grow wide. On the screen, Victor rubs his mouth area.

Victor:

¡Oye, pero lo hiciste! Tu ... como dices, "ganado?" ... ah! You... won. ¿Se siente bien saber, por contrato, que nunca podré revelar tu ... secret? Ya te lo he revelado, friend. I have ...revealed you ... darkest secret! Estabas en el partido conmigo cuando lo hice ... cuando lo hiciste.

Victor's image is replaced by the Deacon, looking from the ladder to the mallet, and choosing the mallet, to blast Victor in the back of the head. The video cuts back to Victor.

Victor:

Tu grito de ... FAITH no es más que un truco, no más real que Henry Keyes parlotando sobre el Tiempo! Ask you self ... ¿cuál es mi truco?

Victor opens his arms out.

Victor:

Para demostrar que nada ni nada de esto realmente importa ... tienes fe ciega, tu código de conducta ... no significa nada. That is ... MY win. I never want you secret... ¡Nunca lo necesité!

VOICE from off camera:

Me, on the other hand...

The camera pulls back as Stalker steps into the scene, a scene that includes the Methodist Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh.

Stalker:

I very much wanted it.

Stalker glances to the right, giving a subtle gesture.

Stalker:

And I'm just getting started gathering all that I want.

The camera follows his gesture. Oblivious, Magdalena walks toward the entrance to the hospital. Stalker smiles, a broad, toothy grin before giving a nod to Victor Vacio & they both start walking toward Magdalena just as the camera feed cuts to static & then Darren & Lance.

The Deacon's heart was gone. He'd fought, bled, and... accomplished nothing. He'd messed so much up, and he wasn't about to let Vacio, and now Stalker, do anything to Magdalena.

My enemies have set a trap, sprung to mind.

The Deacon lunged out of his chair & dashed down the hallway, oblivious to the person sitting in a chair in the hallway, their face hidden by their open laptop. The Deacon passed, and the person pushed the screen down, clicking it into place.

Terry Anderson.

MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

Somewhere in the depths of the DEFarena...

A green screen is set up in front of a camera. Obviously, off camera, it's merely a set with a plain green screen, which is not very exciting but looking through the lens of the camera, the screen *transforms* into a desolate desert environment.

THUD! THUD! THUD!

The harsh sound of large boots grows louder and louder until a short but stout man enters into the camera's scope.

Ryan Knox:

Ry Knox scouting the area.

He speaks laboriously. His hulking frame is intimidating, even though he isn't that tall.

Ryan Knox:

Cyber John will be pleased with our findings.

Knox's overly bushy beard flaps as he speaks. Suddenly, an even shorter and much smaller man comes into frame.

Ryan Knox:

Septimus Tyne! I have scouted the area. There might be something worthwhile here, after all.

Septimus is muscular and wide eyed. He pats Knox on the back for a job well done.

Septimus Tyne:

Well done, Ry Knox. Well done. You don't have to be so formal about things, though. I wasn't sure this land would be worthwhile because of the inhabitants. Take that Lind-Say Troy for example. Very, very poor. But we can look past that. I trust your judgement.

Tyne turns and waves his hand, inviting three more characters into frame. Two more men and one woman walk into view. The woman is beastly, if not amazonian. Her broad shoulders and terrifying height would make anyone's knees weak.

Septimus Tyne:

Megan Krong, we need you to go up ahead and look for anything suspicious.

Tyne turns to a rather ordinary looking man.

Septimus Tyne:

Al Sparks, you need to stay with us here. Always stay by our sides.

Lastly, Tyne turns to the shadiest character of them all.

Septimus Tyne:

Starscream... just don't do anything stupid.

Starscream:

Gahhhhh, you got it, boss!

Starscream bashfully kicks some make believe rubble. Megan Krong takes issue with the direction she's been given by Tyne.

Megan Krong:

Excuse me but no. Tyne, you not boss. I refuse. You not leader of us. I strongest. I boss.

A silence overcomes the clan of characters. Tyne looks off screen, smiles and chuckles under his breath before getting RIGHT into Krong's face.

Septimus Tyne:

YOU LISTEN TO ME AND YOU LISTEN TO ME GOOD, KRONG!

A vein from Tyne's neck throbs like he's having an epileptic seizure.

Septimus Tyne:

I AM THE UNBRIDLED LEADER OF THIS UNIT! IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, GO BACK TO CYBER JOHN'S BASEMENT WHERE YOU CAME FROM!

The fit of fury finally subsides. Tyne collects himself after berating a woman nearly double his height.

Septimus Tyne:

Besides, we have an advantage on our side. Everyone knows what to do if they ever get in trouble right?

They all nod hesitantly.

Septimus Tyne:

Show me.

One by one, the four of them fold their arms over their faces and kneel down in awkward positions. The fully bodysuits they're wearing makes it look like they've morphed into different indistinguishable objects they are actually not.

Septimus Tyne:

Excellent. Now we can blend in anywhere.

They all "transform" back to their humanoid figures.

Septimus Tyne:

DEFcepticons! ROLL OUT!

Tyne's voice is heard off-camera.

Septimus Tyne:

BRAZEN here we come!

The scene fades.

DARKNESS LIES DEEP PART II

The Deacon leapt down the stairs, taking several with each step, racing toward the entrance, toward Magdalena. So much had happened, so many things. He'd tried to build a family, tried to give a young friend an opportunity, and all it'd done had led to failure upon failure. The case still in his hands swung wildly as he took each step, openly mocking him as it clanged against the metal handrail like a victorious ringing of the bell. Reaching the bottom, he pulled the door open and turned the corner.

Startled, Magdalena turned to the Deacon who scanned the room, the entrance, everywhere.

"What's wrong?" Magdalena asked.

They weren't there. But he'd just seen them walking this way, didn't he?

"Deacon," Magdalena said. "What's wrong?"

And he had no answer. What had he seen? Heard?

"I not know," Deacon said between breaths. "I..." He had no more. Had he seen anything, truly? Had the stress gotten to be too much?

And I'm just starting to gather what I want, Stalker had said, or Deacon had thought he had said. Deacon looked down and something told him--

Go!

RYAN BATTS vs. ALECZANDER THE GREAT

DDK:

Welcome back to UNCUT and up next, Aleczander The Great takes on “Bantam” Ryan Batts! We’ve seen Batts in on UNCUT the last few weeks coming out with a new more aggressive streak that’s allowed him to take on people like Gunther Adler and Kazuo Akamatsu. Meanwhile, Things have not gone well for Team HOSS and we saw how did not work out for Mushi at our last PPV as well. Team HOSS messed with Mushi’s friend, Troy Matthews and at the PPV, Angel paid a hefty price for it when Mushi ran through him like a knife through butter!

Lance:

We’ve heard Angel Trinidad has just gone radio silent entirely after he lost, however, Aleczander The Great is in action tonight and is making an open challenge. He’s promising a new night for Team HOSS starting with a win over Ryan Batts who has been on a bit of a hot streak the last few weeks.

DDK:

Clearly, he thinks that something needs to change for Team HOSS. They came out hot when they fought The Lucky Sevens, but since that loss they haven’t been the same. We’ve got Aleczander The Great in the ring right now, ready to speak.

“Great” by Instruction is playing over the PA as inside the ring, Aleczander The Great has a microphone.

Aleczander The Great:

All right, wankers, shut the hell up for a minute!

BOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

Aleczander The Great looks out to the crowd and then shakes his head in disgust.

Aleczander The Great:

I got left off the Ascension card, but I’m right here, I’m right here, ready for a fight! So bring out this “Batman” wanker who can’t get a spot on the show, either, cause there wasn’t a spot for a tiger or a party where he could be a little wanker wallflower. It’s time to show what Team HOSS can REALLY do!

He throws the microphone aside and waits for somebody to come out and answer him. He leans back against the ropes to do a few stretches until music hits...

♪ “The Last Garrison” by Enter Shikari ♪

The lights in the arena flash rapidly in shades of gold and white and from the back, out comes “Bantam” Ryan Batts, waving a rally towel and dressed in black pants-length tights with purple trim, fringe on the boots, and a purple bandana! Aleczander The Great looks displeased as the fiery underdog heads to the ring.

DDK:

Wow! He’s getting Ryan Batts. He’s been earning the nickname “The King of UNCUT” lately due that amazing match he had with Gage Blackwood a few shows ago. He came CLOSE to winning the SoHer and since then, he has been looking to improve his game.

Lance:

Since then, he’s notched victories over Gunther Adler and Kazuo Akamatsu. If Aleczander takes him lightly, he may be next. I’ve been hearing Batts is looking for a break and I think he’s closing in on it!

With a grin on his face, he waves the towel for the crowd and then heads towards the ring. The Good Wholesome Wrestle Lad throws the towel into the crowd and gets caught by a young fan a few rows deep. Batts races up the steps and then does a roll through the ropes before hopping to his feet. Aleczander still looks annoyed by his mere presence.

Aleczauder The Great:

Bring it you silly little wanker!

Batts looks up at The Mancunian Muscle with a smile...

Then STOMPS on his foot!

Referee Rex Knox calls for the bell!

DING DING!

Batts goes right at the much taller Aleczauder, throwing forearms at him. He goes at the foot again with another big stomp, then runs off the ropes to come back with a dropkick aimed at his left leg!

DDK:

Look at Batts go! We have seen him turn up his intensity in a big way recently!

Lance:

That he has! And there he goes off the ropes like a rocket! Oooh! Another dropkick to that knee!

Batts gets back up and then heads to the second rope while Aleczauder hobbles around. He takes flight with a missile dropkick off the middle rope, again to the leg! Aleczauder finally crumbles! The crowd cheers on Batts as he grabs for the knee and then hooks it...

No!

Aleczauder kicks him away with a powerful shot from his right leg! Batts rolls backwards, but then makes it to his feet as an angry Mancunian Muscle heads to his feet. Like a mad bull, Aleczauder charges, but Ryan Batts pulls the ropes down and sends him stumbling over the ropes and out to the floor below!

DDK:

Nicely done there by Batts! What's he got now?

Lance:

He's heading off one side of the ropes... OH WOW! THE FLIPSIDE! THE FLIPSIDE BY BATTS!

The crowd pops as the somersault tope through the ropes connects and takes down the big man! Batts is back on his feet, slapping the barricade with a whole lot of energy and feeding off the people.

DDK:

Batts has been very impressive since those big matches he's had with people like Lindsay Troy, Jay Harvey and more recently, Gage Blackwood! Some of that big match experience has really helped Batts improve his game.

Lance:

That is definitely true, but now Batts has a chance to continue his own winning streak.

Aleczauder limps up and then tries to get back into the ring while Batts heads in first. When Aleczauder heads through the ropes, Batts takes the leg again. He grabs it... dragon screw in the ropes! The Big Brit is left clutching his left leg now and Batts has the crowd cheering him on!

DDK:

Wow! That move right out of the playbook of Oscar Burns! That studying under the former FIST really paying off!

Batts tries going for the leg again, but now Aleczauder CLOBBERS him with a huge blow to the chest! Batts barely is able to be on his feet, but Aleczauder nails a second one and finally knocks Batts on his back. The crowd jeers as

Aleczonder hobbles to his feet and then picks him up. He throws Batts into the ropes and ties him up before... yep, flexing...

DDK:

And here come the blows! Clangin' and Bangin' by Aleczonder! Those clubbing forearms in the ropes working in his favor now!

Batts continues to get beat until Rex Knox yells at the large Brit to stop. He does and then throws The Good Wholesome Wrestle Lad back inside. He picks him up again and then DRIVES him down with a huge stalling belly to back suplex! Batts bounces off the mat harshly and then Aleczonder goes for a cover.

ONE!

TWO!

NO!

DDK:

Batts with a shoulder up! But now Aleczonder finally takes over.

Aleczonder slowly sits up and checks his knee to make sure it still works before he grabs Batts and drops him mid-ring slam. He decides he's gonna do it again, then slams him with another big move! Then picks him up a third time and down he goes before leaping and hitting a huge elbow drop! He goes for another cover.

ONE!

TWO!

NO!

Batts kicks out again, but has a few welts on his chest from the beating taken by Aleczonder.

DDK:

Look at those marks! Aleczonder, usually a cocky one, is behind right now and Batts needs to find a way to take the offensive back!

Batts stis up when Aleczonder grabs him by the body and then launches him to the ropes. He presses him up...

DDK:

No! Aleczonder's knee gave out! He was looking for the BPI, a gorilla press powerslam, but Batts slips out!

Batts lands on his feet behind Aleczonder then goes at the leg with a big chop block! The blow brings Aleczonder to a knee and then the running flying knee strike by Batts off the ropes brings him down to the mat!

DDK:

Wow, new move by Batts! Almost a little bit, but not quite Gage Blackwood's Gaelic Storm! Taking something away from that big match he had with him, maybe?

Lance:

Looks like it!

The crowd cheers on Batts as he heads to his feet again while Aleczonder is seeing stars. The big man tries to hobble up but when he charges, he hits nothing but the buckle... but Batts grabs him from the waist... into a HUGE German suplex! The crowd EXPLODES!

Lance:

Incredible technique and leverage there by Ryan Batts! He just dumped Aleczander right on his back with that release German suplex! Now where's he going?

The crowd can't believe it as Batts kips up after the suplex and gets ready to do whatever he does next. He runs off the ropes and then comes back with a wheelbarrow roll up... right into a sick-looking leg lock on the bad leg! Batts has the heel over his arm while keeping his legs scissored around Aleczander's bad knee!

DDK:

What a move by Batts! He has the Goliath Birdeater submission and now he has this one called Take a Knee! That's exactly what he's doing with that shawn capture-style hold!

The hold is locked in tightly! Aleczander howls in pain and tries to get free, but he's been knocked silly by all the shots that he's taken recently... he holds a hand up...

TAP TAP TAP!

His hand slaps the mat and Batts rolls away before getting back to his feet, hand raised by Rex Knox!

Darren Quimbey:

Here is your winner of the match via submission... **RYAN BATTS!**

Batts raises a hand to the crowd and gets cheered on by the fans as he celebrates another big victory over a larger competitor via submission!

DDK:

That Take a Knee and Goliath Birdeater submissions for Batts have been game-changers for him! One to work the the head and shoulders and another to work the legs!

Lance:

That's true! And I have a feeling sooner rather than later, Batts' fortunes are really going to turn around for him soon in a big way!

Batts pumps a fist and celebrates on the middle buckle while Aleczander limps out of the ring, incredibly pissed with himself for having to tap out. Meanwhile, The Good Wholesome Wrestle Lad gets to enjoy his victory with the people as the scene goes elsewhere.

PERSONAL APOCALYPSE

Stalker and Victor Vacio met Terry Anderson in the hallway just as the PI was putting his computer into its bag & throwing it over his shoulder. A broad female nurse walked up to them, glancing at each but focusing on the masked Vacio.

Nurse:

Excuse me, but can I help you?

Stalker puts a hand up.

Stalker:

It's okay - I'm an uber driver.

He steps around her and moves toward the end of the hallway, the other two flanking him. Entering the room first, Stalker notices the pretty, young redhead, in her late-30's. He'd seen her before, plenty of times actually, but this was the first time in person. He entered the room. Concerned, she looks up, then notices Vacio and starts to scream.

Stalker:

Hello Leah, or do you prefer Mrs. Deacon? I... I am so glad to finally meet you. You don't know how long I've wanted to have this meeting with you.

Stalker pulls back the curtain causing a squeak.

Stalker:

And the greatest secret of all - the fruit of that old Mute Freak's loins-- Jack.

Asleep in a bed too large for his frail frame, the bald and pale Jack remains curled on his side, oblivious to those who've entered his room that he's spent so much of his young life. The beep beep of machines keeps time like some metronome accompanying Jack's tepid, yet valiant, breathing.

Leah:

Leave.

Leah's words are quiet but firm, like a low growl from a frightened cat.

The Stalker smiles at the boy. Before returning his gaze back to Leah.

Stalker:

Absolutely. Please be sure to give a good rating. Five stars. Also - my app 'StalkMe' is available free to download on most mobile platforms. You get a discount if you sign up, just use the coupon code 'SECRETS' for the best value.

Fading into the shadows Stalker walks away with a smirk painted across his face, one more secret revealed to what crippling effects only time will tell.

THIS.

IS.

DEFIANCE.