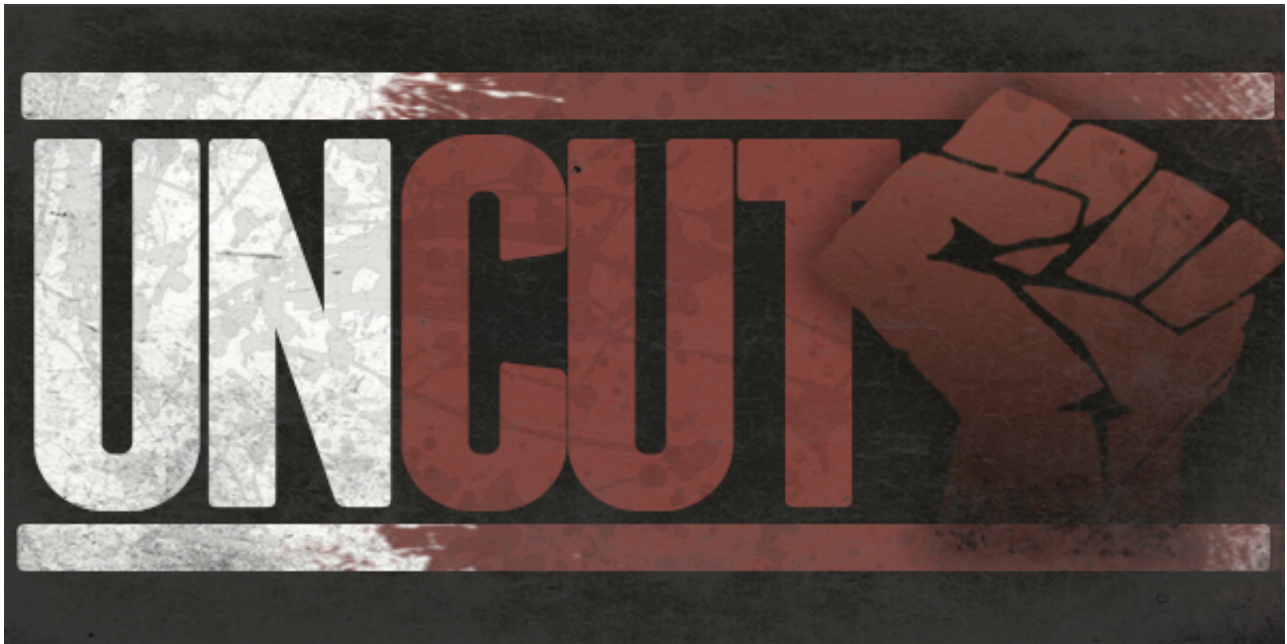


SHOW OPEN

A HANDHELD COMPANION?

The scene opens to footage from an iPhone. There's a bunch of shuffling before the lens spins into a very sarcastic smile from none other than The Snowflake Superstar, Malak Garland. Garland holds a finger to his mouth, keeping things hush-hush as he creeps across what looks to be a WrestlePlex hallway. There's a time stamp at the bottom of the screen, reading 08/18/21.

Cyrus Bates is behind Malak as the two of them make stealth moves down the hall. Bates has not become Search Party Cyrus yet but you can tell he has some solid, basic creeping skills to build upon. Eventually, the two arrive at their destination. Malak looks up, the sign on the door reads "Conor Fuse" and has various video game images on the plaque. A devilish look appears on Malak's face as he pushes the door back slowly. There, sits not The Ultimate Gamer but instead his mini boss, The Game Boy. Garland turns to Bates and gives "the nod" before both of them slip inside undetected. However, once inside the locker room, Malak is no longer playing Metal Gear Solid.

Malak Garland:

I am announcing my entrance into this room through space and time.

The Game Boy turns, seeing the iPhone in his face as Malak Garland stands in front of the luchador masked big man.

Malak Garland:

Is this seat taken? Of course it isn't. It's okay, I am capable of helping myself.

The Keyboard King doesn't allow The game Boy to reply (not that The Halo From Hell would, anyway).

Malak Garland:

Great. This chair cuddles my posture perfectly.

Garland sits beside The Game Boy, albeit cautiously. At first, Malak doesn't say anything. He simply scuffs his feet against the floor a few times before looking over at Cyrus Bates and giving a glance as if saying "everything is going swimmingly". Moments pass... The Game Boy, of course, does nothing. Finally, Garland wonders out loud.

Malak Garland:

Oh jeez, I wonder what cOnOr is doing right now, don't you?

Garland pauses for self reflection on the thought. Then a lightbulb goes off in his head.

Malak Garland:

Wait a second, I don't have to *wonder*. He's out there right now, taking on ADV in a match where Ned Reform just beat cOnOr up. Damn. It's almost as if... there's no place for a big bad "protector" beside him because he's doing this gOOdie twOshOes cOnOr Fuse thing.

Malak pauses, again, for self reflection.

Malak Garland:

Hmmmmmm, all I know is if I had someone of a muscular ilk beside me, / would never cast them to "mini" boss status. They would get their own world for sure. I most certainly wouldn't tell them to stay in the back. I would ask them to... *[clears throat]* ahem, join me.

Garland looks up to Bates with a shit eating smile.

Malak Garland:

Wouldn't I, Cyrus?

Bates nods profusely. Game Boy continues to sit there without moving, staring ahead at the other side of the locker

room.

Malak Garland:

After all, I am the most dashing and caring person DEFIANCE has ever seen. If I had a big boy, a big *angry* boy beside me, I would allow them to help.

Garland looks up to Bates once again, yet this time it's in disgust.

Malak Garland:

Sometimes my current help is a poor waste of flesh. It gives me extreme anxiety.

Bates' expression doesn't change. He's likely used to hearing this by now.

The Keyboard Warrior and Snowflake Extreme extends his right arm, hovering it over The Game Boy's left shoulder. Garland is thinking about it... thinking... thinking... then he just goes for it. Malak starts grasping The Game Boy's muscular bicep, veins and all.

Malak Garland:

Have you been working out? Are you also on the TB12 method!? Pliability matches the lifestyle lens I live within. That Tom Brady, not to go on a huge rant or anything, but he's by far my favorite athlete. There's no way a player like that would retire anytime soon.

Although TGB doesn't flinch, Garland quits while he's ahead. Just in case.

Malak Garland:

Yep. All I really know is, in a perfect world, if a giant sized man decided to join The Comments Section...

Garland's voice trails as he rises from the bench, stands and nods to Cyrus. They both head to the exit as the camera phone in Malak's hand lowers, still recording The Game Boy who continues to do nothing.

Malak Garland:

...They would be used to the best of their abilities.

The duo leave the locker room, with Malak's final words.

Malak Garland:

Anyway, think about it. Enjoy sitting in the back while cOnOr plays the herO. So selfish of him.

Fade.

CRESCENT CITY KID vs. BUTCHER VICTORIOUS

DDK:

Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to UNCUT! I'm Darren Keebler and with me as always is Lance Warner! We've got a lot of action tonight! But up first, something that might get the blood pumping. The young high-flyer of the Gulf Coast Connection, Crescent City Kid, takes on the loudmouth Butcher Victorious!

Lance:

It was around Christmas time Butcher took a loss to "Wingman" Titus Campbell. Tonight, he demanded payback... but interestingly, skirted the subject when fighting the much larger Campbell and instead, wanted Crescent City Kid.

DDK:

You can't sleep on the Kid for too long. He may surprise you! Let's get to the next match... right now!

To Quimbey in the ring!

Darren Quimbey:

The following singles match is set for one fall! Introducing first, being accompanied by "Wingman" Titus Campbell and Theodore Cain, from right here in NOLA...

Pause for the hometown cheer.

Darren Quimbey:

Weighing in at 185 pounds... **THE CRESCENT CITY KID!**

♪ "The Saints" by Andy Mineo ♪

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

♪ "Junior Kickstart" by The Go! Team ♪

The fans right away do not like the song that sounds like a rock band and a marching band in a trash compactor, but it plays Butcher Victorious heads out from the back... now wearing a purple sparkling sequined coat and a matching... yep, a top hat like a complete asshole. And of course, the microphone. Darren Quimbey doesn't get to do the intros when... you guessed it...

Butcher Victorious:

BUTCH VIC HAS THE STICK!

Boos from the Faithful!

Butcher Victorious:

You three boners ruined my Christmas! So now I'm gonna ruin your Valentine's Day, your President's Day AND take a big ol' dump all over your Mardi Gras and I'm starting with YOU, Kid! It's gonna be a crappy February for the three of you!

Butcher gets jeers.

Butcher Victorious:

Titus cheated to beat me at the DEFys, but tonight I'M walking out like my last legal name! Victorious!

The Kid doesn't speak, but Theodore Cain speaks for him, now with a mic of his own.

Theodore Cain:

You... you changed your last name to Victorious?

Butcher Victorious:

Oh, you KNOW it, boner! Live the life!

Cain smirks.

Theodore Cain:

What? Dressed like a cracked-out Willy Wonka in that top hat and coat? Some life you got there!

Laughter erupts from the fans, but Butcher isn't having it.

Butcher Victorious:

SHUT UP! SHUT UP! THAT'S IT! THERE'S NO TIME LIKE GO TIME! LET'S GO! THEY ABOUT TO THROW ME IN JAIL FOR ASSAULTING A MINOR!

Butcher rolls into the ring and stares down the Gulf Coast Connection as Titus and Theodore each pat CCK on the back. As Butcher takes off his purple top hat and coat, they leave the ring to support CCK from the outside as the bell rings.

DING DING

At the bell, Butcher charges right for The Kid, but the masked member of the Gulf Coast Connection thinks on his feet and moves. Butcher stumbles into the corner and gets rolled up!

ONE... TWO...

Butcher kicks out, but right when he stands up, he gets cracked with a big dropkick by CCK! The crowd cheers on their hometown boy as Butcher tries to stumble up to his feet!

DDK:

And we're underway with our first match of the night! Butcher already off his game and Crescent City Kid looking good!

The 185-pound kid rushes at Butcher in the corner, but Victorious tries a back body drop. CCK adjusts himself in mid-move and lands on the ring apron before Butcher turns around to eat an elbow to the face. The blow stuns him when CCK quickly hops to the top rope and then flies off into a big springboard crossbody! Both Cain and Campbell cheer him on as CCK goes for the cover!

ONE... TWO...

Butcher kicks out!

Lance:

Crescent City Kid is keeping the pace up! Butcher can do high-flying as well when he's not goofing off!

DDK:

And that's not often!

The masked kid gets up and waits for Butcher to stand before launching into another attack. He leaps at Butcher in a standing monkey flip before turning it around into a flying headscissors, sending him spilling across the ring! Victorious rolls through and is left in a tizzy while CCK stands up and poses for the crowd!

DDK:

Butcher now stuck against the ropes! What does CCK have in mind now?

He looks over to where Butcher is leaned into the ropes, then bounces off to gain speed. He runs and tries for the 504 tiger feint kick... But Butcher ducks!

Lance:

No! 504 misses! Butcher moves!

When CCK tries to adjust himself after the missed move, Butcher slides to the ring apron. When CCK charges but Butcher boots him in the stomach through the ropes. He reenters the ring and then knocks CCK down with a big running clothesline! The Kid goes down... then Butcher bounces off the ropes, does a moonwalk like an asshole and then drives a jumping elbow drop into the gut of The Kid!

DDK:

And Butcher finally gets the advantage after the missed 504! And Butcher with that... unique... offense, I guess. Now with the kicks!

As CCK is down on the mat, Butcher lays in some stompage to the chest of The Kid and continues to work him over. He gets tired of stomping, so he kneels near him and punches away on the head of The Kid! The official yells at him to break or he will disqualify Butcher, but he doesn't stop right away. He backs off... then goes back to laying right into him!

DDK:

Butcher showing some aggression here tonight! This look suits him better than that suit, that's for sure.

Lance:

But now he's got Crescent City Kid where he wants him! He drags him over to the ropes!

Victorious pushes him to the second rope and then starts to choke The Kid against the ropes with a knee to the back! He holds on for the count of four and keeps him in place. He lets go of Crescent City Kid as he's left gasping for air near the ropes. Butcher then runs off the ropes and comes back to deliver a running double knee strike to the back of CCK, sending him back to the mat!

DDK:

Landslide Victory! That might do it!

Butcher doesn't go for a cover right away, though. He taunts both Campbell and Cain on the outside cheering on their buddy then he leaps and hits a springboard discus leg drop to The Kid! After the drop, he goes for a cover!

ONE... TWO... NO!

DDK:

Nice set of moves by Butcher, but a knockout by CCK!

Lance:

Butcher getting a little more serious now. He's trying to win this one tonight!

Both the Wingman and the Smash Surfer cheer on their stablemate from outside the ring while inside, Butcher sits up The Kid before delivering a dropkick to the back of the spine! CCK arches his back in pain while Butch Vic goes for another cover!

ONE... TWO... NO!

The Kid kicks out again and Butcher is in shock. Victorious looks to Rex Knox but he holds up only two fingers.

DDK:

He's grounding The Kid! Butcher working that back!

Lance:

And I think he's trying to end it!

Butcher gets something ready when he measures up CCK. He goes for a spin kick... but CCK ducks and sneaks behind Butcher to deliver a jumping reverse bulldog! He snaps Butcher down to the mat and now both men are left down!

DDK:

Great counter by CCK! He takes down Butcher with that modified neckbreaker and now he has a shot at a comeback.

Titus Campbell:

Go, Kid! Kick his purple ass!

He and Cain continue cheering him on as The Crescent City Kid gets fired up off the cheering of the Faithful. He waits as Butcher runs off the ropes and then delivers a flying forearm to knock him down. He gets back up and then kicks him in the gut. He tries to throw Butcher, but he reverses. CCK jumps up though and surprises Butcher with a big flying reverse crossbody out of the corner! CCK rolls through and gets back to his feet before he leaps to the second rope nearby and connects with a lionsault!

DDK:

CCK goes! Springboard moonsault! Cover!

ONE... TWO... KICKOUT!

Butcher kicks out while CCK shakes his head, thinking he had the match.

Lance:

Kickout by Butcher! I thought that was it!

He goes to pick up Butcher again by the hair, but Butch Vic surprises him with a jawbreaker. He tries to send CCK into the ropes, but a counter into a drop toe hold sends him into the ropes! With him being placed where he needs to be, CCK swings and hits the 504 the second time! He gets rocked and then he leaps through the ropes with a springboard off the second rope into a tornado DDT!

DDK:

CCT by CCK! The 504 and the CCT put Butcher down! Now can he get this move?

The crowd cheers as Crescent City Kid heads up top and then poses... he leaps...

Lance:

Hurricane Press! He nails the top rope splash! That's it!

CCK hits the stiff-looking splash and then hooks a leg!

ONE... TWO... THREE!

He cheers and then slaps the mat as he throws his arms in the air!

DING DING DING

Darren Quimbey:

Here is your winner... **THE CRESCENT CITY KID!**

DDK:

Nice singles win by The Crescent City Kid to kick off UNCUT!

Lance:

He threw everything at Butcher! The 504, the CCT and then the Hurricane Press to take the win here tonight! They're gonna party like Mardi Gras!

CCK leaves the ring, but then gets hoisted onto the shoulders of Titus Campbell! He raises him on his shoulders and starts carrying him to the back with Theodore Cain celebrating the crowd! Butcher is left looking up at the lights as the show moves on.

TITANS ALWAYS STAND TALL

DDK:

We've already had quite a show on UNCUT! We're about to jump right into DEFCON season and it's been big. And coming up next, I hear we have Los Tres Titanes to talk about their DEFIANCE Road

Lance:

That's right! Titaness was victorious over the now-former BFTA member Jack Mace and Minute and Uriel Cortez competed in that AMAZING three way ladder match that main evented DEFROAD for the Unified Tag Titles! The former two-time champs were unable to make it a third time, but their performance will not be forgotten!

DDK:

But I think all that, they could call it a great two nights! Uriel Cortez proposed to Titaness after her victory over Mace and she accepted! A really heartfelt moment! Let's see what they have to say!

The crowd waits...

"I'M TROUBLE AND YOU WANTING IT!"

♪ "Giants" by Little V. ♪

One by one, the three members of Los Tres Titanes flank the stage.

The dynamic luchador, "The Most Interesting High Flyer in the World" Minute, holding out the new Los Tres Titanes towel.

The powerful young lass, Titaness, with her new "One Tall Glass of Kick-Ass!" shirt... and big rock of an engagement ring.

And center, "The Titan of Industry" Uriel Cortez, fist raised in the air!

He brings it down with a chop motion, causing a big explosion of silver pyro from either side of the stage! The fan favorite trio head down to the ring before they take their time getting inside. Minute throws the new custom towel into the audience for a lucky fan to have. Uriel pulls himself up then steps over the ropes into the ring. Minute leaps up, bounces off one rope, leaps to the adjacent and then backflips into the ring! Titaness stands up and then steps through and then the three pose in the ring with all arms raised before the music fades. Uriel has a microphone and circles the ring as the crowd cheers.

He smiles at Titaness.

Uriel Cortez:

So a few weeks ago... we did a thing...

A loud chorus of cheers and applause fills the DEF-Plex. Titaness is trying not to break from her usual stoic self, and can barely do so. Minute claps and then pulls a microphone out himself.

Uriel Cortez:

Yeah. Wedding date tee-bee-dee, but as soon as we figure that out, you'll all find out together.

Minute:

Princesa... Uriel... congrats! DEFIANCE... can we get a chant of congrats for la feliz pareja? Congrats to the happy couple!

On cue, the Faithful oblige Minute's request.

"CONGRATS! CONGRATS! CONGRATS! CONGRATS! CONGRATS! CONGRATS!"

Titaness, too, has a microphone and is still trying to look tough but for this one night, it's hard to do.

Titanness:

Minute, you're a dick... you're killing my aura here...

Cortez points at Minute as he addresses the crowd.

Uriel Cortez:

Don't let his Mr. Peanut-sized body fool you. He'll kill your aura and he kills my buzz every time he whines about how much space I take in the car. I'm a gian and he's a giant asshole.

Minute shouts back.

Minute:

PUTAS!

Hooting and laughter erupt from the crowd. Titaness rolls her eyes as Uriel continues.

Uriel Cortez:

It's... it's been a crazy ass couple of years, but whether you knew us as the Sky High Titans or you know us as Los Tres Titanes, one thing that has never changed is our ability to make history. Minute and I defeated the Fuse Bros as a team in our very first match together. Our third official match together, we won the Unified Tag Team Titles from a seemingly unstoppable Stevens Dynasty. We bonded, we were the first team to hold the Unified Tag Titles twice since they were created. Then we added a Titaness. Minute had a kick-ass run as the Favoured Saints Champion! Became DEF Radio's Winner of Best Promotion Consideration... word up, Scotty Flash...

Mixed reaction for the shock joke extraordinaire!

Uriel Cortez:

And just last week... along with the Saturday Night Specials and The Pop Culture Phenoms, we were in our first-ever pay-per-view main event!

The crowd cheers some more for their list of accomplishments.

Uriel Cortez:

There is no shame in losing to Brock Newbludd and Pat Cassidy. They busted their asses off and any one of the teams in that match could have won... though I am now going to visit Ballyhoo Brew more often and prank Cassidy by throwing his shoes up on the power line to see if he'll get them. Brock told me where you keep your extra shoes, so Pat, look out for that.

He rubs a hand on his chin, then continues as the crowd cheers.

Uriel Cortez:

I tell bad jokes, but there was a point to us coming out here beyond talking about the main event. Win, lose, or draw... we have made a lot of history. And in this sport, tag teams and stables that stay together forever... that's a rarity. It's almost unheard of. But we're here to say this...

He looks to the locker room.

Uriel Cortez:

We're not just another tag team. We aren't just another stable. This here? Familia. Family. I don't give a shit who hears me say this out loud... and quite frankly, I dare someone to try... friendship...

He looks at Minute.

Uriel Cortez:

And love...

Titaness smiles and Minute can't help but be a cheeky asshole, quickly blinking and looking up at Uriel lovingly.

Uriel Cortez:

You're an ass, Minute... but those two things I mentioned built who we are today. We have each other's backs. We lift each other up. And there is NO ONE that is going to break this. NEVER!

Minute:

Irrompible!

Titaness nods as Uriel Cortez raises a fist.

Uriel Cortez:

We will earn our way back up to the top one day and then me and Minute will make history as the only three-time Unified Tag Team Champions! We are Los Tres Titanes... and Titans ALWAYS stand tall!

♪ "Giants" by Little V. ♪

The crowd cheers as Uriel, Titaness and Minute salute the crowd and then leave the ring to head to the back.

DDK:

They have certainly done a lot in DEFIANCE and there's still much more to be done where these three are concerned.

Lance:

Speaking from the heart right there. Much appreciated. And congrats again to the newly engaged Titaness and Uriel Cortez!

DAVEY'S BIG PROMOTION

Location: Ballyhoo Brew's Back Alley

Time: 4:00pm

"Black Out" Pat Cassidy flashes his buddy an evil grin as he palms the basketball with one hand and raises it up to point at his friend.

Pat Cassidy:

Just like Bird at the gahden, baby!

Leaning against the pole of Ballyhoo's freshly installed back alley basketball hoop, Brock Newbludd rolls his eyes as raises a bottle of beer up to his lips and takes a sip. Lowering the beer, Newbludd gives his buddy a sarcastic thumbs up.

Brock Newbludd:

Bro, that's like a half-court shot...

Brock opens his mouth to speak again but suddenly shuts it when Cassidy pulls the ball in and fires it towards the hoop with an impressive jump shot. Newbludd's eyes grow wider as the ball soars closer and closer. Then his jaw drops.

SWISH!

Brock grabs the rebound and shakes his head in disbelief as he dribbles his way towards Cassidy. Standing frozen with his shooting arm still raised, Cassidy shifts his gaze from the distant hoop to his incoming partner.

Pat Cassidy:

Swish of Jameson, buddy. Right here.

Brock Newbludd:

Shit, bro. This ain't nothin'. I would have went full-court...the only reason this might be hard for me is because it's *too* close, ya know?

Cassidy raises an eyebrow as he procures a beer of his own from a nearby cooler.

Pat Cassidy:

Oh yeah. That sounds totally legit. Uh huh.

Brock smirks at Cassidy and turns his attention back to the distant hoop. Taking a deep breath, Newbludd dribbles twice and zeroes in on his target. Brock's smirk slowly turns to an uneasy smile and he suddenly turns to Cassidy, tucking the ball under an arm.

Brock Newbludd:

Oh hey! Dude, before I sink this shot and crush your dreams, I need to run something by you. I was going to ask after but then I realized that you're probably going to be pretty depressed from being a loser.

Brock gives Cassidy a shit-eating grin and Pat responds by throwing a beer can at him. Newbludd ducks the incoming projectile and glares at his friend in mock offense.

Pat Cassidy:

Quit stalling!

Brock Newbludd:

I'm not! Well, maybe a little...but I do have an idea! Just listen for a second!

Cassidy stands up and turns around to grab another beverage from the cooler. Spinning back around, he plops back down on it and cracks it open.

Pat Cassidy:

Shoot. Your idea and then the ball.

Brock Newbludd:

My man. Alright, it's pretty simple. I don't know about you, but I'm getting sick of having to deal with all of our opponent's third wheels during matches. We need someone at ringside keepin' an eye on the Tom Morrow's and the Cary Stevens' of the world. Someone we can trust to watch our backs on the outside of the ring so we can keep focused on the task at hand on the inside of it. And that's delivering world-class beatdowns, dude. Like nobody else can.

Pat Cassidy:

That's why I like you, Newbludd. That's a brilliant idea. That's some strategic thinking my friend.

Brock Newbludd:

So, let me lay it out. We need a manager, but not just any old manager off the street. No, dude, we need someone who we can trust. And I can't think of anyone we can trust more than Davey.

Pat Cassidy:

That...that actually might work.

Brock Newbludd:

I think it will, man. Davey's been talking about getting back in the ring and this might just be the opportunity to kick his ass in gear. Speaking of kicking ass...BIG SHOT BROCK!!

Newbludd performs a crossover and shoots the ball. Both men watch in anticipation as it soars towards the rim.

CLANG!

Pat Cassidy:

More like Big Brick Brock! Fork over the dee-naro, pour favor.

The ball rolls back to the defeated Brock and he snatches it up off the ground. He looks at the grinning Cassidy and shrugs his shoulders.

Brock Newbludd:

I mean, you could take the twenty bucks now. OR...we go again, double or nothing?

Cassidy thinks about it for a second and nods his head in agreement.

Pat Cassidy:

You're on, amigo. Are you sure you want more of this jump shot?

Pat dusts some non-existent dust off his shoulder and raises his beer to Brock.

Pat Cassidy:

Loser starts! Maybe you should move closer to give yourself a better chance!

Brock Newbludd:

Whatever it takes, bro!

Gripping the ball with one hand, Newbludd grins at Cassidy and breaks out in a sprint towards the hoop. Running at full sprint, Brock launches himself towards the rim and starts to rotate...

Pat Cassidy:

Hey! No dunk...

Before Cassidy can finish getting his protest out, Brock slams the ball through the hoop with a 360 jam! Gripping the rim with both hands, Newbludd hangs from it and smiles.

Pat Cassidy:

...king...well shit...

Pat rises up off the cooler and shakes his head at the still hanging Brock. Ballyhoo's back door suddenly opens up and Davey LaRue pops his head out. His eyes instantly zero in on Newbludd.

Davey LaRue:

Brock! I told ya'll no hangin' from the rim! Ol' Davey didn't spend all dat time putin' dat ting up just to have ya tear it down! So GIT DOWN!

Brock drops from the rim and gives LaRue an apologetic smile as Cassidy walks over to stand next to him. Satisfied, Davey nods his head and turns to go back inside.

Brock Newbludd:

Davey! Wait! We need to talk to you. It's important, brother.

LaRue lets the door shut behind him, deadening the sound of revelry from inside the bar, and puts his hands on his hips as he gives SNS his full attention.

Davey LaRue:

Go on den. Spit it out for Davey.

Cassidy walks over to Davey, placing a hand on his shoulder.

Pat Cassidy:

Big guy, over this part year you have been more than a friend. More than a partner. You've been... well, the man who pours me my drinks. That means we have a sacred bond that can never be broken. And Brock and I, we've been talking... and since you've given the ol' wrestling career a jump start lately and bailed us out of some serious shit... well...

Cassidy looks over to Brock. They both nod at each other.

Pat Cassidy:

...David H. LaRue... will you... be our manager?

The cajun narrows his eyes and puts a hand up to his chin as he processes Cassidy's proposition. Hoping to help his friend come to a decision, and maybe sweeten the deal a little too, Newbludd hands Davey an ice cold beer.

Brock Newbludd:

Whaddya say, Davey? Sounds like a pretty good spot to start that comeback, eh?

Davey LaRue:

Dat is one way ta look at it, bon ami. Dough...I dunno how bein' a babysitta on de outside is gonna help shake de ring rust, Brock.

Brock Newbludd:

Babysitter? Shit, Davey, you know we wouldn't do you like that. Tell you what. You help your boys by watchin' our backs and we'll help with that ring rust, no problem. Anything you need from us, we're here bro.

Pat Cassidy:

One-hundred percent, buddy. Plus, did we mention that being a manager pays more than being a bartender?

LaRue's ears perk up at that bit of information and Brock grins.

Brock Newbludd:

Uh oh. I think we got him, Cass. I think he's in! I can picture it now...it's the main event...the Faithful are all standing on their feet...The Specials are tearing down the house once again...The Lucky Sevens are helpless as they get their shit pushed in by the champion and now greasy Tom Morrow is up on the apron...but wait!

The overly excited Brock grabs Davey by both of his shoulders and shakes him.

Brock Newbludd:

IT'S DAVEY LARUE! Davey crushes Morrow's scrawny ass on the outside and listen to this crowd!

LaRue can't help but grin ear to ear as his two friends serenade him.

Newbludd and Cassidy:

Davey...Davey!...DAVEY!...DAVEY!!

Davey LaRue:

Simma' down! Simma' down! Ya'll gonna make dis ol' gator blush!

Brock Newbludd:

So, what's it gonna be? You ready to be the tip of the spear and lead the champs into battle?

Sighing, Davey cracks open his beer and takes a deep drink. The burly cajun wipes off his scraggly beard and lets out an impressive belch as his two friends anxiously wait for him to speak.

Davey LaRue:

Ah hell, count me in!

The tag champions both let out a cheer at the news as they each give him a slap on the back. Eyeing up the basketball hoop, Davey picks the ball up with one hand and starts to spin it on a finger.

Davey LaRue:

Now, if ya'll excuse me...

In one quick motion, Davey fires up a one handed shot, not even bothering to look at his target...

Swish!

Davey LaRue:

Dis ol' gators gonna go belly up to de bar and tie one one to celebrate de big promotion!

Finishing off the rest of his beer, the new manager of The Saturday Night Specials disappears back in the bar as the camera slowly fades to black.

HONOR SOCIETY vs. HALLMARK JOURNEY

To the commentation station to check in with DEFIANCE's dynamic duo.

DDK:

Well, switching gears here folks... at DEFIANCE Road, Ned Reform tried to pull some funny business by dressing the members of Hallmark Journey up like Deacon and Magdalena. When he got upset with their portrayal, he attacked JC Hall.

Lance:

That's right. And while the real Deacon ultimately went on to win the match, JC and Vickie Hall were upset enough about Reform's actions to ask for this match tonight.

♪ "As Long as You Love Me" by The Backstreet Boys ♪

Jonathan-Cristopher Hall and his wife Vickie walk out from the back with hands locked in a loving embrace. They stare into each other's eyes with a sense of deep longing before sharing a quick peck and making their way to the ring.

Darren Quimbey:

The following contest is a tag team match! Introducing first, Jonathan-Cristopher and Vickie Hall - The Hallmark Journey!

As the married couple walk to the ring, we get a quick mini-box promo in the lower left hand corner of the screen:

Jonathan-Cristopher Hall:

Ned Reform! You think you can embarrass me and sic your attack dog on my beautiful wife without any consequences? Tonight, I fight for the honor of the love of my life!

Back live, JC Hall sits on the middle rope, bending downward so his sweetheart can step into the ring. Inside the squared circle, the loving couple embrace and twirl around, staring into each other's eyes as their music fades out.

♪ "Für Elise" by Cole Rolland ♪

Ned Reform's theme is the only thing that can get Hallmark Journey to break their gaze and glare with anger at the entrance way. The Good Doctor appears through the curtain, walking with authority and smiling broadly. He pauses at the top of the ramp and gestures dramatically behind him, revealing the appearance of an absolute beast looking TA Cole. Cole is flexing, cracking his neck, and jumping up and down in place with intensity causing Count Novick's cape to flail in the wind. Smiling, Reform moves his finger slowly from pointing toward Cole to pointing to the ring, and his student follows these instructions by beginning to march down the aisle.

Darren Quimbey:

And their opponents: TA Cole and Ned Reform - they are The Honor Society!

Cole leaps straight up from the bottom of the ring onto the apron, glaring down both Hallmark Journey members like he wants to eat them. Reform follows slowly behind, making his way up the ring steps while smirking out into the fans. Reform slaps Cole on the back with pride and laughs in the direction of The Hallmark Journey, who are inside the ring and trying to look as menacing as possible.

DDK:

It's not too often we see Ned Reform and Levi Cole stepping into the ring as a team.

As referee Rex Knox calls for order, TA Cole steps into the ring flexing and ready for action as he tosses the injured Count Novick's cape aside. The Hallmark Journey share another quick peck before Vickie moves into their corner, leaving Jonathan-Cristopher to start the match. Knox signals...

DING DING

Cole circles JC Hall like a hungry shark, but the young love bird stands his ground. He shakes his head "no"... and points toward Ned Reform on the apron!

Lance:

Jonathan-Cristopher wants Ned Reform!

DDK:

That *is* who dropped him with the Syllabuster at DEFIANCE Road, after all.

The fans actually get behind JC as he makes more intense demands for Cole to tag out to his mentor. Levi looks to Reform, questioning what his next move should be. Reform laughs, shakes his head... and reaches out for the tag!

Lance:

Cole with the tag!

Arrogantly, Ned enters the ring. He assumes a wrestler's stance, crouching and slowly walking around JC Hall, looking for an opening. Jonathan doesn't take his eyes off The Good Doctor as Ned continues his slow circle. Just as Reform looks poised to move in for the lock up...

BOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

He tags back out to TA Cole!

DDK:

Some mind games from Ned Reform. As if he hadn't made these two angry enough already...

TA Cole jumps over the top rope into the ring and charges at the male member of Hallmark Journey. Cole and JC Hall lock up with Hall transitioning quickly into a hammerlock. TA Cole twists around and switches into a side headlock, clamping down tight on the head of Jonathan-Cristopher. Hall tries to use his momentum to push Cole forward into the ropes, but the bigger man plants his feet and doesn't allow it. Knowing that he has his husband trapped, Cole begins to blow mocking kisses toward Vickie Hall on the apron. In the Honor Society corner, this absolutely tickles Reform.

DDK:

The influence that Ned Reform has had on this young man is vile. Levi Cole would never have done something so crass.

Lance:

And JC Hall isn't going to stand for it! He fires a rapid succession of elbows into TA Cole's midsection!

Jonathan-Cristopher has the big TA stunned. He bounces off the ropes, building a head of steam...

... but he runs right into a big shoulder block that sends him spiraling to the mat. TA Cole off the ropes, but JC Hall is able to drop down and Cole runs over him. JC Hall back to his feet with TA Cole on the rebound, but this time Hall leapfrogs over the charging bigger man. When TA Cole bounces off the ropes a third time, he runs into a crisp JC Hall arm drag! Reform throws his hands up in frustration and surprise on the apron as Levi bounces backwards into a neutral corner. Jonathan-Cristopher leaps up, positioning himself over Cole for the classic ten count punches.

ONE! TWO! THREE! FOUR! FIVE! SIX!

Lance:

I can't believe it, Keebs... the people are counting along!

DDK:

I think they hate Ned Reform more than they find the Hallmark Journey obnoxious, Lance.

SEVEN! EIGHT! NINE!

Before the tenth shot, JC Hall turns to blow a kiss to his wife. Blushing, she grabs the kiss out of the air and pulls it close to her heart. Unfortunately, this brief respite is all TA Cole needed. He charges forward, dropping HC face first onto the turnbuckle! Cole grabs him from behind...

DDK:

GERMAN SUPLEX!

With JC Hall crumpled on the mat, Vickie Hall begins desperately reaching out for a tag. JC Hall is too far away to tag out, however... and it's made even worse when Cole pulls him by one foot closer to The Honor Society corner. Cole makes a tag to Ned Reform's outstretched hand and his faithful protege holds JC's arm outstretched to allow The Good Doctor to fly off the second rope with an axehandle. Thanking his Teaching Assistant, Ned Reform takes a moment to smile at Vickie before lighting JC Hall up with brutal slaps across the face! Rex Knox moves in to admonish him but Reform simply brushes him away rudely. Ned lifts JC Hall to his feet and whips him into the corner. The Pedagogue of Pain takes a second to flash the fans that obnoxious smirk for which he has become so famous before charging into the corner... but the fans let out a cheer of surprise when JC Hall leans forward through the ropes before Reform reaches him, catching The Socrates of Slam with a stiff kick to the dome!

Lance:

Reform is stunned and JC Hall is headed up top!

One half of the Hallmark Journey is perched on the top rope, ready to fly off at Ned Reform. But Reform, holding his head in pain, leaps out of harms way and quickly tags TA Cole back in to a round of jeers! Those jeers turn to cheers as JC Hall simply jumps down from the top rope and charges TA Cole - lighting him up with a series of forearms! Forearm! Forearm! Forearm! Forearm! Forearm! The bigger man is stunned, so JC Hall brings him into the corner and lights him up...

CHOP!

CHOP!

CHOP!

CHOP!

DDK:

I don't think we've ever seen Jonathan-Cristopher bring it like this!

Lance:

He's fighting for love, Keebs!

With Vickie Hall absolutely gushing on the apron, her husband takes TA Cole down with a Fireman's Carry Gutbuster!! He jumps on top with the lateral press!

ONE!

TWO!

DDK:

And TA Cole powers out! I don't think he expected this much fire from The Hallmark Journey.

Gaining strength from the approval of his wife, JC Hall is on fire! He runs the ropes, but gets caught in the back with a knee from Ned Reform who is standing on the apron. Although Hall's momentum is broken, he turns and clocks

Reform in the face! The man in love turns back around... but walks into an overhead belly-to-belly from TA Cole. From here, it's all Cole. He brings JC up and puts him back down with a short arm clothesline. He follows that up with a bulldog off the second rope. With JC Hall down, Ned Reform again calls for the tag.

DDK:

Everytime Levi Cole takes control, Ned Reform helps himself. Typical.

Reform saunters into the ring, lifting the broken JC Hall to his feet...

...and Ned Reform EATS a superkick to the face! JC Hall, with a burst of energy, spring forward to tag in Vickie Hall! Vickie is in and she's a house o' fire! Dropkick to Ned! Another! A third! Dropkick to TA Cole, sending him off the apron to the floor! Hurricanrana to Ned Reform!

Lance:

Vickie Hall is on fire!!

Reform, looking for a break, pulls himself up into a neutral corner... but he turns right into a flying heel kick from Vickie. The matriarch of The Hallmark Journey sends Ned into the opposite turnbuckle. He takes just a second to grin at the cheering fans before she runs... and does a handstand! And another! And another! And she looks to end the acrobatic display with a back elbow...

...but she's caught in the Ad Hominem!!! Reform locks in his version of the Crossface Chicken-Wing. Vickie Hall immediately begins to flail, but JC Hall is cut off by TA Cole before he can intervene. After about ten seconds, Vickie has no choice but to tap!

DING DING DING**DDK:**

After a hell of a performance by The Hallmark Journey, Ned Reform and TA Cole come out on top.

Lance:

This might be the most impressive that we've ever seen them, Keebs, and... oh, come on. This isn't called for.

In the ring, Reform continues to hold Vickie in the Ad Hominem even though the bell has sounded. Meanwhile, TA Cole drops JC Hall with a Red, White, and Blue Thunder Bomb. Finally, The Good Doctor releases the smaller woman with a sneer. As Rex Knox tends to the couple, Reform gestures for a mic amidst the crowd's booing.

Ned Reform:

This is what happens when passion runs afoul of cold, hard logic. What you just saw, children, was an absolutely textbook example of team work and synchronization. This is what peak tag team wrestling looks like without a doubt.

TA Cole looks very pleased at the words of his boss.

Ned Reform:

And I know that I owe you people something. I have an obligation to live up to, yes? My... acknowledgement. Well I will have you know that it IS coming. Dr. Ned Reform will stand in the center of this ring and admit that he was... that he was... wrrrrroo.... Wrooooooooooo...

Once again, he can't seem to bring himself to do it. He shakes his head

Ned Reform:

Well, I will say it. But in one week's time at DEFtv 165, I will fulfill my promise. In front of the world, I will...

Lights out. In surprise, Ned Reform stops his tirade. On the DEFiatron, we see a full moon being covered by dark clouds. A wolf howls. And in blood red letters, the following words appear on the screen:

I AM WHAT GOES BUMP IN THE NIGHT!

A crack of lighting.

Lights back on. Ned Reform does not look terrified. In fact, he looks downright bored. He shakes his head and looks directly into the camera.

Ned Reform:

Okay. Okay. Just stop. The man who calls himself Count Novick - my TA Cole beat you within an inch of your life two months ago, and now you hope to get inside our heads with your cheap parlor tricks. I need you to hear me: I don't know if you are a con man or simply insane, but this needs to be said: there is no such thing as vampires. You are not one. And if you are halfway intelligent, you will not return to DEFIANCE. Because if you do, my TA Cole will put you out of competition. Forever. And this time, he won't be carrying around your cape as a trophy. It will be your head.

A smile. TA Cole moves into frame behind Ned Reform, cracking his knuckles.

Ned Reform: *[mockingly]*

aH. hA. hA.

Mic drop. Hit Reform's music.

Lance:

Well, we've got confirmation Keebs... sounds like Ned Reform is going to publicly admit that he was wrong at DEFtv 165!

DDK:

I'll believe it when I see it...

THIS IS CALLED A HYPE PIECE

The camera heads backstage where none other than Chris Trutt is standing by for his next interview.

Chris Trutt:

Hi, everybody! This is Chris Trutt... and I'm here on UNCUT! That rhymes! I'm a better rhyme guy than Butcher...

He stops when he realizes he's rambling to no one.

Chris Trutt:

Ahem. I'm Chris Trutt and right now I'm talking to someone who is not Rezin! I'm talking to the leader of the Better Future Talent Agency... Tom Morrow!

Walking into view in a dark blue suit, the BFTA Brainchild has a big smile on his face, seemingly happy with most of the recent events of DEFIANCE Road.

Tom Morrow:

Trutt.

Chris Trutt:

DEFIANCE Road looks like it had mixed results for BFTA! We...

Morrow puts a hand up to cut him off.

Tom Morrow:

Did you watch the same show that I did, Trutt? The sky is blue! Birds are singing! I got BIG, BIG Pay-Per-View bonus payouts in the pockets of me and my guys! Problems got solved! Henry Keyes did a great impression of Icarus! He flew too close to The Golden Son, Alvaro de Vargas and he got burned AND fell to his doom! He's done! The House? They're teaching wrestling classes via Zoom while they're laid up in hospital beds! MY Main Event Monsters... got SIX-AND-A-HALF-STARS from accredited reviewer Tim Tillinghast! They're not only the best wrestlers on this roster, they're the most destructive forces on this roster! You tell me how it was "mixed success" you window-licker.

Chris Trutt:

Well... uh, Jestal lost to Flex Kruger and Klein. And Jack Mace...

Tom Morrow:

YEAH YEAH YEAH I'm gonna stop you right there. Jack Mace is crying at home in his cabin in England with broken ribs and a concussion. And I heard he might be having a few issues with his work visa letting him back in the country so he's gonna be tied up with that for a while... he isn't coming back.

He stops with a sinister smile.

Tom Morrow:

And Jestal only lost to Flex Kruger AND Klein AND Dandelion! It took THREE people to gang up on the Clown Prince of BFTA! He isn't to blame because his sister is a nutcase. He'll either convince her to join Better Future... or he'll take care of the problem PERSONALLY. But I'm not here to dwell, Trutt. I'm not interested in being your BFF like Rezin. I have important things to worry about like money. Like championships. Like... PAYBACK.

He addresses the camera directly.

Tom Morrow:

I wanted to break the news right here on UNCUT! See... I hear the whispers and murmurs. Nothing gets said in this locker room that I can't find out eventually. And it seems lately, people have wanted to write off BFTA as being big talk... we are big talk. But you all saw... we can back it up and we can cripple people any time we want. And it's DEFCON season! People are trying to make impacts, make statements and make moments... We are going to be doing ALL THREE. Henry Keyes, Jack Mace and The House were just the start. See... Alvaro was right. We're going

to be righting wrongs of the past year...

He points ahead.

Tom Morrow:

...And we're starting with YOU, Pop Culture Phenoms!

The mere mention of the name makes him seethe. He tries to not let it bubble over before speaking.

Tom Morrow:

Months ago, YOU teamed with Henry Keyes and Conor Fuse to try and put the screws to us just because we dared liberate Ophelia Sykes from your little group. Now? You don't have Conor. You certainly don't have Henry Keyes! I put in a request to have a match and I just learned earlier today that match has been granted! Four on four! The D, Elise Ares, Flex Kruger and that asshole with the box on his head... against Alvaro de Vargas, Big Money Max and Big Money Mason aka The Lucky Sevens and... you guessed it... Ophelia Sykes! She wanted a piece too as soon as we heard this match was granted.

The gears are turning and Morrow is smiling ear to ear.

Tom Morrow:

You two just came off an amazing ladder match... but MY GUYS are coming off stacking bodies and winning... and next week, DEFtv 165... we're gonna pile on a few more!

He shoots a disgusted look at Chris Trutt.

Tom Morrow:

And they're not the only group that's gonna suffer...

The power-hungry BFTA Brainchild marches off from the set, whistling a happy tune as the show moves on.

Chris Trutt:

Uh... thanks!

FENCE POSTS

Malak Garland lazily thumbs through his phone as he sits at a table in catering. He notices Percy Collins circling around him with his phone pointed at the Social Media Savant.

Percy Collins:

Okay, I'm recording you but remind me once we're done to show you the awesome panoramic picture this phone takes. It's so unreal. I can see the pores on your face!

Malak grabs the plastic fork next to a plate of half eaten food. He shyly pokes and prods at the broccoli.

Malak Garland:

Like, this is it, huh? We've gotten to the point where we are truly scraping the bottom of the barrel for content so you have to record me at catering?

Percy's phone shakes as he replies.

Percy Collins:

The fans love it, Mal. Who doesn't like a peek behind the curtain? It adds depth to your character and heck, maybe more people will start to like you once they truly get to know you. So, what are you eating there, Mal?

Malak gets some green beans on his fork and shoves them in his mouth.

Malak Garland:

Healthy stuff.

So insightful. The disdain in his voice is more than clear.

Percy Collins:

Okay, okay. How about this? What's your favorite scary movie?

Malak drops his fork into his roasted red potatoes.

Malak Garland:

Are you shitting me right now? You know I don't subject my lenses to that nonsense. It's outside my center. Even bringing that up gives me anxiety. My favorite scary movie is changing the channel.

Percy tries to defuse a potentially volatile situation.

Percy Collins:

Okay, okay, okay. My bad. What are you up to later?

A coy smile breaks across the Keyboard Master's punchable face.

Malak Garland:

Oh, you'll see. I have lots planned for the coming months. Lots.

Garland goes back to bulldozing the food around on his plate as Percy invades his personal space.

Percy Collins:

Uh, how are the pOtAtS? Last time I had them, they sucked so hard.

Malak forks one and takes a tentative bite. The bitterness forces his nose to scrunch.

Malak Garland:

JC tap dancing Hall, Percy! tHeY aRe tHe wOrSt pOtAtS iVe eVeR hAd! That's it! I'm going to finally go through with submitting a formal complaint about catering. I mean, I was holding off on doing it for the longest time and you know what? These potatoes have been shit for far too long. Then one time two months ago, they were good! I was impressed! I was like 'wow, okay,' so I decided to drop my investigation but you're right. This is the last straw. I am done with this but before we shred catering on social media, we gotta go check out Game Boy's match cuz it's next. Let's go.

Malak rises from his chair and grabs Percy by the shoulder before the phone recording cuts.

THE GAME BOY vs. JJ DIXON

With JJ Dixon already in the ring, UNCUT opens to The Game Boy marching down the rampway and Malak Garland beside him. Sometimes Garland nestles into The Game Boy's chest for additional emotional support, other times The Snowflake Superstar pumps up the crowd (he doesn't really) by telling them The Game Boy is the newest addition to The Comments Section and Game Boy is awesome!

Once TGB reaches the bottom of the ramp, he walks in front of Malak, takes hold of the second rope and pulls himself onto the apron. The Halo From Hell steps over the top rope, looks at referee Mark Shields and Malak Garland shouts for the bell to sound.

DING DING

Immediately, JJ Dixon charges The Game Boy and when he's close enough, The DPad Destroyer slugs Dixon in the side of the head with a wicked left hand.

Thump.

DDK:

He's out!

Lance:

Yep.

Dixon doesn't move... but Mark Shields is too stupid to call for the bell and end the match so instead, Game Boy leans down, methodically lifting JJ to his feet.

DDK:

Dixon can't stand. He's legitimately knocked unconscious.

Game Boy doesn't mind. He holds Dixon in position and fires another left hand into the skull of his opponent. Dixon flies across the ring, landing in the turnbuckle and collapsing to the canvas. Game Boy walks over. He snatches Dixon from the mat and throws the man across the mat! Game Boy continues the onslaught. He hits Dixon with a sidewalk slam, then a powerslam, then a running chokeslam. The roided freakshow adjusts his luchador Game Boy mask before gorilla pressing Dixon's passed out body... holding the Houston native up for all to see.

Meanwhile, Malak Garland blushes on the outside.

Malak Garland:

I'VE GOT HIM PLUGGED INTO CONTROLLER PORT 2! I'M UNSTOPPABLE!

The Mini Boss destroys Dixon by dropping JJ on his shoulders and running around the ring... around and around and around...

WHAM!

Powerslam.

Game Boy pins Dixon, even hooking a leg.

ONE.

TWO.

THREE.

DING DING DING

Quimbey announces the winner of the match as Malak Garland rolls into the squared circle and hugs his new found muscle. Mark Shields tries to raise Game Boy's hands but the massive beast is in a trance... simply staring at JJ Dixon, the man he physically crushed.

DDK:

Well, this wasn't much of a match.

Lance:

No, it wasn't. I've been told Malak Garland intends to give Game Boy all the freedom he desires. I think we'll be seeing a lot more of these contests, partner.

The Game Boy walks over to the ropes and holds them open for Malak. UNCUT fades as Garland exits the ring with the same shit eating smile he had when Garland first approached Game Boy all those months ago.

EMPLOYEE EVAL

Ballyhoo Brew, February 6, 2022.

The big man drew a long, bored sigh as he watched the conclusion of the rather lackluster Pro Bowl playing out on the TV closest to him. It was a pretty slow night, hardly a night where the 6'4" former sumo wrestler needed to utilize his intimidating presence to help keep the peace, but after a few weeks on the job, Eiichiro "Mushigihara" Yamazaki came to appreciate the occasional lulls.

He had taken the job after Dametreyus Fuqueiawytas left for another work opportunity, and he got used to it like a fish to water. Known for his displays of strength and brutality in the DEFIANCE Wrestling ring, Mushi was a much quieter and reserved, but still friendly, presence, who had very few problems keeping the rowdiest of Ballyhoo patrons in line with little more than a sharp glare and a low grumble. Like Big Dam, though, Mushi didn't take long to ingratiate himself to staff and patron alike, especially after celebrating his first day with Joe Stats and Siobhan Cassidy, killing a bottle of Akashi White Oak between the three of them and the reigning DEFIANCE tag team champions, the Saturday Night Specials.

As he sipped from a long bottle of Smartwater, he could hear some synth-heavy mellow pop playing from the jukebox, and he started to wonder if he could get some Mariya Takeuchi on there...

"YEAAAAAAH, LET'S GO, BABY! WHOOOOOOOOO!"

His deep thoughts were interrupted by the jubilant screams of Eddie Dante, jumping up and down and drumming the sides of the Mortal Kombat machine, laughing as he pulled his glass of beer from the cupholder.

Eddie Dante:

I GOT YOU, YOU FOUR-ARMED BASTARD! I _GOT! YOUR! ASS_!!!

It was a quiet night, so Mushi knew that Eddie wasn't causing much harm, and let him be. In the distance he could see David Fox and Saori Kazama, combing through the pages of a binder at a booth near the stage together, looking for songs to equestrian when karaoke started in an hour.

David Fox:

Hmmmm... the punk selection could use a little work. What do you think, babe?

Saori Kazama:

Definitely. Not even any Misfits? Come on.

David Fox:

Eh. Maybe we should just stick with "I Got You Babe" or "Shallow" and call it a night.

Suddenly, there is a bit of a commotion at the far end of the bar. In come the co-proprietors of Ballyhoo Brew and reigning tag team champions The Saturday Night Specials! Pat Cassidy and Brock Newbludd are leading, in their own minds, what appears to be a conga line. The only issue being, of course, that nobody else seems to have joined them.

In the lead, Brock Newbludd stops his rhythmic hip swaying and opens his eyes. His mouth drops open. Pat Cassidy, unaware that they were stopping, fumbles a bit as he threatens to stop his momentum.

Pat Cassidy:

The fuck? What happened to our dance line, man?

Brock Newbludd:

Dude. Look.

Brock points to the bar - and the severe lack of patrons within.

Pat Cassidy:

Oh yeah. Good call. This place is dead, let's go somewhere else.

Cassidy goes to turn before Brock stops him with a hand on the shoulder.

Brock Newbludd:

Buddy - this is our place.

Pat Cassidy:

Oh shit! You're right.

Another glance at the sad state of affairs.

Pat Cassidy:

...that's depressing.

Brock slaps his tag partner on the chest.

Brock Newbludd:

Screw it. We bring the party. Let's inject some life into this.

With a nod, Cassidy and Brock walk into the bar proper. Brock smirks at Eddie Dante while Cassidy shoots a thumbs up in the direction of the karaoke duo. Both men approach the bar and help themselves to a beer - owner's perks, after all. They both seem to notice Mushi at the same time as he continues to sip his water.

Brock Newbludd:

Lookin' intimidatin' as hell, Mushi! Doin' a helluva job, bro!

Pat Cassidy: *[speaking loudly and slowly]*

WE. COME. IN. PEACE.

Recognizing his employers, the God-Beast politely nods and gives them a friendly...

Mushigihara:

Osu!

Newbludd scans the empty bar again and frowns. Turning to his partner, Brock whispers a few quick words into Cassidy's ear and the two of them focus their attention back on Mushi.

Brock Newbludd:

I tell ya, Mushi. You've been doing a bang-up job on keeping the peace around here. I mean, shit, we haven't had to clean any blood off the walls in a couple of weeks now! I'm pretty sure that's a record. Whaddya think, Cass?

Pat Cassidy:

You know what I think? I think it's time we start rewarding our employees when they do a damn fine job.

Newbludd hikes a thumb in Mushi's direction.

Brock Newbludd:

Which is *exactly* what the big guy here is doin! The question is...how should we show our appreciation...

Pat and Brock both put their thinking caps on and take a few seconds. Over in karaoke, David and Saori begin to sing "I Got You Babe" and the tag champions both glance in their direction. Both stare at David for a half second before looking back at each other with matching grins.

Pat Cassidy:

I got it.

Newbludd's smile grows even bigger.

Brock Newbludd:

You thinkin' what I'm thinkin'?

Pat Cassidy:

You know it, buddy.

Brock looks up to meet Mushi's gaze.

Brock Newbludd:

I'm thinking I wanna see the big man work under the bright lights. Not gonna lie Mushi, we're fans of this Dangerous Mix thing you got going with Dave.

Pat Cassidy:

And since we're big fans, let me ask you a question. How about we see just how dangerous you guys are against us? A silent couple of seconds pass and Brock breaks the ice by giving Mushi a friendly slap in the shoulder.

Brock Newbludd:

We're serious, Mushi! A big time match against the champs! Let's go out there and give the people a show, big man! That is...if you and Dave accept of course...

Mushi put his thumb and index finger on his chin while looking over to the stage, seeing the other half of the Dangerous Mix and his wife crooning like the lovebirds they are, and then over to the arcade machine where Eddie Dante, who usually looks at everyone like he were plotting another scheme, or another speech littered with ten dollar words, cackles with delight as he manages to defeat Shang Tsung and become the newest Mortal Kombat champion.

Mushigihara:

Osu.

With a confident nod and an ear to ear smile, the God-Beast firmly accepts. The Specials respond with a couple grins of their own along with a fist bump. Mushi taps his sizable fist against both of theirs to make things official.

Brock Newbludd:

You bet! Now, how about we celebrate beating the shit out of each other in the near future with some more drinks, eh?

Pat Cassidy:

Now we're talkin'! You should join us, Mushi.

With a toothy smile, Mushi nods and chuckles...

Mushigihara:

Ikuzo.

THE SAINT AND THE SINNER

Fade in on veteran interviewer JAMIE SAWYERS, standing on the interview stage and beaming proudly.

Jamie Sawyers:

Ladies and gentlemen, joining me at this time... the Favoured Saints Champion, KERRY KUROYAMA!

♪ "Cause" by Human Impact ♪

The Faithful POP LOUD as Kerry wastes no time stepping through the camera, belt clasped around his waist, immediately acknowledging his fans by pumping both fists into an A-shape over his head. The Pacific Blitzkrieg is wearing his usual attire, thankfully bleached from the bloodstains, along with a dark gray short-sleeve compression shirt.

DDK:

The Favoured Saints Champion, and what a reaction for Kerry Kuroyama, here tonight on Uncut for an exclusive interview!

Lance:

He survived a HELLACIOUS battle in the Deathmatch with Malak Garland at DEFIANCE Road, and the damage still shows!

DDK:

Kerry looks anything BUT Uncut, but almost looks ready to compete tonight! I don't know if that's wise, but the champion has been a man on a mission as of late!

Even with his torso covered, we can still see some bandages exposed on his lower arms. His forehead also bears fresh stitches. Despite still bearing the scars from his battle at DEFIANCE Road, the fierce determination in his eyes hasn't faded a bit. After a beat, he joins Jamie on the stage.

Jamie Sawyers:

Thank you for joining me out here today, Kerry. It's been a few weeks since that violent Deathmatch at DEFIANCE Road, where you successfully defended your title against Malak Garland. How are you feeling right now?

Kerry can't help but chuckle after letting out a labored sigh. As if it wasn't obvious just by looking at him. Before answering, he pauses a beat to acknowledge a chant picking up steam in the crowd, letting the Faithful be heard.

"KER-RY!! KER-RY!! KER-RY!! KER-RY!!"

Kuroyama leans in to answer...

Kerry Kuroyama:

I won't sugarcoat it for you, Jamie... I feel like *shit* right now. Excruciating pain shoots through my back any time I sit down. And I'm constantly exhausted... between having to balance a steady recovery and keeping myself in shape for the next challenge. It's not very fun, to say the least.

He holds up a finger, looking directly into the camera.

Kerry Kuroyama:

But you know what I'm *not* feeling, Jamie? It's DOUBT. There's not a shred of it left in me. Despite everything I've endured to get here, I have NO DOUBT in my conviction to get it done in that ring!

The cheers pick up in volume, and Kuroyama looks into the very heart of the Faithful.

Kerry Kuroyama:

When I walked into that bloodbath at DEFIANCE Road, I was ready, willing, and able to prove I would go to any length

to define myself as one of the *greatest* of DEFIANTS in that locker room right now, and now I got the scars to prove it!

He unstraps the championship belt, and holds it up to the roaring crowd.

Kerry Kuroyama:

For better or for worse, I feel like a *CHAMPION*, Jamie!

“RRRAAAAAAAAAHHH!!!”

Kuryoama drops the belt over his shoulder while Jamie pushes on.

Jamie Sawyers:

So what's next for Kerry Kuroyama? Maybe take a few weeks off to let your wounds heal?

The uncanny smirk that forms on Kerry's face suggests otherwise.

Kerry Kuroyama:

Why stop now when the *storm* inside me is already raging, Jamie?

He pats the belt on his shoulder.

Kerry Kuroyama:

Despite these wounds, I am still bound and determined to fulfill my obligation as the Favoured Saints Champion. I'm still two more title defenses away from earning my shot at the Southern Heritage Championship, and the chance to take that title from the clutches of the scumbag that currently holds it and bring it back to the level of prestige it once held here in DEFIANCE!

The Faithful pop again. He nods approvingly, before turning his attention back to the interviewer.

Kerry Kuroyama:

What's next hasn't changed a bit, Jamie. The real question is, *who* is next? *Who* is going to be daring enough to come face to face with the Pacific Blitzkrieg? *Who* wants this belt bad enough that they're willing to stand in the path of the STORM?

♪ “Apocalyptic Havoc” by Goatwhore ♪

A MEGA-POP rocks the DEFarena as everyone's favorite Goat Bastard REZIN comes stumbling through the curtain, acknowledging the cheering crowd with a savage and maniacal grin as he runs along the stage and gets them charged up! On the interview stage, Kuroyama sighs and buries his face into his hand.

DDK:

I think we have our answer, Lance!

Lance:

Kerry asked, and therefore he has received. A former three-time Favoured Saints Champion himself, “the Escape Artist” Rezin would no doubt love to enjoy another chaotic reign as the “Favoured Sinner”.

Rezin, brandishing his own mic, is all smiles as he approaches Kerry and Jamie on the interview stage. Kuroyama is playing it polite, with maybe a tinge of subdued annoyance.

Rezin:

Kerryyyyy!

Kerry Kuroyama:

...Rezin?

Jamie Sawyers:

Rezin! To what do we owe the pleasure?

Rezin doesn't answer. He only stiffens up and gives Jamie a long and awkward death stare. Several uncomfortable seconds pass. Sawyers looks appealingly to Kerry, who can only shrug. Finally, he seems to understand that he's no longer needed in this situation, and quietly heads to the back through the curtain.

Mere seconds later, CHRIS TRUTT gets shoved through the curtain. The Faithful POP, and Rezin nods approvingly. Trutt, looking annoyed to be put to work, readjusts his suit as he approaches the two on the interview stage and picks up where Jamie left off.

Chris Trutt:

Rezin, to what do we--

Rezin SWIPES the mic right out of his hand.

Rezin:

ARRRRRIIGHT, LISTEN UP, YOU SCUM!!

The Faithful pop again, further charging up the Escape Artist as he pulls his "How To Be A Hero 101" pamphlet out from the backside of his pants and waves it through the air.

Rezin:

So you ain't gonna believe this, but I'm back there rolling blunts on this pamphlet here, when by happenstance, I notice this line here...

He opens the pamphlet to read. A few crumbs of shake fall onto the stage. He not-so-innocently tries to kick away and pretend nobody saw anything. Trutt can only shake his head. Rezin clears his throat and begins his dictation.

Rezin:

It says here... "A REAL HERO instills vibes of HOPE, INSPIRATION, and POSITIVITY within the masses by proving his COURAGE, by heedlessly answering INSURMOUNTABLE CHALLENGES to demonstrate his WORTHINESS!"

The brochure gets folded up and stuffed back into his pants as Rezin looks up, his face full of speculation. It's strange to see him actually *think*.

Rezin:

And then it suddenly occurred to me... HEY! Heedlessly answering insurmountable challenges is PUNK ROCK as FUCK! That sounds RIGHT UP MY ALLEY!

He reaches out and pokes the face of the belt on Kerry's shoulder. Kuroyama stoically smiles, but remains as rigid as a mountain on top of a dormant volcano.

Rezin:

And then, I noticed you were coincidentally out here asking all these rhetorical questions about who was going to be next to challenge for this belt, and it again occurred to me... well, DAMB! I ain't got anything else going on tonight! Why don't I try my hand at becoming a FOUR TIME FAVOURED SINNER?! TONIGHT!!

"RRRAAAAAAAAAHHH!!!"

The crowd pops hard. Kerry can't help but acknowledge the reaction. Rezin is hyper-charged and pacing like an animal, awaiting an answer. Kuroyama leans in on Jamie's mic.

Kerry Kuroyama:

Rezin, I would be more than... "honored" to take you up on the challenge here tonight. Because you're exactly right...

answering the challenge is not only the quality of a hero, but the quality of a champion as well. But... before we go ahead and commit to this, are you *absolutely sure* this is what you want? You *do* remember what happened last time you and I tangled on Uncut, don't you?

Rezin:

You're asking ME if I WANT THIS?! HA!! I WANT THE WHOLE WORLD, KERRY!! ALL I DO is WANT!!

Rezin is yelling more to the crowd and to himself by this point. As he rants, Kerry looks off-camera and gives a "roll it" motion with his finger. The DEFIATron lights up and shows replays from their match back at Uncut 92.

Rezin:

I am the ETERNAL NUCLEAR FLAME of DEFIANCE, Kerry! I just CONSUME and BURN!! I am the ESCAPE ARTIST! There isn't ANYTHING that can hold me back! There isn't ANYONE that won't hold me down! You knock me down, I GET RIGHT BACK UP!! NO MATTER WHAT, I KEEP KICKING! I KEEP... uhmm...

The Goat Bastard trails off when he looks up and sees himself getting pulverized by not one, not two, but THREE devastating Kuroyama Drivers. The crowd gets a good chuckle at his expense as they see him grimace with embarrassment. Finally, he waves this off.

Rezin:

Ya know what, WHY DOES IT EVEN MATTER what happened back then! RIGHT NOW, Kerry, I'm ready for another chance at being the FAVOURED SINNER!! Done PROPER this time! Like the PUNK ROCK HERO I AM!! FEARLESS, FURIOUS, and BLAZED OUTTA MY MIND!!

The Escape Artist looks Kerry dead in the eye and fiercely points to the ring.

Rezin:

So COME ON, KERRY! BRING THAT STORM!! YOU KNOW I GOT THE LUNGS!

Kuroyama takes in a deep breath, and nods. The crowd CHEERS LOUDLY.

DDK:

Looks like we're being treated to a title contest for the Favoured Saints Championship to close off Uncut!

Lance:

Well, this all escalated fairly quickly. One has to wonder if Kerry is pressing his luck here, given his condition.

Rezin is bounding down the aisle, slapping hands and continuing to charge up the crowd. Many paces behind him, Kerry follows him to the ring, still smiling with a professional level of stoicism. An official runs out from behind the curtain as we fade to a quick break.

FAVORED SAINTS CHAMPIONSHIP: KERRY KUROYAMA Â© vs. REZIN

Both competitors are already in the ring and warming up when official Brian Slater reports for duty. Darren Quimbey enters the ring to make the formal championship announcements.

Darren Quimbey:

Introducing first, the challenger. Hailing from Indianapolis, Indiana, and weighing in at two-hundred and five pounds. He is the FAVORED SINNER of DEFIANCE... the ESCAPE ARTIST... REEEEEEEEEZZZZZZIIIIIIINN!!!

Rezin holds out his arms in a crucifix pose and spins himself into a circle. The fans roar in support, and he roars right back!

Darren Quimbey:

And the opponent... fighting out of Seattle, Washington, he weighs in at two-hundred and forty-eight pounds. He is the reigning FAVORED SAINTS CHAMPION of DEFIANCE... the PACIFIC BLITZKRIEG... KEEERRRRRRYYYYYYYYY KUURROOOYAAAMMMMAAAAAA!!!

As his name is announced, Kerry Kuroyama raises the Favored Saints Title over his head to a raucous pop from the Faithful! Then he hands the belt over to the official to hold up for the cameras while removing his robe.

DDK:

This is something of an impromptu match, but one that has the makings to be something great, given the caliber of the athletes standing in that ring!

Lance:

These two have fought in matches at least a few times over the past year, so they know each other well by this point. It's anyone's guess as to how this will shape out.

DING DING

The brimming excitement of the crowd feeds into Rezin's maniacal energy and he comes hopping out of his corner. Kerry is all business as he comes out of his and goes right into a lock-up. Kuroyama looks to immediately overpower, but Rezin slips under his arms and traps him into a side headlock. Rezin shakes and cackles in his brief moment of triumph, but Kerry remains calm and grabs him around the waist.

DDK:

Rezin goes right into a headlock, but here's Kerry with the BACK SUPLEX to REVERSE -- NO!! Rezin lands on his feet! And goes right into ANOTHER headlock!

Lance:

The Escape Artist is looking fired up and confident, but there's still plenty of match to go.

Kuroyama backs into the ropes and pushes Rezin off, sending him into motion. Rezin uses the momentum to POUNCE upon the second rope and pull of a SPRINGBOARD MOONSAULT! The crowd POPS as he flies through the air... and immediately deflates as he collides face-first with the canvas, as Kerry never moved off the ropes. Rezin rises up onto his knees off the impact, croaking in pain. The Favored Saints champ shakes his head as he takes a bounce and starts running.

DDK:

Here comes Kerry for the GREEN RIVER REVOLT--NO!! DUCKED at the last moment by the ESCAPE ARTIST!

Lance:

I don't know how he knew that was coming, but he's lucky to have avoided that Shining Wizard, or it would have drastically changed the flow of this match.

DDK:

Both men come scrambling to their feet... here comes Kerry with a LARIAT--but Rezin again DUCKS, and REVERSES with a CRUCIFIX ROLLUP!

One!

Two!

And Kerry kicks out!

Kuroyama sits up and receives a sharp KICK to the back that leaves him howling in pain. Rezin seems taken aback by the reaction, and experiments with another kick that again leaves him reeling in agony. The Escape Artist nods, seeming to only NOW understand the situation.

Lance:

Kerry might be competing in a compression shirt tonight to keep the bulk of his wounds sustained in that Deathmatch out of direct exposure, but it's doubtful those cuts have completely healed yet.

DDK:

His back must be on FIRE right now! And Rezin is now just discovering that the Favored Saints Champion may be vulnerable in this contest!

Lance:

The question now is, will he take advantage of it?

Reeling in pain, Kerry falls into the turnbuckle, clutching his back but inadvertently leaving himself open. Rezin is looking the gift horse in the mouth. He looks out to the Faithful for some moral direction on what to do with this. They don't seem to endorse the idea of attacking the champion's healing injuries. But then a devilish smirk crosses the Goat Bastard's face.

Lance:

I guess he just can't help himself! Rezin coming in for another KICK--NO!!

Kerry suddenly spins around and CATCHES Rezin's leg while it's in motion! The eyes of the Pacific Blitzkrieg are completely cold and serious, while Rezin's face explodes into a mosaic of surprise and panic. The Escape Artist begs for mercy, but Kerry admonishingly shakes his head. Not a chance. He pulls Rezin into him...

DDK:

EXPLODER SUPLEX by the Favored Saints Champion!

Lance:

I'm sure Rezin will remember that when he considers doing something a hero would NOT do.

DDK:

Rezin took a MASSIVE bounce off the mat, and now Kerry Kuroyama drags him back to the center of the ring, hooking the legs for the cover!

One!

Two!

KICKOUT by the Escape Artist!

The WrestlePlex is split over who they're behind, but ALL are cheering! Kerry begins to get Rezin back up, but once he's on his knees the challenger tries to fight back with a few shots to the mid-section! Kerry ends his plans for a rally

with a KNEE to the side of the head to leave him stunned. Kuroyama gets Rezin up the rest of the way with a waistlock...

DDK:

Kerry has Rezin around the waist... and LIFTS into a GUTWRENCH SUPLEX, SLAMMING HIM RIGHT INTO THE TURNBUCKLES!!

Lance:

Kerry is finding his opportunity dominant in this title defense. He knows he needs to get in his hits when he can. Because if he loses the momentum again in this match, there's no telling what Rezin will do!

DDK:

For right now though, the Escape Artist is TANGLED upon on the top turnbuckle!

Rezin remains stuck in the Tree of Woe position. Kerry gets a head full of steam and comes running in for the LOW DROPKICK--but Rezin SITS UP at the last second! Kuroyama groans in pain as his boots bounce fruitless off the bottom turnbuckle, but as he gets back to his feet, he turns around to see the Goat Bastard now perched on the top turnbuckle...

DDK:

Rezin with the CORKSCREW DIVING CROSSBODY!! What a turnaround! Rezin has the champion's shoulders to the mat!

ONE!

TWO!

TH--and KERRY ROLLS OUT to escape...

...and to the amazement of the crowd, keeps hold of Rezin as he gets back to his feet, drops him across the knee into a RIB-BREAKER, which transitions perfectly into a FALLAWAY SLAM! Rezin careens violently across the mat like someone thrown from an automobile accident, ending up in a groaning heap against the ropes.

DDK:

The back and forth action continues, but Kerry Kuroyama continues to dominate in spite of Rezin's frequent reversals! Now the champion pulls him to the center of the ring, and goes for the cover!

ONE!

TWO!

THR--NO!! Kickout by Rezin!

Lance:

As a three-time champion of the Favored Saints Title himself, Rezin knows he has to go the distance to stay in this contest for a hope at winning that title for the fourth time!

The official Brian Slater whispers something into Kerry's ear, and the champion nods understandingly. Red blotches are beginning to form in the back of his compression shirt. His cuts are reopening. Every second this match continues, it's only going to get worse. Rezin's listlessly flops his limbs on the mat before Kuroyama takes him by the head and pulls him to his feet.

DDK:

Kerry is looking ever more desperate to put this match away! He bends Rezin over and grabs him by the waist... and DRILLS HIM with a STANDING POWERBOMB! Holds him in place for the PIN!!

ONE!

TWO!!

THR--REZIN pops the shoulder... and Kerry lifts him up for ANOTHER--

REZIN GOES OVER INTO A SUNSET FLIP AND ROLLS HIM UP!!

ONE!!

TWO!!

KICKOUT BY KERRY!!

Kuroyama rolls to his back but can't help but put a hand to his sore back. Rezin pops up and charges him head on, but Kerry thinks quick and dips down, putting him AIRBORNE after the Back Body Drop over the ropes...

...but Rezin LANDS ON THE APRON! Kerry thinks he's in the clear as he unsuspectingly turns around, looking up just in time to see Rezin COMING DOWN UPON HIM off the Spingboard Moonsault off the top rope and back into the ring!

DDK:

MOONSAULT LAYS OUT KUROYAMA!! Rezin hooks the legs FOR THE TITLE!

ONE!!

TWO!!

NO!! Kerry gets the shoulder up, and keeps his title reign alive! The three-time former "Favored Sinner" has remained resilient in this fight, though.

Lance:

And Kerry sustains yet another unforgiving bump on his lacerated backside.

The champion groans in agony and rolls onto his side as Rezin rises off of him, revealing the red blotches on his back have only grown in size. The Escape Artist stoops low to assess the damage and tsk-tsks pitiaably... then flashes the crowd his devilish grin as he draws a thumb across his neck!

DDK:

I think Rezin is ready to end his misery, AND his title reign! Could this be the "Favored Sinner's" chance to claim that belt for the FOURTH time?

Lance:

I'm not sure I can withstand that roller coaster again...

Rezin beckons Kerry to his feet as he gets himself into position, and Kuroyama rises up just in time for the Escape Artist to spring on him the CLOVEN HOOF KICK--but Kerry DUCKS the Spinning Heel Kick, and snags Rezin's arms between his legs. Before the Goat Bastard can react, he's put into the pumphandle position and scooped up onto the champion's shoulder.

DDK:

KUROYAMA DRIVER after Kerry ducks the CLOVEN HOOF KICK!!

Lance:

He knows Rezin far too well to fall for that move!

DDK:

Kuroyama HOOKS THE LEGS to RETAIN!!

ONE!!

TWO!!

THREE!!!

DING DING DING*♪ "Cause" by Human Impact ♪*

The Faithful CHEER Kerry rolls off of Rezin's chest and lets Slater raise his arm in victory. Upon being handed the Favored Saints Title, he holds it to his chest for a moment and raises it proudly to a massive ovation from the crowd.

Darren Quimbey:

The winner of the match... and STILL FAVORED SAINTS CHAMPION of DEFIANCE... **KEEERRRRRRYYYYYY KUUUROOOYAAAMAAAAA!!!!**

DDK:

It almost looked like it would be all over for the Pacific Blitzkrieg, but somehow, in yet another amazing turnaround, the Favored Saints Champion Kerry Kuroyama found a way to come out triumphant once again!

Lance:

A strong win, given his state of recovery. And this also brings him only one match away from the four consecutive title defenses he needs for a bid at the Southern Heritage Championship.

DDK:

Rezin put up a spirited battle for the very title that made him the Favored Sinner of DEFIANCE, but Kerry Kuroyama's ambitions couldn't be stopped here tonight!

Kerry exits the ring and pulls off his compression shirt to reveal a few of his stitches have come undone during the action. He gets someone to run ahead and let Iris know he's on his way to DEFMed.

In the ring, Rezin groggily wakes up, clutching the back of his head, and eventually comes to realize his defeat. Still, he flashes the retaining champion a salutary thumbs up. Kuroyama returns the gesture before continuing up the ramp, in a moment of mutual respect that gets another pop from the crowd as UNCUT closes.

THIS.***IS.******DEFIANCE.***